



Communications
Canada

THE END OF THE LINE -- (OR THE
BEGINNING): COMMUNICATIONS IN
PAINT HILLS (A REPORT ON PHASE 1
OF PROJECT ANIK AND ISOLATION).

by: Nathan Elberg
Richard Salisbury

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Communications in Paint Hills

(a report on Phase 1 of Project, Anik and Isolation)

Department of Communications Project

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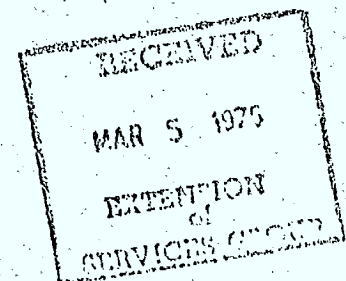
by

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Contents

Acknowledgements	i
1. Introduction	1
2. Paint Hills, the Community	4
3. Variability as a Problem	10
4. Head Office to Branch Office Communication	19
a) Hudson Bay Company	19
b) The Co-op Store	26
c) Band Administration	30
d) Provincial Administration	38
e) Education	39
f) Health and Welfare	45
g) The Post Office	52
h) The Anglican Church	55
i) The Roman Catholic Church	58
j) Austin Airways	59
k) The Telephone System	65
5. Mass Media Communications to Paint Hills	77
a) Magazines and Newspapers	77
b) Books	80
c) Radio	85
d) Tape Recorders	88
e) Record Players	90
f) Cinema	91
g) Television	96
h) Summary	103
6. Local Communications	105
a) Traditional	105
b) The Settlement Community	109
c) The Grand Council of the Cree	115
Bibliography	121
Tables	
1a. Age Distribution, Paint Hills Dec. 31, 1974	9a
b. Numbers of People in Paid Employment	9a
c. Household Size in Paint Hills	9a
2a. Fluency in English and Cree	82a
b. Fluency in English by Age	82a

Contents (cont.)

Tables

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 3. | Ownership of Communications Equipment, 1974
by Individuals | 85a |
| 4. | Ownership of Communications Equipment, by
English Fluency of Household Head | 85a |

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The End of the Line -- (or the beginning):

Communications in Paint Hills

1) Introduction

A communications study in Paint Hills was planned for several reasons. More so than most isolated Indian settlements in Northern Quebec it could provide a baseline study of how communications functioned before the advent of satellite technology, while the likelihood of connection to the satellite system in the near future made a future follow-up study to evaluate the effects of satellite communications potentially possible. Even as a single study of a small community a potential for contributing scientific knowledge was possible. The variations in community life caused by seasonal, or day to day changes in the weather, or by unpredictable actions by community members or outsiders, are extreme and appear as crises. Efficient and rapid communication of information is vital, from a wide range of sources to recipients who may be scattered over the 5,000 square miles of forest, river and coastline that is Paint Hills territory, or who may be temporarily migrant from the community in Fort George, Moosonee, Val d'Or or Montreal. Yet to outward appearances the community has few crises, and peacefully

and quietly copes with the difficulties and changes, without the strident over-communication that is familiar in city life as communicators strive to ensure that it is their message that gets through. A study of how flexible communications systems cope with the problems of vulnerable and changing isolation could be of major value as indicating the real world communications problems that technology could assist with.

More directly, and apart from the scientific value of such a study, the Indians of the James Bay region urgently need information about communications -- their own needs and the potential contributions of modern technology. Over the last hundred years they have readily taken over communications innovations that could be of use to them -- the outboard motor, the skidoo and the bush aeroplane for transport, the radio and the telephone for messages, and the record player, tape recorder and movies for entertainment -- yet the new possibilities likely to become available in the near future greatly exceed this list. Selecting from the total list what are the most relevant to local needs could perhaps be left to time and experience, but this hit or miss method is dangerous. It is likely that an innovation accepted may, alongside its apparent benefit, have costs in two forms. Less obvious communications functions

that used to be performed by the technique that is replaced may in reality have been highly important; dog-teams are belatedly recognised as still having important functions alongside the skidoo, for example, though retaining them is now difficult. Secondly there are opportunity costs; adopting one innovation prematurely may mean that the possibility of changing to alternative forms is ruled-out. In other words, alongside knowledge of existing communication patterns, native communities need to be able to assess deficiencies in their total communications system, to obtain information about possible innovations, and to be able to evaluate how innovations might change the total system, remedying defects but creating new problems at the same time.

Although a small study could not definitively solve any of these issues it was hoped to contribute to their solution, as part of a longer term and comparative study. A documentation of existing usage of communication channels at different times in the annual cycle, coupled with a fuller description of the community itself (existing literature is largely general, or (Elberg et al 1972) confined to subsistence economics) could provide baseline data and an indication of variability. The research task itself, carried out in conjunction with community

members, would induce community thinking about communications issues in a more abstract way. If the researchers asked questions about communications, they would in turn be asked questions themselves, and their knowledge of options available could then be provided to interested community members. If community action on communications issues ensued, then this process could be assisted (and also recorded for scientific analysis).

2) Paint Hills, the Community

Geographically Paint Hills is located on the east Quebec coast of James Bay, half way between Fort George, the northernmost large coastal settlement, and Moosonee, the southernmost point and terminal of the Ontario Northland Railroad. Within this region the Hudson Bay Company post of Old Factory (along with those of Eastmain and Rupert's House) served for many years as a trading centre to which the Cree living along this coast and inland, came in the spring and fall, to trade furs and to stock up with winter supplies. After World War II and the advent of social services, the Canada-wide trend to more prolonged residence by Indians at the site of Posts affected Old Factory Band, as it did most northern Indians. But the site of Old Factory proved to have disadvantages as a permanent village

site, and in 1959 the community agreed to move to Paint Hills (or Wimindji), some twenty miles to the North. The present village site is within an inlet, protected from the open waters of James Bay by substantial hills, but with enough open water for small amphibians to land and to pull in to the beach in front of the village. The trees in the settlement have been preserved, adding to the sense of quiet and permanence, while the major buildings of the Bay, to the east, and of the various government services, to the west, frame the houses of the local people. Anglican and Catholic churches, the radio station and generator, and the new school, line the sides of a growing settlement spreading back from the shore, up the slope. The modern construction inland is hidden from the waterfront, and replaces the teepees which were the predominant form of housing for transient summer residents as late as 1972. For the southern white, looking for a "traditional" settlement, Paint Hills has almost idyllic charm, as CBC documentary films have shown.

More concretely it is relatively isolated from direct white influences. No road reaches Paint Hills settlement, although the new road to Fort George and the Hydro-electric construction cuts across Paint Hills territory about 50 miles

inland. Major supplies are shipped in at infrequent intervals during the summer, by HBC barge from the regional base at Moosonee. Overland or coastal canoe travel to the nearest settlement of Eastmain takes a day, and brings one to a comparable settlement of slightly smaller size. Only small planes flying between Moosonee and Fort George call in regularly every other day, weather and ground conditions permitting, and travel beyond either of those regional centres by scheduled plane is likely to involve an overnight stop-over.

The few white residents are employees of the bureaucratic or commercial agencies, occupying housing owned by those agencies, and are clearly only transitory in the long term (no matter if they have been resident for several years). In relation to all the administrative hierarchies, Paint Hills is at the lowest level. It acts as a centre to no lower order of community that these hierarchies recognise, (i.e. bush hunting camps are not recognised by them), and to all of them it is just another inaccessible post like many others, requiring occasional visiting and the provision of routine information and reports. In the Administrative structure of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs it reports to the Val D'Or Regional office. Even the Regional Chief comes from another

band (Rupert's House) and the representative Indian organizations (the Grand Council of the Cree, and the Indians of Quebec Association) have their offices in Montreal and Quebec City.

It retains many features of a "traditional" Cree way of life. Subsistence hunting and trapping still provides a major portion of Paint Hills diet (Elberg et al 1972). Major amounts come from the spring and fall geese hunts on the sand flats along the coast, and from the fishing (especially for whitefish) in the river estuaries. The dozen or so families with inland hunting territories maintain a pattern of residence in small isolated microbands, during the winter, although with growing populations the proportion of bush-dwelling hunters in the band has declined. The non-hunters from these families, and the families with more easily accessible hunting territories now live in the settlement but travel out to trap, or to shoot ptarmigan and hares. Moose and caribou, though not as plentiful as in areas to the south and north respectively are regularly killed, as is the occasional bear.

This is not to say that "modern" features are lacking. More detailed figures will be presented later, on the distribution and availability of these features -- from electricity,

inside toilets, and washing machines to skidoos, stereo hi-fi, and Seven-up. But the presence of these features is comparable with that found in other isolated Indian reserves throughout Canada, rather than with that found in larger settlements. The HBC and Co-op stock food items, as well as clothing and hardware, but these foods are reserve foods or luxury items for most local people. Marked is the absence of other features of more contacted settlements -- there is no liquor store, no squalid shacks, and even if many people do not have paid wage employment this does not mean that they have nothing to do. More dramatically it is a settlement where all the customers for local services are themselves Indian, and to a very large extent the people who serve them, in Band offices, at the telephone exchange, at the Co-op or in the Bay, at the school or the community centre are themselves Indian. The incoming white -- and some services are staffed by whites -- must adjust his behaviour to the local milieu, and if he does not do so he rapidly meets a blank wall, where in a larger, more contacted settlement the outsider can often remain immune for a long time from the pressures to change to fit in with the local society, and can insist that the local people adapt to him. In short, it appears as an Indian settlement where modern

features represent additions or changes, rather than as a white settlement with a few remaining Indian features, even if knowledge of the gamut of modern technology is available.

Socially too the experience of Paint Hills is one of long historical contact with some white influences, but at least until recently, sufficient distance or isolation to make those influences appear only to modify a basically traditional culture.

The population of Paint Hills numbers just over 100, and has been growing steadily for the last thirty years, at about 3% per annum. It is thus a predominantly young population with over 40% below age 18. All this young population has been schooled in English, mostly in Federal schools, whereas their parents learned to read and write in Cree syllabics at mission schools. Until the new school was completed in 1973, all children above the lowest grades had to leave the community for their education, however. Where they went has varied over time, with schools in Sault Ste-Marie and Ottawa being used at one time, but with an increasing trend recently towards schools located further and further north, in Moosonee or Fort George among other places. The new Federal elementary school in Paint Hills expands the lowest grade teaching of the previous single-teacher-

		Male	Female	Total
Age	0-9	56	63	119
	10-19	54	62	116
	20-29	45	49	95
	30-39	24	25	49
	40-49	18	19	37
	50-59	18	18	36
	60-69	12	7	19
	70+	14	9	23
		<u>242</u>	<u>252</u>	<u>494</u>

Table 1a. Age distribution, Paint Hills, Dec 31, 1974. Ages derived from band list figures. Excluded from these figures are individuals with non-Indian status, whites, etc.

		Male	Female	Total
	0-19	-	-	-
Age	20-29	10	3	13
	30-39	8	2	10
	40-49	5	1	6
	50+	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
		27	6	33

Table 1b. Numbers of people in paid employment, December 1974, at Paint Hills, by age and sex.

		Households	Persons
	2	2	4
Household	3	2	6
size	4	3	12
in	5	6	30
persons	6	9	54
	7	7	49
	8	7	56
	9	8	72
	10	7	70
	11	7	77
	12	3	36
	13	<u>3</u>	<u>39</u>
		62	494

Table 1c. Household size in Paint Hills. Average size is 7.97 persons.

school up to grade 6; only for high school do pupils now have to go away to Fort George. Pupils wishing to make use of the Quebec Government school in Rupert's House to obtain French-language teaching would, however have to leave home.

Almost all adolescents, young adults, and adults up to the age of about 35 have thus had experience of travel outside the community, and of returning home. Included among them are high-school graduates, people with higher technical training, and some with University experience. Their presence in the community is not the result of ignorance of the world outside, but rather because the small community has something to offer them -- even if it is only assurance of a minimum livelihood when the outside offers unemployment. The communications pattern of the small community is presumably part of what the community offers, and is presumably something that could selectively be strengthened by some communications innovations, or be irretrievably damaged by others. It is this pattern that we shall seek to document, to provide a baseline for later comparisons.

3) Variability as a Problem

In terms of variability the yearly round of the subsistence cycle indicates the main dimensions of variation. Spring break-up provides the most dramatic change. For a period of a month

or more travel may be unpredictably difficult; ice may look safe but is really dangerous; rivers choked with ice or in flood are not canoeable; ground that is newly thawed in the top six inches is worse than soft snow or summer bog. Neither seaplanes nor landplanes may be able to get in or out. Food resources are lowest at this time, until the return of the geese. One should be in the settlement before break-up if one is to be able to take advantage of the arrival of the geese on the nearby shores, but ahead of time one does not know whether break-up will be early or late. The geese settle on the sandy shallows on their way further north to nest, and though shooting them can provide enormous catches, the camps must needs be widely spaced along the forty miles of neighbouring coastline, so that dispersal and knowledge is critical. The summer months yield fish, again something for the individual to catch away from the settlement, and this is the time when children are home from school. Weather in summer may however be very variable, and fog and cloud disrupt travel, while radio storms often disrupt telephone communication. The white-fish spawning in August and September at the head of river estuaries again produces exodus from the settlement by family groups, although there is also the pull of children

returning to school. With the end of the whitefish run upriver, comes the return of geese flying south and dispersal of small groups to goose camps along the coast. This in itself is a harbinger of freeze-up, with its transportation problems. Fall moose-hunting is desirable if a supply of meat is to be secured for the winter, to supplement the geese in the freezer locker, but this too requires dispersal in a different direction from the coast. In the past this was the first activity when a hunting group established its winter camp, and even now the formation of winter hunting camps, their supply and building is important in the Paint Hills economy. For those in the settlement even winter is no smoothly consistent period. Somewhat the same freeze-up problems plague transportation, of neither firm ice nor firm ground and clear water, as at break-up, while early snow falls and changeable weather make for unpredictability until the clear, cold spells of January to March. The return of children and hunters for the Christmas season amplify the variability. The period January to March is perhaps the most predictable, with the hunting and trapping continuing in the bush, but preparations being made for return to the settlement before break-up. The settlement is partially empty, however.

While this picture deals mainly with the variations for the hunter and for the family with school children, the pattern for the wage-worker is also variable. Welfare, it is true, provides a cushion of stability for everyone, but for most people wage-work does not represent a steady nine-to-five job, with every night spent at home. For managerial personnel -- band chief, co-op manager, etc -- trips to Montreal or Val D'Or are frequent and involve a week away each time. A few clerical staff have regular jobs in the stores, band office, aid post, telephone exchange, school, etc, but other jobs are casual and intermittent. House building is one of these, located in the settlement. Unloading barges, guiding for white sportsmen, goose hunters or fishermen, or cutting wood are ones that are more familiar for the non-local reader. Distinctively they happen somewhat suddenly and to some extent unpredictably. It is known that the supply barge will come some time in early summer and at intervals thereafter, or that goose hunters will be expectable during the spring and fall migration seasons but the actual arrival of the barge or of the plane with hunters is sudden and marks a sharp break in activities. Leaving the settlement for guiding or logging, with males separated from their families in the settlement, is the usual

expectation of those wage jobs. For school teachers, band managers, co-op workers, construction site workers and many others there is also the variation caused by the arrival and departure (at almost daily intervals) of some supervisory official from some governmental or business organisation. Each such visit may be anticipated and involve days of preparation, frantic activity during the visit, and a return to "normal" later; it may be unanticipated and involve embarrassed improvising when the visitor steps off the plane; it may be anticipated, but then be put off or delayed for days through bad flying conditions or a hundred and one other causes, frustrating the local preparations.

The overall pattern of variability is clear to any visitor who comes more than once, since the whole settlement appears different at different times. Over the year it may be a collection of about 600 people of all ages in the same place, at a time of festivity. It may involve less than 300 people in the settlement, with major categories of people widely scattered -- children at school, hunting groups in the bush for long periods, males working at a Manpower training course etc; or it may involve even fewer people but of all age categories in the settlement overall, with a steady turnover

as different families come and go to fishing or goose camps for brief stays. In between each of these "states" of the community are transition periods, when individuals are newly returned or preparing to leave, anticipating the future and recalling the past.

When one tries to envisage the types of information that this variability makes important, and the sorts of channels that might be employed to get the right pieces of information to the right people in order for them to make decisions about their next or future actions, the potential complexity becomes almost overwhelming. Ideally one would need to know where all community members are at any given time, what weather, forest, and animal conditions are all over the 30,000 square miles of the hunting territories attached to the settlement, where and when other people are planning to move within the regular series of possibilities, and also something about the completely irregular and highly unpredictable actions of whites (and other Indians) outside the context of the variable regularities of settlement life. Everything is, however, in flux, and each individual is in flux with it, constituting neither a stable emitter nor a stable receiver of information. Finding one particular person may be as difficult for someone else who

wants to get information from him, as it may be for that person from whom he needs information.

For different people there are different needs for information. Those with children or other family members absent have different needs from those without absent relatives; the planner of a winter hunting group is interested critically in information about animal movements and catches, and about supplies and transportation which may have less significance to the wage employee of a government organisation; the comings and goings of officials of companies and governments are mainly of concern to the employees of those companies or agencies, and are irrelevant to the decisions of most people; even for employees however it is often hard to envisage why the head office of the organisation constantly demands information to be sent about Paint Hills to the distant head office.

Isolation combined with variation thus creates several problems for communication. Isolation implies both small size (and thus few local specialised agencies to store or transmit information), and restricted means of communication between major centres and the local society. These factors have different implications depending on whether one looks at them from the point of view of large centres, from the point of view

of a local who is a subordinate to the larger centres, or from the point of view of a local who is involved mainly in local concerns.

From the point of view of head offices, Paint Hills is "the end of the line", the last place to which information about decisions taken at head office is sent, the most difficult to send that information to, and the least important source of routine information which head office might need for making its decisions. Head offices may try to improve the channels of communication to their own local offices, but their obviously greater interest is in improving communication with larger, less isolated, more important centres.

From the point of view of local offices -- stores, medical aid post, band office etc -- better communications with "outside" would be a mixed benefit. Though better news of head office decisions would remove some of the crises and sources of variability in life, the improved communications might only serve to increase the demands by head office for more information to be provided by the branch office, more interference by head office in local affairs and even less control over what went on locally. There would be no guarantee that information about outside events would be provided any

more readily by Head Office when asked for by the branch office, than is now the case. Rather it is likely the present difficulties of getting answers to locally urgent questions would persist, with an increased flow of locally irrelevant demands for information or greater provision of information about locally unimportant decisions.

For the local person not employed in a branch office of an external organisation most decisions about activities that he can make, depend on information generated by other local people. The general lack of specialised agencies to store or transmit information in a small isolated settlement is mitigated by the small population of the settlement, but increased by the great variation in settlement activities and in population dispersal. Yet even for such people, the effect on them of decisions made elsewhere -- on prices for furs or for flour, on airline schedules, school-building, or welfare budgets, for example -- is very great, and many of their decisions about their own activities depends on knowledge of the outside world. They receive much of their information about those decisions at third or fourth hand. The information is second or third hand by the time it arrives at the local branch office of the relevant organisation, and the local person has to rely on it

being circulated locally from the branch office. It is small wonder that the picture one gets of the outside society from talking to local people is that of a capricious and meaningless world; much of the activity of the settlement thus turns in on itself, concentrating on those activities where local decisions can be made using local information and where the individual can buffer himself from the capriciousness of the outside world. Yet problems of circulating within-settlement information are widely recognized but are left to solve themselves, informally and haphazardly -- at least until recently.

In our presentation we shall consider first the way in which each of the agencies with branch offices in Paint Hills communicates with the outside world, incidentally discussing how the agency also functions in communications within the community. Only after this shall we consider the communication channels used by the local person, within and without the settlement to satisfy their information needs.

4. Head Office to Branch Office Communication

a) The Hudson Bay Company. For many years, at Old Factory, the Hudson Bay Post was the only Branch Office in the community. It had the only communications link directly

out of the community, to the larger office in Moose Factory and from there to Head Office in London (if one excludes individual contacts with Indians of other bands). The goods it provided were all the manufactures local people could learn about; it was the sole purchaser of furs and the sole source of information about prices for furs; though the local manager had wide discretionary powers locally, he was limited by the directives of Head Office, and only he knew what those limits were. Critically Head Office could direct tightness or ease in the granting of credit, and since this credit was the main source of working capital for hunters outfitting for the winter information about credit availability was locally important. The manager of the post gained a large part of his importance from his critical position as exclusive intermediary with Head Office. He also gained power and prestige because his presence at the post was more continuous than the presence of anyone who traded there. When individuals visited the post only intermittently, with only small numbers present at any one time, he was the only person who talked with every hunter, and knew where they were hunting, what animals they were killing, and all the gossip of every hunting band. He passed that information on -- or as much as suited him -- and performed a

highly important role as the communications focus for a community. To the extent that the community trusted him, it could ignore its dependence on his communication links to head office, and placidly focus its interests on the local world of hunting. Where there was no trust there was a likelihood of the post closing.

This pattern (if it ever really existed in the ideal form presented) no longer prevails. The HBC post has been replaced by a Bay department store, where the manager does a job similar to that of any Bay store manager. He does buy most furs, he does make decisions on credit, and he must keep up to date on local happenings. But as a figure in the social life of the community he is perhaps most important when he dresses in a red coat to play Santa Claus at Christmas.

But in its economic and communications links with Head Office, the HBC is highly important. The supply barge from Moosonee is still the major source of manufactured goods, and information about its movements or requests for new supplies go via the HBC. If supplies are urgently needed, an HBC charter may occur -- called for by the HBC radio system, which is well maintained, staffed and of sufficient power to ensure that messages will be relayed by other posts if they do not directly

reach Head Office in Winnipeg or the Northern Stores office in Montreal. The HBC manager will, if necessary, house visitors to the community who do not have local contacts. In default of any banking facilities, the Bay is the agency most used for financial transfers into and out of the community. Price changes, and the unpredictable consumer demands for such things as cigarettes, have considerable effects on the community and the information about changes or shipments come in on the radio -- albeit in code.

The manager himself no longer deals with all customers, nor does he perform all jobs in the store. In some ways the manager's position makes it politic for him not to engage in too many social activities with his customers, but generally his interaction with customers outside store occasions is conditioned by his reputation among local people and by his official ties in the community. A manager known to be friendly and honest is invited to join in social activities; a good shot with a rifle is invited to go hunting and is widely respected; someone who is less trusted or seen as stand-offish will be ignored by Paint Hills people. Little information from Head Office flows out from the manager directly to other members of the community.

However the Bay store has a local staff of six regular employees -- an assistant manager, store clerks, warehousemen -- who do meet all customers both in the store and informally. Locally relevant information from HBC Head Office enters the community fairly freely and rapidly, as will be later described, in connection with sugar price changes in midsummer 1974.

Any information circulates much more quickly because the Bay is very much the "general store" of traditional America. If new stocks have recently come in, the store is always crowded -- but not only with shoppers, though most will buy some foodstuffs. Before buying people will stand around the entrance, gossiping and chatting, the older people inside the door and the children outside. If food shipments have come in the number of people at the store is usually about thirty at any one time, of mixed age and sex; when the less rapidly selling items of hardware form the main stock the number of people in the store may drop to about seven to ten, mostly men. The conversation is general, including fishing locations, the prices of tools and equipment, or personal comments about other people in the community. The bulletin board in the entrance serves as a means of leaving messages for other people, and is commented on by store visitors. The board usually has about

three items posted, official announcements mainly, but some personal notices, and advertisements of used articles for sale. In spite of the store becoming less multifunctional, and more devoted to retail selling, it has retained its major function as a meeting place for the spread of information among customers.

The Bay is also a major source of information about the South by virtue of the goods it stocks. For example, in 1972 the manager had become interested in the possibility of all-terrain vehicles being used in Paint Hills. He described the vehicle to many local men, and felt that he had created sufficient interest among them to warrant his ordering one machine. However, by the time it arrived all those who had expressed interest had cooled, and no one was prepared to buy the machine. Rather than ship the machine back, the manager used it personally for amusement and recreation (see photograph). In interviews with community members about the machine they defined such machines as for leisure and recreation rather than as practical and utilitarian means of transportation. Their information about machines came entirely through their experience with the Bay store.

This example will also serve to illustrate why the Bay is

reluctant to be too innovative -- it does not pay. It accepts the tastes of local people and tries to cater to them. For example a survey of all toy purchases was made during the Christmas season, when 90% of all Paint Hills purchases are made and a large section of the store is converted to displaying toys. The total list of toys ordered was inspected. Most of the toys purchased were relatively simple ones, with a median price of \$1.60, and a mean price of \$2.95. They involved tactile sensation, manual activity, and sound -- such things as Playskool benches, pull toys, blocks and beads. The other main items stocked and sold were 50 cent novelties -- stickers, paper dolls, and cutouts. There was very little demand for more complex toys for older age groups such as play garages or airports. Interviewed about the stock of toys the Bay store staff said that taste varied little from year to year, and the only way new toys could be introduced would be if someone saw a toy outside the settlement and placed a special order. At that time more than one might be ordered, as once the toy was introduced to the settlement, and used there, others might be interested in having one.

Innovation, and education in consumer taste, is not something the Bay sees itself as performing. This is indeed

an area in which local people feel themselves deprived. They are aware that outside Paint Hills all sorts of goods exist, which might conceivably be of use, in the local context. They do not have the choice of buying them or not buying them, of testing whether they work or not, since they are not available. They are not currently exposed to the hard-sell commercials of southern mass media, and in interviews do not express negative feelings to the mass media as loaded propaganda. Rather they wish they had more readily available information on how products work and what tasks they will do; they see mass media as providing that useful information. The HBC only partially fills this lack -- a lack which underlies one of the communication "needs" which Paint Hills residents see television as possibly filling.

The Bay does fill some of the need for information about southern Canada in other ways -- its stock of goods related to the media, books and magazines, radio sets, tape-recorders and record players, records themselves, camera and films. The data on these aspects of its role will be considered in a separate section.

b) The Co-op Store. The second institution discussed is one which is not, strictly speaking, a branch office, but an

independent company with membership in the Federation of Arctic Cooperatives which obtains and ships goods wholesale for all northern co-operatives in Quebec. It does, however, have interesting parallels with and differences from the operation of its competitor, the Bay, and thus merits discussion at this point.

Co-operatives had been urged by the Indian Affairs Branch since the mid 1950's, following the success of several Eskimo groups involved in craft production. The encouragement of Federal officials was augmented by that of the Quebec DGNQ agents, when Quebec inaugurated its New Quebec office in 1964. With this encouragement a few settlement members, who had long chafed under the monopoly held by the Bay, combined to start a community co-operative. Shares were sold at \$5 each, and the store was built and initially staffed with the help of volunteer labour. As can be envisaged, the resulting capital pool was very small, the amount of stock kept by the Co-op in no way competed with that held by the Bay, its sales did not generate sufficient profits to support the employment of highly trained staff, and many of the efficiencies required to make stores pay -- regular ordering, a flexible pricing policy, minimal stocking of slow moving items, inventory control etc --

were not observed. The Co-op concentrated on items that did not require extreme efficiency in ordering -- clothing, tools and staple foodstuffs. It was located in the same building as the band office, but rarely had more than one or two customers in it at any one time.

The coming of a new manager in 1973 has made the Co-op more competitive with the Bay. The annual turnover of 1974 was four times that of 1973, and the beginning of stocking perishable foodstuffs -- bread, freezer meat, dairy products etc -- has made it become something of a social centre in the same way as the Bay is. The Bay attracts a larger group and has more frequent shipments, with the Co-op particularly attracting the age group between 15 and 25. This age differential is probably related to the age of the Co-op manager, who is 20 years old, and also to his being a resident of Paint Hills.

The Co-op, unlike the Bay, has no independent radio system or fleet of supply barges. It must rely like the rest of the community on the regular means of communications -- the public radio, the mails, the scheduled airline and the charter flights. It cannot obtain information from head office in advance of the rest of the community, and its shipments are subject to

the same vagaries as are those of other individuals -- on a crowded scheduled flight on a small plane, a package may easily be off-loaded time and again to enable the weight limit to be observed. Some packages from Paint Hills Co-operative -- slow-moving goods being exchanged for similarly slow-moving items of other Northern Co-operatives in Port Harrison and Povungnituk -- had been waiting for several months for shipment when we observed them.

This example, however, also indicates some of the channels of communication that the Co-op uses, that are lateral and not simply to Head Office. The Co-operative Association does link several settlements at least intermittently -- along lines that are made potentially profitable by the existence of the Austin Airways service to Fort George, Great Whale, Port Harrison, and Povungnituk. The Association office in Montreal uses staff from its member societies on a revolving basis, thereby training local staff in the complexities of larger operations, but also ensuring that Head Office operates with a knowledge of conditions of isolation and that local societies understand Head Office workings. There is always at least one person in the Montreal office who speaks Cree, and everyone from Paint Hills knows when it is a Paint Hills person who is

in Montreal. The Montreal office thus exists to serve the interests and demands of northern people, who themselves feel they can affect decisions. Information about the south is provided to the Co-op and its members through the educational activities of Co-op officers and by the visits south of the manager and staff. But the effectiveness of the demands by northern people, and of the flow of information which they receive is limited largely (as is the concern of this paper) because of the poor communications originating in the North, although one must not also ignore the limited financial resources available for such things as accumulating stocks.

c) Band Administration. The band is officially administered by its elected Chief, advised by an elected Band Council of six members, with a Band Manager and a secretary employed on a salaried basis to attend to the day to day tasks of administration.

In the hierarchy of the Department of Indian Affairs, the band office routinely reports to the Regional Office in Val d'Or, which reports in turn to the Quebec Provincial office in Quebec City, which reports to Ottawa. Val d'Or, it may be noted, is not directly connected to Paint Hills, by scheduled airline; flights out must either be south to Timmins or north to

Fort George, a change of plane, usually after a night stopover, then gives a flight to Val d'Or. The specialised activities of the Department -- Education or Economic Development, for example -- usually follow the same organizational pattern.

Co-ordinate with the structure of regional and provincial offices is a structure of elected Regional Chiefs (the one with Paint Hills in his jurisdiction comes from Rupert's House), and the provincial Indians of Quebec Association, with its elected President from Caughnawaga. Access from Paint Hills to the Regional Chief for Paint Hills is relatively easy, since Rupert's House is only two stops south on the regular scheduled flight. Radio communications between settlements are usually available and until August 1975 were not subject to long distance charges. Access to the Indians of Quebec Association however was deemed so difficult, especially when a majority of its members belonged to other tribal cultures, that the northern Cree Indians decided in August 1974 to set up their own Grand Council of the Cree. The Grand Council had as a main task the negotiating of land claims issues with the James Bay Development Corporation and the Quebec government and remained a part of the IQA, but it now constitutes a more meaningful umbrella organisation for Paint Hills than does the IQA. The

significance of the Grand Council of the Cree will be discussed in a later section, in relation to local communication.

Communications from Val d'Or to Paint Hills are much simpler than are communications in the opposite direction. The link from Val d'Or to the central radio telephone exchange at Alma is by Bell Telephone cable and microwave and is almost always open while the larger secretarial staff at Val d'Or can keep calling the exchange until an answer is received; the single radio operator in Paint Hills is often unable to get a signal to or from Alma, and though he may alert the Band Office when reception is clear, by this time the Band Manager may be busy doing something else and the Chief may be absent. If face-to-face contact is needed, again Val d'Or has the advantage. The air charter firms (especially Fecteau Air) have offices in Val d'Or or Amos, and can always be contacted, while the need to pay for such flights means that only relatively high level officials in Val d'Or can normally approve or authorise such expenditures. The existence of many specialised branches of DINA in Val d'Or also means that if a charter flight is once decided upon, it is convenient to arrange between branches that the flight is fully used; Paint Hills by itself is unlikely to have enough individuals

travelling on official DINA business to justify a charter and so must make do with travel by scheduled airline.

Band Council meetings occur roughly monthly, although the activity occasioned by Cree negotiations over the James Bay agreement meant that they occurred more frequently during the period of study. Formal agendas and motions are prepared, but rarely constitute the main topics of discussion except when a formal decision is required by some agency higher in the Government hierarchy. At such times it is imperative that a formal resolution be sent by the Band Manager, after signature by members present, to the office in Val d'Or, in order that administrative action be initiated. More commonly decisions or actions to be taken locally are arrived at less formally. The Band Chief has usually discussed any specific topic with a wide range of individual Council and Band members, and only when he has a sense of widespread agreement or consensus is the issue brought to a meeting. Even then the absence (which is quite common) of one or two Councillors involved with the topic may cause debate to be put off until they are present. Difficulties are commonly encountered if an outside agency demands a rapid decision. Some community members expressly said that slow circulation of information in the band is

probably the most serious obstacle to improving the effectiveness of the Band Council. They feel a need for local action that is not fully satisfied at present.

The level of literacy and of knowledge of English is not significant in Band Council operations. Half of the Council is over forty and literate in Cree syllabics and half is under forty and literate in English, while the Band Manager and the secretary are in their twenties and fluent in both ways. Council discussions when no outsiders are present are in Cree, but even if the presence of an outsider necessitates English usage, over half those present can converse easily in English, and translation is rapid for the others. The current Chief, and his predecessor, have both been under 35 years old, bilingual, and with high-school education. All official communication with the Department (of the Val d'Or office) is conducted in English. Fluency in English is thus a useful qualification for a candidate for office as Chief or Band Manager with a readiness to read or write letters as a second one. A majority of the white staff in Val d'Or have French as their mother tongue, but are mainly bilingual, as is also the case in the office in Quebec City. English/French linguistic problems are also not marked in band administration.

In the parallel structure of Indian organizations, Cree is used in most verbal encounters up to the level of the Grand Council, although formal documents (especially those to be circulated outside local contexts) are mainly in English. The dialect differences between bands, and the fact that most people operating in meetings or workshops have learned their bureaucratic "language" in English (which they speak fluently) means that segments of interaction and meeting discussion do also occur in English even so -- especially when English-speaking advisers or consultants are present. By contrast there are language problems in communication in the wider forum of the Indians of Quebec Association. About 60% of the Indian population of Quebec speaks English as its second (and in some cases, first) language while only 40% speak French. There is no one Indian language that is spoken in common. The IQA main office is near Quebec City, and is staffed by French speakers, only a portion of whom are trilingual in English. When whites are present at IQA meetings they are most often French-speaking officials of DINA or of Provincial bodies, and they commonly address meetings in French. These communication problems revolving around language obviously contribute to the alienation that the Cree have felt vis-à-vis the IQA, though they did not

cause it.

Communication from the Band Council to band members is a problem, that many people recognise. Few people other than councillors attend council meetings unless a special issue confronts the community, or special steps have been taken to get attendance. Any decisions that have been taken are told by councillors to friends, and to people who ask, but no forum exists for public dissemination of decisions, and few people specifically ask about Council affairs. The network process of gossip passing from individual to individual can be rapid however, especially if a decision or issue seems important. More often however, issues are lost if a person in the network does not think them important enough to pass on; distortion of information is common. We shall discuss the gossip process further in a later section.

Voting turnouts for Band Council and Chiefly elections are usually low, around 30% of those eligible to vote. Neither the turnout nor the lack of overt involvement in Council business implies that people have no interest in what the Council does, or feel that the Chief does not represent them. Discussions are held to consider who would make the best Chief or councillor, in which all villagers currently in the

settlement participate and where community elders in particular present their views. All potential candidates are considered, what sort of job they would do, and whether they are willing to do it. A consensus is achieved and by the time the official election comes around, the results are usually a foregone conclusion. Few local people feel it important to participate in the formal procedure that is required by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. They feel that the preceding discussions have produced the right result, and that further action on their part is not needed. So too, the Band Council can be trusted to attend to most of the formal details that are unimportant to most villagers; if a critical issue arises then people will hear about it, the Council will not act precipitately, and non-councillors will be able to express their feelings. The formal trappings of party systems and democracy are seen as largely unnecessary by Paint Hills people.

This is most clearly seen in the turnout and interest in federal and provincial elections, which is less than half that for Band elections. In part this is due to a lack of knowledge of the issues involved in federal and provincial politics, and a feeling that nothing can be done about them. Election information they receive includes mainly party stances on

issues in mining towns and the name of a candidate appointed by the party organization. The local people have had no say in the selection of candidates whom they do not know, the issues are meaningless to them, and they do not feel any urge to vote. A number of stories were told regarding the 1974 Provincial elections, and will be cited in a later section, which document these attitudes and indicate the information needs of Paint Hills Cree.

d) Provincial Administration. The Quebec Government maintains an office of its regional authority, la Direction Générale du Nouveau Québec in Paint Hills, which also serves as temporary accommodation for any Quebec officials visiting the settlement. The regional agent responsible for Paint Hills is a white, French-speaking Canadian, who speaks no Cree, but who communicates with local people in English. He has his "base" in Fort George and does not reside in Paint Hills full time, but periodically visits to animate involvement in such activities as the Quebec Government school in Rupert's House, the Co-op, Quebec Tourism Fish and Game monitoring of tourist catches and encouragement of fish and goose camps for tourists, or activities connected with other topics of provincial jurisdiction. The local DGNQ representative is also the

telephone-operator, which is the job for which he is best known in the community, although he forwards inquiries about Quebec pensions or family allowances to Provincial authorities. As he has his own house the impressive DGNQ building frequently stands empty except for the radio-telephone exchange and appears as evidence of the wealth and wastefulness of whites in general, and of Quebec in particular. It represents power and a threat to local autonomy; a constant reminder of the Government actions over the James Bay project, and of Quebec's insistence on using French which only one Indian person in Paint Hills understands.

e) Education. The school in Paint Hills, newly built in 1972-4 is a Federal school operated within the terms of the Indian Act, by DINA. It offers education up to grade 6 in English, with Cree used in the kindergarten, and in some courses in social studies. The three teachers employed full-time include one Cree speaker, but the others are unilingual English-speaking, including the Principal. One part-time instructor from Paint Hills teaches local history, local oral literature, and answers questions about traditional life. Only Roman script is used in the school, and children are not explicitly taught to write Cree in Roman script. The few

young people who learn to write Cree in syllabics have been taught by their parents or by other relatives.

Decisions about school curriculum, staffing, building and finance are made at the DINA offices in Val d'Or and Quebec, and it is to these offices that the Principal is responsible. The pattern of communication between the Principal and the regional Education officer are as described for Band administration.

The regional Education officer also communicates directly with the Band and with parents. Resolutions from the band have played a significant part in inducing the Department to build the new, enlarged school in Paint Hills and so reducing the number of students who leave the settlement for boarding school, and in inducing the use of some Cree language and locally relevant curriculum in the school. Parents must be contacted each year in order that the census of intentions for enrolment for the coming year can be completed, and plans made in Val d'Or. The periodic visits and the broad and varied local contacts of the Education Officer make communications about education some of the most effective of all communications outside Paint Hills. There are still problems with education, teacher turnover, building and repair delays, etc, but the

school system seems well accepted as part of Paint Hills life -- even if it is as something that gives the children something to do when they are in the settlement with no household jobs to do.

A brief note must be added here about attendance at the Provincial school at Rupert's House, which none of the Paint Hills parents has opted for. It is oriented towards the gradual change for children from the use of Cree to the use of French; it has developed an enlightened northern curriculum to make the schooling acceptable and appropriate to northern Quebec. However Provincial regulations do not allow people with Indian status to sit on school boards, and thus all planning for the school is done by DGNQ and Ministry of Education officials. Despite the efforts of these officials at doing their best for local people, the school is not seen by Indians as being "their own" school -- communications about it are all one way, from Quebec downward.

The pattern of communication from school staff to local people is probably similar to that in any small local school, with telephoning homes, messages sent with pupils, and face-to-face meetings between parents, teachers and Principal. Language problems and the social distance between white teachers

and local people may make the latter type of communication less frequent than elsewhere, but the close interlinking of the children outside school probably means that parents learn indirectly more of what goes on in school than is the case elsewhere.

Perhaps of most significance is the role of the school system in conveying information about the world (locally and outside the community) to the coming generation of children. There have been many discussions of the way in which the school teaches Cree Indian children to adopt an identity as white children, while their home life revolves about their Indian identities, in the work of Wintrob and Sindell (for example Sindell and Wintrob 1973). They highlight the problems that such "discontinuities" cause for individuals as they grow up, and they reinforce the more general writings of Illich and Freire which criticise formal schooling as being indoctrination for participation in a middle-class social system. One former white Paint Hills school principal explicitly stated, when interviewed, that he felt that his responsibility was to turn Indian children into white adults.

Further documentation of how this teaching is indirectly conveyed, through analysis of contents of curricula and of

school texts, of attitudes and techniques of teachers, etc is beyond the scope of the present study. For an extremely relevant report on these effects, we would cite Derek Smith's (1974) demonstration that in Northwest Territories secondary schools the patterns of job aspirations and evaluation of jobs is highly conditioned by the schools. While there were major differences between high schools in Inuvik, Frobisher, Yellowknife and Churchill, there were insignificant differences between Indian, Eskimo and White children attending the same schools. The aspirations and evaluations are fairly dissimilar from those that would be expected in southern Canada -- bush pilot is a job that is much more highly rated in the north, for example -- but many of the jobs are ones that have necessarily been learned about vicariously, through books, mass media, and through school.

In Paint Hills there is the beginnings of a movement to increase the information about local society that is conveyed by the school, but to date the balance is still predominantly information about southern Canadian, white industrial society. It is conveyed by all the audio-visual aids that any modern school possesses, including videotaping. The role of the school in this regard must, in future sections, be placed

alongside the role of the mass media, and printed materials in conveying this sort of information about southern Canada to Paint Hills residents. As we have indicated earlier most adults and children would like more such information; they would however, like to have more opportunity to choose what they will do with the information, and there is increasing opposition to the "clandestine indoctrination" aspects of existing ways of "informing". Alongside the acceptance of schooling, is an ambivalence about education too. Of what use is it to learn only things that might be useful if the student will eventually work in southern Canada, when life will be lived in the north. Children learn things different from what their parents know, and along with this goes disrespect for important local customs and skills. Even those who have completed what is supposed to be "a good education" find problems if they try to obtain employment in southern Canadian institutions, problems which generically get classed as discrimination. Of what use is it to try and learn white ways, if this merely exposes one more clearly to discriminatory behaviour? School may act to separate children from the parents, both physically when boarding school is involved, or culturally; fear of a generation gap marks both adults and children, and

is particularly serious in a society where respect and close ties are felt to be normative within the family.

f) Health and Welfare, and the Local Nursing Station.

The Federal Department of Health and Welfare maintains a Nursing Station in Paint Hills, since the Federal Government has a responsibility for Indian health. Hierarchical communications from the Nursing Station go directly from Paint Hills to Montreal, though there is a medical link with the Provincially funded hospital in Fort George. The hospitals in Fort George and in Moosonee are used for most cases requiring hospitalisation (mainly obstetrical cases), with Federal hospitals in Montreal (former veteran's hospitals) or teaching hospitals being used for cases requiring specialist attention.

The Nursing Station is one of the most prominent and largest buildings in Paint Hills, right on the waterfront, and including residential quarters for the two nurses, a large waiting room, treatment rooms and an office, and a room for bed care for non-serious illnesses. Most patients are seen during the daily clinic hours, and involve some form of minor medication. Between twenty and sixty people are seen per day, and most of them are female. Approximately thirty patients annually go from Paint Hills to Fort George or Moosonee for

hospital treatment, and of these 21, in the year July 1973 to June 1974, were pregnancy cases. Another five cases went to Montreal for specialist treatment.

In terms of official communication with head office, the nurses are clearly responsible to, and employed by, the Department of Health and Welfare and must report to DHW and request supplies from them operating within DHW budget guidelines. Visits from DHW officials occur intermittently to check on the operation of the post. Yet the nurses also have at their command important resources, about which they can make decisions. In any emergency case they would be expected to telephone Montreal, Fort George or Moosonee for advice and consultation, but to make the decision on the spot as to whether an emergency flight was needed to take the patient out to hospital. The order would be initiated in Paint Hills, even if medical opinion elsewhere would check the decision, and relieve some of the responsibility for life or death decisions.

On a more mundane level local nursing staff decide when to authorise the non-emergency transport of patients to hospitals outside for diagnosis or long-term treatment. They also can certify that a patient is unable to work, needs special foods, or treatment facilities and so can make the patient eligible

for insurance, welfare, social security or other payments. For all these resources that flow from the Government, the patient initiates action by communicating information about his need, and the main decision is taken by the nurse on the spot. She is the "gatekeeper" over communications upward, and over benefits downward, allowing some messages to pass through and others not.

One case where the monopoly was broken may serve to illustrate the power involved. A patient had previously been sent to Montreal for treatment of a persistent painful condition. On his return after treatment his pain recurred more rapidly than expected, but the nurse said he must wait for the three month period that the hospital had prescribed before returning to Montreal for further treatment. She radioed Montreal and her recommendation was approved. The patient however, was in such pain that he decided to pay his own fare and go immediately to Montreal, hoping for an eventual reimbursement. He was treated at the Montreal hospital, and they authorised that his travel and living costs be paid from the time he registered at the hospital. But the costs of travel he had incurred getting there without the authorisation of the Paint Hills nursing station remained his own responsibility, a large debt for a

Paint Hills resident!

The "gatekeeper" role has been widely discussed in the literature on medical sociology, and much of the present material on Paint Hills merely replicates aspects of this. In the present context however, we shall try to indicate the modifications that arise because of the isolation of Paint Hills -- the virtual monopoly of communication about health matters by the gatekeepers, but also the necessary involvement of the gatekeepers in the community and thus the possibility of community control over the gatekeepers.

Basically the gatekeeper situation is one where the gatekeepers -- the nurses -- see themselves as the guardians of scarce resources, which they must allocate to those who really need them, in the face of a demand, which could be immense, from individuals who do not really need them. The "consumers" -- the local people -- have been told that the nursing station is there to help them should they be sick and see themselves as entitled to care or attention whenever they feel sick. At the same time all local people use traditional medical knowledge when they are away from the settlement, and use traditional practices in the settlement as a first resort, going to the clinic if these prove ineffective, or if the

clinic has shown a pattern of successful treatment for particular illnesses. There is, in short, an ambivalent pragmatic attitude to western medicine among most local people, who do not see the nursing station as the unique source of medical help.

The nurses "ration" medical care by insisting that patients come only during clinic hours, unless there is an emergency, and by limiting the convenience of treatment. Thus there is a shower and flush toilet available at the nursing station during clinic hours. But without comfortable changing and drying rooms, use of the facilities means that one must return home with partially wet skin, in temperatures that may go down to 30 degrees (Celsius) below zero in winter. Flush toilets are a rarity in Paint Hills and for those not accustomed to them, are not worth the walk to the nursing station, when adequate sanitary facilities are available to every house. Facilities are less used than they could be.

Even so the large number of patients at the clinic gives nurses the feeling sometimes that they are being taken advantage of in a community epidemic of hypochondriasis. They see the animated group in the waiting room and often feel that many of the people have come to socialise, not to get medical treatment.

The nurses also have problems in understanding what the patients' symptoms are, because of language problems, as well as the problems with patients who explain their symptoms in terms of a non-western theory of disease. The two nurses are French-speaking, with varying degrees of bilingualism in English. They talk in English with patients, with a paid interpreter translating into Cree and back, where the patient is monolingual in Cree. With unclear symptoms, and a record of patients who have come to the clinic as an alternative to self-prescribed herbal treatment, they often appear sceptical whether what is complained of is real.

Local people are aware of this scepticism -- or sense of mistrust -- and feel that they have to convince the nurses that they are sick, when the nurses are there to treat them, and they themselves know they are sick. The rigid clinic hours and avoidance of emergency calls appear as "laziness" or unwillingness of nurses to do "their job". The way to get treatment is to exaggerate the seriousness of the complaint. And of course, this in turn leads the nurses into further distrust of local people.

The pattern of interaction thus tends to become one of social distance and mutual wariness -- a fear that the other

side would take advantage of undue familiarity. Nurses do not generally interact with Indians on social occasions, out of clinic hours, but interact most with whites who are rarely their patients. This despite the fact that the nurse's relationship with patients is the closest of all relationships between whites and Indians, and despite the humane and interested way in which the nurses question about family activities, and even try to learn some words of Cree. The Indians respond by respecting the nursing staff more than any of the other outsiders in Paint Hills, for their work, and their interest in local people as individuals. Respect and social distance make for great restrictions on the sorts of information, outside of health information, that gets conveyed into or out of the community via this channel.

As a place for people to meet and for information to be circulated within community members the clinic plays a little of the role of the HBC store. But it is not a favoured centre. A justification of sickness is needed to be there, and the turnover of individuals is nowhere near as rapid as at the Bay. Women, especially those with young children, are the main group present and this age group tends to be less involved in the events making community news.

g) The Post Office. The office of this Federal Department in Paint Hills is a small one room building slightly behind the office of Austin Airways. Inside there is a waiting area with two benches, a counter, and a working/storage area. The postmaster is an Indian from Paint Hills, who is rarely to be found in the post office building, though he will always come over from his nearby house should stamps be needed.

His office, although in Quebec, is an outstation of Moosonee, Ontario (the postal address is "via Moosonee") from which post office all mail (except local mail from Fort George, Rupert's House or Eastmain) comes. The mail bags for each settlement are placed on the scheduled flights of Austin Airways, and thus are shipped only during the eight months when the service is operating. Mail builds up in Moosonee when conditions are unfit for the Otter to land, and catching up with the backlog may take a number of flights. Not only is mail service subject to long delays, but many items are lost and never delivered. People in Paint Hills do not think first of the postal service if they wish to send a message out.

Nevertheless there is great interest in incoming mail. When the plane with mail pulls into the beach the postmaster is invariably there to receive the mail bag or bags, and the

crowd of usually about thirty people follow him back to the office where he sorts and distributes the mail. If no member of an addressee's household is present in the crowd the item is given to a neighbour or kinsman for delivery. It is rare for there not to be someone present to deliver all items for local people, and for the offices manned by white people not to send someone to collect the mail within ten minutes. Within a short time of the arrival of the plane all mail is in the hands of its recipients who are in the settlement.

We sampled the types of mail received by observing the process of distribution on four days, when 104 items were received. Thirty-two items were magazines or newspapers, twenty-seven were mail order packages, twenty-four were official government communications (from DINA, H&W, Manpower Canada etc), a miscellaneous category of apparently commercial junk mail included twenty items; only one personal letter appeared in the entire sample. Although the official government letters and the mail orders are obviously items that conveyed important replies to other letters that had been sent from Paint Hills, while most of the magazines or newspapers would be eagerly read (some, however, were the house organs of groups that local people were members of, but in which they were not actively

involved, and which probably remained unread, see below), it is remarkable how little personal information is conveyed by the mail.

We could not check the contents of outgoing mailbags, but the size of them would indicate that only about ten letters a day go out -- presumably letters to government departments, mail orders, and a very occasional personal letter.

This presents an inconsistency in the data. From the stores in Paint Hills we were told that more than 4,000 letter envelopes are sold each year, with equivalent writing paper, and many more sales of pens and other writing equipment than would be needed for school purposes. We would conclude that people do write letters to send messages to kin and friends outside Paint Hills, but that they do not usually send them by the postal service. In Paint Hills the post office has long had the reputation of slowness and unreliability and other means of communication are used. Perhaps in this, as in some other things, Paint Hills is ahead of the rest of Canada, and is not just the "end of the line".

In practice any important message to friends, relatives or a government agency or mail order store is put in the hands of a traveller leaving the community, and going to the

destination intended. He either delivers it personally or arranges for its delivery. A personal courier service is used.

The postal service to Paint Hills does not get improved for several reasons, of which irregular air service is one. In the present context we would point out how the unpredictability of the mails has led to the development of a limited alternative system that meets certain specific needs, and thus to a very small usage of the official system. No one complains about the official system, so no steps are taken to improve it, while in the official accounting of sales of stamps and volume of mail shipped, Paint Hills remains a marginal post office. The possibility of eliminating it entirely is seen as more economical than the improving of it so that it would be more used.

h) The Anglican Church. The Anglican Church of Canada is a hierarchical organization of ministers, bishops and archbishops, with the Primate of Canada at its head. Paint Hills church is at the bottom of this hierarchy, not having a resident minister, but being looked after by a local Lay Reader, while being served intermittently by the minister resident in Eastmain. It forms part of the Diocese of Moosonee, together with parishes on both sides of James Bay, and that Diocese, in turn, is part of the ecclesiastical Province of Ontario (I would thank

Canon Turpin of Montreal for this information). The Bishop of Moosonee visits all parishes (and sometimes even sub-parishes) at intervals -- hopefully of less than a year; representatives of each church should go to each diocesan synod; at all times there should be a flow of communication between each parish, its congregation and its bishop. In practice the flow is limited.

Church services in Paint Hills are well attended. We counted 110 people at one service which we attended, the third service of the day, on a "regular" non-special Sunday. This is about 20% of the entire population, and probably 30% of the population in residence at the time. This service, in addition to the liturgy in Cree spoken by the lay reader and the congregation, included a pre-recorded sermon in English by the then Eastmain minister (a Cree from Paint Hills has recently become the minister), even though 70% of the congregation did not understand English being over age 40. The congregation listened quietly to the taped playback, and was attentive when the Lay Reader followed it with remarks in Cree. We were told that attendances have declined, and were higher in the past, but by comparison with southern Canada this is an area where earlier patterns of community churchgoing still prevail.

We inquired about the extent to which this major opportunity for dissemination and discussion of community news and decisions was utilised, as it undoubtedly is in many religiously cohesive communities in Canada and elsewhere, and as it undoubtedly was in earlier days in the James Bay area, when the missionaries exercised an important political role. As Hyman says of Fort George, they "became involved in economic, social and political activities as well as religious. Most missionaries played more than the role of spiritual leader.... Since (he) often had a multiplicity of roles, his position in the community was influential; it commanded respect because of the things he could control or influence" (Hyman 1971: 37). The Sunday service used to be an occasion when the minister could instruct or form opinions about public issues, invoke moral censure or criticism, convey information about events, and initiate public discussion by the congregation after the ritual was over.

As far as we could gather the church has withdrawn from local politics. Sermons and discussion at church now confine themselves almost exclusively to personal spiritual questions, not those of community action. Earlier the Church Hall was used for settlement meetings; the Band Council has now taken

over the Church Hall as its office. Even though at the time of the James Bay case, the church as a corporate body did try to intercede with government agencies on behalf of northern Quebec parishioners, and did offer a forum to northerners to spread news of their feelings in the rest of Canada, the action came late, in 1973, rather than in 1971 and 1972 when initiative was needed. The matter had not been brought up by parishioners, not because they were not concerned, but because they had not seen this as an appropriate communication channel for their concern. "Head office" had not felt it appropriate to take action on its own account, if the local churches did not demand it. Those local people who were most active in getting community action on this major issue were not those who were involved in the church structure, being younger adults while the churchgoers are predominantly older. A viable communications structure exists at the community level, but is not used through being too specialised, and through too little access further up the hierarchy.

i) The Roman Catholic Church. An even more hierarchical structure is present in the Roman Catholic church, which has a church in Paint Hills, formerly staffed by a member of the Oblate Fathers but now vacant. There are, however, no Indians

in Paint Hills who are officially Roman Catholic, and the congregation of the Catholic church whenever Mass is celebrated is composed entirely of whites who are temporary residents of Paint Hills. This includes the nursing staff, and such personnel as construction workers present for specific projects who wish to attend mass. Missionary work has been pursued by the Oblate Fathers, through the example of service and good works within the community rather than through active attempts to proselytise religiously and their church hall is widely used for meetings. But visitors were always welcomed by the priest, who maintained a lively interest in affairs outside Paint Hills. Here was a communication structure that reached effectively down from the head office to the branch office, but which was ineffective below there without any local communication channels and has since become disused.

j) Austin Airways. Austin Airways operates the scheduled air service that connects Paint Hills with Fort George and other places further north, and with Eastmain, Rupert's House, and Moosonee to the south. Its head office is in Timmins, Ontario whence it flies to the major northern settlements using DC-3 aircraft. Moosonee, a sub-station on the DC-3 routes, is the main centre for the feeder services by single-

engined DHC-Otter going to the smaller settlements. It is also a point of connection to the Ontario Northland Railway.

Within Paint Hills, as in all other settlements, there is an Austin Airways agent who makes bookings, receives and ships cargo, and communicates with incoming aircraft about ground conditions, local weather, visibility etc, although the latter fly on visual flight rules. He meets all flights, and dispatches them when they leave, and his office is right next to the beach (see photo).

The Austin Airways radio transmitter is not of great power, but is used quite extensively as a source of information. Its primary use is to contact incoming planes, but under normal conditions it can receive and transmit messages from and to the other airline agents offices from Fort George to Eastmain and Rupert's House, and possibly from the higher power station at Moosonee. The radio is left on when the agent is in the office -- as he is most of the time -- and all messages from all the stations are heard in the office. Though they are often cryptic, for example "I have four passengers for Fort George. Is there likely to be a charter before Tuesday? Over", the agent can usually infer much from the message. In the example given he may infer that the health team in Eastmain is leaving without

calling in at Paint Hills, and that there is a good chance that a charter will be arranged for them and other passengers that could call in at Paint Hills for cargo if some was available.

So too messages to Moosonee or Fort George from DC-3's flying high above Paint Hills may often be overheard when ground reception conditions are impossible, most commonly messages about weather conditions. In an emergency, or radio blackout at ground level, a message to an overflying aircraft may be relayed to the more powerful stations that connect with ground-line communication. A call at the Austin Airways office is always a possible source of information from outside the community.

The flow of communication is also heightened by the nature of the airline company. It has a relatively small number of flying staff, who rapidly become familiar to the agents since they converse and rely on each other every time there is a landing or take off, with its consequent loading and unloading. None of the pilots are yet local Cree, but the majority of the agents (including the Paint Hills agent) are local people. Agents and pilots interact cordially, and local people interact easily with the agents. There is the feeling that Austin Airways is a "local company" concerned with giving service to

local people. In 1972, when the James Bay issue was first in contention, the president of Austin Airways issued a statement in support of the Cree position against the stance of the Development Corporation, even though the project construction could greatly increase the revenues of the airline. This is known and remembered by local people, who often joke affectionately about the airline, pretending it belongs to particular individual Indians in various settlements.

The scheduled service provided by Austin Airways using DHC-Otters can carry ten passengers and baggage, or equivalent weights in cargo. Flights are regularly three days a week (increased to five days weekly in August 1975), when landing is possible, with the plane calling in on both its northbound journey from Moosonee en route for Fort George, and its southbound return journey. The plane lands on the river in front of the settlement using floats in summer and skis in winter. During break-up and freeze-up, from mid-April to June and from mid-October to December scheduled service is interrupted until landing is possible and safe. In 1974 the passenger fares one way approximated twelve dollars between each settlement, ten dollars to Eastmain from Paint Hills, but twelve from Paint Hills to Fort George, and from Eastmain to

Rupert's House. They were thus not beyond the means of individual residents to make such flights.

Austin Airways, in company with other airlines, also flies charter flights into and out of Paint Hills, and all companies used similar but differing light planes -- Beavers, Otters, Norsemen, Cessnas. Only Austin has a ground agent or radio contact in Paint Hills and thus only Austin Airways flies out Paint Hills hunters wishing to travel to their hunting areas. In the period when amphibians cannot land, charter helicopters are the only emergency means of entering and leaving the community, but these are beyond the means of local residents. They fly either on medical emergency calls, or when very affluent outside visitors wish to come in -- company presidents, film crews, or senior government officials.

The arrival of a plane is still an event in Paint Hills. Most residents have a practiced ear, and as soon as a plane is heard, they will say with few errors whether it is the "sked", a chartered Otter, Beaver or Cessna, or an overflying DC-3. A landing flight usually buzzes the settlement as it prepares its approach run, and by the time it pulls in to the beach a crowd of forty to seventy people has usually collected. This is a cross-section of all ages and sexes, though at the

beach people stand in groups. The older men stand at one side by the canoe racks, while the young men approach the plane itself. The younger women stand back, closer to the houses, while the older women line the bank above the beach. New arrivals are greeted, and departing passengers farewelled, amid animated gossip among the spectators. Most of the spectators follow the arriving mails across to the post office.

The number of incoming and outgoing passengers each week varies between ten and fifteen each way, with the flights to and from Fort George contributing the largest proportion.

Although the flights have a contract to collect and deliver mail, pilots are not allowed to carry letters or messages between settlements. They can take parcels or cargo only when these items have been regularly shipped and paid for at the agent's office. Pilots are very careful about weight limits and safety, but do try to accommodate agents who ask for urgent carriage of particular shipments. Their decisions on particular items are always accepted without question. This is made much easier by the custom which we have already mentioned, namely that any traveller is always expected by local people to take messages to friends and relatives at his destination. Undue pressure on agents is

not needed. Within the limits provided by the weight of accompanied baggage, local people also take along parcels for friends and relatives.

Austin Airways is among the most effective parts of the external communications system of Paint Hills. Although head office makes the major decisions about schedules etc, these decisions are well known, and treated as reliable. Even if flights do not arrive, this can usually be anticipated from a knowledge of local weather conditions. About more detailed local issues, seats on flights, arranging charters, or the shipment of particular goods, there is a major degree of local decision-making by agents and pilots, after local people have initiated action. Everyone rapidly hears about flights from the sound of engines, and if they want more detailed information they can get it through the full-time availability of the local agent. At the community level the agent has a ready means of contacting a wide cross-section of the community at plane-times, when he himself also learns rapidly the community news of Paint Hills and the other settlements. The airline has adapted itself to local needs and conditions, including having agents who can speak Cree. It is trusted and used.

k) The Telephone System. Paint Hills has an intracommunity

dial telephone system, with thirty telephones in various houses and offices. Through its exchange, which has an R-T receiver, transmitter and an operator, it is connected to other exchanges in northern Quebec, and to the Central R-T exchange at Alma, Quebec. This latter exchange provides a link to the entire Bell system, of which the northern Quebec telephone system is a subsidiary. Head Office is in Montreal, in this case, although the Alma exchange is the "master" to Paint Hills and to all the other isolated stations in northern Quebec.

Until August 1975, when a rate hearing changed the basis for charging, telephone subscribers in Paint Hills were charged only a base rental charge, plus the costs of long-distance calls made through the Alma exchange (i.e. calls made over Bell telephone lines, to southern Canada). Telephone calls within the community were direct-dialled at any time, using two digit numbers and the local automatic exchange, and were not monitored. Calls to other northern communities were sent through the operator at Paint Hills to the operator in the other community, who could then link up with an individual recipient. As no Bell lines were involved, and the exchange at Alma did not intervene, no long-distance charges were made. The telephone, in theory at any rate, thus provided a relatively easy and

cheap means of communication within the community and with neighbouring communities, and a more expensive and costly means of communication to southern Canada. It presented the obverse of the sort of system described initially where head-office/branch-office links are those that are strong, and horizontal links among individuals are weak.

In practice two factors altered this picture. The intra-community telephone system gradually broke down between late 1972 and the conduct of our study in 1974-5. Secondly there is the quality of telephone communication by R-T. These two issues will be discussed separately.

The breakdown of the local telephone system was gradual. The individual houses are connected by buried cable, and damage to the cable made whole groupings of telephones on the same line become non-operational. These breakdowns also caused some switching equipment to fail at the automatic exchange. Repairs required personnel and equipment to be ordered from Montreal, and these came only after extremely long delays. By the time one section was repaired it was time for a cable failure to occur elsewhere. Although a few phones continued in service all the time, so few lines were operational at any one time that the making of a local telephone call became a

chancy operation. The value of the local network became extremely restricted, and the network fell largely into disuse.

On the other hand, the telephones in most of the branch offices -- the Co-op and Bay stores, the DINA representative's house, the DGNQ house, the School, and the Nursing Station -- could still communicate with the exchange, and through the exchange could make long-distance calls to southern Canada. As long as these calls could get through, head offices were not unduly active in pressing Bell Canada for the repair of the local cables.

The quality and nature of R-T reception is such that all the relatively low-power stations in individual settlements are frequently unable to make contact with other settlements. This is an area very close to magnetic north, which is highly effected by radio storms and aurora effects. Alma, a higher powered station, even though a more distant one, is much more commonly raisable. All the operators at the various local exchanges maintain their radios on continuous monitoring, but being human, each operator monitors only during his working day, and these working periods do not always coincide, either with good reception conditions, or with monitoring by other operators. Communication with other local communities is much

more sporadic than one would ideally imagine despite its low cost.

The other characteristic of the R-T system of Paint Hills that affects its usage results from its single wavelength radio component. Only one party can transmit at any one time, so that when one has finished speaking one must signal that fact (usually by saying "over") to allow the other party to talk. This serves to break up the normal flow of any conversation. There is no possibility of pauses by both sides, of intervention in the middle of what the other person is saying, or of rapid fire interchanges. Instead there is a stilted formality, as each party tries to give its message logically and grammatically correctly, before saying "over", at a point of completion of the sense. The reply is a formal answer, rather than a conversational response, and it too carries on to a logical completion point. There is no room for the continual affirmative "uh-huh" that marks most two-way telephone conversations. This is less of a disadvantage in business communications where the content of the message is relatively precise, and the response expected is often merely an acknowledgement of receipt. But for the personal or consultational messages which rely markedly on conveying emotional tone, as well as overt content,

the radio-telephone is at a disadvantage.

Poor reception conditions compound the problem. Probably half the responses to an "over", with poor reception are "I didn't understand your message, would you please repeat what you said about -----, over". If there were two-way simultaneous conversation the listener would have been able to interrupt at the point where he misheard, and would not have to have waited until the end of the speaker's remarks before asking for a repetition of something that was probably crucial to the understanding of the last half of the remark. Several repetitions are often necessary, especially for users who have not mastered the technique of short direct statement or question that the medium demands. It can be understood that the radio-telephone is rarely used for personal messages.

The radio-telephone is also relatively public. Anyone tuned to the same frequency can listen to both sides of the conversation. This necessarily involves all the operators of all exchanges in the system. Visitors are often present in the exchange building waiting to make a call, or merely passing the time with the operator, and can hear what is being said. Anyone with a good radio set can listen in, and many people do so. Although operators do not normally divulge personal

information that they have overheard, visitors and other listeners feel no restraint, and gossip (especially gossip that reflects on particular individuals) based on R-T calls, spreads rapidly throughout all settlements. Naturally users of the telephone who realise the public nature of their calls, tend to send very guarded messages, that would not form a basis for gossip.

Language competences, by contrast, would be expected to encourage local telephone usage. All operators are Cree-speakers who are also fluently bilingual in English, except the operator at Alma who is bilingual in French and English. The individual operators are known, and can be asked for information about when a party is likely to be reachable. They will often reply for example, that he is out goose-hunting, but is likely to be back next week for someone's wedding. A local person making a call gets the feeling that he is indeed talking to a helpful person, and not just to a machine. Local (or inter-community) calls are mostly in Cree, and there is a knowledge that the call will not be understood by the Alma operator, or by any listening white. Even so, the use made of the telephone is not as extensive as would be expected.

The implications of these aspects of the nature of the

telephone system clearly appear in the statistical data which we were able to collect. Firstly the private use of telephones within the community was observed incidentally by noting what happened when the telephone rang at the house where the field-worker was present. Fifteen such calls were noted, of which 13 were under two minutes in duration, and involved either an exchange of a very short item of information -- "Is Jimmy over at your house?" "No, he went to the Co-op" -- or set up a longer meeting face-to-face -- "Is Charlie in?" "O.K. then I'll be right over for a talk".

Unlike the picture given for Rankin Inlet (Institute of Northern Studies 1972) where 55% of all Eskimo houses had telephones, or for Lake Harbour (Valaskakis 1975) where 7 out of 26 Eskimo homes had telephones, and some individuals reported making as many as 15 calls a day, the Paint Hills network is very limited. The thirty telephones installed (not all of which work) include 12 for "branch offices" of the various organizations listed or for the housing of their non-Indian officials, and only 19 for Indian households. Only 29% of the 62 Paint Hills households are connected, at the best of times, as against between 31% and 55% in the Eskimo communities reported upon.

The brief conversations observed contrast markedly with the traditionally proper style of Cree conversations. Normally one should not immediately raise the topic of major concern, but should engage in various snatches of unrelated small talk. Only when the topic has already been introduced indirectly through other comments made by the listener does the visitor come round to the point of his visit. Spells of silence may often intervene, if the host does not himself lead the conversation in the direction of what the guest wants to talk about.

But the telephone is not seen as a channel for such diffuse conversations, conveying a multiplicity of messages in different dimensions. The telephone is one dimensional. When a young adult student, accustomed to southern Canadian telephone practices was asked why Paint Hills telephone conversations were so short he replied "We're not gabby", even though in face-to-face conversations Cree talk at length and supplement oral communication with gestures, smiles, body movements and contacts. The telephone being purely oral/aural, it is seen as a poor substitute for multi-dimensional communication. It is used to set up a face-to-face meeting, but given the short distances within the settlement, the

face-to-face meeting is preferred for any complex message transmission.

Our survey of radio-telephone communications out of Paint Hills for the month of August showed 110 calls to neighbouring settlements (mainly to Eastmain and Fort George) and 19 calls via the Alma exchange. We do not have information on the identities of senders or receivers of all calls, but half of those calls via Alma, on which we have information were branch-office to head-office calls, and half were personal. Of the inter-community calls a larger proportion -- about 70% -- seemed to be personal, although it was often difficult to know whether a call by, for example, the band chief to another band chief, was personal or official.

The proportion of inter-settlement calls may well have been higher shortly before our study. In early 1974, Rupert's House was connected by landline with the main Bell Canada telephone system. We assume that this was by means of a branch cable attached to the main telephone cable laid for the James Bay Development Corporation from Matagami to its construction camps at Radisson and LG-2. The result was that the radio-telephone installation and operator at Rupert's House was withdrawn, and direct R-T connection with Paint Hills was

cut. Calls to Rupert's House since then have had to be made through the Alma exchange, and back to Rupert's House by land-line, and have involved long-distance telephone charges.

At the time of our study the JBDC line to Radisson had been carried through to the settlement of Fort George, but had not been connected to the telephone system there, pending negotiations between the Corporation and Bell Canada over ownership. But it was clear that this connection would be made in the near future, and with it a further worsening of the possibilities for local communications to neighbouring settlements for such isolated points as Paint Hills when Fort George is removed from the local network. Ease of communication from Montreal to branch offices would undoubtedly be increased, but the net gain for local communications would be very small. At the same time the costs of the "improved" communications system to local users would be greatly increased, since the monthly telephone charges would increase for all users, and now long-distance charges would be added for all calls outside the settlement.

This suggests that a really hard look may be needed at the desirability of meeting northern communications needs through increasingly high technology. An intermediate

technology for local communication, involving some use of radio and manual operation may be much more suitable for the demands placed on it locally. Efficiency of data transmission by landline may be critical for head-office purposes, and for emergency purposes it may be important for the local network to be compatible with, and capable of connection to the outgoing transmission system. But imposition of the mechanically complex and highly centralised-out-of-the-region system, without a recognition of the diffuse local communication systems it replaces, may create more harm than good. Even if such a high-technology system is inevitable, given the demands of head-offices, there would appear to be a role for a citizen's band radio system for the area, with operators in each settlement, who could relay messages received from outside the settlement through the internal telephone system. The costs of the high-technology system should rightly be borne by the head-offices, which benefit from it, and not passed on to the local society which would, given a choice, opt for the simpler technology which would do the local job demanded at lower cost.

5. Mass-media Communication to Paint Hills

The mass media represent another form of communication that is largely one way, with Paint Hills as the "end of the line". Yet the information that Paint Hills receives as a result of mass media communication is not determined solely by the originators. The originators, mainly in southern Canada or the United States, send out a highly varied output of messages of all kinds, not aiming at the Paint Hills audience. Only a small portion of these messages gets to Paint Hills, with the portion that is received being the result, in part, of the communication system leading to the settlement, and in part, of the selection of media by Paint Hills residents. Although the originators may have clear ideas of the messages they wish to get across -- for example, in newspaper advertisements -- the message that is received in Paint Hills may be entirely different -- amusement at impracticable clothing patterns, perhaps. Yet it is also the choice of Paint Hills residents regarding what messages they wish to expose themselves to, by the purchase of tape-recorders, radios, books or magazines. We shall consider each medium in turn, with the latter consideration in mind.

a) Magazines and Newspapers. Though the settlement has a sixty-two percent rate of literacy in English, most of the people possessing magazine subscriptions are people who do not speak or understand English at all. Reader's Digest is

delivered to twenty Indian persons in the community, mostly old men. Only three of the subscribers to it understand English, and interviews indicate that the magazines generally lie around the house until they are torn up by the children, being perhaps looked at by visitors. The subscriptions were often started through some form of giveaway sweepstakes, and the subscriptions are still continuing until the expiry of the initial period. Comments were that the subscribers did not feel they asked for the magazine, receiving it only due to the sweepstakes.

A number of subscribers to Reader's Digest also found themselves receiving another periodical, one which they have also never paid for. This is the "Free Press Weekly Report on Farming". This suffers the same fate as the copies of Reader's Digest, except that it is not of great interest even to those who are capable of reading English.

Time magazine is subscribed to by seven persons, all readers of English. Two of these are the school principal and the Hudson's Bay Company manager. The other five are local people, all of whom are engaged in full time wage employment, with four of them being in managerial type positions. Of the local people, the median age of the

subscribers is twenty-nine years old, about twenty years less than the median age of the subscribers to Reader's Digest.

Another periodical subscribed to by English readers only is the National Enquirer. This is received by two white residents and by two local residents. The median age of the local readers is twenty-three. Other periodicals received by fewer than four individuals include Macleans, and the Toronto Star, both received by one English speaking local person. By contrast, almost all male household heads receive Indian News Magazine, published by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, whether they understand English or not. There is no journal of the Indian Association.

Comic books are popular. They were not seen for sale at either of the settlement stores, but are brought in, in large numbers, by people returning from the south. They are widely circulated, and are not destroyed as readily as other publications. Every household or office has numbers lying around. They are read principally by people in the fifteen to twenty age bracket.

The above material reinforces the contention made in the discussion of the library, that reading material and its information is available. But other than comic books, the

demand for it is limited, and the issues and the information do not pass far beyond the original subscriber.

Why is the receptiveness towards books so small?

Carpenter (1960) argues that books are just as much a mass medium as are radio and television. If the receptiveness to books is low, will it be the same to radio and television?

One factor is clearly language and relevance. Though a written form of Cree exists, this form was devised by the early missionaries in the nineteenth century so that the people could have bibles and psalm books available in their own language; and this remains the primary use of Cree syllabics.

The Cree traditions and stories remained largely oral traditions, and syllabics never gained prominence as a regular format for intra and extra community communications. But Cree is still the language for home use and discussion of locally relevant issues. English-language magazines deal with non-local matters, and are hardly read at all by locally oriented Cree.

b) Books. The main place where books are found in Paint Hills is the library. The library is located in a relatively new, one room building, near the Co-op store. It has approximately seven hundred and fifty volumes, three hundred of which are catalogued. The non-catalogued books

are generally children's books, mysteries, novels and religious works, which are from the nineteen forties and early nineteen fifties. From stamps inside the jackets it appears that the bulk of this part of the collection was obtained from the Anglican Church library, and a high school library in Timmins, Ontario.

Of the remainder of the book collection, the sources of which are unknown, approximately one hundred and forty are related directly or indirectly to the north, bush activities, and Indians. Included among these are "Indian Legends of Canada", "I am an Indian", "Call of the Wild", and "An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada". There is a shelf in the library containing about seventy recent paperbacks, including in the selection political works such as "Soul on Ice", "The Unjust Society", and also including recent novels and science fiction.

Other possessions of the library include a nineteen seventy-three edition of the World Book Encyclopaedia, and a nineteen forty-six edition of The Book of Knowledge. There is a magazine collection including Beaver, published by the Hudson's Bay Company, Macleans, National Geographic, Reader's Digest, Canadian Geographic Journal, Time, Star Weekly, and

Tawow, an Indian culture magazine, published by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. All these appear to have been subscribed to at various times between nineteen seventy-two and nineteen seventy-four. In addition there are tourist magazines from British Columbia, West Germany, and the state of Arizona. Another subscription held by the library is the Saturday edition of the Toronto Star. The most recent one seen by the researcher was less than a week old, and thus there is available to the people of Paint Hills a printed version of current events, giving a measure of in depth analysis of the news. There was also one copy of a mainland Chinese publication, almost entirely in the Chinese language.

Fluency in the Chinese language in Paint Hills is very low, as is to be expected. However, as illustrated in Table 2 (over sixty-two percent of the population has some level of reading and writing ability in English, and while there is not much of a potential readership for the Chinese magazine, there is such a potential for the English language books (all library volumes are in English excepting the one mentioned).

One more item is possessed by the library, that can be seen as relevant for all the people in Paint Hills, that is, a collection of about fifty topographical maps of the region

Quality of English

		none	poor	good	excellent	Total
Quality of Cree	none	-	-	-	1	1
	good	19	4	6	181	210
	excellent	99	5	9	51	164
Total		118	9	15	233	375

Table 2a. Fluency in English and Cree. The Table indicates the number of persons in each category. One person, for example, is the only adult with no fluency in Cree, and that person speaks excellent English both reading and speaking.

One adult out of 375 claimed to have a knowledge of French at the level of "poor"; all others claimed no knowledge of French.

"poor" = understands, "good" = understands and speaks, "excellent" = understands, speaks and writes.

		none	poor	good	excellent	Total
Age of speaker	10-20	13	-	6	97	116
	20-30	4	3	-	88	95
	30-40	12	-	3	34	39
	40 +	89	6	6	14	115

Table 2b Fluency in English by age. Ages taken as of December 31, 1974.

in which the Paint Hills people hunted and trapped. This well thought out acquisition could be of immeasurable value to a people oriented to translating printed abstractions to reality. The maps in the library looked virtually unused. Our understanding was that they had been recently left in the library by the research team of the Cree negotiating committee for the James Bay Agreement.

On the question of library use, the researcher had difficulty obtaining information. At no time when he visited the building of the library was anyone inside using it, and his questioning about the person responsible for the library received no clear answer. This remained a mystery throughout his fieldwork. The clear impression was that this was an available resource, or potential channel for information flow into Paint Hills, but one that had extremely limited use.

The other obvious potential source of books -- the Hudson's Bay Company store -- was equally indicative of almost no use of books by local residents. None were stocked at all. Bibles, however, do form a possession of almost every household, and are acquired through the church.

The other source of books, magazines and comic books are the whites living in the community. There is some evidence

that the magazines and paper-backs that transients read are often left behind -- the most impressive being the adornment of the walls of the DGNQ office and the telephone exchange with centrefolds from Playboy magazine. In 1972 when the house owned by Indian Affairs was being used by numbers of very short term transients working on the school construction, many magazines, comic books and paper-backs were lying around, and were thumbed through by local residents who dropped in to visit. In 1974 when the house was occupied almost permanently by the same individual, the magazines were fewer in number, were kept for home use, and were less commonly thumbed through by visitors.

So too the relatively permanent residents of the nursing station, the school teachers' houses and the HBC post do not throw away their magazines for local use, except perhaps at the time of leaving. In the waiting room of the nursing station, for example, the only reading matter available for waiting patients are pamphlets issued by National Health and Welfare.

Reading, in short, is neither encouraged by white residents, nor much sought after by local people, even up to the limits available.

c) Radio. Information as to electronic media in the households was collected on a per household basis, rather than on an individual owner basis, for if the apparatus forms a part of the household environment, it is heard by all members of the household whenever it is played. Table 3 (over) summarizes this information. Two hundred and eighty^{five} people_{six} (Seventy / percent of the population), live in households in which there is a radio.

As can be seen from the table, radios are by far the most popular electronic equipment, followed by cassette recorders and record players. It should be noted, however, that very few of the homes in Paint Hills possess electricity, and that for the most part, these appliances must be run off batteries, and are portable units.

Though portable, the radios purchased are not cheap. They run mostly in the seventy to one hundred and fifty dollar price range, with a median price of one hundred and ten dollars. Though reception at present is limited to A.M. bands, many of the units purchased are AM-FM.

The radio station most frequently listened to is that of Moosonee, Ontario, about two hundred and fifty kilometres southwest of Paint Hills, at the railhead on James Bay.

	n	%
Owens no communication equipment	80	21
Owens radio only	230	61
Owens radio with other items	55	15%
Total radio owners	285	76%
Owens Tape recorder only	10	3
Owens Tape and radio	35	9
Total Tape owners	45	12%
Owens Radio and record player	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>
	375	100

Table 3 Ownership of communications equipment in Paint Hills. All residents in a house containing equipment were counted as "owners" of that piece of equipment. The figures thus give an indication of exposure to the media.

Ownership of equipment	English fluency of household head	
	nil or poor	good or excellent
none	9	5
radio (with or without record player)	26	13
tape recorder (with or without radio)	1	8

Table 4 Ownership of communications equipment in paint Hills, by fluency in English of household head. This table complements Table 3, in indicating that, of the 62 households 14 or 23% are without equipment, 9 or 15% own tape recorders. 46, or 74% own radios.

Programming is mixed during the day, with reception stopping at about eight o'clock in the evening. From two to four in the afternoon there is rock music programming, and from four to six country music is played. There is a small amount of James Bay area news, and for most purposes, this station is the most relevant local station for the James Bay settlements. Reception during daylight hours is also possible from one other somewhat local station, C.B.C. in Timmins, Ontario. Otherwise daytime reception is very limited.

It is at night that the radio band becomes more varied. Unless static conditions rule out all reception, a range of programmes from a wide section of eastern North America can be audibly obtained. A sample listing of programmes available across the band at ten forty in the evening, July third (1974), noting all stations receivable was:

Philadelphia, Penn., U.S. (KH 120)	--	Sports phone-in
Fort Wayne, Indiana, U.S. (KH 109)	--	Baseball game
Cleveland, Ohio, U.S. (KH 100)	--	Country music
Chicago, Illinois, U.S. (KH 95)	--	Rock music
New York City, New York, U.S. (KH 87)	--	News
Chicago, Illinois, U.S. (KH 85)	--	Rock music

The stations received at any one time vary from set to set and atmospheric conditions. The table gives a range of the type of programming available, rather than a schedule of all those available. Other stations received during house visits

by the fieldworker include C.B.C. in Winnipeg, WABC (the archetype AM rock station in New York City), and an occasional unidentified French language station, encountered during dial spinning and listened to only until the record in progress finished. It can be seen from the listing that a variety of music and programmes can be obtained. During the numerous visits of the fieldworker to the settlement all this range was heard, and the complete absence of classical music was confirmed. During the summer there is little interest in baseball, but during winter hockey games are received and are popular among the young (the preferred teams being the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Montreal Canadians).

In open-ended interview schedules as to what types of programmes would be desired (as opposed to what is listened to), the almost unanimous reply was a desire for Cree language programming, discussing events that were related to the Cree of Paint Hills, such as information on the James Bay Hydro Project, news from around James Bay, what was happening in other Indian settlements. No strong comments were made on musical preferences, or of dislike of any type of programming now received. Music, especially rock and country, is the main listening, with sets often being left on to provide

continuous background.

d) Tape Recorders. Cassette players fill the slack left by radio, in the provision of desired kinds of programming. Tapes are commonly sent with travellers to friends and relatives in neighbouring settlements. News is sent, letters take a voiced format, and friends and relatives in the various communities are kept aware of what is going on in their neighbouring settlements. They also serve to form a local recording industry, wherein a person known as a musician will be asked to make a tape for someone, with a payment of five to ten dollars. A machine would be borrowed, an hour of time spent, and the tape given to the requestor. Thus each recording is unique, and original. The artist would sing some popular country songs, some of his own compositions, and perhaps a song or two by other local artists. Being a songwriter and singer enables one to have many contacts and relationships. In a discussion of Newfoundland outport folk music, at the 1973 Mariposa Festival, it was noted how the captains of various trading ships could obtain the favour of a particular community, by possessing a larger number of songs. Though the James Bay baladeer is not seeking trade monopolies, his possession of a long repertoire of songs,

distributable by cassette and by direct performance, give him authority and respect beyond that which he would obtain through normal affinal and friendship ties. They are owned in houses where the head is in his twenties, or where there are teen-agers.

As mentioned previously, the median price of radios sold in Paint Hills is one hundred and ten dollars. High quality units are needed in order to receive distant stations. For cassette players however, there is no more of a pragmatic need for high quality units than there is in the south. Furthermore, in the absence of a one hundred and twenty volt electrical supply, batteries are required, and the higher power consumption of the more expensive machines would mean a higher consumption of batteries. Thus the fact that most cassette recorders purchased are in the seventy to one hundred and twenty dollar price range underlines the importance of these machines in inter and intra-community communications. The Co-op store alone sells approximately two hundred blank cassettes a month, and is constantly back ordered on them.

The important fact about cassettes is that they are blank. They come unprogrammed, available for use in whatever way northern people see fit to use them. Their portability means that their use is not restricted to the household which owns them. And thus they serve as an example of how a piece of

communications technology can be adapted to northern needs, especially when it gives the people the ability to make decisions about the end use. The statistics in Table as to how many cassette recorders are owned, underestimates the importance of these machines, as indicated by the volume of sales in blank cassettes, and the quality of the machines sold.

e) Record Players. Record players play pre-recorded music. There is no opportunity for input by the user, save in choosing what records to buy. Statistics as to record purchases in the settlement stores were not obtained, as it appears that the bulk of records owned in the settlement were purchased outside, while people were on trips, and then imported into the settlement. It will suffice to say that no records were seen at the Co-op store, and the Bay had only ten records in stock, all country, popular, and rock music. There can be two factors given as possible explanations for the relative lack of popularity of record players. Firstly, there is the lack of electricity; most units would have to be battery-operated. The quality of sound coming from battery-operated record players does not compare to the quality of battery-operated cassette players.

A second potential reason for the lack of popularity of

record players in Paint Hills is one that is more relevant to our discussion, that is the inflexibility of the medium. Records are pre-recorded only. The technology required for recording is complex, non portable, expensive, and inaccessible to most people. Thus there is little room for local adaptation of the medium or for local decisions. Record players in Paint Hills are only possessed when part of an audio equipment item including a radio. Ownership is mainly by 30-year olds, without teen-age children.

In brief radio is valued for the information inputs which it provides. Cassette recorders are utilized for inter and intra community transfer of information, and unlike radio, are an adaptable medium. While records are neither adaptable, nor do they provide any more information than does radio. Music as background and as recreation is highly important for the use of both radio and cassette tapes. Adaptation to local usage is evident, if only in what is theoretically available, but in practice not used.

f) Cinema. The information about southern Canada, or Western civilization in general, that Paint Hills people receive from the media described, has been either oral or verbal for the most part (excluding illustrations in books or magazines). For those who have not travelled outside

James Bay, the visual image of the south has been one of conjecture. Although almost all people under age 35 have travelled outside the area, the impact of such travel on people who have not been outside has been proverbial. The anecdote of an Indian who came to Moosonee for the first time, and saw the three-storey hospital is typical. He thought that this must be the Tower of Babel, since the three storeys seemed to reach to the sky, and his only description of such a building was the one he had read in the Bible.

Movies have been the major source of visual information about the outside, for many years. Occasional performances of specially imported films by missionary or government groups gave place, around 1968 to the regular importation of movies by the recreation committee of the Band Council, for showing in the Roman Catholic Mission Hall. The performances are listed as The Wemindji Repertory Cinema.

The usual pattern -- flights into and out of the settlement permitting -- is that one main film, with perhaps a second small feature (a cartoon, or something similar) is requested each week. There are usually two showings of any film, before it is returned on the next available flight, to the film library. Although families attend the movies as a

whole, the overall impression of the typical audience is that children -- especially those from ten to twenty -- predominate. An average attendance for a regular film is about sixty, indicating that about a third of the resident population at any one time attends the movies regularly.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the Paint Hills recreation committee is rarely able to obtain either first or second run feature films. What the committee can afford, or what distributors are willing to send north, are usually older films from the late 1950's or early sixties. It is rare that these films were the best films of their days, but most were B pictures in any case. It is interesting to speculate about the view of southern Canada that would be obtained by a person whose only knowledge came through such films -- and to some extent this is still the case for many older people. It is true that the picture presented by modern movies, of relatively few people living as families in houses, a preponderance of relatively free sexual encounters, a tremendous emphasis on city living and on crime, police, and the use of drugs, and a sense of impending doom through spying activities of foreign powers, is not yet available. (It will presumably come through television.) On the other hand the films that are shown

reflect the slightly different and even more stereotyped social attitudes of twenty years ago. War pictures of World War II make it clear who is a good guy and who is a bad guy; B grade cowboy movies had not yet moved into the psychological complexities of heroes who struggled with ethical issues, or with bad guys who were fundamentally striving for long term social goals; the crime and violence pictures still saw the efforts of the police (or FBI) to stamp out crime as good, and the activities of the people they were fighting as bad. In short, the films present an ethical and moral picture of southern life that is out-of-date, and which was probably never an accurate one.

One film attended by the fieldworker was a War at Sea film, and in watching it he was concerned to try to envisage what it would have meant to a watcher who was not fully proficient in English, and who had not been south. Even understanding the dialogue did not enable the fieldworker to disentangle all the characters and plot. The studio set of a ship's deck, superimposed against a waving still photograph of ocean and horizon, may or may not have been meaningful to someone used to canoe fishing and the relatively small HBC barges. What was clear at the end was that the people who

gave orders which were rapidly obeyed were the people who came through and won, and were the "good guys". Respect for authority may well have been the main didactic message the film would have conveyed.

It is perhaps coincidental, but perhaps of significance, that the black and white view of morality that the films present, is by no means antithetical to the black and white view of morality that is stressed in the local interpretation of Christianity, if not so much in the actual church teachings. Church attendance, as we have indicated, is still extremely high in Paint Hills, as compared to southern Canada. The strongest supporters of the church are the older people who have not been outside the area. In the south the changing realities of the last twenty years mean that the films of the style still shown in Paint Hills are treated as laughable or as caricatures, when they are seen. In Paint Hills the corrective of actual experience is not available to older people -- though it is to the majority of younger people. We shall return to this discrepancy below.

These commercial films do not form the entire repertoire that is shown. Two films that were shown during the fieldwork were a CBC Nature of Things film on Arctic Wildlife, and a

National Film Board movie on Cree Hunters of Mistassini.

The former film had demands for five showings while it was in the settlement, with a hundred people approximately at the showings. Far more than usually these included adults, many of whom must have viewed the film twice. The Mistassini film had calls for repeated showings in the same way, although it had to be passed on to a neighbouring settlement before demand was satisfied. The projectionist who travelled with the film described how he had arrived unannounced in Fort George nearby, and within ten minutes of his arrival 500 people had assembled in the hall to view the film. While the time sounds incredibly fast, it does indicate that news can travel rapidly. It also indicates the interest of the Cree in films that appear to relate to local life, as well as their interest in films about the south. Enjoyment and novelty play an important part in their use of film.

g) Television. Television, as of the writing of this report had not begun to Paint Hills, although extension of service, both radio and television to Paint Hills was envisaged for 1975 under the CBC Extended Coverage Programme. No television sets were owned in Paint Hills. We interviewed several local people about their expectations regarding

television, attempting not to bias the direction of their replies by leading questions. Responses were universally optimistic, looking forward to television's availability. Almost all the younger people had seen television when outside the community and had enjoyed it. They seemed to feel that since it existed they should not be deprived of it, merely because they lived in the north. It seemed to be ranked as one among many possible entertainments along with movies, that were not critically important but should be available for occasional use. Older people who had not watched television outside appeared to place it in much the same category -- a possibly interesting diversion that would be nice to have available.

Knowledge of the controversies surrounding the use of television in the south was to us, surprisingly low. Our non-directive interviewing made it difficult to bring up issues like those of people who watch television to the exclusion of other activities, especially children, those of advertising and the promotion of consumerism, those of the effects of portraying violence, those of stereotyped images (e.g. in cowboy versus Indian movies or in portrayal of affluent middle-class suburbia as "typical" and desirable), and those

of effects on family life. Young people quickly responded to questions about what they did not like about television in the south, the negative image presented of native peoples, and went on from that to discussing the need for native control of programming, in the form of vetoing undesirable films. The more positive aspects of native programming -- the choice of desirable films, the production of such materials themselves, and the use of Cree in programmes -- were very rarely raised spontaneously. Their possibility did not occur to people who had not yet had television as part of daily life.

Questioning about advertising led to statements almost opposite to our expectations. The advertisements were seen as a way of learning about what things were available in southern Canada, and about how they were used. This reaction should be related (and a few informants said this explicitly) to the present dependence of most residents on the Bay for information about available manufactured goods. If the Bay does not stock a new item, people do not learn about it, and have no opportunity to assess whether it might be useful or not. Television advertising they saw as a means of getting that information. Southern Canadians are usually highly

sceptical of whether advertising does this job, rather than that of raising exaggerated hopes (e.g. that chewing gum will make one popular with the opposite sex) and inducing people to buy useless goods, even though advertisers claim that spreading product information is their function. An advertising code more geared to this function might help television perform a needed job in the north, for outlying settlements. Any suggestion by us that television advertising might lead northerners to buy things that they did not need was rejected, with the firm statement that whites might be silly enough to be duped in that way, but Indians were not that stupid.

Television's effect on family life was also seen as quite unthreatening, especially by those who had had extensive experience living in the south. They went on to talk about the difficulties they had of discussing their southern experiences with their parents and with older people in general. These difficulties were in part simply technological and verbal -- the word Metro or subway, say, means little to anyone who has not seen one, while the connotations and connections of the terms (to escalators, to speed and to noise, for example) have to be spelled out as well for those who have not travelled on one. More seriously the difficulties lie in

transmitting acquired understandings of the logic to southern Canadian life. Speed and punctuality, plus the rapid communication needed between thousands of people massed in a few square miles, to follow on the example, are principles that make understandable so much of southern behaviour. Native people who have lived in the south inevitably have come to understand these principles, even if they reject them as undesirable. In conversation among themselves this understanding is taken for granted by native with southern experience, even if only to provide the basis for jokes about whites. To people who have not had such experiences whites remain enigmas, and conversation is difficult between those who understand and those who do not. There is, so we were told, a generation gap in Paint Hills families, and universally this is regretted by young and old, who see the family as the strength of Indian society, where its ties are much stronger than in white society.

Far from increasing this threatening generation gap, television is seen as likely to reduce it. It is seen as likely to provide the lacking knowledge of southern Canada to those who have not been south to have first-hand experience of it. Young and old in Paint Hills will be able to converse

again without misunderstanding. Perhaps even more important, where decisions about how to deal with southern Canada are now entirely in the hands of young people who have had experience with whites, in the future older people will be able to contribute to the making of those decisions. The respect and authority which, in Cree eyes, is rightfully the due of older people who have knowledge, could again be in their hands. Television could strengthen both family life and the life of the settlement.

This view emerged spontaneously and unexpectedly. It is too early to say whether it represents only wishful thinking by people who know little of television, or whether it is a wise prediction of what may occur. In the context of our earlier discussions of decision-making, however, we would stress what it reveals about the information needs of people in northern, isolated settlements. They need information about the outside world. They are aware that the information they receive at "the end of the line" is partial, and slanted in particular ways by the intermediary who transmits the information. They believe, perhaps over-optimistically, that they can sort out and recognise bias, but that if more information were available, not selected by particular "gate-keepers" like

HBC managers, or DINA officials, they would be able to make better decisions. These decisions would involve choosing what, of southern Canadian technology, to incorporate advantageously into local life, and choosing how, in the face of great local uncertainty in dealings with "head offices" in the south, to exercise greater local control through a fuller understanding of how "head offices" work. To the extent that television does provide a wide spectrum of information, accurately and without attempting to "sell" a particular viewpoint, it may fulfil northern needs. To the extent that the medium selects (as we know it does select, both consciously and unconsciously) what aspects of southern life to display, then the northern communities will be vulnerable to that selection.

In southern Canada the public is aware of the existence of media distortion. Even children discount the reliability of commercials as information. Yet even with our awareness we are vulnerable; those same children still beg their parents to buy the advertised breakfast cereal. In the north there is already healthy scepticism present in the evaluation of information given orally by outsiders, and scepticism is likely to grow rapidly in the evaluation of the information obtained

via television. The surest way to reach that state would be by ensuring that there is variety in what is seen in the north, and that local materials be rapidly incorporated into programming. The relative accuracy of the latter materials, and the divergences of points of view, will rapidly accustom viewers to apply their existing standards of evaluation to the new medium.

Summary. The mass-media have, in effect, been enthusiastically received by the Paint Hills people. They have selected among them and have adapted the use made of them to northern purposes. Entertainment, background playing of music, and leisure view of films are seen as enjoyable. They lead to the prediction that television will be adopted even more enthusiastically for it provides for the same ends, with much more attractive methods. Whether the same adaptation of the medium to northern purposes -- information about other areas, local news, videotape materials, etc -- will indeed take place is questionable; the mechanism of receiver station and low power re-transmission seem unlikely to be linked to the high cost of production of other such materials, to permit local adaptation. Yet certainly the use of portable cassette recorders suggests that this potential mass medium is already

being widely used for interpersonal communications.

So too our initial questions of the impact of southern communications media on northern culture remain unanswered, though answers can be suggested. That northern people are going to be simply brainwashed into wanting what the media suggest southern Canadians have, is unlikely. The scepticism and hesitations about white society that are evident in many fields are clearly evident also in the overt reactions of Paint Hills people to the media other than television. Yet so many changes and adaptations to a southern way of life have been accepted without any overt comment (or possibly perception that a change was occurring), that it seems likely that much absorption of southern ideas will occur, below levels of conscious awareness. We feel that the carrying out of this research has itself raised the awareness of Paint Hills society to the issue of the content of television. We are optimistic that the Paint Hills people themselves will be able to adapt to television, utilising it where it provides services, but developing the sophistication and structures needed to discount potentially harmful materials, and to ensure that programming does indeed suit northern needs.

6. Local Communications

In this section we shall not attempt to duplicate materials already introduced incidental to the earlier descriptions of communication channels. We shall focus on channels not yet described, and on pulling together materials on information flows within the local (and regional) community, to show how they relate to local decision making.

a) Traditional. Messages other than the face-to-face communications within the hunting group were certainly a part of traditional society. Most critical were ways of telling others where the message-sender was, principally by marking of trees within the forest. A series of notches were made on a tree, indicating how many people had passed by; the direction in which the notches were pointed, and the side of the tree on which they were located indicated where the group had come from. If a tree was left at an angle, it indicated where the group was going, and if the top of the tree was somehow broken or defaced, it indicated that there had been a tragedy in the group, either illness, death, or some other misfortune. The prominence of the sign indicated its urgency.

The person encountering such a message had to interpret its content. To estimate how recent the sign was, meant

considering the weathering of the sign, the amount of resin flow, etc. The figures of numbers of persons and their direction of provenance could provide a good guide as to which hunting group was involved, to a reader who knew how large each group was and where it was wintering. To confirm that the message had been read, and to guide future readers, the hunter crossing the trail would make his own mark, of two poles set at an angle, one of them upright. The spread of the poles indicated the angle between the reader's path and the original one.

These messages would be left at known sites -- portages, camp sites, well used trails or scenic locations -- that travellers would likely use. Though little urgent action could be expected to result from their use, given the low population density, these messages did enable hunting groups to advise others of their presence, forestalling over-hunting of particular areas; to indicate when travel to trading posts or to hunting areas had taken place; to indicate a welcome for visitors; and merely to offer reassurance to the traveller that if help was needed it might be found in a particular direction. It will be noted that information about time was not coded by the cutter of the message; urgency is something

that traditionally has to wait in isolated northern areas, the important thing is that information be made available, not that it be delivered at a specific instant.

This method of message delivery cannot be visualised as the only form of inter-group communication even before the advent of the fur-trade. The re-allocation of individuals from hunting group to hunting group to accord with ecological and demographic realities, the marriage of young people, and the acquisition of some overall picture of what was being done by neighbouring hunting groups -- all demand the existence of more general exchanges of information, than would have been the case with occasional visitors, of more detailed qualitative information than could have been collected by the individual reader of signs. McFeat, in Small Group Cultures, has well described how the annual reunion at trading posts or fishing areas filled this function for most Algonkian groups. The advent of trading posts can have meant little change in this respect, except that the location of the meeting places may have altered somewhat, and except that the trader was permanently present at one spot. He could act as an information bank for people who missed the more general reunion. It is noteworthy that present-day informants also talk about Roman

numerals being used to indicate numbers larger than five or ten, in the notching of trees. Communication innovation at the local level is nothing new.

If one considers decision-making in "traditional" times, however, it is clear that most significant decisions were made within the individual face-to-face hunting group (or by its component families separately). They needed information on what nearby groups were doing; they could have used more information from the HBC on what it was doing; they needed to tell nearby groups what they themselves were doing; but information on the less predictable events of weather, government actions, or political events in Europe was not available and could not be included in local decision-making processes. That is not to say that information collection outside the local group was not seen as important. Within a "normal" hunting or trapping expedition considerable amounts of time are still spent seeing what the state of forest or game is in long unvisited areas, or in going to new places "just to see what is there". To people for whom tourism is seen as leisure, it is perhaps hard to realise that such activities are investment in information collection. They serve the functions of business conventions in the modern world. The early narratives

are full of examples of groups coming to posts merely to see what was going on.

b) The Settlement Community. Paint Hills as it now exists, with a permanent village as its base and its small constituent hunting bands as only temporary groupings, retains many of the information channels that were significant when the hunting bands were the only important decision-making groupings. There is still the assumption of a free flow of all information among all family group members.

The typical house -- and most houses are of a standard type with minor variations resulting from modifications by individual homeowners -- have a single major living-cooking area, where all people spend most of their time indoors. Here people cook meals, eat, clean furs, manufacture snowshoes, repair tools and equipment, entertain visitors, or merely sit quietly. Though sheds or small rooms (e.g. bathrooms without plumbing) adjoin the main room, these are not used for private purposes, but only for storage. No division is made between "work-rooms" and "leisure-rooms".

The one room that is regularly used is the vestibule. Most homes have built a vestibule outside the side door. This insulates the entrance, as one can close the outer door before

gaining access to the living area. It also serves to give notice to the people in the living area that an outsider is coming. It is easy for the completely open communication flow among the residents to be rapidly restricted if an outsider is near.

In other ways the whole settlement is assumed to be open to the flow of communication. For example, the network of roads and housing lots shown on the official plan of the settlement appears like a suburban grid. In actual practice the roads are little used and the pathways through the settlement run diagonally between houses. The traveller walks within a few feet of men working at wood chopping, of women using (outdoors) their wringer washing machines, and of the skidoos, sleds or woodpiles near the house doors. In summer many houses have a tipi nearby for the drying of fish, etc, and the path passes by the open tipi flap, within feet of people taking their leisure on a long summer's evening. The visitor is not felt to be intruding on the privacy (or the private property) of the family: what the family is doing is felt to be public knowledge. Or perhaps more accurately, if there are matters that are felt to be private, they are discussed in secluded areas outside the settlement. Much more information is assumed

to be general knowledge than is assumed to be the case in southern Canada.

The public nature of most behaviour is most clearly evidenced in the summer, when almost all activity -- walking to stores, arrivals of planes, departure of people fishing or on the way to goose hunting camps, or to any area outside the village, arrival of visitors, fishermen, hunters, etc -- entails acting in full view of the people that are invariably sitting looking out over the waterfront. Ostensibly the group is kibitzing as individuals play the Indian-Eskimo variant of checkers -- 100 squares in the board, 32 pieces, and the possibility of "taking" pieces located anywhere along the diagonal ranks of the piece that does the taking. Yet every action is commented on as it occurs. People describe what is happening and what the reasons for it, or the intent of the actor is, as though they knew accurately these data, even though it is likely that they are really making inferences. "George is going up to the rapids to catch whitefish". The event is captured in the minds of everyone by the comment, and is stored as information.

In winter the open publicity of most actions is not so clearly evident, but we have already described some of the

forums -- the Bay store, for example -- in which information is publicly circulated, to those who are present. The stretching of skins outside the house on frames is a clear statement to all who can read the evidence, of who has returned from hunting and what he has caught.

The types of inferences made from such observed detail can be well illustrated from what happened when a Paint Hills resident arrived in the settlement after a trip south. He had had to spend a night in Fort George waiting for a connecting flight, and had visited an aunt. She had given him an unmarked box, which he carried off the plane with him. He did not immediately go to his parents, who were not at the plane to greet him, but within an hour of his arrival someone commented to him that his parents were expecting some fish. There had been no telephone message about the arrival, and no message from him to his parents. Someone at the plane must have passed the message to the parents that they had seen him, and possibly also the message that he was carrying a box. Someone, either the parents themselves, or the message carrier, must have guessed at the contents of the box, either from knowledge that he had been in Fort George where dried fish is a major local product or from a knowledge of the parents' liking for

fish. When the parents talked they must have realised that their desire for fish would be relayed. The inferences were highly indirect, but were stated as though there was no doubt about the meaning of the acts, and all that needed to be said was that the parents were expecting fish. They got the fish shortly after.

Despite the obvious effectiveness of this mode of transmitting public information, from person to person, using observable data and the inferences that any informed Cree should be able to make from data, there are clearly whole areas of information that do not get effectively spread in Paint Hills. We are most aware of the way in which information about the negotiations for a settlement between the Cree and the Government of Quebec regarding the James Bay Project was unevenly spread in the community, and in ways that did not convey the full implications of what was happening. Despite the efforts of the Grand Council of the Cree -- a body we shall discuss below -- the methods of information transfer used within Paint Hills are not yet adapted to this process. In part we attribute this to a traditional Cree reluctance to pass on hearsay information -- to talk about things that other people said, rather than about what the speaker observed.

Third-hand and fourth-hand accounts of happenings in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec are not freely given, so that what happened at meetings or what is posted on notice boards gets little attention. In the second place we would emphasise that the techniques for communication that might be effective in a small, stable, agricultural community -- particularly the village meeting, or the meetings of formal associations -- are less effective in an isolated and fluctuating community like Paint Hills. Despite the interest of most people in what James Bay involved, absence from the community, over-frequent calls for meetings, inadequate explanations to people who did not share all the background information that would let them make inferences, and confusions from not knowing who were the different speakers and what were their interests, made the communication process a long and hard one. This process (and its failures) are illustrative of what has happened in the past in many fields where outsiders have wanted to communicate information to everybody in the community, about topics that are not already part of the experience of community members -- school programmes, government regulations, etc. Not everyone personally attends meetings, and those present are unwilling to make decisions on the part of those

who have not been consulted; the specific pieces of information that are conveyed to non-attenders are not sufficiently set in a context to permit the non-attenders to make inferences from them.

The Grand Council of the Cree was formed in August 1974 during the negotiations between the Indians of Quebec Association and the James Bay Development Corporation, to facilitate the direct involvement of the Cree in the negotiations. In 1971 "Communications Workers" had been appointed by the IQA to convey information provided by the JBDC to Cree bands. They had been educated Cree in their twenties, from several bands, though initially they did not include a worker from Paint Hills. These workers had hectically travelled between Montreal and Cree communities explaining what they knew, and trying to collect reactions. When in the communities, they had been spreading news of an event about which few people had any conception of what might be involved. Settlement meetings did not get 100% turnout, and only small parts of the message -- highly disquieting but vague parts -- got through. The response that they were able to convey to Montreal was not organised, except as one of opposition and unease. The only Indian political body, the Indians of Quebec Association,

officially organised both the representation of Indian views and the political and legal activities vis-à-vis outside bodies, governmental and public. The Cree communications workers were a minor subgroup within the IQA, and had additional problems in communicating to all the widely scattered bands of the IQA, or even to the predominantly French-speaking secretariat of the IQA. They did, however, build up relatively strong ties among themselves, talking among themselves in Montreal and when they were "on the road" as a group.

Organization of channels of communication within the settlements took a great leap forward in 1972 when a research team, sponsored by the IQA and involving all the communications workers, toured the settlements to collect data on land use and ecology, for use in legal proceedings against the James Bay Development Corporation. Where periodic settlement meetings, addressed by communications workers on a topic that few people knew much about, had followed closely the earlier experience with visits by government officials, the meetings about research were a new experience. Most of the high school graduates of each settlement were involved as interviewers of the older people, regarding their land use. Most of the

expert hunters were important informants on sites used, ecological changes, burial places that might be flooded, etc. The project became an issue that clearly involved the individual members of the settlement of Paint Hills. Many of the people who were involved in research came to give testimony in Montreal at the hearings before Judge Malouf in 1972 and 1973, and formed much clearer perceptions of the kinds of things the communications workers needed to know in their negotiations. The skeleton structure for an ongoing information collection and distribution process within settlements had been built, with the role of the communications workers as the intermediaries, articulating the opinions of the settlements for the outside world, becoming defined. At the same time the relations between the communications workers themselves (and with their white advisers in Montreal) became close, and permitted much more communication laterally, between settlements, than had been the case previously. Montreal remained the point of articulation however, in the offices of the legal adviser to the IQA.

During the negotiations that resulted through 1973, 1974 and 1975 this structure became progressively firmer, with the formation of the Grand Council of the Cree marking its firm

institutionalisation. The head office of the Grand Council of the Cree is in Montreal, and is staffed mainly by Cree Indians in Montreal (not from Paint Hills). The panel of six communications workers (or negotiators, as they became) is represented at any one time by at least two members, while the others are back in their home settlements. The chiefs of the various bands are also represented on the Grand Council (some of the communications workers are also chiefs, and the President of the Council itself is a chief and former communications worker and negotiator) and convey the opinions of their settlements to the Council. The Council itself meets for consultative meetings in various locations through the year, most commonly in particular Indian settlements such as Mistassini, Fort George or Ruperts House, but occasionally in Val d'Or or Montreal. Critically, now that these meetings are planned and talked about well in advance, plane charters can be economically organised to collect representatives, information can be brought together in advance, rather than being called for unexpectedly when a visitor arrives in the community. There is a sense that all Cree people can get together to make decisions. When the negotiations with the JBDC were proceeding rapidly, the speed with which possible

alternative negotiating positions emerging in the discussions could be referred right back to the settlement level for decisions on their acceptability is perhaps remarkable.

The cost of this, in terms of plane charters, in terms of telephone calls to Montreal, in terms of the time taken to transport people, to lodge them, and to cope with the inevitable delays when fog or snowstorms prevent air travel -- is quite high. The urgency of the James Bay negotiations, and the high stakes involved made these costs bearable. Even so the referral of issues to the lowest grass-roots level had to be undertaken only when crucial questions arose. In situations of less urgency in the future, much less expensive means of ensuring inter-band communication may be worked out. An estimate of the total cost of communications about the negotiations, and a comparison of the costs that might have been incurred to institute a network of community radio stations, and the installation and maintenance of video-recorders that could convey information that the radio could not, would be an important exercise. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this particular study.

It is clear that means do exist to bridge the communications problems between communities. It is clear that

mechanisms are emerging within each settlement to provide for the storage, collection and distribution of information on a continuing basis within bands. It is clear that, even if the final answer has not been found, in at least one communication system the people of Paint Hills form, not the last station in a communication system that flows from head office to branches to individuals, but one which flows from individuals in isolated areas, upwards through articulating intermediaries, to the location where those communications get action. How to improve such a system, how to make it not dependent on direct communications alone, but to create the nodes that any communication system requires, and how to make them available in the north are questions that emerge clearly from this study, and hopefully will be partially answered by our next study, of Fort George. They suggest that we need to look at Paint Hills, not as the end of the line, but as the beginning of a network.

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