

OFF-CENTRE: FORT GEORGE AND THE
REGIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK OF
JAMES BAY

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COMMUNICATION NETWORK OF JAMES BAY

NATHAN ELBERG and ROBERT VISITOR

foreword by

RICHARD SALISBURY

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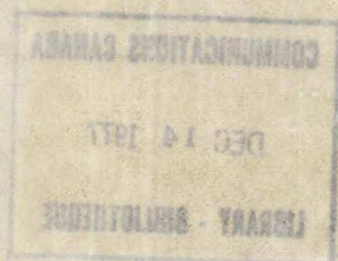
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Foreword

R.F. Salisbury

When this study was proposed in Fall 1974, Fort George had every appearance of becoming the communications centre for the northern James Bay region of Quebec. It was proposed while we were completing a study of a nearby isolated settlement, Paint Hills. This study clearly indicated the local need for improved communications within the region, at a time when most improvements in communications technology were facilitating communications outside of the region, to "head offices" in Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, or Winnipeg. We hoped that a study of an emerging regional centre, and of its problems, would help the centre emerge, help solve its problems, and provide answers for other emerging northern centres. More generally, it would complement the study of the isolated "outstation", and would indicate how regional centres can efficiently meet the needs of outstations, and so mediate the tendency to focus all communications (and thus all decisions) in distant metropolitan areas.

From conception to execution, however, the study has changed focus. Fort George has, over the past two and a half years, become less of a regional centre than it was in 1974. Instead of analysing a process of growth, as we had hoped to do, we have

had to look at the events that have accompanied, led to, or been the result of a decline. The data that we hoped would provide a quantified comparison with those of Paint Hills, that could be related to the two communities' different positions in a single communications network, have not provided a contrast. The larger size of Fort George (1500 against 500 individuals) made the data more difficult to collect but the data suggest a comparable picture. The result is that this report has had to be recast. It presents the same data, but the analysis has had to focus on why Fort George has not become the regional centre that it could have done, if 1974 tendencies had continued.

In many ways it thus remains a single case study, of a series of historical events that went one way rather than another -- a historical accident that we happened to witness and record. Yet the events seem typical of the patterns of northern development in Canada, and the results are ones that one finds throughout the North. This study is distinctive in looking at these events from a communications perspective, but it points out how crucial such a perspective is. It suggests that if the planning of northern development took the perspective of looking at communications within the North as a region, rather than regarding the north as an area to be communicated to from southern centres, very different patterns would emerge. We hope that the inferences

from such a study can be used in the planning of northern communications, even though the study is stronger in pointing out what has gone wrong in the Fort George case, rather than in extracting lessons of what has gone right.

Succeeding chapters will take up ~~in order~~ and describe in detail each various aspect of Fort George as a settlement, and the communication patterns within it, with nearby smaller settlements, and with the larger southern centres. Here we shall try to provide an overview that will place the detail in a context. A historical summary is the simplest way to give that overview.

Prior to 1971 most settlements in Northern Quebec (with the exception of Fort Chimo and Great Whale River) were isolated. Whatever their size they were mainly occupied by native people, with a few whites acting as administrators, missionaries, Hudson Bay managers, school teachers or nurses. Communications outside the settlement by native people were predominantly with nearby settlements and not with southern Canada and they used ground travel, small aircraft, or radio-telephone. Communications outside the settlement by whites were predominantly with the major southern metropolitan centres where their "head offices" were located, and they used many modes -- direct radio links, radio-telephone, telex, mail, scheduled and charter aircraft,

and the HBC barge system. Fort George, as a relatively large settlement, had (in addition to the usual settlement facilities) a large mission primary school that drew some boarding pupils from outlying settlements. It had a small hotel that accommodated transient whites. A hospital had been built by the Quebec administration of New Quebec Territories (D.G.N.Q.) primarily to service Quebec officials in the region. It also was the terminus of an air service from Val d'Or, operated by Fecteau Ltée using DC-3's, but connecting (under ideal conditions) with Air Canada services to Val d'Or from Montreal, Ottawa, and Sudbury.

The trend towards Fort George becoming a functioning regional centre, that we noted in 1974, and which provided the theoretical justification for our proposal, can be dated from the 1971 announcement of the James Bay project. The announcement spurred both an increase in the number of whites (researchers and officials) passing through Fort George, and an intense effort by the Cree people to combine in opposition to the proposed project. As they became organised politically they undertook consultations with people of all settlements, had frequent meetings with settlement leaders, and, within the Indians of Quebec Association (I.Q.A.) created a Task Force to collect data for legal proceedings against, and later negotiations with, the James Bay Development Corporation (S.D.B.J.). The head office of the Task Force was

in Montreal, but Fort George was, from the first, a centre for its research, and in 1974 a regional office was established in Fort George. Through it passed a flow of representatives from other Cree settlements, I.Q.A. officials, and researchers.

Important meetings of the Cree took place there, and press and media sent teams to interview in Fort George. Our research in Paint Hills at this time was deliberately designed to investigate communications in a settlement relatively undisturbed by such unwonted activity, but we were actively aware of the changes.

Communications in Fort George changed markedly in 1973 and 1974, alongside this increasing use of it as a centre by native people. Anik satellite reception of television was planned for early implementation; the dish antenna was installed, but objection to TV transmission by Inuit groups delayed the start of rebroadcasting of signals within Fort George. The S.D.B.J. constructed a microwave telephone system to connect directly with their construction sites inland of Fort George, and they linked it to an office in the settlement. Legal difficulties with Bell Telephone had delayed the connection of the local telephone exchange with the S.D.B.J. microwave link, but the tenuous and unpredictable radio-telephone service was soon to disappear. The flow of whites through Fort George had become sufficient for Nordair to begin direct service by Boeing 737

from Montreal. Also imminent though not yet operational was the all-weather road the S.D.B.J. had carved north through the forest and muskeg, from Matagami to its construction site of LG2, with a spur on to Fort George.

All things considered, the expectation that Fort George would grow as a communications centre for the region still appears as a reasonable one. The problems of how effective it would be in transmitting messages from outstations, in permitting individuals from outstations to pass through easily to larger centres, or in facilitating communications between outstations would likely be highlighted by the recency of Fort George's growth. They were expected to provide the meat for our report. Experiment, optimism, and regional planning were in the air in Fall 1974. The Grand Council of the Cree had been set up in August, independently of the I.Q.A., and in November it signed an agreement in principle with the Province of Quebec. Fort George promised to be a major focus for the region, making our study relevant and timely.

Our study encountered problems. Although funds were granted for fiscal year 1975-6, the settlement of Fort George had been so overwhelmed by researchers during the James Bay negotiations, that the Band Council was unwilling for any other research to take place until after the Final Agreement was signed. This

did not take place until November 1975, and even then the Council was reluctant to give permission until the Cree member of our team spoke strongly in its favour. Budget regulations meant that all fieldwork had to be hastily completed before March 31st, 1976. Writing up and analysis ~~of the data~~ had to be conducted on an unpaid basis after that date, by a team which had to maintain itself with other jobs. The analysis that had been hoped for when the study had been planned ^{no t} did/give answers, though this became apparent only as sections were written. The reconsideration of the entire study, and the perception of its significance has been possible only in the summer of 1977.

But to return to the historical overview of what happened in Fort George after 1974 -- the events which were in progress as the fieldwork for the present study took place -- is to summarise the reasons for Fort George not becoming a regional centre. One of them is that almost every different agency that had used Fort George as its northern centre in the period immediately before 1974, independently decided to switch to a different centre or to organise its own communications pattern differently. If there had been coordination between agencies, and they had all decided to use the same site (but not Fort George) then there would have grown up a northern regional centre somewhere else. If only one or two had changed, then Fort George

might still have developed and used its advantages. But agencies chose different locations, or chose to eliminate their Fort George base in favour of centralising operations in the south. The lack of coordination alone would appear as sufficient reason for the lack of development of a regional centre in Fort George; lack of coordination could equally well prevent the development of any such centre, while conversely, coordinated planning of communication routes could even now make such a centre a reality.

But lack of coordination at the regional level is the counterpart of separate planning by different agencies, each one with its head office in a metropolitan area outside the region, and each one seeing its problems from the perspective of improving communication between head office and branches. Our historical overview will illustrate this briefly and for only a few of the agencies.

Most critically the Grand Council of the Cree closed its Fort George office, when the negotiations for the agreement were finished and it subsequently moved its head office to Val d'Or, where Federal Indian Affairs has its regional office. Soon after, with James Bay construction in full swing, Nordair changed its flight pattern, using the paved S.D.B.J. airfield at the LG2 site as its terminus for Boeing 737 flights, and connecting

Fort George with LG2 by a somewhat unpredictable DC-3 service. The radio-telephone service of Bell Telephone that had connected all settlements directly with one another, and with the exchange at Alma, Quebec, gave way to the SOTEL direct-dial telephone from Fort George to Montreal and the North-American system, but cut Fort George off from all the smaller settlements which remained linked to Alma and one another. The Quebec administration (D.G.N.Q.) has its regional office in Great Whale River, and the absence of direct air communication south from Fort George resulted in Fort George being used even less for regional conferences. So too the presence of air services direct from LG-2 to Quebec City has made it feasible for the Provincial hospital in Fort George to send serious cases to other Provincial hospitals in Quebec City, instead of to Montreal and Moosonee where Federal services are available with Cree and English speakers common. Indians who speak no French feel that being sent to Quebec City, where there are no Cree-speakers and few English-speakers, is being sent to solitary confinement; Indians from other settlements try to avoid using Fort George medical services if they possibly can, since to do so runs the danger of being classed as a "serious case", and being shipped to Quebec City. Only in education has the role of regional centre increased, with the former residential primary school becoming

the residential secondary school for the region. Otherwise activities in Fort George have been dispersed to Val d'Or, LG-2, Montreal, Great Whale River and Quebec City.

Technological change has also contributed to Fort George not becoming a regional centre. - The case of the telephone link has already been mentioned, and it illustrates a general principle. Insofar as any technological change makes it almost as easy to communicate from every outstation directly to head office, as it is to communicate from the outstation to the regional centre, it militates against the emergence of a regional centre, and in favour of all communication being direct to head office where all decisions and planning take place.

If this is the case with the telephone, it is also the case with the James Bay road. Because of its existence, the Hudson Bay Company discontinued its barge system, which had meant Fort George built up during the summer one of the largest stocks of goods north of Moosonee, and so served as an emergency supplier for smaller settlements in the winter. Year-round ground transportation means that smaller stocks need be built up in Fort George. Not only that, but the road passes through the territory of other bands on its way to Matagami, and the southern road system. Other bands look forward to the time when they will have their own connections with the James Bay road and are making

plans on that basis. These involve buying goods in Matagami or further south, and not shopping through Fort George. There is little likelihood of Fort George becoming a distribution centre for goods, or developing well stocked stores, though Matagami may do so, as long as all road travel ~~must pass through~~ it.

Other technological changes point in the same direction. Greater money incomes in the area have resulted in purchases of more skidoos, of colour TV sets, and of trucks for travel to Matagami. For all of these items, Fort George is too small a market by itself to warrant the setting up of a repair facility; if all settlements in the region constituted one market, repair facilities and storage of spare parts might be warranted. But it is almost as easy, and much more certain to find the spare part available, to send such appliances from any smaller settlement to a southern repair facility. Fort George, and the regional economy, suffers, though the added benefits to the south are minimal.

The same story is repeated in the matter of charter aircraft. In 1974 the S.D.B.J. activities meant charter aircraft were readily available in Fort George, particularly if flights could be worked into S.D.B.J. schedules. There was talk of the Cree buying a plane, especially as rising incomes meant more Indian use of planes to fly hunters to their winter territories. But

better planes with greater ranges and higher speeds nullify, for a commercial operator, the advantages of stationing a plane in a regional centre to ferry hunters on short flights. They weight things in favour of a southern centre, where a larger, faster plane can be used for a variety of charters, and can be sent north only intermittently when reservations have been made. The northern regional centre with charter planes available cannot emerge easily, and the northern passenger is catered to by southern centres only when the convenience of southern passengers makes it possible. Val d'Or is now the main centre for northern charters, not Fort George.

Television is the other technological innovation that has impacted Fort George. Anik reception is excellent, and most families watch television avidly, to learn more of how southern Canadians live. A major part of the income of the past few years has been spent on TV purchases. Yet over half of the TV transmissions in Fort George are incomprehensible to the vast majority of the viewers, since the number of French-speakers among the Indians can be counted on one's fingers. C.R.T.C. hearings granted a licence for re-broadcasting ANIK programmes on a basis of 50% in each official language; switching of the channel to be re-broadcast is done centrally in Fort George on a schedule determined in Montreal, but which all Cree assert gives prime

time slots to French language programmes. Cree would like to participate in deciding what programmes they see, and in producing programmes for the regional audience, in Fort George and in the small settlements that have their own antennae.

With eminent reason the southern ~~policy-makers~~ can argue that programmes produced in the south with professional resources are more welcome to wider audiences than less professional productions of northern bands might be. And ANIK broadcasts must satisfy a wide audience, not merely a local one. Even the settlements that might use a Fort George production can phone Montreal to influence what is broadcast, as easily as they can phone Fort George. There is no gain in having regional production centres, or regional control of channel choice, over having the choice made centrally, where the major production facilities are.

And so the regional centre does not develop any expertise in producing TV, or any skill in either the technicalities or the decision-making of channel-switching and programme choice. No regional centre emerges. The technology favours centralisation, and centralisation occurs, even though some degree of regional planning, with TV production seen in relation to local government, to the local economy, to local transportation networks, to local hospital and educational services, and to local cultural units, could make the regional centre viable.

Technological change, especially in communications, can have an immense impact on people everywhere. When all the plans are made in metropolitan areas, where all the technological knowledge is available, the impacts are likely to be beneficial for the people in those metropolitan areas. ~~Each separate~~ technological change may, from the central perspective, also appear to give an incremental gain in one particular aspect to people living in isolated regions. Yet if there are not mechanisms for looking at all the different potential incremental gains from the perspective of the isolated region as a whole -- if there are not forums in which regional planning takes place -- then the incremental gains are likely to be imaginary. Each incremental gain which depended on the local community remaining otherwise the same is voided because other changes have occurred -- good telephone communications with Montreal help Fort George less than expected, for example, because communications with other settlements within the region have become relatively more difficult. What is likely to occur over time, is the gradual centralisation of all decisions, and of all benefits in the metropolitan areas, and the elimination of all regional centres, and all possibility of growth occurring in the outlying regions themselves.

We hope that this study of Fort George may encourage the

Department of Communications to press for mechanisms to emerge for regional planning of all communications media which would complement the existing national plans for each individual medium. If so, the tribulations that the study went through may not have been in vain. More immediately we hope ~~that the~~ study may help the Grand Council of the Cree in themselves trying to plan for the James Bay region. Even if Fort George is not the regional centre of the future, there should still be a regional centre for Crée people in northern Quebec. But such a centre will not emerge unless there is planning on a regional basis, to meet regional needs, considering all aspects of communication at the same time.

Chapter 1

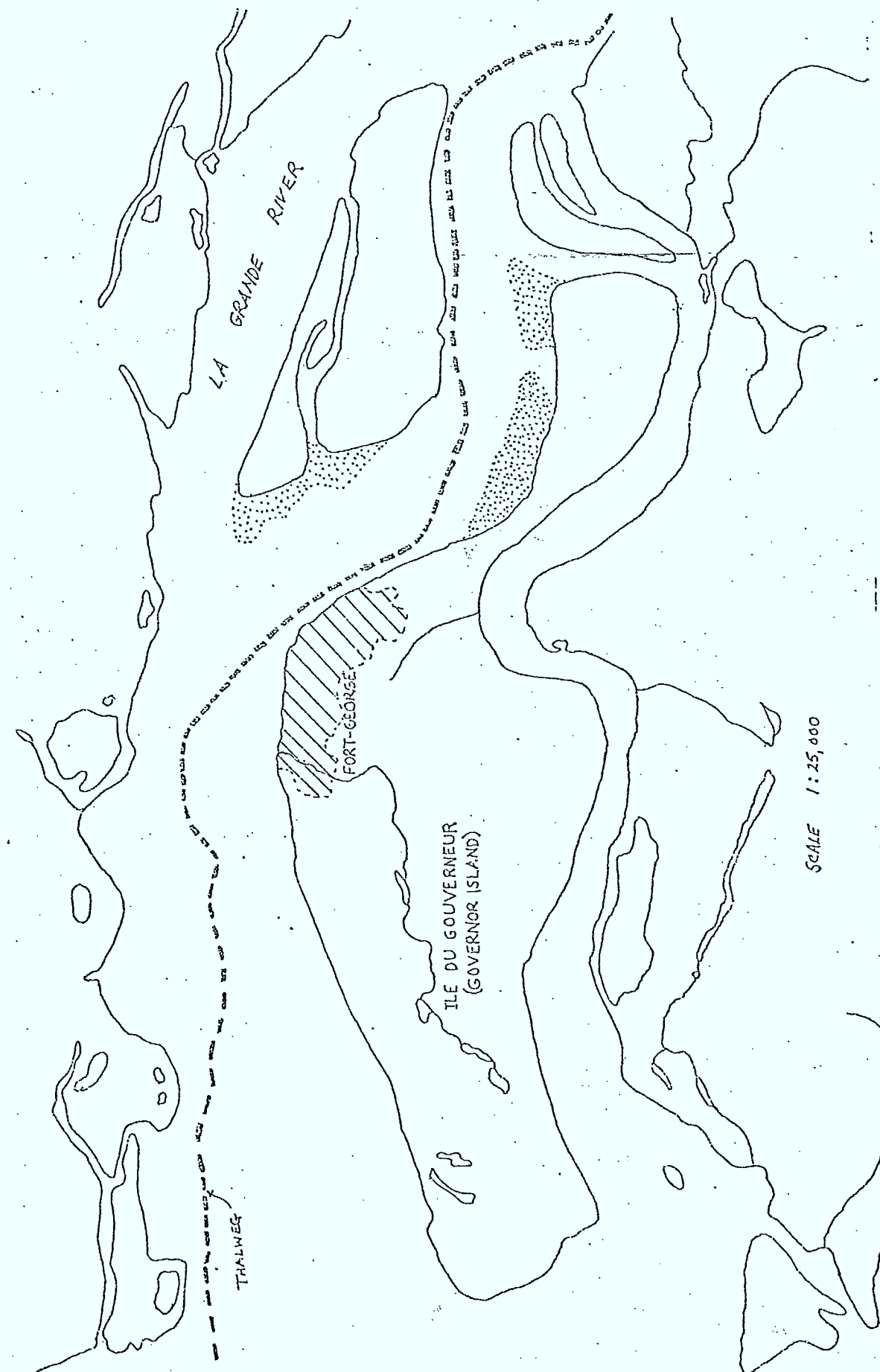
The Setting of Fort George

Fort George is located on Isle du Gouverneur in the mouth of the Fort George (La Grande) river, nine hundred and ninety kilometers northwest of Montreal as the crow flies, one thousand four hundred kilometers by road, of which approximately sixty percent is paved. The island itself, of which the settlement takes up seven percent has a basic composition of sand and small stone. The vegetation is primarily Black and White Spruce, with some berry producing shrub areas. Several small streams meander across the island, but none are in the principal areas of inhabitation (Figure 1).

It should be noted that the settlement of Fort George is on a northeastern bank of the island, facing inland. Erosion of the island by the force of the river flow, especially in this part has always been a problem. It has been hypothesized that the effects of the James Bay Hydro electric development scheme may hasten the process of erosion, leading to the virtual destruction of Isle du Gouverneur (Taylor et al, 1972). Discussions are already taking place on the possibilities of relocating the entire settlement.

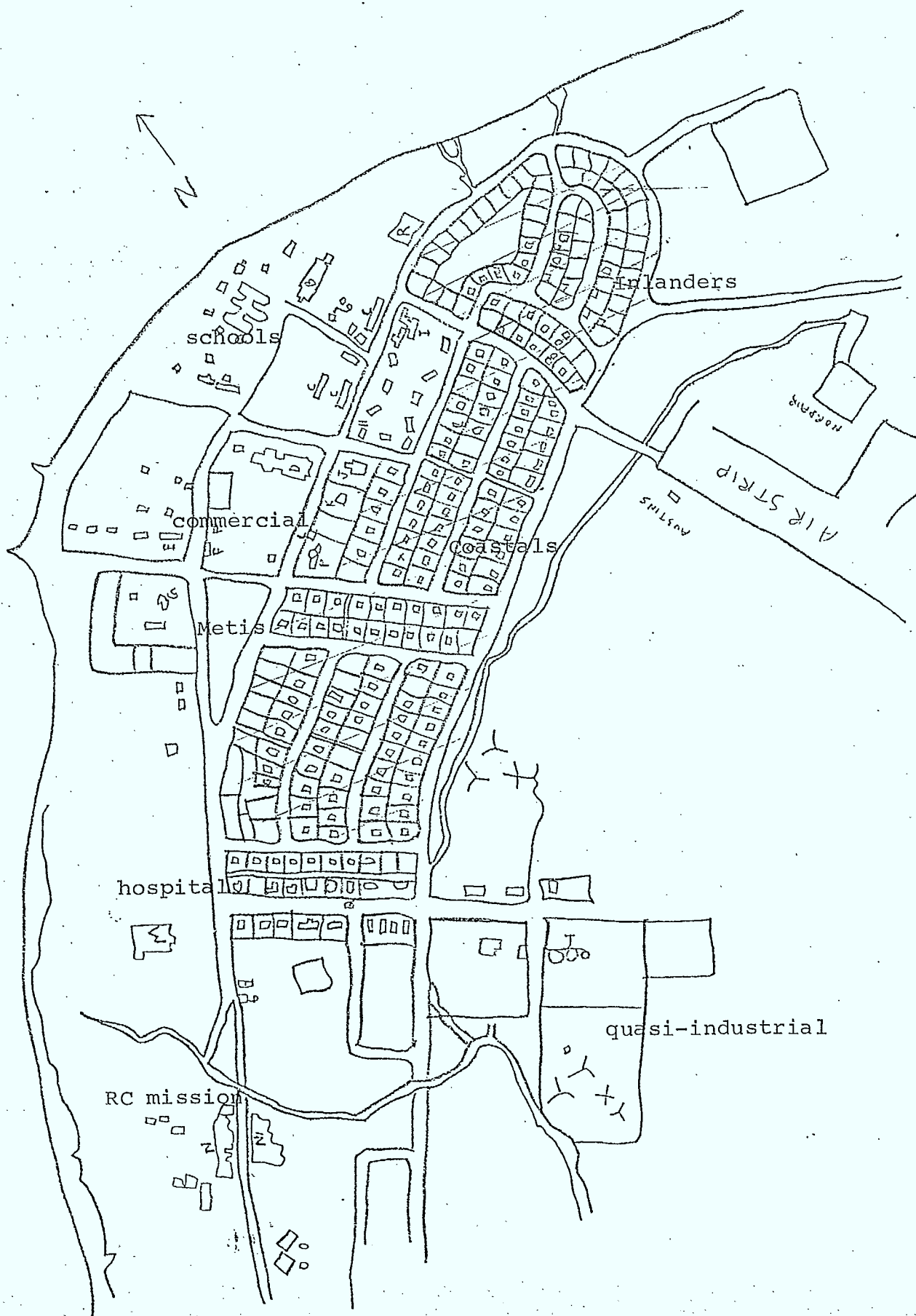
The sketch map (Figure 2) shows the layout of the community of Fort George, including most services and commercial

FIGURE I
GOVERNORS' ISLAND AND FORT GEORGE



(James Bay Task Force Report)

FIGURE 2
SKETCH PLAN OF FORT GEORGE



establishments. Communities and types of people are segregated according to which organization provided them with housing (e.g. Band Council, Métis association, provincial government for white residents⁷). The only people whose organization has not as yet begun construction of new houses ~~are the~~ Inuit. A majority of the population of Fort George is now living in homes built since 1969.

Of course these housing projects may seem to be ill-timed, given that the entire settlement may have to be relocated. But extreme flux and even uncertainty about very basic aspects of life are an important part of the background of the community. Uncertainty about the future of hunting, of fishing, the prospects of employment, the type of involvement in the Canadian economy that the Cree will have resulting from uncertain development, indeed uncertainty about the prospect of retaining the 'Indianness' of the people has interfered with all decision-making by the Cree leaders and the small "masses" of population involved. Further issues of where the settlement is to be located, future transportation facilities, services to be made available or abandoned all combine to hinder the Fort George permanent residents from making decisions based on future conditions. On the other hand, decisions made in southern Canada concerning Fort George continue to come in.

One of the decisions which was made in consultation with the Cree was the layout of the Fort George settlement. The Direction Général du Nouveau Québec, the Quebec government service to administer the northern part of the province, prepared a zoning scheme for the community, with separate commercial, residential, recreational, and quasi-industrial areas. Though the map itself is not part of this report, an examination of Figure Two will quickly reveal the outline of the zoning scheme.

Buildings in the shaded area are all native residences. The area including the bank, Hudson's Bay Company, and the office of the Grand Council of the Cree is called the commercial zone. The areas beside the schools are classed as recreational, and the area in the lower right hand corner as a quasi-industrial zone. The term "quasi" is used as there are no factories here, but it is the location of the Anik television antenna, storage facilities and municipal service operations, and it is reserved for future industrial type concerns. There are also some fuel storage and heavy equipment garages near school 'A'.

The D.G.N.Q. zoning scheme for Fort George is based on classical southern Canadian municipal categories of land use. It has been adapted to the north in the eyes of the planners who developed it. But actually, the land uses existed before their formalization in the map. The original institutions of Fort

George were built with no law deciding their location, but in accord with some limited consultation with members of the band, and topographical imperatives. The new services then clustered around previously existing ones of similar type, and new items such as the Anik receiver dish found their own niche. There is one clearly undesirable location of a service; that is the airstrip located so that incoming planes fly low over the school zone. This will be discussed further in the section dealing with airline services.

Within this free form arrangement that is now regulated, certain tendencies have appeared. One of the most noticeable of these is the segregation of the residences according to ethnicity. The Indians are mostly located in the central block of new housing, built by the band in cooperation with the Federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The Métis association of Fort George has undertaken its own housing project between the hospital and the commercial area of the Grand Council office, near to the river bank. The Inuit are, as mentioned previously, the only group without new housing under construction. They are living in a group of small, older houses located in a triangle to the west of the Hudson's Bay store and the bank.

But by far the most exclusive sections of Fort George are the two white areas, one near the school consisting of the

teachers' residences, and the other area opposite the hospital containing virtually all other white residents of Fort George.

The teachers' residences, conveniently located near their places of work, segregate them according to their occupation, and provide a useful means of maintaining communities of teachers within Fort George. It should be noted that the teachers at the Roman Catholic Mission School have virtually no interaction with their fellow pedagogues located elsewhere.

At the other end of town is what best can be described as the white ghetto. It features such anomalies as a concrete sidewalk (all other roads, paths and routes of transport in Fort George are dirt, mostly ungraded), apartment buildings, suburban style bungalows, driveways. The residents have such comforts as running water, central heating and a full range of modern appliances such as refrigerators, electric stoves, automatic washers and dryers. Though some of the native residents of Fort George have one or more of these appliances, these constitute the exceptions, rather than the rule.

In this enclave a variety of persons reside. Police officers, supervisory construction workers, doctors, nurses, consultants to the band, government of Quebec administrators and bureaucrats, federal government administrators and bureaucrats, technicians, and many others.

In many ways the white community carries many features of, and greatly resembles the stereotypic expatriate ghetto in what is now the third world. The many services they have available, which the natives have no access to, their many comforts, the large size of their residences, the attempts to make their part of town look as much like a suburban subdivision as possible, all serve to separate the whites from the other people in the settlement.

And the division created physically is reflected in the relations between the two sets of people. There is friendliness, personal interrelations in some instances, but the interaction model could best be described as two tangential spheres. It would be difficult to statistically determine the amount of interaction with any degree of reliability, so to give a more accurate picture the conditions of interaction will be described.

Firstly, there is the element of subservience. Nowhere in Fort George is there a white person who has a native person as his or her direct superior. As previously mentioned virtually all whites in Fort George are professional, technicians, or administrators. In the case of the professionals (doctors, nurses), the natives are receiving a service which the professionals view as vital. The technicians are aloof from questions involving interpersonal relationships, as they merely operate

the technology imported into Fort George. And the administrators are there to administer the people, to convert the wishes of Ottawa and Quebec City into action affecting the community as a whole or as individuals.

One common feature of the whites, ~~defines~~ the relationship most clearly. They import the alien, more complex technology which the native people wish to use, at least in part. The whites are all teachers of a sort, providing knowledge of technology to the unskilled Cree, Inuit, and Métis. Many studies (e.g. Paine 1971) analyse this relationship in terms of the roles of patron, broker, and client. Virtually all whites in Fort George fit the former two categories of this analysis, while most natives in Fort George behave as clients in most of their interactions with whites. The traditional brokers, the Bay manager, the missionaries, and the police, now have reduced power, as there are many alternate sources for the technology over which they once held a monopoly. But there is not a high degree of competition for the favours of Fort George residents among the new suppliers of technology. The 'market' has been divided up among the patron-brokers so that overlapping of services is limited, and the native person has a limited amount of choice of whom to approach. His bargaining position has improved little, and each supplier of technology can fix his

own prices within given ranges.

All this has a unifying and stabilizing effect on the community. The native people are not rigidly divided according to which patron-brokers they relate to as clients, and the lack of a tightly competitive situation between patrons helps to maintain harmony among the whites. This harmony means that they do not have to include many natives among their social networks, and they remain independent of them.

The white population of Fort George also includes some transient workers or servicemen who stay at Webb's Lodge. (I) They usually do not have the time to make contacts among the established white community. And the contact that transients often have with the native people takes the form of drunk teenagers coming to their rooms in the evenings, seeking alcohol or other drugs.

Another group of whites who do not mix with the established whites, are those who have married or are living common law with native people. They range from labourers to tourists to anthropologists. They do indeed provide some services at a lower cost than other patron/brokers in the settlement, and their social networks often include more native people than white people, kin and non-kin. Many of them present a picture of southern

life which differs somewhat from the view presented by government (and government workers in the north). Attempts by officialdom are made to control this inflow to Fort George, but on the whole, such control is difficult to carry out, and past attempts have been unsuccessful. This group, and closely linked native people, acted in concert when a Band Council member requested government action against them, and they rendered that action virtually ineffective.

The population present in Fort George ranges from twelve to eighteen hundred, depending on the season and the project activities of the various levels of government. Compared to regional centres like Sherbrooke or Chibougamau, this is not a large population. And though Fort George has a large airstrip with several flights per day during good weather, is situated on a trunk road, and has direct line telephone service, a bank, several stores, a hospital, several schools, and two churches, it is still an isolated settlement compared to Val d'Or or Granby. Compared to the 500-person settlements of Eastmain and Paint Hills however, it is the largest centre of the region. It is the source of a number of services not available in these smaller communities, and its connections to the south are much better than theirs. In relation to their experiences, Fort George is not a remote location in the wilderness but a

relatively urban environment. The roughly fifteen hundred people there constitute a large group of relative strangers, include individuals with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and offer a choice of who to interact with that the immigrant from a smaller settlement can make in terms of his own preferences. To the southern Canadian this choice may seem more limited than the choice in a southern town; many limit their choice even further by not including native people in their options.

It is neither the desire, nor the capability of this report to analyse why the white population of Fort George has only limited interaction with the native people. It is limited and it is limited by choice on the part of the whites. And within their small community, these persons must select their friends and acquaintances. It is thus not surprising that newly arrived whites, even transients, are viewed by many other whites as "a breath of fresh air".

As previously discussed, the native population can be subdivided into Indians, Inuit, and Métis categories. Legally the differences between the categories are sharply defined, though in behavioural terms there are few sharp breaks. A high degree of intermarriage has taken place between all three categories. There are a number of children of Indian-Inuit parents, capably fluent in both languages. As a matter of necessity, virtually

all the Inuit of Fort George have learned to speak Cree, the language of the majority. Although legal statuses lead to different political structures, social relations between the Inuit and the Indians are close, and joint economic projects, such as hunting together, commonly occur.

The differences between the various segments of the native population of Fort George are most clearly manifested in political terms. In negotiations with the Quebec Government over the James Bay Hydro-Electric Project settlement, the three main participants were the Grand Council of the Cree, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, and the Government of Quebec. The Grand Council, representing the Indians but with Métis participating in its consultations at local levels, was the first to come to terms with provincial authorities. The Council signed a provisional agreement, and rapidly obtained local approval of the final agreement in all settlements.

The Inuit Association also approved the agreement. But a number of non-official leaders of some Inuit settlements argued that the Inuit people should reject the agreement, and they desired a delay in the voting for ratification. The Cree Council leaders expressed their impatience with the time taken by the Inuit. Their people had approved, and implementation of the settlement was desired.

The only two settlements with potential for intra-community racial conflict, having both Inuit and Cree inhabitants, were Fort George and Great Whale River. But the differences of opinion at the leadership levels of the two peoples did not filter down. At the settlement level, the native people were united in opposition to Quebec; Cree and Inuit were working in unison towards the resolution of the same issue, with local variants.

There is one more division in the native community that is not recognised in law, yet is of some political and economic significance and that is the distinction between "Coasters" and "Inlanders". Hyman (1971) describes the difference:

"Today, they differ socially and economically beyond the traditional differences of hunting area and technology. The Inlanders hunted and trapped inland:... the older generation is in general less acculturated than the "Coasters" in terms of English speaking persons, education, participation in wage earning and accouterments of white lifestyle. Moreover, until recently there has been little overlap in kinship and friendship networks between the two groups. The Coasters, in population thrice as large as the Inlanders, hunted up and down the coast of James Bay and have a

technology more adapted to coastal hunting and seal hunting."

Homogeneity has been the trend in Fort George in the last few years since Hyman's article was written. The increased availability of wage employment, the decreased costs of importing southern foods, and other factors repeated in virtually every discussion of Fort George, have all contributed to reducing the differences discussed by Hyman.

At the time of her study, the two groups were clearly segregated in housing. In her plan of Fort George in 1970, the Inlanders' village forms a separate locality, while most of the settlement belongs to the Coasters. In 1976, the area of the Inland Village is the last location where new housing is being built. Most of the residents here live in the same houses they had in 1970, while a majority of the Coastal peoples already live in new homes. The dichotomy is not an absolutely sharp one, but neither is the distribution of new housing a random one. Rather, the first houses were built as parts of projects, were occupied primarily by Coasters, and are more elaborate than the ones being currently built and occupied by Inlanders. They have more complete basements, gyproc walls, more rooms and superior insulation. The later houses, are simpler plank homes, with little insulation, through which the

wind can often be felt blowing. There are thus two neighbourhoods among the Cree Indians of Fort George even with the advent of planned and government-sponsored housing.

Sometimes Inlanders describe the 'privileged' Coasters in value-laden terms, such as 'lazy', 'arrogant', less adept in the Indian ways and less inclined to participate in them. A description by an Inlander informant of a political decision-making process stated that the Coasters held a meeting, made the decision, and then asked the Inlanders what their opinion was. According to the informant the reply was "you've already made the decision, why are you bothering to ask us now?" But the political clout carried by the Coasters does not lead to further community division. There are few local political issues other than the James Bay project, on which to get worked up, and on that issue there is unity. Otherwise if decisions go against a minority, they accept them and carry on their own separate ways.

As mentioned above, many of the barriers between the two groups have been greatly reduced. Marriage, changes in residence patterns, work associations have dulled the demarcation lines. For this reason, subdivisions among the native people of Fort George will not be extensively treated in this paper. The foregoing discussion must be borne in mind however in

consideration of informal communications networks in the local community, one focus of this paper.

For purposes of analysis, the settlement will mainly be treated as comprising two population subgroups: native and non-native. Native persons, includes Indians, Métis and Inuit, all of whom react to the impact of the same innovations and changes coming to Fort George in similar ways. Of the approximately "listed" 2000 population of Fort George a survey was made of 191 native families representing 60 percent of the "official" native population of 1700. (i.e. those with Indian or Inuit status on Government lists plus Métis) The sample is not random, but was the result of an attempt to survey all the Fort George population.

Those excluded were people not in town at the time of the survey, for whom the data could not be obtained from friends or neighbours, and those living in isolated parts of the settlement.

It is felt that the data, though not completely accurate,

adequately represent the main body of Fort George native people.

Table 1 shows the composition of the Fort George population, registered Indian and the composition of the sample surveyed. Ages of the registered population are taken from the records of dates of birth; those of the sample are by report, either of themselves or of other family and Inuit members. Métis/are included in the survey but not in the official figures.

The figures from DINA report 1558 Indians and 53 Inuit in Fort George in December 1975, and for their Master Plan studies DGNQ estimated 150 Métis or Non-status Indian persons, and 200 whites in Fort George in March 1976, 43 of them children, and 95 employed by the hospital, the RC Mission, DGNQ, and HydroQuebec.

Table 1

NATIVE POPULATION OF FORT GEORGE
BY AGE AND SEX

Population (Indian only by Band List Date, Dec 31 1974)					Sample Surveyed (Indian, Métis and Inuit, Feb 1976)				
Male	Female	Total	%	Age	Male	Female	Total	%	
245	245	490	32.6	0-9	134	129	263	24.8	
183	170	353	23.4	10-19	156	183	339	31.9	
119	109	228	15.2	20-29	75	89	164	15.4	
81	75	156	10.4	30-39	48	59	107	10.1	
38	56	94	6.3	40-49	51	40	91	8.6	
51	40	91	6.1	50-59	28	29	57	5.4	
20	33	53	3.5	60-69	20	14	34	3.2	
20	17	37	2.5	70+	7	-	7	.7	
<u>757</u>	<u>745</u>	<u>1502</u>	<u>100.0</u>		<u>519</u>	<u>543</u>	<u>1062</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Source: DINA list for 1974.

The discrepancies in age totals suggest that in the survey informants overestimated the ages of young children in their own families. The discrepancy in proportions of males aged 40-49 and 50-59 would suggest that the band list data is incorrect, as it would indicate a highly abnormal pattern of births in the 1920's. The low figure of over 70 persons surveyed is probably due to their living away from the family groups that were the main focus of the survey interviewers.

Chapter

The Economy of Fort George

There are three main sources of income in cash and kind for the population of Fort George. These are bush activities (hunting, trapping and fishing), wage employment, and transfer payments. Figures on the 1972 economy are available from Elbert, Hyman, and Salisbury (1972). Rapid changes mean that the 1972 description is no longer accurate, but represents a

general pattern against which the more recent changes can be sketched. The contributions of the various sectors in 1972 is given in Table 2.

<u>Source of Income</u>	<u>Cash Value</u>	<u>Percent Value</u>
Bush activities	\$525,000	26.3%
Wages	\$1,286,700	64.4%
Transfer payments	\$185,760	9.3%

Table 2: Sources of Income in Cash and Kind, Fort George, 1972 (after Hyman and Hyman, 1972).

At the time of the 1972 study, a shift was taking place away from intensive hunting activities involving long absence from the settlement towards bush activities such as rabbit snaring, bird hunting and fishing which could be undertaken from a base in the settlement. The trend towards more local bush activities has continued, but at the same time there has also been an increase in numbers going to bush camps for winter trapping. Wage employment has also increased, though the new jobs added to the two hundred and seventeen noted in 1972 are mostly casual employment. Transfer payments have also changed form, with a large number of people now drawing Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Some possible causes of the increase in intensive hunting may be the desire to assert ownership of territories, threatened with flooding by the project, or a desire to go to the bush before it was too late, or as an attempt to show that Indians were indeed hunters.

Other causes, such as the seven year hare cycle or the cyclical resting of territories to allow for the recovery of game animal populations may have played a part (Feit et al, 1976).

Increased availability of wage work, both casual and full time, had led to more limited distance/limited time hunting trips, so that people had remained near the settlement to be available for wage work when it arose. Coupled with significant increases in the hare population, as part of the seven year cycle, the incentive for, and the productivity of casual bush activities had grown considerably.

In 1972 bush activities contributed close to one-half of all food consumed. Feit et al (1976) provide recent figures confirming the general pattern. Two factors however, which should be born in mind are: a) there has been an apparent increase in the amount of bush foods obtained, as a result of the augmentation of the amount of activities in more distant bush areas; b) improved transportation systems have made easier the importation of southern Canadian foods to Fort George.

One contribution of the James Bay Project to economies of all Cree settlements was to provide jobs for the growing numbers of young adults who had not been trained for living off the land. Employment on the power project for natives has been available only sporadically. During peak periods they have been utilized at various tasks, some travelling over three hundred miles to their work sites. But most of the native people have low seniority or union qualifications, and often are laid off during slacker periods of work. Even so the work periods have often been long enough, and the layoff periods short enough for native workers to be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits between periods of high activity. Workers have returned in groups to the settlement, without much prospect of obtaining interim work, but by U.I.C. regulations have had to remain near the settlement so as to be "ready, able, and willing to work each day" (Unemployment Insurance Commission, Claimant's Report). On U.I.C. they receive generally higher amounts than they would receive on welfare, and non-household heads, who would not be receiving any social benefits are receiving an income. The net result at any one moment has been a large number of persons in settlements with both time and money on their hands.

Fort George is a kind of "centrale" for employment for natives on the James Bay Project. Fort George permanent residents

sit out periods of unemployment there, but additional persons come in from the outlying communities, staying with relations or friends. The few without these contacts find themselves in somewhat of a quandary. Rates at the hotel are more than most people in the north can afford. The result is the creation of a category of vagrant work seeker, who must nonetheless (by native rules of hospitality) be cared for.

In Hyman's study, she documented the existence in 1972 of A DINA survey estimated 232 Indians employed in summer 1974 217 full time jobs./ In the present 60% sample we listed 144 workers, and would estimate a total of 240 workers in the whole population if the sample were a representative one. Unfortunately the sample selection would have tended to overrepresent persons in wage employment. The real figure for total employment in Fort George is probably the same or perhaps 10% higher than it was before the Project started.

Table 3 gives the number of individuals employed by age class, and sex for the Fort George sample.

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age Class</u>					
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Male	5 (6)	24 (32)	24 (30)	10 (30)	6 (4)	-
Female	4 (4)	33 (37)	22 (37)	10 (25)	5 (17)	1 (7)

NB: Figures in brackets are of the percentage of the sample in that age class which is employed.

Table3 : Native Employment in Fort George, by Age Class and Sex.

These figures can be taken as indicative only, given the selectivity of the sample. They indicate however, that about one-third of the active labour force -- those persons between the ages of twenty and sixty years old -- are in wage employment. The remainder are not "unemployed" but include those unable to work, housewives, trappers, and people in self-employment. In the interview schedule responses, some persons did indeed define themselves as unemployed, whereas others did not deem it necessary to define themselves in any category for that section of the schedule, rather leaving it blank or responding "nil".

The highest employment rates for both males and females occur interestingly enough, in the thirty to thirty-nine group, persons who, for the most part, do not speak English and have little formal education. Over half of the males and almost half of the females are in wage employment. The twenty to twenty-nine group, which has a higher knowledge of English, and more formal training, is less employed -- over one-third, but less than half. For the males the differences are more marked. It should be noted however, that a large proportion of the female work force is engaged as cleaning ladies and cooks. For the men there is a wider range of qualities of employment available. This wider range may hold the key for explaining the greater heterogeneity of male labour force employment rates as compared

to female employment rates.

At the time this study was conducted, some native people, from Fort George and from other settlements, had worked on construction but had then been laid-off for over six months. On the other hand such activities as the establishment of two police force bases in the community, and the creation of new native enterprises, had created more local service jobs in the community. This had added to Fort George's role of a regional centre. It now has an established though fairly transient white population, but for the native population it is not completely urban and wage oriented.

Native Businesses

The native businesses in Fort George are small scale. The first native business venture was a retail Shell gasoline station, pumping gas and selling various gas engine accessories. This started out modestly, selling petrol for winter use in Ski-Doos, summer use in outboard motors, and year-round for the few white-owned road vehicles in Fort George. With the advent of the road connection of Fort George with Matagami and the south, business boomed. A large number of vehicles were purchased for commercial use and as financing became available, increasing numbers were bought by local people. As the only regular source of fuel for all who do not import it directly from the south, the local

Shell station is an important local business. The owner is one of the wealthiest Cree, and has held most band political offices at one time or another. He is among the most respected members of the community, both by outsiders and by local persons. His respect is not due to his wealth, but rather a result of the attributes which brought him his business success. The station now has several employees, and its services are in considerable demand.

The station, even if locally owned, is also a franchise of a large southern operation. It has some of the features and facilities of a "branch office" analysed in an earlier report on Paint Hills (Elberg, Salisbury and Visitor 1976). As a part of the Shell operation it can offer such conveniences as accepting credit cards, having a comparatively stable supply of goods, and having access to the know-how and accounting of a large corporation.

But as a franchise, the decisions on day to day operations are made in the north by a local person. He can and does adapt the methods of running the station to the needs and style of his people and his community. Local people making purchases do not feel intimidated as they are when dealing with a large alien organization. They can feel at home and not have to adapt to southern Canadian business customs. Yet the white person dealing

with the station can feel equally at home. The milieu of the gas station is not unfamiliar, the employees are all fluent in English and in what the Euro-Canadian expects in a business transaction. And who could call Shell gas pumps unfamiliar?

- This first enterprise was a demonstration of potential success for native businesses. The precedent was set for other attempts. It may be that the absolute need for a gas station contributed greatly to the success of the enterprise, but had it not been handled properly, it would not have been popular among both native people and whites in the community.

Another of the older native businesses in Fort George is the Bombardier Ski-Doo outlet. Advertising posters of the manufacturer show a happy-looking owner of a distributorship standing in front of his glass-walled showroom. With winter temperatures in Fort George often reaching minus forty degrees celsius, and with high winds and inside humidity, a glass-walled showroom would present problems, among them that the frost on the inside of the windows would prevent people from seeing the products on the inside. Indeed, unlike the posters, the Fort George Ski-Doo outlet is a garage behind the proprietor's home, and on a sunny day he can be seen outside, servicing a machine.

A showroom is not necessary in Fort George to sell snowmobiles. The demand exists, all that is needed is an outlet to

meet the demand. In addition to sales and service, the outlet does occasionally rent machines to transients, and might lend a machine to a local person whose own is being repaired.

Like most machinery dealerships, this one also keeps a "stockroom" of parts. This is well utilized by the native community, as many people prefer to do their own mechanical work. It is also made use of by people in some of the outlying settlements. A person needing a part in, for example, Paint Hills, will go down to the airplane heading north, and ask someone going to Fort George to pick up the part. This person, once having obtained it, if he or she is not returning to Paint Hills right away, will find someone who is, and will send the part down with them. This informal system gives the Fort George outlet a wide and efficient distribution system, and avoids the ten dollar minimum freight charge normally imposed on each shipment. The system does not occupy a great deal of the distributor's time, and he is thus able to provide service to the outlying communities at no cost to the quality of service to his own settlement.

The distributorship has been successful personally for its owner/operator. He is well known, and he has become an interlink between the white and the native communities. He is a controller of access to a vital service and functions at times as a broker to the white community. During fieldwork, when a truck ride was

needed from Fort George to the LG-2 airport, some of the white hospital personnel suggested contacting this person to ask if he knew of the availability of a lift. He didn't, but through a series of phone calls to other persons with trucks, he willingly endeavoured to obtain one. He was the informal organizer of what could be seen as an amorphous cooperative taxi service. His more formal role as the Ski-Doo dealer, greatly facilitated and was facilitated by his organizational abilities.

Two more examples of native enterprise need discussion. The first of these, called "The Trading Post", is not entirely a native operation. It was established primarily by a white male and his Indian wife. Dealing primarily in clothes, this store is located near the centre of the village, in an old house left vacant after its previous tenants moved into new housing. At the time of the store's opening, there was no electrical power connection, nor were there prospects of these being made soon. The store was illuminated by daylight and Coleman lanterns, and was heated by a wood stove. In this way the establishment did not bear any physical resemblance to the typical northern store owned by a southerner. Indeed, the owner had recently married into the community. At the time that this research was being conducted however, it was too early in the store's history to say whether or not it will be fully accepted by the native people.

On its opening day the stock carried by the store were lots of varied second-hand clothing imported from Toronto and advertised as such. By the end of the first day of business a large proportion of this stock had been sold out. According to an open-ended interview with the proprietor, it is ~~not the intention~~ of the store to remain dealing in second-hand clothes but rather to have their buyer in the south look for lots of clothing, principally new items, which could be sold at discounted prices. Whether or not this store can successfully continue to sell low-price clothing, is an open issue, to be decided both on economic grounds and on the acceptability of the white owner to all sections of Indian society.

The last establishment to be discussed is not exclusively a product of native enterprise. It developed in part following the initiative of a Val d'Or wholesale food distributor who trucked in groceries from Val d'Or along the new James Bay road, a total distance of approximately nine hundred kilometres. With the establishment of this service, locally owned grocery stores were set up in both Fort George and Paint Hills. The store in Paint Hills has its supplies shipped further from Fort George by charter aircraft with the agent for the wholesale food company flying with the goods, settling the financial details, and taking the next order. The Fort George grocery is supplied directly

by the distributor's truck. The role of this wholesale distributor will be discussed in more detail later.

The grocery store of Fort George is located in a newer home in the western portion of the settlement. It is relatively distant from both the Co-op and the Hudson's Bay Company store. As such, it is convenient for many people in the settlement who previously had to walk long distances in order to obtain groceries. The store contains about the same array of products one would find in a southern corner grocery, or dépanneur and introduces one new item to the settlement. Indeed it has introduced this item to the east coast of James Bay. And regardless of whether Fort Georgers lick their fingers after it, it has become rapidly accepted and readily consumed in Fort George. The fast food phenomenon has had a similar impact on Fort George, albeit on a smaller scale, as on the south of Canada. In spite of the high cost, the novelty of having ready-to-eat food has helped sales. People do not drive up to the store and consume the food on the premises. Rather, it is purchased cold along with other groceries and warmed up when it is to be served.

There are some problems with this method of supplying Kentucky Fried Chicken. The product was not developed to be sold at retail groceries for later consumption, but is intended to be eaten shortly after being cooked. For Fort George the product

is obtained by the wholesaler from a retail outlet in Val d'Or, and is then frozen and trucked up north. The wholesaler does not have factory flash freezing facilities, and the product is frozen more slowly, and possibly less safely. From the Kentucky Fried Chicken distributor in Val d'Or to the serving table in a Fort George home, there is a possibility that the product may partially thaw and refreeze, especially during the summer months. At the time of the research for this report, no ill effects had been reported from either Paint Hills or Fort George.

Other projects for native private business are under consideration. The availability of financing by the Local Development Council set up under the James Bay Settlement, and the likelihood of increases in local incomes may speed their creation. Greater numbers may also lead to larger businesses, but at the moment a style seems already developed of small-scale native businesses operated as part- or full-time operations by people who continue to act as important figures in the social life of the community.

Non-Native Commercial Enterprise: 'These Are the True Voyages of the Starship "Enterprise", As She Travels Through Space, Looking for New Worlds ...'

Enterprise has entered upon this northern world, and enterprise is surely moving in. From one pioneer commercial establish-

ment in the first century of white presence, the number has grown to at least six in ten years, and the numbers are growing all the time. Added to this number is at least an equal number of service establishments. The local establishments discussed above pose no threat to white Enterprise. Indeed the local variety is welcome, according to some of the white managers, for the more

enterprise is ingrained in Fort George, the greater the involvement in, and acceptability of these concerns from southern Canada. All businesses provide customers for other businesses.

There are six major non-native establishments in Fort George selling goods. These are the Hudson's Bay Company, the Co-op store, the Imperial Bank, Webb's Lodge, "Rosie's Store", and the restaurant. These six have been in existence for a number of years, and are fairly well established. Three of them are retail stores, three of them provide other services. But there is a degree of overlap in the business of each, as shall be demonstrated.

The Hudson's Bay Company

The oldest and most venerated of these institutions is the Hudson's Bay Company. Established at Fort George by the year 1805, it preceded the next outside institution, the Anglican Church by almost fifty years (Hyman, 1971). For most of its history it has been a trading post, exchanging for furs the various products of western society wanted by the native people

of the region. Buying furs, selling products, and operating a simple credit system was the role of the Hudson's Bay Post.

These three activities remain the principal functions of the HBC outlet in Fort George. In the past fifteen years however, the trading post has developed into a store, taking on more and more the format of the merchandising retail outlet and grocery store. Fur purchasing and the provision of credit have diminished in importance. The store is in a modern through somewhat spartan large building, with capacity for the display of a wide variety of products, ranging from colour televisions and refrigerators, to fish nets, to baby's underwear. The grocery section has two cash checkouts, a number of freezers, fruits and vegetables, shopping carts, and long aisles filled with a variety of packaged foods. There is no parking lot beside the building, and no car order delivery. When the building was constructed, there were no roads leading to Fort George, and no prospect for many cars in the community.

Certain factors have been involved in the transformation of the Bay store from a trading post to a department store. Included among these are the increased profitability of sales rather than fur-buying, the increase in cash available to the native people through transfer payments and employment, and the development of a white population in the settlement, who required the services

of a regular retail outlet. As the availability and regularity for store-bought food has increased, the store has become more of an alternative source of food, leading to greater dependence and thus to even greater demand.

Anik satellite television provided a boon to the store. The logic of television purchasing in the north leads directly to the Bay. The Bay carries two principal brands, "Baycrest" and "Hitachi". The former is a house brand manufactured by the latter, and the apparent differences between the available models of both are superficial. There is however, one difference that gives Baycrest a major advantage. Because the distributor is the Hudson's Bay Company, it is the establishment to which defective televisions are returned under warranty. A person buying a television set from the store in Fort George may return it to that store for repairs under warranty, and the store bears the responsibility and expense of shipping the unit to a depot for those repairs. The owner can negotiate directly, face to face with the authority responsible for the services, in case of recurring or new defects. A person purchasing a unit of some other brand, from either the Bay or another store, is personally responsible for freight charges, damage, quality of repair, time duration of repairs, and so on. If a unit comes back still inoperative or not functioning properly, the repairman may blame

the damage on transportation, and the transport carrier may argue that the repairs were not properly carried out. The television set owner is in a poor position to allocate blame, or to enforce a demand that one party or the other meet the costs of further repairs and freight charges.

But at the Bay, for a Baycrest set, the store handles all the problems. And the organization is large enough to underwrite the cost of a new replacement unit if the cost or bother of repairing the original one is too great.

The cost of this service is not directly added to the cost of the sets themselves. The prices appear only modestly higher than in the south. At the time of this survey, the cost of a large colour unit was approximately \$650, while a black and white portable sold for \$270. At that time, most of the sets sold by the Bay in Fort George were still under warranty, and as such we could not determine what the service experience will be following the expiration of the warranty period.

The store had sold an estimated one hundred units at the time of the inquiry. Virtually all were colour sets, purchased through credit. Payment was usually made as fifteen payments of about forty-five dollars each. Most units were purchased between six months before and six months after the introduction of television to the settlement so that for a period of almost a year

the store had about forty thousand dollars outstanding on purchases of sets. No other establishment in Fort George could have handled that kind of credit so easily, without obvious costs to the purchasers.

The Bay manager is not only the principal supplier of television sets to the community, he also distributes the television signals for the sets. To be more precise, he is responsible to CBC for switching and adjusting televisions broadcast to the community from the satellite receiver station (dish antenna). He could, in effect, select which one of the incoming signals is broadcast to all of the televisions in Fort George. Thus, besides his hearing all customer complaints dealing with their sets, people come to him with complaints about what is being shown on these sets.

Over the former issue the manager has power to act according to his own discretion. Over what is to be shown however, his theoretical power is limited. As officially responsible for the receiving station, he acts more as a technician, carrying out strict orders by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of how and when switching is to be done. The CRTC permit demands that equal time must be given to French and English programming in Northern Quebec, and CBC decides which of its transmissions must be switched on for local reception by each Anik station. This

meant for example, that the people of Fort George were obliged to watch the Progressive Conservative leadership convention entirely in French for two days of programming. Consisting entirely of conversation, speeches and short interviews, the convention proved somewhat boring and neither informative nor educational for the 95% of the Fort George population unable to understand French. Complaints poured in to the manager, though the complainants were aware, as they stated their grievances, that the manager was unable by his own authority to resolve the matter.

In this the local people still see the manager as a broker, through whom the quality of programming could hopefully be ameliorated. How long this situation will continue is unclear, as his written descriptions of complaints by the people appear to have had little effect. It appears that CBC induced the HBC manager to take on the role of station-switcher, to take advantage of his stability and prestige in the community and of his relative aloofness from local conflicts and factions. If he then is unable to effectively represent the views of local people, this choice is likely to backfire and undermine the confidence placed in both the CBC and the HBC.

Does the role of its manager help the Bay with its television sales? This is unlikely. The Bay store already has a virtual

monopoly of television sales, for very practical reasons given above. There seem few additional advantages any individual would gain, in the form of better programmes because he purchased his set at the Bay.

Has the advent of television been a ~~major~~ influence in the change of the Bay store to being almost a department store? According to open-ended interview schedules, the demand for electrical goods, including television sets, did not date from the arrival of television broadcasting, and the product information given through advertising. More influential was the expansion of reliable electrical service into native homes, which made appliances more functional, more reliable, and less expensive to operate. Another important factor was the increased confidence in the future created by the signing of the Final Agreement between the native peoples and the provincial government, and the optimism about the permanence of greater cash incomes in the community. No requests have been made to the store manager for products advertised on television but not previously stocked by the Bay. No trends or changes in demand were noticed by him following the advent of television. With easy credit, the purchasing of television sets has not seriously affected the purchase of other goods, except perhaps where a choice had to be made, for example between a freezer and a television set. But

with numbers of people purchasing nine thousand dollar trucks, it is clear that individuals have considerable cash for investment in durables and for them the \$650 for a television set is not a major problem. Any impact of advertising is likely to be more long term, and will only be detectable in more isolated situations such as Paint Hills, where a higher degree of control over other variables that are changing simultaneously in Fort George is possible.

The third area in which changes in communications have affected the Bay store in Fort George has been in the reduction of freight costs following the opening of the road to Matagami. The rate at present is 5 cents per pound of freight from Matagami to Fort George. This can be compared with the cost of air freight from Moosonee of 36 cents per pound, which was previously the lowest cost for year-round delivery. Bulk supplies were shipped at low cost on the HBC barge service from Moosonee, but this barge operated only in the summer, and necessitated the detailed advance planning and extensive warehousing operation that the HBC organized to ensure year-round availability of goods. There is now no advantage in operating barge service to Fort George and the service has been discontinued. Goods are now more readily available in Fort George; there are more frequent changes in the goods available, and fewer prolonged shortages of parti-

cular items. Prices have, on balance, remained stable as inflation has absorbed any savings that might have been made on airfreight.

The Co-op Store

The Co-operative in Fort George is one of the few northern Quebec co-operatives which is not affiliated with the Federation of Cooperatives of New Quebec, which acts as a purchasing, shipping, and administrative arm for most northern community-owned stores. This Federation is composed exclusively of its own member stores, and is thus controlled by the people of the north. There is a strong sense, in the Federation, of Co-ops being community organizations.

The Fort George store on the other hand, has no other northern affiliates. Founded by an ex-member of the Fort George Roman Catholic Mission, it follows the practice of southern Co-ops in Quebec, started originally on the initiative of the Church. Individuals purchase memberships which entitle them to discounts on purchase prices, and some say in the policy of the store. Members include both whites and native people, but the strongest influence on policy is that of the founder.

The store is located opposite the hospital, somewhat removed from the small, native-owned grocery. It is the closest shop to

the white section of town, and is used by residents of that area as a source of small purchases (many of the whites order their groceries in bulk from outside the settlement). It is a small store, with a limited variety of goods. It does however, accept orders for large items such as canoes, outboard-motors, and snow-mobiles. It is also the only commercial outlet that sells locally manufactured products such as snowshoes, moccasins, and some articles of clothing. For a local resident who finds himself in urgent, immediate need of such items, the Co-op store is a useful source although tourists are the major market. It is also thus one of the very few sources for cash income (other than furs) which is based on local manufacture.

As a Co-op, the store provides a supply of products other than groceries and is operated so that any profits remain in the community. But the pattern of store operation is that found in church-affiliated stores in the south rather than that found in a northern native-controlled establishment. It is the only store in Fort George where at no time was there noted crowds of people hanging around, gossiping, discussing events of the community, or just maintaining relationships. All customers observed (except for the five to ten year olds coming after school to buy sweets), selected merchandise, gave payment, and left the store

immediately. Discussion of communication in this store follows that of outside commercial ventures, rather than the pattern of local native enterprise.

Webb's Lodge

This hotel is not the oldest pioneer commercial establishment in the community. It does however antedate the announcement of the Hydro-Electric Project, and the subsequent development.

The lodge is also one of the few institutions in the settlement that does not sell a product to the local populace. As a hotel, it takes in money from transients, and feeds it into the Fort George economy through salaries, some capital purchases, and through personal spending by the proprietor.

The lodge is classified as non-native enterprise, for the proprietor is white. Yet he is a permanent resident of the community, on a year round basis. He is married to a local Inuit woman, and his children participate in the community as regular residents. Unlike institutions such as the HBC, the various mission stations, or the hospital, the lodge is operated from year to year by the same person, and its managerial staff -- the proprietor -- is not subject to being transferred to a different branch.

As the lodge does not sell goods to local people, there are

few feelings locally that the lodge exploits them by charging high prices or by selling poor quality merchandise. Employment at the lodge is considered secure, the salaries good, and the working conditions quite acceptable. The net result is that relations between the lodge, proprietor, and the community at large, are good. Though he is not of local origin, and his kin and social networks are not structured like those of the native populace, the proprietor is accepted as a permanent resident, as a local person, with little resentment and few grudges. His sympathetic character has led to his being well liked by all.

The lodge is divided into two principal sections. There is the "old lodge", a large cinder block building containing bedrooms, the kitchen, dining room, storage space, and the lodge office. Here are housed mostly guests who are spending more than a few days in the settlement. They include government scientists, manual workers for corporations, and generally representatives of large organizations. Those staying here on a long-term basis may equip their rooms with televisions, stereos, or other amenities to make the place feel more like a home.

The second section is the newer one, and generally houses short-term guests, such as truck drivers, people in transit to outlying settlements, newly-arrived temporary residents who have not yet been set up for accommodation, and more. This section

has individual entrances to each room, in a motel-like layout. Units are fully equipped with bath, shower and toilet, affording a greater measure of independence to residents. The beds are comfortable, and the rooms have maid service as in an ordinary motel. Also as in an ordinary motel, the walls are very thin. The forced-air heating system, so necessary in the North, also transmits noise from one room to another, and gives an initial feeling of being in an audio goldfish bowl. Everyone knows what is going on in the next room. Often these rooms are the location for gatherings. The truckers for example, finishing a long journey, the native association leaders coming into town, etc, are all prone to boisterousness. There is less of a feeling of privacy than in a southern motel room.

At the "old lodge", visitors must pass through the front entrance in order to gain access to the individual rooms. In the new part, with its private entrances, this is not the case. And it is here that many transients welcome Indian girls, inviting them in for drinks, parties and sex. And many girls in turn, welcome the invitations, and expect to get something from the encounter, either alcohol or other pleasures. That the girls expect to be let in is manifest by this conversation described to the researcher:

Girl: Hello.

Transient: Hello.

Girl (giggling): How are you?

Transient: Fine, you?

Girl:- I want to come in.

Transient: Why?

Girl: It's cold outside. Don't you want to see me?

Transient: I don't know you. Who are you?

Girl (mumbling to friends): Come on, let me in.

Transient: Why? Who's there?

Girl (mumbling to friends): Open the door.

Transient: No. You won't even tell me who you are.

This carries on for several minutes, with essentially the same answers and questions being exchanged.

Transient: I have no reason to open the door, and until I do, I won't.

Girl: Open the door you bastard.

No reply.

Girl (mumbling to friends): You bastard. You're a bastard.

She mumbles some more, then walks away with her friends, and does not return for as long as she knows the same person is in that room.

Occurrences like this do not occur every night, for every guest. If a person stays long enough he can expect such a visit,

and if he is cooperative, he can expect return calls.

The proprietor is aware of these kinds of callers, and advises new guests how to discourage them. It is not in his power to enforce a no-caller regulation. For him the costs of these visits run from disturbed guests to broken furniture to virtually destroyed rooms. And often such action is unpreventable when the guests initiate the action.

Residents of outlying communities also use the lodge. Although they usually can find someone from the settlement to put them up, if they are unable to or if for some reason, such as wanting privacy or toilet facilities, they want a room, they do not hesitate to ask for one. The proprietor makes a personal assessment of such guests, and if the guest is judged unable to pay the regular rates, he may be given a reduction, even though he will receive the same service as the other patrons. The native guest can then be visited by friends and relatives at his own discretion, without having to inconvenience any hosts, and is also easier to locate than if he stays at some relative's house.

In this way the lodge provides an important service for travellers, from the south and from other settlements. It is one of the essential services contributing to Fort George's role as a regional centre. That it is accessible to local people is critical for the smaller native settlements.

The lodge proprietor performs other functions contributing to the regional centre role of Fort George. He often meets patrons at the airstrip, and gives them transportation to the lodge. He will perform minor activities, such as collecting or shipping freight for clients, or people dealing with those clients. He may lend his truck for use within the settlement to patrons in serious need of it. Or, with his knowledge of the settlement and of who is travelling through, he will help guests or local residents locate one another.

As a businessman the lodge proprietor carries out the exigencies of his enterprise. But as a long-term resident of the community, he goes beyond these demands in providing services which facilitate Fort George's role as a James Bay regional centre.

The Restaurant

The Fort George restaurant, almost contemporaneous with the lodge, caters to a large extent to a youth clientele. After school, during holidays, and on week-ends, young people gather here to listen to the rock and roll juke-box, to eat french fries, play cards, and generally hang-out. The seating capacity of the "front room" is small, with five counter seats, and five four-person booths. It is often overcrowded as more than 25 young people, generally in their teens, look in to see who and what is

happening. On winter days, when it is less comfortable to stay outdoors, the crowds are augmented, the cigarette smoke is heavy, and the place is stiflingly stuffy. The restaurant has low illumination, and coming in from a bright day, it takes minutes for eyes to adjust, and recognize who is there. Conversation is lively however even if one does not know to whom one is speaking.

For those who can afford more than french fries, there is another section of the restaurant. Known as the 'dining room', it has five more booths available for sit-down complete meals. This area is locked from the inside, and customers must be let in by a member of the staff after passing through the crowds of youths in the 'front room'. Even though the juke box may be blaring through a thin wall, the dining room provides an opportunity for isolation, and small groups may spend hours in this room.

The restaurant also provides somewhere for travellers from outside the community to eat if they are not staying American Plan at the lodge -- with all meals provided. Transient native people who do not want to impose too much on friends or relatives also eat here.

In interviews we asked what effect the advent of television had had on the number of young people hanging out at the restaurant. The feeling was that business had not declined. Though the volume

of foods sold has not depreciated significantly, the time spent in consuming foods by the younger clientele has perhaps lessened. The net result is that the crowds forming at the restaurant for hanging out purposes are still large; but they break up sooner, to pursue other activities. The restaurant has become more of a rendezvous point, and less of the actual hangout locale. It is a role that would be recognized in many southern restaurants catering to teen-agers (among others). The fact that restaurant staff is white does not affect the role they play in facilitating communication among Fort George teen-agers. They pass on messages and act as a store of information for young people on current community activities. Though it is not Indian-run, it is accepted as an integral part of local life by all young people.

Banks and Credit

The only chartered bank at Fort George is a branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. It is located in a trailer across the road from the Bay store, building F on the map of the settlement (Figure 2). It has most of the features of a modern bank, though for matters involving transfers outside of the settlement, it is somewhat slow. The manager is a local Métis, and all the employees are native people.

The bank has been a success with both the white and native

communities in Fort George. Saving account numbers numbered over five hundred by February 1976 and it is likely that this number has increased somewhat since then. Many (though not all) businesses in Fort George have established current accounts. The net result has been to increase the availability of cash in Fort George.

In the past anyone receiving a cheque had to send it to a bank account in the south and wait until notified that it had been received before using the funds. The H.B.C. would accept government cheques in payment of accounts, but was limited in how much cash it could advance against such cheques. The H.B.C. operation used to involve extensive advancing of credit to local hunters, but the granting of this credit was at the discretion of the local manager. He had to ensure that total credit outstanding did not exceed limits set by head office, and he had to be able to enforce repayment of credit. This was possible when hunters sold furs to the H.B.C., but more recently H.B.C. credit has tended to resemble that of other department stores. The H.B.C. also held some deposit accounts. But except for payment of store accounts, these transactions fell to the Bay by default, as the only organization large enough to handle them. It was not a profit making activity and the establishment of a bank has been welcomed by the Bay as taking a burden off the store.

A bank however, was an unfamiliar concept in the north, and was accepted with some hesitation. The Bay still keeps deposit accounts for a number of people hesitant to use the new facility. These people, out of loyalty, or perhaps conservatism, continue to use what they feel is a traditional practice. The store is quite willing to maintain this reduced banking load, as such people are likely to continue doing their business with the store.

The new bank, in addition to serving businesses in Fort George, processing payroll and Government cheques, and accepting savings accounts, also advances credit. Consumer credit can be used anywhere, including for the purchase of goods from outside Fort George, and for purchases that would not have been considered five years ago.

The great increase in the purchase of durable consumer goods over the last five years, and the increase in the use of credit, is only partly due to the existence of the bank. The increase in salaries, together with the increases in money spent within the community by contracting firms, research groups, government agencies, etc, and more recently by the Grand Council of the Cree, antedated the arrival of the bank, and encouraged the establishment of the bank. With a bank in existence, however, purchasing has been greatly facilitated, and the volume of

purchasing has increased faster than the increase in salaries.

In default of figures on the total savings deposits by Fort George residents, and on the total volume of consumer and business credit advanced to Fort George residents, perhaps the most dramatic illustration of a change in the Fort George economy and the role of communications in it, concerns the purchase of trucks. Their use will be discussed later, in the section dealing with the road to Matagami; here we shall look at them in financial terms.

Roads in Fort George demand the use of a four-wheel drive vehicle, if the owner is to use the vehicle for more than a few months in the year. Before the road to Matagami was opened in 1974, the few vehicles present were imported by plane or barge by businesses or by Government. Since 1974, the number of privately owned vehicles has grown to over 30, according to our informants' listing. Three types predominate. Over half are Chevrolet Blazers (or G.M.C. equivalents), with Toyota Land Cruisers, and A.M.C. Cherokees as alternative choices. The Toyota is the cheapest and most Spartan type of vehicle, but the Blazer's basic retail price is about \$8,000. As suggested, Fort George residents do not choose the most spartan versions, and with minor options and the cost of delivery to Val d'Or or Matagami, where purchases are usually made, the total costs must

average at least \$9,000. Assuming two year financing at an interest rate of only 14%, the monthly payment needed for such a purchase would exceed \$430. The total capital cost of vehicles bought since 1974 would approximate \$270,000 (not counting interest charges), at a time when the annual cash income of the native people was about \$2 million, average household income was \$5,130, and minimal expenses for housing and food (given inflated northern prices) were about \$4,260 per household (Hyman and Hyman 1972). "Disposable income" over and above these minimal expenses would have amounted, for the entire settlement, to about \$250,000 per annum. While in 1972 snowmobile purchases were estimated to have cost about 50% of all such disposable funds, it would seem that trucks and television sets may have constituted an amount greater than total disposable income in 1975 and 1976. Our inference is that the advent of more easily obtainable credit and of the possibility of using it in southern stores has enabled the rate of purchasing to go beyond the income of the community. Optimism about continuously rising incomes in the future is present, but it is not clear how well founded this optimism is, and a decline in incomes would now have disastrous effects.

Without the communications of the bank -- the transfers of funds, the telephoning of credit inquiries, and overnight communication of computer data -- Fort George's credit buying would

hardly have been possible, though the road and Anik are the obvious spurs for it.

Summary

The economy of Fort George has changed markedly in the four years 1972-76. Most of the changes have been in the direction of increasing cash incomes, increasing involvement in wage labour, and an increasing adoption of southern-style businesses. The increased cash available has most evidently been spent outside the settlement, purchasing new items of technology having to do with communications -- skidoos for local transportation, television sets following the availability of Anik, and trucks for use on the James Bay road, when once the road was opened for traffic.

These changes have gone alongside a major rehousing scheme that has made most homes electrically serviced and oil heated. The consequences of these technological changes will be discussed in later chapters.

For the economy however, what is clear is that the technological changes have made the community ever more dependent on its links to the outside world. The goods are imported from the south. There is minimal build up of repair capabilities for the high technology goods in the north -- even the stocking of skidoo

parts is restricted. Reduced transportation costs decrease the incentive for local production of goods and services -- the importation of pre-cooked Kentucky Fried chicken providing perhaps the extreme example, in a community where over 60% of the food supplies in 1972 were obtained from hunting.

Fort George as a relatively large settlement is in a favoured position to withstand this tendency for isolated settlements to become ever more unable to meet their own needs, as high technology goods are introduced. Yet on balance, it has not been able to do so, except to a very limited degree in snowmobile repairing. If a large community cannot succeed, how can smaller communities do so. And where the large community does not succeed, it cannot hope to become a regional centre -- except perhaps as the funnel through which local labour flows out to work in other centres (in this case, for the James Bay Project).

Chapter 3

Community and Regional Services

The provision of services in Fort George -- health, welfare, political representation, salvation, and transportation -- is sharply different from what it is in Paint Hills, the outstation we have described earlier. All the Fort George institutions number a higher proportion of administrators. All, including the Grand Council of the Cree and the Band Council, are branch offices, connected to head offices in the south. Some of them are recent immigrants to the community, some go back over a hundred years. And, except perhaps the Roman Catholic Mission, most are currently increasing the role which they play in the daily affairs of the community.

The Hospital

Perhaps the largest institution is the Chasapisich (Big River) hospital (Building M). Built in 1970, it is a 42-bed institution, with an admissions office, staff cafeteria, and many of the distinguishing features of a southern hospital. It runs clinics, delivers babies, and counsels the sick as part of its many services.

It is owned and operated by the Provincial Government in cooperation with the Federal Department of National Health and

Welfare, which is statutorily responsible for native health care.

The hospital serves the entire Quebec coast of James Bay, as far south as Rupert House with a series of travelling clinics; a team of medical people, or sometimes just one doctor who goes by plane from settlement to settlement, examining patients at the local nursing station. If a patient is diagnosed as seriously ill, he is sent to Fort George for treatment. Sometimes the travelling clinic is for general medicine, at other times a specialist examines specific aspects of health, such as respiratory, gastro-intestinal, and so on. As the Fort George hospital is not large, often the specialists on tour are brought up from the south, and temporarily stationed at Fort George for the time needed to examine all appropriate patients in the area.

The system of rotating specialists is the best available in the north since the cost of locating specialists there for only occasional patients would be prohibitive. But this temporary stationing can also lead to problems for local people. For example, a specialist was making a tour of communities served by the Fort George hospital. Accompanying him was an anaesthetist, also brought from the south, as it was deemed likely that the specialist would perform at least some major surgery. On this occasion no major surgery was required, according to local informants, but large numbers of patients were brought in from

outlying stations for small non-emergency operations that are no longer routine in the south. Local people felt that they were done as much to make the team's visit economical, as to forestall conditions that might create emergencies before the next surgical visit. They complain about having to accept whatever care is given, but accept it readily as it is all that there is. Decisions about care are made outside.

The nursing station at Fort George (R) does not offer another potential source of treatment. It treats minor ailments only, and passes anyone who is more sick than that to the hospital for care. It carries out preventive medicine programmes such as, in 1976 inoculations against hepatitis which had become epidemic.

Since 1970, people have had an opportunity to become accustomed to the ways of hospital care. Conversations with various patients coming in for initial care of an ailment have described waits of six hours before seeing a nurse or doctor. Illnesses such as colds or burns are now referred to professional care rather than being home treated, with a corresponding decline in the effectiveness of home treatment. For example, in previous decades, the native people in the bush took care of health and disease problems on their own, to the extent that one woman amputated a gangrenous leg with such skill that a doctor who saw the leg afterwards said that the operation had been done

'perfectly', even though it was done with a wood saw and medication derived from the forest. Now the people going into the bush are being provided with two-way radios, so that in case of emergency, they can radio to the Band Office for an airplane or helicopter to bring them to medical help. The use of patent medicine in the bush has increased radically, and the hospital and its doctors are seen as the final arbitrators over the health of individuals.

A healthy visitor to Fort George, from an outlying settlement, will stay at the house of a friend or relative, but is unlikely to entertain other friends unless they know the host. The individual who comes to Fort George from an outlying settlement to go to hospital is likely to be a focus of much visiting. Anyone from his settlement passing through will know where he is and will make a point of calling in. The patient will in addition be visited regularly by friends and relatives in Fort George, who stay for a bedside chat, and exchange of gossip and news. The patient is thus kept up to date on the happenings of his home settlement, as well as on the current events in Fort George. In turn, he relates this information to his guests returning to the settlements where they will pass it on. Through other patients, the events of other outlying settlements will also be fed into the information flow.

Though the availability of information, and the visitors present, clearly depend on who is in the hospital at any one time, the hospital is a highly effective centre for the spread of news. Its use as a maternity hospital ensures that there is a constant flow of news about births, and that mothers come and go after short stays. It is a major focus for Fort George's regional centrality.

Even so it has factors working against it. It is staffed almost exclusively by French-speakers, when no Indians speak French. It ties itself, through the staff, to the Quebec Provincial hospital system, sending patients needing more specialised care to hospitals in Quebec City as much as to those in Montreal. If patients who speak only Cree, or Cree and English, are sent to Quebec City where no one speaks Cree and very few people speak English, they feel they are being sent to solitary confinement.

The result is that native people do not feel that it is "their" hospital, but rather that it is a hospital for French-speaking whites that accommodates them on sufferance. This feeling is more acute among Cree from outlying settlements. If they can ensure that they are not sent out of the region for medical care, they will try to do so. The hospital at Moose Factory is almost as close to southern Cree settlements, and at

it there are both Cree and English speakers. Potential patients try to arrange their visits to the nursing station to fit in with flights to Moosonee rather than with flights to Fort George. Some even take flights at their own expense, so that they can appear as emergency patients in Montreal or in Moose Factory, and so ensure that they receive treatment there.

They can do so because Indian health is constitutionally a charge on the Federal Government, and is regularly provided either at Federal Veterans' Hospitals, or by the Federal Government repaying Provincial hospitals. The coordination between the Federal nursing stations and the Provincial hospitals is close, with the medical decisions usually being made by the nearest doctor, by radio or by telephone. What is discrepant is that the doctors' channels of communication upwards do not correspond with the communication fields of the patients. As indicated in the Introduction, the non-overlapping of channels of communication is a major reason for Fort George not being the regional centre it could be.

Le Direction Général du Nouveau Québec

The Direction Général du Nouveau Québec (D.G.N.Q.) is the Provincial Government agency charged since 1962 with administering the area of the province north of the Eastmain river. D.G.N.Q.

initially concentrated its efforts in Ungava and was not very active in the James Bay region, it set up its regional office in Great Whale River where the population majority was Inuit. In Fort George its solitary agent handed out welfare cheques and in his 1972 report he listed the clean-up of garbage as his greatest accomplishment. Few local people were aware of D.G.N.Q.'s existence as distinct from other Provincial personnel who lived near the hospital.

By early 1976 the situation had changed. The D.G.N.Q. staff included an agent, two secretaries, and a support staff of five. It occupied a large office in what formerly was the Fort George Bureau of the Grand Council of the Cree, and it ran a hostel building for D.G.N.Q. personnel in transit through Fort George. Fort George was still not the D.G.N.Q. regional headquarters however; this remained in Great Whale River. Airline routes and schedules make the hostel necessary for travellers to other settlements, and occasionally meetings are scheduled at the hostel, but the locus for any decisions affecting Fort George is the agency in Great Whale River.

D.G.N.Q. has become more locally active nonetheless. It produced an official zoning scheme for the community, rationalizing previously existing informal zoning arrangements, and it has enforced the scheme, preventing ad hoc developments by outsiders.

It endeavours to work with the local people and existing agencies, reinforcing their decisions and providing advice. Until the James Bay Agreement, it had full Provincial authority. But since the agency is supposed to be aiding the community, arbitrary action was avoided, and local initiatives supported.

The Direction Général du Nouveau Québec has developed from almost nothing in 1972 into an organization that is viewed favourably as one that enables native people to turn desires into more concrete realities. The agency is credited with informing the community about the existence and availability of the Federal Unemployment Insurance benefits, a knowledge which has proven quite fruitful in the community and raised some family incomes. This action has reduced the number of people on Quebec welfare roles, transferring the costs to the Federal from the Provincial Government. As U.I.C. payments are higher than welfare payments, people feel D.G.N.Q. is on their side as an information broker. The Quebec Government is increasing its budget for Northern Quebec and the acceptance of D.G.N.Q. by local people is of critical importance. A good job has been done. But the Provincial structure placing Fort George as dependent on Great Whale River does not help Fort George as a regional centre.

The Police -- Four Forces in One Settlement

During the periods that the native people spent most of their time in the bush, hunting and fishing in small groups, social control was efficiently exercised by the unit. Interaction was with limited numbers of individuals, and hostilities and tensions could be managed and kept at a level ensuring the safety of the group. Kin bonds also helped to resolve situations of stress. Visits by R.C.M.P. officers were rare, and when they occurred were not in connection with local disputes.

The traditional Cree and Inuit methods of social control were developed in and adaptive to small group situations. But as people tended to spend more and more time in the settlements, especially in the 1960's, these methods of control became less efficient. Increased interaction took place with persons outside of the kinship circles, interaction that was harder for the group to control. With the geometric increase in the use of alcohol in the early 1970's, the problems became even more acute. Minor incidents of fighting occurred and competition for alcohol supplies became a major source of tensions. In a community where virtually every male adult (and many female adults) owns at least two firearms, with ample stocks of ammunition, the potential for extreme violence is high. Fortunately the traditional methods of social control have not become completely ineffective, and

the traditionally non-violent native population remains basically peaceful.

The first major incident of violence occurred in 1972. An account is given here as it is felt that the context in which it occurred is extremely important for an understanding of how and why the local community communicates with law enforcement agencies.

A particular native person had become acquainted with a group of white workers living at the lodge. They each supplied liquor and beer, and participated in drunken parties together. It is said that when the Indian got drunk the whites would beat him up, demanding more liquor. This relationship carried on at least for a few weeks. One evening the native person, still intoxicated from drinking with them earlier in the day, became aware that his 'friends' still had beer left. He knocked at their room doors demanding a share, but they denied having any, insulted him and told him to go away. This carried on for several minutes, until he left. He went home and got his shotgun, returned to the lodge, and induced the whites to open the door. He then fired at them from close range, permanently disabling one of them, and injuring another. He broke into the Hudson's Bay Store looking for ammunition. A number of local people surrounded the store and waited until they could talk the man

into coming out peacefully. Radio calls to Great Whale, Montreal and Ottawa flew back and forth as local people wondered what to do. In the meanwhile, they locked him in the hospital basement until he could be removed by plane from the settlement.

The above account may not be entirely accurate. It is as recounted by a number of local observers, some of whom were participants. It indicates why Fort George people felt a need for a jail, and for more continuing relations with police.

The nearest police at the time of the incident was the Quebec Provincial Police unit stationed in Great Whale. With the temperamental nature of communications and transportation facilities between the two communities at that time, the Great Whale police were able to arrive only after completion of the incident, to mop up, take a report, and lay charges.

Two agencies were set up by March of 1973. By Provincial statute in 1972, Fort George became part of the James Bay Municipality and the James Bay Municipal Police was given the responsibility for law enforcement throughout the region. A local detachment was stationed in Fort George, which included one native constable and which at various times has had other native staff. The size of the detachment has varied between three and six and numbered four at the time of fieldwork, of whom only one was Cree.

A detachment of the Quebec Provincial Police was also established in the community and has numbered up to four members (all white). At the time of fieldwork it had no members, only an office. It restricted its role, in the words of one informant, to observation, while responsibility for day to day activities of law enforcement was, and is, in the hands of the Municipal Police.

These responsibilities are fairly straight forward. Incidents the magnitude of the one described are rare. Most of the work consists in taking drunks off the street and bringing them home. Stories are told of one physically powerful former native policeman who would take a drunk (sometimes two) under his arm, carry him home and tuck him into bed, with soft spoken instructions not to get out of bed until the individual concerned was sober. There have been few incidents of violence, where the officers have had to use force. There have been a number of accidental deaths to report on and investigate, one of which was said to have possibly been a murder.

None of the incidents have led to the establishment of hostility between the force and the local populace.

The third force that has been called in on occasion is the R.C.M.P. Complaints were made in a Band Council meeting about the availability locally of drugs such as marijuana, and although

no official request was made for an investigation, a number of officers of the R.C.M.P. flew in a week or so later. A full explanation as to why they were brought in, their presence being quite conspicuous, could not be obtained, though several informants were questioned on this matter. As the enforcement of the section of the criminal code dealing with drugs is a Federal one, it is apparent why the Municipal and Quebec Provincial Police were inactive, but it is not clear how the R.C.M.P. became aware of the problem. The R.C.M.P. visit proved ineffectual and no charges were laid. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise, when the outside force arrived conspicuously by plane, and when it had

no local officers with local contacts and knowledge.

Fort George's police force is larger than that in any of the small settlements to the immediate south. It could be the centre to which requests for reinforcements could come, should any small settlement be faced with a crisis like that of Fort George in 1972. But the Quebec Provincial Police is the force best equipped for rapid movement in emergency situations. Its regional centre is in Great Whale, and by the time of fieldwork it had withdrawn its personnel from Fort George. If it had to come to Fort George in an emergency, it would be in the same position that the R.C.M.P. was in, of "coming in cold", except that there is still a Q.P.P. office in Fort George. It would be no worse off in going to the smaller settlements, and a Fort George detachment would have no advantages. Fort George has not become a Q.P.P. centre, or a location for emergency equipment.

In terms of the Municipal Police, there has been a major effort made to recruit native constables, and to make the force a local one. This has extended to the smaller settlements, and Paint Hills now has one local constable stationed there. One or more Fort George detachment members did periodically visit outlying settlements for coordination and for discussion of problems of Band Councils. The potential for a local police force does exist.

It has been strengthened by the terms of the James Bay Agreement. This sets up (Section 19.1.3) a Cree unit of the Q.P.P. for the coast, as well as a part-time unit for Great Whale. These would be composed entirely of local people, and would work in close relations with Cree ~~Local~~ Community Police Forces, but at the time of fieldwork, the same problem of channels of communication not flowing through Fort George, but variously and with difficulty through other channels (principally Great Whale River) vitiated the potential of Fort George.

The Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions

The missions are among the older institutions in the settlement, the Anglican Mission being established in 1852, and the Roman Catholic Mission in approximately 1920. The dates are those when the first buildings were erected.

The Anglican religion had a good start in Fort George, and the missionaries did a thorough job. Virtually every native person in Fort George and its outlying settlements is a baptised Anglican. Until the late 1960's church attendance was almost universal, and even now attendance rates are high. The Anglican church is seen by the local people as "their church", and the minister at Paint Hills is a former member of the Fort George congregation.

But the status of Fort George as a local church, despite

being the largest congregation on the coast, militates in some ways against the status of a regional centre. The diocese of which it is part is that of Moosonee, and the Bishop of Moosonee, visits Fort George intermittently, probably stopping there more often and more frequently than he does at the smaller settlements, because of the better air service and more spacious accommodation. Diocesan meetings are held in Moosonee or in Timmins, and Fort George delegates attend on the same basis as those from other settlements. There is no need for Fort George parishioners to arrange for accommodation to out of town visitors as the Austin Airways flights go directly to Moosonee. As a relatively large congregation Fort George has a relatively senior minister, and to date that has meant that it has not had a Cree minister.

When the Anglican mission operated the largest boarding school in Fort George, this did constitute a facility that attracted people to the settlement, and to the church itself. In 1976 the first initiative in several years took place that might indicate an intention to take up the regional centre role again, this being the holding of a four week training course for catechists. Again, this revival may be seen as springing from the local activities in connection with the James Bay Project. The Anglican Church throughout Canada

took a firm stand in support of the native position, and backed this up with large collections in support of native organizations. The Church, in the minds of many older people, fulfilled a prediction that one of the respected nineteenth century missionaries made (Hyman 1971). He said that if the people maintained their faith, any crisis could be dealt with. Now that a major crisis has been weathered, there is some return of faith in the settlement.

As indicated earlier, there is a growing internal crisis of alcohol, drugs and violence. The mission has, all along, tried to offer counselling, to combat alcohol abuse, and to educate and reassure the individual. Local people have turned to the church for solutions to those issues. They are regional problems, and to the extent that Fort George can offer support and facilities to the smaller settlements, in relation to these issues, as well as merely being the location of a permanent minister to offer services when a local minister is not available, it may be able to develop a regional role. The cards, however, are stacked in favour of the existing Anglican regional centre of Moosonee.

The communications pattern of the R.C. mission is necessarily very different, for, as indicated, it has made almost no local converts in over fifty years in the settlement. It is operated

by the Oblate Fathers, and is run with the philosophy that it should make the services of the Catholic Church available in the area and there are now many French speaking officials in the area who do make the R.C. Mission their centre and that by working in the settlement, and showing that it is of practical service to the members of the community it will slowly convince people of the value of the Christian way of life. It started by operating a boarding school, which now teaches in French. It organises entertainment for the community, and the movie shows that take place in its hall are the best attended "ceremonials" in the settlement. It began practical enterprises that supported other local initiatives. At one time it tried to introduce vegetable growing under glass, but subsequently it encouraged the setting up of a co-operative providing the links to the provincial Desjardins movement. It operated a sawmill, and when house building began to concern the settlement it began a factory for the local production of cement blocks.

Though the intention of these projects was to aid local development and local initiative, their success has been mixed. Most of the projects were, in fact, directly organised by the Mission with mission staff or lay members operating the venture and supported by mission facilities and capital.

Local participation, except as workers, was small and the style of operation was efficiently commercial, and not of the style typical of local ventures. Local people felt that projects were making profits out of, for example, local housing projects and that these profits were supporting the relatively large staff (mainly French Canadian) that lived at the Mission. With the growth of secular business in Fort George, the Mission has reduced its involvement -- it now no longer works on Band construction projects, for example. With the growth of French-speaking personnel in Fort George it has become more clearly a parish church for French speakers, and its involvement with the native community of Fort George has decreased.

There has also been a decrease in its functions as a regional centre, for until 1973 it was the largest R.C. Mission among a chain of such missions on the coast of James Bay, each of which operated with a similar policy though on a smaller scale. Except for the mission at Eastmain all the others are now closed, and their properties converted for other uses. The Fort George premises are no longer part of a regional system for native people; by contrast the number of white visitors to the mission from other parts of Quebec, many of whom stay for meals or for lodging, has increased greatly. As indicated in the Economy chapter, it is through the Mission

that the largest volume of tourist sales of Fort George manufactures of beadwork or leather goods takes place.

Political Structures in Fort George.

Fort George has long had an Indian band council that has nominally controlled the community under the headship of its elected Chief. Advisory to the Band Council, although in effect its controller, has been the Department of Indian Affairs, through its Provincial office in Quebec City, and its northern regional office in Val d'Or.

In practice the Band Council office is the major administrative agency in the community (outside D.G.N.Q.) and officials of Indian Affairs visit the community only intermittently. It deals with day to day affairs through its secretary, and the part-time paid chief supervises and makes on the spot decisions that are needed. More major policy decisions are discussed at periodic Council meetings, and then sent to Val d'Or for approval or for further action -- thus a decision to plan for certain housing needs must go forward to determine how well the plan fits within budget specifications, or D.I.N.A. specifications for housing construction, etc.. Such a request may take a long time to go through channels or it may receive a speedy response should it coincide with what has been anticipated by higher levels of the bureaucracy. The Band Council offices work by telephone,

letter, and personal contact within the community, much as a municipal office works in the south.

The Grand Council of the Cree, also located in Val d'Or since 1975, is the regional political grouping of all the bands of the Cree who were involved in the ~~James Bay Project~~ negotiations. Insofar as it is situated in the same city as the Indian Affairs office, and insofar as it has air services and ground transportation that can link it relatively conveniently with most Cree settlements, the Grand Council appears now, in 1977, to be emerging as the major regional authority for native people. In 1975 it appeared as though it might make a major regional centre of Fort George, as has been described in the Introduction. In 1976, when the fieldwork for this study was undertaken, it occupied one room in the Band Office building, with one person answering the telephone, but with few local functions.

The story of this rise and fall of the Grand Council in Fort George, from 1971 to 1976 is focal to the question of northern communications, and thus will be dealt with in some detail.

In 1971 the first Cree reactions to Premier Bourassa's announcement of a James Bay Project were formulated at a meeting of chiefs from the separate settlements, which took place in Mistassini. The chiefs had rarely met officially, and the provincial Indian organization was still weak, but funds for the plane

travel involved became available, and a meeting was held. The participants included individuals who had been at high school together, and these same individuals, when the James Bay Development Corporation began a programme for informing native peoples of what was proposed, were nominated as "Communications workers" by the provincial Indians of Quebec Association. It was apparent to them that if they were to communicate native feelings to the Corporation, as well as merely telling Indians what the S.D.B.J. was going to do, they must develop means of consultation with all settlements, and among themselves.

The result was a series of trips round all settlements holding meetings, providing information, telling each isolated settlement what other settlements thought, and hearing what people felt. They met difficulties. Few people turned up for early meetings. Plane travel between settlements, from Montreal to the North, was much more difficult in 1971 than it has since become. There were no local offices or secretariat to prepare local arrangements in advance. It seemed a desperate and slowly moving effort to create links throughout a region to combat a menace that was felt to have all the resources of the Quebec Government behind it.

But by August 1972 the Indians of Quebec Association had developed a strong enough Montreal office, and had obtained

sufficient funds from the Secretary of State Department to prepare for negotiation regarding the Project. A Task Force of researchers, and the communications workers (including the present authors) flew to Fort George to investigate the social and ecological impacts of the Project. They recruited research teams in each of the settlements, and collected data that subsequently was used in the court case to halt the Project. Fort George proved an excellent central base.

As the court case, and subsequently the negotiations on an agreement gathered momentum, the research base in Fort George and the nearly continuous passage through of communications workers, negotiators, or research personnel made Fort George a major centre of I.Q.A. activity. The experience of makeshift means of communication, by word of mouth, by notes sent with plane passengers, by indirect radio contact, by begging rides on charter plane flights, etc, was critical in our understanding of the need for (but also the problems facing) communications within the region. The present research is an outgrowth of that experience, and especially the experience of the difficulties in obtaining effective communication from local people to the centres of decision making, when communications within the region are poor.

The latter problem was critical in mid-1974 in the setting up of a regional Grand Council of the Cree. Negotiations between

the I.Q.A. and the Quebec Government had become stalled, particularly, the Cree felt, because the I.Q.A. negotiations included too many Indians from southern groups such as the Mohawks or Hurons, who did not properly represent Cree views on critical issues. The Cree negotiators, ~~who had~~ at considerable personal costs maintained their links with their home communities, and had travelled back and forth between the north and Montreal throughout the two years of negotiation, became the Grand Council of the Cree. They took over the offices, in both Montreal and Fort George, that the I.Q.A. and its Task Force had set up.

The Fort George office of the Grand Council in 1975 was bigger than that of the Band Council. It both collected data from the Fort George area and from outlying centres, and analysed much of the data before transmission of it to the Montreal research centre. Meetings of representatives of outlying settlements could take place easily either before a negotiator had to fly to Montreal, or when a researcher, negotiator, or political figure arrived from Montreal on the direct flight. The radio-telephone system, though not giving as clear messages as the present micro-wave telephone system does within Fort George, enabled all settlements to listen in on each other's calls, and to receive messages simultaneously when sent from Fort George. Messages in Cree assuredly did not get understood by the Bell

Telephone operator in Alma, Quebec.

Use of the Fort George office continued through the period of later 1975 and early 1976, during which the terms of the Agreement that the negotiators had signed in November 1975, were submitted to all Bands for approval. ~~This was a~~ period of as much activity as any that had preceded it. It was clear that co-ordination of the views of all the coastal Cree settlements could be done there much more efficiently and inexpensively than it could be done in Montreal. Even the fact that the inland Cree settlements of Mistassini and Waswanipi necessitated awkward travel if they were to meet in Fort George did not at the time negate the value of the Fort George location.

But the greater ease with which the inland settlements communicated with the south, and the subsequent decline in the value of efficient co-ordination of native views, was apparent as soon as the Agreement was signed. Val d'Or was the Indian Affairs regional office, and all settlements had easier air links with Val d'Or than they had with any other centre -- even charter flights were readily available from Fecteau Airways in Amos. It was closer to the north than Montreal was, and Cree people would find it much easier to maintain their ties with home while working for a Council located in Val d'Or than when working in Montreal. Val d'Or now has a Cree suburb inhabited largely by the staff of

the Grand Council. All that is needed in Fort George is an office with a telephone, and someone to answer it.

The Band Council for Fort George now transmits information to the Grand Council of the Cree, which is also the coordinating agency for all the regional administrative bodies-- Cree School Board, S.O.T.R.A.C. on remedial works, Environmental Committee, Cree Regional Council, etc. This hierarchical structure is largely replacing the hierarchical relationship that Fort George formerly had with D.I.N.A., but in terms of it, Fort George is one of the several outstations of Val d'Or and has no claim to be a regional centre.

What were the grounds that led to the abandonment of the Fort George office other than the existence of the D.I.N.A. structure? Clearly most determinant was the pattern of air travel. The negotiators, more than anyone else, were aware of the inconveniences of unpredictable air travel, involving stop-overs. Fort George, as a later section will show, had improved air communications during the early phases of the James Bay Project, but by 1976 they returned to their earlier inconvenience and unpredictability. Val d'Or suffered neither problem, and links to all settlements were reasonably possible (though not necessarily convenient).

The highly improved telephone and telex communication of

Fort George with southern Canada neither helped nor hindered it in the choice of a regional centre. If telephone conversations were clear there would be no difference between talking from Montreal with Val d'Or or Fort George, and neither would have a competitive advantage. Clear telephone conversation to all settlements would, in fact, mean that no premium would exist in having any regional centre as an intermediary in communications from Head Office. As will be shown, however, Fort George had a very marked advantage as a regional centre when telephone linkage in the north was by radio-telephone throughout. The fact that some northern settlements remain unconnected to the micro-wave relay system provides no arguments in favour of Fort George as a centre, especially as Fort George has lost its radio-telephone links.

Could other communication links create a regional centre out of Fort George? At this point in time the answer is presumably no. Arguments of economics, and of geographical location all suggest that the point of centralisation of the fan-distribution of northern settlements is at the pivot of the fan. All settlements are potentially linked through the pivot to the source of economic goods in the south, all ground transportation from the south should pass through the pivot. Fort George is again an outlier, whereas the geographical pivot lies not far from Val d'Or.

How far Val d'Or is adapting to the role of communications

centre for the Cree (or for the north generally) is a matter for a future study. How far other media can be used to overcome the disadvantages to a regional centre that this study has isolated as being due to the absence of regional planning, and the independent decisions on communication channels made by different agencies, is a major question that we hope to study in the next phase of this research.

Chapter 4

Transportation and Communications

Air Transport

There are two scheduled airline companies serving Fort George, flying directly to four locations. Each airline has its own terminal building (Figure 2) at opposite ends of the airport area. The runway itself is of sufficient length to handle DC-3's and smaller craft. The surface is packed and graded dirt in summer, snow in winter, and mud in the spring and fall. During an early phase of the Hydro project, larger craft were landing at a new airstrip just off the island, and truck transportation had to be obtained to the settlement. Use of this airport was temporary however, and all flights resumed using the island airport.

Of the four scheduled routes out of Fort George, two are to connecting points to the south; one is to a connecting point for communities further north; the fourth is to smaller outlying communities.

The prime connecting point to the south is the airport at La Grande, the main construction site of the Hydro project. From here, 737 jets are available to Matagami, Val d'Or, Quebec City, and Montreal. This route is a relatively recent innovation.

Until late 1972, the traveller from Montreal to Fort George (and vice versa) flew Air Canada from Montreal to Val d'Or, and then connected to a Fecteau Airlines DC-3 to Fort George. Near the end of 1972, Nordair also began operating a service from Montreal to La Grande and to Fort George, ~~with the~~ Val d'Or and Nordair planes leaving Montreal at approximately the same time. The Fecteau flight to Fort George would arrive several hours later than the Nordair, it being a propellor plane, as opposed to the jet going via La Grande. Subsequently, the Fecteau service to Val d'Or was withdrawn.

The Nordair practice was discontinued in 1975, when it decided to terminate its jet from Montreal at La Grande. Passengers going on to Fort George had to connect to another Nordair operated plane (DC-3) to Fort George. The traveller from the south still has to take a minimum of two planes to Fort George; on the route via La Grande however, conditions of the transfer are easier than they were in Val d'Or, and less time is spent on the somewhat uncomfortable DC-3.

Nordair is thus the principal airline flying into Fort George. Its office at the airport is staffed by one full-time person, and two part-time people who are present for flight arrivals and departures. All its staff are native people. Fecteau, at the time of fieldwork, did not have full-time staff in its office

at the airport, but relied on the crew of its charter planes for servicing flights.

A secondary connecting route to the south is via Moosonee. At the time when most of Fort George's southern ties (Church, Indian Affairs, hospital care) went through Moosonee and the Ontario Northland Railroad, this routing was of greater importance than the one via Val d'Or. From Moosonee one could catch the train heading south towards Toronto, or one could fly to Timmins, and from there get flights to a variety of locations. The carrier to Moosonee is Austin Airways, and they have been running this DC-3 route without change since the early 1950's. The route is an important one for the Hudson's Bay Company, as it is utilized to import perishables to Fort George from H.B.C. facilities in Moosonee.

The plane from Moosonee continues on from Fort George for one more stop, that is Great Whale River, on Hudson's Bay to the north. Great Whale has its own direct jet service to Montreal, but this DC-3 route is rarely used to obtain transportation to central Canada, as the services are not scheduled to connect, but entail overnight stopovers.

The population of Great Whale River is mostly Inuit, which means that this route is not frequently used by Cree for visits to relatives, or for personal affairs. The major traffic between

the two communities is that of the Direction Général du Nouveau Québec. Freight carriage onwards to Great Whale of cargo originating in Moosonee is the major justification for the route. Until the advent of the James Bay road, Moosonee was the closest point to Great Whale reachable from the south by ground transportation and it is still the cheapest route. But should cargo transfer facilities at the northern head of the road in Fort George become sufficiently developed, the economics might change and make the road an efficient cargo route to Great Whale. This would depend on the construction of warehousing facilities at the Fort George airport.

The other local route connects Fort George to Paint Hills, Eastmain, Rupert House and eventually to Moosonee. The plane is usually a single engine Otter, capable of handling ten passengers plus cargo. In summer this plane lands on floats at Fort George in the river near the airstrip; in winter it lands on skis on the frozen runway. In recent years an innovation has been made on this route in the use of a de Havilland Twin engine Otter flying along the same route (except for the Eastmain stop), landing on the landing strips of the various communities. This service is provided only during the freeze-up and break-up periods, at a time when previously no planes could visit any of the smaller communities. The Twin Otter has a twenty passenger

payload, and is a comfortable plane, compared to the noisy and cramped Single Otter. It is unlikely however, that the Single Otter will be totally supplanted in the near future, as no other plane (except for the even smaller de Havilland Beaver) performs as well under adverse conditions, or on the smallest runways.

This route provides the only regular means of getting in and out of the smaller settlements. It is used a great deal by native people to visit family or friends, to go to events in neighbouring settlements such as weddings and winter carnivals. It is also one of the most irregular services of the various flights to Fort George, as its reaching any settlement depends on the weather over five locations. With the short distances between stops, and the smallness of the craft, the plane is not able to fly above weather systems. The plane leaves Moosonee in the morning, stops a short while in Fort George around 1:00 PM, and then heads back. If a prospective traveller does not wait at the Fort George Austin terminal (which can be closed for lunch until ten minutes before flight arrival), he may find that the plane has come and gone before he realizes it. With the other flights there is usually more stopover time, as there is more cargo to load and unload.

The Austin Airlines terminal at Fort George has thus to service both seaplane arrivals and those of the DC-3, and is

entirely separate from the terminal for the Fecteau and Nordair flights. It is almost as busy as the Nordair terminal, with more storage of goods awaiting onward shipment to the small settlements or to Great Whale River, and many more native people passing through when Otter flights are expected. It also is staffed by one full-time and two part-time Cree workers, and it is regarded almost as a Cree-operated airline, so much Cree language is heard in its operations.

The arrangement of the airport with two separate terminal buildings is not too inconvenient for the traveller originating in Fort George. Both terminals are within walking distance of town, while trucks and skidoos readily offer lifts to travellers whose hosts do not take them to the terminal. For travellers transferring from one terminal to the other the inconveniences are much greater. The part-time help unloads baggage from planes, but it is then the traveller's responsibility to take the baggage to the other terminal. There is no through checking of baggage, and neither airline has sufficient business with the other for trucks to ply regularly between the terminals. The traveller must often carry his bags the length of the airstrip. When he arrives at the other terminal he is likely to find it locked, as the terminals are opened to the public only shortly before flights are expected. The traveller cannot even leave his bags

under cover in the meanwhile. While these difficulties are not major obstacles, they nonetheless indicate how little Fort George is oriented towards taking advantage of its potential position as an airline interconnection point.

Nor do the schedules of the different ~~airlines~~ facilitate interconnection at Fort George. The flights in to Fort George from smaller settlements, if at all delayed, do not arrive in time for onward departure on the flights to Val d'Or or La Grande. The arrival of the flights from La Grande or Val d'Or is usually after the Otter has left the Austin terminal for the smaller settlements.

Besides the regularly scheduled flights to and from Fort George, charter flights are also used, primarily of small planes like Beavers or Otters. In autumn and winter, many families use charters to travel to the bush to go trapping. For government departments, companies, or native organizations that cannot depend on the uncertainties of the scheduled service, chartering is common. It may be less expensive, if a full load is carried both ways, but more commonly organizations fly charters less than full.

Charter planes are not available at all times of year. During freeze-up and break-up in James Bay, flight becomes risky and infrequent. So at the beginning of these periods the

companies often fly their craft south, where they can be used on a less sporadic and thus more profitable basis. Amos is the base from which Fecteau flies, and it is conveniently situated near Val d'Or. Timmins is the base of Austin Airways and their charter aircraft. St. Félicien ~~operates from its base~~ in the Lake St. Jean area.

At the time that this research was conducted there was only one airline company keeping a plane stationed at Fort George. This was Fecteau Airlines, formerly operators of the now defunct Val d'Or to Fort George route. They had one Beaver in Fort George, and a pilot who could take orders for flights, accept payments and so on. He operated somewhat independently, making his own decisions which flights to accept, whether payments could be charged or not, and when to fly south for break-up and freeze-up periods.

The principal obstacle encountered by prospective clients was that often the pilot was hard to reach. He rarely could be found in the official Fecteau office, and locating him could require several phone calls even if the plane was on the ground. This problem was compounded for residents of the outlying settlements. When Fort George had direct RT connections to the other settlements, the radio operator, receiving a call for the Fecteau pilot, could direct the call to where she knew he could be located,

or she could take the message and ask around, till she found someone who knew. Now a caller from an outlying settlement must first contact the Alma operator by RT, and give a number which that operator would obtain through the Val d'Or RT operator, who would direct-dial the desired Fort George ~~phone~~ over the microwave link. Neither intermediary would know where to redirect the call, should the Fecteau office not reply. The real problems of climate and equipment are compounded by the communications problems. It is largely a matter of chance whether a resident of an outlying community can charter a plane out of Fort George.

Even the need for an emergency service, from a local base, has not made Fort George a regional centre. Both the Department of the Environment and the James Bay Energy Corporation regularly use helicopters on the James Bay Project. They can be readily contacted with their excellent communications systems, and thus there is no overriding need for stationing an emergency plane in Fort George. They save the cost of emergency service, but hinder the development of permanent services.

There are no travel agencies in Fort George and it would be unlikely that one which tried to establish itself to serve the James Bay region could succeed (Austin Airways does not even accept collect calls from travel agencies). The operations of flights are too subject to random interference, sudden changes

in scheduling, or cancellation with no possible ways to inform those planning to travel. At present the traveller who wishes to have the best chances in arranging travel in the James Bay region must rely on his personal resources: contacts, information, and above all, patience. It's the only way to go.

The James Bay Road

Roads have been generally considered by western man as inert, utilitarian objects, which are traversed, which do not function. Behind this conception of the road as passive object however, there has been an understanding of the powers to affect which it possesses. We all are enchanted by the "Yellow Brick Road", and we know that "Country roads, take me home" is an appeal resulting from country roads having first taken the plaintiff away from home.

The average southern Canadian is limited in his concept as to what constitutes his part of the world by what parts of the world are accessible through means of transportation readily available to him. These areas are relevant components of his environment. And as the automobile is the most common form of transportation utilized, the boundaries of the Canada known by most Canadians are the furthest limits of our highway systems. The end of the frontier.

It was this realization that led the Federal Government to declare its intention to build a highway in the Mackenzie River Valley reaching the Arctic Ocean. And it was this realization that led the native people of that region to oppose this highway so fiercely. The highway was to open the area to "development", even though this was occurring at a rapid pace even without a Mackenzie Highway. But what the highway would do would be to enable the average Canadian to reach the north in the privacy of his own car, independently. It would enable smaller companies without large resources to provide their own form of transport to establish themselves in the north. It would remove the de facto control of access which existed. Past experience shows that roads drastically affect native communities, and their relations with the outside world. They are possibly the most powerful force for change among all communications media.

It was to an extent the realization of this impact of highways which led the Quebec Government to decide on a road system to transport materials for the James Bay Hydro Project, rather than using planes only, which some analysts suggested would be less expensive. But they would not have "opened up" the region for other projects.

Construction of the road began in 1971, when a winter road was cleared with ice bridges across the rivers. All rivers are

now bridged by permanent structures, and approximately fifty percent of the road is now paved. The road is designed to conform to Trans Canada Highway standards, and is thus not a bush or pioneering road. When completed, it will be a regular part of the continental highways system.

Although a highway system of transport was chosen for James Bay this does not mean that there is unrestricted access to the road for all motorists. Those wishing to utilize the road must present justification for the use, obtain a permit, and pass through security barriers at either end of the road. These regulations prevent both unauthorised visits to the construction sites, and to Indian settlements. Justification for visits is mostly for construction or enterprise purposes. Except for V.I.P.'s such as visiting dignitaries or businessmen potentially involved in the area, tourists are not allowed to enter. The regulations do not apply to Indians. It was the experience of this researcher in 1973 to have to devote four hours to the obtaining of a permit to travel a mere thirty miles along the road north from Matagami.

The skin colour of most Fort George residents usually serves as Indian identification for travel along the James Bay Road. When passing onto the controlled section from Fort George, a native person is usually waved on, without having to go through

formal security and permit procedures. In cases of doubt, identification could be requested however.

We have already described how Fort George people have used much of their disposable income and credit for truck purchases. With the small size of Fort George itself, ~~it is~~ clear that such major investment would be worthwhile only for use on the road going out of town.

Trips out of town can be classified under three separate categories. Firstly, trips to the south, mostly to Val d'Or and Matagami. They can be for shopping purposes, either food, appliances, toys, or liquor. This last is perhaps the most significant. No alcohol is legally sold in Fort George. Previously, travellers flying in from the south were restricted in how much liquor they brought by baggage weight limitations, and limitations as to how much they could personally carry. But a driver of a truck can park near the liquor store, load in crates of liquor, and does not have to carry it personally. Back at Fort George, he only has to unload the liquor at his home.

The relationship between road connections to native settlements and the amount of drinking in the settlement has been described many times. Native residents of Rapid Lake, Quebec, talk of piling on the back of a pick-up truck and going door to door

They date the alcoholism and drug use problems

of their community from when they were linked to the principal highway of Parc de la Verendrye. The people of Wrigley, in the Mackenzie Valley, argued against road construction on the basis of its influence on alcohol consumption, among other things, having seen what happened in Fort Simpson, ~~when it~~ became the terminus of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. And the dramatic increase in alcohol usage in Fort George which occurred following construction of the road to Fort George is more than coincidence.

As mentioned, shopping trips can be for a number of purposes. People may go south to buy Christmas toys, and they have found that it is cheaper to buy appliances in Val d'Or or Matagami and bring them up themselves rather than to buy at the H.B.C. A passenger or two will relieve the expenses such as gas costs involved in making the trip. If several such ends can be served by a single trip, the long drive and hard treatment of the vehicle are easily outweighed by the benefits. An estimate would be that an average of five trucks makes the trip up to Fort George every week.

A second category of use is the informal taxi service operated by native Fort George vehicle owners, mentioned earlier in this report. People needing transportation from Fort George to La Grande, to any of the other project sites, or to Matagami and Val d'Or, at a time when no plane is available (or who just

prefer travelling on the ground by truck), ask around the settlement until they find someone who either is going to the same destination, or is willing to take them for a fee. Fares depend on how well you know the person, and how bad driving conditions are. For example, the rate from ~~Fort~~ George to La Grande, a distance of approximately one hundred kilometers, can cost between forty and sixty dollars. At fifty dollars, this would work out to thirty-eight cents per mile, half the rate charged by Montreal taxis. Considering the higher cost of the vehicle, its greater proportional rate of depreciation due to the rougher roads, and the high cost of gasoline in the north, it is not likely that the northern drivers make a considerable profit on their vehicles. Such excursions provide ready cash, but are not yet businesses. They are still generally just a service to help out travellers in the north.

It should be noted that the frequent presence of vehicles from Fort George in Matagami, the southern terminus of the James Bay road, has given a greater freedom of movement to residents of James Bay coastal communities. The resident who has come south from his settlement by whatever means, now has a good chance of returning north again, independent of the expensive scheduled airline route by hitching a ride. A number of James Bay visitors to the south told us that if one goes to Matagami

and hangs around with the native people there, one has a fairly good chance of hearing about and obtaining a ride with a native person driving back to Fort George. Access from Fort George to the other settlements is not too expensive. This puts trips to the south into the realm of the possible ~~for many natives~~ who previously could not afford such a journey. In this way, through their own actions, rather than from southern initiative, Fort George residents have developed a regional centre. To the extent that Fort George has trucks available already, it is the ideal depot from which trucking services could be built up to serve all other intermediate centres.

The third category of trip is the transportation of hunting groups to their hunting territories (or as close to the territories as the road will take them). Trucks can be used for short expeditions or for taking groups out to their winter camps. A friend or relative owning a truck can make several voyages, to transport all the belongings of a group. Pick-up at the end of a hunting expedition can be by prior arrangement, or by flagging down a vehicle along the road. Since the mid-1950's many of the longer trips to winter hunting territories have been made by charter aircraft. The cost has been high, and road transportation promises major economies, even though trucks do not have access to all the regions accessible by bush plane. They can bring a

fair number of groups to within walking distance of where they had intended to establish camp.

The attractiveness of going to the bush by truck has begun to cause some problems however. A large number of inland traplines belonging to Paint Hills people are crossed by the Fort George - La Grande or La Grande - Matagami sections of the road. A number of Paint Hills trappers have complained that Fort George trappers have established camp in Paint Hills traplines without asking permission of the owners. This is a serious breach of custom and one which rarely occurred in the past. At the time of research its resolution had not as yet occurred, and it is not possible to describe its full ramifications. Easier communication is not without its own problems.

The converse, advantages for settlement dwellers, of the Fort George road and its trucks, should also be noted. A few Paint Hills families, in 1975 when the charter aircraft they had called for did not arrive due to problems with a late freeze-up, took the scheduled air service to Fort George and from there went to their traplines by truck. This was merely an experiment, but is likely to be repeated. It suggests that there will be much further expansion of road use, with feeder roads to other settlements, establishment of supply depots along the road, and eventually a scheduling of vehicles. Effects on the game, on fire

prevention and ecology, and on legal questions will all follow. The restricted use of the James Bay Road has already provoked major changes in native life. The changes are likely to accelerate, especially if the road is opened to public use.

That the changes need coordination, if they are not to be destructive is a main theme of this study. It is most evident in the area of freight, freight rates, and storage. Until 1974 the cheapest air freight rate to Fort George was 36 cents a pound from Moosonee. Air freighting was used only for emergency supplies, for perishables or for goods with a high value for weight -- every flight brought cartons of cigarettes for example. The bulk supplies were brought up to Moosonee by rail -- the only mechanised ground transport link to James Bay. The H.B.C. organised a system of barges that supplied all coastal settlements on both the Quebec and Ontario coasts of James and Hudson's Bay, during the summer navigation season. Stocks had to be built up during these months, and work unloading the barges was a major source of income during the summer. Figures of cost per pound of the barge service are not available but an estimate would be that it was about 10 cents per pound. It should be noted that the major element in this charge was not the distance from Moosonee, but the capital costs of the system, and the costs of loading and other handling. The intensive use of the barges

throughout the summer spread the costs widely. They were also relatively even for all coastal communities, large and small, close and distant.

Air freight costs from Moosonee to settlements south of Fort George were not greatly less expensive than the cost to Fort George, because of the smaller planes that fly the routes. Moosonee to Paint Hills cost 37 cents a pound in 1975, and as Paint Hills to Fort George cost 15 cents and Eastmain to Fort George cost 25 cents, it is likely that Moosonee to Rupert's House costs about 15 cents and Moosonee to Eastmain about 25 cents. All rates would have been higher than the barge costs. The barge system was the lifeline of the whole region, especially for heavy materials like fuel tanks or steel girders for major construction.

The road has altered the whole picture. Freight costs by road from Matagami (roughly equally as far north as Moosonee) to Fort George are 5 cents per pound. The H.B.C. has naturally ceased supplying Fort George by barge, though the barge service is still needed for points that are not served by road. Rupert's House is also linked to Matagami by a spur road. We can only speculate on the effects this has had on the costs of the barge service to the other points that must bear the overhead charges on reduced volume shipped.

Air freight rates coupled with road freight now suggest that Fort George should supply Paint Hills, that Eastmain should obtain supplies through Rupert's House. Great Whale River should also obtain its winter supplies via road to Fort George and air freight onward.

This fails to take into account both the possible future extensions of the road system, and the coordination needed. For Fort George to become an onward forwarding point for freight would require the stationing of a plane of DC-3 capacity in Fort George, as well as an Otter. We have earlier discussed the airline complexities that make this unlikely, especially as any road extensions would make the build-up of facilities in Fort George redundant. The other coordination required would be the construction and operation of warehousing facilities in Fort George, and then the linking of that warehousing with the agencies needing supplying in Great Whale, Paint Hills, and possibly even the Ontario side of James Bay. This could be done for one agency, say the H.B.C. (although even here the existence of the Moosonee base makes it doubtful whether the H.B.C. would wish to create another base at Fort George), but to do it for several agencies makes for greater problems. We have already indicated that the Province of Quebec has made Great Whale its regional centre; the Grand Council of the Cree has its centre in Val d'Or; the

links of the Co-ops in Great Whale and Paint Hills are with Montreal, and not with Fort George, which has its own direct links to Montreal. The probability of a Fort George warehouse being set up, and working effectively, is very small. If it is not set up, the freight connections to settlements further out are not likely to profit from the improvement in communications to Fort George. Nor will Fort George reap any benefits as becoming a regional centre. The only benefits will be felt in the manufacturing centres that sell more goods in the north.

The Fort George Telephone System

Communications into and out of Fort George have never been noted for their efficiency and reliability. Even at the time when the settlement had radiophone connections to the main phone network and to the other coastal communities, the radio operators of the other settlements complained that the Fort George operation was of poorer quality than the others. Calling Fort George from the other settlements was considered unusually difficult.

The coming of the Anik Telecommunications satellite brought to the north the expectations of regular two-way phone connections being established between the various settlements and the principal phone network. For native people with experience and knowledge of the south, the coming system was an expectation for amelioration

of communications technology. For others it was a rumour. The older people as a whole did not have anyone in the south to call (not that the younger people had many), and for them the more critical issues were greater reliability of local service, and better communications facilities with other settlements. The need of the native people for improved communications with the south had become apparent as local people realised the difficulties in informing even the Grand Council Office in Montreal of their wishes with respect to James Bay Project negotiations.

On the other hand, the desirability of direct line telephone connections was always apparent to the commercial enterprises in Fort George, and to the various agencies having branch offices located there. Government agencies, such as the hospital, nursing station, or D.G.N.Q. would be able to report regularly and rapidly to their superiors, and directives for action could be sent north and carried out more efficiently. Stores could contact suppliers, shop for better wholesale prices, place orders more quickly, and obtain better shipping conditions.

The improvement in communications technology could thus be designed in one of two ways: to serve the needs of the native people of Fort George, or to help the outside organizations located there. Or, both groups could be served.

Contrary to original expectations, it was not Anik which

improved telephone communications in Fort George. Rather, it was the installation of a micro-wave link by the James Bay Corporation to LG-2, to serve the James Bay Project. A further short link to Fort George now connects the community phone system with the national network.

This connection did not immediately follow the 1973 construction of the micro-wave link. The James Bay Development Corporation immediately, and without any complication of additional rate hearings or regulatory bodies, connected its own office in Fort George with the direct link to its LG-2 site. At that time the public telephone service was operated and owned by an independent subsidiary of the Bell system. All the northern Quebec localities using radio-telephone and connected to the Alma exchange in the Lake St. Jean area formed part of this subsidiary. All had dial systems within the settlement, but outside calls could only be made at the hours when an operator manned the radio-exchange, and all involved the complexities of poor radio reception in the north, and only one-way voice transmission at the same time (see Elberg, Salisbury and Visitor 1976 for a full discussion of these complexities). Yet despite the difficulties the system worked to the advantage of nearby northern settlements which could cheaply maintain radio contact with one another, and could monitor the gossip of all other settlements. Bell was not

prepared to give up its Fort George operations, and the S.D.B.J. could not arbitrarily take over a franchise that had been granted by the Canadian Transportation Commission.

Negotiations took a long time, as many possibilities existed. Bell could have paid rental for the use of the S.D.B.J. link; S.D.B.J. could have bought out the whole subsidiary (including other RT links); Bell could have obtained jurisdiction over the micro-wave link. During this interval the Grand Council office and that of the S.D.B.J. were the only ones linked directly with Montreal, with the rationale behind the Grand Council link being that it was involved with the S.D.B.J. in negotiations. It provided an emergency service also (at no cost to the Fort George community) for calls that could be routed through the Grand Council office, at least in the outgoing direction. The Cree became aware of the advantages of the micro-wave link (but not of its costs), while also becoming very scornful of the time-consuming delays of white people. Why, they asked, if the link is already in Fort George is it not connected with the local telephone exchange? The only reason they could see for the delay was that Bell Telephone and S.D.B.J. could not agree how to share the profits they would make from the better system, and for that reason local people had to stay with the old system.

The final solution, reached under pressure from the Quebec

Government, was the formation of a new Company S.O.T.E.L., with joint participation of S.D.B.J. (51%) and the Bell system (49%). But this new system does not connect directly in Fort George with the continuing radio-telephone network through Alma exchange --with the complications for calls from outlying settlements that have been outlined in connection with plane charters, in earlier sections. To us, the research group, it seems inexplicable why monitoring of calls from outlying settlements to Alma has not been continued in Fort George, by the Grand Council if not by S.O.T.E.L. The equipment to do so is in place, and trained radio operators are available locally. It is a relatively frequent occurrence for all James Bay settlements to be out of touch with Alma, because of ionosphere conditions, yet to be in touch with one another over distances of 60 miles. When this occurs, an operator in Fort George could then receive calls from outlying points and relay them directly into the S.O.T.E.L. system; if the calls were for individuals in Fort George they could be connected without involving Alma at all.

For all native people the discontinuance of the RT link has meant an increased cost. Calls to outlying settlements are no clearer than before since they still rely on the RT from Alma to the settlement; on the other hand they now must be paid for as Bell system long-distance calls, when radio calls completed

station-to-station without involving the Alma operator or Bell telephone lines previously did not entail charges. The rental charge for private phones in Fort George has gone up, since so many more phones are reachable through the exchange, even when the only customers wishing to reach those phones are the commercial or government agencies.

The operations of S.O.T.E.L. appear more explicable if they are interpreted as merely the first steps in introducing a universal micro-wave system throughout northern Quebec. In that light the present discomforts are merely temporary and part of a transitional phase, of switching to a better system. But again, the discomforts are felt in the least advantaged sectors of the communications network, and since no discomforts are felt by the advantaged sectors -- the government and business agencies -- the pressures to make the transitional phase short are very few.

Rumours do abound in outlying settlements that they will soon have the same system as in Fort George. In 1976 the rewiring of the internal telephone system of Paint Hills (necessitated by damp and faulty connections) and house-to-house calls asking houses without phones whether they wanted an installation led to the belief that a micro-wave link was imminent. In fact it was not until September 1976 that S.O.T.E.L.

representatives stated that a decision on a link to Paint Hills had to await an engineering feasibility study to be completed in spring 1977. Even if the study reported favourably, a connection could not be expected before spring 1978. If the study reported unfavourably, then no change could be expected at all.

The same representatives also stated that it is unlikely that the smaller community of Eastmain will ever get a micro-wave link. The transition is thus likely to last indefinitely for Eastmain, until the settlement either gets large enough to make a link financially viable, or until its residents become despairing of isolation and move away. Until that time the operations in Alma would have to be continued; a regional centre with local radio-telephone links supplementing the micro-wave system would seem more economical, and to offer positive benefits for northern communities.

The changeover to S.O.T.E.L. has meant relatively few changes in the operation of the local telephone system in Fort George. Even before the changeover almost every house had a telephone, and the local exchange was an automatic one, taking dialled calls. The local telephone repairman carried out minor repairs and installed or removed handsets efficiently. Major equipment defects rarely occurred, and even though they necessitated calls to Montreal and visits by specialists, they were

rare enough not to provoke much local complaint. The telephone is very widely used in Fort George, to locate other people, to make minor arrangements, and for general conversation. It adds greatly to convenience, without as yet breaking down the pattern of Cree users to visit other families to exchange news, having once found out by phone that the other family is at home. They are still "not as gabby as whites" over the telephone.

The local repairman still carries out the same tasks. His regional headquarters, to which he refers for major problems, has in fact moved closer to him. It is situated thirty miles away on the La Grande road at the checkpoint that screens traffic between the LG-2 site and Fort George. He should refer to this office all line routing, all billing, and all requests for new installations and disconnections. In practice, he can install or disconnect without waiting for headquarters approval, and thus the local Fort George system operates without major bureaucratic delays.

There are delays in connecting newly built houses or new offices with the system. These require additional equipment, which must be brought up from the south, while new line installation is also a matter for outside experts. Fort George, in effect, appears like a smoothly functioning outstation of the Bell system. But in becoming that, it has lost all the role that

it previously had as a regional centre. Besides its better connections with Montreal, and the proximity of the regional base at mile 30, it has lost a major part of its links with the neighbouring settlements.

Television

Fort George was scheduled, at the time when Anik television was first planned, to be among the first group of stations with antennae, though not in the most powerful group. The dish antenna was built on schedule, but C.R.T.C. approval was not given for the rebroadcasting of signals to local receivers. The reason for the delay was that Inuit in Fort Chimo objected in principle to any television transmission, for the potential cultural damage it could do to Inuit ways of life. The Cree in Fort George, although no less sceptical of white innovations and no less proud of their own cultural tradition, were not opposed to television as such. Almost all young people had had experience of television in the south, through schooling, hospitalisation, or visits, and felt that they were being deprived of something as long as television was not available. As we have already indicated for Paint Hills, older people looked forward to television as permitting them to better understand white people, and to communicate better with their children.

The existence of the antenna, and the fact that excellent pictures from a number of stations could be received on the monitors in the television control office (and watched if one was a friend of someone who had access to the office) excited great interest. As we have already described, sets were purchased and the actual beginning of home reception was eagerly awaited. The delay in making the signals locally available was attributed, not incorrectly, to white inefficiency and bureaucracy. We hoped that the delay would make it possible to study initial reactions to television in Fort George.

The C.R.T.C. hearings that finally approved transmission took place in Sherbrooke, Quebec in June 1975. Transmission began well before our study was authorized. Though strong representations were made by the lawyer for the Indians of Quebec, the permit was granted on condition that all the Anik stations broadcast equally in French and English. This is despite the fact that 1900 out of 2000 Fort George residents understand English (or have Cree-English interpreters at home) and a maximum of 150 understand French. The proportions of language groups are even more unfavourable to French-speaking in all other native settlements in the Northern Quebec Territories, though in the James Bay Project construction camps, and in Great Whale River the majority of white residents are French-speaking.

The Quebec Government has pressed for an extension of French into the New Quebec Territories since 1963, both by settlement of French speakers and by creating a French school system. Radio-Canada has also encouraged the expansion of French-language programming, and has been the representative for C.B.C.-Radio Canada in negotiations with the C.R.T.C. and other groups within Quebec. The C.R.T.C. decision in Sherbrooke could hardly have been otherwise given political pressures.

For Fort George the decision was an unfortunate one. Hostility towards French-speaking Quebecers was greatly provoked by the initial announcement of the James Bay Project, and by the authoritarian and insensitive actions of workers on the early stages of the Project, who appeared to say "the project must go through, whatever your local objections are, and without thought for local ecology". As indicated earlier, D.G.N.Q. has worked hard to remove this hostility, and smooth working of the negotiations between the Cree and the Quebec Government have encouraged collaboration, but the merest hint of similar authoritarianism or insensitivity can provoke the same hostile reaction. Television, with its large proportion of French-language programmes that are unintelligible to most audiences, acts as a constant reminder of earlier wrongs that French-Quebeckers did to the Cree.

The scheduling of programmes for rebroadcasting is potentially a matter that could be within local jurisdiction. C.B.C.-Radio Canada transmits several signals on different channels to the Anik satellite and all these (plus other signals on other channels) can be received in the television control office in Fort George. Potentially too there seems to be no technical obstacle to locally produced signals (e.g. film or videotape) being rebroadcast by the local station. In practice, a schedule of what programmes are to be rebroadcast is sent out from Montreal to the person in charge of the Fort George television office. That person ensures that switching is done in accordance with the schedule sent up from Montreal. In view of the local antagonism created by the existing programming, and the pressure that there would be on a Cree station official to alter the programming illegally, it is not surprising^{as we have indicated earlier} that the individual with whom Radio-Canada has contracted to effect the channel switching in Fort George, is the H.B.C. manager. Widely respected in the community, but also largely immune to community pressure, he is believed when he says that he is just "doing his job". He can listen to complaints, but is obviously not the channel for those complaints to be turned into action. This will have to be through community representations at successive C.R.T.C. hearings on licence renewal, presented by the legal

counsel for the Cree.

The strength of Cree feeling on the matter can be illustrated from examples that occurred during fieldwork. Watching the C.B.C. National at 11:00 PM is a regular activity in many households; any overtime on the news can lead to its being cut off in the middle at an exact moment in time in favour of a French talk-show. Great anger occurs among audiences that want to know the final answer on a news item, that was obviously significant or the news would not have been lengthened on that occasion.

A C.B.C. programme that is popular among the Cree is the one called "Forest Rangers". It is about a group of boys living on their own in a small town in the bush of northern Ontario. They are friends with the local Rangers, with whose station they have two-way radio contact, as well as with the police, and local Indians. They are particularly close to one member of each of these groups, and the shows illustrate how all groups can work together to solve predicaments that are highly possible in the north. The programme has various didactic themes, taking up the dangers of wounding but not killing game, of carelessness with fire, of rabies, or of not cooperating in the bush. It teaches lessons adult Cree endorse, is humorous, and shows life in the forest situation. It is especially aimed at children, showing them as interacting meaningfully with adults. In the

south it was shown at 4:00 PM; in Fort George it is shown at 3:00 PM, and a French programme comes on at 4:00. Adult Cree watch the programme, and some children would run home from school to catch the last few minutes; but most children could not get home from school in time for the programme.

Special programmes in French appear to Cree to be publicized in advance, so that switching to them can occur officially, while special programmes in English, outside the regular schedule but advertised on the regular network (two hour specials of "\$6,000,000 Man" or "Cannon", for example) are not notified in advance, and the extra portions are switched to regularly scheduled French-language programmes. The example of switching to French that we received most comment on was ^{as indicated earlier} the Conservative Party leadership convention. It was presented exclusively in French, and took up much of the broadcasting time of the days it was on. It would be clearly desirable that local people become more familiar with the national political scene, but at least half of the programming should have been in English. The entire broadcast showed people talking, and the only action understood by a non-speaker of French would have been the cheering demonstrations. Cree families were interested in hearing about Canadian politics, but learned nothing from the convention, becoming rapidly bored by the changing unknown faces, the

incomprehensible sounds and gesturing, and the moving lips of English-speakers being simultaneously translated into French. Their reaction was not to want to learn French, but to become more hostile to French-speaking Québec.

-- It is our impression that a larger proportion of French programming is of talk shows. Talk shows in a foreign language, without any action or scenery that can be intrinsically interesting, do not provide any incentive for a non-speaker of the language to learn that language; they merely provoke disinterest. The one French language show that has action and which many Cree watch is the late movie. This could be a vehicle for inducing more learning of French. Even so the predominant reaction is to ask why there is never a late-night movie in English.

It is indeed fortunate that the one universal programme that suits its audience whether shown in French or English is an action programme -- Hockey Night in Canada.

All this is not to say that the Cree are happy about English-language programming. The base station for the English-language programmes for New Quebec Territories is C.B.C. St. John's, Newfoundland. Newfoundland local news, weather and regional interest may be crucial in Churchill Falls and Labrador City, and may be of considerable interest and concern in Fort Chimo, Schefferville, and Wabush, but they are largely irrelevant to

Cree who are more closely linked to northern Ontario.

Local access to the broadcasting transmitter is an increasing concern. The Cree were given a pre-recorded tape on health measures to use to avoid a disease that was then becoming epidemic in Fort George, and wished to use ~~the~~ local station to reach every individual in the community with it. They were denied access, ostensibly on technical grounds. Our own inquiries subsequently indicated that if there were indeed technical grounds at the time, these obstacles could be quite simply removed, and their existence was only because no local inputs were envisaged in initial planning.

Although television is readily accepted, and in many ways is seen as making life in the community more pleasant, for children and for old people alike, the way it has been implemented has made people feel more dissatisfied. It has made them more aware that they do not control what is made available for them to see, and that no channels seem to exist through which to voice their complaints; it has served to exacerbate relations with French-speaking Quebec, with a constant nagging dissatisfaction. Until some local control over programming is instituted, there is likely to be a growing Cree feeling that no respect is given to their feelings.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

As the previous chapters have evolved, the depressing picture of why Fort George has not become a regional centre has emerged. It has not been a story of the regional-centre roles being taken by a different locality in preference to Fort George, but rather one of a series of individual factors all causing one activity to be withdrawn from Fort George, in such a way that nowhere in the North has a regional centre emerged, where to multiple facilities are fairly close both residents of the centre, and, even more importantly, to residents of other smaller settlements. The communication links that have been strengthened have been those leading to the major cities; strengthening them has been at the expense of strengthening links between neighbouring settlements, since the increased ease of communication southwards has resulted in the atrophy of previous links that connected laterally and were of no interest to southerners. To review the fields in which the pattern has been repeated would merely be to repeat the message of the study.

The recipe for solution of the difficulties given in the introduction -- explicit planning within the region by local people, so that the currently divergent patterns of regional communication by each medium come together to create some

regional centre -- are a long-term, but currently unlikely solution. Such planning would not necessarily make Fort George the centre, though Fort George would have to be considered a candidate. Good grounds for Val d'Or being chosen, or possibly Matagami, have been indicated. The possibility that Radisson might become such a centre was envisaged in 1972 (Salisbury et al) though its lack of any Indian population makes it inappropriate as of 1977, and its size after James Bay Project construction ends is likely to be below that of most Indian settlements.

Instead of discussing the unlikely event of coordination, this concluding chapter will try to indicate how, given an overall intention of there being a regional centre in the New Quebec Territories, slight changes in policy in a number of different areas, could ensure that a centre emerged at Fort George. Theoretically, other places might have more claims to centrality; it is merely that our study allows us only to talk from a Fort George basis, and other studies of other centres would be needed before their claims could be discussed.

Reinstallation of an RT station, monitoring calls from other settlements in the region, and available for calls to those settlements is a first simple step. The RT station would not have to be operated by a S.O.T.E.L. operator, but could be located in, say, the band office, with the operator an employee

of the band. In effect, Fort George band office (or perhaps the Grand Council office) could constitute itself a no-charge agent for relaying calls to other settlements, whether it did this by recording calls, or by some sort of manual exchange connection to a S.O.T.E.L. line in Fort George. This would certainly assist in making Fort George the emergency centre for the coast.

The two main types of emergency are those relating to medical needs or to non-availability of particular items of equipment (e.g. skidoo parts) in outlying settlements. Fort George suffers in that it does not regularly have a plane based there, although it has almost enough charter business to make economical such a basing year-round, except for freeze-up and break-up. Guarantees of sufficient charter business would require minimal risk (again this might be borne jointly by all Cree bands) especially if, for example, more regular medical visits to outlying settlements became systematically planned, and if, say, the bank in Fort George could be persuaded to start a flying banking service to settlements. Such visits, originating in Fort George and returning to Fort George would only be possible if a plane were available in Fort George; otherwise the use of scheduled services to outlying settlements would require overnight stops of personnel and this would be prohibitive.

If, in fact, more frequent flights from Fort George were available, then there would be much more incentive for settlements to order goods from outside, that would be routed through Fort George (especially as banking services extended from the Fort George bank would presumably act, as in ~~Fort George~~, to make credit buying much easier). This in turn, could tip the balance for the setting up of effective warehousing and terminal facilities, for Fort George to become a much larger supply base for the region.

Should this occur, the demand from outlying settlements would clearly be for routes for ground-travel access to Fort George. There is experience in several provinces (especially in Manitoba) of the clearance of well-used winter roads, suitable for snowmobile traffic, perhaps towing sleds. At present it is a hardy soul that makes the trip by snowmobile along the coast from Fort George to Paint Hills, for the trail is not clearly marked at all points, nor is it wide enough or gentle enough in its gradients and crossings to readily permit the towing of a sled. Upgrading of the trails to "road" status would represent a major change in the economics of inter-settlement travel.

It would also inevitably lead to an overall plan for eventual connection of all settlements to the Fort George-Matagami road, at least during the winter, as well as to each

other. Such a plan, made right now when the warehousing facilities at Fort George are rudimentary, would inevitably be a plan of fan-like routes, centering on Matagami; made at a later date, in coordination with a deliberate development of Fort George as a regional centre, it could well strengthen ~~the~~ connections between coastal settlements rather than separate them from each other while linking them all to the south.

But if road planning for the region should clearly involve Matagami, the same is true of air service. The presence of a plane in Fort George, and more frequent flights to Paint Hills, Eastmain, and Rupert's House suggests that a service stopping at all settlements and then going on from Rupert's House to Matagami, in the morning, and returning in the opposite direction in the afternoon would be a well-used service. It would connect passengers from small settlements with ground transportation to Val d'Or. It would enable such activities as flying banking service to stop in Paint Hills on the morning run south, but to return on the afternoon run north; on alternate weeks it might do the same to Eastmain.

The relationship between Fort George and Great Whale River could well be re-examined, should Fort George show signs of becoming a Cree regional centre. The large advantage of Great Whale is its all-weather airstrip, built when the DEW-line station

was established there. At some point, perhaps when Fort George is relocated off Governor's Island, the upgrading of Fort George airstrip might be financially justifiable. That point would be much more likely to come should the Québec Government decide to decentralise its operations from Great Whale, or even to institute a southern region for D.G.N.Q., stopping at 55-degrees North. If such a decision were considered, then Fort George, with an all-weather strip would be a good candidate for a regional headquarters.

The last candidate for regionalisation would be the television programming. An immediate step that could be taken would be to make Timmins the C.B.C. English language base for programmes rebroadcast in the James Bay area. Critical is the question of weather forecasts. Those giving forecasts for Labrador talk of weather that has already passed James Bay; those for Timmins are much closer to local weather -- an important item of news in the north -- and in fact relate to the direction the weather comes from. Almost as critical is the fact that Timmins is in the same time zone as Fort George. It may well be time-zone differences which cause the unfortunate timing of "Forest Rangers" that we have already noted.

Of greater long-term significance however, is the demand by local people that greater choice be given to communities themselves

to schedule their own programmes -- to decide which of the available signals from Anik shall be locally rebroadcast, and to be able to use some of the time of the local station for the rebroadcasting of video-tape, or film material either produced or-obtained locally. Video-tape training ~~has been~~ acquired by many Cree during the years of inter-community discussion and negotiation over the James Bay project. Local news in Cree (and English perhaps) could well be produced in one or more settlements -- and here the stationing of a plane in Fort George could be critical -- and flown to other settlements for them to use in their own transmissions. The items of common interest are so many -- news of individuals, of the actions of the Grand Council, of fur prices, of the state of air travel at break-up and freeze-up, of prevalence and movement of game -- that it is easy to envisage daily showings of such a taped Cree news. Information from other Indian and Inuit communities across Canada would supplement such news. This too is an area of planning that is clearly within the purview of the Cree Grand Council, should it set up a Native Communications Society for the Cree. But once again we return to our initial argument -- to set up such a society without also taking into account the relations between television programming, air service to distribute tapes, ground transportation of people, and the linkages needed to ensure that

spare parts and repairs are speedily made in the difficult northern environment, is likely to be less productive of regional interrelationship than it otherwise would be.

All of the individual changes here described would contribute to more lateral communication in the ~~James Bay~~ region; taken together they could go a long way to creating the regional centre that our study has shown to be lacking.

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