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COMMINTERPHONE  
RANKIN INLET

A  
Report of  
Research  
for  
The Department of Communications  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for Comminterphone was developed by Mr. Paddy Gardiner of Bell Northern Research Limited, now on secondment to the Department of Communications, Northern Pilot Project. He visited the Arctic Research and Training Centre in Rankin Inlet to discuss with K. G. Williamson the present and potential impact upon northern people of advanced communications technology. The Comminterphone experiment was an outgrowth of these discussions.

The enthusiastic support of Mr. Richard Gwyn, Director of the Social/Economic Planning Branch, is worthy of special note, as is the interest and assistance of Miss Heather Hudson, the Department's Communications Research Consultant.

Mr. John Gilbert, Manager of the Northern Pilot Project, has taken a keen interest in the Comminterphone experiment and his co-operation and assistance is appreciated.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1971 Bell Canada, Bell Canada Northern Electric Research Limited, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation co-sponsored a community communications experiment in the Arctic settlement of Rankin Inlet, N.W.T.. The project is intended to achieve a greater sense of participation and sharing in local affairs and an increased rate of information flow within the community.

The experiment consists of a CBC type Low Power Relay Transmitter connected to the switching equipment of the local telephone exchange. By dialing "0" a participant can connect with the transmitter equipment and broadcast to the community. The system will handle up to four participants simultaneously on a conference circuit. Reception is via a standard household AM radio receiver tuned to 1110 kilocycles.

Installation of the equipment began on October 19, under the direction of Mr. Paddy Gardiner of Bell Canada Northern Electric Research Limited, and was completed by October 22, 1971.

On October 1, 1971, the federal Department of Communications contracted with the Institute for Northern Studies, University of Saskatchewan to conduct an evaluation of the experiment. The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- i) Identify present communications structure and dynamics in Rankin Inlet.
- ii) Document any possible changes in this structure as a result of Comminterphone.

The procedures as outlined in the contract are to:

- i) Map present social information network.
- ii) Monitor usage and performance of Comminterphone.
- iii) Document changes in social information network and determine user satisfaction by observation and interview.
- iv) Evaluate the impact of Comminterphone on the community and individuals (preliminary only).

The Comminterphone experiment is now a part of the Northern Pilot Project of the Department of Communication which consists of a series of experiments to provide a range of social communication systems to residents of selected isolated communities. The experiments are designed to provide data on the suitability of various hardware configurations and usage techniques in meeting the social communications needs in remote areas.

The evaluation presented in this report brings forth several conclusions on the performance of Comminterphone and makes recommendations for changes in the experimental format to improve social communication in Rankin Inlet.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Comminterphone has functioned as an intra-community medium, as was intended by its designers. As such, it appears to hold promise for meeting some of the needs for entertainment, information, and discussion, which are especially important in an isolated community. However, it should be noted that many of the socio-political problems of a community such as Rankin Inlet are a function of physical isolation, and other types of communications systems would be needed to alleviate such problems.

2. The responses to the questionnaire indicate that Comminterphone may play a significant role in giving voice to the Eskimo community. A significantly greater proportion of Eskimo speakers than white speakers felt that Comminterphone has given them an opportunity to express their views when otherwise they would not have spoken up and that this expression of their views had some impact on the community.

3. The basic social information networks in Rankin Inlet reflect both traditional and recently-developed patterns of social organization, and are divided along cultural and linguistic lines, although several formally organized groupings provide some limited opportunity for cross-cultural interaction. Within each of the major cultural

segments of the settlement exists a network of formal and informal opportunities for interpersonal communication and interaction. Comminterphone, during its short span of operation, has had little apparent effect on the adequacy and efficiency of the pre-existing networks although a significant number of Rankin Inlet residents feel it has a potential effectiveness in such a role, given a greater degree of internal organization.

4. An intensive forty-day period of monitoring Comminterphone revealed a two-phase pattern in its utilization. The "novelty" phase lasted for about three weeks and contained a relatively large proportion of community announcements and spontaneous conversation broadcasts. The "entertainment" phase began in mid-November and continued through until the research assistant left the community in early February. Community announcements and spontaneous conversation declined in frequency, while the broadcast of recorded music increased with the acquisition of an 8-track tape recorder which was connected directly to the transmitting equipment. Throughout the period of observation, utilization time comprised about 15 percent of the total time available. Twenty percent of this time was used for information and discussion; 80 percent was devoted to entertainment.

5. The community is enthusiastic about the role of Comminterphone as an entertainment and information medium, but is as yet unsure of its performance as a cross-cultural and intra-cultural communications medium.

Comminterphone has apparently been successful in achieving the originally-stated objective of "an increased rate of information flow within the community". There has not yet been any observable effect in achieving the second stated objective of "a greater sense of participation and sharing within the community". It is, of course, too early to evaluate the full potential of Comminterphone as a community communications device.

6. A Policy Committee was formed to guide the operation of Comminterphone but as yet has not been fully effective. The most significant problem appears to have been uncertainty about its role and the opportunities available to it. It has not been able to deal satisfactorily with the problem of irresponsible adults and children abusing the system. Further, the Committee is not equipped to deal with such technical problems as incidental interference by Comminterphone with other radio operations, such as the K.C.N.P. high frequency radio system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In recognition of the fact that the community's response to Comminterphone is at present in an intermediate phase, but definitely indicating a desire for a more organized operational format, it is recommended that the project anticipate these trends by assisting the community in developing plans for the second phase of operation.

Thus it is recommended:

- a) that the termination of the project be left open-ended (within the licensing constraints, of course) and the experiment be continued at least to the completion of one full year--that is, to the end of October 1972, and possibly beyond;
- b) that liaison be established between the Comminterphone Policy Committee and some individual or agency in southern Canada with experience appropriate to the provision of programming assistance;
- c) that this individual or agency act as a resource input to assist the Policy Committee to develop an amended operational format by helping it to identify its programming desires and by providing technical assistance in scheduling and acquiring program materials; and

- d) that the Department of Communications seek means to assist in the implementation of the next phase in the form of funds to support a local broadcast co-ordinator on a full-time basis for a trial period of at least three months.
2. The amended format should continue in an experimental mode, and should be implemented during the last five months of the present experimental period, and should be monitored and analyzed for a minimum of three months before an evaluation is made. It is important to stress, considering the recommendations for the more organized format, that the project be recognized as an experiment, perhaps under the aegis of a research facility, to accommodate licencing requirements.
  3. To permit the community to better plan its operation of Comminterphone it is recommended that it be advised, as early as possible, of the requirements of the experimental licence and informed of the expected duration of the experiment.
  4. It is recommended that, beginning prior to full implementation of the amended experiment, research continue on the documentation and analysis of existing social information networks.

5. To assist in the development process assistance should be provided to:
  - a) correct the existing technical difficulties with the equipment; and
  - b) install an automatic monitoring device, thus releasing research personnel for other investigative work.
  
6. It is recommended that:
  - a) copies of this report be provided to the following agencies in Rankin Inlet:
    - i) the Comminterphone Policy Committee,
    - ii) the Settlement Council,
    - iii) the Rankin Inlet Community Association,
    - iv) the school, and
    - v) the community library; and
  - b) that funds be found for the local preparation and production of an Eskimo language digest of this report.
  
7. Prior to final release of this document the people of Rankin Inlet should have an opportunity to review it and their comments and criticisms should be appended.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was divided into two phases. The first phase involved the description of the present social information network and the monitoring of the usage of Cominterphone. The second phase involved the documentation of the user response to the experiment. Within the limited time available a research assistant, Miss Jennifer Evans, with background training in sociology, was established in Rankin Inlet from October 13, 1971 to February 2, 1972. During the course of this field work data were collected, by interview and observation, on the patterns of the present social information network. A brief preliminary description of this network is included in this report. In addition, approximately 90 percent of all transmissions were monitored during a selected forty day observation period beginning on October 20 and ending on December 7. Each day's monitoring period bracketed the time during which most usage would occur, from mid-morning to late evening. The monitoring recorded date, time, duration, and content of each transmission. It also recorded the name of each speaker and subject discussed during periods in which conversations were transmitted. Most conversations were recorded and those in the Eskimo language were translated into English by a local assistant, Mr. Paul Angutik Tugak.

To document user satisfaction, a questionnaire was developed and administered to every second household in the community. The results of this questionnaire are analyzed in detail later in this report.



## EXISTING SOCIAL INFORMATION NETWORKS

### Introduction

Social information networks normally operate within or reflect social organization. Some are quite formal, obvious, and easy to document. Others are diffuse and more difficult to identify and describe. Interpersonal communications are bounded by, among other things, language, semantics, experience, organizational context, and opportunity. They can take many forms and occur under a variety of favorable and unfavorable conditions.<sup>1</sup> The limited time available for this evaluation permits only a rudimentary description of the social information networks in Rankin Inlet.

It must first be recognized that Rankin Inlet is physically isolated, lying some one thousand miles from the mainstream of social and economic intercourse of southern Canada. Its linkages with the "outside" world are tenuous and intermittent at the best of times. An unreliable thrice-weekly air service<sup>2</sup> carries passengers, mail and freight between Rankin Inlet and Churchill,

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<sup>1</sup> Beckenback, E.F., and C.B. Tompkin, Ed., Concepts of Communication: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Mathematical, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1971, pp. 35-45.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning in January 1972, this service has been reduced to twice-weekly flights.

Manitoba. A high frequency radiotelephone system is operated by Bell Canada from its base in Churchill. The system is used for communication between Rankin Inlet and other Keewatin settlements and with southern Canada. However, technical failures and atmospheric conditions can isolate Rankin Inlet for weeks at a time. Other high frequency radiotelephone systems are operated for special purposes. The Hudson's Bay Company offers a telegram service through its commercial network. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Roman Catholic mission, and Transair operate private networks which can be made available to the public for emergencies or on special request. Notable is the complete absence of any television reception. Sporadically shortwave and standard AM broadcasts can be received from southern Canada and other parts of the world.

Because of this communications isolation it is understandable if the people of the settlement feel more like spectators to than participants in Canadian life. A possible example of this feeling was the almost complete lack of reaction to a newspaper clipping introduced to the settlement through the settlement manager. The clipping announced a recent federal cabinet policy decision supporting a program of depopulation for Keewatin. The clipping was posted on

the bulletin board of the local government office but was not translated into Eskimo. When pressed for a reaction, the Rankin Inlet settlement manager indicated disbelief that such a policy would ever be implemented. The clipping was sent to seven other Keewatin settlements; the only reply was from the Belcher Islands.

Communications within Rankin Inlet are enhanced by the small size of the community (590<sup>3</sup> persons) and the existence of an extensive dial operated telephone system.<sup>4</sup> However, widespread and rapid communications are hindered by the lack of a local newspaper or radio station (at least until the Cominterphone experiment began). As a substitute means of announcement, bi-lingual public notices are posted on bulletin boards in the Co-op Store, the Hudson's Bay Store, the Arts and Crafts Shop, the Cannery, the administration offices and other work places. Public notices can also be mailed or delivered by hand to the residents.

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<sup>3</sup> Extrapolated from 1969 population figures contained in: Schweitzer, D., Keewatin Regional Dynamics, Research Report, Faculty of Engineering, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1971: p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> It is estimated from the questionnaire results that 55% of the Eskimo homes and 93% of the white homes currently have telephones. More telephones are expected to be installed this year after the necessary materials are acquired.

Probably the greatest hindrance to intra-community communication is the bi-cultural nature of Rankin Inlet. Of the 590 residents of the settlement, the Eskimos outnumber the whites by more than 7 to 1. The two groups are separated by ethnicity, culture, education, occupation, experience, life style, language, and, to a large extent, geographical location. The white community, most of which comprises impermanent migrants from the south, is located around and within the main business section of Rankin Inlet while the Eskimos occupy the "Eskimo Village" well to the south of this area. The white homes are serviced by utilidor; the Eskimo homes are not. The whites tend to dominate the commercial, professional, managerial and supervisory positions while the Eskimo people are more likely to be employed as laborers, tradesmen, equipment operators, and clerks.

There appears to be relatively little communication or social interaction between these groups. Very few of the whites speak the Eskimo language with sufficient fluency to communicate with any effectiveness. Although many of the Eskimo people speak conversational English, inter-group communication in that language tends to be limited to subjects of a daily operational nature.

Interethnic social interaction is generally restricted to organized community functions such as bingo and curling games, dances, and movies. Interethnic interaction on the job tends to be relatively formal, hierarchical, and unidirectional. Casual home visiting is rare; there are few instances of interethnic marriages.

Intracommunity communications are further hindered by the development of sub-groups within each of the two major groups. The whites tend to form sub-groups representing a greater homogeneity of professional and intellectual interests. These criteria appear to play a less dominant role in determining sub-groups within the Eskimo population than do familial and dialectal affiliations. Six major dialectal sub-groups have been defined<sup>5</sup> in Keewatin and all are represented in Rankin Inlet. In addition the settlement contains Eskimo people from northern Quebec and Baffin Island.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that, although

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<sup>5</sup> Williamson, R.G., "The Keewatin Settlements", The Musk-Ox, Publication No. 9, Institute for Northern Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1971; pp. 14-23.

<sup>6</sup> From the results of the questionnaire, it would seem that the Eskimo people had difficulty classifying themselves into the dialectal groupings as defined by anthropologists. Only 47% of Rankin Inlet Eskimo residents were readily able to identify themselves as members of one of the eleven possible dialectal or locational sub-groups listed; most, if pressed, referred to their settlement of origin.

the formation of distinct sub-groups may hinder intra-community communications, it may enhance interpersonal communications for the members of the sub-groups.

#### Formally Organized Networks

The formal organizational networks of Rankin Inlet provide a number of opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and social information flow. The seven-member Settlement Council, with majority representation from the Eskimo community, has been exercising increased responsibility for local government. The members of the Council are elected for one- or two-year terms, depending on the number of votes gained. The Settlement Manager (currently employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories) acts as an "ex-officio" secretary to the Council. The actual powers of the Council appear ill-defined at this time, and although no exact information could be gathered, their fiscal responsibility appears to be limited. No local taxes are collected. Hamlet status has been discussed and formally applied for (December 1971); this application, if approved, will not take effect until late in 1972 or early in 1973. The following summary of topics discussed in Council meetings for the period October through January should give some idea of current Council operations:

- discussion of contracts awarded for garbage collection, fuel and water delivery.

- approval of local land usage and zoning plans made by government planners.
- management of a community bathhouse.
- bylaws dealing with local traffic operations.
- approval in principle of a loan to the Rankin Inlet Community Association, pending further decision by government authorities as to whether such a loan is within the authority of the Settlement Council.
- discussion of planned overhaul and extension of the utilidor system; decision that any homes constructed in the future be connected to the utilidor. Final decision will remain the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Rankin Inlet Community Association, with partial funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories, is responsible for all organized community recreation events. The executive, currently comprising ten Eskimo and four white members, is elected annually. Because this ratio can fluctuate from year to year, it is stipulated in the charter that there must always be two Eskimo representatives. In addition to the current president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, interpreter and two Eskimo members-at-large, there are chairmen for eight committees. The chairmen appoint the members of their own committees. Thus total organizational involvement is quite extensive.

The six members of the executive of the Eskimo Housing Association are elected for one-year terms. This organization has no white membership and no power over housing for government personnel. It is financially dependent on the Government of the Northwest Territories but remains virtually autonomous in its routine operations. These operations include assignment of houses on a priority basis, determination and collection of rent, and maintenance of houses.

The co-operative, incorporated in 1968, is guided by an annually elected Board of Directors, at present all Eskimo. The present manager of the co-operative store is white.

An Education Advisory Board operates to advise the public school teachers on curriculum, family problems of students, resources within the community available to assist in the education of the children, and the employment of classroom assistants. The Board this year has also assisted in the administration of the Education Land Program. This program was developed by the Department of Education of the Territorial Government to instruct students in traditional Eskimo hunting and fishing techniques by having local hunters take the children out on the land for an overnight period. The Education Advisory Board has held no election this year, and the five members



from last year continue to serve.

#### Non-Organizational Networks

The foregoing section refers only to the formally organized instruments of communication in the settlement, all essentially the products of contemporary macro-organizational needs in the modern community.

Other, less formal, opportunities for cross-cultural communication also exist. These are the congregations of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches<sup>7</sup> and the schools. One characteristic of the school system is worth noting. No post-public school education can be had in Rankin Inlet to date.<sup>8</sup> The children are sent to boarding schools elsewhere, usually in Churchill, Yellowknife, or Frobisher Bay. The experience of the Eskimo children during their years away from home differs drastically from that of their parents, and a greater than usual communications gap between generations is developing. The absence for ten months of the year of most of the adolescent substratum in the structure of the

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<sup>7</sup> The Roman Catholic Church has separate services in English and Eskimo; the Anglican Church has services solely in Eskimo. It should be noted that, in line with the current ecumenical movement, the Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations of Rankin Inlet conducted a bi-lingual "Unity" service in January 1972.

<sup>8</sup> It is anticipated that with the opening of the new school in Rankin for the 1972 fall term, enrollment up to and including grade nine will be accommodated.

local society is sufficiently alienating that, even during their summer weeks at home, the normally absentee students do not always relate well with the members of the home community, and their participation in the communication networks is quite limited.

Very great significance must, however, be given to the communication networks which exist in another context--that of the traditionalistic formulations of social intercourse amongst the Eskimo, now with some overlay of historical southern influence.

Still present in the Eskimo culture in Rankin Inlet are the lines of interaction predicated essentially in terms of kinship, and the often-unarticulated but objectively discernable original dialectal sub-group affinities, this more frequently being expressed temporarily in terms of settlement of origin. Less significant than in the previous three decades, the lines of religious affiliation still serve to provide an accepted context of communicative interaction.

There are still quite firm habits of daily visiting and exchange of goods and services amongst kinsfolk, primarily amongst blood relatives and, to a lesser degree, amongst marital affines. Eskimo sense of kinship and kin-commitment spreads widely along horizontal-temporal

planes, with people able to claim relationship at many removes further than is now normal in Euro-Canadian society (though time-depth in kin knowledge rarely extends beyond the second ascending generation). These affinity patterns are seen in operation through the way in which the Eskimos tend to arrange such social phenomena as material exchange or joint usage, hunting and fishing, dwelling contiguity when possible, recreation and sociability, mutual assistance with technological concerns, child care, and the channelling of information.

The hunting-camp extended family tended to comprise a senior parental pair, sharing their dwelling with or closely neighbored by the married sons and daughters, the unmarried children remaining with them, but being at home in the dwellings of their married siblings also. This was also an economic unit enabling the functioning of the traditional hunting life, and was undergirded by a clearly-understood belief and value system. Although settlement life has largely disfunctionalised the economic bases of such social organization, there remains some persistence of the concomitant emotions, attitudes, and commitments.

The traditional high positive value for sharing--vital to group survival in the hunting camp-days--is still somewhat persistent, and so too, amongst relatives, is the

value for frankness, which is really a non-material corollary of the former. In addition to the visiting habits of the adults, there is a not-unimportant medium of communication represented by the constantly moving ripples, eddies and tides of children around the community. Approximately 52 percent of the total population is under the age of 15. The Eskimo child is nowhere near as one-house-centred as the southern urban child. Children frequently move into and out of almost all of the houses in which they have kinsfolk, stopping to play, to eat and drink, sometimes to sleep, or just to watch the adults for as long as their interest holds, quite often leaving tidbits of information or misinformation along their way.

The time and staff available for this study did not permit detailed documentation of the somewhat complex social and communication networks of the Eskimo. Let it be noted that there are people drawn from ten different<sup>9</sup> arctic areas living in the settlement, representing six major dialectal sub-groups<sup>10</sup> (with two others present in very small numbers). These people together comprise 85 nuclear families, all members of one, two or more

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<sup>9</sup> Repulse Bay, Baker Lake, Eskimo Point, Coral Harbour, Ennadai Lake, Chantrey Inlet-Back's River, Chesterfield Inlet, Perry River, Pond Inlet, N.W.T., and Ft. Chimo, P.Q.

<sup>10</sup> Aivilimiutitut, Padlirmiutitut, Uqusiksalimiutitut, Natsilimiutitut, Qairnirmiutitut, Kuksuammiutitut

extended-family constellations or kin-groups, most of which, but by no means all any longer, are circumscribed by dialect-group affiliations. In other words, marriage across dialectal sub-group lines has been occurring, and this opens up new permutations of relationship, contact and communication.

It is this human matrix which is the more confirmed and on-going context in which communication occurs in Rankin Inlet, the societal continuities being more deeply established culturally than in the formally-organized community bodies, which are more recent in total experience and tend to fluctuate in their acceptance and effectiveness. This is not to say that communication flows as fully and readily within the Eskimo society of today as it used to in the hunting camp situation. Inter-generational alienation is discernable in a not-insubstantial number of instances--most particularly between those involved in the schooling process, and the rest of society (Eskimo and white), the degree of alienation, atomization and, ultimately, anomie<sup>11</sup> increasing usually in direct proportion to the number of years in school and the number of years of schooling away from home in exile institutions. Even amongst adults not so affected, there is some lack of

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<sup>11</sup> Anomie: A socio-psychological condition of disintegration and loss of norms.

understanding between the more traditionalistic old people and the wage-earning, technology-oriented, middle-classward-aspiring younger generation.

In more recent time, most particularly over the last two years, another inhibitant to understanding communications within families, and even more so, beyond the family, has been the growing incidence of heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages. The amount of consumption may be discerned by the fact that of 8,000 12-can cases of beer landed in this community of 247 adults (approximately 4/5 Eskimo and 1/5 white) in mid-September of 1971, none was left by the end of December. Even accounting for a half-dozen sled-loads taken to Chesterfield Inlet and Whale Cove, there remains an impressive average utilization by the Rankin Inlet population of between 3 and 4 bottles of beer per adult per day.

#### Spontaneous Nodes

Amongst the people of Rankin Inlet, particularly the Eskimos, there are several event and location nodes for spontaneous communication, which again require much more extensive research coverage than was available in order to achieve any satisfactory documentation. They may, however, be noted as being:

- (a) (i) The Hudson's Bay Company Store.
- (ii) The Co-operative Store.

Both stores act as day-long centres for social

conversation as well as for trade. Both have bulletin boards.

(b) Work groups:

(i) on the job.

(ii) larger groupings for coffee breaks.

(c) Recreation events:

(i) curling-(nightly except Sundays during former winters; no activity this year).

(ii) dancing-(one night weekly).

(iii) bingo-(one night weekly).

(iv) movies-(thrice weekly. Conversation takes place before, after, and between reels).

(d) Church events:

Large congregations gather morning and evening on Sundays and talk in small groups before and after services. There are smaller groups for week-day evening services.

(e) Administration Office Waiting Room:

People calling for various purposes meet here.

An additional factor of communication here is the bulletin board.

(f) Nursing station:

The waiting room is an active social centre.

It also has a bulletin board.

Needless to say, not all of these nodes involve all people, but together they frequently do bring together the great majority.

In summary then, we have recognized that insofar as traditionalistic attitudes, affiliations and habits of emotion and thought persist amongst the Eskimos, there are in Rankin Inlet somewhat complex sets of often-overlapping communication networks which operate mainly along familial and identity-group lines, and which provide certainly the most significant and well-established information and response matrix in the settlement. It is suggested that these networks could only be more thoroughly described and analyzed by dint of considerably more research than was feasible within the limited constraints of this short study.

Clearly there is greater likelihood of communication flow within the in-groups than there is across the in-group interface, but the extent and nature of communication within the groups is itself variable according to personality, interest, education, intellect and motivation. Equally, substantially more research would be required to document the exclusiveness or non-exclusiveness of these culturally-defined social networks, and also to identify the points of interchange and their characteristics, though certainly the spontaneous nodes may be good initial areas of observation.



At the same time, we have noted that while traditional affinity patterns ensure and channel a greater degree of communication, there are developing inhibitants to full and understanding communication within the Eskimo society, largely as a result of the contemporary acculturation dynamics (e.g.-generation and cultural alienation, drinking, and lack of experiential background to give reality dimensions to new information). As a further example, it has been noted that, in the area of cross-group relations, even the most physically mobile and observant element in the community--the children--do not always know the place of residence of local Eskimo people with whom they do not have some form of affinity relationship.

Finally, it has been observed that tending toward the off-setting of group exclusiveness is the increasing sense of common fate and commitment to life in this settlement, the formally-organized sharing of technical and life-support tasks and problems, and the rather numerous opportunities and stimuli for multi-directional and relatively unstructured communication.

## PERFORMANCE AND UTILIZATION OF COMMINTERPHONE

### Introduction

The concept of Comminterphone was introduced to community leaders early in 1971. The general public became aware of the proposed system by means of a brief explanation of Comminterphone at a general community meeting on October 13, 1971. On October 21 the system became operational and explanatory pamphlets (see Appendix A) in English and Eskimo were distributed to each household. Many people still did not understand their roles as users of Comminterphone. During the first days of Comminterphone operation recorded music was broadcast over the system intermittently with the hope of developing "Comminterphone awareness" among community residents to stimulate spontaneous use of the system.

On October 24 a broadcast by a community leader in both languages again explained how Comminterphone operated. Several discussions on community issues were organized and broadcast by community leaders. Hours of broadcasting were posted but in reality no restrictions were placed on potential twenty-four hour transmissions. On the same day came the first spontaneous broadcast, recorded music and an announcement, by a local Eskimo individual, of Comminterphone's identification code, CBQR kankin

Inlet. This marked the beginning of spontaneous community broadcasting of music, both Eskimo and English, community announcements, conversation and personalized stories. Times of transmission ranged from early morning to late evening, with noon and evening having the most "conversation" broadcasts.

#### Patterns of Utilization

A forty day period, beginning on October 29 and ending on December 7, was selected for continuous monitoring of system utilization. For analysis each hour of the monitoring was broken into 15 minute time intervals and the monitoring records were scrutinized for the presence of a transmission during each of these periods. This first stage of the analysis included a classification of each transmission by type of transmission and language (English or Eskimo) used during the transmission. Four categories were selected for describing the types of transmission:

1. Community Announcements:

These included notices of public events and such information as weather reports where no response was expected.

2. Spontaneous Conversation:

This category included the transmission of discussion and the expression of opinion and the

passage of personal messages without benefit of formal organization.

### 3. Home Programming:

Early in the experiment it was discovered that individuals were creating their own entertainment broadcasts by playing their record players or tape recorders adjacent to the household telephone handset on an open line. In addition, spontaneous singing into the handset was noted.

### 4. Official Programming:

Early in November a small cassette tape recorder was directly connected to the transmitter; tapes of music and parts of an educational course about co-operatives were played over the system. Late in November the Settlement Council purchased an 8-track tape recorder to replace the cassette recorder. Popular and country and western music was transmitted for prolonged periods.

By considering each transmission occurring during a fifteen minute interval as being of fifteen minutes duration the short, sporadic transmissions (such as community announcements and spontaneous conversation) may be substantially overestimated in total duration. However, the duration of longer transmissions (such as home and official programming) will be quite accurately

estimated.

Figure 1 illustrates the frequency and duration of transmissions within the monitored time of each day during the forty day observation period. Figure 2 summarizes the transmissions observed and presented in Figure 1. The system was monitored for an average of about 12 hours each day during the observation time. Total utilization of the system averaged just less than 4 hours per day. Figure 3 illustrates the time of utilization as a percentage of the monitored time each day. Figure 4 shows the utilization of Comminterphone by type of transmission for each day of the observation period.

From the figures it appears as though there were two distinct periods of use of Comminterphone. The first period (to mid-November) might be referred to as a "novelty" period in which Comminterphone was quite extensively used for all types of transmission. People were quick to realize that they could create a quasi-radio station by playing their own music over the system. Comminterphone was also relatively heavily used for conversation, discussion and community announcements. The small cassette tape recorder connected directly to the transmitting equipment was also used on a number of occasions.

However, utilization quickly declined and remained low for the next two weeks. It appears as though the

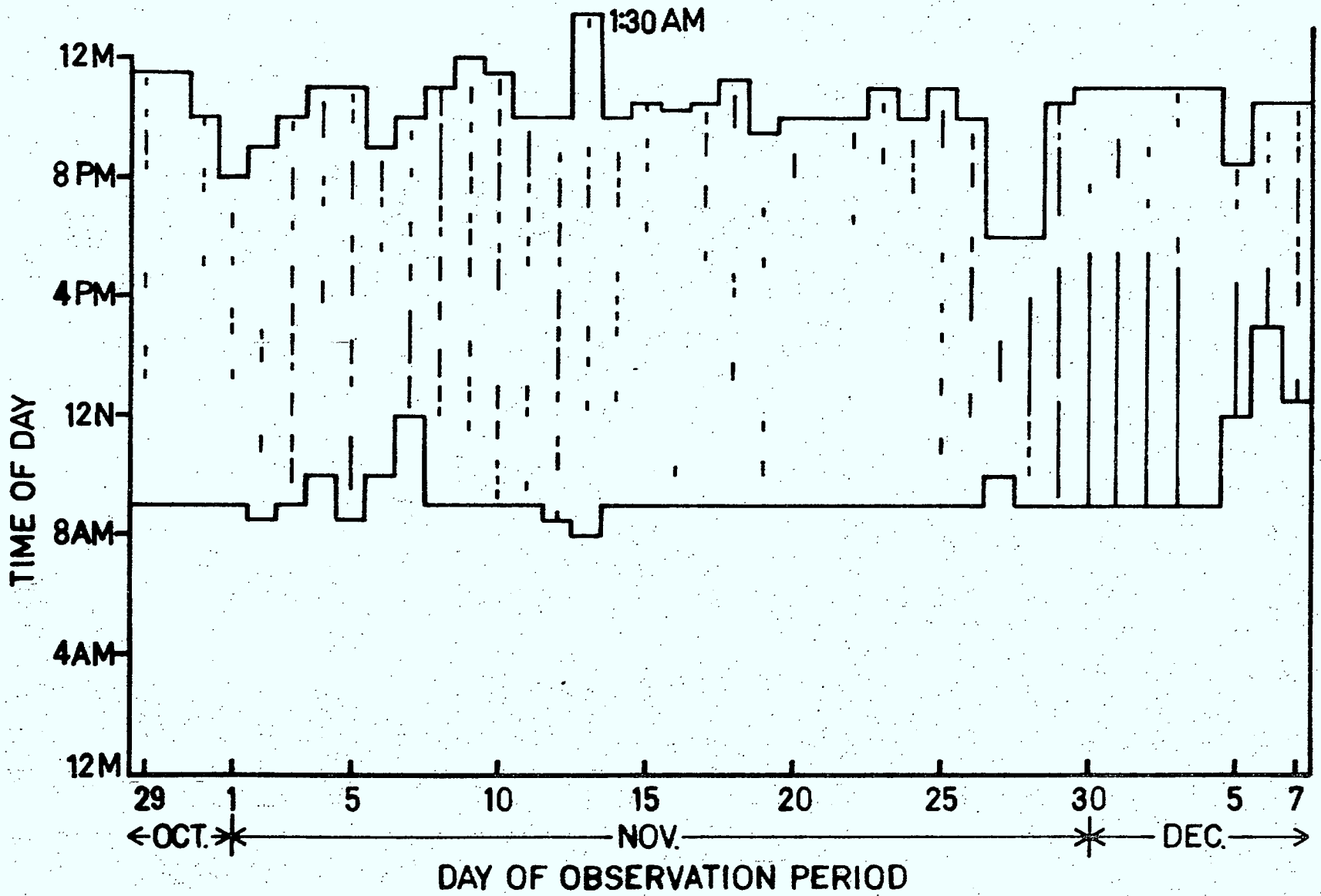


Fig.1 - FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF TRANSMISSIONS DURING MONITORED TIME OF EACH DAY DURING THE OBSERVATION PERIOD

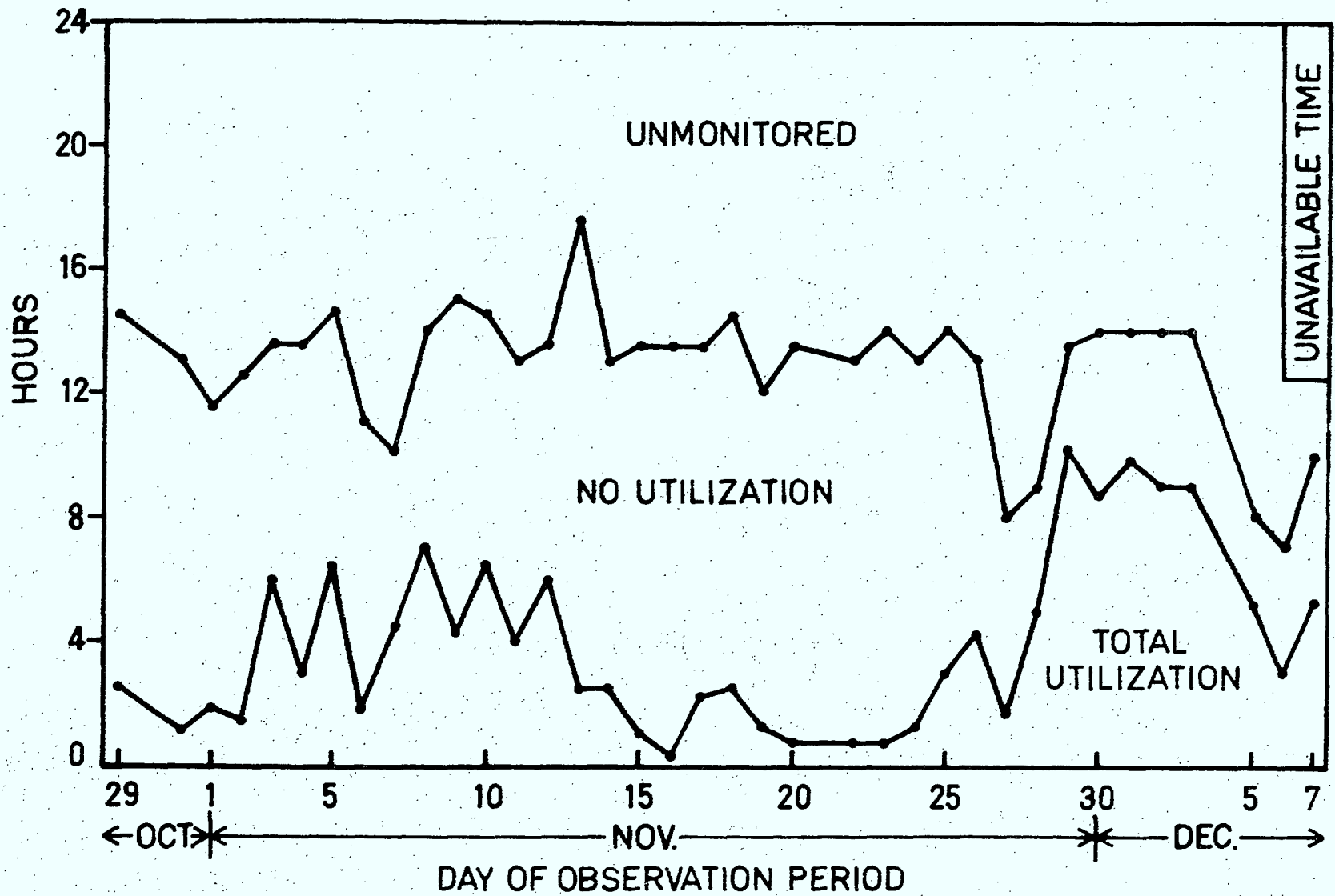


Fig. 2 - DAILY DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE AND MONITORED TRANSMISSION TIME

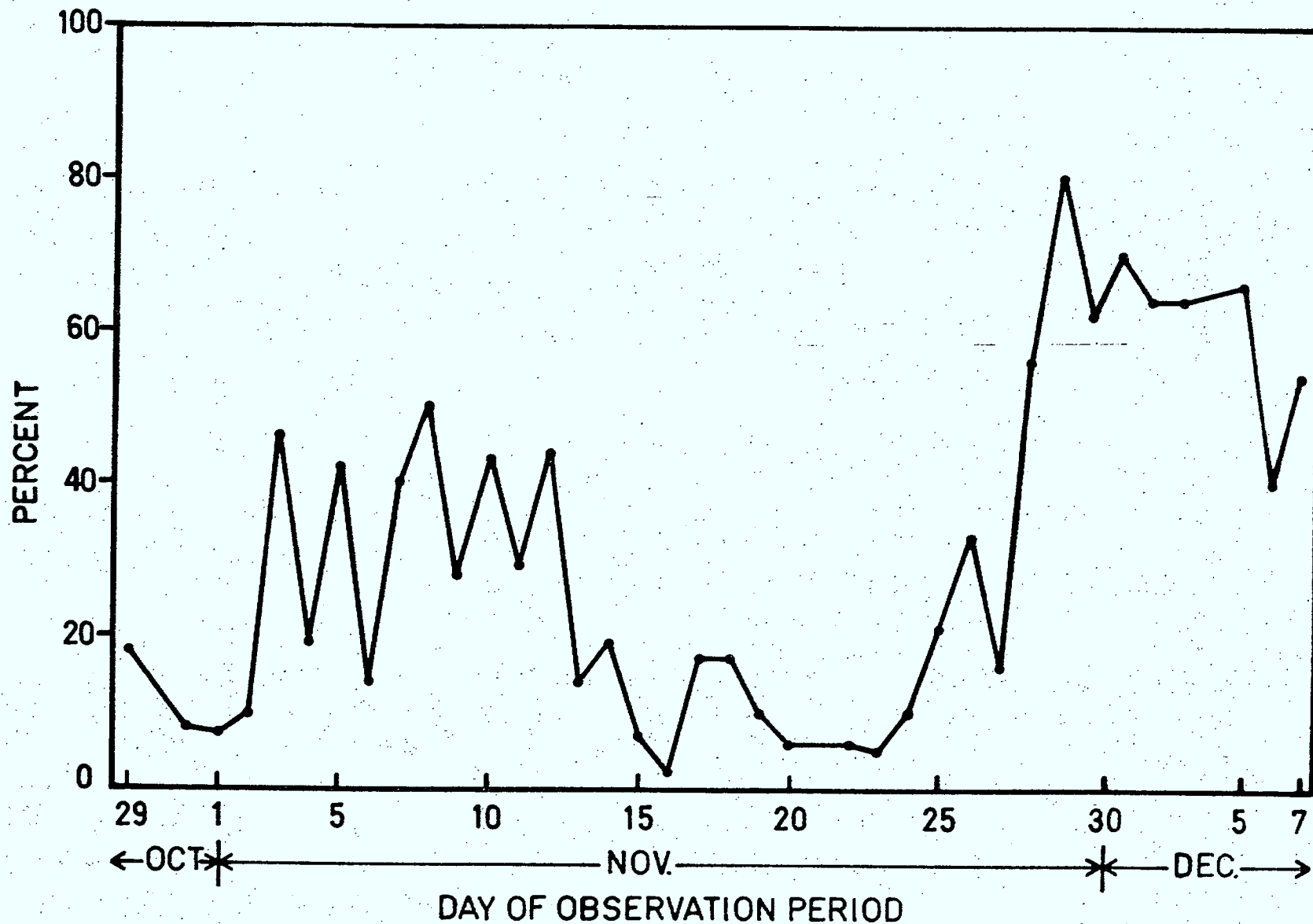


Fig.3 - TRANSMISSION TIME AS A PERCENTAGE OF MONITORED TIME



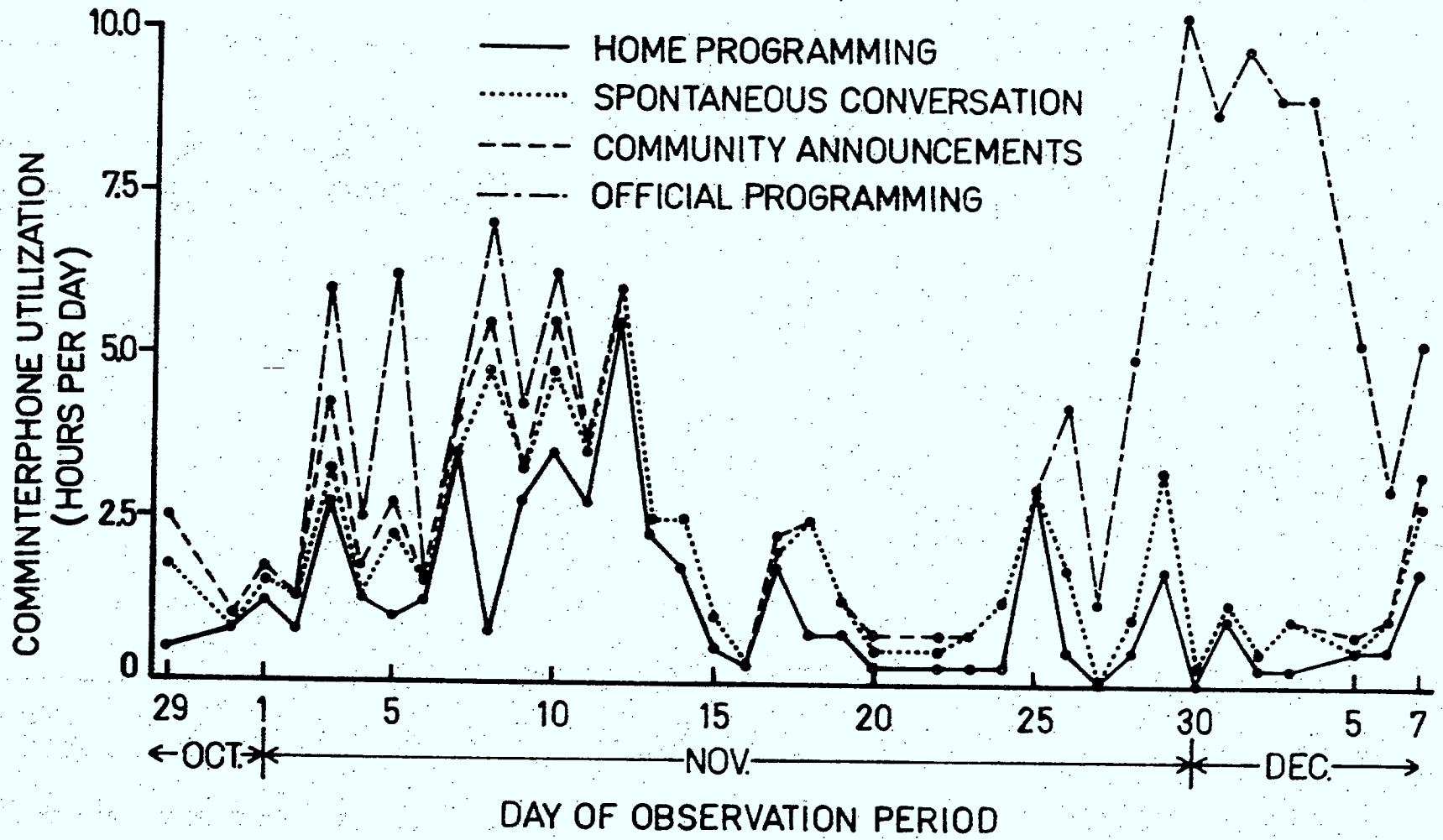


Fig.4 - UTILIZATION OF COMMINTERPHONE BY TYPE OF TRANSMISSION

novelty had worn off. Utilization for home programming, community announcements, and spontaneous conversation remained relatively low throughout the remainder of the observation period.

The second period, which might be called the "entertainment" period, began on November 25, when the Settlement Council acquired an 8-track tape recorder and connected it directly to the transmitting equipment. Total utilization of Cominterphone increased significantly as music was transmitted from the tape recorder throughout most of the daytime period. While the tape recorder was connected to the transmitter it prevented the accessing of the equipment by telephone and thus other types of broadcasts may have been restricted. It is, of course, not known if individual transmissions would have occurred if access had been possible.

On December 6, a timing device sent in by Mr. Gardiner, was installed on the transmitter. It limited the hours of use to the period from 10:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. (see Figure 2). During the following month this timer was re-set several times.

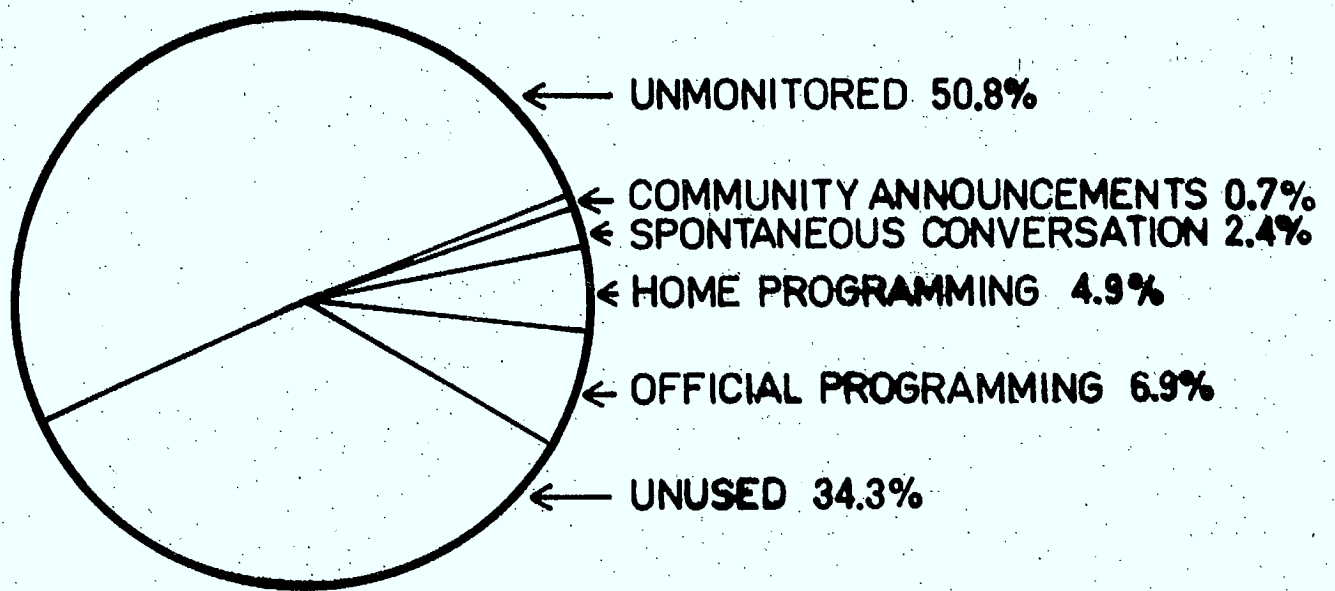
In summarizing the utilization of Cominterphone it was assumed there were 960 hours of transmission time available for use over the forty day period, about half of which were monitored. If it can be assumed that there

were a negligible number of transmissions during the unmonitored periods, Figure 5 shows that the system was actually used about 15 percent of the time (143.5 hours). Community announcements and spontaneous conversation utilized about 3 percent of the available time, while some type of programming was being transmitted during the remaining 12 percent of the time.

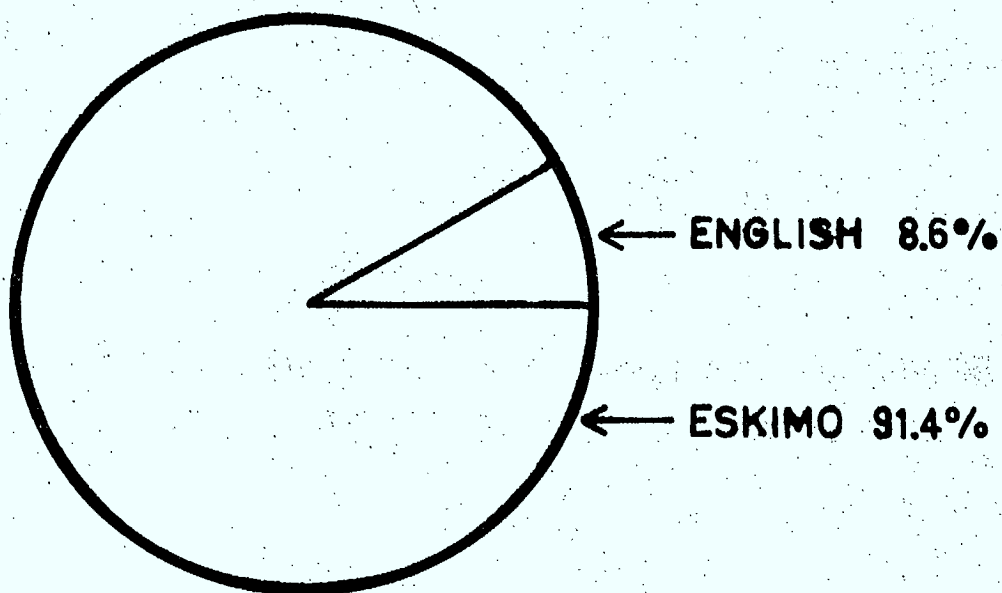
It was estimated that about 23 hours were spent in spontaneous conversation and discussion during the forty day period. (As mentioned previously, the techniques used for monitoring may have significantly overestimated the total time devoted to this type of broadcast.)

Figure 6 illustrates that these conversations were almost totally dominated by the Eskimo language.

An analysis of the monitoring records indicates that 77 individuals over the age of eighteen years transmitted over Cominterphone during the forty day observation period (see Table 1 and Appendix B). Of these users, 59 were Eskimos and 7 were whites from Rankin Inlet, and 11 were non-resident Eskimos, 5 of whom were visitors while the remaining 6 sent recorded messages from other settlements. This indicates 29 percent of adult Rankin Inlet residents used the system for transmissions during this period. (This proportion of users appears to have remained relatively constant as 32 percent of respondents to the January



**Fig. 5 - DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE TRANSMISSION TIME OVER 40-DAY OBSERVATION PERIOD**



**Fig. 6 - DISTRIBUTION OF SPONTANEOUS CONVERSATION TRANSMISSIONS BY LANGUAGE OF TRANSMISSION**

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SPEAKERS ON COMMINTERPHONE DURING  
THE 40-DAY OBSERVATION PERIOD.

	Resident	Non-Resident	Total
White	6	1	7
Eskimo	59	11	70
Total	65	12	77

questionnaire stated they had spoken on Comminterphone.) Eskimo speakers were slightly over-represented in this user group with a ratio of Eskimo to white of about 10 to 1. Male speakers (59 percent) had a slight edge over female speakers (41 percent). Three-quarters of the speakers were less than 41 years old. Significantly, none was over 60 years and only one under 21. A breakdown by frequency of speaking shows that 99 percent of resident individuals broadcasted less than six times (see Figure 7). Of the 63 individuals who spoke less than six times, nearly half spoke only once. During the early stages of operation, one Eskimo community leader in particular felt responsible for Comminterphone. This individual spoke thirty-nine times within the observation period. The content of his transmissions included announcements of meetings, rulings by the local council,

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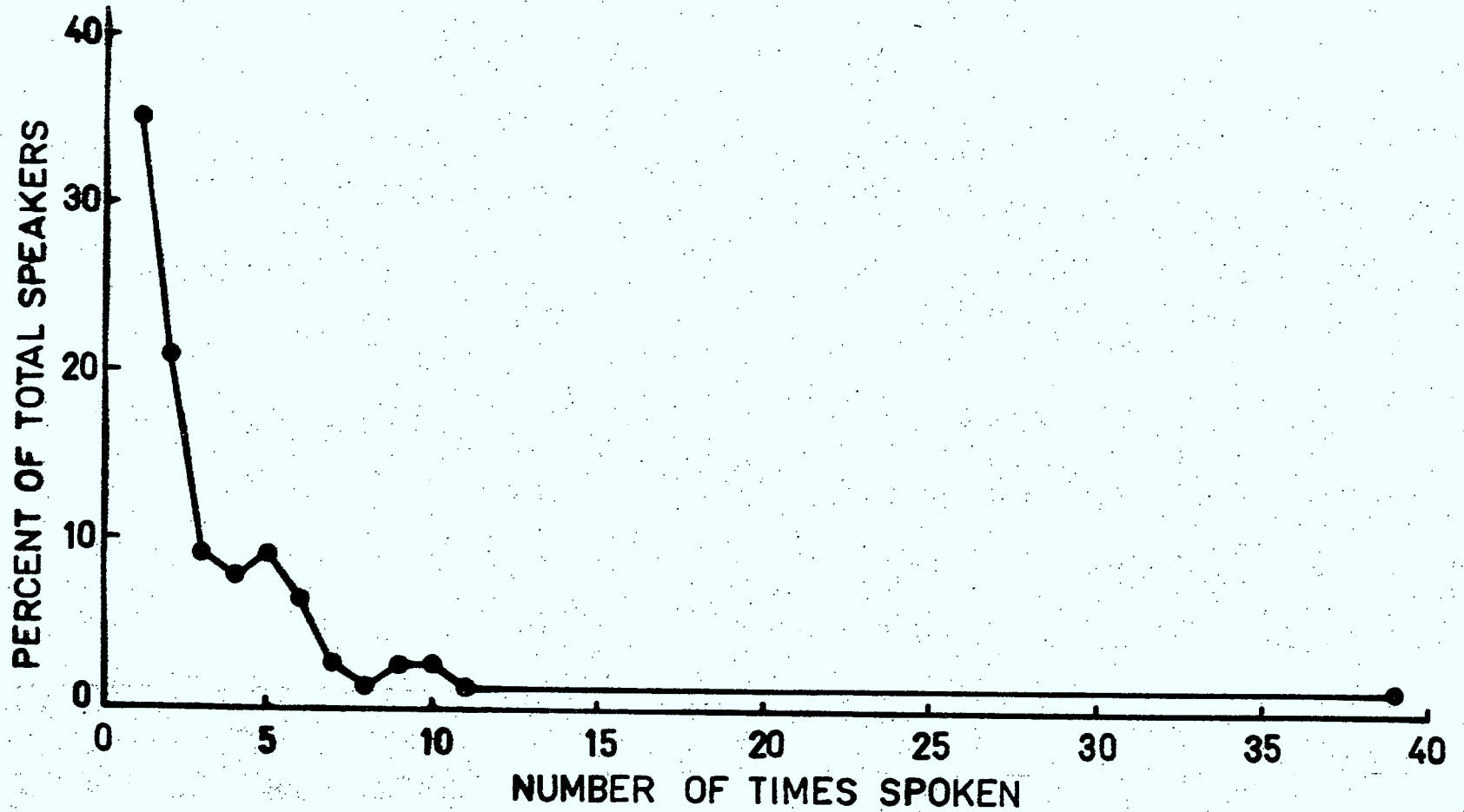


FIG 7 - DISTRIBUTION OF SPEAKERS BY FREQUENCY OF SPEAKING

discussion of local issues, instructions on the use of Comminterphone, and attempts to control misuse of the system. The pattern of speaker usage changed very little in the following months of Comminterphone operation.

The pattern of utilization which appeared after November 25 with the second or "entertainment" period of Comminterphone operation continued through December and January. There was only one major change -- after December 13 weather reports were broadcast daily (except Saturdays and Sundays) at 9:30 A.M. Reporting was done by two men in the local administration office, in both Eskimo and English. These reports were usually supplemented by any news available on the arrival of scheduled aircraft, the Churchill weather whenever it was available, and any special community announcements which had been made known to the reporters ahead of time. Brief flashes of news from the south were included sporadically (e.g. reports on the progress of the January air-controller's strike).

A brief attempt was made in the latter half of December to schedule a weekly children's story in English on Saturday mornings at 10:30 A.M. However, this lasted for only a couple of weeks.

It must be stated at this point that, although spontaneous broadcasts remained infrequent for the re-

mainder of the evaluation period, they never ceased entirely. Comminterphone was used to pass on information and personal messages and to make comments and inquiries whenever a need was felt and whenever Comminterphone seemed a useful way to do so. For example, in the case of a mother trying to locate her child at meal-time, a broadcast over Comminterphone was a quicker and easier method of doing so than telephoning houses individually and making inquiries. Another example is the organization, through Comminterphone, of a search party in late December. The RCMP corporal, expressing his opinion later, felt that the use of Comminterphone had made the organization of the search faster and more efficient.

Home programming dropped sharply after programmed music from the office was instigated, but again this did not die out completely. Intermittent transmissions of music from private homes continued to fill in the gaps whenever music was not transmitted from the office, especially in the evenings and on weekends. (If a silence continued for a considerable length of time without being broken by a music broadcast, someone was certain to dial Comminterphone and request "Please play some music"). This home-transmitted music continued to be of uncertain quality, with interferences from background noises.



In summary, research conducted indicated that:

1. Two distinct phases were apparent in the utilization of Comminterphone. These were termed the "novelty" phase and the "entertainment" phase.
2. The utilization of Comminterphone was dominated by some type of programming although not an insignificant amount of the total transmission time available was devoted to spontaneous conversation and community announcements.
3. The spontaneous conversations were almost completely dominated by the Eskimo language.
4. A substantial cross-section of the community used the system with no evidence of speaker domination; a variety of subject matter characterized non-musical transmissions.

## LOCAL ORGANIZATION FOR COMMINTERPHONE

During the first week of Comminterphone operation there was no local authority established to guide its use. On October 27, prior to his departure, Mr. Paddy Gardiner called a meeting for the purpose of forming a Policy Committee to be responsible for Comminterphone. A young Eskimo, the assistant Settlement Manager, was nominated as chairman and he subsequently selected two Eskimo and two white people to share the committee responsibilities. On November 3 the existence of the Committee was announced on Comminterphone and suggestions and comments were invited. The response was negligible.

The first meeting of the Policy Committee was held on December 10, by which time it was under a different chairmanship (the first chairman had transferred to Repulse Bay; one of the other two Eskimo members of the committee took his place as chairman<sup>12</sup>). This meeting was not announced to the general public. Concern was expressed on the part of Committee members for the fact that people were frequently broadcasting on Comminterphone

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Whereas the original chairman of the Policy Committee had not been on the current executive of any other formal community organization, his successor was on the executive of the Settlement Council, the Housing Committee and the Roman Catholic Vestry Committee. This latter individual served a term last year as Eskimo representative on the Rankin Inlet Community Association.

after they had been drinking. The Committee felt that some form of control was needed and they were anxious to devise an appropriate method of eliminating drink-inspired conversation. The desire was also expressed for more programming and at one point a suggestion was made that someone be hired to operate Comminterphone, even for only a few hours per day. The manner of operation of other regular northern radio stations was mentioned, with the idea of proceeding along those lines in the future if possible. Funds were conceded to be an obstacle to the implementation of this plan. The Committee felt a need for further clarification of the legalities surrounding Comminterphone operations, specifically as they affected the possibilities for local programming. Explicit information had not been forthcoming on the terms of the experimental licence or on the matter of obtaining a regular broadcast licence.

Although a plan was constructed whereby weather reports, aircraft arrivals, food shipments, recreational events and other community notices would be announced at regular intervals throughout the day, it was never effectively implemented. Difficulties were encountered in finding volunteers to make the broadcasts. In partial implementation, there were

children's stories<sup>13</sup> and weather reports. In view of the fact that daytime transmission of music prevented accessing of the equipment by telephone from private homes<sup>14</sup> it was decided to have the music shut off during the noon hour. This was done haphazardly but there were few attempts to use the system. Broadcast times were changed to: 9 A.M. to 7 P.M. on Mondays and Fridays; 9 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. on the remaining days<sup>15</sup>. A public notice was posted and a brief announcement made over Comminterphone about the new schedule. Public reaction was minimal.

The Policy Committee did not re-convene until January 29. It had been decided that this meeting should be open to interested members of the public; however, due to a lack of sufficient advance advertising,<sup>16</sup> only one individual

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<sup>13</sup> These stories in English were discontinued after December 29 when the individual who had volunteered his time as storyteller, a member of the Policy Committee, left the community.

<sup>14</sup> The Committee members had not all been aware of this fact prior to the meeting, nor had they been aware that a timing device had been sent from Ottawa, was installed on December 6, and was currently eliminating all possibilities of transmissions from 10:30 P.M. to 10:00 A.M. each day.

<sup>15</sup> These hours were, in reality, not always adhered to.

<sup>16</sup> The forthcoming meeting had been announced twice over Comminterphone. No notices were posted as a supplemental means of announcement and it is doubtful if many persons heard about the meeting. Therefore, the lack of public response should not be construed as low interest towards Comminterphone.

responded. A very minimal meeting was held. Further action was postponed until more information could be obtained regarding current licence regulations and the use of C.B.C. tapes for programming.<sup>17</sup>

The main reason for calling the January 29 meeting had been to discuss and take action on the current problem of abuse of the system by children. (The problem of drink-inspired conversation had ended by this time, perhaps due to the lack of beer in the settlement during the month of January. Reluctance to use Comminterphone may also have been due in part to the fact that word was spread that all broadcasts over Comminterphone were being monitored and recorded.)

By late November children had learned to dial "0" and misuse Comminterphone. In its early stages this problem had been amenable to control by adults, who simply dialed Comminterphone and told the children to cease their play. But as the children learned that no punitive action would be taken against them their "play" activities increased. Their activities were most pre-

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<sup>17</sup> A letter had been received in November from Mr. Paddy Gardiner, saying that the C.B.C. may be willing to supply program tapes and possibly a tape deck upon written request from the community. Not all members of the Policy Committee had read this letter; at the time of the first chairman's departure from Rankin Inlet in early December, the letter had inadvertently travelled with him and thereafter had not been available for Committee consideration.

valent on evenings of organized adult entertainment and on holidays. In late December and throughout January this activity increased from a minor irritant to a major nuisance. Children not only used the intervals of silence for their games, they began to interfere with music or conversation whenever these were broadcast. Continued adult attempts to control the situation became largely ineffective. The Policy Committee, at its meeting, decided to request the local R.C.M.P. corporal to speak to the children over Comminterphone, in the hope that his air of authority would sufficiently deter them from any further abuse of the system. However, by February 3 this solution had yet to be tried and the problem continued.

The possibility of placing the Comminterphone Policy Committee under the jurisdiction of the Rankin Inlet Community Association, as a sub-committee, had been suggested by some local residents at the end of January. The proponents of the plan felt that the Policy Committee as it was constituted was largely ineffective. They felt that by placing the Committee under R.I.C.A. it could be more effective since it would have official support. Such support might also help secure funds from the Government of the Northwest Territories for a future

station-staff operation if it became feasible. Current financial problems in the L.I.C.A. may, however, prove an inhibitant to the assumption of further responsibility.

From October onwards there was some apprehension on the part of both the Policy Committee members and other residents, that Comminterphone would be taken out of the community at the end of January. This may have affected the way the community members utilized it and may have been a factor restraining the Policy Committee from making long-term plans.

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COMMINTERPHONE

During the month of January a questionnaire was administered to the residents of Rankin Inlet to determine the response of the community to Comminterphone. Every second household was interviewed. The composition of the sample is illustrated in Table 2. In total, 53 usable responses were obtained and they are summarized in this section.

TABLE 2

### COMPOSITION OF QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

	Eskimo	White	Total
Sample size	44	16	60
Unusable response	6	1	7
No. used in analysis	38	15	53
Ethnic distribution (%)	72	28	100
Sex distribution (%)			
Male	50	40	47
Female	50	60	53

The distribution of the sample by age-group and by education is illustrated in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.



TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY AGE-GROUP  
(Percentage)

Age-Group	Eskimo	White	Total
15 - 20 years	11	0	8
21 - 30 years	34	53	40
31 - 40 years	18	20	19
41 - 50 years	24	20	23
51 - 60 years	5	7	6
Over 60 years	5	0	2
No response	3	0	2

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY EDUCATION  
(Percentage)

Education	Eskimo	White	Total
No formal schooling	45	0	32
Grades 1 - 8	40	7	30
Grades 9 - 12	13	33	19
Some University or technical	0	40	12
No response	2	20	7

It has been previously mentioned that language acts as a barrier to cross-cultural communication. The survey indicated the magnitude of this barrier as illustrated in Table 5. More than one-third of Eskimos and more than

TABLE 5

## BI-LINGUAL COMPETENCE

(Percentage)

Capability	Knowledge		
	Fluent or Operational	Very Little	None
Eskimo in the English language	40	24	37
Whites in the Eskimo language	7	40	53

one-half of whites classified themselves as not having any knowledge of the other's language. Forty percent of the Eskimo respondents described themselves as being fluent or operational in English while only 7 percent of whites considered themselves fluent or operational in the Eskimo language.

To make use of Comminterphone it is necessary to have access to a telephone and an A.M. radio. Within the Eskimo community 55 percent of the households reported having a telephone in the house and 71 percent owned a radio. Ninety-three percent of white households had both a telephone and a radio. A surprising number of households reported that they received radio

broadcasts from southern Canada and other parts of the world. The figures were 53 percent and 73 percent for Eskimo and white households respectively.

Listening to Comminterphone appeared to be a popular pastime. Three-quarters of the Eskimo community and 87 percent of the white community reported doing so frequently. However, there appeared to be some inhibitions to the use of Comminterphone for communications with others. Only one-third of the Eskimo households and less than one-quarter of the white households stated they had used Comminterphone for broadcast purposes.

Patterns of listening were relatively uniform, both throughout the day and throughout the week. There were more Eskimos than whites listening in the evening. This is probably due to the fact that the preprogrammed music from the government office is available only during working hours. Evening is also the time for broadcasts of conversations and songs in the Eskimo language. The lack of preprogrammed music on the weekends may also account for the significant decline in listeners at that time.

The community exhibited certain preferences for the different types of broadcast heard on Comminterphone. Their response to six types of broadcast is illustrated in Table 6. By analyzing the "like" and "dislike" response

TABLE 6

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES FOR TYPES OF BROADCAST  
(Percentage of those who listen to Comminterphone)

Type of Broadcast	Ethnic Origin	Like	Dislike	Indifferent	No Response
1. Conversation and discussion	Eskimo	43	14	32	11
	White	54	15	23	8
	Total	46	15	29	10
2. Recorded Music	Eskimo	75	7	14	4
	White	77	23	0	0
	Total	76	12	10	2
3. News from outside Rankin Inlet	Eskimo	68	3	11	18
	White	100	0	0	0
	Total	78	2	7	13
4. Stories and songs broadcast from local homes	Eskimo	57	11	29	3
	White	46	23	15	16
	Total	54	15	24	7
5. Local weather reports	Eskimo	96	0	0	4
	White	100	0	0	0
	Total	98	0	0	2
6. Community announcements	Eskimo	79	4	14	3
	White	100	0	0	0
	Total	85	3	10	2

it is possible to impute a preference structure for the various kinds of broadcast by the community as a whole and for each of the two ethnic groups. The order in which each would rank the six types of broadcast is illustrated in Table 7.

TABLE 7

RANK ORDER OF PREFERRED BROADCASTS

Broadcast Type	Total	Eskimo	White
Local weather reports	1	1	1
Community announcements	2	2	1
News from outside Rankin Inlet	3	4	1
Recorded music	4	3	2
Stories and songs broadcast from local homes	5	5	4
Conversation and discussion	6	6	3

Both groups agreed that they liked listening to local weather reports and to community announcements although 14 percent of the Eskimo respondents were indifferent to the latter. Both groups enjoyed listening to news from outside Rankin Inlet. Understandably, the positive feeling was much stronger among the whites than among the Eskimo. Both groups liked recorded music although nearly one-

quarter of the whites disliked it. This may have been due to the limited variety of music available. The least liked broadcasts were those containing stories, songs, conversation and discussion although they were still liked by nearly one-half of the respondents and disliked by only 15 percent. Notable and perhaps significant is the fact that though so small a percentage of the whites understand Eskimo, and a 50 percent non-positive response is shown, it is remarkable that as many as 50 percent were shown as favourable to Eskimo Language broadcasting.

At this point it should be noted that the responses are predicated on the very limited experience to date with Comminterphone. Individual broadcasting has been unstructured and unguided and the possibility exists that a different format for the presentation of individual views might evoke a more positive response from the community. Both ethnic groups indicated in unstructured conversation situations a desire for more formal coordination of discussion and spontaneous-offering sessions.

The respondents were asked a series of questions to determine the effectiveness of Comminterphone as a catalyst to community action. The responses to these questions are summarized in Table 8. In interpreting these responses it

TABLE 8

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COMMINTERPHONE AS A  
CATALYST TO COMMUNITY ACTION

(Percentage)

	Ethnic Origin	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
1. Has Comminterphone made you more aware of how other people think?	Eskimo	29	21	40	10
	White	20	53	27	0
	Total	26	30	36	8
2. Has Comminterphone made you more aware of what is happening in Rankin Inlet?	Eskimo	40	26	29	5
	White	80	13	7	0
	Total	51	23	23	3
3. Has Comminterphone given you the opportunity to express your views when otherwise you would not have spoken up?	Eskimo*	54	38	8	0
	White*	0	100	0	0
	Total*	41	53	6	0
4. Do you think the expression of your views on Comminterphone has made any changes in Rankin Inlet?	Eskimo*	46	8	46	0
	White*	25	50	25	0
	Total*	41	18	41	0
5. Do you think anything that is said on Comminterphone will have any effect on what is happening in Rankin Inlet?	Eskimo	53	13	29	5
	White	47	13	40	0
	Total	51	13	32	4

\* Calculated as a percentage of those who actually spoke on Comminterphone: Eskimo = 13; Whites = 4; Total = 17.

should be noted that there is still a significant degree of uncertainty in the minds of the respondents as to the effectiveness of Comminterphone. Approximately one-third of the respondents could give neither positive nor negative answer to the questions posed in Table 8. There is no clear indication of the success of Comminterphone as an aid to cross-cultural understanding (Question 1). This is again partly a function of the short term of the experiment, and likely due also to the language barrier - something that is not easily overcome by technology such as Comminterphone, unless the radio were used as an instructional medium and other methods were available in the community. It seems to be a success as a medium for distributing information. A significant number of respondents felt that it had made them more aware of happenings in Rankin Inlet (Question 2) although the white community appeared to have been more in need of this improvement than the Eskimo community. Of those that spoke on Comminterphone less than half felt that it had given them the opportunity to express their views when otherwise they would not have spoken up (Question 3). A similar number felt that the expression of their views made a significant impact on the community (Question 4). Interestingly enough, while no whites felt that Comminterphone had increased their powers of communication more



than one-half of the Eskimos felt they had benefited from this opportunity. Further attitudinal enquiry amongst the whites, against a background of their cultural and experiential conditioning, is indicated. Slightly more than one-half of the respondents feel that Comminterphone has a potential for influencing community action while one-third are still uncertain (Question 5).

The respondents were presented with a series of statements with which they could agree or disagree (see Table 9). Although both Eskimo and whites tended to indicate a significant degree of satisfaction with Comminterphone many were reluctant to commit themselves at this time.<sup>18</sup> No one dismissed Comminterphone as a useless experiment and almost one-half of the respondents would be willing to extend the same system to other settlements. Communications with other settlements can

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<sup>18</sup> It may be notable that the translation of "I don't know" into Eskimo is "amai" - a word which has been traditionally used in the culture to cover a number of situations. Comments accompanying the responses of the Eskimo people revealed a definite reluctance to impose anything on another group of people, again an attitude which has traditional cultural roots. "If they want it" was a most frequent remark accompanying responses to this question. The word "amai" can be used as a screen, a defense, or an opinion-eliciting antenna itself.

TABLE 9

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION WITH COMMINTERPHONE

(Percentage)

Statement		Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response
1. Comminterphone is a good thing for Rankin Inlet.	Eskimo	76	0	21	3
	White	67	7	27	0
	Total	74	2	23	2
2. The money spent on Comminterphone could have been better spent on improving communication with other settlements.	Eskimo	21	8	66	5
	White	13	33	53	0
	Total	19	15	62	4
3. Comminterphone provides people with information sooner than through other means.	Eskimo	74	8	16	3
	White	60	27	7	7
	Total	70	13	13	4
4. Comminterphone is a useless experiment.	Eskimo	0	71	26	3
	White	0	53	40	7
	Total	0	66	30	4
5. Comminterphone has made it more possible for me to understand about the people who do not speak my own language.	Eskimo	26	32	37	5
	White	20	40	33	7
	Total	25	35	36	0
6. Comminterphone should be operated more like a commercial radio station.	Eskimo	55	3	37	5
	White	67	7	27	0
	Total	59	4	34	4
7. Other settlements should also have a Comminterphone.	Eskimo	42	3	50	5
	White	53	7	33	7
	Total	45	4	45	0

be expected to be of more vital concern to the Eskimo group, most of whom have close kinship ties with individuals in the other northern centres. This may account for the higher proportion who felt that the money spent on Comminterphone could have been better spent on improving the inter-settlement formal communications network. The ties of the white group tend toward more southern centres.

Comminterphone was seen to have served at least one useful purpose by members of the community. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the sample group felt that it had provided them with information sooner than through other means. The fact that language is a greater barrier to cross-cultural communication than technology is again supported by the low positive response to Statement 5. Table 10 indicated that only a very few respondents felt that relations between the two cultural groups had improved as a result of Comminterphone. One-half indicated that relations had not changed while an almost equal number were reluctant to respond.

Over one-half of the community desires the system to be operated more like a commercial radio station. This is mainly an expression of a desire for a more diversified and regulated programming format. When responding to this particular question of the survey,

TABLE 10

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COMMINTERPHONE AS AN AID  
TO IMPROVING CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONS

(Percentage)

	Cross-Cultural Relations				
	have not changed	have become more friendly	have become less friendly	have become hostile	no response
Eskimo	40	11	0	0	50
White	80	7	0	0	13
Total	51	9	0	0	40

individuals stressed their desire for continued community control over program content and rejected any "commercialism" denoted in the term "commercial".

In summary the response to the questionnaire administered to every second household in Rankin Inlet during the month of January indicated that Comminterphone is proving to be a very useful information and entertainment medium. However, it is seen so far as a somewhat less successful instrument for promoting cross-cultural or intra-cultural communication. Certainly, language differences appear to play a much more significant role as a barrier to cross-cultural communications than does communications technology. It was pointed out that present attitudes towards the performance of Comminterphone in this role are a function of experience and that a more formal and structured presentation of individual viewpoints may evoke a more positive response to Comminterphone in this regard. It appears that, given the general feeling of favour for the potential of this technique, additional community experience with the experiment is required.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION TO COMMINTERPHONE

## Dial 1110 for CBQR Community Radio

### What It Is . . . .

An experiment is being tried in Rankin Inlet which will make using your telephone more interesting. It may also give you a better understanding of the way people feel in the settlement. Anyone who has a telephone or a radio in their house will be able to use this idea and it won't cost them anything.

The experiment, which is called "Comminterphone" (short for community interaction telephone), is being made so that several people can talk together at once on the same telephone line in such a way that the people of the settlement will hear what they are talking about. This is because these people's conversation will be sent to a radio transmitter called CBQR and broadcast throughout the community on a frequency of 1110 on the AM band. This means that anyone who has a radio in his house can turn it on and listen to the telephone conversation which is being broadcast in this manner. Because there will be a special number for this service (dial zero on your telephone) you can take part in the conversation by dialling in as the lines become free. Your own house telephone number still ensures that normal conversations are totally private.

### How It Will Work . . . .

Let us suppose that Charlie wants to call Billy on his telephone. Charlie then dials Billy's number and the telephone machinery will make the call go to Billy. But let us now suppose that Charlie wants to talk to Billy about a particular item, and

they both want to know what the other people in the settlement think about this. Then Charlie will call Billy on his normal house telephone number, and he will say that he wants to talk to him -- but publicly so that everyone can hear on the Comminterphone system.

Both Charlie and Billy then hang up their phones and start over by each dialling '0' which connects them to Comminterphone. Having dialled '0' they are then both talking together in the usual manner but through the special machine connected to the telephone exchange. From there, the conversation is taken to a broadcast transmitter and sent all over the settlement so that anyone else can hear it on the radio.

Suppose now that Tommy is listening on his radio and can hear Charlie and Billy talking together. Perhaps they were talking about something like putting in a new water pipe for the reservoir. But maybe Tommy thinks that this water pipe should not go where Charlie and Billy say it should go. So Tommy then dials zero on the telephone and tells them over the telephone what he thinks about putting the water pipe in a different place. Now we have Charlie, Billy, and Tommy talking together on the telephone and their conversation is being broadcast.

Somebody else in the community, we will say it is Theresa, wants to say something. She can hear what they are talking about, so she dials the special number and joins the conversation. She may agree or disagree, but as you can see, the interest picks up throughout the settlement.

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So each person puts his ideas or comments, in favour or against whatever the subject is, so that they understand what others



think about it. But as each person puts in his ideas and finishes what he says, he should hang up his phone so that a line becomes free for someone else to dial in. According to the way the machine is made at this time, only up to four people can use it at once, because otherwise it would block up the whole telephone circuit. Thus if Leoni wants to talk about the water pipe, she must wait until either Tommy, Billy, Charlie, or Theresa hangs up.

One thing everyone must remember is, when they are listening to their radio and they want to call in to the special number, they must turn down the volume of their radio set. If they do not do this, there will be a high-pitched squeal in their ear which will annoy them. This is because the radio starts listening to itself!

#### Just a Trial .....

This, as I said before, is nothing more than a trial to see if such a thing works. We want you to use it, it won't cost you any money, and we want to find out just how much you will use it. It probably won't last longer than a year because the equipment is needed for something else. But after that time, we will know whether or not such a Comminterphone system is useful.

#### Caribou and Weather News .....

There are many things Comminterphone can do. For example, it could give you a weather forecast. This could be done by someone getting a call into Coral Harbour, or Churchill or Baker Lake and getting the weather forecast, then phoning it to the special Comminterphone number to have it broadcast throughout the settlement. It could also be used to give warnings of bad storms, the arrival of Transair, or perhaps even tell of a herd of caribou that

might be coming near the area. This is something designed to give Rankin Inlet its own radio information, and you, the residents, are the people who can make it work.

Cominterphone will operate on frequency 1110 and the station identification will be CBQR. It may be heard between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. for a start and possibly after 5:00 p.m. However, any changes in broadcasting time will be announced.

Remember 1110 on your AM dial for Radio Rankin!

October 21st, 1971

APPENDIX B.

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM  
MONITORED TRANSMISSIONS

November 1:

"I don't understand this [Comminterphone] yet. I won't put another music next time if it is like this. Myself I'm talking right now, it's okay. When they are talking through the air I could hear it very well. When they are playing music on the radio with the record player it is very hard to hear. What do the other people think when anybody plays a record player through the air? I would like to hear some from other people too. Now I'm going to stop because they have told the people that there shouldn't be too many on the radio. When they finish talking they should hang up. I don't understand this [system] yet. Right now I feel good and happy....Bye."

November 3:

"Don't ever talk when you are drunk because it's not very nice to hear you when you talk half drunk. This radio station was put up for news and music, it wasn't put up for people who are drunk. Everytime when people get drunk I hate to hear them talking through the radio."

November 8:

First speaker: "... We were going to have a meeting today but only a few people showed up this evening. So the meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10 after the Settlement Council meeting. I think lots of people

didn't hear that there was going to be a meeting this evening. We will put a notice that there is a meeting on Wednesday, November 10." ...

Second speaker: "We never know when there is going to be a meeting because we that don't have phones we never know when there is going to be a meeting... We can't always leave the radio on all the time... I think they should deliver a notice to those who don't have a phone or radio and some people could go to the meeting. Also some of us don't always have a babysitter and that's why some of them don't go to the meeting..."

First speaker: "...We will put a notice at the Bay [store], bathhouse and at the office so that the people can know that there is a meeting going on..."

Second speaker: "I can't go to The Bay all the time and people that know that there is a meeting going on they never tell other people. And when I try to ask people they never know if there is a meeting going on and some people say that there is a meeting tonight and I get mixed up..."

First speaker: "When this first started, this Comminterphone business, me and Tom Sammurtok and Willie Adams talked about it and I think people forget because we didn't talk about it for a long time because we usually talk about other things and forget to say it again. Mainly we work hard, or maybe we forget to say it again,

or maybe we're just lazy."

Second speaker: "It is very hard to remember."

First speaker: "Yes it is very hard to remember. We forget to put a notice because we work hard, are lazy or even forget. And we even forget about our work too. Okay? Bye."

November 8:

"...As probably some people don't know here that the fuel oil truck has been broken down all day, and the truck has been repaired now. And Mike is back on the job. And we call Mike on overtime, and he has two places to deliver fuel oil - that is, the cannery and Jackie Iguptak. They are both out of fuel oil and Mike is going to deliver it to them. While he is at it maybe if anybody else is running low of fuel oil maybe they can check their fuel oil tank and let us know."

November 8:

"Somebody is playing an old record or the needle is bad. And it is very hard to hear it. Yeah, the record is very nice to hear but it is very poorly heard. I think it is old or the needle is bad. Could we hear some Eskimo songs?"

November 8:

First speaker: "I want the guy that was talking

at the first place, the guy that was talking about the dogs. I don't have to worry about the other man that was talking, because he is not a dog officer. The dog officer is what I want to hear. I was never a dog officer before and also I'm scared of the dogs that are loose at large."

Second speaker: "Oh Eli I know you. Are you from Chesterfield?"

First speaker: "Yes, I'm from Chesterfield. I'm tired of hearing about dogs being loose because I hear it all day long."

Second speaker: "So you hear about dogs being loose all day long. How could you hear it all day? We were working until 5 P.M. We start walking around at 5 P.M. and you hear about it all day long. I don't understand you. I announce it at 12 noon and now I announce it after I finish walking around. Right now it is pretty near seven. If you are tired of hearing it will you please stop hearing it now."

November 10:

"I don't want the bathhouse to be used for tomorrow. I think it is better for people not to use the bathhouse or even for washing their things [clothes]. Because it is very hard to paint it and the kids touch the wet paint and dirty the floor."

November 10:

"Wish somebody would give me at least 8 cans of beer."

November 11:

"Yes, I'm going to sing my song. After, I'm going to put Johnny Cash back on. My house is finally heard tonight. I have been hearing for a long time through the radio."

November 15:

Eskimo woman: "Who has the music of Charlie Paniguniak? Who is she?"

Second woman: "It was me, Carman Itlaut."

First woman: "The one who has music of Charlie? I would like to hear it because I'm going to tape it."

Second woman: "Can you wait for a while?"

First woman: "I'm going to fix my tape recorder."

November 19:

Woman: "Who is playing a rock music? Please play again. Come on, play again. Kids are not allowed to play on the radio. They are not allowed to play with the radio. Don't ever play again. Please tell your kids not to play with it. Don't let your kids play with the radio. Our kids don't play with the Comminterphone."

Man: "Those who have kids sometimes they just let them play with it. You know it is not very nice when



the kids play with the system. I think the kids are getting used to seeing their parents talking through the phone and now they start to dial "0" and play with it. I thank the lady that was talking. If you watch your kids carefully you could easily tell them not to play with the system."

November 23:

Woman 1: "Somebody's house is on fire."

Woman 2: "I think so because everyone is running down."

Woman 1: "I think so too; just scared."

Woman 3: "I don't think it's in the Village."

Woman 1: "Okay, bye."

Woman 4: "I think so. The siren has been on for a long time; it's down there."

Woman 3: "Yes, it is down there."

Woman 5: "Armand Kolut's house is on fire; don't ask, I already said it."

Woman 1: "Whose house is on fire?"

Woman 5: "Armand Kolut's house."

Woman 1: "Yes, I understand."

Woman 5: "Okay now. Bye."

Woman 5: "Yes, I just said it to those that are not going down because sometimes we like to hear very much of what is going on."

Woman 6: "The kids started it up when they were

babysitting and their parents were not home."

December 3:

"Tonight the Rankin people are going to dance. Now I'm talking to Chesterfield now, I'm talking to a far one, also maybe Whale Cove people are listening that we are having a dance tonight. And it's kind of snowing outside and the wind is coming from the north. Right now I just came home from work."