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NOTES ON COMMUNICATIONS IN COMMUNITIES OF
THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE PROVINCES OF
MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN, ALBERTA, AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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prepared at the request of

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MAN IN THE NORTH PROJECT

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NOTES ON COMMUNICATIONS IN COMMUNITIES OF
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During the course of its work on northern communications, the Man in the North (MIN) Project of the Arctic Institute of North America undertook a compilation of information regarding northern communities in Canada's four western provinces. Because of its interest in this sphere, the Department of Communications, Government of Canada, collaborated in and contributed to this work. This report details the findings of G.I. (Gerry) Kenney of the MIN Project during field work, 16 August 1971 to 2 September 1971.

It was possible to visit only a few of the localities in question, and therefore most of the information is not first-hand. The accuracy of the information is very high although 100% exactitude cannot be guaranteed.

The study area was defined as that area which lay north of the continuous lines of communications, transportation, and population. As a starting point, the 55th parallel was chosen, with deviations in Alberta and Manitoba to reflect actual conditions. This southern boundary of the study area is shown by the continuous dark line running generally east to west on the accompanying maps.

In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, all communities in the study area with 50 or more permanent residents were cataloged. However, because northern British Columbia is relatively more developed, only those communities where conventional communications do not exist were cataloged in that province.

MANITOBA

Telephone service

The policy of the Manitoba Telephone System has been to provide at least radio-telephone service to all communities with more than 50 residents. They have reached this objective. In addition they plan to expand their trunk network over the years to replace all radio-telephone links. Although the timing is not scheduled, it is expected that within about ten years all locations will have regular long-distance service. Three locations are scheduled for regular telephone service to replace radio-telephone service by 1972. These are Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Norway House.

Radio and television

Radio and television stations in the study area are as follows:

LPRT: Pukatawagen, Lynn Lake, Gillam, Wabowden

Radio stations: Churchill, Thompson

TV stations: Churchill, Gillam, Snow Lake, Lynn Lake (FCP), and Thompson.

Note: Those stations that cover locations other than their home locations are Thompson and Flin Flon Radio, and Flin Flon TV. Approximate daytime coverage is shown by circles on the map. It also appears that the TV station at The Pas covers Snow Lake and Cormorant. Also shown on the map is the limit of daytime coverage provided by CBW-Carman.

Growth centers

The location of possible growth centers in the area under consideration is a matter of opinion. However, discussions with various people in government and other circles indicate the following locations: Gillam, Churchill, Lynn Lake, Thompson, Norway House, Island Lake, Wabowden, Snow Lake. Others not in the study area but immediately adjacent to it are The Pas and Flin Flon.

Languages

Churchill: Chipewyan, Eskimo, Cree; Brochet: Chipewyan; east side of Lake Winnipeg: Ojibway; remainder, Cree.

TABLE I: MANITOBA

No. on map	Name	Pop.	Tel. (LD)	Road	Rail	Radio or TV reception
1	Brochet	691	R	T	-	
2	Lynn Lake	3,200	+	T	+	LPRT, FCP
3	South Indian Lake	477	R	T	-	
4	Pukatawagan	912	R	T	+	LPRT
5	Granville Lake	90	R	T	-	
6	Split Lake	415	R	T	+	
7	Ilford	184	+	T	+	
8	Shamattawa	300	R	T	-	
9	Sheridon	161	+	T	-	
10	Nelson House	1,100	R	T	-	
11	Thompson	23,000	+	G	+	Radio, TV
12	Pikwitonei	275	+	-	+	
13	Thicket Portage	382	+	-	+	
14	Snow Lake	1,600	+	G	-	TV
15	Wabowden	960	+	G	+	LPRT
16	Cross Lake	1,991	R	T	-	
17	Oxford House	803	R	T	-	
18	God's Lake Narrows	887	R	T	-	
19	God's River	275	R	T	-	
20	Cormorant	341	+	T	+	
21	Norway House	2,100	R	T	-	
22	Island Lake	2,000	R	-	-	
23	Poplar River	387	R	T	-	
24	Beren's River	766	R	T	-	
25	Little Grand Rapids	402	R	T	-	
26	Matheson Island	114	R	G	-	
27	Bloodvein	330	R	T	-	
28	Pine Dock	112	R	G	-	
29	Bisset	160	+	G	-	
30	Gillam	3,000	+	T	+	LPRT, TV
31	Churchill	3,000	+	-	+	Radio, TV
32	Poungassi	188	R	-	-	

LPRT: Low power relay transmitter

FCP: Frontier Coverage Package TV

+ : Facility existing

- : Facility lacking

T : Tractor winter road

P: Paved

G: Gravel

E: Earth

R: Radio-telephone

SASKATCHEWAN

Telephone service

Seven of the twenty-three locations in the study area are served by conventional long-distance service as shown on Table 2. The remainder are served by an HF radio message service provided by the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources. Saskatchewan Government Telephones plans for the area are as follows:

1. An HF radio base station is to be opened in Prince Albert in 1971. The telephone company at the same time will equip two communities with the remote equipment to work into the base station, i.e. Stony Rapids and Portage La Loche; any other stations will be privately owned.
2. Northward extension of the three trunk routes shown on the accompanying map eventually will provide conventional long-distance service to virtually every community in the study area. The timing of these extensions will be governed largely by the uranium market situation, as the deposits of Wallaston Lake are brought into production and those of Uranium City are expanded. Saskatchewan proposes to extend the system now terminating near La Ronge northward to Wallaston Lake and Uranium City, thereby eliminating the need for the existing Uranium City-Fort Smith link. It is anticipated that these trunk extensions will be completed within a 1975 time frame.

Radio and television

The only radio and TV stations in the study area are at Uranium City and La Ronge; they provide immediate area coverage only. The TV station at Flin Flon (Manitoba) provides coverage to Pelican Narrows and perhaps Island Falls. Coverage of CBK-Watrous is shown on the map.

Growth centers

Four regions within the study area appear to be candidates for growth:

- Uranium City and Wallaston Lake regions, when and if the uranium market picks up;
- The La Ronge area, due to mining and tourism;
- The Buffalo Narrows-La Loche area, due to pulp and tourism.

Languages

Cree in the south, Chipewyan in the north.

TABLE 2: SASKATCHEWAN

No. on map	Name	Pop.	Tel. (LD)	Road	Rail	Radio or TV reception
1	Camsell Portage	89	R-	-	-	
2	Uranium City	2,350	†	-	-	LPRT, FCP
3	Fond du Lac	209	R-	-	-	
4	Stony Rapids	125	†	-	-	
5	Black Lake	448	R-	-	-	
6	Wallaston Lake	238	R-	-	-	
7	Cree Lake	33	R-	-	-	
8	Portage La Loche	1,480	R-	†	-	
9	Turnor Lake	193	R-	†	-	
10	Southend	120	R-	†	-	
11	Dillon	100	R-	-	-	
12	Buffalo Narrows	1,090	†	†	-	
13	Putuanak	210	R-	-	-	
14	Ile a la Crosse	1,000	†	†	-	
15	Pine House	481	R-	-	-	
16	Stanley Mission	750	R-	-	-	
17	Sandy Bay	535	R-	-	-	
18	Pelican Narrows	575	R-	†	-	
19	La Ronge	1,800	†	†	-	FCP
20	Kinoosao	10	R-	†	-	
21	Beauval	463	†	†	-	
22	Canoe Lake	236	R-	†	-	
23	Sucker River	150	†	†	-	

LPRT: Low power relay transmitter

FCP: Frontier Coverage Package TV

† : Facility existing

- : Facility lacking

R- : Indicates a radio telephone message service provided by the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources. There is no public telephone service in these locations.

CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF
MINES AND TECHNICAL SURVEYS
SURVEY AND MAPPING BRANCH

PRAIRIE PROVINCES

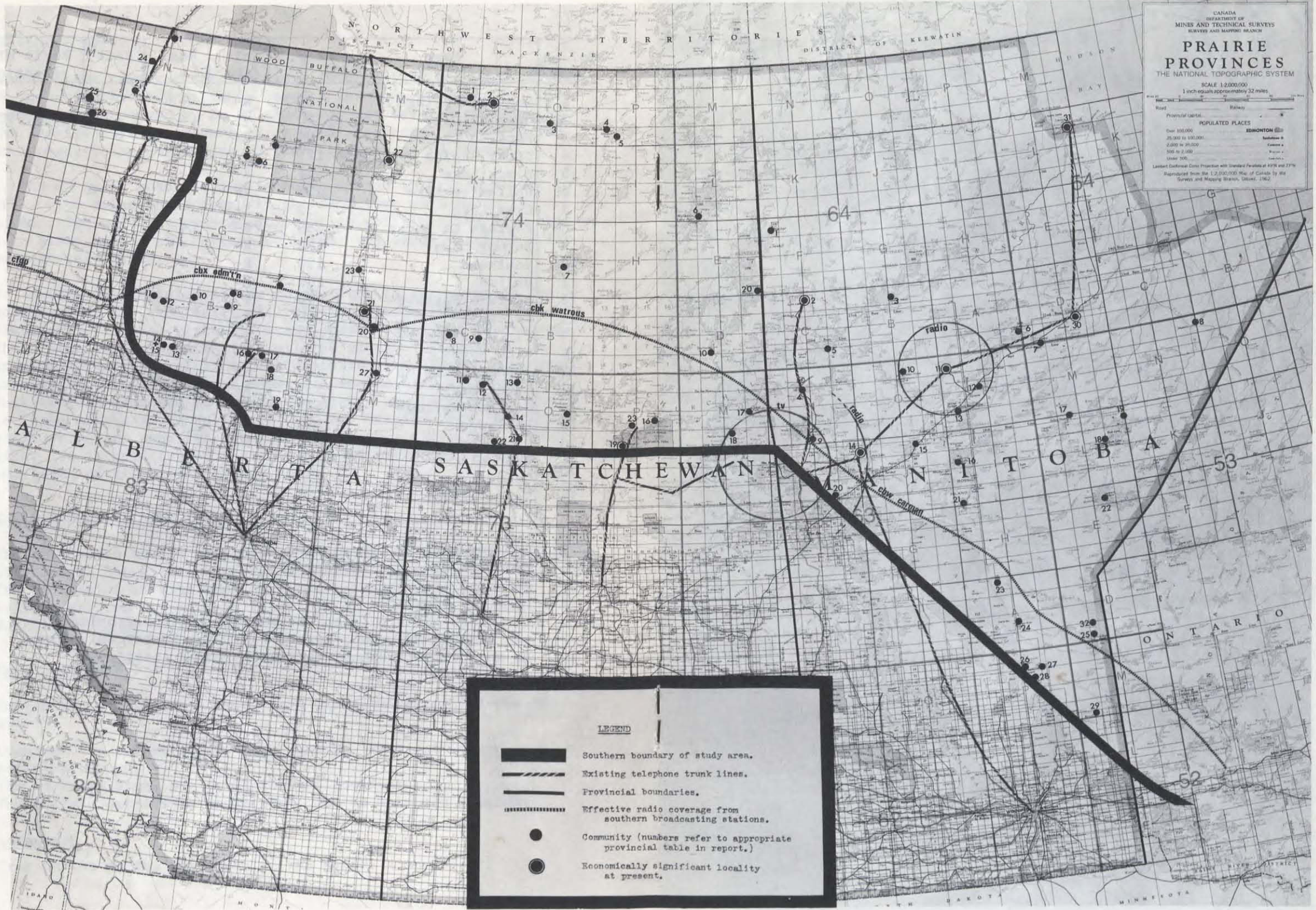
THE NATIONAL TOPOGRAPHIC SYSTEM

SCALE 1:2,000,000
1 inch equals approximately 32 miles







POPULATED PLACES

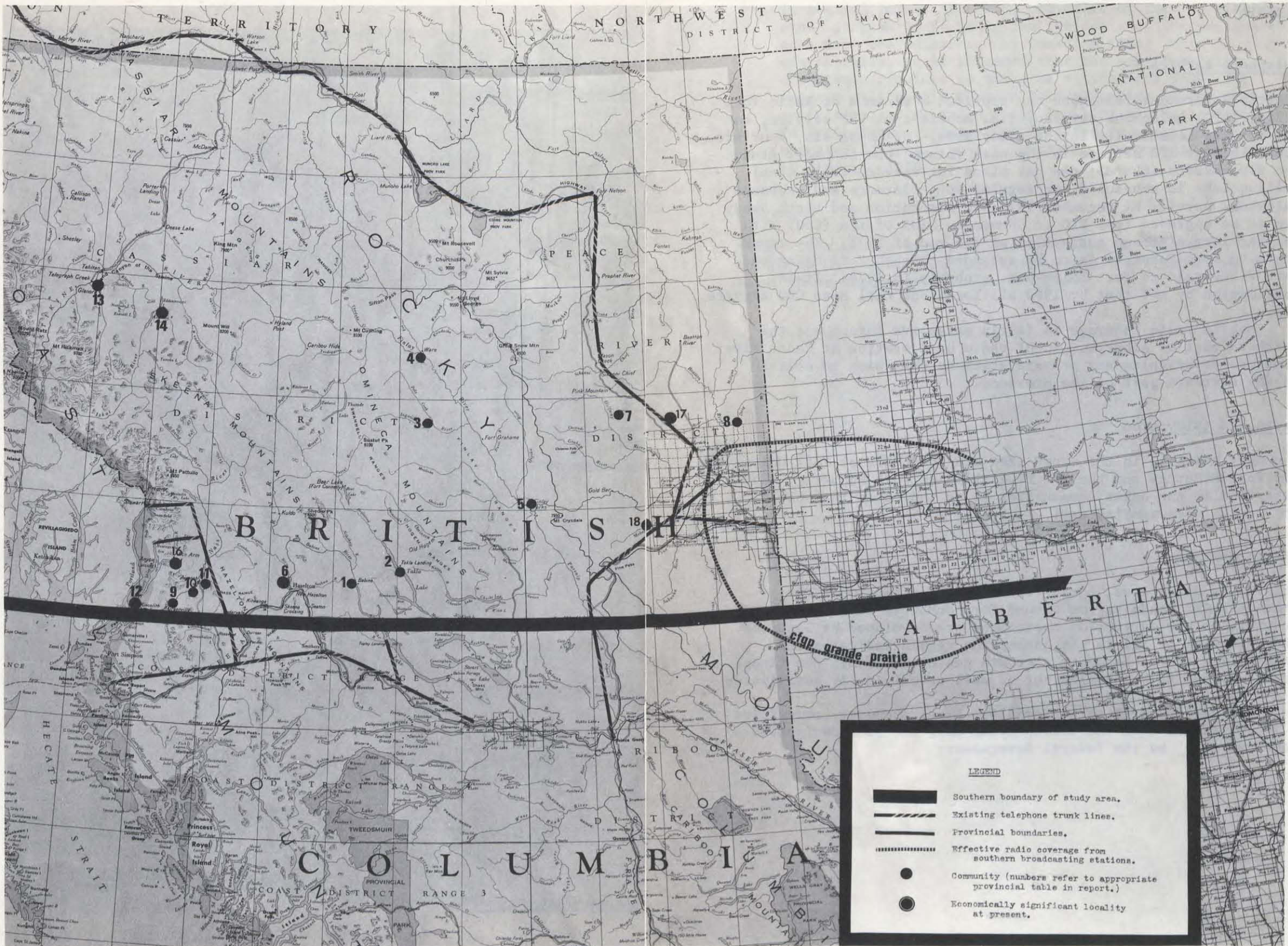
Over 100,000	EDMONTON	●
25,000 to 100,000	Calgary	●
2,000 to 25,000	Regina	●
500 to 2,000	Saskatoon	●
Under 500	Other	●

Landset Coarse Cone Projection with Standard Parallels at 49°N and 77°N
Reproduced from the 1:2,000,000 Map of Canada by the Survey and Mapping Branch, Ottawa, 1962



LEGEND

-  Southern boundary of study area.
-  Existing telephone trunk lines.
-  Provincial boundaries.
-  Effective radio coverage from southern broadcasting stations.
-  Community (numbers refer to appropriate provincial table in report.)
-  Economically significant locality at present.



LEGEND

- Southern boundary of study area.
- Existing telephone trunk lines.
- Provincial boundaries.
- Effective radio coverage from southern broadcasting stations.
- Community (numbers refer to appropriate provincial table in report.)
- Economically significant locality at present.

ALBERTA

Telephone service

Alberta Government Telephone has provided a minimum of Radio Toll Office (RTO) telephone service, i.e. mobile-type VHF service, to all but six communities in the study area. Of these six, four are scheduled for RTO service in the near future; one is under study for RTO service (Chard); one has plans for service (Tall Cree). Calling Lake is scheduled for regular long-distance and exchange telephone service by December 1972. L'Assumption and North Habay are to be upgraded from RTO to Community Dial Office (CDO) with regular long-distance connection at the end of 1971. The trunk route to Fort McMurray is to be extended through Fort McKay and Fort Fitzgerald to Fort Chipewyan, probably in 1974. It is anticipated by AGT that by 1980 all locations will have CDO service.

Mobile radio coverage is fairly extensive throughout the northern part of Alberta. An HF radio base station at Peace River provides coverage to any private stations that wish to operate in the northern part of the province.

Radio and television

The only stations in the study area are the LPRTs at Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray and the FCP TV station at Fort McMurray. Radio reception in the other communities is as indicated in Table 3, and on the accompanying map.

Growth centers

Within the study area, three regions merit attention. The Athabasca Oil Sands region around Fort McMurray seems destined to grow, as the extraction operations are developed by Sincrupe. The existence of oil in the Assumption region indicates the possibility of its becoming a growth center, although the finds do not appear to be panning out as well as originally anticipated.

The region north of Lesser Slave Lake, grouping communities 7 to 19 inclusive on the accompanying map, has been designated a "special area" by the Federal Government:

In general terms, the prime objective of the "special area" program is to bring the residents of the designated area into the mainstream of Canadian life. More specifically, it is intended that the supplementary assistance provided to the area's residents under the program will enable them to take advantage of the economic activities and to raise their level of living. (from "A Socio-Economic Survey of Isolated Communities in Northern Alberta," by R.L. Mansell. Edmonton: Government of Alberta, 1970.)

Languages

Mainly Cree with a pocket of Slavey in the northwest corner, a line of Chipewyan from Fort Chipewyan to Fort McMurray, plus about three scattered villages of Beaver.

TABLE 3: ALBERTA

No. on map	Name	Pop.	Tel. (LD)	Road*	Rail	Radio or TV reception
1	Indian Cabins	63	RTO	+	-	-
2	Mender River	400	RTO	+	-	-
3	Tall Cree	118	-	+	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
4	Garden River	250	-	+	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
5	John D'or Prairie	250	RTO	+	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
6	Fox Lake	150	RTO	-	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
7	Chipewyan Lake	150	RTO	-	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
8	Peerless Lake	200	-	+	-	Peace River, Edmonton radio
9	Trout Lake	200	-	+	-	Peace River, Edmonton radio (poorly)
10	Loon Lake	150	-	+	-	Peace River, Edmonton radio (poorly)
11	Cadotte Lake	) )400	RTO	+	-	Peace River radio
12	Little Buffalo	)	RTO	+	-	Peace River radio
13	Atikameg	500	RTO	+	-	∅ Peace River radio
14	Gift Lake	) )300	RTO	+	-	∅ Peace River radio
15	Big Prairie	)	RTO	+	-	∅ Peace River radio
16	Wabasca	) )3000	+	+	-	∅ Peace River radio (poorly)
17	Desmarais	)	+	+	-	∅ Peace River radio (poorly)
18	Sandy Lake	200	RTO	+	-	Peace River radio (poorly)
19	Calling Lake	250	RTO	+	-	∅ Edmonton radio
20	Anzac	150	RTO	+	+	∅ Edmonton radio
21	McMurray	3,000	+	+	+	∅ LPRT, FCP
22	Ft. Chipewyan	2,000	+	-	-	∅ LPRT
23	Ft. MacKay	230	RTO	+	-	-
24	Steen River	over 100	RTO	+	-	-
25	Habay	300 - 500	RTO	+	-	-
26	L'Assumption	930	RTO	+	-	-
27	Chard	150	-	-	+	Edmonton radio

* Many of the roads in this area are classed as unimproved, and may not be passable under certain weather conditions.

LPRT: Low power radio transmitter

RTO: Radio Toll Office (mobile-type VHF service)

FCP: Frontier Coverage Package TV

∅ : Receives a TV station also

+: Facility existing

- : Facility lacking

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Telephone service

As mentioned previously, in the case of British Columbia only those communities where conventional communications do not exist were cataloged. For the time being, BC Telephone has no plans for changing the grade of service to the locations in Table 4. It is to be noted that although two locations, Atlin and Alice Arm, are served with single channel mobile-grade VHF, it was deemed advisable to provide HF radio backup as well.

Radio and television

Reception is shown on Table 4 and on the accompanying map.

Growth centers

The situation in northern BC is different from that in the other three western provinces in that development is already well advanced in northern BC. Roads and railways have penetrated the area in question and major extensions are under construction at the moment. It would be presumptuous in a report of this nature to even attempt to summarize the growth potential in northern BC. Instead, it is suggested that information available from the BC provincial government such as the British Columbia Financial and Economic Review, thirty-first edition, would be useful to anyone wishing to pursue the matter further.

Languages

The following language groups are represented by the communities listed in the table for British Columbia: Tagish, Niska, Gitksan, Carrier, Tahltan, Beaver, Sekani.

TABLE 4: BRITISH COLUMBIA

No. on map	Name	Pop.	Tel. (LD)	Road	Rail	Radio or TV reception
1	Fort Babine	90	-	-	-	-
2	Takla Landing	160	-	-	-	-
3	Ingenika	60	-	-	-	-
4	Fort Ware	140	R	†	-	-
5	Finlay Forks	100	-	†	-	-
6	Kitwancool	206	-	†	-	radio, TV from Terrace
7	Halfway River	113	-	†	-	radio, TV from Dawson Creek, and
8	Doig River	74	-	†	-	radio from Ft. St. John
9	Greenville	760	-	†	-	radio, TV from Terrace, and radio
10	Canyon City	220	-	†	-	from Prince Rupert
11	Aiyaush	670	-	†	-	Prince Rupert
12	Kincolith	451	R	-	-	radio, TV
13	Telegraph Creek	200	R	†	-	-
14	Iskut (Eddontenajon)	250	R	†	-	-
15	Atlin	225	R,VHF	†	-	radio from Terrace,
16	Alice Arm	100-	R,VHF	-	-	Fort Rupert TV, radio from
17	Blueberry River	72	R	†	-	Dawson Creek; radio
18	East Moberly	126	-	†	-	from Ft. St. John

VHF: Single channel mobile-type VHF link

† : Facility existing

- : Facility lacking

R : BC Telephone radio-telephone existing or will be this year.



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