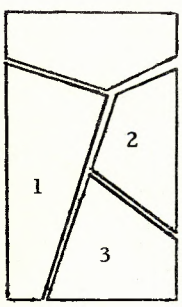
the Changing Eskimo

FRONT COVER PHOTOS



1. Using his telescope, an Eskimo hunter scans the horizon for seals while hunting.
2. Eskimo students in an Arctic school find the settlement they live in on a globe.
3. Eskimo man from Frobisher Bay at the controls of his bulldozer.

The Changing Eskimo

Inuk, the man, a lonely figure driving his dog team across the white, wind-lashed barrens...to most Canadians Inuk is the image of arctic Canada. An image reaching far back into time, and legend.

But life for Inuk is changing. As, with every generation, life changes for the rest of Canada. In some parts of the Arctic life is changing quite fast. In others, more remote, the pace is slower.

Sensitive problems of human adjustment occur in working with people who have remained isolated by distance for a long stretch of time. Great opportunities, too. In the Department of Northern Affairs we are keenly aware of this. Appreciative, too, of how much good work is being done in the Arctic by others. We know - as they do - that the future will be shaped by the character and work of many different sorts of people - by northerners, and by an increasing number of southern Canadians who are in the north working with them.

The Eskimos feel about their homeland the way most of us feel about the place where we were born and brought up. Some call it Nunassiaq, The Good Land. This is a feeling that many people not born in the Arctic share with them.

This book suggests some of the ways in which life for the Eskimo people is changing. Old barriers of distance are falling; the great spaces are not shrinking but the time needed to cross them is - by aircraft that can fly in almost any weather. Eskimo children grow up to the sight and sound of aircraft. To them it would be an adventure to ride in a train.

The Eskimo people number some 12,000 and the birth-rate is rising. Better housing and medical care, more plentiful food, have begun to make an impact on infant mortality. People are living longer and children staying longer in school. The north is very old in terms of landscape. But in terms of people it is young. The average age is 21 years, 5 months. In the rest of Canada it is five years older. Population promises to grow rapidly over the next 10 to 20 years. Even now our big new schools are bulging.

In the north there are not "schools for Eskimos" or "schools for Indians" or "schools for others". Throughout the north children of all races go to school together. Children - and schools - are a big part of the future of the north. Youngsters like you will see on the back cover, coming back to school at the end of summer.

The work of Eskimo sculptors and graphic artists has taken Canada's name into almost every country in the world. It seems to be instinctive with the Eskimo people to create and this deep-rooted drive has survived amid some of the sparsest raw materials nature ever provided. Like all art, the work of Eskimo artists responds to the life around it and while true primitive examples are growing rarer, strong new talents are emerging.

An Eskimo hunter shows his son how to use a harpoon. An inflated sealskin float is on the kayak.

Out of an urgent need to increase the harvests of land and water have sprung the Eskimo co-operatives - char fisheries, art, fine crafts, logging, boat and house building - whatever local resources the Inuit can be assisted in developing, with technical aid at the outset. The co-operatives are putting cash into the hands of their members and, perhaps even more important, giving them responsibility for the management of their own corporate affairs. Organizing and maintaining successful co-operatives in the Arctic is not simple. But it is an approach that speaks the language of the Eskimos, to whom it is traditional to pool resources and share the harvests.

Canadians who live outside the Arctic have a strong tie of kinship with life in the far north. Not so long ago to be a Canadian anywhere between the Atlantic and the Pacific was to be a pioneer, to live strung out along the frontiers of social and economic change. In the north now aircraft and telecommunications are bridging north and south. The "far" north is no longer so far.

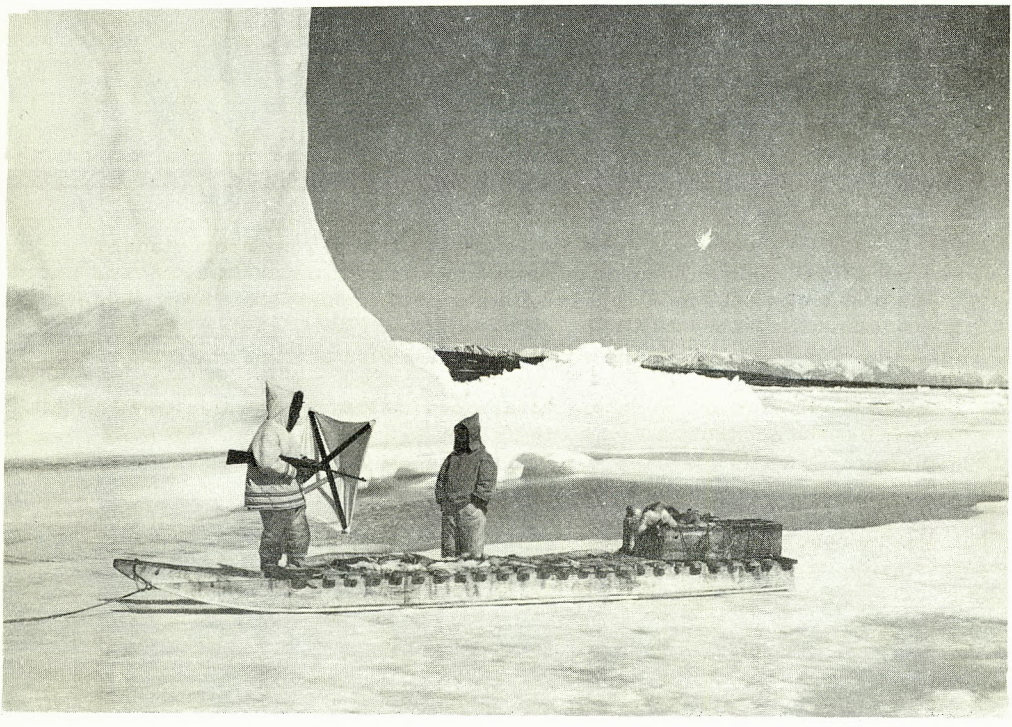
HUNTING

The skill to hunt and trap is still a necessity of life for many Eskimos. The introduction of firearms has altered hunting patterns radically. Old methods and new are used to catch animals for food and obtain skins and furs for trading.

Returns from trapping and sealing are an important source of Eskimo income. Seventy to eighty per cent of Eskimos engage in trapping and sealing, either full or part time. White fox, muskrat, caribou, seal, walrus, whales and fish - all are important.

Seal and whale oil burned in lamps to provide light and heat is being used less and less. Primus stoves seem to turn up everywhere. Animal skins are still utilized in many parts of the north for clothing and boots.

An Eskimo youngster learns to use a white cloth screen for stalking a seal.



TRAVEL

Dog teams are used for transportation across snowy tundra and ice-locked seas. Teams are guided by shouts from the driver, and the crack of a long sealskin whip. In summer, dogs sometimes carry lighter loads in small pouches, while bulkier and heavier articles are carried by men and women. Skidoos and autoboggans are also used in winter.

Kayaks and umiaks are rare now as a form of water transportation, but the occasional kayak can still be seen in the north. In most areas manufactured boats are used, with power supplied by outboard motors, commonly known as "kickers".

CO-OPERATIVES

Eskimo people are used to co-operative action. With Government assistance, co-operatives have been established across the north. Members of the co-operatives are learning to better utilize the resources of the north, gaining a better living and adapting to a changing way of life.

Co-operatives have been established at Port Burwell, Whale Cove and Frobisher Bay, to name only a few points in the Northwest Territories. Programs include the development of char, salmon and seal fisheries, sawmill operations, canoe building projects and arts and handicrafts production.

At the Co-op store in Port Burwell, manager Harry Analuk watches a member bring in a polar bear skin.

Pudlo, one of the Eskimo artists at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative at the Cape Dorset, puts the finishing touches on a stonecut.

PRINTS

One of the most striking forms of development to take place recently in the north is in the arts - a field where the innate Eskimo skills have placed them in the front ranks.

At Cape Dorset, on the west coast of Baffin Island, Eskimo artists have added to their reputation as excellent carvers by developing their skills in two art forms - stonecut prints and sealskin stencils. Many prints from Cape Dorset are collector's items. Prints and stencils have been shown throughout the world. The Eskimo Co-operative at Povungnituk is also doing much interesting work. A new art form, copper engraving, was recently introduced to Cape Dorset craftsmen.

ESKIMO FISHERIES

Eskimo co-operative fisheries are catching and processing large catches of arctic char. First established at Frobisher Bay in 1958, Co-ops are also in operation at Port Burwell and Cambridge Bay and Great Whale River, Fort Chimo and Port Neveau in Quebec. The main market for 'Ilkalupik' - arctic char - was first located in eastern Canada, but shipments are now being sent to all parts of Canada, and to the United States and Britain.

The Fort Chimo Co-operative is the first one to make extensive use of aircraft to fly their fish fresh to southern Canadian and American markets.

A Northern Affairs projects officer helps members of the Fort Chimo Eskimo Co-operative weigh fresh-caught arctic char.

SCULPTURE

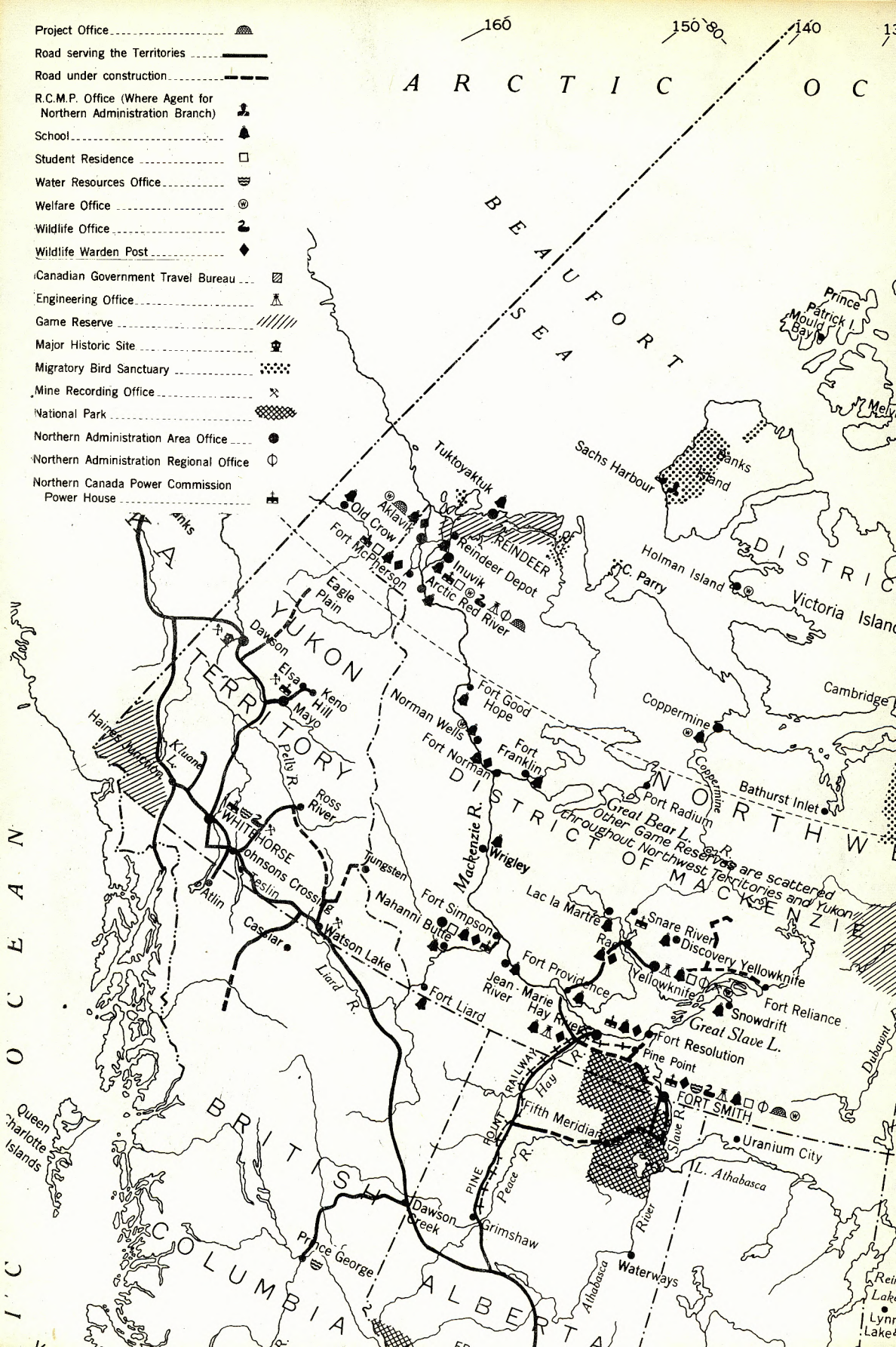
Many art experts believe that the Eskimos produce an art of stone, bone and ivory equal to, or surpassing, any native art on this continent. Carvings reflect the artist's feelings about people and the life around him. The carvings are often a link between the past and the present.

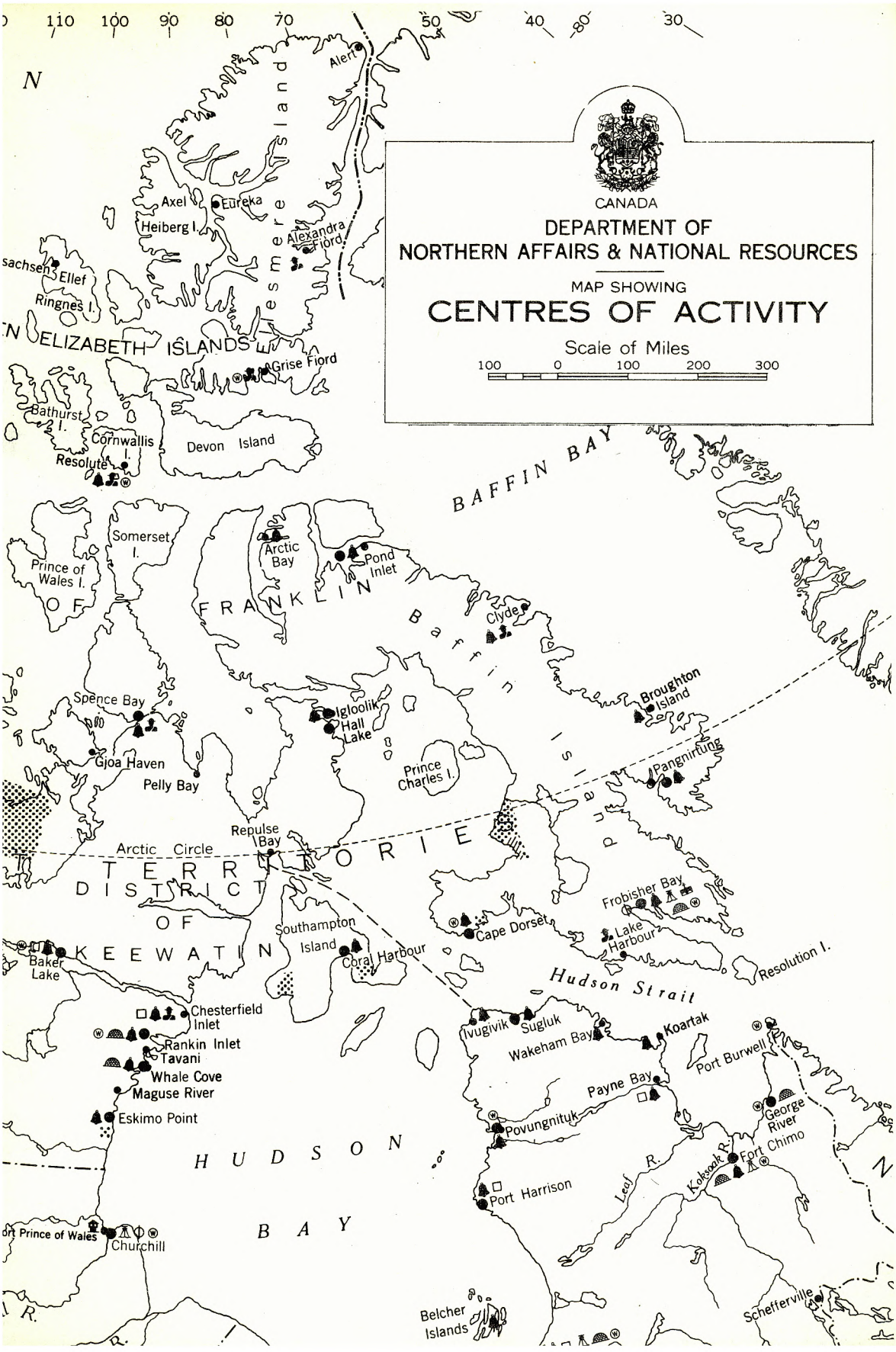
Carving is done in the home. A variety of tools are used to produce the figure from rough stone, and seal oil and dust to bring a final smoothness. Carvings, maintained at a high level of excellence, continue to bring the Eskimos, and Canada too, world-wide recognition.

A young sculptor works with his father and uncle to put the finishing touches on three soapstone carvings. The men are members of the Sculptors Society of Povongnituk.

Eskimo hunters play an ancient game of skill, using pieces of caribou bone. The games are part of the Christmas celebrations at Pelly Bay, held in a specially-built wide-domed igloo.

Many Eskimo traditions are still maintained. Eskimos from Tuktoyaktuk hold a drum dance inside a large igloo. Sounds are created by striking the edge of the drum with a wooden mallet.


Project Office
Road serving the Territories
Road under construction
R.C.M.P. Office (Where Agent for Northern Administration Branch)
School
Student Residence
Water Resources Office
Welfare Office
Wildlife Office
Wildlife Warden Post
Canadian Government Travel Bureau
Engineering Office
Game Reserve
Major Historic Site
Migratory Bird Sanctuary
Mine Recording Office
National Park
Northern Administration Area Office
Northern Administration Regional Office
Northern Canada Power Commission Power House
160
150
140
ARCTIC OCEAN
BEAUFORT SEA
Prince Patrick I.
Mould Bay
Sachs Harbour
Banks Island
Tuktoyaktuk
Aklavik
Old Crow
Fort McPherson
Reindeer Depot
REINDEER
Inuvik
Arctic Red River
Holman Island
C. Parry
Victoria Island
Eagle Plain
Dawson
YUKON TERRITORY
Elsa
Keno Hill
Mayo
Fort Good Hope
Norman Wells
Fort Norman
Fort Franklin
Coppermine
Cambridge
Bathurst Inlet
Port Radium
Great Bear L.
Other Game Reserves are scattered throughout Northwest Territories and Yukon
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE
Haines Junction
Kluane L.
Pelly R.
Ross River
WHITEHORSE
Johnsons Crossing
Teslin
Atlin
Carcross
Watson Lake
Liard R.
Tungsten
Mackenzie R.
Wrigley
Nahanni Butte
Fort Simpson
Lac la Martre
Rae
Snare River
Discovery
Yellowknife
Fort Reliance
Snowdrift
Great Slave L.
Fort Providence
Jean-Marie River
Hay River
Fort Resolution
Pine Point
Fort Liard
Hay R.
Fifth Meridian
FORT SMITH
Slave R.
Uranium City
L. Athabasca
Dubawnt
Queen Charlotte Islands
BRITISH COLUMBIA
PINE POINT RAILWAY
Peace R.
Dawson Creek
Grimshaw
Prince George
Waterways
Athabasca River
ALBERTA
Lynn Lake


CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF
NORTHERN AFFAIRS & NATIONAL RESOURCES
MAP SHOWING
CENTRES OF ACTIVITY
Scale of Miles
100 0 100 200 300
Alert
Axel
Eureka
Heiberg I.
Alexandra Fiord
Ellef
Ringnes I.
ELIZABETH ISLANDS
Grise Fiord
Bathurst I.
Cornwallis I.
Resolute
Devon Island
BAFFIN BAY
Somerset I.
Prince of Wales I.
Arctic Bay
Pond Inlet
FRANKLIN
Clyde
Baffin Island
Broughton Island
Spence Bay
Igloolik
Hall Lake
Gjoa Haven
Pelly Bay
Prince Charles I.
Pangnirtung
Repulse Bay
Arctic Circle
TERRITORIES
DISTRICT
OF
KEEWATIN
Frobisher Bay
Cape Dorset
Lake Harbour
Southampton Island
Coral Harbour
Baker Lake
Resolution I.
Hudson Strait
Chesterfield Inlet
Rankin Inlet
Tavani
Whale Cove
Maguse River
Eskimo Point
Ivugivik
Sugluk
Koartak
Wakeham Bay
Port Burwell
Payne Bay
Povungnituk
George River
Fort Chimo
Koksoak R.
Leaf R.
Port Harrison
HUDSON
BAY
Port Prince of Wales
Churchill
Belcher Islands
Schefferville

TRADITIONAL HOUSING

Snowhouses are still widely used by the Eskimos. Wind-packed snow is cut into long blocks with a special knife, and the blocks are laid in a spiral, sloping gradually more inward as the walls rise.

Working from the inside, the floor of the igloo is below the original surface level, but a raised area is left for a sleeping platform. The entrance to the igloo is usually through a smaller igloo used as a porch.

The summer home for many Eskimos is a canvas tent. The use of skin tents in the north, once common, is rare nowadays.

Homes of Eskimo wage-earners at Frobisher Bay, on Baffin Island.

MODERN HOUSING

The increasing number of Eskimo wage-earners has created the need for more permanent homes. Through a Government-sponsored program of loans and grants, more Eskimos are owning their own homes. Simple in design, the housing units have done much to improve health and living conditions for many in the north.

Part of the cost is covered by a Federal subsidy; the owner may borrow the balance from the Eskimo Loan Fund and repay it on terms adjusted to his level of income. A man's own labour in building his house helps to cut costs.

EDUCATION

Eskimo parents show great interest in education and want their children to go to school. More than half the students live in student residences, ranging from large hostels which can accommodate 250, to eight-pupil family type residences.

In 1958 only 17 per cent of Eskimo children were in school. By 1964, as the Department of Northern Affairs increased the number of schools, 75 per cent of Eskimo children were in schools.

Eskimo and Indian students go over their lessons at the Federal school in Inuvik.

The parka shop is one of the more popular stops for visitors to the Eskimo Rehabilitation Centre at Frobisher Bay. Eskimo women, always skillful with the needle, turn out colourful, well-tailored garments.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The Eskimos enjoy essentially the same social welfare benefits as Canadians in other parts of the country. These include Family Allowances, Old Age Security, special allowances for the blind and disabled and assistance to those unable to support themselves. Even the privilege of paying income tax.

The care of patients discharged from hospitals and of children separated from their parents are some of the many family welfare services provided.

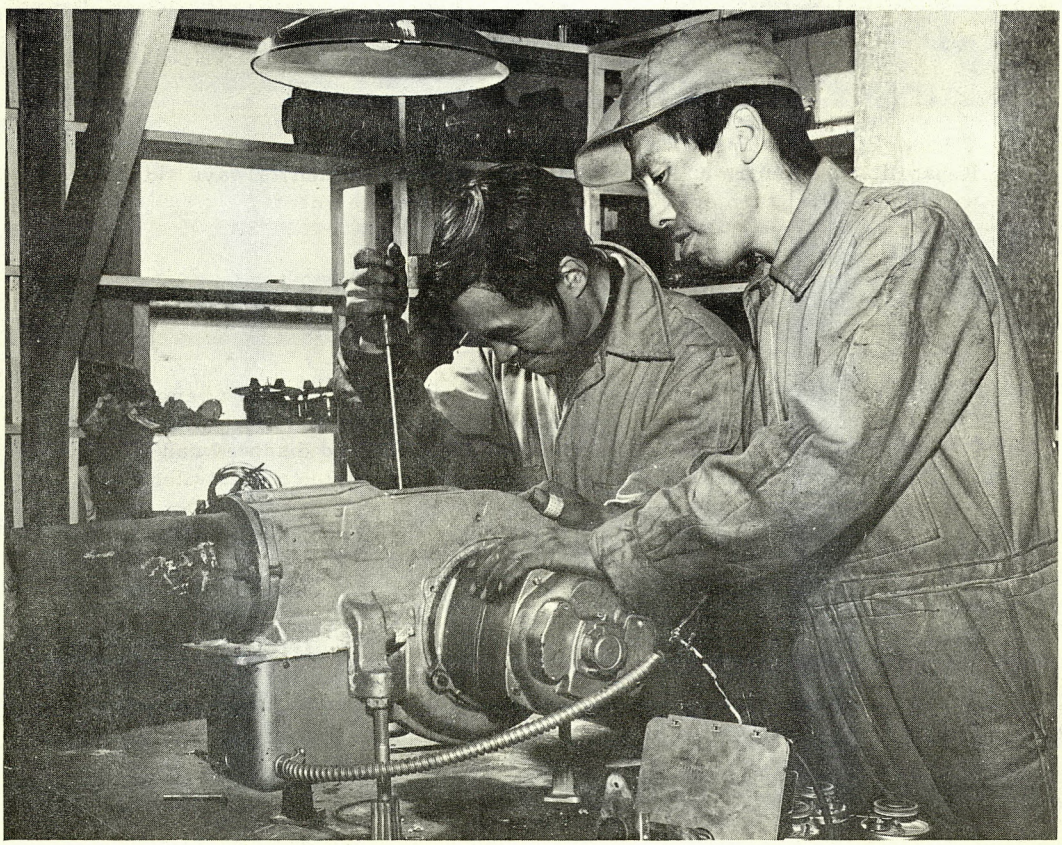
A Northern rehabilitation program with Centres at Inuvik and Frobisher Bay helps restore handicapped people to a useful life. Sculpture is one of the activities which the Centre at Frobisher Bay encourages. The Craft shop is managed by an Eskimo, and the Deputy Director of the Centre is also an Eskimo.

EMPLOYMENT

Eskimos work in a variety of fields, skilled and unskilled. They work like other Canadians, for government departments, and on the DEW line. There are miners, carpenters, mechanics, tractor operators and oil drillers. An Eskimo manages the CBC radio station at Inuvik; an Eskimo girl edits an Eskimo-language magazine. Others work as interpreters, nursing assistants, secretaries and clerks.

Northern Affairs Selection and Placement Officers can help Eskimos, Indians and others in the north to get training and jobs.

Akshuyouleak, left and Newkinga are employed as repair and maintenance men by Northern Affairs and National Resources at Frobisher Bay.



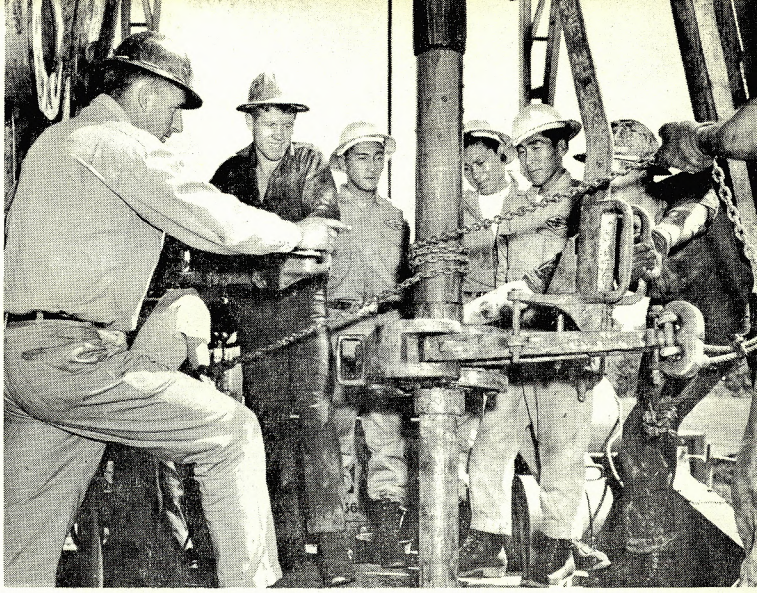
Eskimo and Indian boys at the federal school in Inuvik are learning carpentry.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

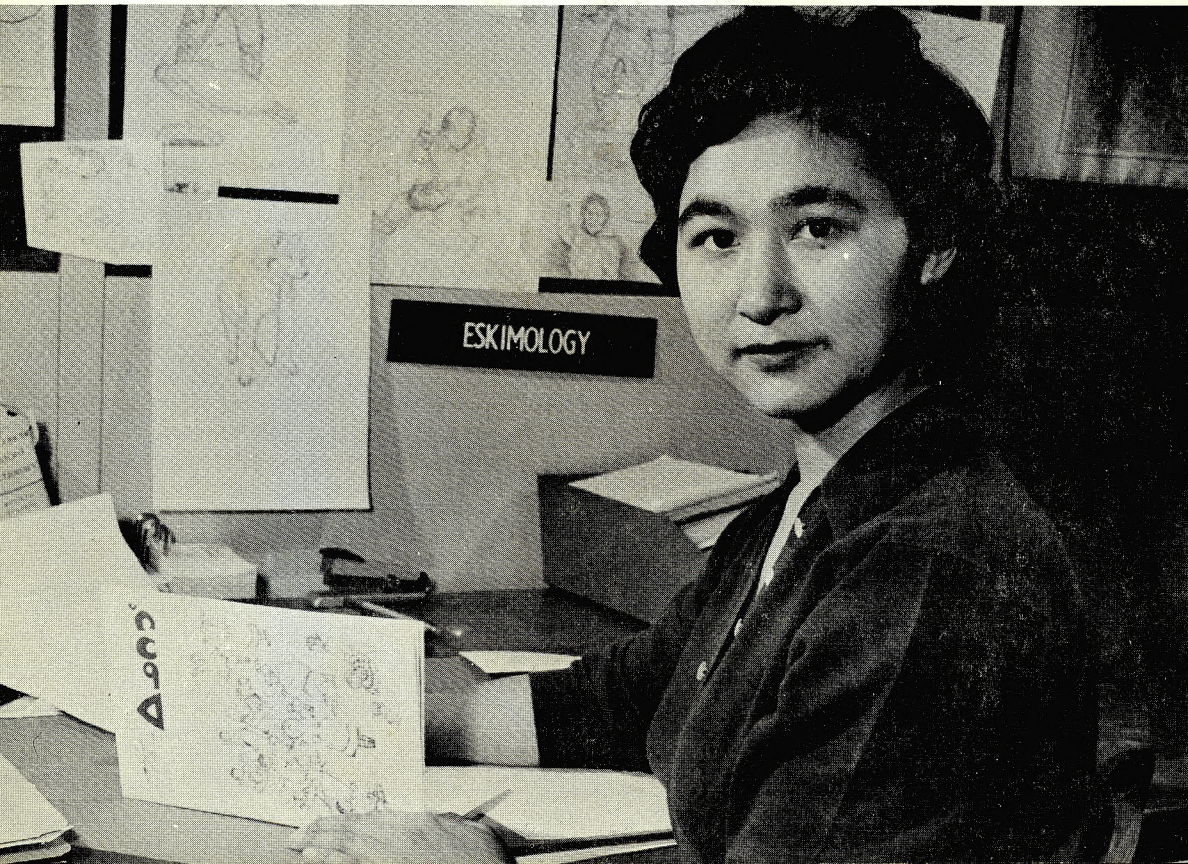
An academic education opens the door of opportunity to some Eskimos, but it is not the only avenue to the future. Vocational training classes offer the chance to become skilled tradesmen in carpentry, electronics, mining, auto and diesel mechanics, domestic science and other fields. On-the-job training also shows adult members of the community how to make a better living.

An increasing number of fine crafts ranging from small sealskin animals and toys to embroidered duffel coats, are being produced by Eskimos for southern markets. Eskimo women are known for their distinctive graphic art and tailoring. Working in her tent, Nepachee puts finishing touches to a beadwork belt.

A number of Eskimos have learnt how to handle oil-drilling equipment and have taken part in the search for oil in the Northwest Territories and Arctic Islands. Here trainees in Calgary learn how the bit functions on a drilling rig.



Mary Panegoosho, born in Pond Inlet in the Eastern Arctic and on the Northern Affairs Welfare staff, edits an Eskimo-language magazine, Inuktitut, The Eskimo Way. Cover drawings and illustrations are also her work. The text is prepared on an Eskimo-language typewriter.



SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE NORTH

Background papers, speeches and articles are available free from The Information Services Division, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 85 Sparks Street, Ottawa.

More specialized inquiries for research material may be addressed to:

- The Librarian, Northern Administration Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 150 Kent Street, Ottawa, Ontario.
- Northern Co-Ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa, Ontario.
- The National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

FILMS

Many good 16mm. films, black and white and colour, are available on a variety of northern subjects. The National Film Board, 150 Kent Street, Ottawa, or your nearest Film Board Regional Office, will have some helpful suggestions about titles.

Outside Canada information on these films can usually be obtained by writing to the nearest Canadian diplomatic or trade office.

COVER PHOTOS

Back - Eskimo youngsters come back to school at Inuvik at the end of summer vacation. Their parents live mainly out at hunting camps, too far away to attend a day school. The children live in hostels near the school.

Photo Credits:

Front cover, Max McConnell; page 18, David Millar; back cover, Hunting Survey Corp.; all other photos, National Film Board.

An Eskimo paddles his kayak on the still waters of White Bay, Eclipse Sound.

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Information Services Division

Issued under the authority of
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Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources
Ottawa