

Subsection 2.—Administration of the Eskimos*

The Eskimos in Canada are found principally north of the tree-line on the northern fringe of the mainland and around the coasts of the islands in the Arctic Archipelago and in Hudson Bay. Most of the Eskimos are coastal dwellers, obtaining much of their food and clothing from the mammals of the sea. However, there are bands of Eskimos living in the interior of Keewatin District, on the west side of Hudson Bay, who are inland people and who subsist chiefly on caribou and fish.

The economy of these nomadic people depends entirely on hunting, trapping and fishing. Hunting produces local food while trapping produces furs to trade for the white man's goods. Considering the variations in the supply of game for either food or fur and the drastic changes in price characteristic of the fur trade, it will be apparent that this is a precarious economy.

The 1941 Census established the Eskimo population at 7,639, of whom 1,965 were located in northern Quebec. The Eskimo population of Canada, excluding Labrador, was estimated as of January, 1950, to be 8,437.

The Department of Resources and Development is charged with the administration of Eskimo affairs. The aims of the Administration are:—

- (1) to ensure a sound Eskimo economy;
- (2) to enable the Eskimos to make a wise adjustment to the advance of civilization and to maintain their independence, initiative and integrity in the face of this advance; and
- (3) to give them full opportunity to develop to the stage where they can assume the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The question of the ability of wildlife resources to support the native population is becoming an acute problem. To conserve the natural resources necessary for the subsistence of the Eskimos, the Administration has introduced game preserves where only natives may hunt and trap. In addition, game regulations provide for the efficient use of wildlife, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police encourage hunting practices which will conserve the supply of game both on land and in the sea. The Federal Government for a number of years has operated a reindeer project near Aklavik, which was undertaken primarily as a possible means of improving the economic condition of the Eskimos. Research is going on to determine the suitability of other areas for reindeer culture and to determine the possibility of developing other resources such as fisheries, thus broadening the native economy. With the same purpose in view, Eskimo handicraft is being encouraged by the Canadian Handicraft Guild assisted by a grant from the Federal Government. Eskimos have produced for successful sale at Montreal, Que., carvings in soapstone, ivory and wood, and articles made of various skins and furs.

Social services available to the citizens of Canada in general are being extended to the Eskimos as rapidly as possible, care being taken that these services are extended in a manner and form conducive to the best interests of the native. Family allowances to Eskimos are issued in the form of goods and allowances to aged Eskimos have also been authorized.

Medical care and hospitalization of Eskimos is a function of the Department of National Health and Welfare. Missionary hospitals, maintained with Government assistance, are located at Aklavik, Chesterfield Inlet and Pangnirtung. At these

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