

As has been said many times, the North has a way of stimulating resourcefulness and ingenuity. At Aklavik in the Western Arctic, a trapping centre cruelly slashed by falling fur prices and synthetics, a pilot training project was undertaken in 1959. Its aim was to combine two valuable local resources—fur and the native skill of Eskimo women at tailoring fur garments. With the help of the Vocational Education Supervisor for the Northwest Territories a small group of Eskimo women were introduced to "southern" methods of fur-working. Before long they had begun to meet the local demand for fur parkas and headgear, seal-skin mukluks and muskrat mittens, with a professional touch. This is a modest fur factory as factories go but it has at least one asset that all strive for—a healthy backlog of orders. At the close of the year some \$10,000 in orders stood on the books, enough to keep the Eskimo seamstresses busy all winter and their families off relief.

Like all pilot projects this one has an eye on bigger things. As the number of trainees grows and the value of their output increases, this could become an Eskimo fur co-operative. Or it might be used in conjunction with the Inuvik Rehabilitation Centre to train the physically handicapped to a new productiveness, like the Centre at Frobisher Bay. Community needs will probably be the decisive factor.

By tradition, Eskimos are a people who prefer to "write by tongue"—story-tellers who have handed down their past, partly from choice and partly from necessity, in the form of speech. But the printed word has come to them at last. Early in 1959 the first all-Eskimo magazine, *Inuktituk* (The Eskimo Way of Life) made its appearance in two editions—syllabics for the Eastern Arctic—Roman script for the Western.

Outside the Arctic the voice of the Inuit in Canada has been silent in the conduct of Eskimo affairs but in May 1959, when the Eskimo Affairs Committee met in Ottawa, the long silence was broken. A race accustomed to listening to other people speak for it was in the nation's Capital to speak for itself. The Committee is an advisory body, reporting to its Chairman, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It is not large as working committees go, and has been meeting only in recent years. But the presence of Eskimo representatives from Western, Central and Eastern Arctic who bluntly, and with dignity, voiced the views of the Eskimo community, gave the 1959 meeting an impact as fresh and sharp as wind off the barrens.

This was the first time in Canada that the Inuit have sat around a conference table with senior officials of government, religion and industry and examined with them the changes taking place in the Arctic way of life and the role of the Eskimo people in that change. It was a modest, almost tentative step in a new direction, yet the beginning of a partnership that will become more and more an accepted part of the administration of Eskimo affairs. For years, in various capacities, Eskimos have worked for all three types of agency represented on the Eskimo Affairs Committee and their advice on local problems has often been sought, but never in the past has there been such formal recognition of what Eskimo experience can contribute to the future of the North.

The Inuit have their normal complement of human frailties but dependence on other people is not one of them. Although, like other Canadians, the Eskimo is eligible for the benefits of social security and government assistance, he is by temperament a resourceful and self-directing man. If he had not sprung from this kind of stock, Eskimo affairs would by now have been of more interest to the archivist than to the administrator.

The Government invited the Eskimos to sit at the conference table to say what was in their minds, and they did, giving voice to their desires for more education and vocational training, and for the opportunity to qualify for better jobs and assume a greater measure of responsibility in the conduct of their own affairs. If the voice of the Eskimo came through with clarity so did the voice of other Canadians. And what did the Inuit learn from this? They learned more about what other Canadians are trying to do for, and with, them; why some things are going well and others not so well. They learned that what