

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 36TH SESSION

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 9-36

TABLED ON FEBRUARY 27, 1968.

TABLED DOCUMENT #9
Tabled on Feb. 27, 1968

Belcher Islands, N.W.T.
January 15, 1968.

Mr. Simonie,
Representative for Eastern Arctic,
Council of Northwest Territories,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

Acting on a strong impression that the Eskimos of BELCHER ISLANDS will one day wish to form their own council, I commenced an ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME on December 14, 1967 designed especially to orientate the local population to the ideas of LOCAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT and to assist them to an INDEPENDENCE that may help to guarantee them some measure of cultural pride.

It is my opinion that the unique geography of Belcher Islands could promise the Eskimos here a bright future, and that with careful guidance, these people can do much themselves to transform the islands into a MODEL ESKIMO COMMUNITY embracing all that is to be desired in these changing times.

I am aware that a cautious approach is necessary; but it seems to me that if progress is to be made towards this goal, the programme for adult education should be extended not only to the population of South Camp, but also to the population of North Camp. This I am now doing, and since December 15, 1967 visits have been made to North Camp every other week-end for the combined purposes of ADULT EDUCATION, HEALTH and WELFARE, and GENERAL ADMINISTRATION. My wife, Michelle (R.N.), accompanies me in order to conduct health measures and to organize the local nursing station.

The total Eskimo population of North Camp is 118 of which at present 10 children and 4 children leave their homes to attend schools in Great Whale River and South Camp respectively. 6 children of school age are not attending school at all because it is against their parents wishes that they leave home. The total Eskimo population of South Camp is 77 of which 4 children leave their homes to attend school in Great Whale River. 3 boys from South Camp are presently attending school in Churchill.

For your approval, comments, and, I hope, further suggestions, I would like to present here (together with TAPE RECORDINGS of the first few sessions) the broad outline of my Adult Education Programme now in its 5th. week of presentation at both North Camp and South Camp, Belcher Islands.

MAJOR AIMS:

1. To convey the ideas essential for Eskimo progress and ultimate independence.
2. To promote group discussion of local problems as a preliminary to responsible debate.

1. CORE IDEAS.

- (a) THE WORLD - brief general concepts.
- (b) CANADA - brief major concepts.
- (c) The MACHINERY of CANADIAN GOVERNMENT - 3 levels: Federal, Provincial, Municipal.
- (d) LOCAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT - basic concepts.
- (e) ESKIMO COUNCILS - function, objectives, formation, organization etc.
- (f) REPRESENTATION and ELECTION - adaptable procedures.
- (g) COOPERATIVE INDUSTRY - ideas for progress - exploitation of local resources.
- (h) ARTS and CRAFTS - marketable products (Eskimo prints etc.)
- (i) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - organization, housing, sanitation, modern facilities, industries, recreation, health and welfare.
- (j) PREVENTIVE HEALTH MEASURES.
- (k) Repeat of Topic (c): THE MACHINERY of CANADIAN GOVERNMENT - Review.
- (l) SOCIAL ASSISTANCE - a proper perspective: dangers and abuses.

N.B. 1. Topics (e), (g), (h), and (i) will receive extended treatment.

2. The repeat of Topic (e) will serve to review this important subject under newly gained perspectives thus ensuring greater understanding.

2. GROUP DISCUSSION.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES:

- (a) To provide practical experience in responsible discussion of LOCAL PROBLEMS.
- (b) To provide practical experience in COUNCIL PROCEDURES.
- (c) To provide practice in RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP.
- (d) To provide a BASIS for RESPONSIBLE ELECTION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.
(The most resourceful men will be revealed to the community.)

Sample Problem for Discussion:

The people of this village have decided they want a community wash-house where everyone can go at a special time to have a bath and to wash and dry clothes.

- 1. How are you going to raise money yourselves to buy the materials and equipment necessary to build this wash-house?
- 2. How are you going to make sure that the wash-house is kept clean and that the equipment is kept in good working order?
- 3. How are you going to make sure that an equal amount of time to use wash-house facilities (at a convenient hour) is made available to every family in the village.

(N.B. You will find the response to this particular problem on TAPE 1.)

PROCEDURE.

- (a) The discussion group is set up on working council lines. That is to say, six men and one chairman sit around a table at the front of the class. The rules for serious discussion are repeated and applied. Every man is invited by the chairman to voice his idea of the answer. New speakers are urged to take part each week and a different chairman is selected for each discussion.

(It was agreed that my part in these discussions would be to act as first chairman, as a member of the discussion group, and from then, as guide and mentor). Every man is expected to take the chair.

- (b) Every discussion is recorded, and as a useful weekly follow-up to the Thursday Adult Education class, participating adults are encouraged to hear themselves and each discussion on tape every Saturday evening.

3. MATERIALS.

Wall maps, mimeographed diagrams, pictures, blackboard, tape recorder.

N.B. At the present time, our FILM-STRIP PROJECTOR is out of order owing to a lack of spare projector bulbs. FILM STRIPS and MOVIES to support this special programme are urgently required here. Also urgently needed are INFORMATION, STATISTICS and REPORTS as well as any visual-aid material available that will help to implement the programme and achieve its ultimate purpose.

4. PROCEDURE - for weekly and bi-monthly (N.Camp) Adult Education classes. Duration: 2 hours + (8 p.m. -)

- A 8p.m. - 8:45 : Instruction on CORE IDEAS.
B 1. 8:45 - 8:50 : Presentation of problem for discussion.
2. 8:50 - 9:00 : Coffee Break.
3. 9:00 - 9:10 : Selection of chairman and discussion group.
Rules for serious discussion (repeated weekly).
Discussion - (guidance where needed)

5. COMMENTS.

1. The most popular feature of the classes, I am happy to note, is the final hour discussion, and it has become tremendously encouraging to see these Eskimo minds cooperating and striving to find the answers to a common problem. Leadership potential is being displayed, and it is stimulating to have the opportunity to cultivate this quality for the common good.
2. The rules for responsible discussion are beginning to be understood. The nucleus of a strong and successful Belcher Islands Eskimo Council is in the making.

6. SCHEDULE of visits to North Camp.

Our visits to North Camp - a distance of 65 miles - are made regularly every other week-end. Regularity and reliability of these trips is, I feel, of the utmost importance if Adult Education, Health and Welfare, and General Administration is to be effective.

Also, the example needs to be set of regular effort for the common good so that when finally a Belcher Islands Council is formed, representatives from each camp will have no excuse to shirk their responsibilities. So far, the trips have gone smoothly despite a rather dilapidated Government skidoo and sub-zero weather. The following table of visits will illustrate the schedule to date:

1.	Dec. 1 (Friday) to N. Camp	7½ hours.	
	Dec. 3 (Sunday) to S. Camp	11 hours.	(Gov. skidoo broke down 10 miles N. of S. Camp).
2.	Dec. 16 (Friday) to N. Camp	7½ hours.	
	Dec. 18 (Sunday) to S. Camp	7 hours.	
3.	Dec. 29 (Friday) to N. Camp	5 hours.	
	Dec. 31 (Sunday) to S. Camp	5 hours.	
4.	Jan. 13 (Saturday) to N. Camp	5½ hours.	
	Jan. 14 (Sunday) to S. Camp	5½ hours.	

In order to give you my total impression of Belcher Islands gained during the short time I have been here, I would like to suggest that there appears to be much the Eskimos could do to support themselves. Given education in organizing a strong efficient council, government support and advice, there is every reason to hope that the establishment of various industries together with community development will make the Islands a stronghold of modern Eskimo culture and independence.

Recently compiled statistics appear to show that profitable seal hunting is no longer within the reach of the two present communities on Belcher Islands. Fox trapping at best can never be counted upon to provide the Eskimo a reliable livelihood. And carving, at present the ONLY livelihood, would appear from recent reports to have a doubtful future - that is until more distant markets have been developed. There are in Belcher Islands two large sources of soapstone (of various quality), the extent of which I have not yet had an opportunity to determine.

A commercial fishing industry, on the other hand, might present a more promising alternative; but until I have seen the proper reports for this area (Dept. of Fisheries) I have no way of estimating the potential of the surrounding waters. I have only a somewhat uneducated impression that Belcher Islands would appear to be not only ideally located for an industry of this nature, but also to be abounding in the most likely fishing grounds. It is discouraging to learn that other Eskimo communities, so far removed from Southern Markets that transportation presents an expensive if not difficult procedure, are engaged in profitable fishing operations while BELCHER ISLANDS, only 300 miles from the railhead at MOOSONEE has been totally undeveloped. It may be that forthcoming information will set me straight on this matter.

Equally encouraging - I was going to say discouraging - are the arts and crafts centres of Cape Dorset and elsewhere, and the lucrative market for Eskimo prints when there is such an abundance of talent in Belcher Islands.

Opportunities, then, are here for an enterprising Eskimo council to investigate.

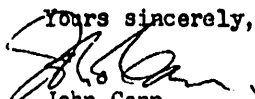
During the spring and summer months a private hunting lodge is in operation two miles north of South Camp. Hunters are flown in by private planes, and the concern gives employment to two local Eskimo guides. The regrettable fact that one Eskimo, last September, failed to receive remuneration for his services prompts one to speculate on the possibility of a hunting lodge owned and operated by Eskimos (complete with interpreter) and catering to southern sportsmen.

One possibility that frequently occurs to me concerns the almost unlimited assortment of local building rock. I am attaching a picture of Edmund Hillary assisting the Sherpas to utilize local stone for the development of an isolated Himalayan community. I enclose this picture not only to make a point that the rocks on Belcher Islands could be used (if not for greater economy, at least for greater appeal) for the construction of community halls, churches, wash-houses, craft centers, hunting lodges, dwellings etc, but also to support an idea that they be utilized for the ulterior purpose of prompting the MODERN Eskimo to use his own resources rather than those of the government. If the idea were indeed practical, and some material assistance available, nothing would give my wife and I greater pleasure than to remain in Belcher Islands during the summer in order to assist a project of this sort. The Eskimo discussion (TAPE:3) on building their own community hall hints of the tremendous boost such a project would give to Eskimo pride and prestige - surely the psychological spur to self-organization.

The Eskimos here unanimously believe that the creation of one larger community from the present two would solve many problems and hasten progress. From their discussions have emerged many interesting ideas to support this view, and I would say they have a very good case. (Unfortunately, I was unable to record the N. Camp meetings on tape). But until that likelihood should arise and despite the present situation, it is my belief they are willing to make a united effort for their greater independence.

Finally, I would like to put in a word for our interpreter, Robbie Tookalook. Robbie is 23 years old, has a fair understanding of English, and possesses marked leadership ability. Though he has only a Grade 4 education he expresses the sincere desire for further education and advancement. His wife, Sarah, who was a Teacher Assistant in Great Whale River for the school year 1964 to 1965 and who, incidently, has a better command of English than Robbie, now seems desirous of seeking a similar school position. The Tookalooks have two small children. If any specialized courses for Eskimo adults have been arranged for the summer months of this year I would be grateful for information.

In order to facilitate your evaluation of the Adult Education Programme in Belcher Islands. I have enclosed 3 Tapes - the complete recordings of 4 consecutive sessions - and I earnestly hope you will give them your attention. A separate comment sheet is attached.

Yours sincerely,

John Cann.

POSTSCRIPT

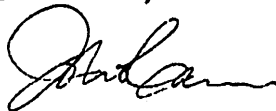
Although my wife and I are very happy with the challenging conditions here, we have two complaints that I feel should be made known to you. They both present serious obstacles to the immediate and future progress of the Belcher Islands Eskimos.

1. There is NO RADIO COMMUNICATION between North Camp and South Camp. This is a serious obstacle to the administration of Health & Welfare and to the safety of all travel between the two communities.
2. There is only ONE government SKIDOO here. For safety precautions and for the transportation of the Nurse, Interpreter, and myself plus equipment, TWO skidoos are essential for the regular patrols to N.Camp. The government skidoo, generally in poor condition, has today (I have just been told) broken down and now requires a new track, the immediate replacement of which (\$104) is prohibited by local purchase regulations. It is now totally out of action.

For recent patrols we have found it necessary to hire the second skidoo from the few locally available; but if the patrols are to continue from this date, TWO skidoos will have to be hired. The average trip by skidoo between N.Camp and S.Camp (assuming there are no difficulties) takes 5 hours. By dog team it is 14 hours plus - a long, cold, arduous journey that makes it almost impractical to continue our programme of regular administrative patrols if school hours are not to be sacrificed unduly.

I trust you will communicate your advice as soon as possible, for you can be sure it will be of great value to me.

Best wishes,



P.P.S.

Recent developments have made it imperative to transfer Robbie Tookalook, our interpreter (plus wife and family) over to G.W.R. on the 1st. aircraft in to Belcher. Robbie has a recurring liver problem that may be psychosomatic, but which requires that he be located in a less isolated place. He has been in extreme pain for the last five days.

In order to orientate JOE KUMARLUK (Robbie's replacement) to the Adult Education programme as quickly as possible, I will hold the tape recordings until he has had an opportunity to hear them. They will be dispatched to you on the next available aircraft (if one ever arrives!).

Please return the Tapes when you have finished with them. DO NOT ERASE .

J.C.

BELCHER ISLANDS, N.W.T.

TAPE RECORDINGS - Comment sheet & Directory.

TAPE 1 (1st. Session - Dec. 14, 1967)

Speed: 1 $\frac{7}{8}$

Content:

INDICATOR

1. INSTRUCTION	0000
(a) The World	
(b) Canada	
(c) Rules	
(d) Government	
(e) Government of Canada	
2. PURPOSE of GROUP DISCUSSION EXPLAINED.....	0175
3. PROBLEM FOR DISCUSSION PRESENTED.....	0196
The people of this village have decided they want a community wash-house where everyone can go at a special time to have a bath and to wash and dry clothes:	
1. How are you going to raise money yourselves to buy the materials and equipment necessary to build this wash-house?	
2. How are you going to make sure that the wash-house is kept clean and that the equipment is kept in good working order?	
3. How are you going to make sure that an equal amount of time to use wash-house facilities (at a convenient hour) is made available to every family in the village:	
4. RULES for GROUP DISCUSSION EXPLAINED.....	0220
5. SELECTION of GROUP for DISCUSSION.....	0260
6. <u>GROUP DISCUSSION of LOCAL PROBLEM</u>	0301
7. SUMMING UP.....	0748
8. RESPONSE to PROPOSAL for WEEKLY GROUP DISCUSSION.....	0838

Comments:

1. You will understand that in order to convey the principles (and machinery) of democratic government, I found it necessary to simplify to the point of distortion and untruth.
2. Just how much essence is lost in the translation is anybody's guess!!

3. It is interesting to note the rather unproductive spirit of Jimmie who, prior to arriving in Belcher Islands last July to conduct local church services, was a chief of the Great Whale River Eskimo Council. I can only conclude that greater sophistication has in this case brought false values and loss of initiative.
4. It is certainly not my intention to leave uncorrected any impression that Government equipment may be used for personal hire (0462). The loud laughter (0510) was at Lucassie's suggestion that no charge be set for using the filing machine until he had sharpened his own files!!

TAPE 1 (Track 2) - 2nd. Session - Dec. 21, 1967.

Speed : 1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Content:

INDICATOR

1. INSTRUCTION.....	0000
- Government of Canada	
- 3 levels	
2. PROBLEM FOR DISCUSSION PRESENTED.....	0134
Do you think that Belcher Islands should have one big village instead of the present two. Why? If you think there should be one big village, where should this village be and why?	
3. <u>PRACTICE IN GROUP DISCUSSION WILL LEAD TO A SUCCESSFUL BELCHER ISLANDS ESKIMO COUNCIL</u> - Explanation of purposes and importance with comments on previous discussion.	0185
4. SELECTION of GROUP for DISCUSSION.....	0238
5. SELECTION of CHAIRMAN.....	0266
6. RULES for GROUP DISCUSSION REPEATED.....	0323
7. PROBLEM REPEATED.....	0348
<u>GROUP DISCUSSION commences</u>	
8. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0368
9. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0438
10. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0565
11. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0816
- Fishing cooperative	

12. SUMMING UP BY CHAIRMAN.....	0895
13. MEETING CLOSED.....	0949
QUESTIONS	
14. FINAL COMMENTS.....	0962

Comments :

1. The lack of continuity in this discussion is a result of my poor arrangement for interpretation. A more satisfactory arrangement can be heard on Tape 2 (Track 1).

TAPE 2 (Track 1)

Speed : 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ (0000 - 0053)
 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ (0053 -)

Content:

1. GROUP DISCUSSION of LOCAL PROBLEM.....	0000
(Chairman: Johnny Cookie)	
If Belcher Islands is to have a strong council; it should be made up of men from both N.Camp and S.Camp. The best number of men for this council is 7 (one of whom will be the chief). The population of N.Camp is 118. The population of S.Camp is 77.	
1. How many men from N.Camp should be on the council? Why?	
2. How often should this council meet?	
3. Where should the council meetings be held.	
2. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0168
3. GUIDING COMMENTS.....	0254
- Majority decision	0330
4. GUIDING COMMENTS (Chairman's duty to sum up).....	0365
5. MEETING CLOSED.....	0412
6. FINAL COMMENT.....	0466

Comments:

1. Johnny was a good chairman and kept this discussion lively.

2. Balance still unsatisfactory - Interpretation difficult to hear.
 3. Unwittingly, I substituted COUNCIL for DISCUSSION GROUP. I hope Robbie did not make the same mistake thereby creating some false impressions.
-

TAPE 3 (Track 1) - Session 3 - Dec. 28, 1967.

Speed: 1 1/4

Content:

	INDICATOR
1. RULES for GROUP DISCUSSION REPEATED.....	0000
2. PROBLEM for DISCUSSION REPEATED.....	0020
If the Government would assist the people of South Camp to build a big village house for everyone to use, what would you use that house for so that it is for the good of everyone? How would you make sure that everyone helps to build it and not just a few men do all the work?	
3. GUIDING COMMENT.....	0124
4. GUIDING COMMENTS.....	0357
- Majority decision	↓ 0400
5. GUIDING COMMENTS.....	0496
- Majority decision	
- Summing up	
6. FINAL COMMENT.....	0588

Comments:

1. Balance between speakers & interpretation now satisfactory.
2. Blank spot (0493 - 0496) - caused by break in the circuit.

TAPE 3 (Track 2)

Speed: 1 $\frac{7}{8}$

Content:

INDICATOR

1. RULES for GROUP DISCUSSION REPEATED..... 0000
2. PROBLEM FOR DISCUSSION REPEATED..... 0021
The people of this village want more fish. There are more than 5 fish nets in the village.
 1. How are you going to catch more fish?
 2. Where are you going to catch these fish?

Comments:

1. This discussion was very disappointing as it revealed a lack of initiative in making use of all available country food. It will be continued at a later date.
2. I had hoped the problem would bring out the following ideas:
 1. Cooperative effort can produce fish for every family in the village at all times.
 2. Organization can provide constant supplies of fish without interfering with seal hunting activities.
 3. Fishing is a more reliable way of producing food than seal hunting and should be used to steadily supplement fluctuating seal meat supplies.
 4. Fishing should be a constant occupation (winter & summer) in order to locate productive lakes and develop techniques in preparation for possible commercial enterprise.
3. Lucassie proved to be a rather dynamic chairman

GENERAL COMMENT

Although the discussion groups are sometimes painfully slow to find obvious solutions, the progress made has been encouraging. Once the significance of a problem has been understood, the desire to solve it is strong, and this is the first essential. Also, these groups are on display to the community, so that a healthy competitive spirit is always present to stimulate the discussion.

I have been unable to record our sessions at North Camp, and this is really unfortunate as it is invariably the men at North Camp who show the greater

initiative and produce the more constructive ideas for helping themselves. Often, when it has taken the South Camp men 2 sessions to reach a complete understanding of possible solutions, the North Camp men will have thoroughly explored the same problem in ten minutes, leaving me to grope hurriedly for some fresh challenge.

J.C.

Belcher Islands, N.W.T.
January 25, 1968.

Miss J. Bowie,
Regional Supt. of Welfare,
Dept. Indian Aff. & N. Developpt.
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Miss Bowie,

By conveying to you my general impressions of the Eskimo welfare here, this letter will put you more in the picture of affairs at Belcher Islands.

Since December 15, 1967, I have visited North Camp every other week-end for the combined purposes of ADULT EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELFARE, and GENERAL ADMINISTRATION. (The Adult Education is an extension of a continuing programme being presented at S.Camp and will, I hope, assist the Eskimos to a greater independence.) My wife, Michelle (R.N.) accompanies me in order to conduct health measures and to organise the local nursing station. Our visits to N.Camp (65 miles) are made on a rather dilapidated government skidoo, and so far we have survived sub-zero temperatures and vicious winds.

The total Eskimo population of N.Camp is 118 of which, at present, 10 children and 4 children leave their homes to attend schools in Great Whale River and South Camp respectively. Six children of school age are not attending school at all because it is against their parents wishes that they leave home. The total Eskimo population of S.Camp is 77 of which 4 children leave home to attend school in G.W.R. Three boys are presently attending school in Churchill. The total enrolment of the Federal Day School at S.Camp is 25.

Housing conditions in Belcher Islands are extremely poor. With perhaps two exceptions, the houses, in South Camp (5 one-room welfare houses, 3 Eskimo houses, and 4 tents) are dirty and hopelessly inadequate. Almost all are overcrowded, the average being 7 occupants per one-room house. In addition to the houses above, the Anglican Mission maintains a one-room house for its local representative. The government hostel, as you know, is presently inoperative owing to there being a need to accommodate only 4 school children instead of the 5 minimum. Three of these children, therefore, are boarding at various homes in the village, and it is disappointing that the extra expense involved in operating the hostel for 4 could not be justified in order to alleviate the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions of those concerned. Present occupants of the 3-bedroom hostel are Robbie Tookalook (Interpreter), his wife and 2 children, and one school boarder.

The situation at North Camp is generally a little better. The one-room houses (including Welfare houses) are bigger and cleaner, though overcrowding is still a

problem. One homo (welfare), that of a Moses Meeko, is a model of cleanliness and utility reflecting the good Southern standards which no doubt Moses had an opportunity to absorb during his sojourn in hospital. (So impressive is this home, that we are apprehensive every time we walk over its polished floors - even in our stockings!) But the biggest disappointment of all, ironically, is the state of the only 3 bedroom welfare house in Belcher Islands. Two families (a total of 13 people) live in this house, the interior condition of which is appalling enough to be comic. This dwelling, in contrast to the small Meeko home, is a model of ignorance, abuse, and wasted money. Thank Heavens the installation of new low-rental housing for Eskimos is preceded by education in maintenance and appreciative care. But are there no rules limiting the occupancy of a welfare house to those for which it is intended?

The most striking difference between the two communities on Belcher Islands concerns morale. The atmosphere at N.Camp we find to be so spontaneous and friendly, that after the rather cautious reserve of S.Camp it is difficult to associate the two peoples with the same race. Perhaps the difference lies not in them but in us and we are unaware; but I do not think so. When we first arrived at N.Camp, everyone, young and old, rushed out to greet us and shake hands. Smiles were genuine and happy, and a warm welcome pervaded the village making us delighted to be there. The experience is renewed whenever we return and we really look forward to our fortnightly visits. Our first arrival in S.Camp, on the other hand, was met by a discomforting stare that may not have been one of indifference but which made us feel extremely lonely; and we have yet to witness the first handshake - even between visiting and local Eskimos. If there is indeed a difference between the N.Camp Eskimo and the S.Camp Eskimo, we can only assume that greater sophistication brings with it false values and loss of initiative. The South Camp people, for example, are more inclined to rely on Government assistance and to complain when it is not forthcoming. This attitude is not evident at North Camp, and as a result, the community appears to be more resourceful and self-reliant. During our Adult Education group discussions (conducted in both communities) in which selected men talk together to solve local problems, it is invariably the men at North Camp who show the greater initiative and produce the more constructive ideas for helping themselves. Often, when it has taken the South Camp men 2 sessions to reach a complete understanding of possible solutions, the North Camp men will have thoroughly explored the same problem in ten minutes, leaving me to grope hurriedly for some fresh challenge.

But I feel a great sense of urgency in reporting to you a general inclination to forsake pride and self-reliance under a growing impression that "Ottawa" will take care of all problems and supply all needs. It is a terrible danger that faces these people. And just when do they reach that point of no return?

Here is the disquieting situation as it now stands:

1. SOAPSTONE CARVING is no longer a reliable source of income.
 - (a) Existing markets are reaching saturation point. Bottlenecks have brought the flow of carvings to a standstill.
 - (b) The H.B.Co. store at N.Camp has received orders (Jan.17) to buy no more than \$1000 worth of carvings per month - until further notice.
 - (c) The G.W.R.Cooperative (\$3000 in debt with H.B.C.) can receive no more carvings from Belcher Islands until the organization is solvent.

(d) A growing lethargy is destroying creative ability. Hastily carved seals brought quick, easy money until they were no longer marketable. Now, everybody is carving geese!!

(e) On the basis of these new developments an evenly distributed trade can now offer no more than \$15 per month per man.

- 2. FOX TRAPPING is not being exploited as a source of income.
 - (a) During our trips to N.Camp, we have noticed signs indicating a sizeable increase of fox on the southern half of Flaherty Island.
 - (b) A few men from N.Camp are trapping 10 miles north of S.Camp. The men at S.Camp are making no effort to trap at all!
- 3. Local FISH resources are not being exploited to supplement the present diet.
 - (a) Fish resources are abundant. Under-ice netting techniques are known.
 - (b) Five fish nets are available in S.Camp.
 - (c) Not one man in S.Camp has made an attempt to catch fish. Further, no one is interested in fishing unless some remuneration is promised for his efforts!

This indifference was revealed to me during our last week's round-table discussion. The problem set was designed to bring out the following ideas.

- 1. Cooperative effort can produce fish for every family in the village at all times.
- 2. Organisation can provide constant supplies of fish without interfering with seal hunting activities.
- 3. Fishing is a more reliable way of producing food than seal hunting and should be used to steadily supplement fluctuating seal meat supplies.
- 4. Fishing should be a constant occupation (winter & summer) in order to locate productive lakes and develop techniques in preparation for possible commercial enterprise.

This discussion — Why, Where and How to catch more fish — will be continued next week, but has not yet been conducted at N.Camp where I hope there will be a more encouraging response.

Your advice on these recent developments will be very much appreciated. Meanwhile, you can be fully assured that I will keep relief figures to a minimum and spare no effort to educate these people to some measure of independence. Because I honestly believe the Eskimos here can do much to help themselves, it is my hope that organized cooperation will ultimately banish the need for relief altogether.

A brief note on the welfare form totals: after serious consideration of all local factors, I have found it unrealistic and possibly injurious to calculate assistance totals in the official way. That a man's income may not be his potential

makes a more cautious assistance (and careful investigation of the forces at work) VITAL to his FUTURE welfare.

Michelle and I are happy to find so much to challenge us here, but though we are very content in our work we do have four serious complaints:

1. There is NO RADIO COMMUNICATION between North Camp and South Camp. This is a serious obstacle to the administration of Health & Welfare and to the safety of all travel between the two communities.
2. There is only ONE government SKIDOO here. For safety precautions and for the transportation of the Nurse, Interpreter, and myself plus equipment, TWO skidoos are essential for the regular patrols to N.Camp. The government skidoo, generally in poor condition, has today (I have just been told) broken down and now requires a new track, the immediate replacement of which (\$10k) is prohibited by local purchase regulations. It is now totally out of action.
 For recent patrols we have found it necessary to hire the second skidoo. from the few locally available; but if the patrols are to continue from this date, TWO skidoos will have to be hired. The average trip by skidoo between N.Camp and S.Camp (assuming there are no difficulties) takes 5 hours. By dog team it is 1 1/2 hours plus - a long, cold, arduous journey that makes it almost impractical to continue our programme of regular administrative patrols if school hours are not to be sacrificed unduly.
3. AIR TRANSPORTATION to the Belcher Islands during the only 4 months of the teaching year when conditions permit are ALARMINGLY UNRELIABLE. The haggling that appears to go on when an aircraft is required is exasperating, ludicrous, and a complete travesty of government efficiency.
4. We expect to be isolated here and are prepared for it, but it is disconcerting to know that many much less remote settlements have regular Xmas "air-drops". The promise of an air-drop to Belcher Islands was an empty one! We have had no mail from September, 1967 to January 25, 1968. We are still waiting.

I look forward to some communication from you; and again, I wish to thank you sincerely for the valuable advice and encouragement you so readily gave to Michelle and myself when we were in Ottawa.

Best wishes from us both.

Yours respectfully,

John Cann