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**INUUVIK TWIN LAKES RIDING**

**INUUVIK TWIN LAKES: A PROFILE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The purpose of this profile of the Territorial riding of Inuvik Twin Lakes is to provide the policymaker with both a clearer view of the riding's composition and needs and a foundation for devising measures that will provide effective and cost-efficient solutions to some of its problems.

We begin with a discussion of the methodology used, followed by presentation of our principal findings. These mainly take the form of statistical data about Inuvik Twin Lakes, many of them based on telephone surveys of Twin Lakes households and Inuvik employers. We then offer interpretive observations on the information, putting it in perspective and relating it to potential policy considerations.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The principal source of data for this study has been a series of two telephone surveys. The first, conducted on Dec. 4th and 5th, 2000, surveyed Twin Lakes residents in their homes, in order to collect information on their sources of income, use of public housing, the incidence of home-ownership and the composition of households in the riding.

The second, conducted on December 11, 2000, surveyed Inuvik employers on their employment of local aboriginals, many of whom live in Twin Lakes, in order to gather data on the kinds of employment opportunities available to Twin Lakes constituents.

The responses of those surveyed were tabulated and analyzed in order to provide both a statistical portrait of the riding and a framework for further investigation. We then collected relevant estimates on public housing in Twin Lakes from the Inuvik Housing Authority, and on the allocation of Income Support from the GNWT's Department of Education, Culture and Employment. These were used to augment our survey findings, while we also used data from the GNWT's 2000 NWT Socio-Economic Scan to compare Twin Lakes with both the NWT as a whole and the group of three regional centres (Inuvik; Hay River; Fort Smith) in several measurable respects. This comparative dimension, in conjunction with the other information, enabled us to place our own findings in a broader framework and to make some tentative observations about their implications for government policy.

**INUUVIK POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS:**

Neither the population of Twin Lakes nor that of Inuvik as a town can be stated with certainty. Statistics Canada offers an estimate for the population of Inuvik as a whole but has no estimate for that of Twin Lakes. The STATSCAN estimate of Inuvik's population as of July 1, 1999, derived from the 1999 census, is 3, 445. Given the seasonal nature of much economic activity and employment in the Beaufort Delta region, however, and the resultant seasonal fluctuations in population, we can assume a margin for error of several hundred, for a population that might be only slightly above three thousand at some times. If, in the absence of clear indications to the contrary, we assume the town's population is divided with rough equality between the two Inuvik ridings, we are left with an estimated population for Twin Lakes of some 1500. Given an average household population slightly

above 3 (see below), we reach an estimated number of households for the riding of between 500 and 700. Thus our survey of 100 Twin Lakes households provides us with a sample of between a fifth and a seventh of the riding's households, a sample that is large enough to justify our confidence that it provides a reliably representative sample of Twin Lakes, from which we can safely generalize about the riding as a whole.

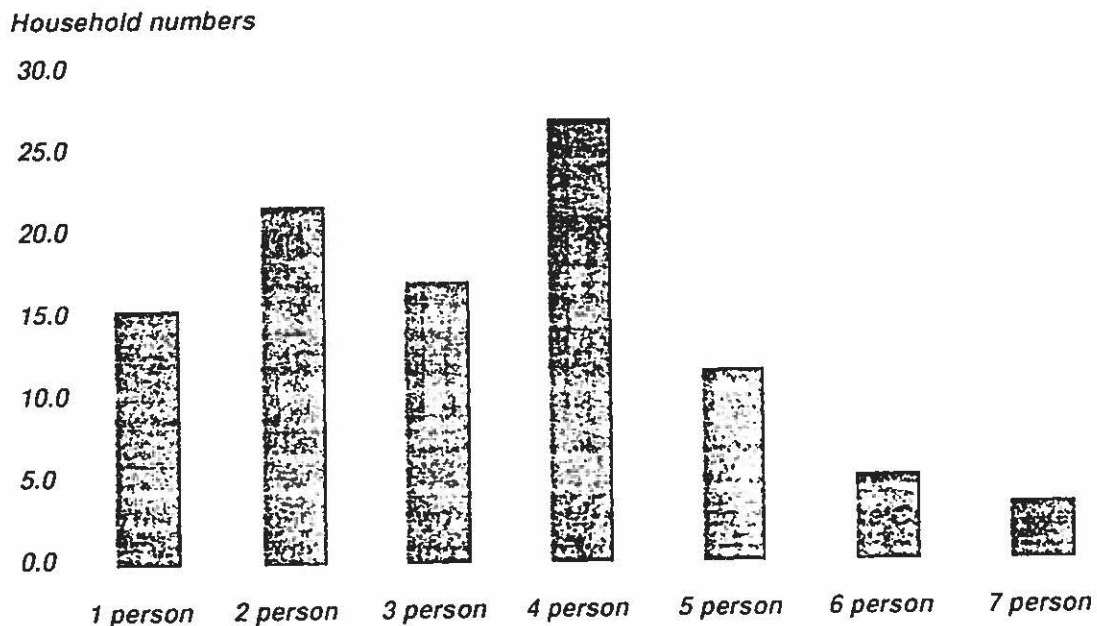
We devised our list of household telephone numbers to be called by cross-checking the most recent voters' list for the riding with the most recent Inuvik telephone directory.

**HOUSEHOLD NUMBERS:**

Of the 100 Twin Lakes households surveyed, household numbers were as follows (Fig. 1):

- 1- person households: 15
- 2- person households: 22
- 3- person households: 17
- 4- person households: 27
- 5- person households: 11
- 6- person households: 5
- 7- person households: 3
- Total: 100

*Figure 1 Of the 100 Twin Lakes households surveyed, household numbers yield an average of 3.24 persons per household*



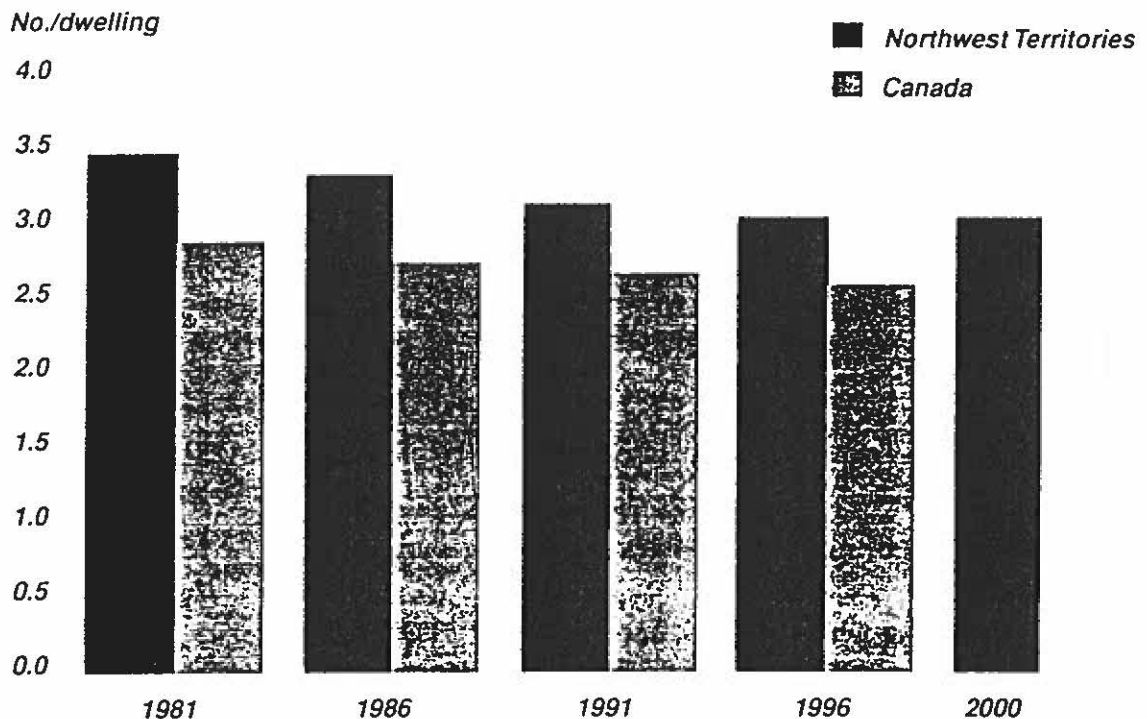
These figures yield an average of 3.24 persons per household. The average number of persons per dwelling for the NWT as a whole is approximately 3.1 (see 2000 NWT Socio-Economic Scan, figure 2.1), suggesting that in this area Twin Lakes is very close to, perhaps slightly above, the Territorial average. It also seems that a strong majority of Twin Lakes households consist of between 2 and four persons (66% of our sample falls into this category), but with a significant minority consisting of 5 or more persons (19% of our sample) and a smaller but by no means negligible minority of 1-person households. Of the 324 persons occupying the households surveyed, 203 (62.6%) live in households of between 2 and 4 persons while 106 (32.7%) live in households of 5 or more and only 15 (4.6%) live in 1-person households.

**HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND AGE:**

Our survey asked respondents to state if their households included anyone under 18. 60% of households in our sample included at least one person under that age. 24% included only 1 person under 18. 36% included more than 1, with 24% including 2, 9% including 3 and 3% including 4.

This yields an average of 1.11 person under 18 per Twin Lakes household. If our sample is representative, slightly under half the households in Twin Lakes have either 1 or 2 residents under 18, approximately 40% include nobody under that age, and the remaining quarter contain 3 or more.

**Figure 2.1 Average persons per Dwelling Northwest Territories & Canada, 1981 - 2000**



*There has been a steady decline in persons per household in the past 20 years.*

2000 NWT Socio-Economic scan

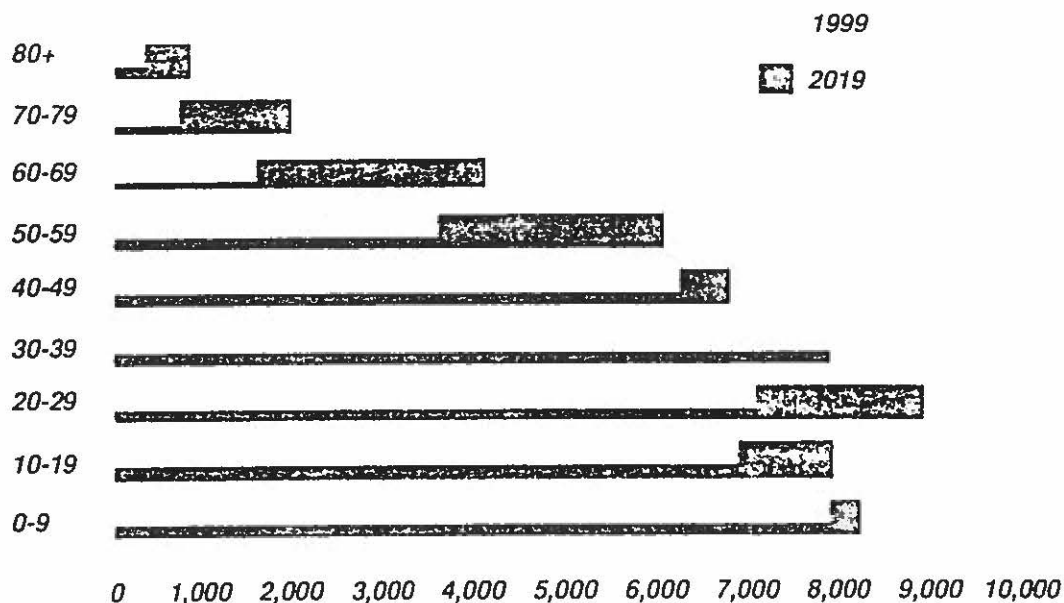
Of those 60 households including at least 1 member under 18, they contained an average of 1.85 members under 18 per household.

We also asked respondents if their households included persons 65 and older. Only 17% of the households in our sample included 1 or more residents over that age. Of these, 13% included 1 person over 65, and 4% included 2. None reported more than 2. If we average these figures for the sample, we find an average of only 0.21 persons above 65 per household. If we break down by age the population covered by our sample, we find that of our total population of 324 — 111 (34.2%) are under 18 and only 21 (6.5%) are 65 or older.

These numbers are not surprising. Historically low life expectancy has meant that at any given time, the population of the NWT or any community within it, over 65 is likely to be very low, although longer life expectancies are likely to contribute to growth in the proportion of older residents within the Territorial population in coming decades. In fact, the fastest growing segment of the NWT population consists of those who are 50 and older (see 2000 NWT Socio-Economic Scan, fig. 1.5).

The high proportion of people under 18 in the population can be largely explained by what have been historically high birth rates relative to the rest of Canada. NWT birth rates have declined over the past 20 years, converging with those of Canada as a whole over the last 3 years (Ibid, fig. 1.6). For women over 25, birth rates are very close to the Canadian norm, but for those between 15 and 24, they remain more than double the Canadian average (Ibid, fig. 1.7).

Figure 1.5 NWT Projected Population, by age 1999 - 2019



Improved life expectancy and stability in the population will contribute to significant growth in older territorial residents in the next 20 years.

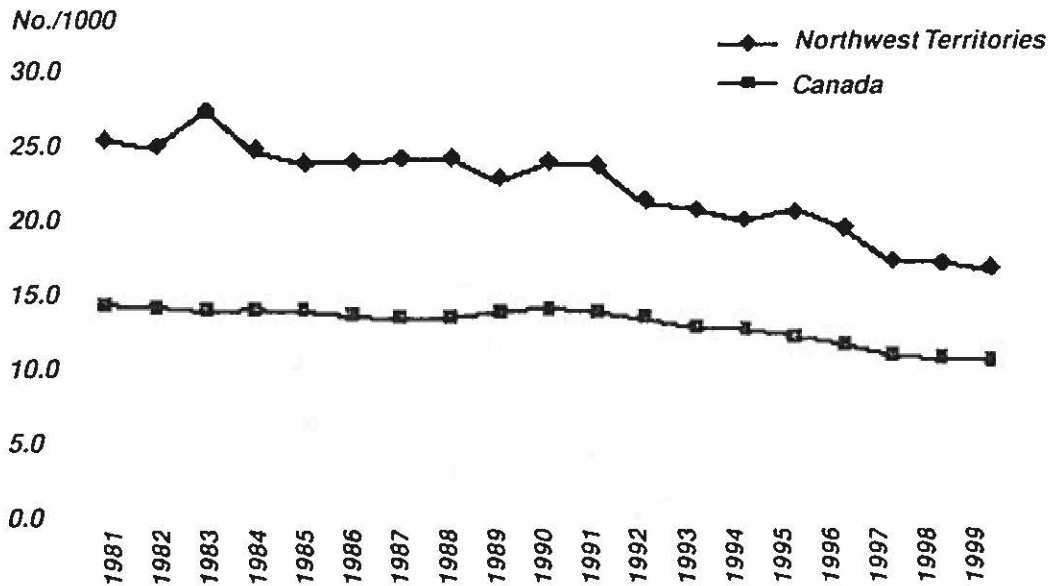
2000 NWT Socio-Economic scan

While those under 18 or over 65 are by no means necessarily too young or too old to form part of the working population, it is accurate to regard them as, respectively, generally too inexperienced or untrained to participate to their full potential, or past the point where they can work at peak capacity. By this measure, 132 of our sampled population of 324 (40.7%) fall outside their principal working years.

**HOME OWNERSHIP:**

Of the 100 Twin Lakes households surveyed, 53% reported owning their own home. This figure is significantly lower than the Canadian average of approximately 63% and slightly higher than the NWT average of roughly 49%. The three regional centres of Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik, taken as a group, have approximately 50% home ownership (Ibid, fig. 2.5). Since these three communities have similar functions as regional centres of government, business and employment, they can be taken as forming an appropriate comparison group or "peer group" for Twin Lakes. Home ownership in Twin Lakes is close to, perhaps a bit higher than, the average for these communities, which is about what one would expect.

**Figure 1.6 Crude Birth Rate  
Northwest Territories & Canada, 1981 - 1999**



*The birth rate in the NWT has been on the decline over the past 20 years. Although still higher than Canada, the gap has closed significantly in the past three years.*

**OCCUPANCY OF PUBLIC HOUSING:**

Of the Twin Lakes households surveyed, 26% reported having lived in public housing in the past year.

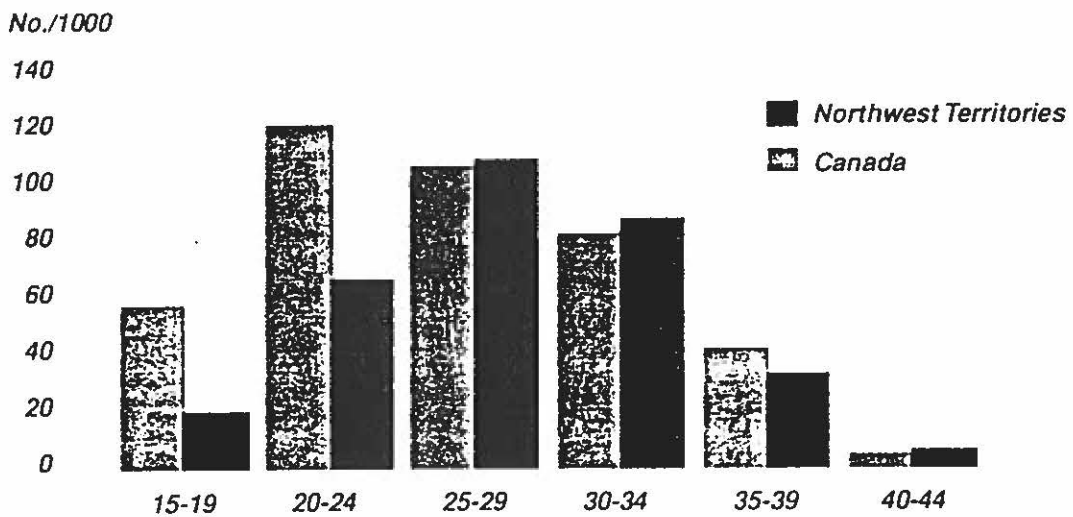
A high incidence of public housing occupancy in Twin Lakes would seem unavoidable insofar as most of the public housing units in Inuvik are located in the riding. An Inuvik Housing Authority estimate put 218 of the 255 public housing units located in Inuvik within the boundaries of Twin Lakes. These units range from bachelor accommodations to 5-bedroom units that could accommodate 8-10 residents. The average unit, the Authority estimates, accommodates three occupants.

Of the 26 Twin Lakes households in our sample who identified themselves as public housing occupants at some point in the previous year, their household composition was as follows:

- 1- person households: 8 (30.8% of this sub-sample)
- 2- person households: 6 (23%)
- 3-person households: 6 (23%)
- 4-person households: 5 (19.2%)
- 6- person households: 1 (3.8%)

(Total of 99.8, rather than 100%, due to rounding off.)

**Figure 1.7 Births per 1000 Females  
Northwest Territories & Canada**



*The birth rate among young women is still more than double the Canadian average. After 25 years of age, our birth rates are very similar to Canada.*

2000 NWT Socio-Economic scan

This yields an average of 2.46% persons per household for this subgroup. See Fig. 1.1

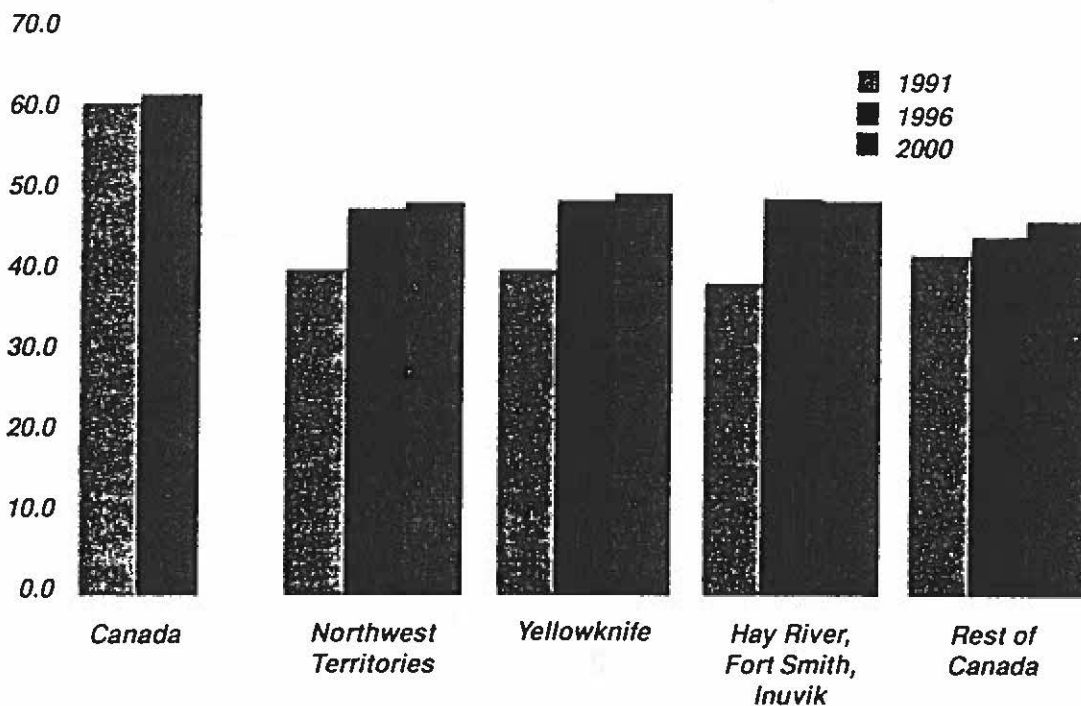
Among the 26 households who identified themselves as having occupied public housing in the past year, 5 (19.2%) also identified themselves as having received Public Assistance/Income Support during the past year as well. These households had an average of 2.6 members; 4 were 3-person households, while 1 was a 1-person household.

Of the 26 households who made use of public housing, 2 (7.6%) also received Employment Insurance benefits during the past year, 12 (46.1%) reported receipt of Canada Pension Plan benefits, while 7 (26.9%) received private pensions, disability or orphans' benefits. Of this 26, 14 (53.8%) included at least 1 person under 18, a significantly smaller percentage than our larger survey sample. Of the 14 households with members under 18, 8 contained 1, 5 contained 2 and 1 contained 3. On average they included 1.5 members in this age group, which is smaller than the average for households including children from our overall sample.

9 (34.6%) of the 26 households who used public housing included at least 1 member 65 or older, more than twice as high as the 17% from our broader sample. 7 of the 9 included 1 member 65 or older, 2 included 2.

In sum, of the population of 324 covered by our sample, 64 (19.7%) lived in public housing during some part of the past year. This 64 included 21 (18.9%) of the 111 under 18 and 11

**Figure 2.5 Percentage of Owned dwellings Northwest Territories & Canada, 1991 - 2000**



*Almost 50% of dwellings are owned by one of the occupants in the NWT. The proportion of owned dwellings has continued to show increases in the smaller NWT communities.*

2000 NWT Socio-Economic scan

(52.3%) of the 21 who are 65 or older. 5 of these 26 households also relied upon hunting and trapping for part of their food or income. The public housing population includes disproportionately high numbers of those over 65, and disproportionately low numbers of those under 18, while public housing households contain significantly fewer members than the average for Twin Lakes.

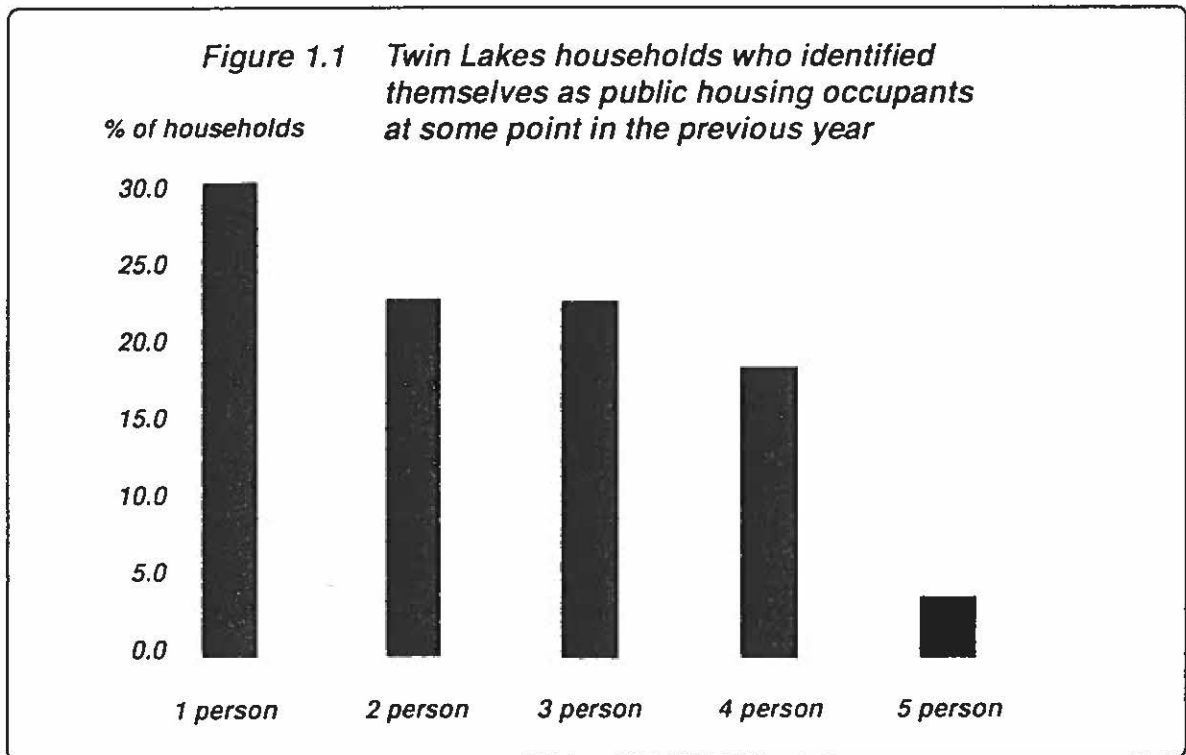
**SOURCES OF INCOME:**

Our respondents were also asked to identify which of a number of sources had contributed to the household's income over the previous year. The numbers citing each source are as follows (see Fig. 1.2):

- Hunting and Trapping: 22%
- Public Assistance/Income Support: 10%
- Private Sector Employment: 52%
- Public Sector Employment: 60%
- Private Pension Benefits: 19%
- Canada Pension Plan benefits: 26%
- Employment Insurance benefits: 11%

A full 21% of our sample reported receipt of Public Assistance/Income Support or Employment Insurance as contributing to their household income. There is some overlap, since 2% of households received both. Taking this into account leaves 19% where one, the other or both was part of the household's income.

Of these 19, 1 was a 1-person household, 3 were 2-person households, 6 were 3-person households, 6 were 4-person households, and 3 were 6-person households.





They accounted for 67 persons (20.6%) of the 324 covered by the survey. They also yield an average of 3.52 persons, slightly above the riding average per household.

This group also includes 25 (22.5%) of the 111 persons under 18 in our broader sample, as well as 2 (9.5%) of the 21 persons 65 or older.

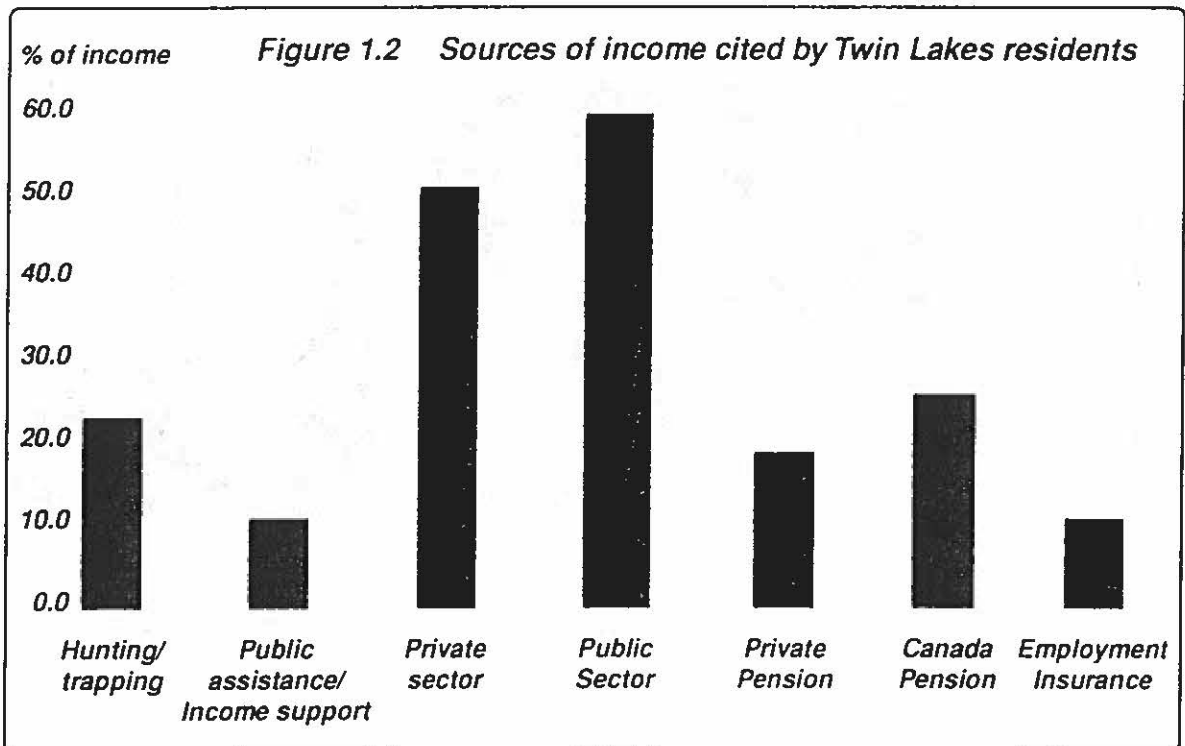
18% of responding households did not cite either public or private sector employment as part of the household income.

**RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE/INCOME SUPPORT:**

The 10% of our respondents who cited Public Assistance/Income Support as part of their household income over the previous year account for 32 (9.8%) of the 324 Twin Lakes residents covered by our sample. This suggests reliance on Income Support is modestly but significantly higher in Twin Lakes than in the NWT as a whole, where slightly more than 8% of residents received Income Support. It also suggests more widespread receipt of Income Support in Twin Lakes than in the comparison group of 3 regional centres, where the average is also slightly above 8% (see 2000 NWT Socio-Economic Scan, figs. 2.9 and 2.10).

Of these 10 households, 1 consisted of 1 person, 2 consisted of 2, 5 consisted of 3, and 2 consisted of 6. This yields an average for the group of 3.2 persons per household. 5 of the 10 included residents under 18, with 2 including 1, 2 including 2, and 1 including 3. This accounts for 9 (8.1%) of the 111 persons in this age range in our sample population of 324. The group accounted for 2 (9.5%) of the 21 persons in our sample population aged 65 and older.

While the GNWT's Department of Education, Culture and Employment does track recipients by community, it does not at present do so by riding. As a result, it has not



provided statistics of the sort that might confirm the estimates derived from our sample.

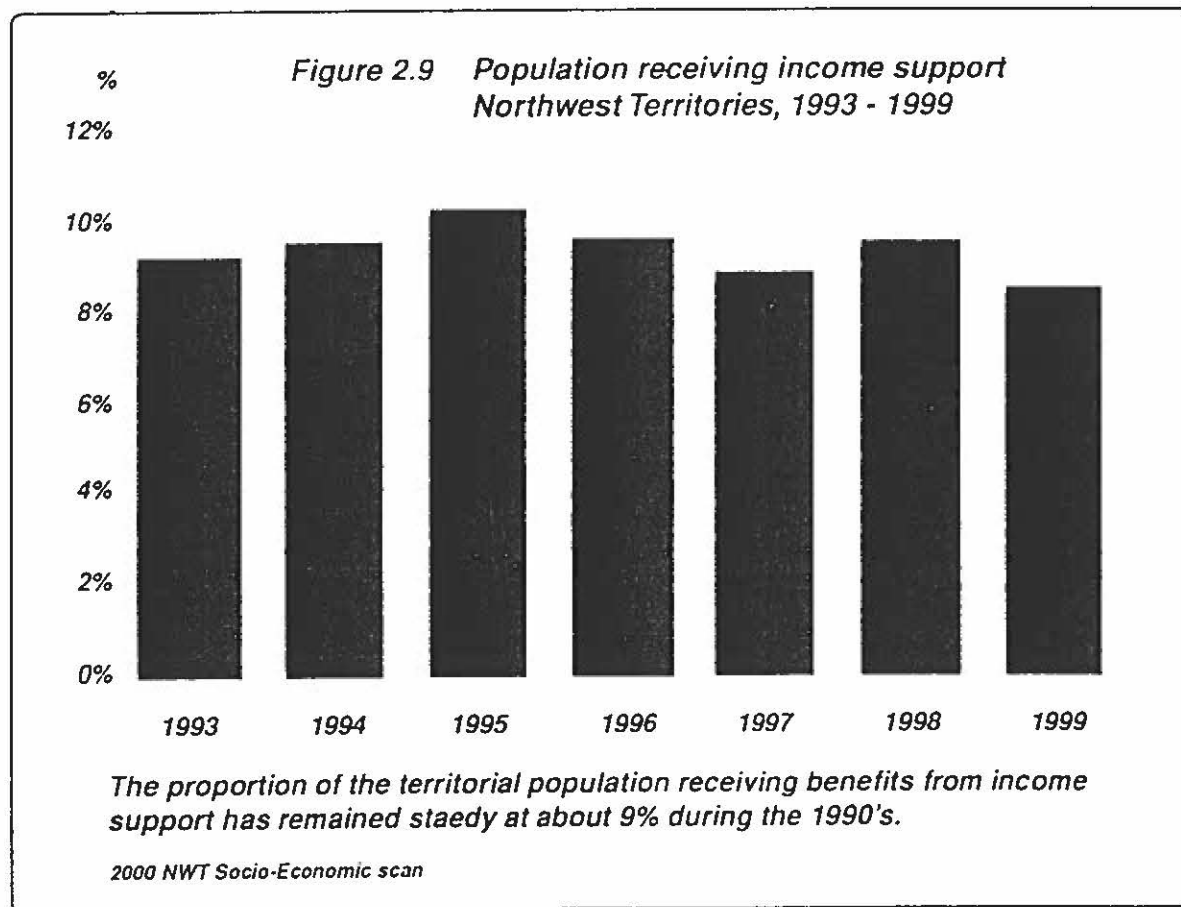
The Department does note that in any given month there are some 200-300 Inuvik households receiving Income Support. Twin Lakes contains most of the public housing units in Inuvik, and since a sizeable portion of the households in public housing are likely to derive part of their income from Income Support, it seems likely that the riding would be home to a majority of Income Support recipients in the community. Twin Lakes also contains much of the shabbier and cheaper rental accommodations, accommodations likely to be disproportionately populated by those whose incomes consist in part of Income Support. Informal estimates put the Twin Lakes share of the Inuvik caseload as constituting 2/3 of the whole, but such "guesstimates" are necessarily approximate, and the substantial fluctuations in the overall caseload from month to month and season to season mean that they can be quickly overtaken by events.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

In order to determine what employment opportunities exist for Twin Lakes residents, particularly aboriginal ones, we conducted a survey of Inuvik area employers. There appear to be fewer than 200 employers in Inuvik, particularly once we subtract businesses that are actually single-person operations or that exist only on paper.

There are 138 Inuvik businesses registered with the BIP.

From current Inuvik telephone listings, we compiled a list of 160 local employers, and completed survey interviews with 35.

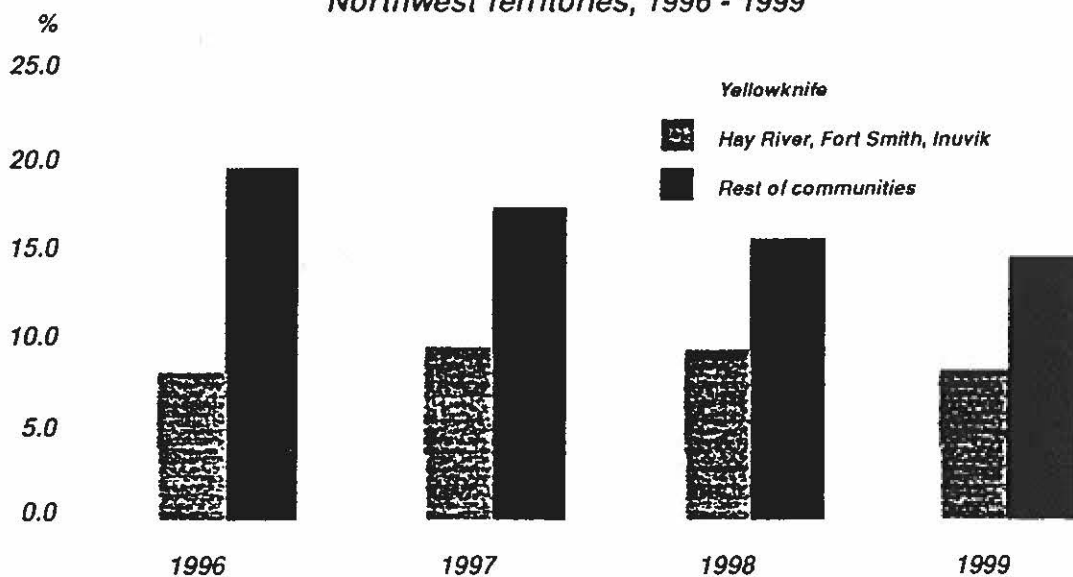


The manager or personnel department of each employer was asked to provide figures on the approximate number of persons employed, the number of them who were aboriginals, and the kinds of positions in which aboriginals were employed.

Of the 35 surveyed, 7 reported no aboriginal employees. The responses of the 28 who do employ aboriginals, in terms of the numbers of aboriginals employed and their positions, are as follows:

- 2: Clerical Apprentices
- 2 : Daycare Workers
- 1: Sales/ Warehousing
- 6 : Scheduling Agents; Shuttle Driver
- 8 : General Contracting Labour
- 4 : Computer Technicians; Office Administrator
- 9 : Mechanics; Truck Driver/ Dispatcher; General Office Personnel
- 1: Apprentice Welder
- 1: Insurance Agents
- 5: Tour Guides; Sales Clerk; Office Manager
- 1: Custodian
- 2: General Office Help

**Figure 2.10 Population receiving income support, by community Northwest Territories, 1996 - 1999**



*A decline in the proportion of residents receiving income support is apparent among smaller NWT communities. After increases between 1996 and 1998, the proportion of residents receiving income support in regional centers declined in 1999.*

- 5: Bartenders; Waitresses; Bouncer
- 10: Welders; Truck Drivers/Heavy Equipment Operators; General Labourers
- 6: Radio Announcers; Office Administrative Personnel
- 2: Mail Sorters
- 1: Helicopter Engineer
- 5: Office Administration; Program Delivery to Gwich'in Beneficiaries
- 1: Customer Sales Rep.
- 3: Groundskeeping/Brush Cutting/Clearing
- 2: Owner; Sales Clerk
- 2: Part-time Mechanics
- 25: Plumbing; Carpentry; Office Administration; General Labourers
- 3: Sales Clerks
- 2: Technicians
- 1: Owner
- 6: TV/Newspaper Communications
- 4: Self-Government Work; Office Administration

Of this sample of 28 employers, approximately 12 employ aboriginals primarily in trades, technical and skilled labour positions. 5 employ them mainly in sales, while another 6 employ them mainly in skilled office, managerial and administrative roles.

None make significant use of aboriginals in professional roles. Of the 7 who employ 6 or more aboriginals, the concentration appears to be in skilled labour and trades positions. The concentration of aboriginal employment in the trades and as skilled labourers, where the availability of employment and the existence of work to be done are subject to substantial seasonal fluctuations, leaves this segment of the town's and the riding's population disproportionately vulnerable to seasonal unemployment and hence more likely to have to augment their earnings with multiple jobs, trapping, casual labour, or Employment Insurance or other benefits.

Trapping is an almost exclusively aboriginal activity. 22% of our households surveyed cited it as a source of income or food. The Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, with which Gwich'in hunters and trappers can register, reports 22 hunters or trappers in Twin Lakes are registered with the Board. The Inuvik Hunters' and Trappers' Committee, regrettably, does not register trappers by riding, and was unable to furnish us with the information that would allow us to make a definitive estimate of the number of hunters and trappers in Twin Lakes.

Our sample would suggest hunting and trapping provides food and/or income in roughly 110 to 150 Inuvik households. This would include those for whom hunting and trapping are major contributors to the household income and those for whom they are minor ones.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

*If our sample survey is representative, we can conclude that a majority of Twin Lakes households are benefiting from both private and/or public sector employment, and that they own their own homes, a key indicator of relative affluence. Given the high wages for the successful in Inuvik (particularly in the public sector, where employment is a contributor to 60% of Inuvik households), these would suggest prosperity is the norm in Twin Lakes.*

*Some of our data, however, provide more cause for concern than for complacency. 26% of households and 19.7% of the population would appear to have made recent use of public housing. This would translate into between 125 and 175 households and between 350 and 500 residents of Twin Lakes.*

*The sample's 19% of households and 20.6% of residents (25% of residents under 18) receiving either Employment Insurance or Income Support would translate into roughly 100-140 households and 300-500 residents for the riding as a whole. By the same reasoning, the approximately 10% of both households and the population receiving Income Support can be extrapolated to produce an estimated 50-70 households and 150-200 residents in Twin Lakes who are similarly situated.*

*One's interpretation of our data largely depends on the nature of any comparison. If we compare Twin Lakes to the NWT, we find that home ownership is slightly above the territorial average of just below 50%, a positive indicator, while receipt of income support is above the territorial average of about 8.5%, a negative one. If we compare Twin Lakes with the three regional centres as a group, we find that it has, again, a slightly higher rate of home ownership than their average of just under 50%, and a higher rate of reliance on Income Support than their average of approximately 8.5%.*

*Yet the situation in Twin Lakes looks bright indeed if we compare it to that in the communities other than Yellowknife and the regional centres, where receipt of Income Support averages close to 15% and home ownership is approximately 48% ( 2000 NWT Socio-Economic Scan, figs. 2.5 and 2.10).*

*The most persuasive interpretation of the data would be that while there is clearly no evidence of widespread and endemic poverty in Twin Lakes, the riding displays striking economic inequality and significant pockets of deprivation.*

*There is obviously an affluent majority in Twin Lakes, consisting of those who have regular employment in either the public or the private sector, and many of whom own their own homes.*

*But there is also a very sizeable minority, consisting of between a fifth and a quarter of the households and the population of Twin Lakes, who live in far less satisfactory conditions. It includes those who live in public housing or cheap rental housing, recipients of Income Support and those who are heavily dependent upon E.I. benefits.*

*There is, perhaps, less between these two relative extremes in Twin Lakes than we might expect. The minority living in straitened circumstances can be divided into various subgroups which, while they overlap, also exhibit significant differences.*

*The public housing population, as we have seen, consists largely of households of 1-3 persons (76.8% of it, in our sample). This may reflect a relative paucity of public housing units designed to accommodate larger households. The public housing population also includes disproportionately high numbers of those 65 and over and disproportionately few of those under 18.*

*Those households in receipt of Income Support, on the other hand, tend to have slightly fewer children than the average, and more or less the average number of those 65 and older.*

*If we compare the population receiving Income Support with that receiving Employment Insurance, we find modest but significant differences. Larger families are more likely to make use of the latter than of the former. Of the 46 households of 4 or more in our sample, 8 reported receipt of Employment Insurance but only 1 receipt of Income Support. Among our 54 households of between 1 and 3 members, 7 reported receipt of Income Support, only 2 receipt of Employment Insurance.*

*Further research into household composition would be necessary to establish with certainty the reason for this disparity. However, the most logical explanation is that Employment Insurance serves older, larger and more stable families (indeed a reasonably stable work history is a prerequisite of gaining benefits) whose economic and employment problems are primarily a function of the seasonal nature of the work providing much of the household income. The families heavily dependent upon Income Support, on the other hand, would tend to be younger, smaller and with less secure footholds in the world of employment, consisting of a young couple or single parent with several young children. This is compatible with the high birth rates for young women and the tendency of households on Income Support to have slightly more children than the population as a whole. (While the stereotypical single welfare mother with many children is no doubt part of the Twin Lakes population on Income Support, it seems doubtful that such households constitute a majority of Income Support households at any one time.)*

*The fact that the Employment Insurance and Income Support populations differ somewhat in household composition and the nature of their difficulties suggests that measures to alleviate their difficulties should also vary. Improvements in the situation of those heavily dependent on E.I. would primarily require steps to provide options other than seasonal employment, including training in more promising fields. Those more reliant on Income Support would need more far-reaching assistance, which might take such forms as expanded basic training and workplace readiness programs, and perhaps support services such as daycare and more public housing suited to their needs. Inuvik's relative prosperity, and indeed that of most of Twin Lakes, compared to the NWT as a whole, provides reason for optimism. If those Twin Lakes residents facing economic difficulties were located instead in more remote communities, with lower levels of economic activity and fewer potential opportunities, the obstacles to their economic success would be compounded by a general lack of avenues for productive activity. Their situations could not be improved except by large-scale measures to raise the level of economic activity. Such measures tend to be costly and of uncertain cost-effectiveness. In an area like Twin Lakes, where the local economy is capable of absorbing more talent and labour, smaller-scale and targeted initiatives are more likely to prove successful and cost-effective.*