

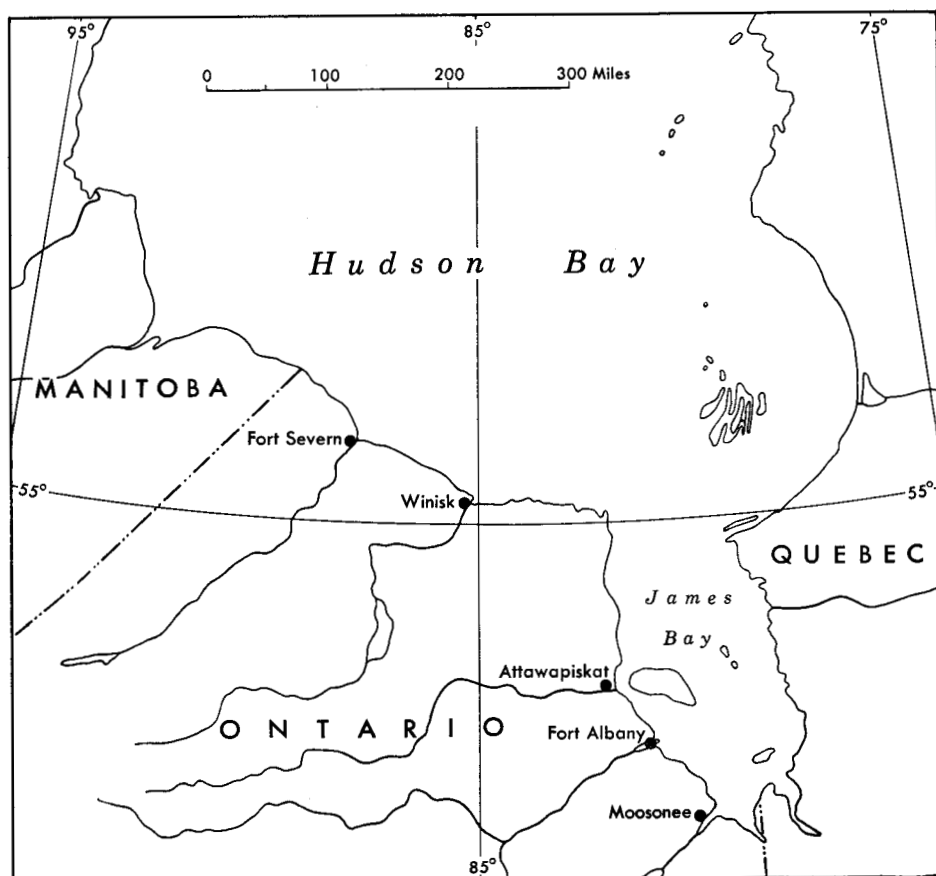


Fig. 1. Sketch map showing location of Winisk.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF ACCULTURATION AMONG THE CREE INDIANS OF WINISK, ONTARIO

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Introduction

THE Cree Indians of the Hudson Bay area have been in contact with Western civilization for more than 200 years. This contact was largely sporadic and impersonal until the establishment of a network of trading posts and permanent missions. For the Swampy Cree of the Winisk River area, sustained contact with the outside world began with the establishment of a permanent trading post in 1901, and a permanent Roman Catholic Mission in 1924. In 1930 regular relations were established with Federal Government agents; in 1948, with agents of the Ontario Provincial Government. Beginning in 1955, with the erection of a Radar Base nearby, Indian contact with whites became much more extensive and intensive. The aim of this paper is to suggest some of the consequences of these contacts since 1901 with special emphasis on the extent and nature of the change brought about by the Radar Base.

The setting

The territory of the Winisk Band lies in the Hudson Bay Lowlands and covers an area of some 15,000 square miles. The band territory is divided by the north-flowing Winisk River which empties into Hudson Bay about 100 miles west of Cape Henrietta Maria. The village of Winisk (55°15' N. 85°12' W.) stretches along the west bank of the river about 5 miles above the river mouth, where the coastal tundra gives way to the inland muskeg. The Radar Base is situated across the river about 5 miles from the village. Figs. 1, 2.

The village population consists of approximately 150 Indians living in about 30 households; 3 employees of the Hudson's Bay Company; a priest and lay brother at the Roman Catholic Mission. In summer, there is in addition an influx of several job-seeking Indian males from Severn, the closest settlement, 100 miles to the northwest.

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All Winisk Indians are Roman Catholic. All are literate in the Cree syllabary. A few have some knowledge of English, especially those younger people who have spent time in tuberculosis sanitariums "outside" and some of the older children who have attended the Mission residential school at Albany. The Hudson's Bay Company men are English-speaking Canadians. The Mission personnel are French-speaking Canadians. At present, the Radar Base has an all-male population of some 200 white workers. Most of them are English-speaking Canadians but French Canadians are heavily represented.

Background

In the latter part of the 19th century the Indians who were trapping in the Winisk River area traded their pelts at the Albany and Severn posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1882 a summer trading post operating out of Severn was established near the mouth of the Winisk River.

First contact with Roman Catholic missionaries occurred at Albany in the early 1890's. In 1895, missionaries from Albany, on the west coast of James Bay, made annual week-long visits to the Winisk area and in 1900 they built a church at the river mouth. The following year, the Hudson's Bay Company built a permanent trading post nearby, and the river mouth became an important annual meeting place for the Indians in the area.

The first permanent mission, consisting of a priest and a lay brother, was established in 1924. In 1948, the missionaries set up a steam-powered sawmill next to the mission house. Over the next few years they built a church large enough to accommodate the whole population and, with the aid of government funds and materials, built an assembly hall with an adjoining schoolroom.

The Federal Government is represented at Winisk by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the Provincial Government by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests and the Ontario Provincial Police. None of these agents resides permanently in the village.

Until 1930, when the Winisk Band became a signatory to Treaty No. 9, they had no formal legal relationship with either the Provincial or Federal Government. The Mission Codex of Winisk first mentions visiting government representatives in 1936. A 1938 entry cites the arrival of a "new" Indian Agent. Thereafter, the annual one-day visit of the "Treaty Party" is regularly noted.

The Treaty Party consists of an Indian Agent, an interpreter, a representative of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and a doctor and X-ray technicians. The Indian Agent distributes the Treaty money (4 dollars to each band member), presides over the election of the chief and councillors (the Winisk Band had no chief prior to contact with the Federal Government), and discusses village problems with the Indians. On the basis of personal interviews, he orders building materials to assist those who want to improve their dwellings, authorizes food and equipment rations for the needy, and

processes individual claims for old-age pensions and family allowances. He also grants money for village improvements (boardwalks, drainage ditches, etc.) by local labour, thereby providing the community with an important source of income during the summer. The technicians X-ray every person for tuberculosis and the doctor examines those with health complaints.

Agents of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests first came to Winisk in 1947 as representatives of the Fur Management Program inaugurated in that year. They set up and recorded trap-line boundaries, closely following the boundaries traditionally observed by the Indians. They introduced various conservation measures and performed a variety of services for the Indians, such as giving lectures and demonstrations on the care and preparation of pelts and skins. In September 1956, a Lands and Forests agent took up year-round residence in Winisk on an experimental basis. He was reassigned in July 1958, and there was apparently no intention of replacing him at Winisk, at least not in the immediate future.

Construction of the Radar Base, one of a string of installations constituting the Mid-Canada Line, began in the spring of 1955. Supplies came in by boat and tractor-train, later by air. More than 700 white labourers were brought in to work during the peak construction period beginning in 1956. Heavy construction was completed by the end of 1957 and the project contractors moved out, taking most of the work force with them. Maintenance and operation were taken over by the Bell Telephone Company and the Construction Maintenance Unit of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Both Bell and C.M.U., like the construction contractors before them, supplemented their work force with unskilled local Indian labour. Indians were usually paid \$1.20 per hour plus time-and-a-half after 40 hours. In 1957, while construction was still under way, a 75-hour work-week was not uncommon. By the summer of 1958, however, Indian wage earnings had dropped sharply. Many Indians were laid off, those who were retained worked a 54-hour week.

With the appearance of the Radar Base, the Indians had, for the first time, alternative ways of making a living. Substantially all have chosen wage-labour over trapping and hunting, but this decision has carried with it a whole train of consequences that importantly changed their total way of life.

The round of life

Pre-Radar Base

Prior to the construction of the Radar Base the pattern of Indian life was dictated largely by the requirements of a hunting and trapping economy. Family groups, each in its own trap-line area, were self-sufficient production units operating in comparative isolation. In late September individual family groups left the post by canoe, loaded with people, dogs, implements and food staples, for their respective trap-lines. Some had to travel only a few

hours by paddling or with the help of an outboard motor but the more distant trap-lines required 2 or 3 weeks of travel by those without motors.

The first week or so on the trap-line was devoted to building a new shelter or repairing the old one, readying and making equipment, and getting in a supply of fish and meat. Once settled, the ordinary routine of the men and older boys consisted of trapping beaver, mink, and otter; hunting caribou and moose; maintaining equipment. The women day-by-day prepared meals, collected and sawed firewood, cared for the children, washed and mended clothes, skinned animals, stretched the skins, set and tended fish-nets and rabbit snares and, in their spare time, trapped near the cabin or tent. At Christmas or Easter, or both, some or all members of the several families returned to Winisk for a week or so in order to sell their furs, to replenish their supplies of food staples, and to attend religious ceremonies.

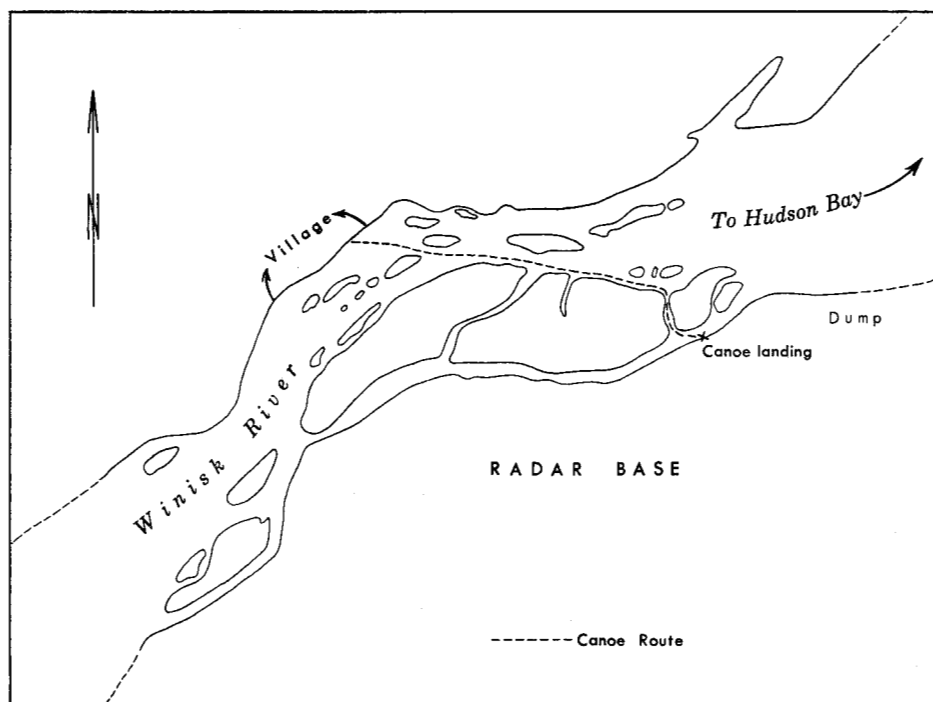


Fig. 2. Sketch map of village and radar base.

The trap-lines were worked approximately from October until late May or June when the family groups, which had been isolated for 9 or 10 months, gathered together at the trading post. For the next several weeks, there was little to do in the way of food-getting. Fish and geese were the dietary mainstays during the early summer but most families had difficulty in getting a sufficient supply. A few had earned enough money by trapping to sustain

themselves with store food for a while; others eked out their livelihood by doing odd jobs for the mission or the store, such as cutting logs and floating them down to the post, or cutting firewood. In particularly lean years most people were forced to rely on the Indian Agent, either by way of direct dole or through the monies he made available for community-improvement projects.

During the day, women did their regular household chores and visited the fish-nets. Mending clothes, weaving or repairing nets and other more or less sedentary tasks were usually done in the company of a neighbor or two.

Men sometimes tended the nets or cut firewood but these tasks were usually left to the women. When not employed by the mission or the Company or engaged in work provided by the Indian Agent, the Indian men spent most of their working time on long-term projects such as repairing their canoes or re-covering them, or repairing their houses.

Evenings were especially given over to visiting, gossiping, and recreation marked by public separation of the sexes. Men pitched horseshoes, played cards in the mission house, or lounged around in groups of three or four. Women visited each other in their dwellings. Small boys kicked around a soccer ball or played other outside games until dark. Groups of young men and girls walked separately through the post, gradually pairing off as the night wore on.

Important social, religious and political events were bunched together in these few weeks of the summer visit to Winisk. Couples planning to marry usually did so during this period. Marriages were performed at the church, almost always on a Sunday. Most of the Indians regularly attended morning and evening prayers. At the end of June or early July, the whole settlement observed a week-long annual religious retreat. At about the same time, the Treaty Party made its annual visit.

After the retreat and after the Treaty Party had come and gone, families gradually left to camp along the coast of Hudson Bay. There they fished and hunted, returning again to the post in early September to work for the Hudson's Bay Company, hauling supplies to the store from the supply boat, and to prepare for the return to their trap-lines.

Post-Radar Base

With the establishment of the Radar Base, the cyclical fanning out of the families to their trap-lines, followed by short-term contraction to the summer meeting place, gave way to year-round residence in what has become a village.

The daily round of life changed, but most radically for adult males. The work-day at the Radar Base began at 7:30 a.m. The Indians at the village allowed themselves about an hour to make the 5-mile canoe trip from the village to the mouth of the river plus the 1-mile walk from the beach to the operations centre. Some travelled singly, others in pairs; infrequently, three

or even four men would make the trip in the same canoe. Occasionally, a truck met them at the canoe landing to shuttle the workers to the site.

At the Base, the men went to their respective headquarters shacks of Bell and C.M.U. The roll was called and the foremen assigned the men to various work crews. Routine jobs were commonly assigned to the same crew from day to day.

One group of three Indians, in the charge of a white truck driver, regularly spent the mornings collecting trash and garbage from the mess-hall and other sites and hauling it to the dump. Other crews moved food supplies from the main warehouse to the mess-hall storerooms, unloaded cargo from incoming planes, or were assigned to special projects such as constructing crude platforms from saplings for carrying an above-the-ground pipe line. Breaks in the underground water-lines required an almost permanent crew of pick-and-shovel men. Men not involved in daily maintenance routines, special projects, or emergencies were assigned to general clean-up, raking, collecting abandoned gasoline drums and other debris left over from heavy construction work, and dismantling the old construction camp that had been set up in 1955.

At 10 o'clock everyone took a 15-minute coffee-break, then returned to their jobs until lunch time. Indians brought their own lunches and ate them in their respective headquarters shacks. On exceptionally cold days those working for Bell went instead to a small, dark furnace room. All whites ate in the mess-hall.

About 1 o'clock the men returned to work. The afternoon was sometimes split by a coffee-break but, unlike the morning break, this was not a regular feature of the work day. About 5:20 p.m. a truck picked up the various crews and brought them to the headquarters areas. The men collected their gear and began the trip home. Most of them walked to the canoe landing, even though a truck regularly made the trip for their benefit.

For women, the round of life changed less radically. In large part, the change projected the summer-only work routine on to a year-round basis. The work day revolved around the house and the children. Women were usually the first to get up, build the fire, and get the family started. Most of them, and those children who could not be left alone, were already in the church for morning Mass when the men left for work at the Base.

Routine chores took up much of the morning. Some children from 6 to about 10 years old were sent off to school. Older girls worked closely with their mothers, hauling water from the river, preparing firewood, and watching the children. Most women made two or more trips to the Hudson's Bay store each day and might send the children for odd items any number of times. The area around the store entrance was a popular meeting place for exchanging news and gossip, especially before the store opened in the morning or before it reopened after lunch.

Women, children and old or unemployed men from the village made daily expeditions to the vast Radar Base dump that stretched several hundred yards along the river about 1.5 miles from the major building installations.

Some came daily; some, combining visits to the dump with attending their fish-nets, two or three times a week; others intermittently, according to need. At almost any hour from morning to late afternoon, a dozen or so adults and children could be seen at the dump sitting and talking in small groups or casually picking their way through the debris. Some stayed only long enough to load their canoes with discarded packing crates, plywood sheets, damaged steel cots, mattresses, chairs, or whatever else might prove useful, sometimes making two or even three trips the same day. Others came early and spent the day around a fire or, in bad weather, in a temporary shelter hastily constructed from whatever happened to be at hand.

The arrival of a trash or garbage truck brought most people running, each one eager to beat the others to the choicest salvage. Out of deference to the Indians, the mess-hall personnel tried to keep garbage separate from the usable left-overs, and the men on the trucks carefully set the cans down rather than dump them over the side. The women, with sleeves rolled up, plunged their arms into the cans and began filling their boxes with food. After a few minutes, the cans were dumped and returned to the truck, leaving the Indians to pick through the remainder. About 4.30 or 5.00 p.m. those still at the dump loaded belongings and booty into their canoes and returned to the village. Similarly, men who worked at the Base frequently stopped off at the dump to load up with building materials or other salvage before making the return trip home. Girls and women (forbidden on the Base proper) who had come to the dump to make surreptitious contact with whites or to arrange for subsequent assignations were the last to leave.

Week-night activities centered on forms of leisure and recreation much like those of summer evenings in the pre-Radar Base period. On Saturday nights, however, the village took on an unmistakable air of excitement. This was the night for home-brew drinking (illegal) and dancing (forbidden by the missionaries) in private. White men came over from the Base either singly or in small groups to rendezvous with girls from the village. Groups of young Indian men and women, high with excitement or alcohol, occasionally drunk, promenaded boisterously through the village until the early hours of the morning.

Sunday mornings, too, when all people of the village come together dressed in their best clothes for Mass, had its own special kind of excitement. The Base doctor came to the village and held a clinic in the mission after the morning religious ceremonies. A dozen or so other men from the Radar Base came as visitors, some to the mission to attend Mass (although the priest said Mass and heard confessions at the Base on Sunday afternoon), others to buy things at the Hudson's Bay Company store (closed to Indians on Sundays), or, most often, as "tourists."

About half the visitors from the Base remained in the vicinity of the mission and played softball, soccer, or pitched horseshoes with Indian boys and young men, frequently pausing to tease the groups of giggling girls who watched and responded in kind. Others, carrying cameras and their pockets stuffed with food or hip-flasks, toured the village taking pictures, generally

ending up in more or less secret meetings with girls or unmarried women. In good weather, groups of men from the Base stopped off at the village to pick up an Indian guide for fishing trips.

Toward evening, the excitement, generated principally by young unmarried men and girls, picked up once again and steadily took on the character and flavour of the night before. Most of the white men had returned to the Base by supper time, but several remained in or near the village. Long after the week-end excitement had ended for older people and children, the young Indian men and women sustained it with home-brew, fights and carousing.

Some consequences of contact

Pre-Radar Base

The trader, the missionary, and the government agent each had a special interest in the Indians and came to the Winisk area only because the Indians were there. In pursuing their separate goals, each introduced important changes but, by and large, these changes reinforced rather than altered the already well established pattern of Indian life based on the fur-trade.

The majority of changes, especially those introduced by the trader and the government agents, were specifically designed to increase the efficiency and productivity of the prevailing hunting and trapping economy. Old elements (such as the home-made bark canoe and paddle) were displaced by new ones (the manufactured canvas canoe and the outboard motor), which met the same needs but more efficiently. The trader gave the Indians food and other supplies on credit, and encouraged the purchase of new equipment, which all promoted the safety, ease, efficiency and productivity of trap-line living. Government agents introduced modern principles of conservation and new, improved techniques for processing skins and furs, rationalizing the economic system and thereby strengthening it. In general the missionary, although not directly concerned with any particular mode of subsistence, perhaps contributed importantly, although indirectly, to its reinforcement by providing solace and encouragement.

In addition, all outside agents, particularly the government, provided material assistance on an emergency or even long range basis, thereby raising the margin of subsistence, ameliorating the harshness of the economy, and reducing the number of casualties.

Some of the changes introduced by these agents were either irrelevant to the basic pattern of living, affected only a small part of it, or had consequences for one or two individuals rather than for the group as a whole. Thus, the introduction of the permanent hair-wave by the wife of one of the Hudson's Bay Company managers and adopted by almost all women was clearly irrelevant to trapping and hunting. The occasional work opportunities offered by the trading post or the mission affected too few individuals and

were too sporadic to have long-range consequences for the group. The mission-operated sawmill permitted several families to live in more substantial dwellings during the time they spent at the post but even this shift on the part of some from summer tents to frame cabins had no immediate effect on, nor direct connection with, the larger pattern of economic activity. Likewise, attendance at Sunday morning Mass in the village, and the year-round proscription against hunting, trapping, or fishing on Sunday, demanded only a minor rearrangement of the work week, and only exceptionally entailed a loss of time or a decrease in productivity.

The Radar Base

Unlike the traders, missionaries, and government agents, the Radar Base has a local function and reality independent of the Indian community. In making wage-labour available, however, the Radar Base changed the conditions and organization of Winisk life. The way in which a man makes a living has changed, and the world in which he makes it has changed as well. For those who work, and for those who hang around the village hoping for work, the effective environment has been transformed into one in which animals, heretofore of primary significance for food and income, have become almost irrelevant. And there is now, among the Indians, the constant awareness that only 5 miles away is an advanced entrenchment of white civilization, a large, all-male community that has at its command an awesome array of equipment and techniques and seemingly inexhaustible resources.

Before the Radar Base, the family on the trap-line was turned in on itself. It was the basic residence unit and the centre of social life. Husband, wife, children and sometimes grandparents, each with special skills and knowledge appropriate to his age and sex, performed a variety of tasks, permitting the family to function as a single production and consumption unit as well.

With wage-labour, the work-crew, consisting of adult males from several families, has displaced the family as the basic unit of production. The rhythm of life, previously based on broad seasonal and climatic variations, is no longer on a seasonal but on a daily basis, and the wage-earner is obliged to spend the same number of hours at more or less the same job throughout the year. Although the family remains the basic residence unit, it must now reside permanently in the village, living as an integral part of the larger community.

Freed from the enforced isolation of trap-line living, each member of the family enters into important economic and social relationships outside the family group. The father and grown sons work alongside other adult males at the Radar Base. The woman spends much of her working and leisure time in the company of female friends, neighbors, and relatives. Children, no longer limited for companionship to their own brothers and sisters, choose their playmates from among other children of the same age. Older boys and

girls seek each other's company and courtship has become an integral part of their social life, although older people continue to frown on courtship and it is seldom a public affair.

This thinning out of family relationships has affected the senior male more than his wife and children. On the trap-line, the senior active male was the acknowledged leader of the group. His skills, especially with regard to hunting and trapping, were the chief determinants of family income and among the chief factors in social ranking and prestige. At the Radar Base, he is a member of a bull-gang and needs neither special knowledge nor special skills. Each worker contributes the same amount and the same kind of labour, with each man receiving the same pay for each hour worked.

The trap-line hierarchy based on seniority and skill in hunting and trapping disappeared at the Base, where father and son, good hunter and poor hunter, stand equal before the white labour boss. In the five instances in which individual leadership on the job was observed, each was ascribable in large part to a reading or speaking knowledge of the English language on the part of the individual concerned. In four of the five cases, these "leaders" were young unmarried men who, in any traditional context, would have found it impossible to exercise any kind of leadership whatsoever. Even off the job, wage-labour tends to suppress the old "leadership" and to elevate trap-line "followers", or even incompetents, to economic and perhaps social equality with their trap-line "betters".

The man who works at the Base cannot trap nor, except for sporadic and short-lived forays up-river or along the coast, can he hunt. He has to buy his food from the Company store, supplementing it with whatever fish his women-folk can take from the river. The women may also bring in an occasional rabbit from snares set nearby and, in season, the man can get some ducks and geese at little cost to his job. By and large, however, moose and caribou meat, along with other country food, has been displaced by Spam, canned meatballs, and a variety of canned and packaged foods.

The sudden and sweeping change in diet introduced by wage-labour can perhaps best be seen in the contrast of canned food consumption before and after the establishment of the Radar Base. During the year beginning September 1954, for example, the Company store sold 375 cans of pears and 125 cans of corned beef hash. The following year, however, when the men worked at the Radar Base and hunted only intermittently if at all, the consumption of pears jumped to 1,250 cans, and of corned beef hash to 1,350 cans. In that year the Indians also bought some 1,800 cans of steak and onions, not stocked at all in 1954. Total 1955 sales for all canned fruits increased by 474 per cent over 1954; sales of canned meats increased by 450 per cent.

Thus, almost overnight, food items that had previously been little-known or untried suddenly became staples. Although the Indians learned, perforce, to build their meals around the tin can, few of them have yet learned to like it. Indeed, the most frequently cited cause of discontent with working at the Base was the aversion to canned food coupled with the lack of fresh meat. The dislike of canned food was expressed frequently and vigorously. Almost

every Indian has said, in one way or another, "I fill my stomach on Company (canned) food. I feel like a man who is starving".

The demand for fresh meat appeared to be setting the stage for a developing specialization in food production. The families of the men who worked for wages constituted a steady market for those hunters and trappers who could produce fresh meat beyond their own immediate needs. By 1957, families who had been on the trap-lines were making a special effort to bring back fresh caribou or moose for sale in the village. In the summer of 1958, when word got around that two of the unemployed men had killed a moose, representatives of every family in the village eagerly thronged around the tent and bought the chunks of meat as quickly as the hunters could cut them. On another occasion a man who had quit his job at the Base turned up with 50 or so geese after a day's hunting. Later he explained that they had lasted only a day because "they [were used to] feed the whole village". The geese were sold at a dollar a piece on a first-come-first-served basis.

Although the hunting for fresh food was perhaps the most important single activity displaced by wage-labour, a host of other activities have been similarly affected. Since a man could not work at the Radar Base and work at home as well, tasks customarily performed by the adult male, such as repairing or building houses or repairing canoes, were done by taking time off from the Base, not done at all, or were done by other members of the family. The family problem of getting along with only part-time assistance from the wage-earning males was much eased by the exploitation of the resources at the dump by women, children, and old people. The dump provided the family with supplementary food, fuel, raw materials for the construction and maintenance of houses and furnishings, and finished articles for a variety of uses. Household inventories for 18 of the 32 Indian households in the village show that all but 5 used some kind of sleeping equipment taken from the dump. Among the 13 families which had such equipment, there were 10 army-type metal cots (with springs), 9 mattresses, and 9 home-made beds (made of wood taken from the dump).

Whereas the material resources of the Radar Base helped to ease the new economic problems generated by wage-labour and permanent residence in the village, the changed subsistence and residence patterns generated social problems that the indigenous social system could not handle.

In the past, the sustained isolation of families on their respective trap-lines provided little opportunity for inter-family squabbles to arise and permitted families to avoid each other if they did. Should conflict between families or within a given family, as between husband and wife, have persisted, public opinion or direct intervention by the missionary or the Hudson's Bay Company manager were usually sufficient to keep the disturbance under control.

New problems appeared with increasing frequency after 1955: drunkenness, lying, stealing, and perhaps most important of all, disruptive sexual contacts between young girls or unmarried women and white men at the Radar Base. Before 1955 no one ever bothered to lock his house at night.

Indeed, even the Hudson's Bay Company store was reported to have remained unlocked and unattended. By the summer of 1958, however, most people were careful to keep their belongings under lock and key. Similarly, lying was popularly believed to be a post-Radar Base phenomenon.

Not only have trouble-cases increased in frequency, but they have become more enduring and more pervasive in the community setting. Individuals or families can no longer avoid each other as they could on the trap-line. Moreover, many of the new problems are not individual or family affairs but directly involve, for the first time, large groups of people and affect the whole community.

Traditional techniques for social control were totally inadequate for dealing with the new problems. Similarly, personal intervention by the missionary, the store manager, or the Lands and Forests agent has become increasingly ineffectual, partly because there are no effective mechanisms for dealing with the whole community, and partly because they have no authority or control over the men from the Radar Base. Law enforcement agents, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, come in periodically to deal with the most flagrant cases, but during our stay the village remained in a more or less continuous state of crisis. That problems were either handled by outside agents or not handled at all is evidence of the flight of authority from the village and may well have been a central factor in the apparent demoralization of the local population, both Indian and white.

The appeal of wage-labour

Indians generally agreed that "we live better" as a result of the establishment of the Radar Base. "People dress better" and "nobody starves to death" were almost universal assessments. Next to the lack of fresh food, the loss of parental control over children and the general deterioration of public morality were generally considered the most undesirable aspects of the new life.

Young men unhesitatingly expressed a preference for wage-labour over trapping, but the thinking and attitudes that lay behind this preference are not at all clear. The most common reasons given for preferring wage-labour were that one could make more money working at the Base and that the work was easier. This was especially true of young men up to 25 or so, one of whom explained, "it is easier to hunt in the [Hudson's Bay Company] store with my wallet than to hunt in the bush with my gun". Older men appeared reluctant to express a preference for wage-labour. Typically, they said, "it doesn't matter to me" or "both the same", but almost all, including one who said he preferred trapping, chose to work when confronted with the actual choice between working and trapping.

The part played by money in the overwhelming preference for working for wages to trapping is difficult to assess. An objective economic appraisal of the two ways of life is hampered, on the one hand, by our lack of sufficient

data on the details of trap-line living (food consumption, hours worked, etc.), and on the other, by our lack of a satisfactory technique for reducing the trap-line standard of living to money or other terms comparable with living standards associated with wage-labour.

Let us assume, for instance, that the trapper has to work 2 hours to bring in 1,000 calories of food and that the labourer works only 1.5 hours to earn the equivalent. If the trapper eats the fresh meat with great relish, but the labourer, however hungry, eats the canned food with distaste or even loathing, can we assume that the nutritional value of the food is the same for both, and that the wage-earner therefore earns more, in this respect, than the trapper?

If we ignore values such as these and assume that, between trap-line and wage-labour standards of living, units of food, clothing, shelter, etc., are commensurable and roughly equivalent, wage-labour does not seem to have any over-riding money advantage, at least in the Winisk area. Total 1957 earnings for the Winisk Indian labourers are not available but incomplete tax withholding records (T-4 slips) show earnings of \$43,988.50. On the basis of work records and personal interviews with those whose earnings were not included in this figure, it would appear that the villagers earned about \$60,000 in wages at the Radar Base in 1957.

Trap-line returns for the last year preceding the construction of the Radar Base show a cash income for the Winisk Band of more than \$37,000 or an average of almost \$1,100 for each of the 35 trappers. To this must be added the money value of the food taken off the land. In preparing a statement regarding compensation for a Winisk family whose trap-line was partly expropriated for construction of the Radar Base, the Department of Lands and Forests observed that "with heavy freight charge to Weenusk meat would be worth at least \$1.00 per pound." Taking the average kill for the 7-year period from 1948-49 to 1954-55, the Department estimated the annual money value of (dressed) meat taken from this trap-line at \$2,916.00. If we use only \$2,000 as the average value of fresh meat taken from each of the 12 trap-lines in 1954-55, annual trapping and hunting income for the band was still greater than the \$60,000 earned in wages in 1957. Whatever value one uses, net income from trapping appears to compare favourably with the net income from wage-labour estimated for 1957.

In view of some of their attitudes in other areas, it would seem improbable that net-income alone, even if higher in fact, was decisive in shaping the Indians' preference for working at the Base. Indeed, there seems to have been little effort to rationalize behaviour patterns along money lines. Gasoline, at \$1.60 per gallon (Imperial) represented a major expenditure, but workers regularly made the 10-mile round-trip from village to Base singly or in pairs in canoes with outboard motors although they might have realized substantial savings had they used some sort of canoe-pool arrangement for getting to and from work. Even more revealing, perhaps, was the attitude toward freighting the Hudson's Bay Company supplies. Here, men who had first argued that the Hudson's Bay Company manager

supply the gasoline, later went out and regularly freighted on each trip hundreds of pounds more than was asked of them. Each man was paid according to the number of trips, but no one seemed to realize, and certainly no one cared, that they were killing the job.

Although the poor hunter and trapper might find a clear money advantage in working at the Base and thereby narrow the gap in standard of living and social prestige between himself and the better trappers, real income seems to have been less important in the decision to forgo trapping than more general considerations of economic security. For the wage-earner, security lay not so much in the amount of his paycheck as in the knowledge that he would be paid regularly so long as he was working. Although the Indian may have looked on the hiring and firing practices of the employers as being just as unpredictable as the weather or the animals on the trap-line, he had the added security of knowing that a good or a bad year no longer meant the difference between eating well and going hungry or even starving to death. So long as he remained in the village, whether working or not, he could always get emergency rations or other assistance from the government, the missionary, the Hudson's Bay Company, or from other Indians.

Moreover, residence in the village offered greater opportunities for religious life through the presence of the mission. Similarly, access to the doctor at the Radar Base sharply reduced anxieties about sickness and accident. Finally, our overall impression is that the attraction to wage-labour lay not only in the real or imagined money advantage, in the relative ease and regularity of wage labour, and in the special services available in the village, but also importantly in the broadened range and intensity of social interaction and the general excitement of community living.

Acknowledgements

This report is based on data gathered at Winisk by Elliott and Harriet Liebow and John Trudeau in the summer of 1958. The study was generously supported by grants from the Arctic Institute of North America and from the Catholic Anthropological Association. We are also indebted to Dr. Charles E. Hutchinson, Chief, Behavioral Sciences Division, A.F.O.S.R., and to Squadron Leader George Moir, R.C.A.F., for arranging our transportation to and from Winisk. We wish to thank the personnel of the Roman Catholic Mission, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, and the Sioux Lookout Indian Agency for their many courtesies and cooperation, and the Northern Stores Department of the Hudson's Bay Company for their kind permission to use the data on consumption of canned food at Winisk.

We are especially grateful to Regina Flannery Herzfeld and Clifford R. Barnett for their critical comments and suggestions in the preparation of this paper.