

Eskimo. He studied the clock very carefully, then took his screw-driver and removed one screw. This he examined slowly and thoroughly, looking both at the screw and the place it came from. He then put it down neatly so that he would know exactly where it was to go. He followed this slow methodical procedure with each screw he took out. It took him six hours to dismantle the clock and to put it together again, but when he was finished every piece was in its right place, and above all - the clock was running: People who have lived with Eskimos can tell you numerous stories like this of incidents where Eskimos, without any technical training, successfully repair motor boat engines or delicate instruments such as chronometers.

### Recent Stories and Myths

Probably many of you have read some of the recent books and magazine articles about the Eskimos. In these you will have heard how the coming of the white man, with his strange food and modern inventions, has seriously dislocated the Eskimo's way of life. There is, no doubt, much truth in that. One thing the white man has done was to improve means of transportation and thus make it possible for him to visit Eskimo country with comparative ease; to stay there for a few months or weeks, or even days, and then to return to take advantage of that other great invention, the printing press, to produce a book. Some of these authors, who have spent many years among the Eskimo, have made most thoughtful and valuable contributions to our knowledge of the people, their way of life and their problems. To them we're deeply grateful. Others, unfortunately, have become "experts" on the basis of a too short experience and have written stories which are dramatic and colourful, but remarkably lacking in factual accuracy.

Perhaps I might take a few minutes to discuss some of the Eskimo "myths" that have developed in recent years. One is that the Eskimos are a declining race, rapidly dying off. This appears to be based on conversations which visitors have had with Eskimos who tell tales of their ancestors living among groups of 30,000 or 40,000 natives. The evidence is not available to refute these statements conclusively, but equally there is no reliable evidence to support them. If we search the records left by explorers, some of them 300 years ago, we find that they all spoke of the sparseness of the Eskimo population.

Authoritative figures for the Eskimo population of Canada became available only with the census of 1941, when nearly every Eskimo was reached and given a numbered identification disc to overcome the difficulty of counting people who are nomads and whose names are in many cases remarkably similar. The official 1941 census total of Eskimos in the Northwest Territories and northern Quebec was 7,178 but because some of the returns were not received until after the compilation was made, this figure should be raised to about 7,700. The 1951 census for the same regions shows 8,646 Eskimos, a gain of slightly over one per cent per year for the 10 years. Supporting evidence for this increase is given by the vital statistics records which have been kept since Family Allowances have been paid to the Eskimos. They show population of 8,378 in 1948 - 8,437 in 1949, 8,550 in 1950, and the census figure of 8,646 in 1951. To this should be added the 847 Eskimos in Labrador, who had become Canadians since the census of 1941.