

regarded by the present generation to be essentials, not luxuries. It has taken more than a hundred years for them to reach this stage. However much the passing of the primitive culture may be deplored, because of the independence it implied, the fact has to be accepted that the Eskimos of to-day could not survive without much of the equipment and supplies the white man has brought them. A few exceptional men might do so, but the majority would be lost.

Clothing

Clothing is of the highest importance to the Eskimo. Properly clad, they can withstand the elements and find food by hunting. Poorly clad, they cannot go far afield nor stay out for any length of time.

The clothing of the early Eskimos was made principally of caribou and seal skins; caribou for winter and seal for summer wear. Bear and bird skins were used on occasion by some groups.

In most areas now, imported garments have taken the place of sealskin clothing for summer wear. With certain reservations, particularly as to styling, they are an improvement on the skin garments.

No satisfactory substitute has been found for caribou skins for winter clothing for the Eskimo. The people on the mainland of the Northwest Territories and the Western Arctic are usually able to get enough for their needs, but in the east, and in Quebec where the caribou have nearly all vanished, the people must buy imported material.

Eskimos living in areas where skins are plentiful are being encouraged to prepare more of them for shipment to areas where there is a shortage. Widows and old women are learning to make clothing which can be sold in other parts of the north.

Some of the more advanced Eskimos are studying methods of creating their own art forms in terms of textile patterns which can be used in sports clothing for white people.

Fur Resources

Although white bear, ermine, foxes, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, and wolves are all found in some or all parts of Eskimo territory, white foxes and muskrat are the two fur-bearing animals of greatest importance.

The white fox has been the main source of revenue for the majority of Eskimos since trade with them was opened. The cyclic fluctuations in the number of animals and the rise and fall of pelt prices have been reflected in a not too stable native economy. Until recent years, the Eskimos obtained sufficient return from their hunting and trapping activities to meet their modest requirements and sometimes to prosper.

High levels were maintained during the three cycles following World War I, but during the economic depression of the thirties prices fell steadily. There was