



CANADA

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 15 No. 15

April 13, 1960

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THE CANADIAN ESKIMO TODAY

"Forgetting the Eskimos was once, unfortunately, a habit of most of us Canadians" Mr. Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, told the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, On April 5. "A lot has been said about this subject, and many angry words have been spoken...The fact is that, if anyone was to blame, it was all of us, for our small nation was too few, scattered and preoccupied to concern itself with citizens so very far away." That day was past, however, Mr. Hamilton said. The present generation had fallen heir not only to "a lot of problems in the Arctic" but also to "a lot of opportunities: opportunities for the development of the great physical resources that lie to our north, and opportunities for working with people who need our help." It was the second type of opportunity to which Mr. Hamilton devoted his address:

"...The problems of the Arctic are not new, even if it is not long since they were recognized. The economic problems probably stretch back to the beginning of history, for in this harsh climate life has very often been perilous. For some people, survival has been threatened in recent years by the tragic depletion of the great caribou herds on which so many Eskimos once depended for their food, clothing and summer shelter. The caribou have disappeared for many reasons, of which the rifle, is probably the most important single one. Not in our lifetime are they likely to be

restored to anything like the place they once held in the economy of the Arctic. Even though scattered herds may sometimes appear, we know that it would be folly - indeed it would be criminal - to be complacent about the game supply. Many new resources must be found and be developed.

"We have been seeking these resources in many different ways. By resources I mean mineral wealth which can be extracted from the rocks, oil wells, fisheries; and other products of the lands and seas. I would even list as resources the talents and skills of the Eskimos, for their own unusual abilities offer remarkable opportunities to the people of the Arctic.

"We are not seeking to persuade Eskimos to take one course or another. We are not asking them to take jobs or start new industries. All we are trying to do is to offer the Eskimos a real chance to choose a vocation, and to give each of them a fuller life when he makes his own choice. We are as interested in helping the hunter who wishes to stay on the land as we are in assisting the ambitious youngster who wants to be a teacher or a doctor - or to follow one of the other occupations which have in practice been closed to the Eskimos.

"Last summer, for example, we helped the Eskimos start three co-operatives. It was only a year ago that the necessary legislation was enacted by the Northwest Territories Council. One co-operative had a remarkably successful season in operating the first Eskimo com-

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