

people were encouraged to move into town where they would continue to receive benefits and could remain with their children. For others, it was pointed out:

"forgetful children should not forget that school is compulsory and that missing school for five consecutive or separate times is liable to punishment. Parents who fail to send their children to school without serious reason and notification to the teacher are liable to be fined and jailed. Moreover family allowance payments may be cancelled upon report made by the proper authorities. Mark well, children that missing part of the day accounts for a day's absence, in so far as the punishments are concerned. Therefore, do your share for your sake and that of your family." (The Catholic Voice, 1957:5)

Given the economic conditions at the time, the threat of the loss of family allowances must have been quite an inducement to those unwilling to volunteer to send their children to school. In any event, voluntarily or not, most people at least in the Fort Simpson and Fort Wrigley regions, had moved into town within one year of the opening of a winter term school.

The movement of people away from residence at fish lake encampments and the introduction of direct family allowance payments, old age pensions, and other cash benefits directly to nuclear family heads and individuals, completely undermined the economic rationale of the local group.

Beginning no later than 1960, the nuclear family, typically composed of an older married couple and their adult and younger children, became the primary self-sufficient economic unit.

The internal organization of the economy was forced to shift into two virtually independent spheres of production and distribution: one for bush subsistence; the other for trade good subsistence.

Permanent and enlarged local populations meant the eventual depletion of small game in the vicinity of communities and ultimately, the virtual abandonment of winter collection activities on the part of women.

Now, with the collapse of the fur trade people needed to obtain cash in addition to the income received from trapping. In most cases, families relied upon direct cash payments from the government such as family allowances, old age pensions, and, in a few cases, welfare, to make up the difference. As well, in some families some or all of the cash needed to live was generated by part or full-time wage labour.

In terms of distribution, the cash-trade goods economic sector had an ideology which seemed to take on features both of our society and the traditional native one. The "production", that is the "cash" itself, was not shared except to purchase those trade goods necessary to fill the needs of the nuclear family.

In rare instances, surplus money was "lent" (of course at no interest) to close relatives, but it was never shared. On the other hand, however, traditional trade goods, and especially food items, although now purchased with money rather than furs, were treated like bush resources and formed a significant part of the reciprocity system of distribution.

Thus, the collapse of the fur trade and the concomitant rise of governmental intervention in the economic and social life of the people in the region did not produce a qualitative shift in the focus of the native economy away from its reliance on both local subsistence and the use of trade goods. However, it would seem that the past thirty years has been an era of marked change in the internal organization of the economy.

Finally, the contemporary native economy has not solved the problem of dependency on external agencies characteristic of the fur trade economic adaptation. The problem has only deepened and become more obvious as direct government payments have replaced productive labour as the main resource for obtaining trade goods; payments which are seen by most people, native and non-native as hand-outs to the poverty stricken.

The pipeline merely represents a further elaboration on this same theme of immediate material survival for long-term dependency, only this time the

changes being considered appear to be on such a massive scale that they will inevitably produce a major re-orientation of the native economy away from the self-sufficient bush existence sector and towards an ever increasing dependence on the externally controlled trade good sector for survival.

Regarding the Pipeline

Hopefully, the information provided has filled in some of the missing historical and cultural factors that differentiate northern natives from southern Canadian poor. I would like to use this information to evaluate the potential social and economic impact of the gas pipeline and attendant development on the northern native people.

This recommendation runs counter to those presented in industry-sponsored studies.

The industry-sponsored studies come to two primary conclusions regarding the social and economic problems and solutions:

1. That the traditional economy of Northern natives, including such activities as hunting, fishing and trapping are becoming of little economic importance and are, today, only part-time activities among young people.

2. That the region today is characterized by high unemployment and underemployment which the pipeline will solve by providing jobs and, in so going, help to alleviate other problems facing Northerners such as poor housing, poor health care facilities, etc.

Therefore, they all conclude that the gas pipeline and attendant development will have an overall positive impact and limit their recommendations to the question of ensuring that northern natives obtain the fullest opportunity to participate in this development through wage labour.

I will begin my critique with a discussion of their conclusions regarding the traditional economy. Their analysis of it can be divided into two major aspects:

1. That hunting and trapping as a "way of life" is "dying" in that the number of Northern Natives pursuing it on a full-time basis is very small and likely to decrease, while the number of part-time hunter-trappers, especially among the young is on the increase (see, for example Gemini North V. 6:412)

2. That the economic value of bush collection activities are now of greatly diminished significance and that the primary value of these activities concerns the intangible aspects of "social and cultural" values.

Concerning the first point, I do not dispute that there has been a decline in the absolute number of full-time hunter-trappers in the Fort Wrigley region and a concomitant rise in the number of part-time hunter-trappers. However, I strongly object to Gemini North's (and others) contention that the reasons for this decline are purely voluntary in nature.

There have been and still are important coercive elements involved here, these include the collapse of the fur trade which forced people to seek other sources of cash income; the location of schools in places far removed from bush collection centers; an education system that undervalued until recently traditional pursuits in its curriculum and sets its school term in such a way as to deny young people the opportunity to spend winters in the bush to learn about hunting-trapping; and the introduction of exploration jobs that are extremely well-paid which help to skew the choice of young males away from bush pursuits — out of which little disposal income is derived — and towards high paying wage labour — which provides large excesses.

It is also incorrect to consider that there has been a decline in hunting activities merely because people are now "part-time" hunter-trappers. The demise of furs as the medium of exchange in the cash-trade good sector has created a need to substitute other forms of generating cash, including wage labour.

Turning now to the second aspect, it is not true that the economic value of traditional bush collection activities is decreasing. Yet, of all the claims made by the industry studies, this is the most groundless.

How, then, do they come to such an erroneous conclusion?

If we examine the animal harvest not from the point of view of resale value but just in terms of quantity, a more valid

impression of value can be drawn. Take, for example, the value of fish in Fort Wrigley in 1972. According to Gemini North Limited, the combined Fort Wrigley fish catch was 2500 pounds. This was valued at 30¢ a pound for a total value, according to them, of \$750. (ibid. p. 48). Now fish, as you well know, is a primary nutritional source for both humans and dogs. Considered in that light, 2500 pounds of fish could well represent the major portion of the winter dog food requirements of the native people of Fort Wrigley or, might represent a major portion of their human food intake. Is there any way that \$750 could accomplish the same end? The answer is of course no. Therefore, their methods of computation greatly underestimate the use value of bush resources to Native people and as such are grossly in error.

Thus, if you discount the errors of Gemini North's analysis and re-analyze their data using proper methodology, the data deny their contention that the traditional economy is dying and, in fact, supports the contention propounded here by myself and others that it is still of economic significance in native communities, both large and small.

I will now turn my attention to a brief examination of the second conclusion which concerns the question of employment. Two important aspects of the findings are:

1. That the region today is characterized by high unemployment and underemployment and that this indicates a high level of poverty.

2. That the pipeline and attendant development will solve this problem in that it will provide employment.

Concerning the first point, I have no doubt that the region can be considered as having a high level of unemployment and underemployment, if one uses Southern standards of measurement. But this does not mean, as it might in the South, that the native people are therefore poor and in great need of jobs. Cash income accounts only for a portion of the total economy of native people and thus they, unlike the stereotypic Southern Canadian poor, may have little cash but still not be impoverished. In short, while I do not doubt figures such as the estimate that in 1972 the average per capita income for Indians in the Northwest Territories was \$667.00 (Van Ginkle 1975:70), I strongly challenge the conclusion drawn from it that the people are living in endemic poverty.

Their conclusion is strongly dependent on the validity of the first and therefore should be considered somewhat skeptically. Furthermore employment itself may not be the unmitigated blessing that the other studies seem to feel it is for, given the contemporary methods of obtaining labour, we find that work generally goes to young unmarried men with the fewest economic responsibilities; a major portion of the income generated by employment is often dispensed on socially useless activities such as drinking parties and so may contribute to alcohol abuse; and because of the artificially high wages paid, employment in development activities helps to undermine the value of labour used for socially useful work such as bush collection activities but which do not produce disposal income. Thus, employment, especially on the large scale envisaged by the industry sponsored studies, may well, in fact, create at least as many problems as it "solves."

Conclusions

The proposals regarding the pipeline are strikingly similar to the bargain proposed by the fur traders about 100 years ago — immediate material well-being in return for long-term economic dependency.

In one respect this bargain is different, for, this new one requires, as a precondition for participation, the acquisition of certain specialized skills necessary to obtain employment. Furthermore, it implies another but more subtle change: the further erosion of the bush resource of the economy.

In other words, as a result of accepting this deal, the companies anticipate the further erosion of the self-sufficient bush collection sector of the economy in favor of even more dependence on the cash-trade goods sector and the means by which this will be accomplished is the desire of young native men to have the relative "security" of wage employment.

Further, there is no guarantee that employment in the petroleum industry

will be secure in the north over a period.

Just as the fur trade's viability depended upon the availability of a high world market price for

What happens when the resource gives out, or if the south finds a cheaper source of fuel in the next decade?

What happens if the world market price of petroleum products declines to a point where it is uneconomic to export and transmit northern oil and gas to southern markets? The petroleum corporations, just like the fur traders before them, will pull out.

What will happen to northern northerners when this does occur? To follow the history of the fur-trade answer is known: there will be a general collapse in the cash-trade goods sector of the economy. Yet, if we follow projections of the petroleum corporation sponsored studies this collapse will be much more severe than that created by the fur trade dependency.

Hence there is very real possibility that should the collapse occur after the next decade it would be too late to recover the traditional economic way of life and the result would be the transformation of northern native people into a general class of southern Canadian "poor."

Thus, the bargain the petroleum corporations are making is as follows: return for reorganizing your labour force to suit our needs, we will provide you with employment for an indefinite period of time. As a result of our high wages you people may well stop pursuing your traditional bush collection activities therefore when we leave, as inevitable we must, there is a good possibility you will be unable to sustain yourself in your native land. It is against this proposition that native people must protect themselves.

Yet, merely being participants in development will not accomplish the end. What is necessary is that native people have effective control over northern development for only then they decide which developments and their own interests and provide safeguards to ensure that those aspects of their traditional economy, including resource collection activities they wish to maintain remain viable. A settlement, should it follow the principles of the Dene Declaration, provide this type of control and therefore should be supported.

Turning now to the loss of native control over their economic, social, political institutions; the contemporary period has not been the most pleasurable for native people nor a particularly ennobling one for southern Canadian society in its dealings with northern natives. Indeed, in the past thirty years southern Canadian society, perhaps with all the best intentions, has done more to undermine the institutions, values of native society than in previous 100 years. Yet, despite intrusions into virtually every facet of native society, traditional economic, social, and political institutions, values persist and, in some cases, flourish.

They have proposed a general solution to these problems. It is a settlement which, if it follows the principles laid out in the Dene Declaration will enable them to regain control over their economic, social and political all other aspects of their lives — where they live to the education of young — which we control now.

Should a permit to begin construction of a pipeline be granted prior to land settlement and the informed consent of the native northerners, it definitely undermines their attempt to regain control over the direction of society for the single largest decision about their future will have been made without their approval. Thus, the granting of a permit prior to a land settlement will only exacerbate the present situation and undermine the initiatives native people have undertaken to solve their problems.

In sum, then, my research leads to fully support the position of the native people that there must be "no pipeline before a land settlement." Indeed, to my mind, it is the only reasonable protection that the people can receive to safeguard themselves against the complex problems both already known and unanticipated that must inevitably accompany a development scheme of this magnitude.