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Indian Commissioner for B.C.

208/14-1 (D7b)

Chief, Economic Development Division

October 29, 1962.

Fur Garments

This refers to your memorandum of October 19, requesting information relative to the production of fur garments by Indians.

I am unable to give you an accurate appraisal of the equipment or costs involved in the production of plucked beaver pelts, but I do know that such equipment is very expensive and is usually of a specialized nature oftentimes developed by the manufacturers themselves.

The manufacture of high fashion fur garments requires a great deal of training and experience, which is generally acquired through long apprenticeship. Dropping of fur pelts is an art in itself as are designing, cutting, blending, and matching. In addition the fur used to produce good quality garments must be carefully tanned to preserve it for long periods. Consequently it is not considered advisable to encourage development of this type of handicraft or cottage industry for persons who are not properly trained.

However, if it is the intention of the Native Brotherhood, or if they are in a position to encourage the production of fur garments of Indian design, i.e. parkas, etc., further consideration may well be warranted. If this is the case the possibilities of having pelts tanned and sheared at Vancouver should be investigated, or if this is not possible, the Branch could arrange for processing in Montreal.

Alternatively, it might be possible to buy tanned and processed pelts from dealers but this would be more expensive and uncertain than having locally produced pelts custom processed.

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RG 10, C-11-2, Vol. 11081  
File/dossier 208/20-9  
pt 2

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