

ESKIMO LOAN FUND

Much has been said and written about the establishment and development of Eskimo fisheries and the art and craft groups, retail stores and co-operatives of the natives of Canada's North, yet few are familiar with the organization that has made many of these going concerns possible.

The Eskimo Loan Fund was established in 1953, with the principal aim of helping Canada's Eskimos improve their standard of living. Since then more than 120 loans have been made. A number of these have financed co-operative fisheries, art and fine-craft groups, boat-building and lumbering projects, and retail outlets. At the same time, money has been made available from the Loan Fund to help individual Eskimos buy boats, tools, outboard motors and camp supplies, and repair or recondition vehicles, buildings and machinery.

"During the past few years the Eskimos of Canada have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to the many changes taking place in the North," Northern Affairs Minister Arthur Laing said recently. "Dollars from the Eskimo Loan Fund have helped many to meet and overcome these problems, and open new avenues. Primary credit must go, however, to the people themselves, for their utilization of artistic gifts and natural resources."

CORPORATE BORROWERS

Since the establishment of the Fund, loans have been made totalling more than \$450,000. Nearly \$300,000 of this amount has been lent to co-operative groups. These include the West Baffin Co-operative at Cape Dorset, famous the world over for sealskin and stoneblock prints, the Povungnituk Co-operative Society, well-known for soapstone sculptures and prints, the George River Eskimo Fishermen's Co-operative and Kikitaoyak Eskimo Co-operative at Port Burwell, catching and shipping arctic char, and the Great Whale River, Coppermine and Fort Chimo Co-operatives, producing arts and handicrafts. Two Arctic groups - one at Inuvik, the other at Frobisher Bay, have borrowed from the Fund to establish housing co-operatives.

Loans made from the Fund have ranged from \$100 to \$50,000. All applications are received and reviewed by a five-man advisory board that supervises the activities of the Eskimo Loan Fund. The board examines all applications for loans, supervises payment and repayment, and sees that the loans are used for the purpose for which they were granted.

AUTHORITY FOR LOANS

The limit for a loan to an individual is \$5,000. Two, three or four Eskimos may form a group and borrow up to \$15,000; a group of more than four may obtain a loan not exceeding \$25,000. Where a co-operative has been formed, loans up to \$50,000 may be granted. Loans exceeding \$1,000 require the approval of the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, and those over \$5,000 the approval of the Minister. Loans of \$500 or less can be approved and granted by the District Administrators, which is often done to save time, but formal applications are still forwarded to the board.

Repayment of loans to individuals and groups varies. A simple interest of five per cent is charged for all loans, and loans to individuals or small groups are to be repaid within five years. In the case of a loan to a co-operative, or a loan made to obtain a home, the time period for repayment is ten years. The Minister, however, has the discretionary power to waive the interest, or parts of it, for various reasons. These include delays resulting from shipping difficulties, with a long period between the time goods were ordered and paid for and the time of delivery, and distance and communication, affecting the date when collection of loan monies is made and the time when repayment is credited. Communications between northern communities is often difficult in winter, despite the many advances that have been made. Extensions to loans may also be granted by the Board.

LOANS TO INDIVIDUALS

While loans from the Fund have aided considerably in the establishment of co-operatives, they have also been of important assistance to individuals. The four Annanak brothers in Port Nouveau Quebec (George River) obtained a loan to buy an autoboggan, which has enabled them to range far afield in their hunting, seal fishing and logging activities. Daniel Cookie of Great Whale River obtained a loan to buy an outboard motor, by means of which he catches more fish. For Simon Inuksak in Pelly Bay, more than 1,600 miles northwest of Ottawa, the Eskimo Loan Fund has meant a new inboard engine for his boat, with larger catches of fish and more luck on the hunt.

"CARIBOU" TRANSPORTS FOR RCAF

Four more Canadian-made "Caribou" transport aircraft are being purchased from DeHavilland of Canada Ltd., for the Royal Canadian Air Force. This will bring to nine the number of these short-take-off-and-landing planes in the RCAF.

Ideally suited to peace-keeping operations, the original "Caribou" aircraft are part of Canada's UN contribution along the Gaza Strip and in the Yemen. This new order will expand the RCAF's capability in the medium transport and Army support roles.

In addition to its use by the RCAF, the "Caribou" is now flying with the United States Army, the air forces of Ghana, India, Australia, Kuwait, Sweden, and the Civil Air Transport in Formosa.

The "Caribou" I entered service with the RCAF in 1960, when these twin-engine, high-wing transports started operations with 115 Air Transport Unit at El Arish as part of the Emergency Force in the Middle East.

The "Caribou" has a three-ton-plus carrying capacity and can airlift 28 fully-equipped paratroopers or two jeeps a distance of 200 miles and return to base. Using less than 500 feet of rough terrain for a runway, the aircraft can land, discharge cargo, take on a full load and take off again in a very short time.

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