

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

in April, May and June, report there was starvation amongst these Eskimos.

The other day the minister, when I asked him whether an inquest had been held, said that there was no formal inquest, not as they are held in the provinces, but that some sort of inquest was held. From the sessional papers I find that there was an inquest. I do not see any reason why inquests should be any different in the Northwest Territories from what they are in the provinces. As a matter of fact, this is the first time I have ever heard of one. But in this evidence, which is very vague I might say, we find that the coroner took charge of this inquest. He named the people who died. Then the R.C.M.P. constable at that post gave a statement which, as far as the evidence is concerned, started on April 24. I think I should read into the record the evidence of this inquest. In this evidence there are only two people who have statements. That is all we have. The first witness is Corporal V. D. R. Wilson. The report reads as follows:

Corporal V.D.R. Wilson, R.C.M.P., Baker Lake detachment of the said Northwest Territories being sworn, saith:

On April 24th, 1958, I patrolled to Pelly lake airstrip in aircraft CF-GOV. At Pelly lake I met Tinark E2-304 and Kokshout E2-302.

That number is the one on the tag that they put on all Eskimos in the Northwest Territories.

These men told me that a number of Eskimos in the Garry lake area had died of starvation in February and March and that most of the Eskimos were hungry. Tinark told me that the building containing food supplies had burned down in February with the loss of all supplies remaining in the building. I obtained a list of the names of people who had died. I returned to Baker Lake in aircraft CF-GOV.

On April 26th, 1958,—

That is two days later.

—I patrolled to Pelly lake airstrip in aircraft CF-MPP.

That is an R.C.M.P. aircraft.

I took in a supply of food and left the food with Tinark and Kokshout. I obtained further evidence from Tinark about the events of the winter. I returned to Baker Lake in aircraft CF-MPP.

On May 6, 1958,—

Which was ten days or more later.

—I patrolled to the Garry lake area in an R.C.A.F. Otter aircraft. With the assistance of Tinark I located the bodies of twelve of the deceased persons. On June 1st, 1958,—

Which was just about a month later.

—I patrolled to the Garry lake area in an R.C.A.F. Otter and arranged evacuation of the twelve bodies to Baker Lake.

On June 5th, 1958, a preliminary inquest was held to view the bodies of the deceased persons. On June 6th, 1958, post-mortem examinations of the bodies were made by Dr. A. C. Wallace, M.D. I have received a copy of report written by Dr.

[Mr. Hardie.]

Wallace and I hereby submit this as Exhibit One. In this report Dr. Wallace states that all of the deceased died of starvation and/or exposure; he could find no other likely cause of death.

Then he goes on to say what happened at that particular time in June. With regard to the finding of the bodies he said this:

The body of E2-356 Peewa was found at the Pelly lake airstrip: It was in a small building covered over with a number of mattresses. It was bare from the waist up; there were no shoes on the feet. Arnaoyuk was a small baby.

In this he is referring to each one of the people who had died of starvation.

This body was found in a small cardboard box on a hilltop behind an abandoned Eskimo campsite. The body of E2-326 Kadluk was found wrapped in a mattress cover on a hilltop back of an Eskimo campsite. The body had been placed in the cover after death. The bodies of E2-328 Akkikunga, E2-329 Tutiktok, E2-412 Igupta, E2-453 Poongook and E2-537 Korschout were found in a snow house. The first two named were on the sleeping platform, the others had been buried in a hole dug in the sleeping platform in the snow.

If any hon. member has ever been in an igloo he will know that inside the igloo they build a platform of ice or snow blocks to lie on. Those first three men were reported to have been buried in this platform. They had apparently died first. The other two men died on top of them.

The bodies of E2-327 and E2-507 Kowetalik were found in the abandoned mission building at Pelly lake. They were on a bed covered with a sleeping bag. The body of E2-353 Iiteroyuk was found on the ice at Garry lake. It was face down in the snow and completely clothed. He appeared to have died while walking.

I imagine this means he had apparently died while he was out walking.

The body of E2-277 Nearkook was found on a hilltop near an Eskimo camp site where it had been placed by other Eskimos. The bodies of E2-590 Sibviark and E2-571 Sirkrinerk, both small children, were located near Garry lake by the special constables.

This was the evidence of the R.C.M.P. at the inquest. The only other evidence was given by an Eskimo whose number is E2-304 Tinark—the man who was referred to in the police evidence—the man with whom the food was left on April 24. He said this:

During the winter of 1957-58 I lived on the shore of Garry lake south of the R.C. mission building. There were not many caribou during the winter and the fishing was not very good. There was a supply of store food in a building at Pelly lake and I looked after this food although I was not at the building all the time.

Apparently he was the caretaker and the man in charge of this food.

Because there were few caribou and the fishing was not good the food in the building was used up quickly. All the people were hungry. They were not sick, except with colds. Our clothing was not very good.