
posts commercially feasible. Many a whaler turned trader as the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company shifted north to the tundra. In the long run, the influence of the trader on the Inuit was far more extensive than that of the whaler had been.

The first trading-post in Eskimo territory was established at Wolstenholme on the south side of Hudson Strait. The influence of Fort Chimo (1830) and Little Whale River (1854) was felt along the whole stretch of coast between the two places. By the 1930s, the Arctic regions were covered by a network of trading posts belonging to the HBC and other trading concerns. By 1937, what was then considered adequate coverage was made of all the inhabited areas of the Canadian Arctic. The HBC today has over 50 stores in the Arctic.

Transition gradual

The transition of the Eskimos from their primitive state has been a gradual one. It is difficult to generalize about the Inuit as a whole because there are significant regional differences, caused by the progress of the different groups within their own cultures and by the degree to which they have been affected by the white man's way of life. Innovations such as firearms have had a tremendous effect on the daily lives of the Inuit. From the early years of this century to the Second World War, the lure of new goods offered by the fur trade gradually involved the Inuit in a new economy. With it came the breakdown of an ancient way of life. This influence was felt in varying degrees over a million square miles of Arctic territory. Until the war, however, the Canadian Inuit still lived a fairly primitive nomadic life in a remote, sparsely-populated country. They obtained their staple food and their clothing from the resources of the land. Their other requirements were generally bought with the proceeds of trapping.

The Second World War and the rapid development of long-range air travel broke down the isolation of the Arctic. Air-strips were established in many places for defence installations, and to service meteorological and radio stations.

Other interests also started to move north. The situation of the Inuit became a matter of concern to the Canadian public. In the early Fifties, therefore, the Canadian Government began to prepare the native people for their proper role in the economy of the changing Arctic. Improved education, health and welfare services and housing, social, resource and economic development programs were begun.
