

Cambridge Bay, Whale Cove, Port Burwell and Frobisher Bay - are engaged in a variety of business operations based on commercial fishing, handicrafts, tourism, and the operation of small retail stores. At Frobisher Bay a group of 15 families has established a co-operative that seeks to provide all member families with adequate, comfortable three-bedroom housing.

#### PORT BURWELL

"The co-operative at Port Burwell has been so successful that it has attracted settlers to the community from other parts of Ungava Bay. This first co-operative in the Northwest Territories was established in the early spring of 1959. At that time, Port Burwell was one of the smallest communities in the Eastern Arctic, with a population of only 26, all of whom lived an extremely precarious life on the land. Because of a programme which has introduced efficient resource harvesting and marketing techniques, additional Eskimo families have been drawn to Port Burwell during the past three years and another group is moving there this summer. By the end of this year, there will be between 100 and 150 people in this community, and all adults there will be employed in small industries or businesses which have been established by the co-operative.

"Originally, the co-operative at Port Burwell was set up to conduct a char fishery and to operate a small retail outlet. This latter service did not exist in the community until the co-operative established its own store. It now also operates a flourishing handicraft business, and a successful seal-hunting programme. This year, it will begin a commercial cod-fishing industry, selling its product in other northern communities.

"Much of the income to members of the co-operatives comes from small enterprises which make efficient use of the renewable resources of the Arctic. In this type of business, Eskimo people continue to use the valuable and highly developed skills which are traditional to them. Through the activities of their co-operatives, they are also learning about types of employment which, in the years to come, may open many opportunities to them, both in the North and in the South. This will be specially true of those co-operatives which offer employment in business management and in the maintenance and servicing of mechanical equipment.

#### EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF CO-OPS

"Thus co-operatives are providing Eskimo members not only with badly-needed income but with new job opportunities. Perhaps most important of all, however, is that this type of organization offers new experience to many Eskimo people who have had little previous contact with a business society, or with many elements of a politically-developed community. In many of the places where co-operatives have been established, community leaders are beginning to emerge, first as directors of the co-operatives and then as leading members of Eskimo councils. Through their co-operatives, many Eskimo people have been introduced to the idea of free elections and the secret ballot for the first time.

"To a perhaps surprising degree, Eskimo members of co-operatives are beginning to plan their own future business operations. For example, several co-opera-

tives this year could have distributed dividend payments to members during the height of winter, at a time when the economic picture in some Arctic communities is at its worst. In each case, the members voted not to declare a dividend, but to plow the profits back into additional capital equipment for their co-operatives.

"During the early years of development, co-operatives will require technical and educational assistance. This was foreseen, especially in areas where most adult Eskimo people have not had the opportunity of formal education. We must expect that full management of the co-operatives' activities will not be undertaken by Eskimo people until those going to school today grow up to participate in the business affairs of their communities. Neither can one reasonably expect that all co-operatives will be in the extremely happy financial position of the Cape Dorset Co-operative. The early programme of development is designed, however, to ensure that full management and responsibility for the affairs of Eskimo co-operatives is placed in the hands of the membership just as soon as the people are fully capable of taking them on. The timing will, of course, vary from community to community, depending on local circumstances.

#### PROBLEMS OF KEEWATIN

"Members of the Council will be aware of the serious situation which has developed on the east side of Hudson Bay in the Keewatin District. This is the area which has been most seriously affected by the decline of caribou. In recent years, the economy has been supported by the operations of the North Rankin nickel mine, which has drawn a substantial part of its labour force from the Eskimo residents of the district. The closing of the mine this summer will have very serious implications for the employees of the mine and their families, and for the area generally.

"Plans are being put into effect to establish new resource-harvesting and handicraft industries to offset in some measure the loss of income from the mine. The success of co-operatives in this type of enterprise indicates that they will have an important role to play in Keewatin. Additional ways to provide employment and income are being sought urgently.

"However, there will be no easy solution to the economic problems of this area. Nature, seldom really bountiful in the north, has dealt particularly harshly with Keewatin. The game resources have always been sparse and now are simply not sufficient to keep the population alive. To develop programmes and policies to meet the worsening situation will require the best efforts of this Council, and of the other government and private agencies concerned with the area.

"By contrast, here in Cape Dorset the outlook is bright. The artistic reputation which the people have achieved has led members of the Council to look forward especially to coming here for the session. That reputation has gone into far corners of the world, bringing great credit to the artists, to the Northwest Territories, and to Canada.

"Of course, the art of the Cape Dorset people is by no means new, but it is only within the past ten years or so that it has been widely known. In these recent years, not only has Cape Dorset art won an ever wider and more enthusiastic following, but it has in itself developed new forms of great vitality and of great merit.

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