

belonging to the HBC and other trading concerns. By 1937, the HBC had stores in all the inhabited areas. Today it has over 50 stores in the Arctic.

Changing lifestyles

Under the outside influences, the Inuit have gradually given up their traditional way of life. Those in direct contact were faster to adopt the ways of the outsiders, or "qablun-aa't", as the Inuit called them.

Innovations such as firearms 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 lived a primitive nomadic life in a remote, sparsely-populated country. They obtained their staple food and clothing from the resources of the land and their other needs were generally bought with furs.

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

As other interests such as mining and trapping 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 role in the economy of the changing Arctic. Improved education, health and welfare services and housing, social, resource and economic development programs were begun.

Administration

Since in every respect they are full citizens, the Inuit enjoy the same rights and bear the same responsibilities as other Canadians—for example, in regard to the franchise, federal, provincial and territorial law, taxation, land ownership and social services. Although the Inuit were excluded from the Indian Act, a Supreme Court decision of 1939 held that the term "Indian" as used in the British North America Act included them, and that the legislative responsibility for the Inuit was a federal one. The special federal jurisdiction nevertheless represents an extra service, not an alternative to normal citizenship.

Today, government policy is to give the Inuit equal opportunities while enabling them to retain as much of their culture as they wish, so that, as a group, they may make a distinctive contribution to Canada's multicultural society. To this end, the federal government, either directly or through the government of the