

THE DENE NATION And HER MATRY

WHEREAS prior to the coming of the Europeans the Dene, the aboriginal people of the Mackenzie Valley, have lived on their traditional lands since time immemorial;

AND WHEREAS the Dene have certain property rights to their traditional lands;

AND WHEREAS Europeans and other non-Dene have settled upon and undertaken developments upon the traditional lands of the Dene without an agreement or treaty between the Dene and non-Dene Canadians;

AND WHEREAS confusion exists as to the meaning of Treaties 8 and 11;

AND WHEREAS there are in International Law certain political, human and universal rights such as the rights to self-determination, non-discrimination, and enjoyment of culture which are witnessed in the practice of nations and international instruments such as the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights;

AND WHEREAS the Dene have survived as a people;

AND WHEREAS both the Dene and the Government of Canada have expressed a desire to see clarification of the rights of the Dene and the negotiation of a new agreement or treaty between the Dene and other Canadians at the earliest possible occasion;

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED between the Dene and the Government of Canada that negotiations do commence forthwith to resolve the aforesaid according to the following principles;

1. The Dene have the right to recognition, self-determination, and on-going growth and development as a People and as a Nation.

2. The Dene, as aboriginal people, have a special status under the Constitution of Canada.

3. The Dene, as aboriginal people, have the right to retain ownership of so much of their traditional lands, and under such terms, as to ensure their independence and self-reliance traditionally, economically and socially, and the maintenance of whatever other rights they have, whether specified in this agreement or not.

4. The definition of the Dene is the right of the Dene. The Dene know who they are.

5. The Dene have the right to practice and preserve their languages, traditions, customs and values.

6. The Dene have the right to develop their own institutions and enjoy their rights as a People in the framework of their own institutions.

7. There will therefore be within Confederation, a Dene Government with jurisdiction over a geographical area and over subject matters now within the jurisdiction of either the Government of Canada or the Government of the Northwest Territories.

8. The Government of Canada hereafter in the exercise of matters within its jurisdiction (and following a settlement with the Dene) will:

- (a) abandon the "last frontier" mentality and all attempts to colonize and settle Dene lands; and
- (b) do everything in its power to assist in the recognition, survival, and development of the Dene as a People.

9. The Government of Canada will finance the establishment of

Another "fur trade" looms in the South

sharing found within local groups was extended to all the people of the region.

The Fur Trade

The period of direct involvement with the fur trade began in the last decade of the 18th Century. Although contact was established as the result of competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company for hegemony in Western trade, virtually none of the intense rivalry between the two trading companies was transferred to the region. Here the Northwest Company maintained hegemony in the fur trade until 1821 when the two companies amalgamated.

As a result, none of the disruptions in native life which marked the period of competition in other parts of Canada appeared in the North and from the time of contact until roughly 1870 when the Bay lost its monopoly in the fur trade throughout Rupert's Land, the fur trade was marked by stability.

However, trade was limited because Bay policy required that remote posts such as those in the region remain self-sufficient in food provisions; and supply lines at this time were maintained through the use of York boats and brigading from Winnipeg to the West, imposing severe restrictions on the

amount of goods and furs which could be transported to and from the North.

Of the goods available, the most important for the Indians probably were new staples such as flour, tea and sugar; metal utensils and implements; beads; blankets; tobacco and alcohol. In order to obtain these goods, the Indians had to trade local resources. Given the limitations of the goods and policy restrictions, it would appear that production for the fur trade was not great and consisted mainly of providing food provisions rather than furs.

Thus the economy of the native people changed little during this period from its aboriginal strategy. The economy of the region was still "total" in that the people of the region depended for their survival almost exclusively on local resources. Bay personnel exchanged trade goods for food and natives continued to use a wide range of bush resources. Production was still primarily a collective activity, and distribution of goods within and between local groups was still based on the principle of sharing. The only significant changes in native economic life during this time were the adoption of certain trade good items that made life a little easier and a shift in seasonal round to

include both occasional trips to the trading posts for supplies and later in the period, the occasional use of the trading posts rather than the major lakes as places for encampment during the summer.

Post 1870

With the sale of Rupert's Land in 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company lost its monopoly in most of its former domain and with it an assured supply of furs at prices well below world market levels. In some areas of the Mackenzie region, such as Fort Wrigley and Fort Norman, monopoly conditions continued to obtain until as late as perhaps 1900. However, in other parts of the region, such as Fort Simpson and upstream, the operation of free traders further south was soon felt by the Bay.

The Bay replaced the York boats with steam, first on the Athabasca in 1882 and then on the Mackenzie in 1885, and by moving the major trans-shipment point to the North from Winnipeg to Edmonton after the completion of the rail link from Calgary to Edmonton in 1891. Between 1870 and 1890, transportation to the North was thus revolutionized from a system based on an 18th Century mode to a modern one.

From the late 19th Century on, the

Bay apparently changed its strategy from one of monopoly in the collection of furs to the encouragement of competition. Their control now was seen in terms of virtual monopoly in transportation and retail sales, where it was felt that they could maintain a high level of profit.

The effect of competition, the new transportation system, the Yukon Gold rush of 1898 and the rise in fur prices during World War I, was the complete transformation of the fur trade. There was a major change in the kinds and quantities of goods available. Among the new items introduced in the period between the end of monopoly and the turn of the century were the repeating rifle, the steel trap, wide varieties of western clothing, dogs and dog teams and chocolates and other luxury items. After the development of steam transportation, the numbers of traditional exchange items such as furs, staples, blankets, and metal utensils available in the North increased dramatically.

Also, a major shift occurred in the position of the trading establishments in the regional economy. The traders were no longer dependent upon local resources for survival, but could re-

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