

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

departure from Churchill for Ottawa Mr. Stevenson received a wire from Corporal Wilson to the effect that the patrol to Garry lake would take place.

The patrol to Garry lake did not take place. The Eskimo guide from Garry lake, who was to have come to Baker Lake in February, did not show up. I do not know what happened to the plan to hire a Baker Lake Eskimo as a guide. In mid-March Corporal in charge Baker Lake R.C.M.P. detachment requested that a flight be made to Garry lake with additional food supplies for the Eskimos. This flight was made during the third week in March, shortly before the northern service officer arrived back at Baker Lake with his personal plane. The R.C.A.F. Otter aircraft made the flight to Garry and Pelly lake with the R.C.M.P. N.C.O. Baker Lake and an aircraft load of food supplies. At Pelly lake it was discovered that the building containing the food and other supplies had been burned down. Nothing remained of the building except the banked up snow walls which were completely drifted in with snow. There was no sign of any Eskimos in the vicinity of the airstrip. The food supplies from the plane were deposited on the airstrip and the plane returned to Baker Lake. It was experiencing some engine trouble and it returned to Churchill the next day.

The northern service officer returned to Baker Lake on March 23. He discussed the matter of the Garry lake group with the N.C.O. R.C.M.P. and it was decided that, after a few days flight practice at Baker Lake, he and the R.C.M.P. N.C.O. should make a trip to Garry lake to visit all the camps in the area. The R.C.M.P. N.C.O. expressed the opinion that the Garry lake Eskimos were not living well but were getting by on fish. Bad flying weather in early April kept flight practice to a minimum and prevented any trips away from Baker Lake. On April 11 the northern service officer received word to proceed to Rankin Inlet to attend the trial of Kikkik. The trip to Garry lake was postponed until his return from Rankin Inlet.

The northern service officer returned to Baker Lake from Rankin Inlet on April 17. Bad flying weather on the 18th and 19th prevented any flight to Garry lake. On April 20, he, and the R.C.M.P. N.C.O. flying in the N.S.O. personal plane, managed to get within ten miles of Garry lake before being forced to return to Baker by extremely bad weather. Bad weather kept the plane grounded on April 21, 22, 23. On April 24 the N.S.O. and N.C.O. R.C.M.P. managed to fly to Garry lake and Pelly lake without trouble. The plane circled the R.C. mission at Garry lake but as no sign of life was seen at that point it proceeded to the airstrip at Pelly lake. Because of bad drifts on the airstrip and the fact that a 20-mile an hour cross wind was blowing directly across the strip, the plane had to land on a small lake about two miles from the strip. From the air Eskimos could be observed near the buildings at the strip.

At Pelly lake airstrip were six Eskimos: E2-304 Teenak and his family of four, and Kukshow E2-302. Teenak and his family had been living in one of the Spartan buildings at the airstrip for almost a month. They were quite well off for the building was being heated by two oil space heaters and was equipped with beds. They were living on fish and the food supplies taken in on the R.C.A.F. Otter. Kukshow had just arrived at Pelly lake from his camp the day before we arrived. He was quite hungry. He had left his family at the camp, where they were living on fish plus a portion of the food supplies brought in by the R.C.A.F. Otter late in March, and had come to the airstrip for more supplies. From these men we obtained the story of events at Garry and Pelly lake during January, February and March. This story is not substantiated as yet and details may change slightly but it seems to be correct in most respects.

The Garry lake Eskimos got almost no caribou during the winter of 1957-58. They existed on fish and the food supplies brought in last fall. Until December they did not do too badly. They all had dogs, they were trapping and trading the furs for goods at Pelly lake. During January the fishing declined and they became more dependent on the food stored at Pelly lake, although they were still getting some fish. In late January or early February two Eskimos, Arnaguak E2-356 and Akeekunga E2-328 came to Pelly lake from their camps in order to get food from the supplies in the Spartan building. At Pelly lake they decided to stay in the building. We do not know how long they stayed but at some time during their stay, Arnaguak lit a Primus stove and it exploded, spreading flame throughout the interior of the building. Akeekunga was asleep at the time but both men managed to get out of the building. It appears that Akeekunga had his clothes on but Arnaguak had only trousers and underclothes. Akeekunga managed to make his way back to his camp, how we do not know. At his camp the people were depending on him to bring food from Pelly but, of course, he brought none. This entire camp of eight people died of starvation and exposure at some time in the next few weeks. After the explosion and fire Arnaguak, who was without adequate clothes, crawled into a small building on the airstrip and burrowed down into a pile of mattresses in the building. He never came out and his body is still there. His is the only body we have seen to date. As nearly as we can gather almost two-thirds of the food supplies taken to Garry lake and stored in the building at Pelly lake were lost in the fire. This completely destroyed the safety factor in the local food supply.

From Teenak and Kukshow we obtained a list of the people known to have died during the winter. A copy of this list is attached. As yet we have been unable to verify the deaths of any of these people except Arnaguak E2-356 whose body is in the building of the airstrip. A total of sixteen people died, twelve of these almost certainly as a result of food shortage, the remainder of other or related causes. We decided to return to Baker Lake and request an aircraft from Churchill to carry food supplies to Garry and Pelly lake and to search for all camps so as to ascertain that all remaining Eskimos were well. My plane had insufficient gas for searching in the area as we had been fighting strong head winds all the way up from Baker Lake. The aviation gas at Pelly lake is too high an octane rating for the plane. We arrived back at Baker Lake at 3 p.m. April 24 and sent messages to Ottawa and Churchill.

The plan for the immediate future is to make sure all Eskimos at Garry lake have sufficient food to last until fishing and hunting improves which it usually does in mid May. Once this is done we will evaluate the position of the group and submit recommendations. I will assist in the search for camps by using my plane so long as weather permits but the main work will be done by either the R.C.M.P. Otter or the R.C.A.F. Otter until all camps have been located. This should not be a difficult task as all camps are within fifty miles of Pelly lake.

It would be unreasonable to suppose that hon. members of the committee could have grasped the full significance of this lengthy report in all its detail from one reading of it but what it boils down to is this. The department followed every bit of advice and practical policy it could adopt under the circumstances. As far as it was concerned it had provided this food cache as a safety factor. The Eskimos were not abusing it but came from their camps to get food only when