

Nursing-stations operated by two or more registered nurses have been established in most settlements having more than 250 residents. The nurses provide preventative and routine care locally; complicated medical and surgical cases are removed to the larger centres by air.

The Northern Health Service carries out extensive health programmes, including pre-natal and post-natal care, immunization, school health programmes and the control of tuberculosis and other communicable disease. Home visiting and health education, dental care for all school children and other programmes designed to improve community sanitation are now in operation. Where facilities are not available, parties of doctors, nurses and X-ray technicians visit Arctic communities to carry out medical and X-ray surveys. Many communities in the Eastern Arctic are visited each summer by the medical patrol ship C.D. Howe; other remote settlements are visited by medical parties using aircraft.

The health of the Eskimo people has notably improved in recent years. In particular the death rate from tuberculosis, one of the greatest scourges of the Eskimo people, has been drastically lowered.

The infant mortality rate is still high (93.7 in 1,000 live births) but the trend is downward toward the national average. (In 1960 the infant mortality rate was 211 in 1,000 live births). To-day the leading causes of death in the north are accidents, poisoning and violence.

Employment

Eskimos are now employed at a large variety of jobs. They are translators and clerks for government departments and employees of the DEW Line and private companies. Eskimos work in many specialized fields as qualified miners, carpenters, mechanics, steam-fitters, diesel and tractor operators, tinsmiths and storemen. Women work as interpreters, waitresses, nursing assistants, clerks and airline stewardesses. Two Eskimo men are councillors on the Northwest Territories Council; others are announcers for the Northern Service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The first Eskimo minister of the Anglican Church was ordained in 1960.

Although more and more Eskimo families are settled in permanent homes in communities close to the store, nursing-station, administrative offices and the school where the children are in regular attendance, the men continue to hunt seal and trap foxes as part of their livelihood.

Probably one of the most significant changes in the economic life of Eskimo communities is the development of co-operatives. These offer maximum participation by the people themselves, give some control of the economy into their hands, and help them to benefit from their artistic talents and resource harvesting.

In 1967, there were 22 co-operatives in the north engaged in arts and crafts, the production of arctic char and specialty foods, boat-building, logging and saw-milling operations.