

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF FOUR
SMALL COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN MANITOBA: WABOWDEN, THICKET
PORTAGE, NORWAY HOUSE AND OXFORD HOUSE

A Thesis

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by

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To my wife, Erna

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ABSTRACT

The central problem, common to the four settlements under study, appears to be one of 'too many people and too few resources.' A large proportion of each community's population is composed of people of Indian ancestry. Family units remain large with many children per unit. Except for Thicket Portage, these communities have experienced a growth rate far in excess of that of the province as a whole. People of Indian ancestry have traditionally relied on the resource based industries of trapping and fishing for their livelihood. More recently, this resource base has diminished and in some instances faces depletion. However, the number of individuals involved in these activities have not declined and thus average yearly earnings per operator have remained extremely low. No new industrial development has supplanted the traditional activities. In addition, people of Indian ancestry have not as yet been able to take full advantage of the large-scale economic development of northern Manitoba. Consequently, a relatively large proportion of the labor force in each community has supplemented their meager earnings with welfare payments.

The thesis concludes that the residents of these communities, particularly those of Indian ancestry, must be totally involved in all programs of economic development in this northern area. Recommendations

include greater assistance to the communities in terms of (1) educational opportunities, (2) relocating residents to centres offering greater employment opportunities, and (3) creating a viable economic base in each of the settlements.

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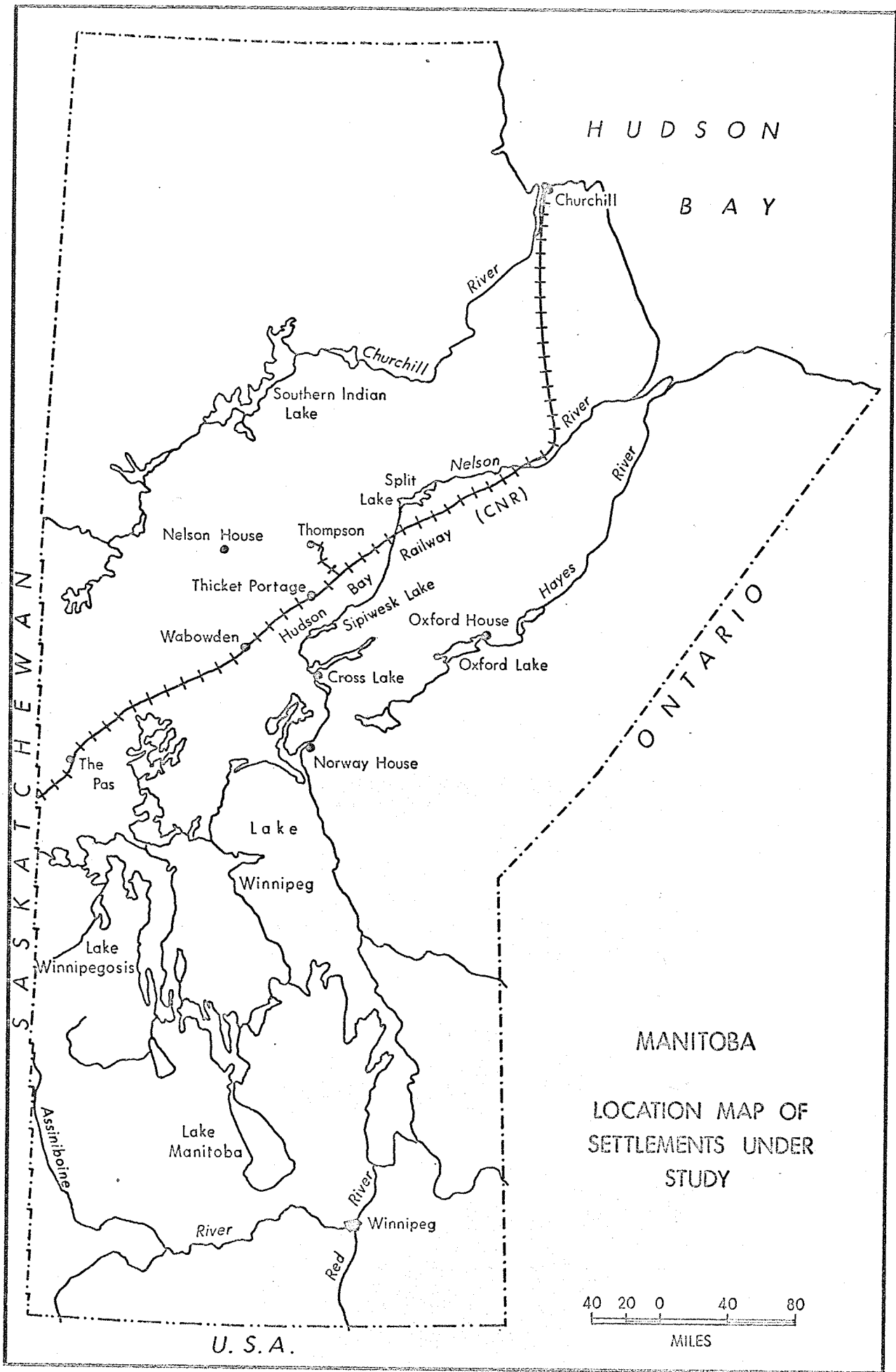
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Northern Manitoba is experiencing a period of rapid development and all indications suggest that this trend is likely to continue at an accelerating rate. In order to determine the effects this will have on already existing settlements their present state of development must first be established.

This thesis will concern itself with the largely Metis communities of Wabowden and Thicket Portage which have grown up along the Hudson Bay Railway line as well as the two Indian reserves - Norway House and Oxford House - which, prior to the completion of the Hudson Bay line, were important centres along the fur trading route to York Factory. All four offer an excellent opportunity for comparison in terms of population characteristics, economic base, degree of accessibility and future development.

It has become increasingly evident in recent years that the majority of Indian and Metis population constitutes a group economically depressed in terms of the standards that have become widely accepted in Canada. They are not sharing equally with others in proportion to their numbers in the material gains or satisfactions and rewards that an affluent and rapidly expanding national economy has to offer. While it is true that Canadian Indians and Metis today are 'much better off' in terms of higher income, better educational and health facilities than



MAP 1

they were in the past, nonetheless, the gains in these fields experienced by the White population have been proportionately far greater with the result that the gap between the two groups is becoming increasingly wider.¹

By and large, the Indian and Metis people of northern Manitoba are among the most isolated and depressed in Canada; this, despite rapid economic growth in the northern part of the province. For example, Thompson was hailed as a showpiece of economic growth in northern Manitoba that would, to a large extent, solve the Indian unemployment problem. In purely statistical terms, Thompson offers more than enough potential in employment and income opportunities to meet the needs of northern Manitoba's entire native population. Its present population is approximately 10,700² and it is expected to reach 25,000 in the next few years. However, it is clear that at present, Indian and Metis people have benefited very little from this major development. By far the majority of people now making their living in Thompson have been recruited from southern Manitoba or from other Canadian provinces or other countries. Very few Indians and Metis from the surrounding area have managed to get regular employment in the community.

¹H. B. Hawthorn (ed.), A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Education Needs and Policies - Part 1, Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1967, p. 21.

²Community Report on Thompson, Regional Development Branch, Department of Industry and Commerce.

Up until 1963, it was International Nickel Company's unofficial policy not to hire Indian people; that is, the Company was reluctant to hire Indian people. In 1963, however, a demonstration protesting this unofficial policy resulted in the setting up of an intermediary between INCO and the Indians.

From May 1963 to October 1966, Community Development Services referred 173 people of Indian ancestry to the INCO hiring office at Thompson. Of the 173 employees, only 29 were still working at the end of October 1966. The rest failed for various reasons; they either quit, were fired, or were 'laid off' because they proved to be unsatisfactory.

When one considers that INCO's total labor force in 1966 was 2,275, the 173 employees of Indian ancestry hired over a three year period constitutes only a very small proportion.³

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The central problem of this thesis, common to the four northern Manitoba settlements under consideration, is one of disparity between (1) a rapidly expanding native population and large numbers of children per family unit, and (2) the lack of a viable economic base coupled with a diminishing resource base.

³Personal communication with Mr. David Chaddock who is currently completing a Masters thesis, "Thompson, Manitoba: A Study of a Modern Mining Community in the Subarctic," at the University of Manitoba.

A large proportion of each community's population is composed of people of Indian ancestry, and it is this cultural group that occupies the lowest economic position in each community. Consequently, the author has included a chapter dealing with six socio-cultural variables that relate to the economic development of the communities.

The four communities vary in the degree of accessibility from the most accessible, Wabowden, to the least accessible, Oxford House. Living standards in the settlements appear to vary in a corresponding pattern. Thus Oxford House has the highest proportion of residents engaged in trapping and fishing, with some of the lowest returns per individual operator. The average income of wage earners is also the lowest here. On the other hand, Wabowden has the smallest proportion of residents involved in the resource based industries of trapping and fishing. At the same time, the average income for wage earners is the highest of the four settlements.

This thesis proposes to assess the disparity between the size of population and the economic situation of each settlement. In addition, the relationship between the communities' degree of accessibility, their economic base and population mobility is examined. The author makes certain recommendations based on his findings which he hopes will serve to make the communities economically viable and which will result in a higher standard of living for the residents, particularly those of Indian ancestry. It is hoped that this comparative analysis will help to elucidate the social and economic problems of such communities in Manitoba's north.

B. DEFINITIONS

Before proceeding further, a definition of terms is required. Indians are generally considered to be descendants of the Mongoloid people from Asia who came into America via the Bering Straits at least 20,000 years ago.⁴ There was a gradual migration over an extended period of time involving various tribes.

At the time of the Indian treaties,⁵ in which the Indians surrendered their rights to the land and became special wards of the Federal Government, all Indians as well as those of mixed blood, the

⁴This date must be qualified in light of recent research claiming an even earlier date.

⁵The terms of the treaties may be summarized:

1. A relinquishment of the Indian right and title to their lands.
2. Indians had the right to hunt and fish in the ceded lands so long as they remained the property of the Crown.
3. Each Indian person was allowed \$5.00 per annum in perpetuity along with an annual payment of \$25.00 to the Chief and \$15.00 to each councilor or head man.
4. Lands were allotted to the Indians to be set aside as reserves for homes and agricultural purposes, which cannot be sold or alienated except with the consent of the Indians and for their benefit. In Treaty Number Five the reserves were planned in terms of 160 acres per family of five.
5. Agricultural implements were given on a once for all basis; viz., oxen and cattle were given to form the nucleus of a herd.
6. Provisions was made for the establishment of schools on the reserves for the instruction of Indian children.

(Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian Affairs Branch, Indians of the Prairie Provinces - An Historical Review Ottawa 1967, pp. 9-10.)

French and Scottish Metis, were recognized as 'treaty Indians' and were taken into the bands among whom they resided. For all practical purposes, the treaties have been replaced by the Indian Act and accompanying regulations.

The term, 'Metis,' as used throughout the thesis is defined as the offspring of a White person and an American Indian, especially in Canada.⁶ Thus it refers to various mixtures, not only that of French and Indian but, for example, Scottish and Indian, as well as others. The term, 'Metis,' has been adopted in preference to its counterpart, 'Half-breed,' because of the derogatory connotations associated with the latter term.

As a group, the Metis are not clearly defined; some are more assimilated into the White community than others. Lagasse's study of Manitoba's Metis estimates that 80 per cent of the people of Metis ancestry in Manitoba are not included in his study because these people "have integrated to the point of not being recognized by their neighbours as Metis."⁷

In addition, the distinction between Indian and Metis has become increasingly blurred due to the prevalence of inter-marriage. Today, therefore, any distinction made should be viewed as legal rather than racial. For example, a child of a treaty Indian man and his White wife

⁶H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (ed.), The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, (Oxford-Clarendon Press, 1960).

⁷Jean H. Lagasse (director), A Study of the Population of Indian Ancestry Living in Manitoba, (Department of Agriculture and Immigration, Winnipeg 1959), Vol. 1, p. 77.

is recorded as a treaty Indian, whereas a child of a treaty Indian woman and her White husband is a Metis.

The Federal Government, through the Indian Affairs Branch, assumes responsibility for all treaty Indians in Canada, but Metis people come under the jurisdiction of the respective Provincial Governments. It must be noted here that Manitoba is the only Prairie Province that does not have special planning for Metis people at the provincial level.

While conditions of employment and education for Metis and treaty Indians are similar, nonetheless, the Metis as a group do not receive the same assistance as treaty Indians. For example, Indian Affairs Branch has a housing policy with respect to the treaty Indian population resulting in an improved housing situation for these people. No such policy exists for the Metis, and this undoubtedly accounts for some of the worst housing conditions among these people. Treaty Indians do not pay for any land while living on the reserve, nor do they pay tax on any income derived from the reserve. On the other hand, the Metis must purchase or rent their land and pay both property and income tax.

Despite cultural differences between Indian and Metis people, at the same time there appear to be enough cultural and social similarities to warrant considering them as one entity for purposes of this study. In a report on the Indians and Metis of northern Saskatchewan, the authors have stated that "in any given locality members of the two groups are more or less identical in socio-cultural characteristics.

The distinction between them is purely legal."⁸ This would certainly apply to Norway House, where almost all Metis people living off the reserve socialize with treaty Indian friends and relatives living on the reserve.⁹

C. FIELD WORK

Field work was completed during the summer of 1967 when the writer visited the four settlements collecting data and interviewing residents. While the schedule technique was used to elicit information from the general population, care was taken to consistently interview the head of each household. Fixed choice and open answer items were used during the interview, and in the case of the latter, care was taken to record all comments, even the 'off hand' ones.¹⁰

⁸Helen Buckley, J. E. M. Kew and John B. Hawley, The Indians and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan: A report on Economic and Social Development, (Centre for Community Studies, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1963), p. 5.

⁹This observation was confirmed by a well known resident of Norway House, Mr. Joe Keeper Sr., who was formerly treaty Indian but has become enfranchised and now lives off the reserve. He, nevertheless, maintains close contact with friends and relatives still living on the reserve.

¹⁰Residents of both Norway House and Oxford House have been bombarded by researchers armed with questionnaires during the last several years; so much so, that they have become both resentful and wary of all new arrivals. The writer was constantly on guard for 'stock' answers that respondents might be giving to appease all investigators. In addition, all conclusions deduced from the responses, complaints and suggestions made by residents were discussed with such people as the community development officer, clergymen, the community health worker and various knowledgeable residents, all of whom were familiar with the community and its problems.

Queries in the questionnaire were designed specifically to give information about the respondent, his household and its economic situation, the household's mobility pattern, and what the respondent felt were positive and negative aspects of the community (Appendix A). Where treaty Indians were concerned, additional items were included such as what their contacts with such urban centres as Winnipeg, The Pas, and Thompson were, whether or not they thought their children should and/or would come back to the reserve after completing their education, and what the future of their reserve might hold for the respondent and for his children.

Instead of sampling, the author simply visited each household head, and those available and agreeable to an interview constituted the sample.¹¹ At Norway House 62 per cent of the household heads, representing 68 per cent of that community's population were interviewed. At Wabowden the percentage of household units interviewed was 81 per cent, accounting for 73 per cent of that population; at Thicket Portage 87 per cent of the household units, representing 82 per cent of the population, were interviewed, and at Oxford House the proportion of household units interviewed was 75 per cent accounting for 86 per cent of that population.¹²

¹¹Of all the household heads in the four communities who were approached by the author for an interview, only two refused to co-operate.

¹²Because the majority of household heads at Oxford House are unable to speak English fluently, an interpreter was hired to help conduct the interviews.

During the course of interviewing each household head, the author was able to study briefly both the exterior and interior of the majority of residences in the communities. At Norway House and at Oxford House, the author's observations were discussed with the local community health worker, both of whom were treaty Indian and well acquainted with the quality and condition of housing in the settlement.

A somewhat generalized and arbitrary scheme for classifying the quality and condition of housing was drawn up, in which Category A denotes excellent construction with conditions of insulation, heating, lighting and general repair ranging from very good to excellent. A house in this category may or may not have a basement, but it rests on a solid foundation.

Category B includes fair to good construction, with adequate conditions of insulation, heating and lighting. These houses generally have no basements but rest on a fairly secure foundation. In some instances they may require repair work to the exterior and/or the interior.

Category C includes poor to very poor construction and lacks adequate insulation, heating and lighting. In some instances these are no more than crudely constructed plywood shacks with cardboard interiors. Most of the units in Category C, according to the author, are fit only for demolition; however, some of the better types in this category might be salvaged with considerable repair or renovation.

Examples of all three categories are given for each of the four settlements. The writer has examined only the physical aspects of the residences, and although he recognizes that the condition of overcrowding also has an important bearing on the actual quality of housing, nonetheless, he feels this factor remains outside the terms of reference of his study.

CHAPTER II

WABOWDEN

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The settlement was named after a railway engineer, W. A. Bowden. Previously, when this post was known as Setting Lake, the Indians often referred to it as John Scott's "Sagahagin" (Lake), due, it is believed, to the fact that in earlier years some trader of that name had his post here.

Wabowden, whose history is intimately related to the Hudson Bay Railway line, has grown up around the station and houses of the section foremen.

Prior to the coming of the railway, both Wabowden and Thicket bore little resemblance to a 'permanent' community. Thicket Portage was a natural centre between Nelson House, Cross Lake and Norway House, both for trappers and fishermen. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, Wabowden acted as a centre for those in the area engaged in these pursuits.

Around 1918, the Hudson Bay Railway line provided access to the settlement, and shortly after, a winter trail was built connecting Wabowden to Nelson House, Cross Lake and Norway House. This proved to be the crucial moment in the history of the community, and its importance grew at the expense of Thicket Portage.

Wabowden has become an important divisional point on the Bay line, and it now functions as a distributing centre for Nelson House, Cross Lake and Norway House.¹

The first Hudson's Bay post here was built in 1922. However, when a disastrous fire swept through the place in 1925, a second store was built on the same site in the same year.²

Wabowden is situated within the northern clay region, and in 1952 a team of soil specialists carried out a survey here.³ Their recommendation, that experimental work be carried on in the area, was accepted, and in 1954 a substation was built at Wabowden with research beginning the following year. The program concluded ten years of research, after which formal operations ceased.

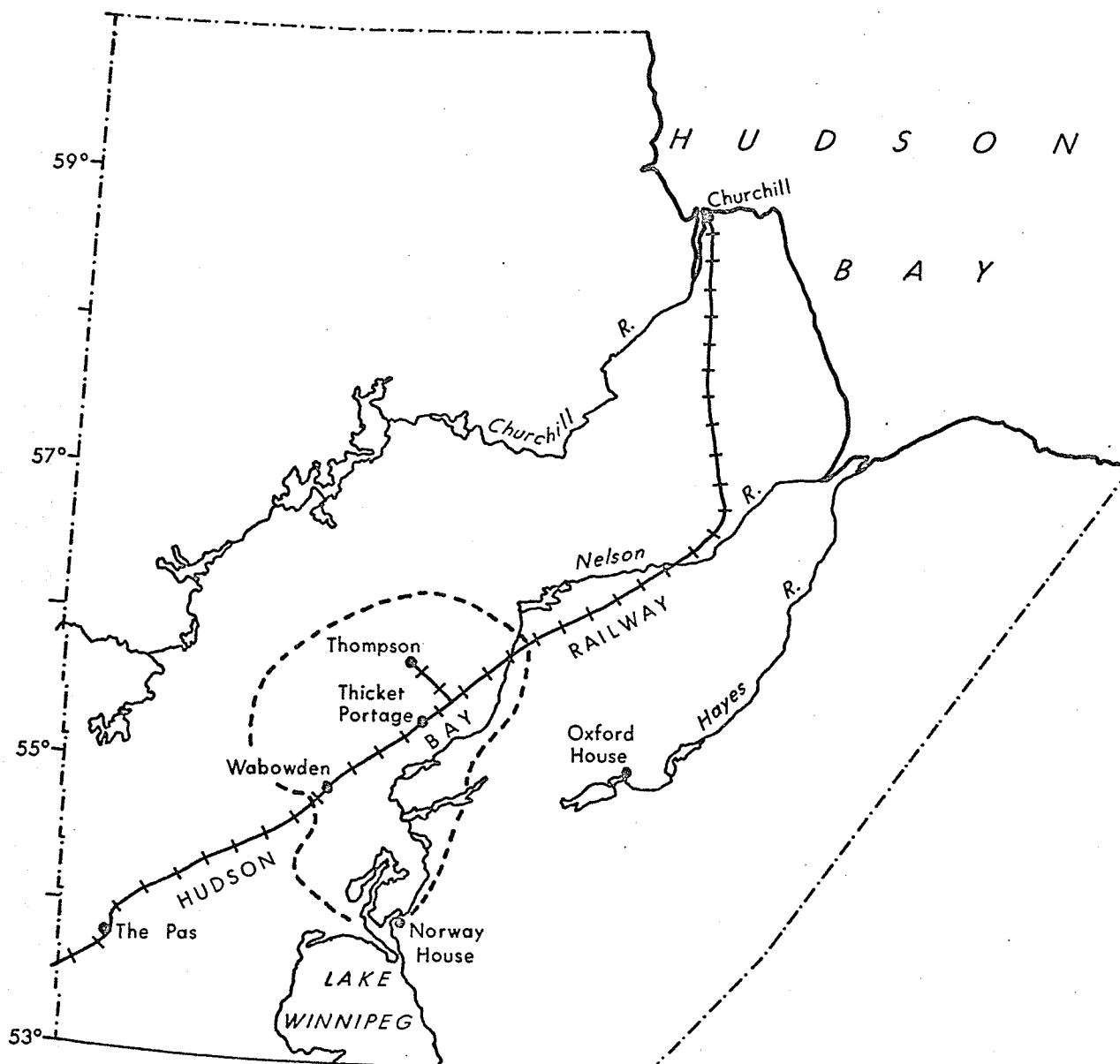
In 1964 a road was built, running from The Pas through Wabowden to Thompson, and at present, the community is accessible by rail, road and air transport.

¹During the winter months, the bulk of the freight going to Nelson House, Cross Lake and Norway House is transported by tractor train. Several airway companies fly passengers and supplies to the surrounding centres during both summer and winter.

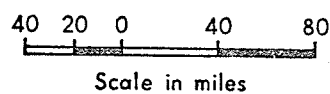
²S. J. C. Cumming, "H. B. C. Posts, Keewatin District - No. 6, Setting Lake Post,," The Beaver, Outfit 258, No. 3, December 1927, p. 121. This structure has subsequently been replaced by a more modern one.

³W. A. Ehrlich, L. E. Pratt, J. A. Barr, and F. P. Leclaire, Soil Survey of a Cross-Section Through the Upper Nelson River Basin Along the Hudson Bay Railway in Northern Manitoba, (Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Conservation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1959).

LOCATION OF CLAY REGION IN NORTHERN MANITOBA



APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF CLAY REGION



The community, with a population of 594,⁴ while remaining relatively depressed in terms of southern Manitoba's economic standards, is, nevertheless, the most economically viable of the four under study. It still retains its functions as a railway divisional point and as a distributing centre for the surrounding communities.

B. PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

The presence of a large clay belt in northern Manitoba was already recognized in the latter part of the nineteenth century.⁵ Subsequent research has determined more precisely the nature and extent of this belt (Map 2). Thicket Portage and Wabowden, both located well within the boundaries of this clay belt have about the most potential for agricultural development in the region.

Wabowden is situated within the Pre-Cambrian Shield, consisting of hard granite or gneissose rocks.⁶ Originally, along with the harder granitoids, there were also the softer sheared lavas and sediments which were eroded to a low level prior to Palaeozoic times.⁷

⁴D. B. S. 1966.

⁵Tyrrell J. Burr and D. B. Dowling, "Reports on the Northeastern Portion of the District of Saskatchewan and Adjacent Parts of the Districts of Athabaska and Keewatin," Geological Survey of Canada Annual Report, Vol. XIII, 1902, pp. 25-31.

⁶The writer observed a chain of small gneissic islands in both Setting Lake and Bowden Lake, as well as granitic out-crops, especially along the shores of these lakes.

⁷R. C. Wallace, The Geological Formations of Manitoba, (Winnipeg: Published by the Natural History Society of Manitoba, 1925), p. 38.

With the passage of the ice sheet, the weathered material was transported away and the schists were plucked to a greater degree than the granitoids. The result has been a hummocky topography with linear valleys and lakes in the schists and sediments. An example here is the relatively narrow Setting Lake whose outline is believed to be determined quite definitely by the attitude of the underlying rocks.

At present, only a few portions of the earlier lavas and sediments remain in the exposures of the Pre-Cambrian formations in northern Manitoba. These are generally surrounded by extensive areas of granite and porphyry, which in themselves probably represent igneous formations of different ages.⁸

These areas of greenstone and sediments are of special interest for in them is found the veins and sheared zones in which occur the ores of gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc. Such areas form a fairly continuous belt from Athapapaskow Lake eastwards to Setting Lake (Wabowden), with isolated patches such as at Wintering Lake (Thicket Portage), Pipe Lake, Pipestone, Cross Lake on the Nelson River, and Oxford Lake and Knee Lake on the Hayes River.⁹

A major zone of extreme faulting appears to extend from Setting Lake to Assean Lake passing through Ospawagan Lake, Mystery Lake and

⁸R. C. Wallace, Mining and Mineral Prospects in Northern Manitoba, (Winnipeg: Published by the Authority of the Government of Manitoba, 1919), p. 7.

⁹Ibid.

Moak Lake. Along this zone the rocks are highly schistose across widths that may vary from several hundred to several thousand feet.¹⁰ It is along this relatively narrow structural belt, sometimes referred to as the Thompson mining belt, that the more important nickel deposits are found. (Map 5)

Relics of the ice period are strewn over the granitoids. Repeated advances and recessions of the ice mass, from its gathering ground west of Hudson Bay, scoured bare the weathered surfaces.

During one of these re-advances of the ice sheet, the limit of the ice-front was the Pas ridge, which represents a terminal moraine deposited by the ice as it moved forward and then retreated. The drainage, then as now, was northwards, and the water was dammed back by the ice-front to form a lake in which was deposited the silt that was carried in by the streams entering the lake. Thus, it is believed, the northern clay belt (Map 2) was formed, which has been estimated to cover 10,000 square miles.¹¹

Since the surface features from the glacial period have been modified only slightly, the drainage system has evolved on the clay covered surface, and as yet, it is still in an extremely youthful stage.

¹⁰J. F. Davies, B. B. Bannatyne, G. S. Barry and H. R. McCabe, Geology and Mineral Resources of Manitoba, (Published by Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Mines Branch, Winnipeg 1962), p. 106.

¹¹Wallace, op. cit., p. 11.

For this reason, artificial drainage would be one prerequisite to any commercial agriculture here.

The black spruce association forms a large part of the natural vegetation cover here, but in swampy areas the growth tends to be restricted. Tamerack is also to be found in these swampy areas. Along the rivers, on islands and in the better drained localities, well developed stands of white spruce, white birch, aspen and balsam fir are found. Repeated and extensive fires have taken their toll and large areas now support a small growth of aspen, white birch and scattered growths of black and white spruce, or jackpine and aspen.¹²

C. THE SETTLEMENT

Officially, the community is classified as an unincorporated urban district and as such is administered from The Pas by the Local Government District Consul.¹³ At the local level, there is a community council which makes the needs and demands of the community known to the Consul at The Pas.

¹²W. E. D. Halliday, A Forest Classification for Canada, (Canada, Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Forest Service - Bulletin 89, Ottawa 1937), p. 21.

¹³The local administrator at The Pas has experienced two lengthy illnesses in the past several years and during his periods of ill-health there was virtually no one to look after the affairs of Wabowden and Thicket Portage. A new man has recently been appointed, but he plans to resign in the near future, and the lack of adequate administration again becomes a problem.

Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs has been acting in a co-ordinating capacity and has done considerable work in both communities. In addition, this Department hopes to set up local governments in Wabowden and Thicket Portage in the near future.

HOUSING

Initially, residents located near the railway station and the section foremen's houses. At present, residences are scattered haphazardly over an area of approximately 12 square miles (Map 3).

Except for a few metal buildings, such as the agricultural substation and the oil company ware houses, most buildings in the community are of wooden frame construction. Some of the older residences still standing are of log construction and these can be warm even in the coldest weather if kept in good repair.

The author has used his scheme for classifying the quality and condition of housing in the settlement (Chapter I). Examples of all three categories at Wabowden are given in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

Map 3 shows the distribution of houses in each category, and it is readily observable that the great majority of inadequate housing, Category C, is concentrated at 'the Point,' a part of the settlement that is almost exclusively composed of Metis residents. The better housing, Categories A and B, occupied by teachers, nurses, business proprietors and other relatively successful wage earners, is concentrated, by and large, in the nucleus of the settlement and away from 'the Point.'

The Lands Branch Office at The Pas has tried to introduce a measure of order into the settlement by laying out roads and surveying lots at its northeastern margin, an area referred to as 'the Point.'



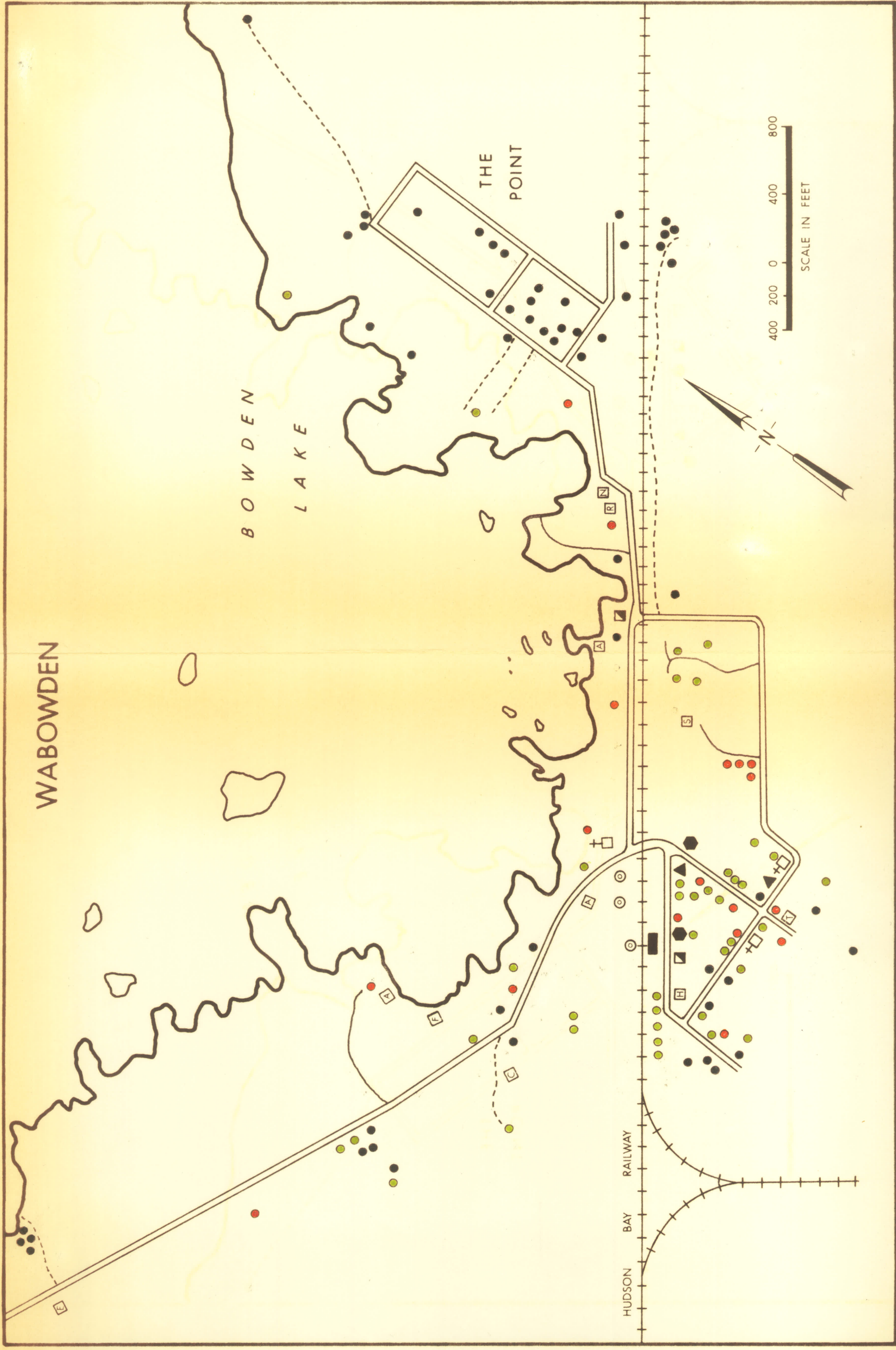
FIG. 1. CATEGORY A HOUSING, WABOWDEN.



FIG. 2. CATEGORY B HOUSING, WABOWDEN.
















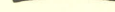






FIG. 3. CATEGORY C HOUSING, WABOWDEN.

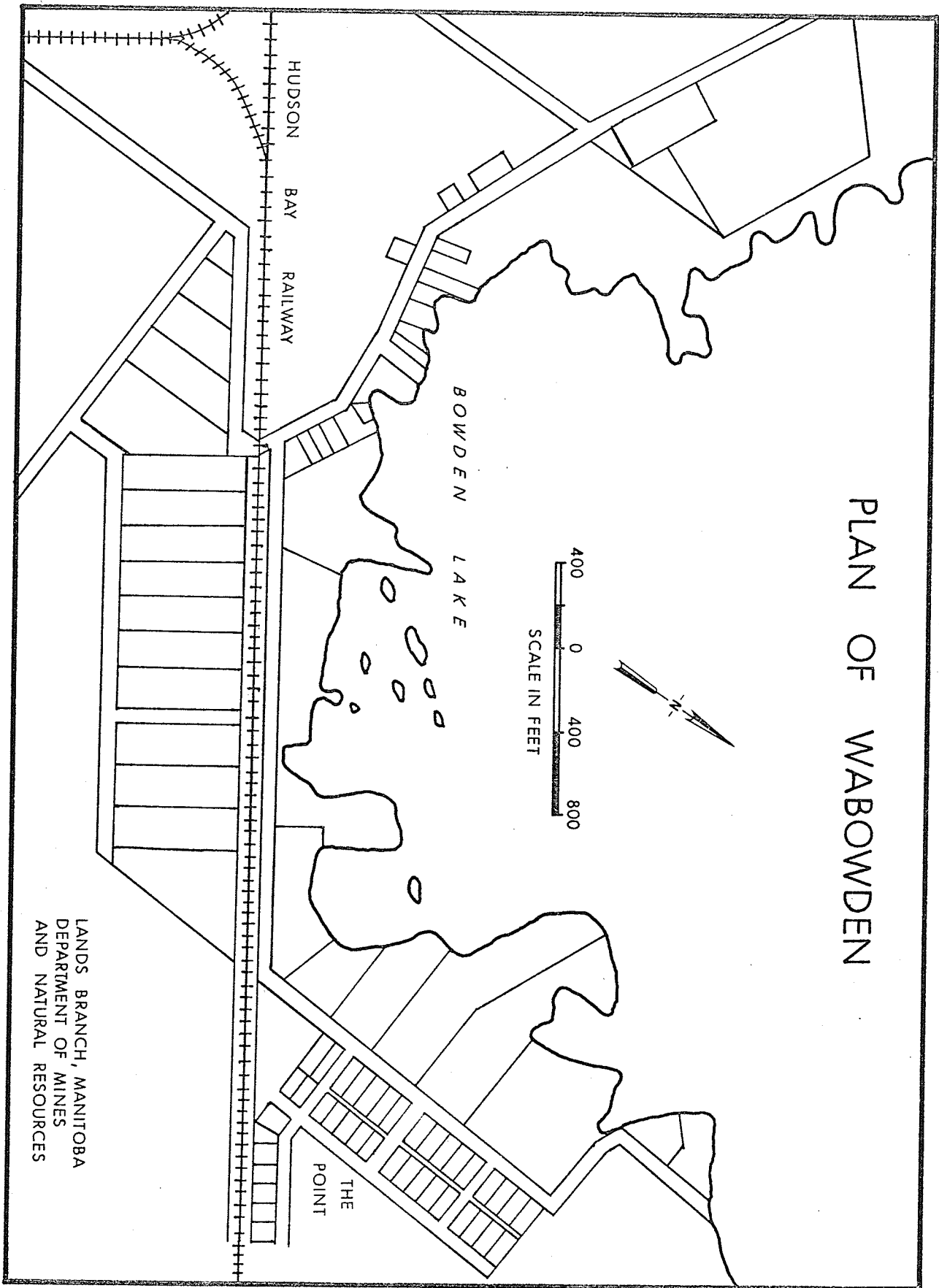


MAP 3 (cf. Key on Page 24)

WABOWDEN

	RAILWAY STATION
	EXPERIMENTAL SUBSTATION
	SCHOOL
	CHURCH
	HALL
	TAXI
	CURLING CLUB
	HOTEL
	GENERAL STORE
	RENEWABLE RESOURCES OFFICE
	NURSES STATION
	AIRPLANE DEPOT
	FISH COMPANY STATION
	GAS AND OIL COMPANY
	CAFE
	ROAD
	TRAIL
	RESIDENCES
	CATEGORY A
	CATEGORY B
	CATEGORY C

PLAN OF WABOWDEN



LANDS BRANCH, MANITOBA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

It has already been mentioned that the majority of residents at 'the Point' are of Indian ancestry and that the quality of housing here is among the poorest in the community (Map 3).

When comparing Maps 3 and 4, it is readily apparent that there is little or no relation between the carefully surveyed lots and the distribution of dwellings. A resident may lease or buy a lot here, but in practice it appears he generally pays little attention to locating his house well within his boundaries or near the road.

A partial explanation for the lack of planning within the community may be the fact that a great portion of the land in the settlement is owned by the C.N.R. and by the Davidson estate.¹⁴ Residents are forced to rent land, but because the prospects of eventually owning it are so remote, people are generally unwilling to spend any substantial amount on their homes and are not concerned about arranging them in any formal order.¹⁵

Squatters¹⁶ pose a problem for many northern communities and Wabowden is no exception. There are approximately 30 squatter household

¹⁴Mr. Davidson, while he lived at Wabowden, was able to acquire a sizable tract of land which after his death passed into the hands of his family. They are no longer residents of Wabowden but refuse to sell any of the land.

¹⁵One of the more prosperous residents, who lives in a well built home, informed the writer that he would like to put a basement under his house, but since he is renting C.N.R. land and realizes his lease can be terminated by the owner at any time, he feels the risk involved is too great.

¹⁶See J. R. Lotz, "Northern Settlements and the Squatter Problem," *Habitat*, Vol. 5, No. 6, November-December 1962, pp. 2-7. The author has used Lot's definition of squatter. He is " . . . any person who has no legal title to the land on which he is settled, or . . . any person renting a dwelling from an owner who has no legal title to land on which the dwelling stands" p. 2.

units in the settlement located on C.N.R. property, at 'the Point,' and on land belonging to the experimental substation. It is difficult to assess precisely their numbers since these residents are constantly in fear of being forced to leave their premises.

Problems created by the squatters are for the most part obvious. As a rule they pay no taxes, they generally build substandard homes in terms of the basic essentials such as proper insulation, and heating, and adequate lighting and living space. They squat more or less at will and may abandon their shacks once they move on. In short, by the very nature of their existence, they are diametrically opposed to the concept of the 'planned community.'

It must be noted, however, that part of the blame for the squatter problem lies with the major land owners in the settlement who tie up large tracts of land and refuse to sell lots to any interested parties.

SERVICE FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

There are two general stores at Wabowden, one of which is owned and operated by the Hudson's Bay Company. Both stores sell a variety of merchandise ranging from foodstuffs to clothing and appliances. Three oil and gas company dealers are presently situated in the community. However, only two are in operation.¹⁷ The community's only garage for

¹⁷The most recently constructed outlet is the B.A. unit which has installed storage tanks and all other necessary equipment. However, due to the lack of qualified and/or interested staff, it has, as yet, been unable to begin operations.

repairing and servicing cars and trucks burned down recently and, as yet, it has not been rebuilt. Wabowden boasts one small hotel, equipped with a beer parlor, and two small cafes. According to a number of prominent citizens, this community is in dire need of a service station, fully equipped to service and repair cars, trucks and various other machinery, and an attractive, fully modernized motel or hotel, complete with dining facilities, to service local residents and numerous travellers along the Provincial Trunk Highway Number 391.

Professional and social services in the community include: (1) the nurses' station, under the jurisdiction of Northern Health Services, which offers the only medical attention in the settlement, (2) a six room school, financed by the Frontier School Division, in which grades one to eight are taught, and (3) a community development officer¹⁸ whose services, broadly defined, are designed to 'help the community help itself.' Police service comes from Thompson, and while Wabowden residents urgently need, and have repeatedly been promised, a permanent detachment, as yet none exists.¹⁹

¹⁸A number of responsible and knowledgeable residents have repeatedly criticized the Community Development Officer here of constituting a negative influence in the community in addition to being ineffectual. Numerous complaints have been made to his organization's headquarters and his replacement with another officer has been requested; all this to no avail.

¹⁹Mr. Macdonald, Assistant Deputy Minister of Manitoba's Department of Northern Affairs, informed the author that Wabowden would definitely have an R.C.M.P. detachment stationed in the community sometime in 1968.

The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and church hall, and the Northern Evangelical Mission constitute Wabowden's religious institutions.

The only recreational outlets are those supplied by the school, the community club and the pool hall. In an effort to promote sports, the school teachers have organized various teams to compete against each other. The community club features such entertainment as movies and dances. A number of responsible and knowledgeable residents have expressed the need for a well organized and equipped recreation centre so as to provide a greater number of young people with opportunities for varied and healthy activity.

Wabowden lacks a proper water supply. At present, many residents have water delivered from the C.N.R. water tank.²⁰ There is no charge for the water itself, which comes from Bowden Lake, but delivery of water costs \$1.00 per 45 gallon tank - an amount the average family unit would use up in two to three days. Those that do not utilize these services haul their water directly from Bowden and in some instances from Setting Lake.

The community has no sewage facilities²¹ and lacks garbage pickup service and an adequate garbage dump. At present, the two pressing

²⁰The drinking water from the C.N.R. water tank is chlorinated. Only C.N.R. buildings and the hotel are serviced by direct connection to the tank.

²¹C.N.R. has a sewage and water filtration plant; however, here again, only C.N.R. buildings and the hotel are serviced by the plant.

demands of the settlement thus include a proper water supply, garbage pickup service and an adequate garbage dump.

The settlement is supplied with electricity and telephones, and can receive radio broadcasts from Thompson and The Pas.

There are approximately ten miles of all weather gravel road within the community, and it connects with the Provincial Trunk Highway 391 running from The Pas to Thompson.

D. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Wabowden has a population of 594²² and 104 household units,²³ with an average of 5.7 persons per household unit. The most common type of household unit is the family, of which there are 90 in the community, particularly the one family household.

TABLE I²⁴

NUMBER AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD UNITS AT WABOWDEN, 1966

<u>Type of household</u>		<u>Number</u>
Total households		104
Total family households		90
One family households	85	
Two or more family households	5	
Non-family households		14
One person only	12	
Two or more persons	2	

²²Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1966 Census, (D.B.S.).

²³A household unit may be any one of the following: a one family household, a two or more family household, or a non-family household.

²⁴D.B.S. 1966

The population is a relatively young one with 53.7 per cent under the age of 15. This is 22 per cent higher than the equivalent age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian for the province. The proportion of the population 65 years and older, on the other hand, remains relatively low at 2.8 per cent; the provincial percentage for this age group, including both Indians and non-Indians, is 9.2 per cent.

Several factors may help to explain this phenomenon. First, recent medical attention along with education has served to lower this community's infant mortality rate. While data here is not available, it is obvious that the nurses' station in the settlement and improved medical care at Thompson and The Pas offers a partial explanation. Another factor is the improved nutrition and personal hygiene, resulting from the influx of medical staff and educators into the settlement.

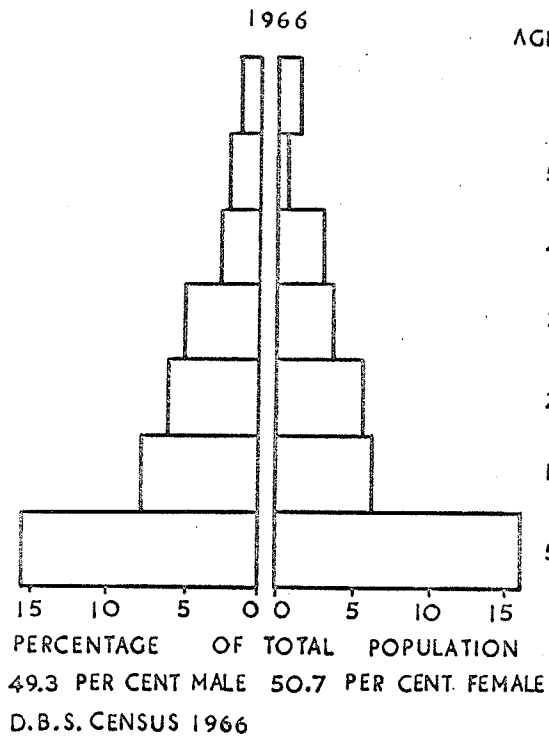
The relatively low elderly population, those age 65 and older, can possibly be attributed to two major factors. First, age 65 is generally accepted as retirement age and it is possible that a number of retired railway workers leave the settlement. Another factor might well be a relatively high mortality rate among the aged, as compared to that of southern Manitoba's urban centres.

Figure 4A²⁵ gives an indication of Wabowden's age-sex composition.

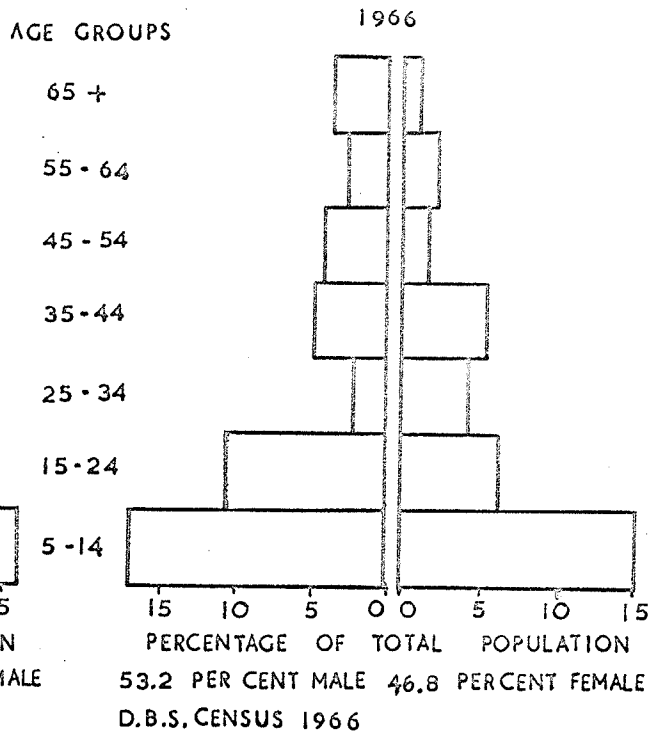
²⁵The only age-sex breakdown available is the one issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, in Ottawa. The first five age groups are in intervals of five years, the next five groups are given in intervals of ten years and the final group may involve an interval from ten to thirty years.

In order to give an accurate graphical representation of the community's age-sex composition, it was necessary to use only one interval for the age groups, in this case the 10 year interval, but this meant omitting that portion of the population under five years of age.

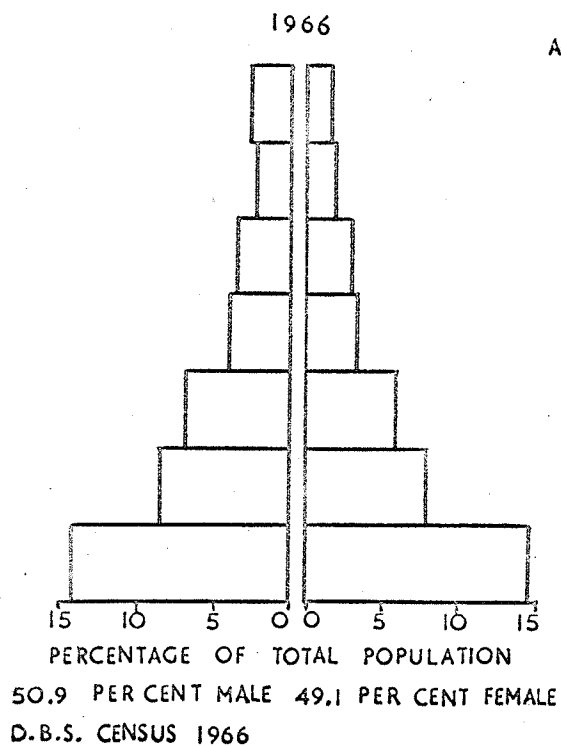
A
WABOWDEN AGE & SEX COMPOSITION



B
THICKET PORTAGE AGE & SEX COMPOSITION



C
NORWAY HOUSE AGE & SEX COMPOSITION



D
OXFORD HOUSE AGE & SEX COMPOSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1965

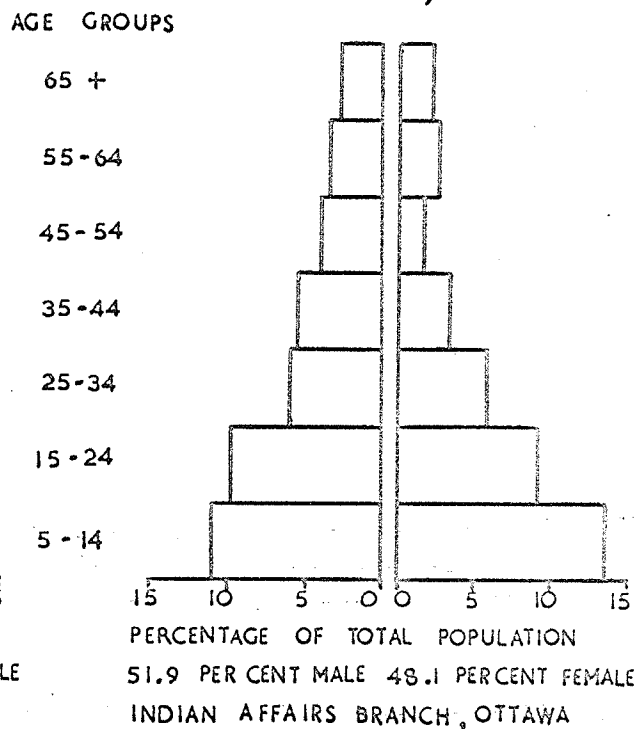


FIG. 4.

Although there are more females than males here, the difference is too small to be of any great significance.

Figure 4A shows the sharp increase in the population during the last decade. In addition, 22 per cent of the community's population are under the age of five (not shown on the graph). Economic planning for the future is imperative. The resource based industries, especially trapping and fishing which provide only a subsistence standard of living at present, will not be able to employ any significant proportion of this increase.

Table II gives an indication of the rate of population growth at Wabowden over a five year period. From 1961 to 1966 the community's population has grown by an astounding 81.7 per cent. This is explainable in terms of both a high fertility rate as well as considerable in-migration of people, especially those of Indian ancestry, to the settlement.

According to the 1961 Census, only 24 per cent of the residents were 'native Indian and Eskimo.'²⁶ However, the recognition of Metis people is a difficult undertaking because of the varying degrees of assimilation with the White man's culture, and this may be one reason for the rather low percentage recorded. Using his sample, the author found the proportion to be as high as 44 per cent. Manitoba Department

²⁶Since the modified document of the 1966 Census did not include questions on religion, ethnic group, schooling and economic characteristics, this data is provided only for 1961.

TABLE II
POPULATION INCREASE
1961 to 1966

Location	Number of People			
	1961	1966	Increase of 1966 over 1961	Percent Increase of Population over 1961
Wabowden	327	594	267	81.7
Thicket Portage	275	282	7	2.5
Norway House	1,981	2,275	294	14.8
Oxford House	613	715	102	16.6
Province of Man.	921,686	963,066	41,380	4.5
Dominion of Canada	18,238,247	20,014,880	1,776,633	9.7

Source: D.B.S. 1961, 1966, and Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa,
December 31, 1965.

of Northern Affairs in 1967 has estimated the proportion to be as high as 58 per cent.²⁷

The majority of residents are affiliated with either the Roman Catholic, the Anglican or the United Church. According to the 1961 Census, 43 per cent were Roman Catholic, 33 per cent were Anglican and 10 per cent belonged to the United Church. The writer's 1967 sample established 26 per cent as Roman Catholic, 48 per cent as Anglican, 10 per cent belonging to the United Church and 8 per cent not claiming membership with any religious denomination.

The educational attainment of the residents here remains lower than that of residents in southern Manitoba. Table III shows that the proportion age five and older who had no schooling and were not attending school at the time of the Census was 14 per cent.²⁸

TABLE III²⁹

HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OLDER
AT WABOWDEN, 1961

Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	89	100
Pre-grade 1		
Elementary 1-4	47	53
Elementary 5-8	35	39
High School 1-2	3	3
High School 3-4	4	5
High School 5		
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree		

²⁷Manitoba Northern Affairs Community Fact Sheet for January 1967 recorded a total population of 684, 400 of whom were designated as Metis and the remainder as White.

²⁸The provincial proportion for the same category was 7 per cent.

²⁹D.B.S. 1961.

TABLE III - Continued

Not Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	174	100
No schooling	25	14
Elementary 1-4	15	9
Elementary 5-8	92	53
High School 1-2	27	15
High School 3-4	14	8
High School 5	1	.6
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree		

In the author's 1967 sample, in which the educational attainment of only household heads was ascertained, 23 per cent had no formal education, 8 per cent had completed elementary grades one to four, 37 per cent had completed elementary grades five to eight, 26 per cent had completed secondary grades nine to twelve and 6 per cent had taken some university or other post-grade twelve training.

Northern communities have often been characterized by a relatively transient population, especially among Whites who often move to these communities for reasons of business and employment.³⁰ Out of the 84 household heads in the writer's 1967 sample, 47 (56 per cent) had lived in Wabowden more than 10 years, 24 (29 per cent) had lived in the

³⁰Approximately 80,000 people have lived in Thompson as temporary residents since the community was first built in the late 1950's. (Personal communication with Mr. David Chaddock.)

community from two to ten years, and 13 (15 per cent) had been there less than two years. Of the 13 household heads who had lived in Wabowden less than two years, 7 gave their previous residence as north of the 53d parallel,³¹ while the remaining 3 had lived south of the 53d parallel. All 13 had moved to Wabowden for reasons of employment. When the 13 household heads were queried about the length of their previous residence, 4 mentioned more than 10 years, 6 mentioned from two to ten years and 3 said less than two years. The 3 who stayed less than two years, all had lived north of the 53d parallel previously. When these 3 were again queried about the length of residence (prior to their previous one), 1 mentioned more than 10 years and 2 said less than two years.

The 84 household heads in the sample were also asked about their future plans. Fifty-nine (70 per cent) stated their intention to remain at Wabowden, and 25 (30 per cent) planned to leave. Of the latter, 5 gave 1967 as the date for their departure, 1 mentioned 1968, and 19 gave 'eventually' as their departure date. When the 25 were queried as to their destination, 9 mentioned centres north of the 53d parallel, 8 mentioned centres south of the 53d parallel, and 8 could not be specific or had not decided definitely where they would move. Of

³¹Stuart Jamieson and Harry Hawthorn, The Role of Native People in Industrial Development in Northern Manitoba, A Report Prepared for the Committee on Manitoba's Economic Future, (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, September 1962). This study has defined Northern Manitoba as that part of the province north of the 53d parallel.

the 25, 9 gave employment as the main reason for moving, 7 mentioned social reasons and 9 gave a combination of social and employment or business reasons.

When asked whether they enjoyed living in this community, 64 out of the 84 responded favorably, 17 did not enjoy living here and 3 were non-committal.

A pattern emerges from this data in which a small but significant number of transient households move to various northern communities, (north of the 53d parallel), generally for reasons of employment. Wabowden is one of these communities in which such a household will function for a certain number of years before moving on to another northern community.

E. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WABOWDEN

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

One of the more reliable indicators of a community's economic viability is its employment structure. Of the 84 household units in the sample, 78 (93 per cent) had one or more persons gainfully employed throughout all or part of the year,³² while the remaining 6 (7 per cent) had no one person gainfully employed throughout any part of the year.

Out of Wabowden's total active labor force in the sample, including all those gainfully employed either part time or full time in activities ranging from fishing and trapping to railway work and teaching

³²This includes employment in trapping and/or fishing.

only 68 per cent worked 12 months per year and 25 per cent worked only 6 months or less in a year. Twenty-three per cent of the total active labor force relied on sources of employment outside of Wabowden.³³

During the month of July 1967, 6 of the 84 household units in the sample (7 per cent) relied on welfare payments or public subsidy.³⁴ However, during the period from July 1966 to July 1967, 11 of the 104 household units (11 per cent) received public financial assistance.³⁵

Of special interest here is the proportion of the active labor force engaged in trapping and fishing. According to the 1961 Census, only 5 per cent of the total active labor force were engaged in these traditional pursuits. The writer's 1967 sample discovered 5 per cent of those gainfully employed to be fishing and another 6 per cent to be trapping. Thus the total 1967 figure of 11 per cent constitutes a higher proportion than that reported for 1961. In addition, Renewable Resources Office issued 21 registered licenses to Wabowden trappers for the 1966-67 season, which would raise this percentage.³⁶

³³Examples here include Gillam, Thompson, Soab Creek and Pipe Lake.

³⁴The terms 'welfare,' 'public assistance' and/or 'public subsidy' here are used advisedly, and do not include such things as war veterans' disability pensions, family allowances, workmen's compensation and unemployment insurance. The interpretation of 'welfare,' 'public assistance' and/or 'public subsidy' in this study is that of help given to bring individuals to minimum levels of functioning in any designated field. Assistance aimed at growth beyond the minimum standards in any particular field will not be included.

³⁵Department of Health and Welfare, The Pas.

³⁶Renewable Resources Office, Wabowden, Manitoba.

TABLE IV³⁷RECORD OF CROP AND VALUE OF ALL FURS 1966-67 INCLUSIVE
WABOWDEN R.T.L.

Species	1964-65		1965-66		1966-67	
	Crop	Value	Crop	Value	Crop	Value
Beaver	226	\$2,806.92	265	\$4,483.80	177	\$2,447.91
Coyote					1	4.67
Ermine (Weasel)	223	515.13	185	482.85	6	7.32
Fisher	9	65.97	15	189.90	5	46.65
Fox, Red	1	5.92	6	72.00	1	5.42
Fox, White	1	16.00	1	24.65		
Lynx	24	463.92	29	1,145.50	17	408.00
Mink	91	1,820.00	102	2,040.00	84	1,302.00
Muskrat	348	528.96	1,440	2,620.80	206	181.28
Otter	5	156.70	21	693.00	14	275.38
Squirrel	274	161.66	170	102.00	96	51.84
TOTALS		\$6,541.18		\$11,854.50		\$4,730.47
Number of Trappers	22		24		21	
Ave. Income per Trapper		\$297.33		\$493.94		\$225.26

Table IV offers evidence of the very low returns to the trappers. The average income per trapper for the 1966-67 season was only \$225.26. These low returns have been characteristic of this resource based industry for the past several seasons. And when one considers that the cost of equipment and repairs must be subtracted from the profits, the net income is extremely low indeed. These low earnings must be supplemented by fishing and/or casual wage employment.

³⁷Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, Winnipeg.

TABLE V³⁸

QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM 14 SELECTED LAKES
IN WHICH PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO WABOWDEN FISHERMEN

Species	1963-64	<u>Totals in c.w.t.</u>		1966-67
		1964-65	1965-66	
Pickereel	345	526	957	927
Pike	184	287	1,085	756
Tullibee	1	19	362	87
Whitefish	181	346	448	840
Trout		46	5	
Perch			1	2
Sauger	1	1		2
Sucker	2			
TOTALS	714	1,225	2,858	2,614
Value to men	\$10,466.00	\$29,376.00	\$57,791.00	\$42,650.00
Market value	\$19,115.00	\$40,886.00	\$79,322.00	\$76,316.00
No. of licenses	22	33	52	53
Ave. income per fisherman	\$475.73	\$890.18	\$1,111.37	\$804.72

While prospects for Wabowden's commercial fishermen are somewhat brighter, they generally net the individual operator less than

³⁸Manitoba Department of Fisheries.

The 14 lakes are: Camping Lake, Clarke Lake, Dugas Lake, Five Mile Lake, Half-Way Lake, Setting Lake, Kiski Lake, Cub Lakes Group (4 small lakes), Trout Lake, Tullibee Lake, Fish Lake, Pakwa Lake, White Rabbit Lake and Black Rabbit Lake.

\$1,000 per year. The cost of repairing and/or purchasing equipment should be subtracted from this amount in order to provide a more accurate assessment of their economic situation. Table V, involving 14 lakes³⁹ in which priority is given to Wabowden fishermen, shows that during the past four years, the fisherman's average per capita income has exceeded \$1,000 only in the 1965-66 season. Their average income for the other three years was under \$1,000, and for the 1963-64 season, it was less than \$500.

The last Census to show earning groups and average earnings for Wabowden was taken in 1961. Figures given here include wage earners who worked for salaries and exclude, for the most part, those engaged in trapping and fishing. Table VI shows that the income of 38 per cent of the wage earners was less than \$3,000. Average earnings in the community were \$3,167.

These average earnings for both males and females appear to compare favorably with those of Winnipeg, \$2,934, for the same year.⁴⁰ However, any observation based on a cursory glance of this data is likely to be premature and misleading. First of all, it should be added that the proportion of active wage earners, outside of trapping and fishing, as compared to the potential labor force is rather small, indicated by the number who are unemployed and depend on social financial

³⁹Some of these lakes are fished either only in summer or only in winter, and others are fished during both seasons.

⁴⁰D.B.S. 1961.

TABLE VI
WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS
1961

Earning Groups	Wabowden	Thicket Portage	Norway House School District	Norway House Indian Reserve	Oxford House
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under \$1,000	14.7%	8.1%	8.4%	-	-
\$1,000 - \$1,999	11.8	16.2	13.8	-	-
\$2,000 - \$2,999	11.8	18.9	20.0	-	-
Under \$3,000	38.3	43.2	42.2	66.6	68.1
\$3,000 - \$3,999	17.6	24.3	26.1	-	-
\$4,000 - \$5,999	25.0	10.8	20.0	-	-
\$3,000 - \$5,999	42.6	35.1	46.1	33.3	31.8
\$6,000 - \$9,999	7.3	2.7	4.6	-	-
\$10,000 + over	-	-	.7	-	-
Not stated	4.4	16.2	.7	-	-
Average Earnings	\$3,167	\$2,607	\$3,144	\$2,186	\$2,232

Source: D.B.S. 1961

assistance. Secondly, included in the average wage statistics for the community are the professional people, such as teachers and nurses, government and managerial personnel. Then too, because of their relative isolation, teachers, for example, receive an additional 'isolation allowance' which again will raise the average. And finally, by examining the average wage of a small community, a few relatively well paid individuals will account for a higher mean. Out of 68 wage earners, 14 belonged to the 'managerial' category, 5 were in the professional and technical' category, and when taken together they comprise 28 per cent of all wage earners. Although their incomes are not known, it can be assumed these individuals were relatively well paid, and when dealing with a small group such as 68, these 19 will have the effect of producing a relatively high mean. In addition, when comparing Wabowden's mean to the Winnipeg mean, it should be kept in mind that in the latter instance one is considering the average wage of 116,723 earners.⁴¹

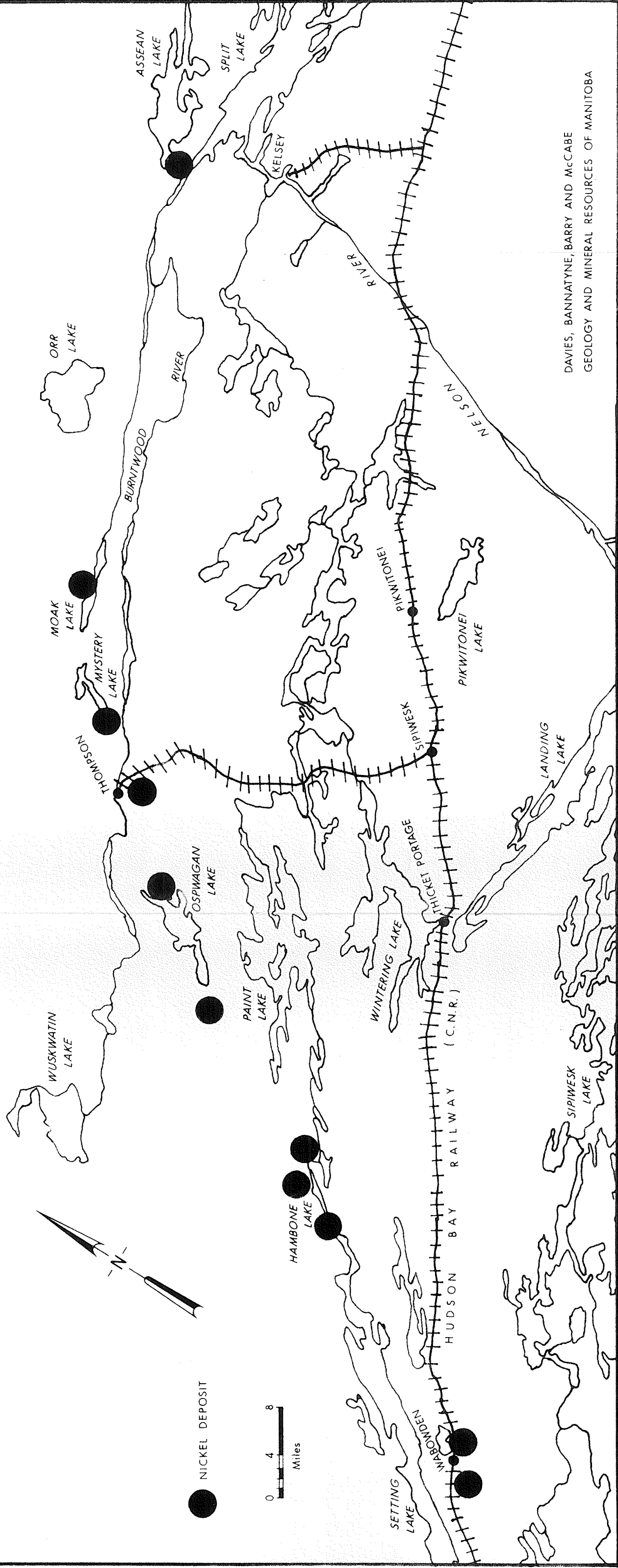
MINING

Wabowden is situated in one of the world's foremost nickel producing areas, ranking second only to Sudbury, in Ontario. Several

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Consolidated Marbenour Mines Limited and Malartic Mines Limited have outlined several small deposits totalling more than 1 million tons. In addition, Amex Mining Company Limited and Falconbridge Mining Company Limited are presently doing considerable exploratory work for nickel in the area.

LOCATION OF THE THOMPSON MINING BELT



DAVIES, BANNATYNE, BARRY AND McCABE
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES OF MANITOBA

mining companies⁴² have done considerable drilling near Wabowden and have succeeded in outlining several small deposits which average less than 1 per cent nickel. The ore occurs in serpentinite intruding 'gneiss' and intruded by granite.⁴³

While it is unlikely that Wabowden will become the centre of a mining complex, including smelting and refining operations, nonetheless, this community's proximity to those areas currently active in nickel mining (Map 5) is of great importance with respect to the employment opportunities.

In the author's 1967 sample, a total of 22 men were employed by INCO either at Thompson or at related mining camps. Of these 22 men, 17 worked 12 months per year, 1 worked from 7 to 10 months per year, 2 worked 6 months and less per year and the remaining two had just begun work and did not know how long they would remain employed. In addition, two others were employed in mineral surveying for 6 months or less per year. Thus a total of 24 men were engaged either permanently or seasonally in some aspect of the nickel mining operations.

INCO plans to exploit the Hambone Lake area (Map 5), and when mining activity here commences, Wabowden residents should be able to take advantage of the additional employment opportunities. However, certain socio-cultural factors here, discussed in Chapter VII, appear to prevent the full participation of people of Indian ancestry in the economic development of the region.

⁴³Davies, Bannatyne, Barry and McCabe, op. cit., p. 109.

AGRICULTURE

Wabowden Experimental Substation

The average frost free period from 1946 to 1960 at Wabowden was 92 days, while the average growing season (daily mean temperature above 42 degrees) was 118 days.⁴⁴ It is usually possible to begin tilling the moderately well drained soils by the middle of May.

As one would expect, the climate here is more severe than that of southern Manitoba. The average air temperatures, soil temperatures and day-degrees above 50 degrees F. and 59 degrees F. (Tables VII, VIII and IX), are considerably lower than at Brandon. From Table VII, it is evident much of the total yearly precipitation occurs during the growing season and thus is available for growing crops.

TABLE VII⁴⁵

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES AND PRECIPITATION
AT WABOWDEN AND BRANDON, 1946-1960

Month	<u>Wabowden (latitude 54°54')</u>		<u>Brandon (latitude 49°50')</u>	
	Temperature	Precipitation	Temperature	Precipitation
January	-11.7°F.	.67 in.	-1.7°F.	.81 in.
February	-4.1	.61	4.0	.56
March	10.4	.61	15.9	.99
April	27.7	.82	38.2	1.01
May	43.2	1.64	51.4	1.94
June	54.5	2.62	60.2	3.23
July	62.3	2.92	66.7	2.65
August	58.9	2.47	64.8	2.67
September	48.8	2.41	53.7	1.56
October	35.9	1.16	42.0	1.04
November	14.4	1.02	22.9	.98
December	-3.3	.68	7.3	.87
TOTAL		17.63 inches		18.31 inches

⁴⁴Peter Braun, Crops and Soil Management for the Wabowden Area of Northern Manitoba, (Canada Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Publication 1164, May 1963), p. 7.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 6.

TABLE VIII⁴⁶

AVERAGE SOIL TEMPERATURES AT THE 4-INCH DEPTH
IN MINAGO SILT LOAN AT WABOWDEN, 1956-1960

Month	Low	High
May	36.8°F.*	42.9°F.*
June	48.5**	56.8**
July	58.3	68.6
August	57.1	65.1
September	45.3	52.1
October	36.1	38.5

*1958-1960 average

**1957-1960 average

TABLE IX⁴⁷

AVERAGE EVAPORATION AND ACCUMULATED HEAT UNITS
WABOWDEN AND BRANDON, 1956-1960

Month	Potential evaporation c.c.		Day-degrees			
	Wabowden	Brandon	Wabowden		Brandon	
			Above 50°F.	Above 59°F.	Above 50°F.	Above 59°F.
June	1241*	1570	196	44	369	111
July	1644	1552	392	149	530	270
August	1196	1554	255	76	457	194

*1957-1960 average

While the length of both the frost free period and the growing season is certainly a crucial factor in any agricultural development at Wabowden, the duration of sunlight is also an important consideration.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 7.

It has been demonstrated that at summer solstice the length of daylight during the summer months at 58 degrees latitude is 17 hours and 25 minutes at 50 degrees latitude.⁴⁸ Using Weyer's chart, it has been calculated that Wabowden has 61 hours more possible sunlight than Winnipeg during the months of June, July and August.⁴⁹

Soils at Wabowden are mainly clay and silt sediments, and the depressions are filled with various depths of peat. A detailed soil survey⁵⁰ has examined soils of the Experimental substation and established three main types:

(1) Soils developed on lacustrine clay; the Wabowden series being the most important. This series is found on the ridges where drainage is good. It is a Solonetzic Gray Wooded clay soil, low in organic matter which is a contributing factor to a cloddy structure and poor germination of seeds. Tests at the experimental farm indicated the need for breaking down the clods in order to promote germination.

(2) The Minago series which is an Orthic Gray Wooded soil developed on strongly calcareous sediments. It has a shallow or weakly developed 'A' horizon, contains very little organic matter and often develops crusts which results in poor germination and weak seedlings.

(3) The organic soils here are classed as half bogs, soils which have a layer of 12 to 30 inches of peat as compared to bog soils with

⁴⁸Edward Weyer, "How Much Sunlight Will There Be?" The Beaver, March 1949, p. 35, as quoted by Ehrlich, Pratt, Barr and Leclaire, op. cit., p. 21.

⁴⁹Ehrlich, Pratt, Barr and Leclaire, op. cit., p. 21.

⁵⁰W. A. Ehrlich, L. E. Pratt and F. P. Leclaire, "Report of Soil Survey - Wabowden Experimental Substation," as quoted by Braun, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

more than 30 inches of peat. These half bogs are generally found in depressions, and vary greatly according to the type of plant material, the degree of decomposition of the peat, and the underlying mineral sediments. Drainage here remains a problem and since the peat has a high moisture retaining capacity and is a good insulating material, it is slow to thaw, warm up and dry in the spring.

Research at the experimental substation has demonstrated the adaptability of these organic soils for growing forage and hay crops. In addition, peat can be used to improve the structure and organic content of other well drained soils, especially in the growing of garden crops.

The substation has tested most common varieties of cereals and has found that wheat and oats are not well adapted to the area because of the definite hazard of frost damage and because the application of large amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous is needed for best results.⁵¹ Barley, however, appears to be the most suitable cereal for the region. During 6 years of testing, this crop has not been damaged by frost, and yields have been reasonably good, especially when nitrogen and phosphorous are applied.⁵²

Alfalfa is well adapted in the area and will consistently produce good hay. Although only one cut per year can usually be obtained, yields are favorable, especially in the initial years after seeding.

⁵¹Nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers should be used at rates as high as 400 pounds of 16-20-0 per acre.

⁵²Braun, op. cit., p. 10.

Tests also found the yields of grass seed high enough to indicate the area has good potential for the production of forage seed.

Potatoes grow well in the area, although early-fall frost frequently causes production of many small unmarketable tubers. However, gardens adjacent to the lakes often escape these frosts. An additional hazard to potato production is the difficulty of operating equipment when the clay soils are wet. Experimental work has demonstrated that applications of nitrogen and phosphorous are essential for adequate potato production, and that the application of peat improves soil tilth.

Hardy vegetables, especially root crops, grow well when supplied with fertilizer and/or peat. Carrots, turnips, radishes, peas and lettuce consistently produce good yields of high quality. Cabbage and cauliflower do well when transplanted. Production of tender vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and corn, is a risky venture. However, polyethylene plastic mulches allow the production of cucumbers, beans and sweet corn, and the use of hot caps on tomato transplants has helped some of them to ripen.

From the research conducted at the experimental substation,⁵³ it is clear that the area can grow barley, forage crops and vegetables successfully with the application of fertilizers.

⁵³See Research Report - 1958-1961 and Research Report - 1962-1964, for Experimental Farm, Brandon, (Published by the Research Branch - Canada Department of Agriculture, Brandon, Manitoba).

The Wabowden area could be developed in terms of livestock farming. Beef cattle would do well here, especially with improved pastureland. But because railway freight rates are higher north of the 53d parallel than to the south, and because all marketable cattle would have to be shipped to Winnipeg, the probability of large-scale livestock farming, at present, appears to be low.

Dairy farming in the area could be carried on here if milk products could be marketed at Thompson. At present, Thompson has no creamery or dairy plant to process milk. The author feels a feasibility study should be carried out first, by economists, in order to ascertain the possibility of: (a) establishing a creamery at Thompson, (b) operating dairy farms at Wabowden, and (c) operating beef cattle ranches at Wabowden.

Poultry farming could conceivably be a profitable venture here.⁵⁴ In addition, vegetables, especially potatoes, could be grown successfully. The production of eggs and poultry products as well as vegetables should be encouraged both for local consumption and for market consumption at Thompson.

MINK RANCHING

The fur farming industry, especially mink ranching, offers excellent prospects in the community. The climate here produces a

⁵⁴Mr. Peter Braun, former director of the Wabowden experimental substation, has attempted to raise a number of chickens. The only serious problem he encountered was the number of half-starved dogs in the community who were able to burrow underneath his six foot wire fence and kill off all the chickens. He assured the author that once the dog problem is solved, poultry farming could be carried on quite profitably.

good pelt and there is an abundant and cheap supply of food - fish. Mink ranchers could use coarse fish, which in Wabowden goes almost completely unharvested. However, residents of Indian ancestry are unfamiliar with this industry, and for this reason adequate practical training would be needed. Mink ranching requires considerable capital as well, and this would have to be made available to any prospective ranchers in the form of a long-term low interest loans. In addition, research and investigation would be needed to study problems of ranch efficiency and low cost operation as well as animal husbandry and practices of improving the quality of pelts.

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

The tourist industry in this area is another aspect of economic development that should be stimulated. Renewable Resources Branch operates three roadside parks, designed for camping, along Provincial Trunk Highway Number 391 between Wabowden and Thompson.

The first is located alongside Setting Lake, near Wabowden, and occupies an area of about 5 acres. The second, located at Sasaqui Rapids encompasses an area of roughly 15 acres and is some 15 miles northeast of Wabowden. The third roadside park, at Pisew Falls near Soab Lake, is 27 miles from Wabowden and occupies an area of about an acre. All three parks are situated in scenic sites; all offer excellent opportunities for sport fishing, and all are being equipped with tables, toilets and fireplaces.

Except for the first three weeks in May, the sport fishing season is open all year. A conservative estimate by the Renewable

Resources Office at Wabowden put the number of sport fishermen from outside the community per year at 200. Another estimate⁵⁵ put the number coming as high as 300.

In addition, this area attracts a number of moose hunters each year. A conservative estimate by the Renewable Resources Office said 100 American hunters and another 50 Canadian hunters, outside the community, come to this area each year.

The highway from The Pas through Wabowden to Thompson has made this area accessible to a greater number of tourists, particularly hunters and fishermen. Facilities are needed to accommodate these people and to encourage even greater numbers to come. Facilities should include at least one new hotel or motel equipped with a licensed restaurant,⁵⁶ a properly equipped service station and a marina to hire out boats, boat motors and various fishing and hunting equipment.

F. ACCESSIBILITY

Located at Mile 136.4 on the Hudson Bay Railway line in Township 68, Range 8 west of the Principal Meridian, Wabowden today is a relatively important divisional point on the railway line. Since 1964 it has been directly connected to the larger northern communities of Thompson and The Pas, and has been indirectly connected to Winnipeg and other southern centres by the Provincial Trunk Highway Number 391, an all

⁵⁵Personal communication with Mr. Peter Braun.

⁵⁶The owner of the Silver Leaf Hotel plans to build a new motel with 8 units. It is to be equipped with a licensed restaurant, and is to be constructed within the next two years. Such facilities are essential if Wabowden wishes to capitalize on the existent tourist trade, and if it hopes to attract even greater numbers.

TABLE X

DISTANCE IN MILES FROM WINNIPEG TO THE FOUR SETTLEMENTS

Mode of transport	Settlement			
	Wabowden	Thicket Portage	Norway House	Oxford House
Rail	618	665	-	-
Road	650	-	-	-
Air	355	375	285	360

TABLE XI

DISTANCE IN MILES BETWEEN SELECTED NORTHERN MANITOBAN COMMUNITIES

	Mode of transport		
	Rail	Road	Air
Wabowden to The Pas	136	200	125
Wabowden to Thicket Portage	47		45
Wabowden to Thompson	93	75	55
Wabowden to Churchill	373		315
Wabowden to Norway House			70
Thicket Portage to The Pas	183		175
Thicket Portage to Thompson	46		30
Thicket Portage to Churchill	326		270
Norway House to Oxford House			120
Norway House to Thompson			115
Oxford House to Thompson			120

weather gravel road. Tables X and XI show the distances between Winnipeg and Wabowden, between Wabowden and other northern Manitoba communities.

Daily railway passenger service to Thompson, The Pas and Winnipeg is available 6 days per week, and there is daily bus service from The Pas to Wabowden to Thompson and back to The Pas. Trans Air operates on a twice weekly schedule to Norway House. Apart from this however, all air service is via chartered crafts at a cost of 50¢ per air mile.

Examining only the transportation facilities available in the community and ignoring the 'time' or 'inconvenience' factors, Wabowden appears to be the most accessible of the four settlements under study.

The writer's questionnaire included an item concerning the frequency of visits in an average year on the part of household heads to Winnipeg, The Pas, Thicket Portage and Churchill, and the reasons for the visits. Table XII illustrates a definite pattern in which Thompson and The Pas stand out as the main service centres in that order of importance.

It is interesting to note the number who visit The Pas for medical reasons. Residents often remark on the fact that they receive better hospital and medical care at The Pas than at Thompson. Thompson is preferred to The Pas for business matters.

The number of visits that residents make to Thicket Portage and to Churchill is almost negligible. However, a considerable number of household heads, 34, visit Winnipeg from 1 to 4 times per year and

TABLE XII
NUMBER OF VISITS MADE BY HOUSEHOLD HEADS
TO COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE WABOWDEN

Visits per year	Communities				
	Thompson	The Pas	Thicket Portage	Churchill	Winnipeg
1 - 4	16	43	3	2	34
5 - 10	5	10	1		2
11 - 20	20	5	2	1	
21 - 30	21	1	1		
More than 30	17	1			
Reasons for visit					
Social	20	21	2	1	26
Business	65	25	5	2	13
Medical	27	30			4

2 others visit the city 5 to 10 times per year. These visits are often made for a combination of social, business and medical reasons.

Wabowden residents can get newspapers, magazines and mail via The Pas and Thompson 6 days per week, although the newspapers usually arrive one day after publication. The settlement is not able to receive any television programs, but residents can keep in touch by radio with either The Pas or Thompson, and residents have telephones and can contact almost any part of the province.

CHAPTER III

THICKET PORTAGE

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT¹

Thicket Portage received its name from the trail or 'portage' connecting Wintering Lake and Landing Lake (Map 6). This 'portage' was an essential link in the early freighting operations of goods and furs between Thicket Portage and surrounding Indian reserves. Furs brought to the settlement were, in turn, freighted to the Hudson's Bay Company post at York Factory.

Before the advent of the Hudson Bay Railway line, Thicket Portage appears to have been more important as a trading and distributing centre for the area than Wabowden. For example, Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Split Lake received the bulk of their freight from and brought their furs to Thicket Portage. However, shortly after the railway entered the scene, a 'winter trail' was built from Wabowden to Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Norway House, and consequently Wabowden grew in importance as a trading and distributing centre at the expense of Thicket Portage.

The history of the settlement might well be divided into two periods - the pre-railway era and the railway era. Prior to the coming of the Hudson Bay Railway line, Thicket Portage had little semblance of

¹In the absence of any recorded literature concerning the historical development of Thicket Portage, the author, to a large extent, has relied on personal recollections of one of the community's oldest living residents, Mr. G. J. Evans.

a 'permanent' settlement and, except for the free traders, few inhabitants remained the year round.

Treaty Indians with their families, especially those from Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Split Lake would move in during the spring, set up their 'teepees' and tents along the 'portage' and remain in the settlement until early autumn when they would return to Thicket Portage. However, this visit was generally of shorter duration, three to four days, and the trappers were not accompanied by their families.

In 1918 the Hudson Bay Railway line to Churchill had been built through Thicket Portage, and this proved to be the turning point in the nature and growth of the settlement. Merchandise could now be shipped directly from wholesalers in Winnipeg and The Pas to the free traders at Thicket Portage, which in turn was sold to the surrounding Indian communities.²

The settlement at the beginning of the railway era has been described by one of the earliest living residents, who settled there in 1919, as consisting of some eight dwelling units, two stores operated by free traders, and the odd shack scattered here and there in the bush.³ In 1920 a great fire destroyed practically the entire

²There was at this time no Hudson's Bay Company trading post in Thicket Portage.

³Informal unstructured interview with Mr. G. J. Evans.

settlement; even the Railway water tank was reduced to ashes.⁴

During its early operations, the train from The Pas would arrive at Thicket Portage only twice each month. The track was in such poor condition that to travel by train at night was considered unsafe. As a result, the 'Old Muskeg', as the train was fondly called, would simply hold up wherever it might be, once dusk set, in and remain there until daybreak when once again it could proceed on its journey. A passenger on one of these trips reported that "while the train was in motion, a man near the front of the train could step off, pick some berries, and comfortably manage to get on the last coach as it went by."⁵

The railway, to a large extent, was a critical factor in diminishing the importance of both the 'portage' and the settlement. While the 'portage' had been a major transportation link for trade in the area before the availability of rail transportation, it was now utilized only in a supplementary manner by the Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Split Lake Indians.

Thicket Portage experienced a brief period of economic prosperity during the initial development of mining operations at Thompson

⁴The 'great' fire of 1920 inflicted great damages on the free traders - so much so that shortly thereafter one of them committed suicide.

⁵Personal communication with Mr. G. J. Evans.

from 1955 to 1959. Pending the completion of a railway spur line to Thompson, up to seven separate airline companies located at Thicket Portage in order to fly in needed equipment, supplies and foodstuffs. During the winter months, several transport companies formed tractor trains to haul the heavier equipment and fuel oil to the INCO⁶ mines at Thompson. One of the transport companies, Patricia Transport Company, provides an illustration of the scale of operations. During the winter of peak activity, the company delivered some two million gallons of fuel oil to Thompson.⁷ Thicket Portage at this time was equipped with additional rail sidings, and for a short time the settlement functioned as a major distributing centre for INCO mining activity in Thompson.

Summarizing briefly, Thicket Portage, at the turn of the century, consisted of only a few permanent residents and a relatively larger transitory population involved in trading activity who spent only part of each year in the settlement. By 1966 a population of 282 was recorded, the majority of whom could be termed as permanent residents.⁸ This transition of a nomadic population to a sedentary one has posed new problems which will be discussed later in the chapter.

⁶Alternatively known as INCO or International Nickel Company of Canada Limited.

⁷Personal communication - foreman of Patricia Transport Company.

⁸D.B.S. 1966.

B. PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

Situated within the basin of former Lake Agassiz, and owing to the recent glaciation and the hardness of the exposed bedrock, few well formed rivers traverse the region. While the drainage pattern of the clay belt region as a whole can be termed 'very youthful' or 'immature,' surface drainage throughout the area is variable. The immediate vicinity of Thicket Portage remains moderately well drained. The topography is irregular, gently to moderately sloping with some peaty depressions.⁹ The greatest local relief exists around the margins of Wintering Lake and Landing Lake where surface deposits appear thinner and bare rock outcrops are more common.

While accurate records of climatic data for Thicket Portage are lacking, such data for Wabowden are available and since both settlements are situated between two fairly large lakes, which conceivably will result in micro climatic variations, and as the two settlements are only 47 railway miles apart, it can be extrapolated that Wabowden climatic data also provides an accurate assessment of climatic conditions at Thicket Portage.

White spruce, black spruce, aspen-white spruce, spruce-jack pine, pine-aspen, pure black spruce, and pure jack pine are the main types of natural vegetation in the clay belt region.¹⁰

⁹Ehrlich, Pratt, Barr and Leclaire, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁰Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Forest Resources Inventory, 1956: Nelson River Forest Section, Report No. 6, (Winnipeg, 1959), p. 13.

Large stands of White spruce are also to be found in the immediate vicinity of Thicket Portage, and the author's observations here have been confirmed by the sawmill operator whose main activity has been concentrated in the Sipiwesk Lake area.¹¹

White spruce is found on the better drained clay soil sites and reaches a very good development at such places as Sipiwesk Lake where trees of 24 inches and over in diameter at breast height with heights of 90 feet and over, have been recorded.¹²

In addition, relatively small stands of birch and poplar scattered in isolated pockets have been noticed by the author to have an understory of spruce, which would support the argument that the climax vegetation cover here is spruce.

A detailed soil survey of a stretch of the Clay belt along the Hudson Bay Railway line reported that soils of arable potential have developed on moderately calcareous clay.¹³ The soils at Thicket Portage, included in the survey, fall into three categories: (1) the Solonetzic Grey-Wooded, clay soil represented by the Wabowden series, (2) the Orthnic Grey-Wooded, clay soil represented by the Sipiwesk series, and (3) the Bog soils.

(1) The Wabowden series is low in natural fertility as the surface mineral horizons are low in organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorus, and are strongly acid in reaction. Sulphur content also

¹¹Personal communication with Mr. Bryan Tetlock.

¹²Manitoba . . . Forest Resources Inventory, loc. cit.

¹³Ehrlich, Pratt, Barr and Leclaire, op. cit., p. 29.

is low, but crop response to sulphur application may occur only with legume crops. Exchangeable calcium, magnesium, and potassium are present in sufficient quantities for plant requirements. Clay content is high, and poor tilth poses a problem in new breaking where the surface organic matter has been destroyed by fire or removed in the clearing process.¹⁴

Internal drainage of the Wabowden series is moderately good. The fecundity of tree roots is responsible for favorable permeability of the soil. Under cultivated conditions, however, the internal drainage would be expected to decrease considerably.¹⁵

(2) The Sipiwesk series, in general, occur in small isolated pockets that are surrounded by the Wabowden series. Internal drainage is excellent for a clay textured soil, due mainly to well developed shotty-like and sub-angular structures. The Sipiwesk soils, like the Wabowden soils, are low in natural fertility: however, since the Sipiwesk soils have a more favorable structure than the Wabowden soils they should not present the same problem of poor tilth.¹⁶

(3) The Bog soils contain more than 30 inches of organic material in various stages of decomposition. It is assumed, by the authors of the Soil Survey, that the lower part of these soils are formed entirely

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 29-30.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 31.

from grass and grass-like plants and the upper part from a mixture of fen, moss, and woody substances. In places, the soils are covered by a strongly acidic, raw organic material and are underlain with black humified material that increases in decomposition with depth. This humified material could well be used as an additive to increase the organic content of cultivated mineral soils.¹⁷

In their natural state, Bog soils are low in fertility, and their reclamation would prove to be very difficult as extensive drainage would be required.¹⁸

C. THE SETTLEMENT

Thicket Portage, like Wabowden is classified as an unincorporated urban district and as such is administered by the local government district consul, stationed at The Pas.¹⁹ The community, which is operated on a tax basis, receives supplementary revenue from the provincial government coffers.

HOUSING, SERVICE FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Buildings in the community are arranged haphazardly over an approximate area of one square mile, and most are located within easy

¹⁷Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The administrative problems which the community faces are similar to those that Wabowden experiences (See Chapter II).

walking distance of the railway station. Virtually all buildings are of wooden frame construction. Some of the older residences are of log construction, and where they are kept in good repair, they remain warm even in winter cold spells.

Map 6 shows the distribution of houses in each category. The majority of houses belong to Category C. No distinct pattern emerges except that the better types of dwellings, Categories A and B, appear to be closer to the railway station, whereas the poorer type, Category C, tends to be located further away from the station. It is interesting to note that virtually all Category A homes were occupied by Whites rather than by people of Indian ancestry.

The lands branch office at The Pas has tried to introduce an element of planning here by subdividing the community into surveyed lots and by constructing some 3 miles of road in the settlement. However, when comparing Maps 6 and 7, it is readily apparent that there is little or no relation between the surveyed lots and the actual distribution of dwellings. As at Wabowden, residents here have generally given little thought to locate well within the lot's boundaries or to locate near the road.

Approximately 4 families here are squatters, and these are scattered throughout the community as well as across the (Wintering Lake) bay. The problem of squatters has already been discussed in Chapter I.



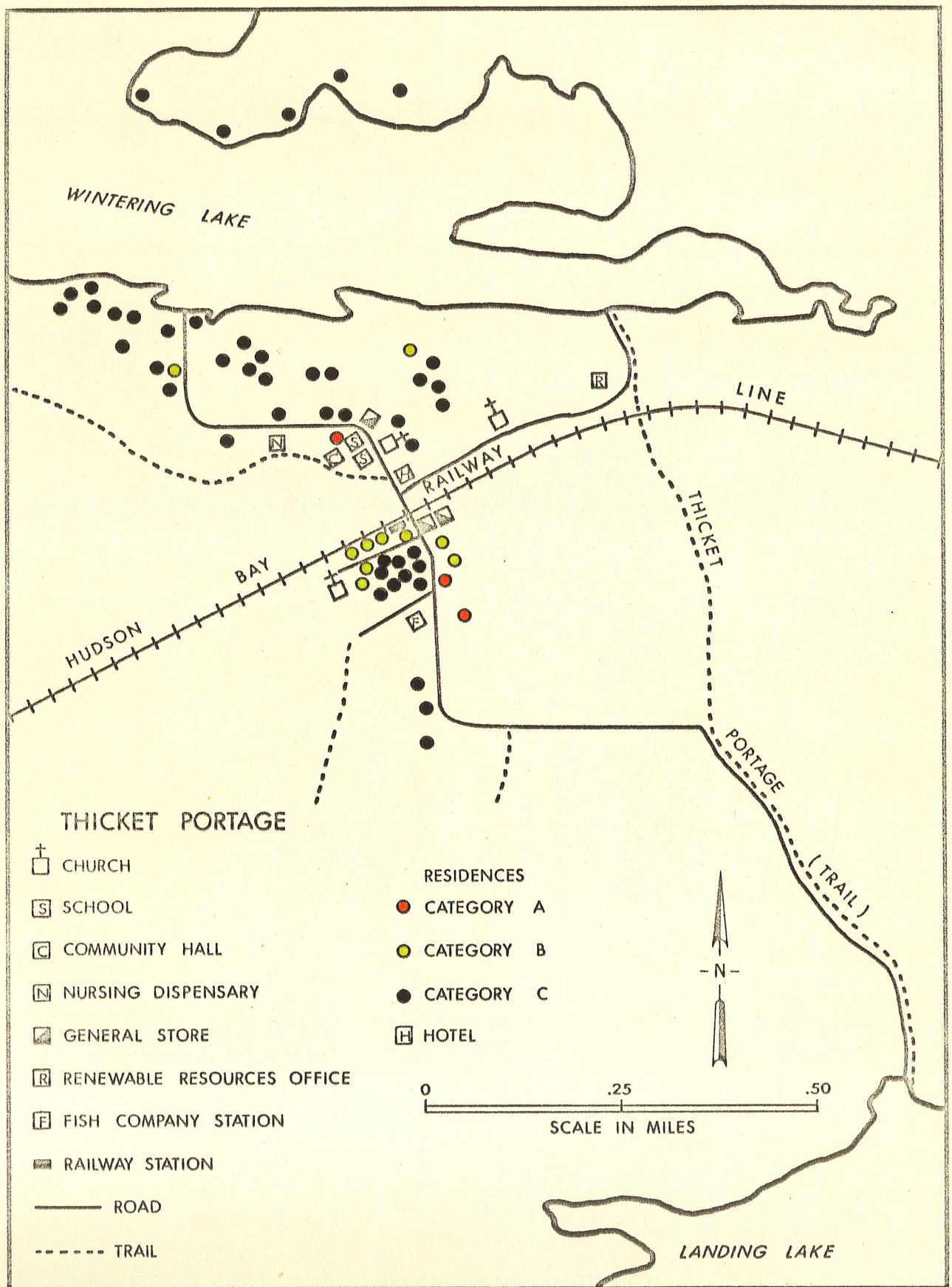
FIG. 5. CATEGORY A HOUSING, THICKET PORTAGE.



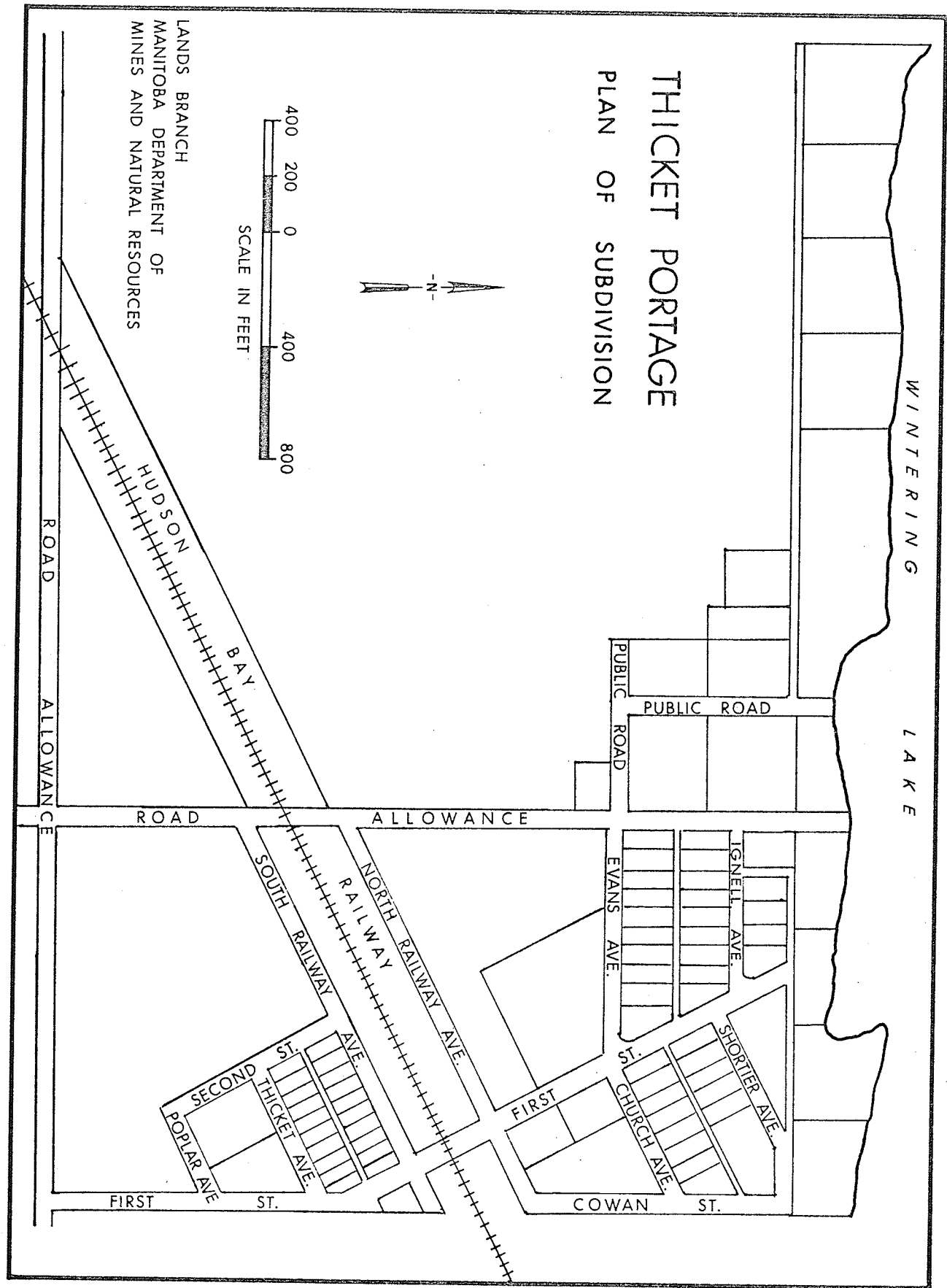
FIG. 6. CATEGORY B HOUSING, THICKET PORTAGE.
The front part of this log structure serves
as a store. Living quarters occupy the rear.



FIG. 7. CATEGORY C HOUSING, THICKET PORTAGE.



MAP 6



There are three general stores at Thicket Portage, but unlike the other three settlements in the study, none is owned or operated by the Hudson's Bay Company. The community has a 12 room hotel equipped with a restaurant, but unlike the hotel at Wabowden and the inn at Norway House, there is no liquor outlet here.

Frontier School Division has just completed construction of a new 4 room school in which elementary grades one to eight are taught. Northern Health Services operates a nursing dispensary here, which is the only source of medical help in the community. Police service comes from Thompson.

The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Northern Evangelical Mission constitute Thicket Portage's religious institutions.

Despite its relatively small population, the community offers a variety of recreational facilities: a pool hall, a community club hall which features movies, bingo, wist, and rummoli, all on a weekly basis. In addition, the school teachers have made an effort to organize various athletic activities.

Much of the water used in the settlement comes from Landing Lake in summer and from the snow in winter. C.N.R. has a well which the residents may utilize; the hotel and the school have their own wells. However, should the wells run dry, water is then hauled from Landing Lake. Delivery of water costs \$1.00 per 45 gallon tank.

Thicket Portage has no sewage facilities and lacks garbage pickup service, although it has adequate disposal grounds on the outskirts of the settlement. Manitoba Hydro offers isolated hydro service, and as a result many of the homes are without electricity. There are some 10 local phones in the community and two radio transmitters for purposes of sending and receiving messages. Residents are able to receive radio broadcasts from Thompson.

There are approximately 3 miles of road within the settlement, but as the only road equipment here includes one tractor, one front-end loader and one horse grader, the roads are not always passable. These are only service roads and are not connected to any highways or provincial roads, and thus the community cannot be reached from other centres by road transport.

Briefly, the community's main requirements includes (1) an adequate water supply and/or a greater number of wells, (2) telephones and electricity for all homes, and (3) an all-weather road to Thompson.

D. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Thicket Portage has a population of 282²⁰ and 47 household units,²¹ with an average of 6 persons per household unit. Forty-two of these units are family households and five are non-family households.

²⁰D.B.S. 1966.

²¹See Chapter II, p. 30, footnote 23 for a definition of household unit.

TABLE XIII²²NUMBER AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD UNITS
AT THICKET PORTAGE, 1966

Type of household	Number
Total households	47
Total family households	42
One family households	40
Two or more family households	2
Non-family households	5
One person only	3
Two or more persons	2

The population is a relatively young one with 52.1 per cent under the age of 15. This is 20 per cent higher than the equivalent age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian, for the province. The proportion of the population 65 years and older remains relatively low; 4.6 per cent lower than the equivalent provincial age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian.

The nursing dispensary, the railway providing access to the medical facilities at both Thompson and The Pas, and the educational facilities have all been instrumental in reducing the community's infant mortality rate. The relatively low elderly population, those 65 years and older, might possibly be attributed to a higher mortality rate in this age group.

It is interesting to note the higher proportion of those 65 years and older at Thicket Portage, 4.6 per cent, as compared to Wabowden,

2.8 per cent. Although it has not been confirmed, one can postulate that this is a result of a greater number of migrant laborers who go to Wabowden in search of employment and leave at the retirement age of 65.

Figure 4B gives an indication of the community's age-sex composition. The males account for a somewhat larger portion of the population (53.2 per cent) than the females (46.8 per cent). What is more significant, however, is the marked decrease in the 15 to 24 and 25 to 34 age brackets, and the bulge in the 35 to 44 age group. One can postulate that the marked decrease in the 15 to 24 and 25 to 34 age brackets is, in part, due to the number of young people who leave the community in search of employment opportunities. In addition, the provincial government encourages young people, who lack sufficient training for the various skilled employment opportunities, to take 'upgrading' courses and/or vocational training at The Pas. The bulge in the 35 to 44 age group is composed of those who have not left for better employment opportunities and those who have come to the community to work, either for the railway, the small lumber industry, the school, or the nursing dispensary.

From 1961 to 1966 the community's population has grown by 2.5 per cent, a small increase when compared to the increase of the three other settlements or to the provincial increase for the same period (Table II). One reason for this slow growth is the number of young people leaving the settlement in search of employment or educational opportunities. Secondly, during the period 1955 to 1959, Thicket

Portage experienced a brief economic boom when it acted as a distributing centre for all goods and supplies being shipped in to Thompson. At this time there was a considerable influx of people to the settlement to take advantage of this boom, and not until after 1961 did they begin to leave the settlement in relatively large numbers. Therefore, since these 'temporary residents' were included in the 1961 Census but left shortly afterwards, the population growth rate appears to be low.

Considering that 20 per cent of the community's population is under the age of 5, and 52 per cent is under the age of 15, economic planning here for the future appears to be mandatory.

According to the 1961 Census, 57 per cent of the residents were 'native Indian and Eskimo.' However, the recognition of Metis people remains a difficult undertaking because of the varying degrees of assimilation with the White man's culture, and this may be a partial explanation for the somewhat low percentage recorded. Using his sample, the author found the proportion to be as high as 76 per cent. Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs in 1966 estimated this proportion to be as high as 90 per cent.²³

The majority of residents are affiliated with either the Roman Catholic or the Anglican Church. According to the 1961 Census, 48 per cent were Roman Catholic, 38 per cent were Anglican and the remaining 14 per cent belonged to other denominations. The writer's 1967 sample

²³Manitoba Northern Affairs Community Fact Sheet for October 18, 1966 recorded a total population of 300, 270 of whom were designated as Metis and the remainder as White.

established 56 per cent as Roman Catholic, 37 per cent as Anglican and 7 per cent claiming membership in other churches.

The educational attainment of Thicket Portage residents remains lower than that of the province as a whole. Table XIV points out that the proportion five years and older who had no schooling and were not attending school at the time of the Census was 27 per cent.²⁴

TABLE XIV²⁵

HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OLDER
AT THICKET PORTAGE, 1961

Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	66	100
Pre-grade 1		
Elementary 1-4	43	65
Elementary 5-8	21	32
High School 1-2	1	1.5
High School 3-4		
High School 5		
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree	1	1.5
Not Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	155	100
No schooling	42	27
Elementary 1-4	38	25
Elementary 5-8	55	35
High School 1-2	10	6.5
High School 3-4	10	6.5
High School 5		
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree		

²⁴The provincial proportion for the same category was 7 per cent.

²⁵D.B.S. 1961.

In the author's 1967 sample, in which the educational attainment of only household heads was ascertained, 24 per cent had no formal education, 22 per cent had completed elementary grades one to four, 34 per cent had completed elementary grades five to eight, 15 per cent had completed secondary grades one to four and 5 per cent had taken some university or other post-grade twelve training.

The writer attempted to study population mobility here. Out of 41 households in his 1967 sample, 27 (66 per cent) had lived in Thicket Portage more than ten years, 10 (24 per cent) had lived in the community from two to ten years, and 4 (10 per cent) had been there less than two years. Of the 4 households who had lived in Thicket Portage less than two years, 2 gave their previous residences as north and 2 as south of the 53d parallel. All 4 had moved to Thicket Portage for reasons of employment. When the 4 were queried about the length of their previous residence, 1 mentioned more than ten years, 1 mentioned from two to ten years, and 2 said less than two years. Of the two who stayed less than two years, 1 had lived north and 1 had lived south of the 53d parallel previously. When these 2 were again questioned about the length of residence (prior to their previous one), 1 mentioned more than ten years and 1 said from two to ten years.

The 41 household heads in the sample were also asked about their future plans. Thirty-four (83 per cent) stated it was their intention to remain at Thicket Portage and 7 (17 per cent) planned to leave. Of the latter, 1 gave 1967 as the date for his departure and 6 mentioned 'eventually' as their departure date. When the 7 were queried as to

their destination, 4 mentioned centres north of the 53d parallel, 2 mentioned centres south of the 53d parallel and 1 either could not be specific or had not decided definitely where he would move. Of the 7, five gave employment as the main reason for moving, 1 mentioned social reasons and 1 gave a combination of social and business or employment reasons.

When asked whether they enjoyed living in the community, 34 out of 41 replied in the affirmative, 4 replied in the negative and 3 were non-committal.

A pattern emerges, similar to one at Wabowden, in which a small but significant number of transient households move to various northern communities (north of the 53d parallel), generally for reasons of employment. Thicket Portage is one of these communities in which such a household will function for a certain period of time before moving on to a different northern community.

E. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THICKET PORTAGE

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

Of the 41 household units in the sample, 34 (83 per cent) had one or more persons gainfully employed throughout part or the whole of the year²⁶ while the remaining 7 (17 per cent) had no one person gainfully employed throughout any part of the year.

²⁶This includes trapping and/or fishing.

Out of the community's total active labor force in the sample, including all those employed either part-time or full-time in activities ranging from fishing and trapping to railway work and teaching, only 43 per cent worked 12 months per year and 41 per cent worked 6 months or less in a year. Twenty-five per cent of the total active labor force relied on sources of employment outside of Thicket Portage.²⁷

During the month of July 1967, 9 of the 41 household units in the sample (22 per cent) received welfare payments or public subsidy.²⁸ However, during the period from July 1966 to July 1967, 14 of the 47 household units (30 per cent) received public financial assistance.²⁹

In examining the employment structure here, it is interesting to note the proportion of the active labor force engaged in trapping and fishing. According to the 1961 Census, 19 per cent of the total labor force were engaged in these traditional pursuits. The writer's 1967 sample discovered 9 per cent of those gainfully employed to be fishing and another 12 per cent to be trapping. The combined 1967 figure of 21 per cent is only slightly higher than that reported for 1961. However, Renewable Resources issued 15 registered licenses to Thicket Portage trappers for the 1966-67 season,³⁰ which would raise this percentage somewhat.

²⁷Examples here include Gillam, Thompson, Soab Creek and Pipe Lake.

²⁸The terms, 'welfare,' 'public assistance,' and 'public subsidy,' have been defined in Chapter II, p. 39, footnote 34.

²⁹Department of Health and Welfare, The Pas.

³⁰Renewable Resources Office, Wabowden, Manitoba.

TABLE XV³¹RECORD OF CROP AND VALUE OF ALL FURS 1966-67 INCLUSIVE
THICKET PORTAGE R.T.L.

Species	1964-65		1965-66		1966-67	
	Crop	Value	Crop	Value	Crop	Value
Beaver	219	\$2,719.98	143	\$2,419.56	163	\$2,254.29
Coyote			2	21.66		
Ermine (Weasel)	96	221.76	334	871.74	20	24.40
Fisher	2		14	177.24	4	37.32
Fox, Blue			1	10.00		
Fox, Silver			1	20.66		
Fox, Red	1	5.92	5	60.00		
Lynx	13	251.29	33	1,303.50	29	696.00
Mink	129	2,580.00	131	2,620.00	166	2,573.00
Muskrat	924	1,404.48	1,142	2,078.44	258	227.04
Otter	7	219.38	11	363.00	13	255.71
Squirrel	495	292.05	285	171.00	107	57.78
TOTALS		\$7,694.86		\$10,116.80		\$6,125.54
Number of Trappers	34		28		29	
Ave. Income per Trapper	\$226.32		\$361.31		\$211.23	

Table XV offers evidence of the very low returns to the trappers. For example, the average income per trapper for the 1966-67 season was only \$211.23, and these low returns have been characteristic of this resource based industry for the past several seasons. In addition, any realistic appraisal of this industry must take into account the fact

³¹Manitoba, Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch.

that the cost of equipment and repairs is subtracted from the profits, and thus the real income realized by the operator is extremely low. These low earnings must be supplemented by fishing and/or casual wage employment.

TABLE XVI³²

QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM 3 SELECTED LAKES
IN WHICH PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO THICKET PORTAGE FISHERMEN

Species	1963-64	Totals in c.w.t.		1966-67
		1964-65	1965-66	
Pickereel	1,042	970	654	683
Pike	671	886	457	271
Tullibee		35	198	74
Whitefish	861	483	438	196
Perch			12	
TOTALS	2,574	2,374	1,759	1,224
Value to men	\$29,131.00	\$48,189.00	\$34,403.00	\$27,800.00
Market Value	\$57,958.00	\$69,004.00	\$55,231.00	\$38,849.00
No. of licenses	54	50	41	25
Ave. income per fisherman	\$539.46	\$963.78	\$839.10	\$1,112.00

³²Manitoba Department of Fisheries.
The 3 lakes are: Paint Lake, Wintering Lake and Landing Lake.

Prospects for the settlement's commercial fishermen appear to be somewhat brighter; however, they generally net the individual operator less than \$1,000 per year. In fishing, as in trapping, one should take into account the fact that the cost of equipment and repairs is subtracted from the operator's profits. Table XVI, involving 3 lakes³³ in which priority is given to Thicket Portage fishermen, shows that during the past four years, the fisherman's average per capita income has exceeded \$1,000 only in the 1966-67 season. Their average income for the other three years was under \$1,000.

The last Census to show earning groups and average earnings for Thicket Portage was taken in 1961. Figures given here are for wage earners who worked for salaries, and excluded here, for the most part, are those engaged in trapping and fishing. Table VI shows that the income of 43 per cent of the wage earners was less than \$3,000. Average earnings in the community were \$2,607.

These average earnings are lower than those of Wabowden (\$3,167) and those of Winnipeg (\$2,934) for the same year.³⁴ It should be noted here that out of 37 wage earners in 1961, 5 belonged to the 'managerial' category and 2 were in the 'professional and technical' category. When taken together, they comprise 19 per cent of all wage earners. One can assume the 7 were relatively well paid, and when dealing with a small

³³Of these 3 lakes, one (Paint Lake), is fished in summer only, another (Wintering Lake), is fished in winter only, and the third (Landing Lake), is fished in both summer and winter.

³⁴D.B.S. 1961.

group such as 37, these 7 will have the effect of producing a relatively high mean. The Census has, for the most part, ignored incomes from trapping and fishing. The proportion of the labor force, was inactive at the time of the census, was also not included. Therefore, the average per capita and per household unit income will undoubtedly be lower than \$2,607.

MINING

Thicket Portage is situated at the margin of the Thompson nickel belt (Map 5). The community's proximity to those areas currently active in nickel mining is of great importance with respect to the employment opportunities.

In the author's 1967 sample, a total of 13 men were employed by INCO either at Thompson or at related mining camps. Of these 13 men, 5 worked 12 months per year, 7 worked 6 months and less per year and the remaining 1 had just begun work and did not know how long he would remain employed. In addition, 1 person was employed in mineral surveying 6 months or less per year. Thus a total of 14 men were engaged either permanently or seasonally in some aspect of the nickel mining operations.

AGRICULTURE

Thicket Portage experiences climatic and soil conditions similar to Wabowden. However, large-scale farming operations here in the near future appear unlikely. At present, the greatest barrier appears to be the lack of road transport with other centres. Goods and produce would all have to be transported by rail.

However, agriculture on a local scale should receive greater encouragement. A few residents grow their own vegetables with considerable success. Certainly, the hardier vegetables such as potatoes and carrots do well here. Poultry farming could conceivably be a profitable venture in the community. The production of eggs and poultry products as well as vegetables should be encouraged for local consumption at Thompson.

MINK RANCHING

The fur farming industry, in particular mink ranching, offers the same excellent prospects here as at Wabowden. Freight rates would not be a prohibitive factor in shipping, 'high value and low bulk' pelts to the auction market in Winnipeg. A development program that would successfully involve residents of Indian ancestry in this industry has been outlined in Chapter II.

FOREST PRODUCTS

An Economic Survey of Northern Manitoba by Arthur Little has stated:

The best timber stands in Northern Manitoba are to be found along the Nelson River and in the Lake Sipiwek and Cross Lake regions. These stands would support a substantial forest-products industry in the Thicket Portage area³⁵

The report goes on to suggest Thicket Portage as the possible centre for a sawmill.³⁶

³⁵Manitoba Department of Industry and Commerce, An Economic Survey of Northern Manitoba, (Prepared by Arthur D. Little Inc., Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 60.

³⁶Ibid.

Since 1959, there has been a small cutting operation in the Sipiwesk Lake area and a small sawmill operation near Thicket Portage.³⁷ The owner and operator has employed up to 20 men during the cutting season, most of whom are residents of the community. The work is seasonal with peak activity occurring during the months of January, February and March, when the lakes and areas of muskeg are frozen. White spruce is the main species cut here. About 85 per cent of it is sold as mining material and is handled through Spruce Products Company Limited in Winnipeg. The remaining 15 per cent is shipped to Clearwater Lake where it is 'finished' and shipped south. All spruce timber is shipped from Thicket Portage via rail transport.

In 1966, Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited was formed to fully develop the forest products industry in Northern Manitoba.³⁸

³⁷Mr. Bryan Tetlock, owner and operator of Bryan Tetlock and Son Company Limited, has informed the writer that his company cuts 1,150,000 B.M., mainly white spruce, in an average year. He will begin to slow down his cutting operations, and may possibly be forced to cease operations, once Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited begins to function at its full capacity.

³⁸Manitoba, Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, Debates and Proceedings, Vol. 12, No. 32, 1966, p. 738.

On March 9, 1966, Honourable Gurney Evans, Minister of Industry and Commerce, announced a multi-stage, fully integrated forest products development program in northern Manitoba. To this end the Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited was formed with an authorized capital of \$5 million. It provided for development, in five stages, as follows.

- Stage 1. To establish woodland debarking and loading facilities for 50,000 cords of debarked wood to be in operation by March 31, 1968.
- Stage 2. To establish a sawmill at The Pas for the production of 30

Their cutting area covers some 40,000 square miles.³⁹

Although little data concerning Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited is available at present, it appears certain that a company sawmill will not be located at or in the vicinity of Thicket Portage.⁴⁰ No accurate estimate is as yet available concerning the quantity of wood to be cut in this area and concerning the number of men to be employed from surrounding centres such as Thicket Portage

million board feet of lumber per year to be in operation by December 31, 1968.

- Stage 3. To establish a newsprint and magazine paper mill at The Pas with a minimum capacity of 300-400 tons per day to be in operation by March 31, 1971.
- Stage 4. Subject to existing economies at the time to establish a chemical plant with a minimum capacity of 50 tons per day.
- Stage 5. Subject to existing economies at the time to establish a high capacity sulphate mill or alternatively to double the capacity of the newspaper mill depending upon market and availability of timber resources, not later than 1973.

The total investments, through Stage 5, would finally exceed \$100 million and jobs for several thousand people will be created over the next ten years at the Plant Site and in the forest operations. It is further expected that the implementation of these projects will considerably enhance the economic and industrial development of Northern Manitoba and lead to substantial exports for the province.

³⁹Personal communication with Mr. W. K. Webster, Director, Manitoba Department of Forestry, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

⁴⁰Manitoba Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, op. cit., p. 742.

On March 9, 1966 the Minister of Industry and Commerce gave a detailed report to the Legislature on Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited forestry operations, on the financial backers of the company and on the forestry agreement. One point of interest was the company's acquisition of title to plantsite and millsite property at The Pas and at Arnot. The selection of Arnot almost certainly eliminates any possibility of establishing a sawmill at Thicket Portage.

and Wabowden.⁴¹ However, since the Sipiwesk Lake area is known to have large, relatively pure tracts of merchantable timber, it is hoped that Thicket Portage residents will be able to take advantage of employment opportunities here when the newly formed company develops the area.

F. ACCESSIBILITY

One of the railway centres on the Hudson Bay Railway line, Thicket Portage is located at Mile 184 in Township 73, Range 2, west of the Principal Meridian. The only mode of travel here, apart from the railway, is by aircraft. Tables X and XI give an indication of the settlement's proximity to Winnipeg and to other northern communities.

Daily railway passenger service to Thompson, The Pas and Winnipeg is available 6 days per week. All air service to and from the community is via chartered aircrafts at the cost of 50 cents per air mile.

Examining only the transportation facilities available to and from the community, and ignoring 'time' and 'inconvenience' factors, Thicket Portage appears to be less accessible than Wabowden but still more accessible than Norway House and Oxford House.

⁴¹Forestal, a consultant firm, is under contract to the provincial government to carry out a detailed survey of timber stands in the Sipiwesk Lake - Thicket Portage - Wabowden area. Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited has hired consultants to do similar studies. Only when the final reports are published, will accurate data be available concerning the quantity of wood to be cut in this area and the number of jobs this will create for the surrounding settlements.

Household heads were queried about the frequency of visits in an average year to Winnipeg, The Pas, Wabowden, Thompson and Churchill, and concerning the reasons for the visits. Table XVII illustrates a definite pattern in which Thompson and The Pas stand out as the major service centres in that order of importance.

TABLE XVII
NUMBER OF VISITS MADE BY HOUSEHOLD HEADS
TO COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE THICKET PORTAGE

Visits per year	<u>Communities</u>				
	Thompson	Winnipeg	Wabowden	Churchill	The Pas
1 - 4	17	4	4	1	26
5 - 10	3				
11 - 20	8				2
21 - 30	2				
More than 30			1		
<u>Reasons for visit</u>					
Social	16	2	2	1	8
Business	18	3	3		11
Medical	11	2			19

What is significant here is the proportion of Thicket Portage household heads that do not visit Thompson in an average year (11 out of 41 household heads - 27 per cent). In contrast, the proportion of Wabowden household heads who do not visit Thompson in an average year is

only 5 out of 84 household heads (4 per cent) even though the distance between Wabowden and Thompson is twice that between Thicket Portage and Thompson. Explanation of this phenomenon appears to lie in the availability of road transportation between Wabowden and Thompson and the lack of it between Thicket Portage and Thompson.

Another interesting point concerns the number who visit The Pas for medical reasons. Many residents believe they receive better hospital and medical attention at The Pas than at Thompson. Thompson is preferred to The Pas for business matters.

Thicket Portage can get newspapers, magazines and mail via The Pas and Thompson 6 days per week, although the newspapers generally arrive one day after publication. The settlement is not able to receive any television programs but residents can keep in touch by radio with Thompson. As yet, the only telephones are local and do not make contact with those of other communities.

CHAPTER IV

NORWAY HOUSE

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

From the beginning of the 19th Century to the early part of the 20th Century, Norway House grew in importance, first as a trading post, or 'House,' and later as an entrepot and supply depot. The post's importance, to a large extent, was determined by its geographical location in the centre of a triangle, of which the angles were York Factory, Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton.

Although traders from both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company are known to have been active in the area during the latter part of the 18th Century, relatively little trade was carried on here before the turn of the century.

The original Hudson's Bay Company post at Norway House, established in 1801 by one William Sinclair, was situated south of the present site on a branch of the Nelson River which meets the Jack River at a place called "Pasquiskuganis" meaning "Big Clearing."¹

In 1814, a party of eight Norwegians, apparently ex-covicts,² with an overseer were brought out to the post by the Company for purposes

¹Robert Watson, "The Story of Norway House," Canadian Geographical Journal, Vol. 1, No. 4, August 1930, p. 300.

²Arthur S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., Toronto, 1939), p. 594.

of opening up land communications between York Factory and the interior.³

At a new site about twenty miles from the Jack River post on a peninsula culminating at Mossy Point, on the west wide of the overflow from Lake Winnipeg, and opposite a place now known as Warren's Landing, they began work on a new 'House.'⁴ This new site had been selected as one of the stations on the proposed winter road from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg. By 1817 the Jack River post⁵ had been abandoned and was replaced by the new House named in honor of the Norwegians. The post expanded and grew in importance as a depot and transportation centre, especially following the union of the two rival companies in 1821. When fire destroyed the House in 1824, the present site was chosen for rebuilding.

Governor Simpson felt that the new House should be erected on the most elevated spot that could be found along the Jack River. Others

³Lord Selkirk, in planning his Red River settlement, hoped to improve transportation between York Factory and Lake Winnipeg. In order to facilitate summer traffic, he planned improvements at various portages. For winter travel, a winter road was proposed to be used by sleds running the frozen streams. Further plans, designed to eliminate the risk of starvation by the way, called for a series of establishments along the route with small farms or gardens providing vegetables such as potatoes, and storing meat.

⁴Information taken from notes on the early history of Norway House as recorded in the Hudson's Bay Company library, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

⁵The Jack River post, in 1816, served as a haven to those Selkirk settlers driven from their homes at Fort Douglas after the killing of Governor Semple at Seven Oaks. The killing was a result of the conflict between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.

felt that it should be conveniently near the fishery, the main source of its food supply. For these reasons, Norway House, in 1826, was moved to its present position on Ross Island where both the Nelson River and Jack River flow into Little Playgreen Lake.

In 1830 Chief Trader Donald Ross (later Chief Factor) was placed in charge of Norway House, and under his direction the post appears to have assumed an air of importance and prosperity.

During the 1830's, Norway House was probably second only to Fort Garry in importance as an entrepot and transport centre. Governor Simpson in 1831 stated its important functions.

This Establishment, being situated at the junction of the two principal roads or lines of communication between York Factory and the interior, is a place of much resort and bustle during the summer and is used as an entrepot for the Athabaska and Mackenzie River Districts, where their returns are received and their outfits delivered, the distance between those districts and the factory being too great for loaded boats to perform the whole voyage, and as business is now conducted it answers all the purposes of a depot, although stripped of most of the expenses which usually attach to such establishments. A great proportion of the Red River outfits and returns, the latter consisting chiefly of provisions, are likewise deposited here until opportunities offer of forwarding them to their destinations. It is moreover a convenient place for boat building, and having a good fishery close at hand, supernumeraries are frequently sent here where they are maintained at little expense⁶

Norway House played an important part in the communications between Montreal and the West, and between York Factory and the interior posts. It also served as a frequent meeting place of the Council of the

⁶As quoted by Watson, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

Northern Department of Rupert's Land until the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada in 1870. The House acted as host to such celebrities as Captain John Franklin who visited the post for the first time in 1819 on his first expedition to the polar sea, and again in 1827 on his return from his second Arctic expedition.

During the 1830's the fort, which was stockaded like the other posts of the Company, included a powder magazine, a jailhouse, a warehouse, various living quarters for officers and servants, and facilities to accommodate council meetings.

Agriculture was carried on at Norway House early on in the history of the post, and an account of the productivity of the gardens here is given in the fort Journal of October 1833.

. . . Thursday, 10th - Got the last of our potatoes taken up . . . 360 kegs of eight gallons - from 15 kegs planted in Spring - equal to 24 fold return.⁷

Fishing during this period was a prolific activity. The catch, mainly Whitefish, included Sturgeon as well. As a rule the fish were air-dried and stored for winter use.

Some two miles from the Bay post, by water, is the settlement of Rossville, an outpost of the Company. The Wesleyan Mission was established here in 1840, with Rev. James Evans, the inventor of the now famous Cree syllabic alphabet, acting as superintendent.⁸

⁷As quoted by Watson, Ibid., p. 298.

⁸Rev. James Evans translated the bible and numerous hymns into the Cree, copies of which he then printed on a crudely constructed press.

The majority of residents of Indian ancestry at Norway House, originally Swampy Cree, came from Manitoba and Saskatchewan between the Red and Saskatchewan Rivers, and ranging eastward down the Nelson River to Hudson Bay and northward toward Athabaska Lake.⁹

In 1875, Norway House was selected as a place where Treaty Number Five was negotiated whereby the Cross Lake and Norway House bands agreed to the terms of the treaty, formally elected chiefs and councillors who signed their marks to that document, and ceded to the Canadian Federal Government their possessory rights to the land. In return for their land, they retained the right to hunt and fish in the ceded area for 'as long as the sun shall shine and the rivers run.' Two reserves were set aside for the Indians' use, and on each reserve, schools were established. Reserve residents were encouraged, through gifts of agricultural implements, cattle and seed, to cease their former nomadic way of life, and instead, to adopt a more settled agrarian one. With the signing of the treaty, every registered Indian was to receive annually, the sum of five dollars.¹⁰

With the building of the Hudson Bay Railway line to Churchill in the early part of this Century, the importance of Norway House as an entrepot and supply depot diminished. The railway line which served to divert the trade and supply centres to other posts, also effected a

⁹Watson, op. cit., pp. 301-302.

¹⁰(Hon.) Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, Toronto, 1880, pp. 166, 286 ff.

relocation for the Keewatin District Office from Norway House to Winnipeg in 1915.

In 1923, the last York boat was built at Norway House for the band to freight its government relief supplies. Today, supplies are brought in either by lake freighter and/or aircraft during the summer, and by tractor train and/or aircraft during the winter months.

At present, although Norway House no longer functions as an important freight distributing centre for the area, nevertheless, its hospital, its Indian Affairs administration and until just recently, its residential school, have helped to make the settlement a service centre for other Indian reserves in this northern district.

Norway House, in actual fact, is made up of two communities: the Indian reserve with its focal point at Rossville and the smaller non-treaty Indian settlement along the Nelson River. Their populations are 1,599¹¹ and 676 respectively.¹²

B. PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

Numerous outcrops of granitic rock here provide ample evidence of the underlying Pre-Cambrian Shield. It has already been pointed out in the discussion of site conditions at Wabowden in Chapter II, that originally the Pre-Cambrian Shield consisted of both the harder granites or gneissose rocks and the relatively softer sheared lavas and sediments.

¹¹Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, December 31, 1965.

¹²D.B.S. 1966.

The various weathering processes had eroded the Shield to a low level before Palaeozoic times, and because the softer sheared labas and sediments were less resistant than the granitoids, they were deeply disintegrated.

With the movement of the ice sheet over the area, the weathered surface was carried away, and the schists were plucked to a greater degree than the granite, the result being a hummocky smooth topography with linear valleys in the schists and sediments.

Wallace, in his report on the geological formations of Manitoba,¹³ states that many of the northern lakes on the Shield lie in these relatively easily eroded schists. He attributes the outline of such lakes quite definitely to the attitude of the rocks, the long narrow bays being always parallel to the strike of the schist.

Following the last recession of the ice mass and the subsequent formation of Lake Agassiz, morainic material, outwash deposits and beach ridges were lain down, generally speaking in a northwesterly trend.

Drainage from the west, to a large extent, was hampered by these glacial ridges. Between the long ridges of relatively dry land extending northwards, large swamps, frequently impassable, have been formed.

Norway House is scattered along the more elevated ridges and granite outcrops. Swamps and depressions filled with muskeg are so numerous as to discourage summer travel over land. For this reason, motor boats remain the major vehicle of transportation around the settlement.

¹³R. C. Wallace, The Geological Formations of Manitoba, p. 38.

Along with the rock outcrops, the swamps and bogs, are pockets of localized clay, in which garden crops have been successfully grown.

The average length of the frost free period, 33 degrees and over, ranges from 90 to 95 days; however, if 29.5 degrees is taken as the critical temperature, the frost free period is extended to about 115 days.¹⁴

The average total annual amount of precipitation is 16 inches, and during the average growing season, the settlement receives 5.35 inches in the form of rainfall.¹⁵

Even though the growing season is somewhat shorter than that of southern Manitoba, the longer duration of sunlight at Norway House is a compensating factor.

The natural vegetation ranges from black spruce and tamarack in the wetter bog areas to white spruce and balsam fir in the better drained localities. On the thin soiled rock slopes, a jack pine cover is common.

Large, relatively pure stands of merchantable softwood pulp become more common along the Nelson River north of Norway House, especially at such places as Sipiwesk Lake.

Soils in the settlement have generally developed in pockets of localized clay and where they occupy moderately to well drained sites, garden crops have been grown successfully. The numerous bogs, with more

¹⁴A. J. Connor, The Climate of Manitoba, (Winnipeg: Economic Survey Board, 1938), pp. 92-93.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 12. This average of 5.35 inches was calculated from records collected over a 39 year period.

than 30 inches of peat, and the half bogs, with 12 to 30 inches of peat, are inherently low in natural fertility and pose a serious drainage problem. Because of the extensive area of swamp and bog, any large scale reclamation of these areas through a program of extensive drainage remains impractical.

C. THE SETTLEMENT

The Norway House Indian Reserve, 28.8 square miles in area, is situated along stretches of the Jack River, Little Playgreen Lake and the Nelson River. Many of the reserve residents live at Rossville, a relatively compact settlement which occupies a peninsula bounded by Little Playgreen Lake. In addition, there are other reserve Indians living along both banks of the Jack River, on Tower's Island and other smaller islands in the Jack River.

Situated on the reserve's western boundary is the smaller non-treaty Indian settlement. Residents here live along both banks of the Nelson River.

It is interesting to note the riparian nature of human occupance at Norway House. With the exception of the compact nucleus at Rossville, the majority of residents are located along the river banks, on islands and along the lake's shores, since the rivers and the lake constitute the main transportation arteries of the community (Map 8).

For purposes of differentiating between the two sectors of the settlement, the D.B.S. Census titles will be used in which the Indian sector is referred to as Norway House School District.

Norway House Indian Reserve is administered by the Indian Affairs Branch, an arm of the federal government, as set out by the terms of the Indian Act.¹⁶ The chief and six councilors who are elected by the reserve Indians, constitute the local government. In fact, they act as link between the Indian Affairs Branch and the reserve population. These intermediaries represent the band when complaints or requests arise, and they act as agents for the federal government in the disposal of relief supplies and treaty goods.

Norway House School District is classified as an unincorporated urban district and as such is administered by the local government council at The Pas. The school district, unlike the reserve, is operated on a tax basis.

HOUSING, SERVICE FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Houses are located at random in a linear pattern along the lake and the rivers, and are seldom more than 100 yards from the water front.

The author used his scheme for classifying the quality and condition of housing at Norway House,¹⁷ and examples of dwellings in each of the three categories are given in figures 8, 9 and 10.

¹⁶See Chapter I, Introduction, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷Mr. Sam T. Anderson, community health worker, who is well acquainted with the quality and condition of housing in the community, both on the reserve and in the school district, assisted the writer in his classification of dwellings into Categories A, B and C.



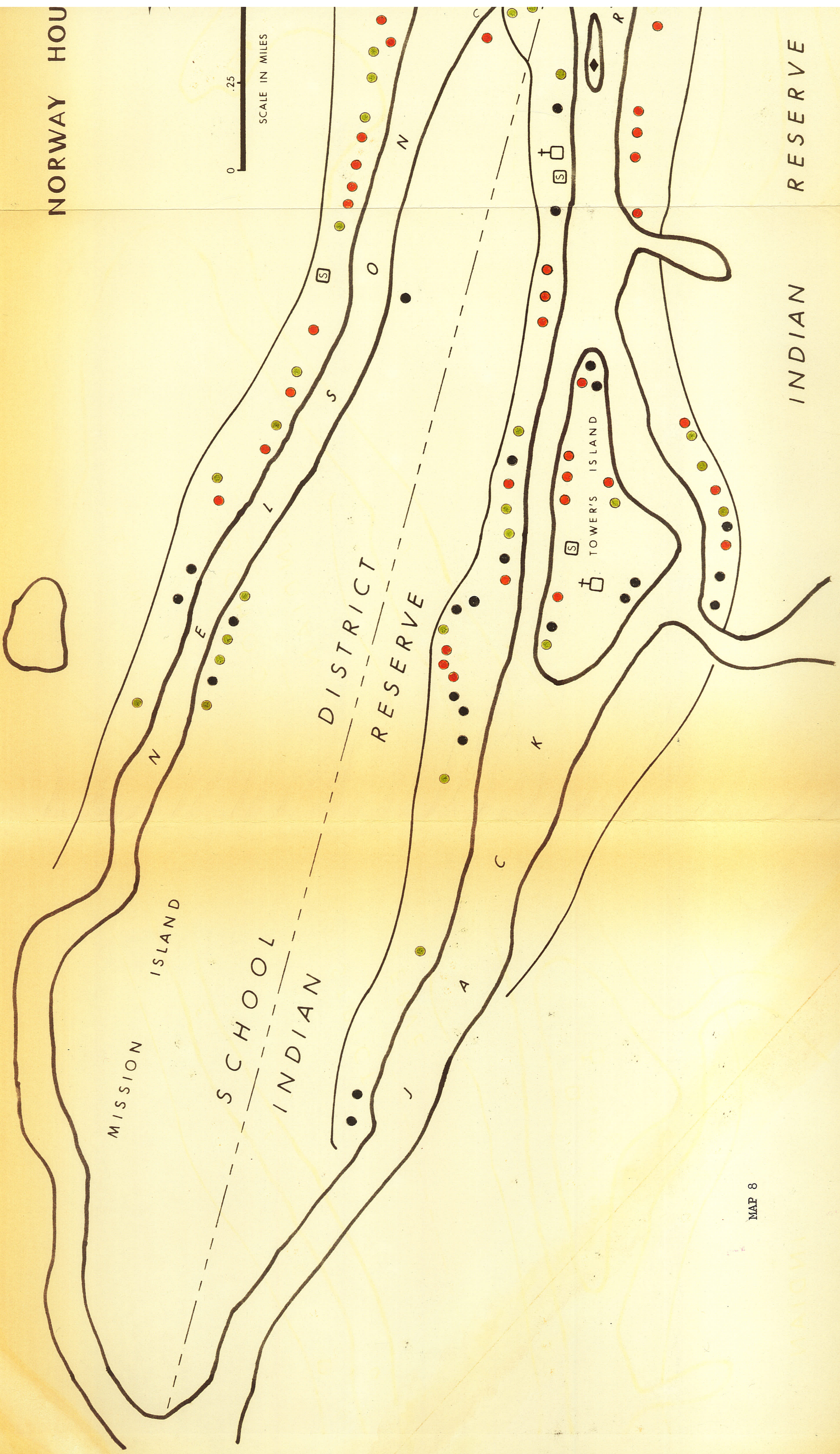
FIG. 8. CATEGORY A HOUSING, NORWAY HOUSE.



FIG. 9. CATEGORY B HOUSING, NORWAY HOUSE.

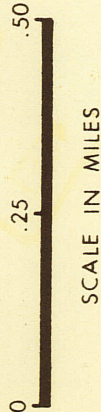
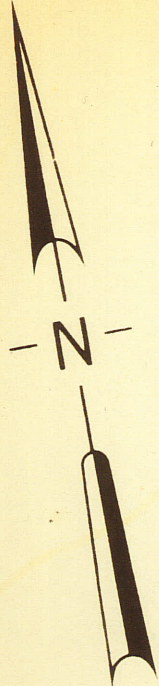


FIG. 10. CATEGORY C HOUSING, NORWAY HOUSE



NORWAY HOUSE

LITTLE



DOG ISL.

R.C.M.P.

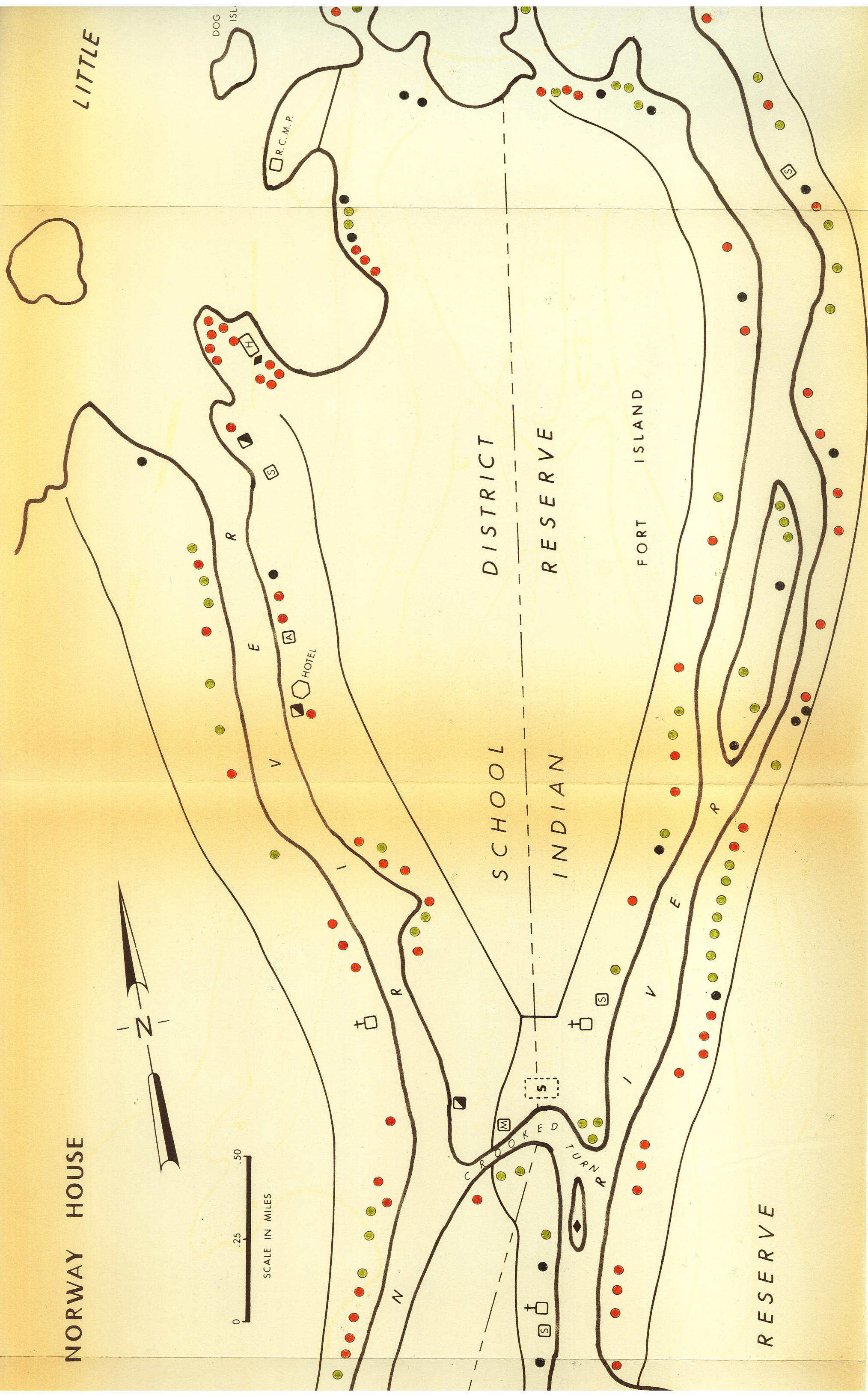
HOTEL

SCHOOL INDIAN DISTRICT RESERVE

FORT ISLAND

RESERVE

CROOKED TURN



LITTLE

PLAYGREEN

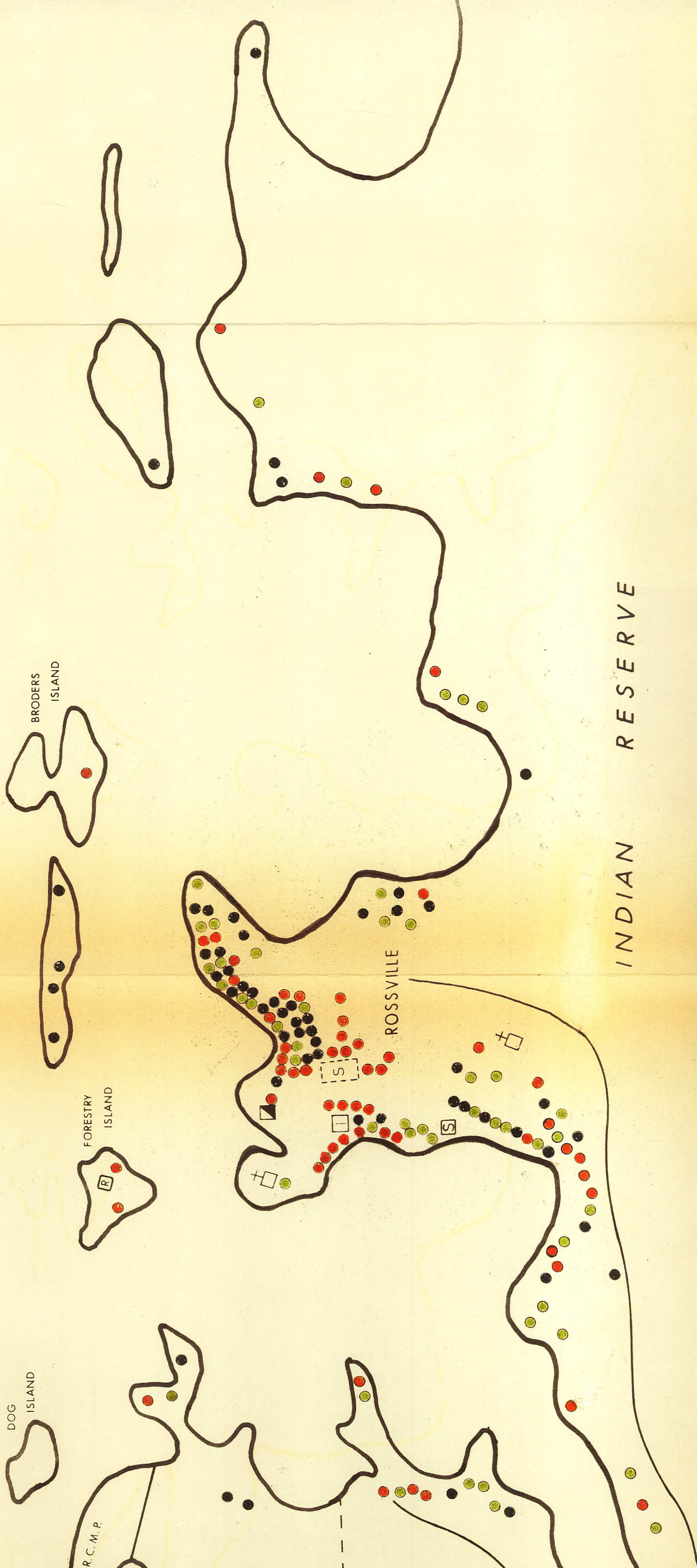
LAKE

DOG ISLAND













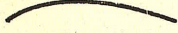

R.C.M.P.

FORESTRY ISLAND

BRODERS ISLAND



NORWAY HOUSE

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|  | CHURCH |
|  | SCHOOL |
|  | HOSPITAL |
|  | GENERAL STORE |
|  | COMMUNITY HALL |
|  | MARINA |
|  | HOTEL |
|  | AIRPLANE DEPOT |
|  | INDIAN AFFAIRS AGENCY |
|  | RENEWABLE RESOURCES OFFICE |
|  | PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL |
|  | BOUNDARY BETWEEN INDIAN RESERVE
AND SCHOOL DISTRICT |
|  | TRAIL |
|  | RESIDENCES
CATEGORY A
CATEGORY B
CATEGORY C |

Map 8 shows the distribution of houses in each category. The majority of houses belong to Category C. It is readily apparent that the better types of dwellings, Categories A and B, are located in the school district, whereas the poorer type is more common on the reserve. It is interesting to note that the better housing is invariably occupied by Whites, particularly those who are in the professional and managerial class. However, by and large, the Metis, living in the school district, occupy better housing than do the reserve Indians.

In an attempt to improve housing conditions on the reserve, Indian Affairs Branch has made an allowance for new house construction in its budget. During 1965, 12 new houses were built, in 1966 the number built increased to 20, and in 1967, 24 new houses were constructed. The acting Superintendent of the Indian Agency has estimated that an additional 69 houses are needed to bring all housing to an acceptable standard.¹⁸ However, due to an increase in new family formations and due to the 'wearing out' of existing houses, it appears that if the present rate of construction is continued, it will be some considerable time before the demand for adequate housing will be met.

There are four general stores at Norway House, two of which are owned and operated by the Hudson's Bay Company. The settlement has a

¹⁸Personal communication with Mr. Howard Kendall, acting Superintendent of the Norway House Indian Agency during the summer of 1967.

modern, fully equipped 8 room hotel with a restaurant and beer parlor.¹⁹

Up until June 30, 1967, the Norway House United Church Residential School taught pupils from various other northern Indian reserves such as Oxford House and God's River. The United Church has since relinquished its responsibility and the operation of the school has been taken over by the Frontier School Division. In addition, there appears to be no further need for a residential school and thus it has now become a day school.

At present there are 6 schools spread throughout the reserve and 2 schools in the school district. Some are only one to two room structures and all teach only elementary grades. Frontier School Division plans to operate two consolidated schools; one which will assume the functions of the former United Church school at Rossville, and the other at the southern end of the settlement. These two schools will be fairly large, fully equipped, teach grades one to nine inclusive and will replace the smaller schools.²⁰ The new consolidated schools will service both reserve and school district populations. In addition, Norway House plans to construct a local system of roads that will allow for the transportation of students to the schools.

¹⁹Liquor is not legally allowed on the reserve and therefore all reserve Indians visiting the beer parlor consume their beer at or near the hotel. This creates a variety of problems. The chief and councilors can decide whether or not they wish to allow liquor on the reserve, but as yet, they themselves have not felt it was wise to allow liquor on the reserve.

²⁰Personal communication with Mr. B. S. Lee, administrator of the United Church Residential School until June 30, 1967. Mr. Lee informed the author that apart from the two new consolidated schools, the Roman Catholic Church will maintain its separate school.

The federal government operates a 38 bed hospital at Norway House which services a number of northern Indian communities such as Island Lake, God's River and Oxford House. The hospital is equipped to perform minor surgery and has a staff that includes qualified doctors, nurses and one dentist.

There is an R.C.M.P. detachment stationed at Norway House which, in addition to the three White officers, employs 3 special constables of Indian ancestry to provide police service.

The United Church, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Pentecostal Mission constitute Norway House's religious institutions.

Despite its relatively large population (including that of the reserve and the school district), the settlement lacks adequate recreational facilities. A new centennial community hall which offers a variety of entertainment has recently been built, but because it is located in the school district, it appears unlikely that it will be of great benefit to reserve residents. The reserve has a small movie hall, owned and operated by a treaty Indian, and a community park of about 6 acres for the use of children and young people.²¹

Thus, the school district is equipped with a new community hall while the much larger reserve population lacks similar facilities. Unless the school district's recreational facilities will be fully

²¹The park is in the process of being built. It is a project of the 'Pow-Wow' club, an organization of treaty Indian young people.

available to reserve residents, there will be a real need to provide the latter with similar services.

All drinking water is taken from either the Nelson River, the Jack River or Little Playgreen Lake. While the hotel, the hospital and a number of residents filter and chlorinate their drinking water, the majority of residents, especially those of the reserve, use the water untreated. The water can and does become polluted, especially during spring breakup, and for this reason there is a pressing need for an adequate, potable water supply.

Except for the hospital, the hotel and a few of the wealthier school district residents, Norway House has no sewage facilities, and garbage pickup service is non-existent. The settlement is equipped with electricity and local telephones. However, telephone communication to points outside the settlement remains poor. Residents are able to receive radio broadcasts from Winnipeg's strongest stations.

There are approximately 50 miles of road in the settlement. However, for the most part, these are virtually impassable in summer since they traverse numerous stretches of muskeg and swamp. They can only be utilized by bombadiers and skidoos in winter when the ground is frozen. These roads are not connected to any highways or provincial roads, and thus the settlement cannot be reached from other centres by road transport.

Briefly, the settlement's main requirements include: (1) an adequate, potable water supply, (2) all weather roads within the community that are passable in summer as well as in winter in order to transport students to the proposed consolidated schools, and (3) an airstrip that allows air service during the periods of 'breakup' and freeze-up.'

D. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Norway House Indian Reserve has a population of 1,599²² and 254 household units,²³ with an average of 6.3 persons per household unit. The family is the basic household unit, 240 on the reserve, particularly the one family household. Of interest here is the relatively large number of two-or-more family households, 24 out of 240 (10 per cent).

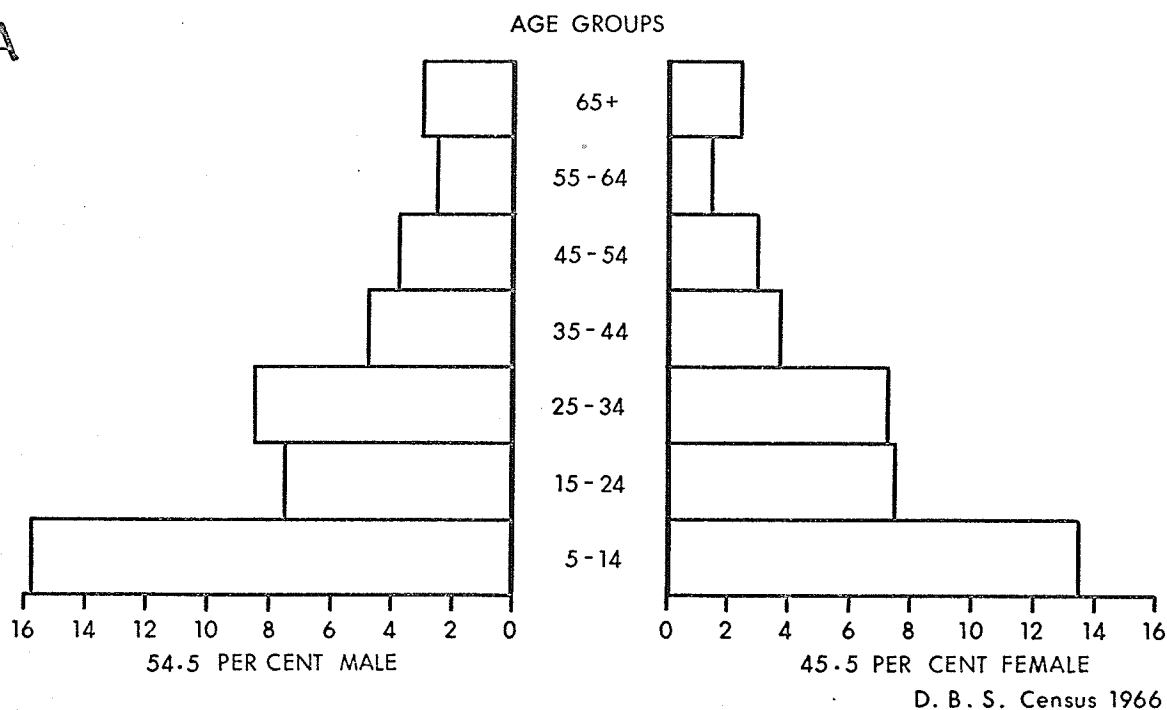
The reserve's population is a relatively young one with 50 per cent under age 15. This is 18 per cent higher than the equivalent age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian, for the province. Twenty-two per cent of the reserve's population is under age 5. This youthful population can be attributed to the effect of the Norway House Indian Hospital with its staff of qualified doctors and nurses,

²²D.B.S. 1966.

²³A household unit may be any one of the following: a one-family household, a two-or-more family household or a non-family household.

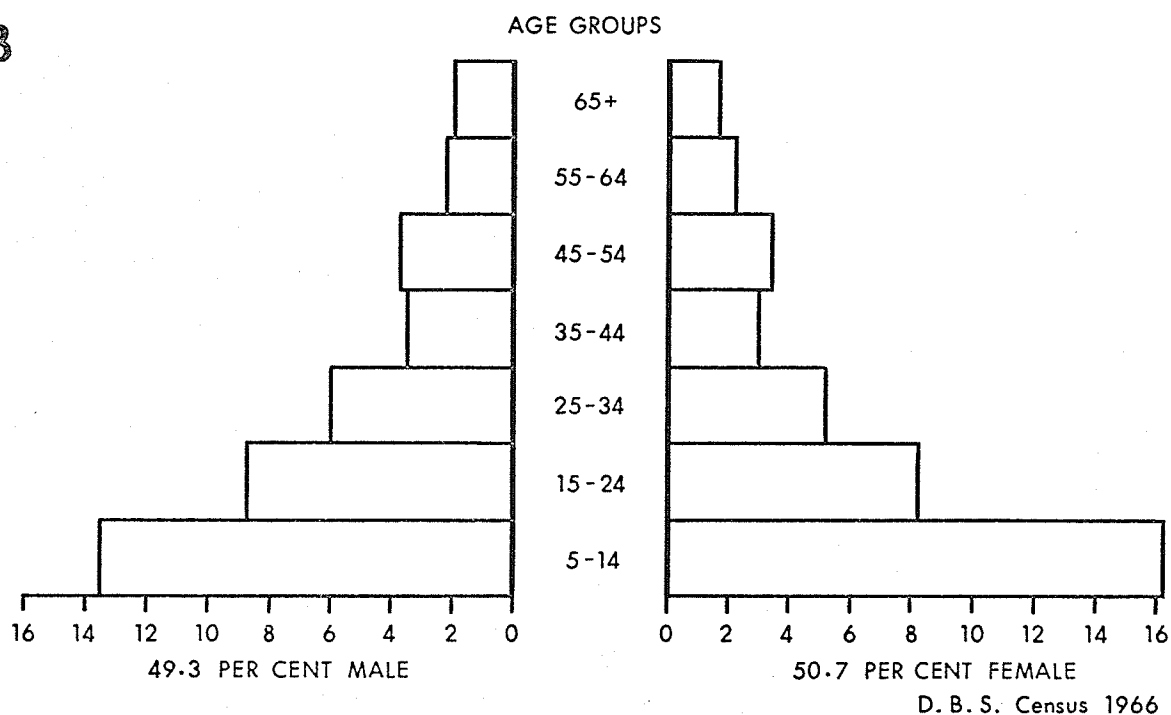
NORWAY HOUSE SCHOOL DISTRICT · AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION 1966

A



NORWAY HOUSE INDIAN RESERVE · AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION 1966

B



and to the teachers. These people have helped reduce the infant mortality rate through medical service and through an education program in nutrition and personal hygiene.

The proportion of the reserve's population 65 years and older is 4 per cent as compared to 9 per cent for the same age group for the province. This phenomenon can be attributed to a relatively high mortality rate here among those 65 years and older, as compared to that of southern Manitoba's urban centres.

Although there are only slightly more females (50.7 per cent) than males (49.3 per cent) in the reserve population, the difference is so small as to be of little significance.

From 1961 to 1966 the reserve's population grew from 1,438 to 1,599, an increase of 11 per cent.²⁴ This rate of increase, which is more than three times the provincial growth rate for the same period (Table II), can be explained in terms of a high fertility rate and a relatively low infant mortality rate, the latter being a result of better medical and educational facilities.

Practically all reserve residents are treaty Indians²⁵ as set out in the terms of the Indian Act.

²⁴D.B.S. 1961 and 1966.

²⁵See Chapter I for a definition of treaty Indian.

TABLE XVIII²⁶

NUMBER AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD UNITS
AT NORWAY HOUSE INDIAN RESERVE

Type of household	Number
Total households	254
Total family households	240
One family households	216
Two or more family households	24
Non-family households	14
One person only	12
Two or more persons	2

TABLE XIX²⁷

NUMBER AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD UNITS
AT NORWAY HOUSE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Type of household	Number
Total households	126
Total family households	112
One family households	108
Two or more family households	4
Non-family households	14
One person only	8
Two or more persons	6

²⁶D.B.S. 1966.

²⁷Ibid.

Norway House School District has a population of 676²⁸ and 126 household units, with an average of 4.9 persons per household unit. Of the 126 household units, 112 are family households.

Forty-five per cent of the school district's population are under age 15, which is 13 per cent higher than the equivalent age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian, for the province. Seventeen per cent of the population is under age 5.

The proportion of the school district's population 65 years and older is 5 per cent as compared to 9 per cent for the same age group for the province.

An interesting anomaly is the ratio of male population to female, 54.5 per cent to 45.5 per cent. One can postulate that this phenomenon is due, in part, to the in-migrating male labor force, including doctors, technicians, teachers and pilots, and to the emigration of females from the community.

From 1961 to 1966 the school district's population grew from 543 to 676, an increase of 24 per cent.²⁹ This increase, which is more than five times the provincial growth rate (Table II) can be explained by (1) a relatively high fertility rate and a relatively low infant mortality rate, and (2) by the in-migrating labor force, which has already been mentioned.

²⁸D.B.S. 1966.

²⁹D.B.S. 1961 and 1966.

According to the 1961 Census, the last census to publish ethnic or racial characteristics, 20 per cent of the school district's population was 'native Indian and Eskimo,' while most of the remaining 80 per cent were classified as Whites. However, the recognition of Metis people is a difficult undertaking because of the varying degrees of assimilation with the White man's culture, and this may be one reason for the rather low percentage recorded. Northern Affairs in 1966 has estimated the proportion to be as high as 71 per cent.³⁰

The majority of the Indian reserve's residents are affiliated with the United, the Roman Catholic or the Anglican Church. According to the 1961 Census, 59 per cent were United Church, 27 per cent Roman Catholic and 14 per cent belonged to the Anglican Church.

In the school district a different pattern emerges. According to the 1961 Census, 45 per cent of the residents were Anglican, 29 per cent were United Church, 18 per cent were Roman Catholic and 8 per cent claimed membership in various other churches.

There is a noticeable difference in the educational attainment between the population of the reserve and that of the school district (Table XX).

³⁰Manitoba Northern Affairs Community Fact Sheet for November 30, 1966 recorded a total population of 2,400, 1,700 of whom were treaty Indians living on the reserve. Of the remaining 700 belonging to the School district, 500 were designated as Metis and the remainder as White.

TABLE XX³¹

HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OLDER
AT NORWAY HOUSE INDIAN RESERVE AND NORWAY HOUSE SCHOOL DISTRICT
1961

Attending School	Norway House Indian Reserve		Norway House School District	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total	406	100	95	100
Pre-grade 1	16	4	1	1
Elementary 1-4	237	58	61	64
Elementary 5-8	144	35	32	34
High School 1-2	4	1	1	1
High School 3-4	4	1		
High School 5		3		
University 1-2	1			
University 3-4				
University degree				
<hr/>				
Not Attending School	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total	747	100	336	100
No schooling	198	27	44	13
Elementary 1-4	7	1	39	12
Elementary 5-8	221	30	123	37
High School 1-2	299	40	35	10
High School 3-4	17	2	69	21
High School 5	5		4	1
University 1-2			5	1
University 3-4			4	1
University degree			13	4

³¹D.B.S. 1961

Table XX shows that the proportion of reserve population age 5 and older who had no schooling and were not attending school at the time was 27 per cent, but for the school district the proportion was only 13 per cent.³² An interesting point illustrated in the table is the higher educational attainment of the school district population than the reserve population for the category 'not attending school,' while the pattern for those 'attending school' for both school district and reserve is similar. This phenomenon can be explained by the transient White labor force, including doctors, nurses, teachers and government personnel, who have achieved a relatively high level of education, and who are residents of the school district. The Metis residents of the school district, on the other hand, have achieved a standard of education similar to that of the reserve Indians. Only a small number of the Metis and Indian children are attending high school and university.

In the writer's 1967 sample, in which the educational attainment of household heads was ascertained, and which examined the reserve and school district as one unit, 19 per cent had no formal education, 25 per cent had completed elementary grades one to four, 43 per cent had completed elementary grades five to eight, 8 per cent had completed secondary grades nine to twelve and 5 per cent had taken some university or other post-grade twelve training.

³²The provincial proportion for the same category was 7 per cent.

The writer attempted to study population mobility. Out of the 237 households in his 1967 sample including both reserve and school district populations, 215 (90 per cent) had lived at Norway House more than 10 years, 16 (7 per cent) had lived in the community from two to ten years, and 6 (3 per cent) had been there less than two years. Of the 6 households who had lived in Norway House less than two years, 3 gave their previous residence as north and 3 as south of the 53d parallel. All 6 had moved to Norway House for reasons of employment. When the 6 were queried about the length of their previous residence, 3 mentioned from two to ten years and 3 said less than two years. Of the three who stayed less than two years, 1 had lived north and 2 had lived south of the 53d parallel. When these 3 were again queried about the length of residence (prior to their previous one), 1 mentioned more than 10 years and 2 said less than 2 years.

The 237 household heads in the sample were also asked about their future plans. Two hundred and one (85 per cent) stated their intention to remain at Norway House, and 36 (15 per cent) planned to leave. Of the latter, 15 gave 1967 as the date for their departure, 2 mentioned 1968 and 19 gave 'eventually' as their departure date. When queried as to their destination, 18 mentioned centres north and 14 gave centres south of the 53d parallel. Four couldn't be specific or hadn't definitely decided where they would move. Of the 36, 24 gave employment as the main reason for moving, 7 mentioned social reasons and 5 gave a combination of social and employment or business reasons.

When asked whether they enjoyed living in this community, 215 out of the 237 replied in the affirmative, 15 replied in the negative and 7 were non-committal.

It is interesting to note that most treaty Indians have lived on the reserve all their lives. The small proportion of the population that might be termed 'transient,' is composed mainly of Whites living in the school district sector of the settlement. These people have established a pattern of moving about various communities, often north of the 53d parallel, in search of better employment opportunities.

E. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF NORWAY HOUSE

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

Of the 237 household units in the sample, 175 (74 per cent) had one or more persons gainfully employed throughout part or the whole of the year,³³ while the remaining 62 (26 per cent) had no one person gainfully employed throughout any part of the year.

Out of Norway House's total active labor force in the sample, including all those employed either part-time or full-time in activities ranging from fishing and trapping to teaching and hospital work, only 50 per cent were employed 12 months per year and 45 per cent worked only 6 months or less in a year. Seven per cent of the total active labor force relied on sources of employment outside of Norway House.

³³This includes trapping and fishing.

During the period from July 1966 to July 1967, 34 of the 254 household units on the reserve (13 per cent) were permanent recipients of welfare for medical and social reasons.³⁴ That is to say, 13 per cent of the household units has at least one member receiving welfare payments on a permanent basis. In addition, 129 of the 254 household units (51 per cent) received temporary emergency welfare.³⁵

During the same period, 50 of the 126 household units in the school district (40 per cent) received public financial assistance.³⁶ During the month of July 1967, 110 of the 237 household units (46 per cent) in the author's sample, which included both the reserve and the school district, received public subsidy.

It is interesting to examine the proportion of the active labor force engaged in trapping and fishing. According to the 1961 Census, 31 per cent of those gainfully employed were engaged in trapping and fishing. However, it should be noted here that almost all those trapping and fishing were treaty Indians living on the reserve, while only one non-treaty Indian person living in the school district was involved in these activities. Expressed another way, 54 per cent of the treaty Indians on the reserve who were gainfully employed were engaged in trapping and fishing, while less than 1 per cent of those non-treaty Indians living in the school district were engaged in these pursuits.

³⁴Letter, Mr. Stewart Killen, Superintendent of Indian Agency, Norway House, to H. I. Redekopp, May 31, 1968.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Department of Health and Welfare, The Pas.

TABLE XXI

RECORD OF CROP AND VALUE OF ALL FURS 1966-67 INCLUSIVE
NORWAY HOUSE R.T.L.

Species	1964-65		1965-66		1966-67	
	Crop	Value	Crop	Value	Crop	Value
Beaver	1,145	\$14,220.90	1,311	\$22,182.12	747	\$10,331.01
Coyote						
Ermine (Weasel)	797	1,841.07	1,169	3,051.09	40	48.80
Fisher	79	579.07	171	2,164.86	28	261.24
Fox, Red	2	11.84	12	144.00	7	37.94
Fox, White			4	98.60		
Lynx	14	270.62	13	513.50	10	240.00
Mink	540	10,800.00	588	11,760.00	479	7,424.50
Muskrat	8,490	12,904.80	10,998	20,016.36	7,592	6,680.96
Otter	205	6,424.70	197	6,501.00	101	1,986.67
Squirrel	1,333	786.47	778	466.80	256	138.24
TOTALS		\$47,839.47		\$66,898.33		\$27,149.36
No. of Trappers	198		194		151	
Ave. Income per Trapper	\$241.61		\$344.84		\$179.80	

Source: Manitoba, Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Wildlife
Branch, Winnipeg.

According to the writer's 1967 sample, of those working, in both treaty Indian and non-treaty Indian populations, 11 per cent trapped and 19 per cent fished. However, Renewable Resources issued licenses to 151 trappers during the 1966-67 season.³⁷ Also, even though Norway House fishermen utilize a number of lakes surrounding the settlement, the one most intensively being fished is Big Playgreen Lake for which 60 licenses were issued to local residents during the 1967 season.³⁸ Thus it appears that at least 50 per cent of those gainfully employed still rely on fishing and/or trapping.

Table XXI offers evidence of the low returns to trappers. The average income per trapper for the 1966-67 season was only \$179.80. These low returns have been characteristic of this resource based industry for the past several seasons and must be supplemented by fishing and/or casual wage employment.

Prospects for the settlement's commercial fishermen are somewhat brighter, especially for those who are members of the Norway House Fishermen's Co-op Limited and who market their catch through this co-operative organization.

The Norway House Fishermen's Co-operative Limited was first organized in 1962. Table XXII points out that in 1962 the fishermen received a substantially greater amount per pound of fish than they did in 1961. If the value to the Co-op is considered, they received almost

³⁷Renewable Resources Office, Norway House, Manitoba.

³⁸Ibid.

as much in 1962 as they did for 1961 and yet the production was about one-half that of the previous year.

TABLE XXII³⁹

QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM BIG PLAYGREEN LAKE
IN 1961 AND 1962

	1961	1962
Total production	228,168 lbs.	100,168 lbs.
Value of production to fishermen	\$20,780.81	\$12,798.81
Value of production to Co-operative		\$16,640.48

Table XXIII shows that the average income per fisherman operating on Big Playgreen Lake prior to the organization of the Fishermen's Co-op in 1962 were consistently lower than \$500. During the first three years of the Co-op's operations, returns remained relatively low due to organizational difficulties.⁴⁰ However, during the last three years of

³⁹G. Allen Clark, "Report on the Norway House Fishermen's Co-op Ltd., 1962 Season," (Printed by Community Development Offices, Winnipeg, 1962), pp. 3-4.

⁴⁰In the early stages of the Co-operative, serious book-keeping problems were encountered. These are now gradually being overcome. During the first year of operation, the supply of equipment, such as nets, arrived some two weeks after the summer fishing season had opened. These problems caused considerable difficulty and resulted in a relatively low production.

TABLE XXIII
QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM BIG PLAYGREEN LAKE

	1957	1958	1959	1960	Totals in c.w.t.					1965	1966	1967
					1961	1962	1963	1964				
Whitefish	2,573	2,482	3,050	1,949	1,472	687	979	345	866	738	1,488	
Pickereel	1,171	566	265	220	128	98	325	648	358	469	606	
Perch	56	26	24	15	4	3	1		2		5	
Pike	794	582	275	319	183	80	289	634	830	552	649	
Sauger	6	3	2	2				2				
Tullibee	162	241	194	436	216	122	165	98	146	271	514	
Suckers	5	568	467	633	666		97	99	1,312	1,186	840	
Sturgeon	85	58	33	21					2	5	4	
TOTALS	4,792	4,527	4,310	3,595	2,669	990	1,856	1,826	3,516	3,221	4,106	
Value to men	\$63,375	\$53,010	\$58,347	\$38,482	\$24,018	\$16,467	\$31,559	\$16,530	\$55,720	\$69,633	\$82,218	
Market value	\$123,938	\$105,940	\$111,286	\$90,320	\$41,310	\$20,192	\$91,866	\$38,326	\$81,008	\$86,216	\$120,972	
Ave. income												
per fisherman	\$288.07	\$325.21	\$416.76	\$211.55	\$304.03	\$261.38	\$534.90	\$275.50	\$913.44	\$1,160.55	\$1,370.30	
No. of licenses	220	163	140	163	79	63	59	60	61	60	60	

Source: Manitoba Department of Fisheries, Winnipeg.

TABLE XXIV⁴¹

QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM 2 LAKES, LAWFORD AND GUNISAO,
IN WHICH PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO NORWAY HOUSE FISHERMEN

Species	<u>Totals in c.w.t.</u>		
	1965	1966	1967
Pickereel	89	215	96
Pike	82	148	71
Whitefish	724	1,039	536
Trout		1	
Mulletts	16		
TOTALS	911	1,403	703
Value to men	\$ 5,252.00	\$10,048.00	\$4,884.00
Market value	\$18,370.00	\$37,460.00	\$17,825.00
No. of licenses	8	9	9
Ave. income per fisherman	\$656.50	\$1,116.44	\$542.67

⁴¹Manitoba Department of Fisheries, Winnipeg.

operation, the average income per fisherman has increased to well over \$1,000.⁴²

Table XXIV shows the average income for fishermen in two other lakes in which priority is given to Norway House fishermen and in which the Fishermen's Co-op does not function. The Table points out that while 1966 was a relatively prosperous year for fishermen not marketing through the Co-op, 1965 and 1967 were relatively poor years. In contrast, the Co-op members on Big Playgreen Lake have consistently enjoyed relatively high returns per operator for the years, 1965, 1966 and 1967.

The Norway House Fishermen's Co-operative Limited hopes to expand its operations in the future and fish more lakes. Ideally, it would like to take over a group of lakes, possibly in conjunction with the Cross Lake residents, and fish them on a management basis.⁴³

The last Census to show earning groups and average earnings for Norway House was taken in 1961. Figures given here are for wage earners who worked for salaries, and excluded here for the most part are

⁴²The average incomes do not give a complete picture as to what has happened at Norway House. Apart from the fishermen's income, there has been a considerable amount of money accruing to the community. The following illustration is taken from the Co-operative's 1967 report.

Fish bought from local fishermen	\$72,591.13
Salaries paid	13,911.84
Ice expenses - by local people	2,362.59
Net income for the year	<u>7,851.85</u>
Total money that was paid out to local people	\$96,717.41

⁴³Personal communication with Mr. Jack Bouma, Supervisor of Co-operatives, Co-operative Services Branch, Winnipeg.

those engaged in trapping and fishing. Table VI shows that the income of 42 per cent of the wage earners in the school district was less than \$3,000, while 67 per cent of the reserve wage earners received less than \$3,000. Average earnings for the school district residents were \$3,144, but for the reserve residents they were only \$2,186.

Average earnings for the school district residents appear to compare favorably with that of Winnipeg wage earners, \$2,934,⁴⁴ for the same year. However, virtually all the White transient labor force, including doctors, nurses and teachers, live in the school district. The 1961 Census showed that out of 130 wage earners, 11 belonged to the 'managerial' category, 55 belonged to the 'professional and technical' category, and when taken together they account for 51 per cent of all wage earners. One can assume these 66 individuals were relatively well paid, and when dealing with a small group of 130, these 66 will have the effect of producing a relatively high mean.

The situation of reserve wage earners in 1961 was less favorable than that of school district wage earners. Of the 63 wage earners, 2 belonged to the 'managerial' category and only 1 belonged to the 'professional and technical' category, which if taken together accounts for less than 1 per cent of the wage earners.

The Norway House Indian Hospital is the largest single employer for both school district and reserve residents. The hospital employs 85 people, male and female, on a full-time basis. In addition, some 20

⁴⁴D.B.S. 1961.

people are hired on a part-time basis, generally for a period of 3 months per year. As the hospital is financed and operated by the federal government, salaries are equivalent to those of most other Canadian hospital employees functioning in a similar capacity. The hospital pays an 'isolation allowance' to all its employees, including the reserve residents and the White transients who have come from southern areas. Treaty Indians employed at the hospital pay no income tax, under the terms of the Indian Act.⁴⁵

There are only about 130 full time jobs available to residents of both the reserve and the school district. However, there are 380 household units and 467 males between the ages of 20 and 65 in the entire settlement. It has already been demonstrated that average returns for the resource based industries of fishing and trapping remain too low to achieve little more than a subsistence standard of living. A high proportion of households rely on welfare payments. The family allowance cheque is an ubiquitous social service to all Canadian families, but in many instances at Norway House, it accounts for a major portion of the household's income, and in other cases, it provides the sole income.

Coupled with the relatively low economic status of the majority of Norway House residents, particularly those of Indian ancestry, is the rapid rate of population increase. Additional research and economic planning are desperately needed to meet the present challenges and to avoid more serious economic and social problems in the future.

⁴⁵See Chapter I - Introduction

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

Up until fairly recently, Norway House attracted an average of 200 tourists during the months of July and August.⁴⁶ These tourists, who came from various parts of the U.S.A. and Canada, travelled from Winnipeg and Selkirk across Lake Winnipeg to Warren's Landing on such ships as the 'Wolverine' and the 'S.S. Kenora',⁴⁷ and from Warren's Landing to Norway House by a smaller vessel, the 'Chickama'.⁴⁸ The Playgreen Inn accommodated the tourists at Norway House.

However, when the proprietor sold the hotel, this tourist trade gradually diminished, and the present proprietor, who has built a new, fully modern hotel, is not interested in operating as a tourist lodge.⁴⁹

Lake Winnipeg Navigation Company Limited plans to begin construction in June 1968 on a passenger boat that will make a five day trip each week from Winnipeg or Selkirk to various points along Lake Winnipeg; the most northerly stop being Warren's Landing. In addition, the company plans to build a smaller vessel, similar to the old 'Chickama', to take tourists up to Norway House from Warren's Landing.

⁴⁶Personal communication with Mrs. Low Sr., wife of the former proprietor of the Playgreen Inn. The hotel was operated as a guest lodge for tourists travelling on the 'Wolverine' and the 'S.S. Kenora.'

⁴⁷These boats no longer make this trip.

⁴⁸The 'S.S. Kenora' and the 'Wolverine' were too large to travel up the Nelson River to Norway House. For this reason the 'Chickama,' which had a shallower draught, transported passengers from Warren's Landing to Norway House.

⁴⁹Personal communication with Mr. John Low, proprietor of Playgreen Inn.

All passengers will be accommodated on the larger ship,⁵⁰ and the short drive to Norway House from Warren's Landing will only take a day. Arrangements will be made whereby any tourists who wish to fly inland from Norway House may return by boat at a later date.⁵¹

It is hoped that this pleasure trip will stimulate Norway House's tourist trade and that people of Indian ancestry may benefit through such things as guiding and handicrafts.

AGRICULTURE

At present there are relatively few gardens being cultivated at the settlement. There are a number of clay pockets that are moderately to well drained, and these could well be utilized for growing various garden crops. Good hay can also be grown in these clay pockets. At present, a few residents harvest small hay crops in order to provide feed for their small herds of cows. Small-scale poultry farming could also be carried on here.

The production of vegetables, milk products, eggs and poultry products for local consumption should be encouraged. The growing population, and the hospital require these basic commodities, which at present must be brought in via lake freighter, tractor train or airplane. To a large extent, local demand could be met by local production.

⁵⁰An official name has not yet been chosen, although the ship has been registered temporarily as the 'Lady Selkirk.'

⁵¹Personal communication with Dr. Ken McKenzie, president of Lake Winnipeg Navigation Company Limited.

MINK RANCHING

Mink ranching offers excellent prospects in the settlement. The climate here produces a good pelt and there is an abundant and cheap supply of fish for feed. Mink ranchers could use coarse fish, which at present goes almost completely unharvested.

In order to involve people of Indian ancestry in this industry, adequate practical training and capital in the form of long term, low interest loans are needed. In addition, research and investigation are required to study problems of ranch efficiency and low cost operation as well as animal husbandry and practices of improving the quality of pelts.

F. ACCESSIBILITY

Norway House Indian Reserve is located on Little Playgreen Lake and along the Jack River, while the smaller non-treaty Indian settlement is spread out along the Nelson River near its junction with Little Playgreen Lake. It is approximately 25 miles north of Warren's Landing (an earlier site of Norway House) at the north end of Lake Winnipeg.

As no road or railroad services this community, the only modes of transport here are by aircraft, by boat or barge, and by tractor train. Most supplies are brought in from Selkirk via Lake Winnipeg freighter or barge during the summer months, a distance of almost 300 miles. In addition, a tractor train from Wabowden hauls freight to the community during the winter months. Passenger service is handled almost exclusively by airplane.

Tables X and XI show the distances between Winnipeg and Norway House, between Norway House and other northern Manitoba communities. Trans Air Company Limited has operated scheduled regular air transport to Oxford House, Wabowden and Winnipeg, the cost of which is considerably less than chartered flights. However, because they fly only certain days, residents may be required to use chartered air service which costs fifty cents per air mile. Thus, passenger travel, for the most part, is restricted to business and medical purposes.

Examining only the transportation facilities available to the settlement and ignoring the 'time' or 'inconvenience' factors, Norway House appears to be less accessible than Wabowden and Thicket Portage, but more accessible than Oxford House.

The writer's questionnaire included an item concerning the frequency of visits in an average year on the part of the household heads to Winnipeg, The Pas, Thicket Portage, Thompson and Churchill.⁵² It was interesting to note that by and large, only White transients and Metis residents travelled to one or more centres at least once in an average year. For this reason, the following pattern applies mainly to the school district population. The writer's 1967 sample included 65 household units in the school district.

From Table XXV, one can see that Winnipeg stands out as the centre most frequently visited by school district residents. Reasons

⁵²Because no school district residents visit Thicket Portage or Churchill in an average year, these centres have been omitted from Table XXV.

TABLE XXV

NUMBER OF VISITS MADE BY HOUSEHOLD HEADS
TO COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE NORWAY HOUSE

Visits per year	<u>Communities</u>			
	Thompson	Wabowden	Winnipeg	The Pas
1 - 4	4	6	23	9
5 - 10		1	4	2
11 - 20	1	2		1
More than 20				
Reasons for visit				
Social	1	2	19	3
Business	4	6	23	9
Medical			2	1

for the visit include a combination of social and business reasons.

Norway House residents can get magazines, newspapers and mail via Winnipeg and Wabowden twice weekly. The settlement is not able to receive any television programs, but residents can keep in touch by radio programs from Winnipeg's strongest stations. Telephone service is of a local nature and the only telephone contact with centres outside of Norway House occurs via two-way radio.

CHAPTER V

OXFORD HOUSE¹

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The history of both Oxford House and Norway House is intimately related to the lucrative fur trade carried on by the Hudson's Bay Company between York Factory and its interior posts. The Hayes River route to York Factory was generally preferred over the Nelson River route because of the hazardous rapids and strong currents associated with the latter. Oxford House was designed as an intervening post along the Hayes River route between York Factory and Norway House.

The Treaty of Paris of 1763 ended the Seven Years' War in which Canada was ceded to Britain. However, this failed to halt competition for the Hudson's Bay Company since the North West Company was organized shortly after the French monopoly of the lakes' trade had ceased. Unemployed French Canadian voyageurs were quick to resume their activities under the newly formed company. The activities of these 'Pedlars,' as they were often called, forced the Hudson's Bay Company to reassess its position and establish a network of posts from Hudson Bay to the

¹Oxford Lake, on which Oxford House is situated, has also been called Holey Lake, or more properly, Deep-Hole Lake. It gets its name from a small inlet off the northeast corner of the lake between a quarter and one-half mile in circumference, which lies in front of the Hudson's Bay Company store, across the narrows. The Cree name, "Pinapowinapheek Sagahagin," means "Deep-Hole Lake," an Indian legend claims that at one time there was no bottom to this inlet, hence the name, "Deep-Hole Lake."

Saskatchewan Valley in order to counteract the Norwestor's growing influence in the fur trade. It was during this program that Norway House and Oxford House, along the Hayes River route, came into existence as a link between York Factory and the interior.

William Sinclair built a fur trading post, called Oxford House, at the northeast corner of Oxford Lake for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1798. However, unlike the Norway House post, Oxford House remained relatively static and never achieved status as a post of great importance.

When he visited the post in 1819, Captain John Franklin reported that:

. . .although formerly a post of consequence it at present exhibits unequivocal signs of decay, . . . the Indians have of late years been gradually deserting the low or swampy country and ascending the Saskatchewan (River) where animals are more abundant.²

One of the difficulties facing the post was the limited local food supply which was practically restricted to fish. The Indians were forced to spend more time seeking means of survival and, consequently, spent less time trapping furs. In the 1820's Oxford House was used mainly as a depot for provisioning parties travelling from York Factory to the interior.

²Quotation taken from notes on Oxford House at the Hudson's Bay Company library, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

While it appears that the area suffered from a shortage of fur bearing animals, nevertheless, the quality of the pelts appears to have been high.³

The need for some form of agriculture at Oxford House was realized early on in the history of the post. William Sinclair, a trader for the Hudson's Bay Company, found patches of soil that appeared worth cultivating, and ordered seeds from Britain to plant a garden and a field of grain. When he found he could grow fodder, he also imported cattle from the Orkneys at his own expense.⁴

A few Indians acquired cattle in an effort to practice animal husbandry, but generally the results were discouraging. Animals suffered from starvation and improper care by their untrained owners, and since 1910, there have been no cows on the reserve. At present, a few horses are kept for purposes of hauling wood and ice.

With the loss of its trading monopoly around 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company was forced to compete with free traders who began swarming into its territory. Consequently, the Company began reorganizing its business, and one of the first economical considerations called for was a reduction in transport costs. York Factory was replaced by Fort Garry,

³Ibid. In their General Letter of 1806 to John McNab, Chief at York Factory, the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company commented on the extremely favorable quality of the furs received from Oxford House.

⁴D. Geneva Lent, "Boyhood at Oxford House," *The Beaver*, Spring 1962, Outfit 292, Winnipeg, Manitoba, p. 47. The bull and several calves survived the long voyage well, and with this small stock, he was able to establish a small dairy to supply fresh milk and butter for his family.

on the lower Red River, as the main depot. Steamships began operating on the Saskatchewan River and Lake Winnipeg and replaced the historic York boats and their Indian crews, which up to this point had been supplying the western trade.

With one major source of employment gone, and facing depletion of their fur resources, the Swampy Cree were willing, in 1875, to surrender their land for White settlement to the Canadian government for which they were granted certain concessions as laid out in the terms of Treaty Number Five.

At the time of the signing of Treaty Number Five in 1875, the Oxford House band, along with several other bands of Crees, living between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay,⁵ had not been included in the original treaty. A delegation of Indians from Oxford House visited the Norway House commissioner at that time and requested adhesion to the treaty in order that they might receive a new reserve more suitable to agricultural pursuits. However, for thirty-five years little was done and only in 1909 was an adhesion signed by newly elected officials of bands at Island Lake, God's Lake and Oxford House.⁶

According to the treaty of 1909, a reservation was set aside for them at Oxford Lake, and the Indians were supplied with seeds, hoes and

⁵Leonard Mason, "The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1941), p. xiii. Oxford House Indians generally acknowledge that their ancestors came from either the York Factory area, from God's Lake or from Island Lake.

⁶Ibid., p. 41

spades. Agriculture here proved to be a failure — partly because of a lack of techniques and partly because of a lack of equipment and manure, the latter urgently required to increase the fertility of clay loam.

At the turn of the Century, Oxford House residents were scattered in three different locations along Oxford Lake.⁷ But with the organization of missions, schools, the nurse's station and the Indian agency, most residents have adopted the present location at the northeastern tip of the lake as the settlement proper.

The first mission here was founded in 1840 when Indians built a Wesleyan church at Jackson Bay on the south shore of the lake. A few years later the main mission was transferred to its present site near the Hudson's Bay store. Today, in addition to the United Church,⁸ Oxford House has a Roman Catholic church, administered by the Oblates, and a small Northern Evangelical chapel.

Around 1920, the last York boat was built in the settlement for the band to freight its government relief supplies. Abandoned on the shore of Oxford Lake it was burned in 1939 in a brush fire.

With the passing of the historic York boat, Oxford House Indians have, until relatively recently, freighted supplies in canvas from

⁷Around the year 1880, several Indian families, with the help and direction of Company traders, had built the first log cabin as permanent homes on their winter trapping grounds near Oxford House.

⁸The United Church at Oxford House is an outgrowth of the Wesleyan mission.

Norway House, a round trip of three hundred miles which take a week to ten days with fair weather.⁹

Since it lost its importance as a supply depot in the fur trading route from York Factory to the interior, Oxford House has served no function to the surrounding settlements. At present, with its population of 715,¹⁰ it exists as an economically depressed community, still relying heavily on a diminishing resource base of fish and fur.

B. PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

The settlement is spread out along a high ridge of light gray clay at the northeastern extremity of Oxford Lake. The topography, generally, is rolling to hilly with abundant granite outcrops.

The underlying rocks, part of the Pre-Cambrian Shield, are predominantly granitoids, gneisses, volcanic rocks and undifferentiated basic intrusives, the more notable ones being derived schists, greenstone and sediments. It is precisely in these areas of greenstone and sediments that the ores of gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc are found. Such areas form a somewhat continuous belt from Athapapaskow Lake eastwards to Setting Lake with isolated patches at Oxford and Knee Lakes on the Hayes River.¹¹

⁹Mason, op. cit. Mr. Mason, who visited Oxford House in 1940, noted that the Indians there still freighted supplies from Norway House. Today of course, most supplies are freighted in by tractor train in winter from Ilford, or by airplane.

¹⁰Indian Affairs Branch, December 31, 1965.

¹¹R. C. Wallace, Mining and Mineral Prospects in Northern Manitoba, p. 7.

Remnants of the ice age, which are to be found over the underlying bedrock, include morainic deposits and glacial drift, predominantly weathered granitic boulders.

The clay ridge, along which the settlement is spread out, marks one of the few pockets of soil, which under the influence of organic material, can be successfully worked in the growing of hay and garden crops. In addition, this clay ridge, which ranges from 20 to 30 feet in height, is well drained.

While accurate temperature records for Oxford House are not available, it can be extrapolated from Connor's climatic study of Manitoba¹² that similar to Norway House, the average length of the frost free period, 33 degrees and over, is approximately 90 days, and when 29.5 degrees is taken as the critical temperature, the frost free period can be extended to roughly 115 days.

Average annual total precipitation here is 16 inches, approximately 36 per cent of which falls as snow.¹³

Despite a cooler and shorter growing season here as compared to that for southern Manitoba, Oxford House receives considerably more hours of sunshine during the summer months because of its location at a higher latitude. Given favorable soil conditions, hay and garden crops can successfully be grown in the settlement.

¹²Connor, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

¹³Ibid., pp. 94-95.

In addition to the large tracts of the black spruce association, mixed stands of broadleaf and coniferous species, chiefly spruce and aspen, are scattered throughout this region. Vast areas of forest have been subjected to repeated, unchecked fires, and only when adequate fire control measures are introduced in the area, can a rapidly increasing volume of merchantable timber be realized.

Soils here have generally developed on ridges or in pockets of localized clay. The clay ridge, which is well drained, is low in organic matter, but with the addition of fertilizers or peat, garden crops and hay can be grown quite successfully. Because bogs and half bogs present a serious drainage problem, and since they are low in natural fertility, they are unsuitable for agriculture. However, in the absence of fertilizers, peat from these bog areas might be utilized to a much greater extent.

C. THE SETTLEMENT

The Oxford House Indian Reserve, 18.8 square miles in area, is situated along the northeastern part of Oxford Lake. The actual settlement, which is only some 4 square miles in area, occupies a high, narrow clay ridge running parallel to the shoreline.

The reserve is administered by the Indian Affairs Branch, an arm of the federal government, as set out in the terms of the Indian Act.¹⁴ The chief and seven councilors, who are elected by the reserve Indians,

¹⁴See Chapter I, Introduction, pp. 5-7.

constitute the local government. In actual fact, they act as a link between the Indian Affairs Branch¹⁵ and the reserve population. These intermediaries represent the band when complaints or requests arise, and they act as agents for the federal government in the disposal of relief supplies and treaty goods.

HOUSING, SERVICE FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Most of the houses are located at random in a linear pattern along the high, narrow clay ridge that parallels Oxford Lake, but a few homes are located along Back Lake. Dwelling units are seldom more than 100 yards from the lakes' shores.

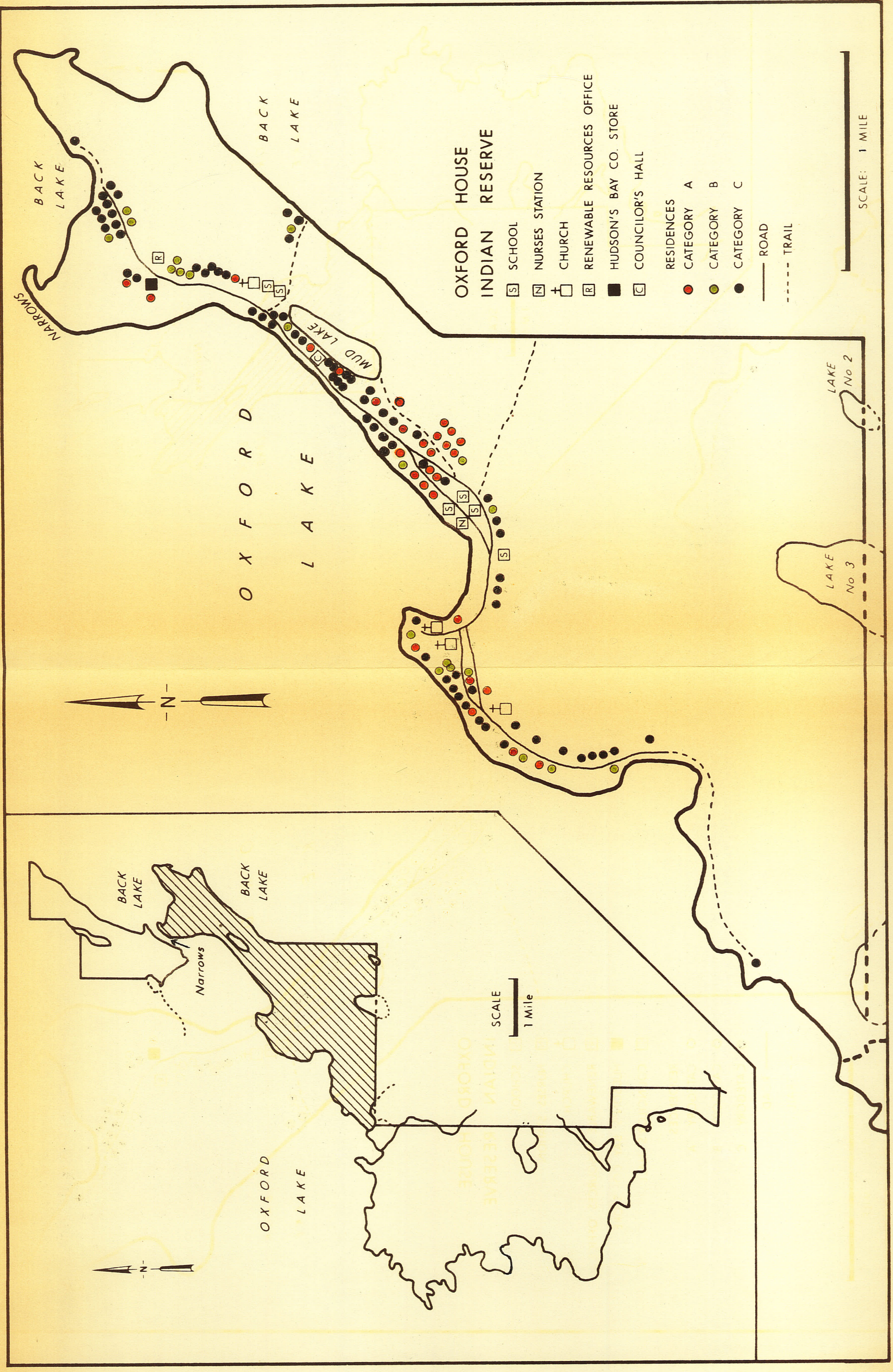
It is interesting to note the riparian nature of human occupance here, similar to that at Norway House. Although water transportation is used in travelling from one end of the settlement to the other, residents more commonly utilize the road built atop the clay ridge.

The author used his scheme for classifying the quality and condition of housing in the community,¹⁶ and examples of dwellings in each of the three categories are given in figures 12, 13 and 14.

Map 9 shows the distribution of houses in each category. The majority of houses belong to category C. As at Norway House, the best housing, category A, is occupied by Whites.

¹⁵For purposes of administration, the Oxford House Band belongs to the Island Lake Indian Agency.

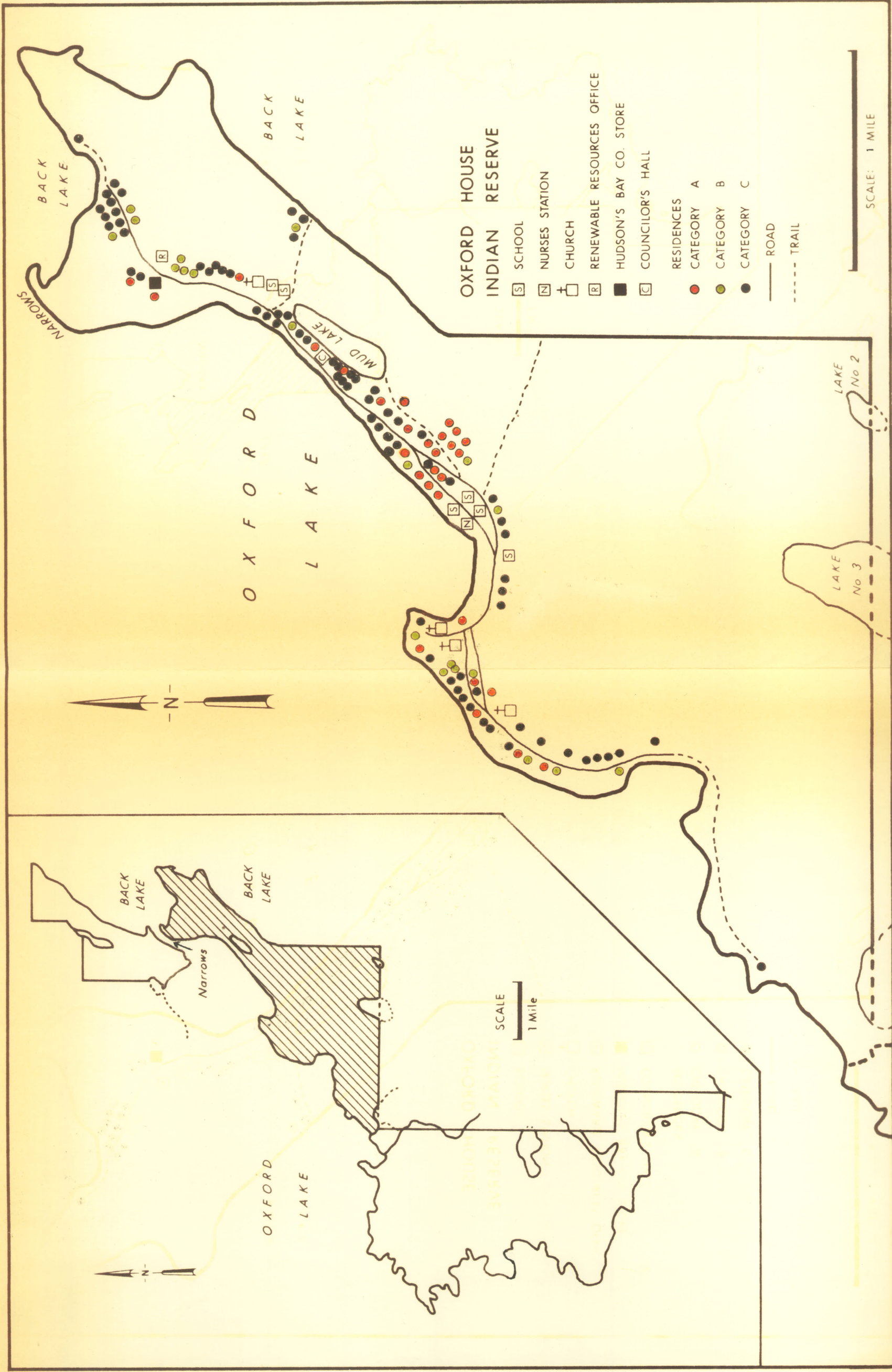
¹⁶Mr. Louis Mason, community health worker, who is well acquainted with the quality and condition of housing at Oxford House, assisted the writer in his classification of dwellings into categories A, B and C.



MAP 9



FIG. 14. CATEGORY C HOUSING, OXFORD HOUSE.



MAP 9

The Indian Affairs Branch housing program has resulted in the construction of 6 new homes during 1965, 8 in 1966 and approximately the same number during 1967. However, the creation of new family formations and the continual 'wearing down' process of existing houses makes an increased rate of house construction mandatory if the demand for adequate housing for all residents is to be met in the near future.

There is only one general store at Oxford House, which is owned and operated by the Hudson's Bay Company. The community has no hotel,¹⁷ no beer parlor and no restaurant.

The community has 6 elementary schools with a total of 7 rooms teaching grades one to eight inclusive. The schools are all financed by the Indian Affairs Branch, but 5 are administered by the United Church and one is administered by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Federal Government's Department of Indian Health and Welfare operates a nursing station with full time nursing services in the community. Patients requiring more professional care are flown to the Norway House Indian Hospital.

Although there is no R.C.M.P. detachment stationed in the settlement, one special constable of Indian ancestry, provides local police service.

The United Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Northern Canadian Evangelical Mission constitute Oxford House's religious institutions.

¹⁷Visitors to the community frequently are invited to stay at the United Church Manse.

Recreational activity is rather limited in the community. Movies are shown fairly frequently in the United Church Hall and a few dances are held throughout the year. Some of the school teachers organize various athletic events during the school year. There is a need for greater recreational and cultural facilities to involve residents, particularly the young people, in varied and healthy activity.

Almost all drinking water is taken from either Oxford Lake or Back Lake. The community has 4 wells which service only a small, select portion of the community. Because lake water can and does occasionally become polluted, and because the majority of residents are dependent on it, there exists a pressing need for an adequate, potable water supply.

Except for the nursing station and the White residents' houses, Oxford House has no sewage facilities. The settlement has no garbage dumping ground and garbage pickup service is non-existent.

Only the White residents are provided with privately owned hydro facilities. The treaty Indian population is not equipped with electricity, although it now appears definite that the entire settlement will be serviced with hydro by the fall of 1968.¹⁸

There are about 20 local telephones in the community, but two-way radio provides the only means of contacting points outside Oxford House. Residents are unable to receive any radio or television broadcasts.

¹⁸Personal communication with the Oxford House United Church minister, Rev. Ian Harland.

There is one major road, approximately 7 miles in length, in the community. This road, which runs along the clay ridge, does not connect with any highways or provincial roads, and thus the settlement cannot be reached from other centres by road transport.

Briefly, the community's main requirements include: (1) an adequate, potable water supply, (2) garbage disposal facilities and garbage pickup service, (3) a better constructed road in the settlement, and (4) an airstrip that allows airplane service during the periods of 'breakup' and 'freezeup.'

D. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Oxford House Indian Reserve has a population of 715¹⁹ and 116 families.²⁰ The population is a relatively young one with 43 per cent under age 15. This is 11 per cent higher than the equivalent age group of the total population, Indian and non-Indian, for the province. Eighteen per cent of the reserve's population is under age 5. This youthful population can be attributed to the settlement's nursing station, to the Norway House Indian Hospital and to the educators who have reduced the infant mortality rate through medical service and through an education program in nutrition and personal hygiene.

¹⁹Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Ottawa, December 31, 1965.

²⁰Quoted from the Community Health Worker's (Mr. Louis Mason) 1966 report. The author was unable to ascertain the number of household units from Indian Affairs Branch, and D.B.S. have combined this date for Gods Lake Narrows and Oxford House.

The proportion of the community's population 65 years and older is 5 per cent as compared to 9 per cent for the same age group for the province. This phenomenon can be attributed to a relatively high mortality rate here, for this age group, as compared to that of southern Manitoba's urban centres.

Figure 4D gives an indication of Oxford House's age-sex composition. Although males account for a slightly larger proportion of the community's population (51.9 per cent) than females (48.1 per cent), the difference is so small as to be of little significance.

From 1961 to 1966 the settlement's population grew from 613 to 715, an increase of 16.6 per cent.²¹ This rate of increase is more than three times the provincial growth rate for the same period (Table II) can be explained in terms of a high fertility rate and a relatively low infant mortality rate, the latter being a result of better medical and educational facilities.

According to the 1961 Census, 97 per cent of the residents were 'native Indian and Eskimo.' Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs in 1966 has estimated 96 per cent to be treaty Indian, 2 per cent to be Metis and 2 per cent to be White. The author's 1967 sample is in concurrence with the Northern Affairs' figure.

The majority of residents are affiliated with the United Church. According to the 1961 Census, 83 per cent were United Church and 14 per

²¹D.B.S. 1961 and 1966.

cent were Roman Catholic. The writer's 1967 sample established 91 per cent as United Church and 7 per cent as Roman Catholic.

The educational attainment of the residents here is the lowest of the four communities under study. Table XXVI shows that the proportion age five and older who had no schooling and were not attending school at the time was 52 per cent.²²

TABLE XXVI²³

HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OLDER
AT OXFORD HOUSE, 1961

Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	175	100
Pre-grade 1		
Elementary 1-4	125	71
Elementary 5-8	34	19
High School 1-2	12	7
High School 3-4	3	2
High School 5	1	1
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree		
Not Attending School	Number	Per cent
Total	340	100
No schooling	176	52
Elementary 1-4	77	23
Elementary 5-8	71	21
High School 1-2	4	1
High School 3-4		
High School 5	10	3
University 1-2		
University 3-4		
University degree	2	.5

²²The provincial proportion for the same category was 7 per cent.

²³D.B.S. 1961.

In the writer's 1967 sample, in which the educational attainment of household heads was ascertained, 42 per cent had no formal education, 34 per cent had completed elementary grades one to four, 19 per cent had completed elementary grades five to eight, 2 per cent had completed secondary grades nine to twelve and 3 per cent had taken some university or other post-grade twelve training. All those belonging to the last group were White residents.

In attempting to study population mobility here, the writer discovered that the degree of mobility was in fact very low. Out of the 85 households in his sample, 82 (97 per cent) had lived at Oxford House more than 10 years, 1 (1 per cent) had lived in the community from two to ten years, and 2 (2 per cent) had been there less than two years. Of the 2 households who had lived at Oxford House less than two years, 1 gave his previous residence as north and 1 as south of the 53d parallel. Both had moved to Oxford House for reasons of employment. When queried about the length of their residence (prior to their previous one), 1 mentioned more than ten years and the other said from two to ten years.

The 85 household heads in the sample were also asked about their future plans. Eighty-one (95 per cent) stated their intention to remain at Oxford House, and 4 (5 per cent) planned to leave. Of the latter, 2 gave 1968 as the date for their departure and 2 gave 'eventually' as their departure date. When queried as to their destination, 2 mentioned centres north of the 53d parallel and 2 could not be specific or had not definitely decided where they would move. All four gave social reasons for wanting to leave.

When asked whether they enjoyed living in this community, 78 out of the 85 replied in the affirmative, 4 said 'no' and 3 were non-committal.

The resultant pattern that emerges is one in which there is a relatively permanent treaty Indian population and a small transient White population. The latter group has come to this community mainly for employment and business reasons and plan to leave after a period of time.

E. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OXFORD HOUSE

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

Of the 85 household units in the sample, 72 (85 per cent) had one or more persons gainfully employed throughout part or the whole of the year,²⁴ while the remaining 13 (15 per cent) had no one person gainfully employed during any part of the year.

Out of Oxford House's total active labor force in the sample, including all those employed either part time or full time in activities ranging from fishing and trapping to clerking and nursing, only 16 per cent were employed 12 months per year and 50 per cent worked only 6 months or less in a year. Sixteen per cent of the total active labor force relied on sources of employment outside of Oxford House.

During the month of July 1967, 22 of the 85 household units in the sample (26 per cent) received public financial assistance.²⁵ Since

²⁴This includes trapping and fishing.

²⁵The terms, 'welfare,' 'public financial assistance' and 'public subsidy,' have been defined in Chapter II, p. 39, footnote 34.

complete statistics concerning the dispensation of welfare have not been made available, only data for those receiving public subsidy on a permanent basis are given. During the year 1966, 35 of the 116 household units (30 per cent) were permanent recipients of welfare for medical and social reasons.²⁶ That is to say, 30 per cent of the household units had at least one member receiving welfare payments on a permanent basis, and these payments constitute the sole income in certain households and act as a supplementary income in others.

Of the four communities under study, Oxford House had the highest proportion of the active labor force engaged in trapping and fishing. The 1961 Census reported only 3 per cent of those gainfully employed were engaged in trapping and fishing. However, in the writer's 1967 sample, it was found that 53 per cent of those gainfully employed were trapping and 27 per cent were fishing. During the 1966-67 trapping season, some 107 registered licenses were issued to trappers,²⁷ and this alone would raise the proportion of the active labor force involved in the primary resource based industries of trapping and fishing to well over 50 per cent. In addition, some 45 licenses were issued to fishermen

²⁶The federal government, through the Indian Affairs Branch, assumes responsibility for administering financial assistance to all treaty Indians in need. Unfortunately, for the author, complete data concerning the nature of the assistance, whether temporary or permanent, and the number of recipients, was not forthcoming from Indian Affairs. Nonetheless, Rev. Ian Harland, who is the United Church minister and who does considerable work for Indian Affairs Branch, was able to supply data concerning the number of permanent welfare recipients for the year 1966.

²⁷Renewable Resources Office, Oxford House, Manitoba.

in the community who were operating in the 7 lakes in which priority is given to Oxford House fishermen.²⁸ (Table XXVIII).

Table XXVII offers evidence of the low returns to trappers. The average income per trapper for the 1966-67 season was only \$229.36. These low returns have been characteristic of this resource based industry for the past several seasons and must be supplemented by fishing and/or casual wage employment.

Prospects for the community's fishermen appear to be equally dismal. Table XXVIII shows that during the past three years, individual operators netted \$500 and less per fishing season.

The 1961 Census, the last one to show earning groups and average earnings for Oxford House, gave figures for wage earners who worked for salaries and excluded those engaged in trapping and fishing. Table VI shows that the income of 68 per cent of the wage earners in the community was less than \$3,000, and that average earnings were \$2,232.

Compared to the average earnings of Winnipeg's wage earners for the same year, \$2,934, average earnings at Oxford House are considerably less. It must be added that out of 22 wage earners, 2 belonged to the 'managerial' category, 8 belonged to the 'professional and technical' category, and when taken together they account for 45 per cent of all wage earners. One can assume these 10 individuals, most of whom were White, were relatively well paid, and when dealing with a small group of 22, 10 will have the effect of producing a relatively high mean.

²⁸Manitoba Department of Fisheries, Winnipeg.

TABLE XXVII

RECORD OF CROP AND VALUE OF ALL FURS 1966-67 INCLUSIVE
OXFORD HOUSE R.T.L.

Species	1964-65		1965-66		1966-67	
	Crop	Value	Crop	Value	Crop	Value
Beaver	914	\$11,351.88	960	\$16,243.20	923	\$12,774.32
Ermine (Weasel)	402	928.68	462	1,205.82	70	85.40
Fisher	30	219.90	21	265.86	14	130.62
Fox, Red			6	72.00		
Fox, White			3	73.95		
Lynx	3	57.99	2	79.00	1	24.00
Mink	504	10,080.00	371	7,420.00	759	11,764.50
Muskrat	4,025	6,118.00	5,092	9,267.44	3,753	3,302.64
Otter	103	3,228.02	169	5,577.00	100	1,967.00
Rabbit (Jack)					1	.43
Squirrel	832	490.88	358	214.80	420	226.80
TOTALS		\$32,475.35		\$40,419.07		\$30,275.71
Number of Trappers	136		135		132	
Ave. Income per Trapper	\$238.79		\$299.40		\$229.36	

Source: Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources,
Wildlife Branch.

TABLE XXVIII

QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FISH TAKEN FROM 7 SELECTED LAKES
IN WHICH PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO OXFORD HOUSE FISHERMEN

Species	<u>Totals in c.w.t.</u>		
	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67
Pickereel	299	453	338
Pike	720	1,021	1,011
Whitefish	1,402	1,436	1,827
Trout	253	167	111
Mulletts	93	236	320
TOTALS	2,767	3,313	3,607
Value to men	\$17,672.00	\$22,954.00	\$22,873.00
Market Value	\$59,748.00	\$70,980.00	\$80,261.00
No. of licenses	109	64	45
Average income per fisherman	\$162.13	\$358.66	\$508.29

Source: Manitoba Department of Fisheries, Winnipeg

The 7 lakes are: Oxford Lake, Knee Lake, Colen Lake, Munro Lake, Bear Lake, Semple Lake and Whitemud Lake.

There exists a real need for the community to introduce some local industry in order to become self sustaining. During 1967, there were only 15 full time and 32 part time salaried jobs available to residents, most of the latter type lasting 6 months and less. At the same time there are 166 family units and 171 males between the ages of 20 and 65 in the settlement. It has already been demonstrated that average returns for the resource based industries remain too low to achieve little more than a subsistence standard of living. A high proportion of households rely on welfare payments. Coupled with the low economic status of most Oxford House residents is a rapid rate of population increase. Here, as at Norway House, there is an urgency for additional research and economic planning in order to solve the present dilemma and to avert a more desperate situation in the near future.

AGRICULTURE

During 1966 there were some 23 individual gardens and 1 community garden at Oxford House.²⁹ However, during the following summer, the writer was able to find only very few that were actually cultivated. Those few gardens that were being tilled received considerable attention and were producing favorable yields.

Along the clay ridge there are some 25 acres of land that could well be utilized for growing various garden crops. A small community

²⁹The Community Health Worker's (Mr. Louis Mason) 1966 report.

herd of milk cows could do well at Oxford House. In addition, small-scale poultry farming might also become a successful venture here.

The production of vegetables, milk products, eggs and poultry products for local consumption should be encouraged. These basic commodities, which must at present be brought in either by air transport or by tractor train from Ilford³⁰ in winter, might well be produced at the settlement.

MINK RANCHING

Mink ranching offers the same excellent prospects here as in the other three settlements. However, in order to involve people of Indian ancestry, adequate practical training, and capital in the form of long term, low interest loans, are required. In addition, research is needed to study: (1) problems of ranch efficiency and low cost operation, and (2) animal husbandry and practices of improving the quality of pelts.

F. ACCESSIBILITY

Located at the northeastern tip of Oxford Lake, Oxford House is the least accessible of the four communities under study. It can only be arrived at through air transport and tractor train. Trans Air Company Limited has tried to visit the settlement twice weekly on its scheduled flight with its mail and passenger carrier, but service,

³⁰Ilford is located at Mile 285.7 along the Hudson Bay Railway line.

generally, has been rather unsatisfactory.³¹ The only alternative is to charter an aircraft at a cost of 50 cents per air miles, which remains prohibitive to the majority of residents.

During the winter months, a tractor train from Ilford, situated along the Hudson Bay Railway line, brings in supplies for the Hudson's Bay store and for the community.

One last mode of travel, used very little at present, is the canoe trip from Oxford House to Norway House. A round trip of 300 miles, the journey takes a week to ten days, given favorable weather conditions.

The distance by airplane from this community to Norway House is 120 miles; from Oxford House to Thompson is also 120 miles. Tables X and XI show the distances between Winnipeg and Oxford House, between Oxford House and other northern Manitoba communities.

Examining only the transportation facilities available to the settlement and ignoring the 'time' or 'inconvenience' factors involved in travelling to and from the community, Oxford House appears to be the least accessible of the four communities under study.

The writer's questionnaire included an item concerning the frequency of visits in an average year on the part of household heads to Winnipeg, The Pas, Thicket Portage, Wabowden, Thompson and Churchill.³²

³¹During the winter of 1967-68, air service was so inadequate that the community was not serviced by the Trans Air mail carrier for some six weeks, and as a result, many residents were forced to spend their Christmas celebrations in February.

³²Because no Oxford House residents visit Thicket Portage, Wabowden and Churchill in an average year, these centres have been omitted from Table XXIX.

TABLE XXIX
NUMBER OF VISITS MADE BY HOUSEHOLD HEADS
TO COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE OXFORD HOUSE

Visits per year	<u>Communities</u>		
	Thompson	Winnipeg	The Pas
1 - 4	6	2	1
More than 4			
Reasons for visit			
Social	3		
Business	5	1	1
Medical	1	1	1

Very few of the 85 household heads interviewed travel to one or more of these centres at least once in an average year, and those that do are nearly always White residents.

From table XXIX one can see that Thompson stands out as the centre most frequently visited by Oxford House residents. Reasons for the visit include a combination of social, business and medical reasons.

Oxford House residents can get magazines, newspapers and mail via Winnipeg twice weekly. The settlement is not able to receive any television or radio programs. Telephone service is of a local nature, and the only telephone contact with centres outside of Oxford House occurs via two-way radio.

CHAPTER VI

A COMPARISON OF THE FOUR COMMUNITIES

A. ACCESSIBILITY

It has been demonstrated earlier in the text that the four settlements vary in their degree of accessibility from the most to the least accessible in the following order: Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Norway House and Oxford House.

The proportion of household heads who visit one or more centres outside their community at least once in an average year increases from the least accessible community, Oxford House, to the most accessible one, Wabowden. (See pp. pp. 57, 89, 133 and 160.)

B. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In 1966, the population of the four communities was as follows: Thicket Portage - 282, Wabowden - 594, Oxford House - 715, and Norway House - 2,275. All four have approximately an equal number of males and females. The family is the basic household unit in each case. Wabowden has the highest proportion of non-family household units (13 per cent) followed by Thicket Portage (11 per cent) and Norway House (7 per cent). Similar data for Oxford House is not available.¹

All of the settlements have relatively young populations. Table XXX shows the proportion of residents in each community under age 15. The proportion of the total population, Indian and non-Indian, for

¹See Chapter V, p. 148.

the province in the equivalent age group is 38 per cent. Conversely, the proportion of the aged, those 65 years and older, remains relatively low (Table XXX). The provincial proportion for this age group, including both Indians and non-Indians is 9 per cent.

From Table II it is clear that the rate of population growth for all communities, except Thicket Portage, over a five year period is more than three times that of the province of Manitoba, and almost twice that of the Canadian figure.² At Wabowden, however, the increase during the same period, 1961 to 1966, was an astounding 81.7 per cent. On the other hand, Thicket Portage has grown by only 2.5 per cent.³

Considering the low economic status of most household units, particularly those of Indian ancestry, and the large number of children per family unit, there appears to be a definite need to introduce and encourage a program for family planning. Such a program should allow for the dissemination of birth control information and contraceptive devices. It must be noted, however, that for some of the residents who are staunch Roman Catholics, the use of artificial means of birth control constitutes a violation of their religious convictions. Nonetheless, until a definite program for family planning is instituted, it seems likely that the population will continue to increase rapidly.

²The natural rate of increase of native Indians in Canada is now approximately double that of the population as a whole in this country. The increase for Manitoba's treaty Indians from 1963 to 1964 was 3.8 per cent. (Indian Affairs Branch, Facts and Figures, Ottawa, February 1966.) Figures for Metis people up to 1951 are available, but may be of questionable utility due to the processes of intermarriage and assimilation.

³See Chapter III, p. 75.

TABLE XXX

PROPORTION OF EACH COMMUNITY'S POPULATION
UNDER AGE 15 AND 65 YEARS AND OLDER, 1966

Communities - in order of accessibility, from most accessible to least accessible	Per cent under age 15	Per cent 65 years and older
Wabowden	54	3
Thicket Portage	52	5
Norway House	48	4
Oxford House	43	5
Province of Manitoba	38	9

TABLE XXXI

POPULATION MOBILITY

Per cent of household heads	Communities - in order of accessibility from most accessible to least accessible			
	Wabowden	Thicket Portage	Norway House	Oxford House
Who have resided in the community more than 10 years	56	66	90	97
Who have resided in the community less than 2 years	15	10	3	2
Who plan to stay in the community in the future	70	83	85	95
Who plan to leave the community in the future	30	17	15	5

TABLE XXXII

A COMPARISON OF SELECTED PARAMETERS OF FOUR COMMUNITIES
BY REFERENCE TO THEIR ACCESSIBILITY

Parameter	Communities - in order of accessibility from most accessible to least accessible			
	Wabowden	Thicket Portage	Norway House	Oxford House
Per cent of residents of Indian ancestry (1967)	44	76	91	96
Per cent of total active labor force involved in trapping and fishing (1967)	11	21	30	53
Per cent of salaried employees earning less than \$3,000 (1961)	38	43	54	68
Per cent of household heads receiving welfare (during July 1967)	7	22	46	26
Per cent of household heads who have had no formal education (1967)	23	24	19	42
Per cent of household heads who have completed elementary grades 1-8 (1967)	37	34	43	19

All four settlements can be classified as being composed predominantly of residents of Indian ancestry. Except for Wabowden, more than 75 per cent of each community's population is made up of people of Indian ancestry. At Wabowden, the proportion is about 50 per cent.

Religious affiliation varies among the communities. The majority of residents at both Indian reserves claim membership in the United Church, a result of the early pioneering efforts of the Wesleyan Missionaries during the 1840's. The majority of Thicket Portage residents belong to the Roman Catholic Church, and at Wabowden the largest proportion of residents are affiliated with the Anglican Church.

Educational attainment in each of the settlements remains low. The writer's 1967 sample, in examining the level of formal schooling of household heads, found the following proportions have had no formal education: Wabowden - 23 per cent, Thicket Portage - 24 per cent, Norway House - 19 per cent, and Oxford House - 42 per cent. With the exception of Norway House,⁴ it appears that the less accessible the settlement, the higher the proportion of household heads who have no formal education (Table XXXII). In addition, very few residents advance beyond elementary grade 8, fewer still complete senior matriculation, and the number of residents going on to university or some other post-grade 12 level is so small as to constitute something of a rarity.

⁴Part of the explanation may lie in this community's early association with the Rev. James Evans and his Wesleyan Mission which was established here in 1840. (See Chapter IV, p. 96).

In view of the fact that an increased level of education is commensurate with a higher standard of living, it is imperative that a greater number of residents in these communities, particularly those of Indian ancestry, be encouraged to achieve a higher level of education. Research is urgently needed to investigate the possibility of producing an educational program that takes into account the special needs and problems confronting people of Indian ancestry.

From the writer's 1967 sample, in which population mobility was investigated, it has been found that the communities have relatively permanent populations. An anticipated pattern evolves in which the less accessible the community, the greater the degree of permanence of population, and conversely, the greater the accessibility, the greater the mobility (Table XXXI). Similarly, when household heads were asked whether they planned to leave or remain in their community in the future, the proportion of those planning to leave became higher as the settlement became more accessible (Table XXXI). In each community there is a small mainly White transient population that moves about various communities, often north of the 53d parallel, in search of greater employment opportunities.

C. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE COMMUNITIES

All four settlements lack a viable resource base resulting in chronic 'underemployment'⁵ as well as unemployment. However, of the

⁵Jamieson and Hawthorn, op. cit. Another term for underemployment is 'structural unemployment' as used by Jamieson and Hawthorn.

four, Wabowden is economically the most viable.

A relatively large proportion of each community's labor force still depend upon the resource based industries of trapping and fishing for their livelihood. The writer's 1967 sample established that of those gainfully employed in each of the four settlements, the following proportions were involved in trapping and fishing: Wabowden - 11 per cent, Thicket Portage - 21 per cent, Norway House - 50 per cent, and Oxford House - 80 per cent. The proportions might well be greater judging from the number of registered licenses issued to the respective local residents.

Since the trapping and fishing industry is fraught with a great many difficulties, too numerous to mention here, suffice it to say that returns to the individual operator are, in general, so low as to afford him a standard of living that compares with the more underdeveloped countries in Asia or Africa. The average income per trapper in each of the four communities has remained well below \$500 per year (See pp. 40, 81, 119 and 155). The trapping industry in northern Manitoba generally appears to be in an unfortunate position.

The wild fur industry in northern Manitoba has occupied a static, or even declining status since the 1940's. Fur prices have generally declined since then and remained low.⁶

While prospects for commercial fishing in these communities are somewhat brighter, nevertheless, they too offer little more than a subsistence standard of living. Except for Norway House, the average

⁶Ibid., p. 92.

income per fisherman per year has been \$1,000 and less (See pp. 41, 82, 123 and 156). The situation is worst at Oxford House where the average income per operator is around \$500 and less.

One possibility of raising returns to fishermen appears to lie in the marketing of fish through co-operatives. This has been tried at Norway House with considerable success and average returns to those fishermen involved have steadily increased to over \$1,000 per capita during the past several years.⁷

The Report of Commission of Inquiry into Freshwater Fish Marketing has determined that prices to fishermen are weak and the share received by the fisherman of the price paid by the consumer is far too low.⁸ Their recommendations include that a Freshwater Fish Marketing Board be established under federal legislation and that the Board accept delivery of freshwater fish only from the fishermen.⁹ The Report has identified one of the basic problems to be the weak bargaining power of the fishermen, particularly those in the remote northern regions of the prairies, and encourages the formation of fishermen's co-operatives.¹⁰

In a report on the fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan, Buckley has concluded:

⁷See Chapter IV, pp. 123 - 126.

⁸Anon., Report of Commission of Inquiry into Freshwater Fish Marketing, (Commissioner George H. McIvor, C.M.G.), n.d., p. 1.

⁹Ibid.-

¹⁰Ibid., p. 96.

Co-operative marketing, we believe, has an important place in the fisheries of the future and in the social development of the North, but let no one imagine that co-operative marketing is adequate answer to the economic needs of northern fishermen.¹¹

Buckley goes on to point out that another advantage of marketing fish in a Co-operative form is that it involves fishermen themselves in shaping their own future.¹²

The author's sample has indicated that during the month of July 1967, the proportion of household heads receiving welfare was as follows: Wabowden - 7 per cent, Thicket Portage - 22 per cent, Norway House - 46 per cent, and Oxford House - 26 per cent. Those statistics dealing with the proportion of each community's population receiving public financial assistance for the period from July 1966 to July 1967 suggest even higher percentages.¹³

The family cheque, in many instances, accounts for a major portion of the household's income, and in other cases, it provides the sole income.¹⁴

¹¹Helen Buckley, Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan, Report No. 3, (Centre for Community Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, March 1962), p. 96.

¹²Ibid., p. 114.

¹³In a survey concerning public financial assistance to treaty Indians in Manitoba in 1965, it was discovered that 50.3 per cent of the resident population were recipients of welfare; 42.8 per cent of the resident adult population was being assisted; 38.4 per cent of those who were employed were receiving welfare; 16.4 per cent of adult residents on reserves who were employable were being subsidized; the proportion of adult recipients who were heads of households was 66.4 per cent; and finally, the percentage of heads of households assisted every month during that year was 26.5. (Indian Affairs Branch, Facts and Figures, Ottawa, February 1966, p. 20.)

¹⁴Unfortunately, figures here are not available.

The number of salaried jobs in each of the communities is considerably less than is required by the total labor force, inactive and active. As a result, a number of residents are forced to leave their community in search of wage employment which in turn poses a number of social problems, some of which are discussed in the next chapter.

A significant proportion of each community's full-time salaried employment opportunities comes under the 'managerial' and 'professional and technical' category (See pp. 44, 83, 121 and 157). These are among the most lucrative positions in the community and invariably they are occupied by White residents.

MINING AND FOREST PRODUCTS

It is unlikely that any one of the settlements will become the centre of a mining complex, including refining and smelting operations, in the foreseeable future. At the same time, the proximity of Wabowden and Thicket Portage to those areas that INCO plans to exploit in the future (Map 5) is of great importance with respect to the employment opportunities it hopefully will offer residents of these settlements.

Similarly, it is fairly certain that a Churchill Forest Industries (Manitoba) Limited sawmill will not be located at or in the immediate vicinity of Thicket Portage. As yet, no accurate estimate is available concerning the quantity of wood to be cut in this area and concerning the number of men to be employed from surrounding centres such as Thicket Portage and Wabowden. Nonetheless, since the Sipiwesk Lake area is known to have large, relatively pure stands of merchantable timber, it is hoped that Thicket Portage and Wabowden residents will be able to take

advantage of employment opportunities here when the newly formed company develops the area.

AGRICULTURE AND MINK RANCHING

The production of vegetables, milk products, eggs and poultry products for local consumption is feasible in all four communities and should receive encouragement. These basic commodities, which at present are generally transported from Winnipeg, might well be produced at the settlement.

Research conducted at the Wabowden experimental substation has conclusively demonstrated the area's suitability for growing barley, forage crops and vegetables with the application of fertilizers. Poultry farming, dairy farming and livestock farming could be carried on here. However, a feasibility study should first be carried out by economists, in order to ascertain the possibility of: (a) establishing a creamery at Thompson, (b) operating dairy farms at Wabowden and (c) operating beef cattle ranches at Wabowden.

Mink ranching offers excellent prospects in all four communities. However, in order to involve residents of Indian ancestry, adequate practical training and capital, in the form of long-term, low interest loans, are required. In addition, research is needed to study: (a) problems of ranch efficiency and low cost operation, and (b) animal husbandry and practices of improving the quality of pelts.

A socio-economic study of Indian and Metis settlements in northern Saskatchewan makes similar proposals.¹⁵ The writer agrees with one of the Report's basic recommendations, that the Government institute a developmental program aimed not simply at promoting the growth of the industry but at establishing Indians and Metis as mink ranchers.¹⁶

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

The tourist industry at Wabowden and Norway House is another aspect of economic development that should be stimulated. Wabowden is presently in a favorable position to take advantage of the tourists, particularly sport fishermen and hunters, that frequent the area. Additional facilities are needed to accommodate these people and to encourage even greater numbers to come.

It is hoped that the 'Lady Selkirk's'¹⁷ scheduled pleasure trip to Norway House will stimulate that community's tourist trade, and that people of Indian ancestry may benefit through such things as guiding and handicrafts.

D. HOUSING, SERVICE FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

It has been demonstrated that a large proportion of housing in each of the communities is substandard in terms of construction,

¹⁵Buckley, Kew and Hawley, op. cit.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁷See Chapter IV, pp. 129-130.

facilities and amenities.¹⁸ Residents of Indian ancestry invariably occupy the poorest quality housing, Category C, and conversely, the transient White population occupies the best housing, Category A. In addition, the pace of constructing new buildings for people of Indian ancestry appears to be falling behind the creation of new family units and the 'wearing out' of existing homes.

A lack of planning within the settlements is evident. In a great many instances, houses are located at random over a relatively large tract of land resulting in low density living. In these dispersed settlements, service costs increase, which in turn reduces the amenities available to the residents.

The majority of Oxford House residents are not as yet serviced with electricity. A number of Thicket Portage residents are in a similar position. All communities lack an adequate, potable water supply. Oxford House and Wabowden lack adequate garbage dumping grounds and all four settlements lack garbage pickup service. Except for Wabowden, the settlements require improved roads within the community. Oxford House and Norway House require an airstrip that allows airplane service during the periods of 'breakup' and 'freezeup.' Nearly all residents of Indian ancestry lack septic tanks, indoor toilets and running water. At the same time, the majority of White residents are equipped with these facilities.

¹⁸Martin P. O'Connell has found that at least 90 per cent of Indian housing in Canada is substandard by any reasonable criteria. (Canadian Standards of Housing in Indian Reserve Communities, A memorandum prepared for the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, May 1965, Chapter I.)

In the light of these observations, the author feels that steps should be taken to produce houses of sufficient size and number of rooms to meet family needs; houses that are winterized and properly heated; houses equipped with electricity and running water from pure sources, and houses equipped with indoor sanitary facilities wherever possible. A housing program similar to the one that exists for treaty Indians on the reserves should be instituted for Metis residents.

In addition, the author feels that the recommendation of O'Connell's housing study be adopted.¹⁹

The author also agrees with another report that steps should be taken to lower needless high service costs of northern communities

. . . by encouraging higher density living. It is apparent that this can be done in such a manner as to obviate the necessity of the private car, and reduce the service costs significantly while at the same time increasing the amenities to the residents.²⁰

All four communities require greater recreational and cultural facilities to involve the residents, particularly the young people, in varied and healthy activity.

¹⁹Among his other proposals, O'Connell suggests a self-help program in which band councils, in the case of Indian reserves, and community councils, in the case of Metis settlements, create housing authorities to utilize the facilities and monies made available to C.M.H.C. to all those qualifying. As a housing authority, people of Indian ancestry could claim eligibility to the various services offered. (Ibid., Chapter II).

²⁰Kennedy, Smith Associates, Housing Study: Isolated Communities and Indian Reserves - Prairie Provinces, First Stage Report, (This Report has been prepared under a grant from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation), Winnipeg, August 1967, p. 4.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG PEOPLE OF INDIAN ANCESTRY IN THE FOUR COMMUNITIES UNDER STUDY¹

People of Indian ancestry in the four communities have been subjected to various historical influences arising from their interactions of varying scope or intensity, and at certain levels, with White society. In particular, treaty Indians at Norway House and at Oxford House have been dependent on systems of administration and internal organization of the reserve and band council, under the supervision of an agency superintendent.

In this context, the ensuing chapter involves a study of six socio-cultural factors which can be viewed as promoting or hindering economic development. Unfortunately, because of the subtle and subjective nature of these variables, they "do not lend themselves to objective and statistical types of measurement and comparison."²

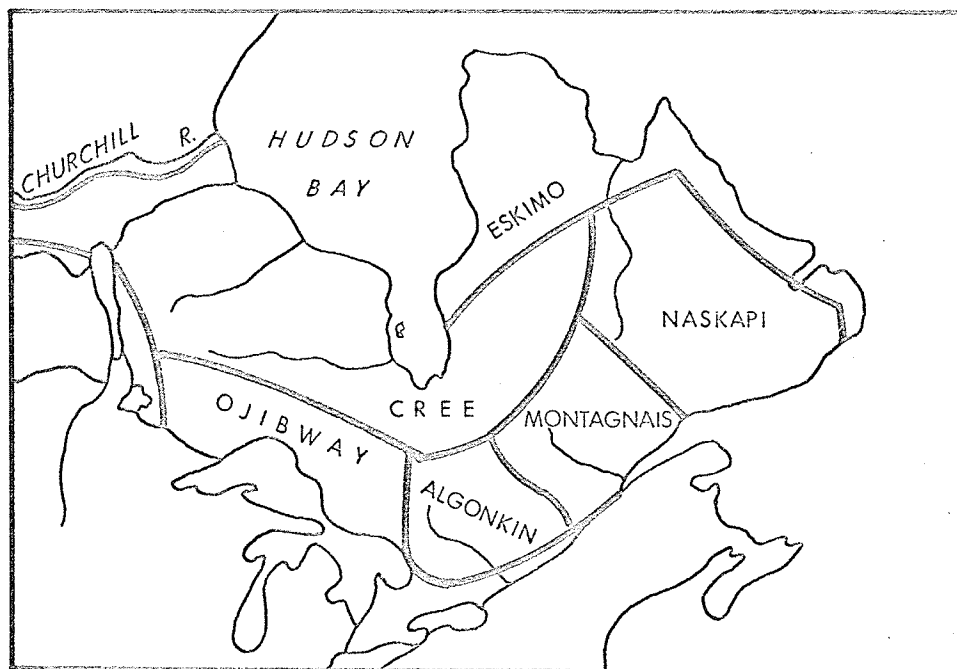
A. TRIBAL CULTURE

The people of Indian ancestry in the four communities for the most part, are descendants of the Swampy Cree Indians. Dependent on

¹See Hawthorn, op. cit., Chapter VII, pp. 119-134. In this chapter Hawthorn examines eight variables which he suggests may be crucial in determining the pace and magnitude of economic development among people of Indian ancestry.

²Ibid., p. 119.

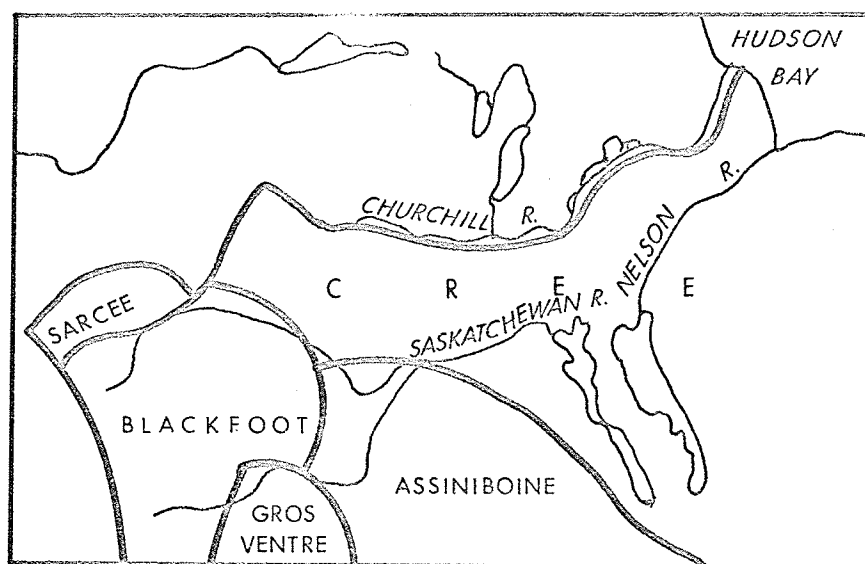
APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CREE TRIBE IN 1525



JENNESS D. INDIANS OF CANADA

MAP 10

APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CREE TRIBE IN 1725



JENNESS D. INDIANS OF CANADA

MAP 11

hunting and fishing for their food supply in a country where game was not overabundant, the ancestral Crees were not able to establish large communities. They travelled alone with their families, or in small groups of extended families, for only in this way could they survive in their exacting environment. When game was plentiful, the Swampy Cree were hearty eaters; once winter set in, game often became scarce and the natives were subjected to long periods of fasting and eating anything convertible to food. Even where the soil was suited to agriculture, the long winter months negated any attempt to provide a more reliable food supply.

Anytime was mealtime depending on the availability of food rather than the hour. Lacking foresight in times of plenty, the Cree rarely put in a store of food for the dreary winter that followed. An exception to this was the occasional preservation of meat and fish by drying and smoking near a fire. The animals which were killed for food also supplied materials for clothing.

Because the Cree's existence was so intimately related to his immediate environment, he was required to be highly mobile. This way of life demanded that he travel light, and never allowed him to develop values and attitudes favorably disposed to the accumulation of great amounts of goods or capital.

At the culmination of every successful hunting, fishing or trapping season, feasting on a grand scale took place until all the food was gone, and where furs had been exchanged with the trader, until all profits derived from this activity were spent. Employment was seasonal

and while the Cree was busy trapping, fishing or hunting, he worked hard, but following this he felt he was entitled to pursue more pleasurable activities. For this reason, any long term employment in particular jobs in particular locales involving a set number of days per week and hours per day was diametrically opposed to the Cree's way of life.

In a report on the people of Indian ancestry in Manitoba, Lagasse has stated that the traditional culture with its value systems and attitudes, with reference to permanent employment as practiced by Whites, tends to perpetuate itself from "generation to generation regardless of the few individuals who may deviate from it."³

It would appear that these cultural factors are still in operation in the communities under study. Wabowden serves as one example. The tremendous amount of mining activity in the Thompson-Wabowden vicinity should have been more than sufficient as a source of employment for that community's employable male population. In reality, this has never happened. (See pp. 3-4). For instance, during the winter of 1966-67, a considerable proportion of Wabowden's males, most of whom were of Indian ancestry, was hired by INCO to help in the exploratory work for new areas rich in minerals.⁴ Although this work often involved living in mining camps during the week, occasionally, exploration crews worked close enough to Wabowden to enable employees to commute to work each day.

³Lagasse, op. cit., p. 86

⁴Since many sites of potential mineral wealth are located in swamp and muskeg territory, work must be carried on during the winter months when the ground is frozen.

For approximately two weeks, these men worked hard and were punctual in reporting for work. However, when the first pay cheque was issued, a considerable number failed to report for work. In an effort to retain their labor force, company officials drove to truant employees' homes hoping to induce them to return to work. This proved to be an exercise in futility, and the company was forced to look for different employees. Where these were not readily available, they had to await the return of absentees. Meantime, the truant group spent their time enjoying the rewards of their two weeks labor, and when the money was gone they returned to work. In many instances they were not rehired and were labelled as being unreliable by their employers. For the following winter's work, the company officials announced their intention of bringing in a labor force instead of hiring locals.⁵

Similarly, men from Oxford House, Norway House and Thicket Portage working at Thompson would remain only a limited time before returning to their communities, albeit, reasons for this often involved more than merely taking a holiday.⁶

In a study of Oxford House in 1941, Mason⁷ cites examples of this lack of interest in steady employment. He concludes that, far from being lazy or unreliable, the Crees simply do not recognize the value of regular

⁵Personal communication with Mr. Peter Braun, one of the most knowledgeable residents in the settlement who acted as director of the Wabowden Agricultural Experimental farm up until 1965 when the farm ceased to be a research station.

⁶An important factor here is family structure. Married males, in particular, are reluctant to leave their wives and families for long period of time.

⁷Mason, op. cit.

employment as practiced by the White culture, particularly when it does not directly pertain to their traditional way of life. In 1967, Oxford House residents still follow a similar pattern and while there has been a gradual change in attitudes, it appears that the traditional attitudes are still the predominant ones.

There is also considerable evidence of the natives' indifference to the accumulation of great amounts of goods or capital. Even when it could be judged essential to their future, this seldom comes into their consideration.

Another example from Wabowden involves the collection and storage of firewood for winter usage. A large proportion of people, who are noticeably of Indian ancestry, live in a part of Wabowden known as 'the Point.' A number of these homes (in actual fact, often only poorly constructed shacks), are heated by burning wood. Yet few of these people prepare for winter by cutting wood themselves. A pattern has developed whereby, once colder weather sets in, those that are unprepared buy, borrow and steal from one another until no more firewood remains available. Whereupon they proceed to tear down partitions inside the house, a porch outside, or even the exterior siding for fuel purposes. The author actually saw examples of homes in which the porches, siding and partitions had been removed for firewood.

One of the oil dealers in the community mentioned selling up to one barrel of fuel oil per week in winter to certain shacks at 'the Point' the cost of which is \$10.95 per barrel. This is considerably more than a well built home in the settlement proper requires. Poor

insulation and a lack of storm windows and doors account for a large part of the high heating cost. At the same time, however, the fuel dealer spoke of shacks in which window panes remained broken all winter, and the outside elements were kept out by placing such articles as sacks, clothing or cardboard over the opening.⁸

At Oxford House, it is common for women, even those well over sixty years of age to walk to the Hudson's Bay Store practically every day, in both summer and winter, to shop for groceries. For some, the daily distance travelled in this way totals from four to six miles. One reason for this is that the store performs an important social function. Also, the idea of shopping for a week or even a few days during one trip is, in many instances, inconceivable to the residents.

The above examples speak of native cultural values and attitudes indifferent to the accumulation of great amounts of capital and/or goods as well as long term employment as practised by the White culture. While one cannot generalize on the basis of these examples, they, nevertheless, point out some of the ancestral traits which today still remain a part of the culture of the people of Indian ancestry in these four communities.

However, since it is difficult to arrive at precise conclusions as to the influence of the factors in tribal culture and history on economic development, it is necessary also to examine variables concerning types of interaction and relationships of Indians and Whites, rather than the earlier tribal culture.

⁸Personal communication with Mr. Peter Braun.

B. CULTURAL REVIVAL⁹

There are two general schools of thought concerning this matter.¹⁰ The one views a cultural revival as a step toward regression and an admission of defeat, and charges the people of Indian ancestry with attempting to find new security and meaning in life by harking back to their ancestral culture. The other trend of thought looks upon any revival as a positive indication that these people are gaining new confidence to participate and compete in Canadian society. Advocates of this hypothesis claim that in order to overcome their apathy and defeatism, it is imperative for people of Indian ancestry to find a source of pride in their history.

Certain distinctively Indian aspects of band life do contribute to economic development. For example, the Oxford House and Norway House bands' rights in fishing and hunting constitute a very real income in that it provides an important source of good.

Indian people living closer to White urban centres have discovered their many unique and varied ceremonies are of interest to the

⁹The Indians' present culture is a fusion of Native and White heritages. Cultural revival, for purposes of this discussion, refers to the Indians' re-discovery and re-evaluation of their various achievements. While this does not necessitate a return to a primitive way of life, it does involve the promotion of the contributions they have made as a group to Canadian society. It might also involve the restoration of certain unique ceremonies or rituals, and handicrafts that act as reminders of their past.

¹⁰Hawthorn summarizes these two schools of thought. Hawthorn, op. cit., p. 120.

non-Indian population and can also bring in a real income.¹¹ However, because Oxford House and Norway House Indian Reserves are situated well away from the major urban centres to the south, it has been difficult to capitalize on the expressions of their native culture.

At present Oxford House remains as one of Manitoba's only communities still producing hand-made snowshoes which are sold commercially. The snowshoes, sold to the local Hudson's Bay Store for \$11.50 per pair, are priced at approximately three times this amount at the Bay's store in Winnipeg. Residents in all four communities still make 'mukluks' by hand; however, as yet, these are mainly for local use. One Norway House Indian has set up a small shop in which he paints and carves various wooden figures in a style quite different from that of White artists.

If roads were built connecting these remote settlements with larger population centres in the South, the native rituals, ceremonies and handicrafts, products of a unique culture, might be utilized to act as a positive factor contributing to economic development, especially where Indians take the initiative and Whites are spectators. Certainly with increasing amounts of leisure time and increasing standards of living, the area would attract many tourists if accessible. It is hoped that Indian residents of Norway House will be able to take full advantage of the tourist trade when the 'Lady Selkirk' begins to bring

¹¹An example of this, outside the province, is the famous Calgary Stampede. One of the highlights there is the Indian war dances.

tourists to this settlement in 1969.¹²

C. KINSHIP TIES AND OBLIGATIONS

One of the variables influencing economic development among people of Indian ancestry, often referred to as a negative influence, involves the obligation of the individual to his kinship group. As in most tribal and peasant societies, a fairly wide kinship group is the basic unit of organization, economic and otherwise. Mention has already been made of the existence of this pattern among the native Cree in northern Manitoba.

During the course of the field work, the author met a number of residents from the four communities who blamed their economic misfortunes on relatives. One example involves an Indian at Oxford House who returned from a hunting trip with a large moose which should have provided him with enough food for several months. Within the space of two days, he had given most of the meat away and was left with only enough for a few days. When queried about his generosity, he said he had little choice in the matter; most of the recipients had been close friends and relatives and to refuse them would have been the equivalent of committing social suicide.

While the above example does not appear to present a very serious problem, this cultural pattern in another setting might pose tremendous difficulties for the person of family expected to act as benefactor. Numerous residents in each of the four communities related their unhappy work experiences at Thompson, blaming many of their troubles on relatives.

¹²See Chapter IV, pp. 129 - 130.

At Norway House, for instance, one man reported he had been working in Thompson and doing so well that he brought his family out, but before long relatives began to drop in and live with him and his family. Of course the successful employee was expected to feed and house his kin, and to entertain them with what wages remained after all expenses were paid. Finally, expenses became so prohibitive as to force the man and his family to return to Norway House. He had to choose between completely severing ties with his relatives on the one hand, and leaving his job and Thompson on the other. After some consideration he chose the latter alternative.

In some cases, this pattern of subsidizing relatives drives the successful employee to despair and drink, and the net outcome generally includes a disgraceful dismissal, and at the same time it confirms the employer's fears about the inherent unreliability of Indians as potential employees. Once again the Indian is caught in the vicious circle of poverty.

Another family at Norway House announced their intention to leave the reserve and move to Winnipeg, after severing all ties with relatives so that they might be able to achieve a higher standard of living. They were quite bitter about previous experiences in which their kin had usurped the family's hard-earned finances.

Even though it is possible to relate other similar experiences in which it appears kinship ties have acted as a deterrent to economic development, such a hypothesis would be extremely difficult to prove.

Traditionally, this pattern of sharing with others offered the only alternative to the Indian in his quest for survival in northern Manitoba's harsh environment. One family would share its food with another, not because of any innate virtue, but because of economic necessity where, in another instance, it might be dependent on the other family for its own survival.

As yet, no one has been able to determine whether those former residents of the four communities, who are now permanently relocated in larger urban centres and enjoying a measure of prosperity, have achieved success because of the financial support pooled from the resources of their relatives. Examples of several families jointly supporting a promising student can be cited, which may be considered a positive factor in the economic advancement of that individual.

At Norway House and Wabowden, a minority of relatively well paid steady employees who appear to have become a separate clique, might possibly embody the embryonic form of a new economic elite in each of the communities that will establish new patterns of kinship and social relations.¹³ This may ultimately offer a partial solution to the present negative aspects of kinship ties and obligations that hinder the communities' economic advancement.

¹³It appears that, in this successful minority, single family units withdraw from their extended families in order to maintain their economic independence. At the same time, however, they are ostracized by their extended families and by the rest of the band because of their new status and because of their refusal to share.

One reasonable, though unproven, conclusion is that the persistence of widespread kinship obligations among Indians, as among other depressed and dependent low-income groups, is a result, rather than a cause, of poverty. Much the same conclusion might apply to the high rate of growth of the Indian population and of its dependence on welfare.¹⁴

D. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP

Due to the limitations of a hunting and fishing economy, the Swampy Cree for centuries had been required to follow a semi-nomadic existence, in which he and his family lived apart from the rest of the band for long periods of the year. The basic unit of social organization remained the family. A number of families would live together during the summer fishing season to constitute a group distinct from similar groups of Crees in other districts. Consequently, there was a lack of community feeling which produced only a very loose political structure. Leaders, chosen for short periods and for specific occasions, such as the hunt, war and trading expeditions, held power for the duration of the business at hand and were at all times entirely dependent for their authority on the good will of the people.¹⁵

However, even though traditionally their way of life never necessitated the formation of strong administrative bodies, more recently, the people of Indian ancestry have lived in close contact with White administrators who have to a large extent controlled and altered their way of life. Local band councils were formed on reserves when Indian

¹⁴Hawthorn, op. cit., p. 122.

¹⁵Mason, op. cit., p. 37.

treaties were signed, and gradually the Indians have become anxious to control their own affairs by displaying powerful leadership.

It would seem reasonable to relate the quality of leadership in the four communities to their economic situation. Hawthorn's report¹⁶ examined this relationship in a sample of Indian bands across Canada by asking Indian Affairs personnel in their respective agencies to classify band leadership into one of five categories. The report concluded that there was no significant correlation between the two variables for various reasons.

First, any assessment of the quality of native leadership made by the Indian Agency personnel is, of necessity, a subjective one and might in many instances only be a measurement of the Indians' willingness to cooperate with the White administration.

Secondly, those who assume the responsibility of band leadership often have, in reality, little real influence among the band members. Older members of the community, or sometimes business proprietors, though not part of the local administrative body, have wide influence which is instrumental in the making or breaking of a program.

Finally, the more prosperous members of the community are usually too busy to take the time to act as administrative persons. At Norway House Indian Reserve a former band chief, who had been relatively successful economically, judging from his two-story house and property, informed the author he was too busy fishing and trapping to get involved in a similar capacity again.

¹⁶Hawthorn, op. cit., pp. 122-123

It should be added here that at Oxford House and Norway House Indian Reserves, the men currently occupying the position of chieftain are certainly not the most capable nor competent. It appears that each of the bands selects a chief whose qualities include an amiable and ease-loving personality, and a readiness to co-operate with the Agency Superintendent and his administration.

This pattern is certainly not a new one as illustrated in an anthropological dissertation involving Oxford House in 1940.¹⁷ During this time, pressure was successfully brought to bear on the chief to resign by two ease-loving councillors. The main reason for discontent with the chief was his implementation of a strenuous communal project.

It may be that those people possessing greatest leadership potential, find the present arrangement petty and lacking in opportunity for chiefs and councillors to exercise real power aimed at economic advancement. The Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada has urged the formation of a 'Native Canadian Development Institute' which would assume complete responsibility and control over band funds and economic development, and accept the consequent liabilities as well.¹⁸ In addition, the present Indian Affairs Branch would assist in an advisory capacity so that the initiative would come from the people of Indian ancestry.

¹⁷Mason, op. cit., pp. 42-45.

¹⁸E. R. McEwen, Community Development Services for Canadian Indian and Metis Communities: A critical assessment of the current Community Development Program and proposals for corrective measures, (Published by the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, Toronto, January 1968).

In the matter of encouraging greater strength of leadership, Hawthorn points out that where the path to economic development appears to lie in closer integration with the White community, and where greater dependency of band members on paid employment results in migration away from the reserve, the band council's importance seems destined to decline.¹⁹

E. ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY²⁰

Some social science researchers of Indian and Metis communities have suggested a relationship between organizational activity and economic advancement.²¹ Generally speaking, the higher the income and status of the individuals, the greater the number of organizations they participate in.

Again referring to Hawthorn's report, a statistically significant degree of correlation (.48) between numbers of organizations in each Indian band, and the average per capita income of members was shown, although this must be qualified in view of the fact that the higher income bands were usually also larger than the low income bands. The

¹⁹Hawthorn, op. cit., p. 123

²⁰Organizational activity here is defined as involvement in community activities such as community clubs, various church and charitable organizations, and parent-teacher associations.

²¹See B. W. Card, G. K. Hirabayashi and C. L. French, The Metis in Alberta Society With Special Reference to Social, Economic, and Cultural Factors Associated with Persistently High Tuberculosis Incidence, (University of Alberta Committee for Social Research: Prepared for The Alberta Tuberculosis Association, October 1963).

report found no evident correlation with average number of people per organization.²²

Wabowden, economically the most viable of the four communities, does not exhibit a noticeably greater number of organizations than do the others. Of course, Wabowden cannot be compared to Norway House in terms of number of organizations per settlement, since the latter has roughly four times as many residents as the former. Then too, even though Norway House has some six churches as compared to three in Wabowden this in itself remains a meaningless statistic in view of the fact that the proportion of active church members, participating on a regular basis, in both settlements remains low.

In relation to more economically developed Indian bands in southern Ontario, for example, Norway House and Oxford House, both economically depressed bands, have far fewer organizations among their members than the former. Thus, this question of organizational activity has considerable relevance with reference to priority of effort for the community development program launched by the Indian Affairs Branch and other agencies aimed at the economic advancement of these communities.

F. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DISORGANIZATION²³

One explanation for the Indians' failure to develop economically that is often enunciated concerns their personal disorganization.

²²Hawthorn, op. cit., p. 123

²³During periods of cultural transition, a change in work habits and group practices disturbs the established habit systems. While the individual is freed, to some degree, from the traditional controls, new

They fail to develop attitudes and behavior patterns that are acceptable to the dominant society and as a result, are unable to adjust to and participate in this latter group. Commonly cited examples of personal disorganization include drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, laziness, apathy, unreliability, neglect of family and so on.

Personal disorganization following similar patterns among relatively large numbers of people of Indian ancestry has, in many instances, been attributed to the failure of this minority group to adjust to the White culture. A report dealing with the Metis in Alberta society²⁴ suggests that the observed behavior of the Metis, while similar in appearance to apathy, may be the Metis mode of adjustment to the dominant culture.

A distinction should be made between social and personal disorganization. Social disorganization presumably is an inevitable consequence of the transformation of a relatively static, localized subsistence economy to one that is dynamic, large-scale and complex in its operations,

elements of insecurity are introduced into his life experience.

The term, 'disorganization,' refers to the process of adjusting to a situation of cultural duality. Disorganization of a person, or a group of people, never leads to complete chaos, but rather to another level of integration. [Alfred M. Lee (ed.), New Outline of Principles of Sociology, (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1951), pp. 4-5, 159.]

In this discussion the term, 'disorganization,' and the examples used may appear to be similar to apathy, and may appear to indicate a state of depravity. Nevertheless, the writer acknowledges that this observed behavior may be an acceptable, and possibly the only mode of adjustment of people of Indian ancestry to the White culture.

²⁴Card, Hirabayashi and French, op. cit.

and which offers high personal incomes. However, personal disorganization is not necessarily a corollary of social disorganization. The inference here is that those communities that have developed economically have successfully made the transition, but those that have remained in a depressed state have failed in the transition.

All four communities appear to have been unsuccessful in the transition. Many residents are still living at a subsistence level. But an increasing number of these, having found their traditional pursuits of trapping and fishing to give them almost negligible returns, and having failed to find alternative employment, exhibit behavior patterns such as laziness and apathy which can be considered proof of personal disorganization.

But there is no simple direct correlation between poverty and social and personal disorganization. To realize this, one has only to look at statistics concerning the rising frequency of such social and personal problems as divorce, alcoholism, delinquency and crime, and mental breakdowns over the last two decades for Canada and the United States, countries which have enjoyed unprecedented economic growth and personal wealth.

However, it seems that, where only a small minority remains economically depressed in an otherwise affluent society, the demoralizing effects are greater than in a situation where the majority of the populace remains poor.

The illegitimacy rate can be taken as a measure of personal disorganization. Statistics showing the percentage of unwed mothers to total mothers in each community are not available. However, Hawthorn's study has compared this ratio among different Indian bands across Canada and concluded that there "seems to be an equally wide range in illegitimacy rates among high-income and low-income bands."²⁵

In order to measure the incidence of personal disorganization in the four communities, the author has relied on personal observations, on interviews with the population generally and with knowledgeable residents specifically.

Oxford House, the least accessible of the four communities, appears to have a lower incidence of personal disorganization than do the others. Certainly, such problems as alcoholism and illegitimacy, while in existence here, do not reach the proportions witnessed at Wabowden for example. But then Oxford House has no liquor outlet, and social control is far stronger here than at Wabowden.²⁶ The more common manifestations of personal disorganization at Oxford House appear to be apathy and idleness, probably the result of poverty, poor health, malnutrition, dependency and overcrowding.

²⁵Hawthorn, op. cit., p. 128.

²⁶The author observed an Oxford House mother driving her two daughters, both in their late teens, home with the aid of a switch after attending a movie shown at the church hall so that they might not fall prey to some amorous young men. Another parent objected to the immoral influences outside the settlement and concluded by saying that every time his daughter went to Thompson she became pregnant, and every time his son went there he got involved in drinking and brawling, and ended up in jail.

Wabowden, which is economically the most viable, the most accessible, and which has the highest proportion of Whites of the four settlements, seems to display the greatest incidence of personal disorganization. This situation, comparable to other settlements with large proportions of Metis, has been attributed by some to the fact that the Metis have utilized lower-class models in their acculturation process, while the general society judges them from a middle-class value orientation.²⁷

Wabowden is accessible by road and rail, to both Thompson and The Pas, and because of its beer parlor and large Metis population, it is frequently visited by White men, employed at either Thompson or in nearby mining camps, who are looking for sexual excitement. It is not uncommon for young girls of Indian ancestry, 16 years and younger, to be enticed one way or another to spend a few days with these men at their camps.²⁸

There is no doubt that it is largely lower-class Whites who provoke anti-social behavior among the Metis population here. To make matters worse, there is no R.C.M.P. detachment stationed in the settlement as yet, and when trouble erupts, a call must be placed to Thompson. By the time the police arrive, the guilty party has usually long departed. The numerous examples of personal disorganization at Wabowden suggests that the era of the 'wild West' has its counterpart in the 'wild North.'

²⁷Card, Hirabayashi and French, op. cit., pp. 382-383.

²⁸Several of the Wabowden teachers complained of absenteeism of young Metis girls, who for days had been spending their time running around mining camps.

A similar situation could exist at Norway House which also has a liquor outlet, although here the situation is more rigidly controlled by the local R.C.M.P. and constables, and by the fact that legally, no liquor is allowed on the reserve. However, at Wabowden the greater opportunities for salaried employment and consequently higher personal incomes for residents provide a partial explanation for an apparently higher incidence of alcoholism.

Any community development program aimed at economic advancement of a community, such as Wabowden, will have to focus on those residents who are unable to take advantage of wage and salaried employment because of personal disorganization. At Wabowden this would include the Whites as much or more as the residents of Indian ancestry.

There appears to be a direct relation between the personal disorganization of people of Indian ancestry and the degree of frequency of contact with the White culture. Oxford House, which is the least accessible of the four settlements, and one of Manitoba's most isolated reserves, offers the fewest examples of behavior characteristic of personal disorganization. However, the incidence of such behavior patterns appears to increase with the greater number of Whites in a settlement, and at Wabowden where slightly more than half of the population is White, the examples of this phenomena are most numerous. The writer feels this hypothesis, while outside the scope of his study, warrants further research.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS FACING THE FOUR COMMUNITIES

The basic problem common to all four communities might well be summarized as 'too many people and too few resources.' With the exception of Wabowden, people of Indian ancestry constitute more than three-quarters of each community's population, and at Wabowden the proportion is about 50 per cent. There has been an unusually high rate of natural increase among these populations, the exception here possibly being Thicket Portage. However, even here household units remain large and the slow growth has already partially been explained in terms of its economic function during the initial development of Thompson.

A relatively large proportion of the communities' populations has traditionally depended for its livelihood on locally available resources, viz., fish, game and fur bearing animals, and timber for fuel-wood. According to the writer's 1967 sample the following proportions still rely on these primary resource based industries: Wabowden - 11 per cent, Thicket Portage - 21 per cent, Norway House - 50 per cent, and Oxford House - 80 per cent. The proportions are probably higher if one considers the number of registered licenses issued to the respective local residents.

However, the populations have increased beyond the capacity of these resources to sustain them. At the same time, the methods of utilizing such resources today, in most instances, remain obsolete and

inefficient. As a result, the economic gain in terms of income is extremely low by southern Manitoba standards, often lower than the total income they receive in one form or another from Government subsidized relief or social welfare. Fishing and trapping employs relatively large numbers of the communities' residents, but because of the seasonal nature of the activities, this employment is always only for short periods. There are too many inactive periods between periods of productivity, and as a result, a large and increasing proportion of residents are unemployed or under-employed and must be supported by public subsidy or relief in one form or another.

In the four communities, the poorer trapper and fisherman, as well as the unskilled laborer, are developing a taste for social aid because these returns appear to be steadier and/or higher than those derived from the traditional pursuits. As Government allowances in the form of welfare payments increase year by year, settlements such as Norway House are in effect becoming welfare ghettos. The expanding population and increasing dependency on the state is slowly gnawing away at the aspirations of the adult population. At present, therefore, it is quite accurate to think of welfare as one of the major industries in these communities.

If the present standard of living is to be raised, a good number of those currently engaged in trapping and fishing must be encouraged to leave this activity for wage and salaried work. Only in this manner can both those remaining in and those leaving this primary, resource based industry hope to achieve a measure of prosperity.

However, here the communities are faced with another dilemma, namely, the lack of sufficient wage or salaried work. At Norway House, for example, there are only some 130 full time jobs and 50 part time jobs lasting 6 months and less; this, despite the fact that there are 380 household units. Similarly, in Thicket Portage there are some 10 full time and 17 part time jobs, the latter lasting 6 months and less, and yet there are 47 household units here. At Wabowden, there are 43 full time and 17 part time jobs, while there are 104 household units in the community. Finally, Oxford House with some 116 families offers only 15 full time and 32 part time jobs, the latter again lasting for a period of 6 months and less. Obviously, those that cannot obtain wage or salaried work and wish to remain in the community will, of necessity, either trap and/or fish, or be forced into a position of accepting social aid.

In conclusion, the three main problems affecting the economies of the four settlements are: (1) their rapidly growing populations, (2) the trapping and fishing industry which is chronically plagued by a diminishing resource base on the one hand, and by too many trappers and fishermen on the other, and (3) the fact that no new industrial development has supplemented or replaced these traditional activities. In view of these problems, it appears that a larger number and proportion of the populations must be encouraged and enabled to find employment in wage work out of these settlements to avoid a deterioration in living standards and a growing dependence on Government subsidies or relief.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposals made here do not appear in any order of importance or priority. Should the recommendations be accepted, it is hoped that they will be co-ordinated into a developmental program that will take into account the human as well as the economic needs of the four communities.

1. Residents should be given greater encouragement and meaningful incentives to emigrate from these settlements. It is possible to educate those residents under age 15 to assume a role away from the Indian reserves or the Metis settlements. The group between the ages of 16 and 35 can be 'upgraded' and given courses in skills that will enable them to accept employment outside the settlement.

2. At the same time, there is a need for additional research to determine:

- (a) the attitude of people to relocation.
- (b) the need for an intensive program of counselling and guidance for students, for the upgrading and technical training of adults.
- (c) meaningful incentives and services to facilitate relocation.
- (d) to evaluate the potential of the residents in relationship to future developments in the mining and forest products industries in the area.
- (e) whether a relationship exists between the personal disorganization of residents of Indian ancestry and the degree of frequency of contact with the White culture group.

3. While it is hoped that the migration from these settlements to Manitoba's larger urban centres will increase, it is clear that a

number of each community's residents will choose to remain in their settlement. Realism, therefore, demands that programs of economic development be centred on these Indian and Metis communities. Communities such as Wabowden and Thicket Portage should be made to serve a useful function in that they offer adequate environments for conditioning Indian and Metis people, from inaccessible reserves and settlements, to adopt an urban way of life.

TRAPPING AND FISHING

The older residents who depend on trapping and fishing and who cannot learn new skills must be allowed and guaranteed adequate opportunity to trap and fish. By encouraging younger residents to find salaried employment, there will be fewer people engaged in trapping and fishing, and hopefully these will realize greater economic returns per capita.

Co-operative marketing has raised the incomes of Norway House fishermen. The practicality of instituting a similar form of marketing fur as well as fish should be investigated. In addition, the Government should establish a Marketing Board to provide some supervision and control over prices and quality of produce.

AGRICULTURE

The production of vegetables, milk products, eggs and poultry products for local consumption in the communities should be encouraged. Practical training should be supplied wherever necessary.

In addition, a feasibility study should be carried out by economists to ascertain the possibility of: (a) establishing a creamery at Thompson, (b) operating dairy farms at Wabowden, and (c) operating beef cattle ranches at Wabowden.

MINK RANCHING

The Government should institute a developmental program aimed not simply at promoting the growth of the industry but at establishing Indians and Metis as mink ranchers. There is a need for practical training and working capital, in the form of long-term, low interest loans. In addition, research is needed to study: (a) problems of ranch efficiency and low cost operation, and (b) animal husbandry and practices of improving the quality of pelts.

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

People of Indian ancestry at Norway House and Wabowden must be encouraged and assisted, financially and through education, to become involved in the tourist trade of these communities.

The historical aspects of Norway House, in relation to its tourist industry, should be promoted. Such a program would have to be instituted by the Government.

HOUSING

The recommendations of O'Connell's housing study¹ should be

¹See Chapter VI, pp. 173-174.

adopted. The advantages, and disadvantages, of Co-operative housing and higher density living should be made very clear to the communities' residents. But the element of choice must always remain a basic tenet in the matter of housing, in order that residents, especially those of Indian ancestry are not coerced, or given the impression of being coerced, into accepting another 'White man's program.'

4. It is imperative that a greater number of residents in the four communities, particularly those of Indian ancestry, be encouraged to achieve a higher level of education. Research is needed to investigate the possibility of producing an educational program that takes into account the special needs and problems confronting people of Indian ancestry. The public school curriculum must be modified in content, teaching techniques and grading systems to meet the needs of these communities' children. Such modifications need not obscure the basic similarity between northern and southern Manitoba school programs nor omit content essential to further academic and vocational education. There is a great need for practical and technical education for the settlements' adult population as well.

5. There is a need for greater recreational and cultural facilities in all four settlements to involve residents, particularly the young people, in varied and healthy activity.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to adopt a plan of development to provide residents of the four communities, particularly those of Indian ancestry, with higher standards of living, more choice

of opportunity in all areas of living and greater participation in the northern as well as the larger Canadian society.

The Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs should be responsible for executing such a plan of development. To bring jobs to these northern communities and to move men out to jobs in other parts of the province will demand the resources of the Federal Government as well as of the Province. However, it is the duty of the Provincial Government to begin planning the larger program.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

1. Settlement: _____ House No.: _____
 Racial origin: _____ Band or Treaty No.: _____
 Respondent's Sex: _____ Age: _____
 Education (school grade): _____ Religion: _____
 How many people in this family (household)? _____
 How many children 16 years of age and under in this household: _____

2. Do you own this place? _____ rent this place? _____
 or do you have some other arrangement (e.g. squatter)? _____

3. How many people in this family (household) are employed at one job or
 other which brings in some income? _____

What sort of work are these people employed in? Check the appropriate blank.

Type of employment	Time spent per year	where
a) gardening, poultry, livestock, etc.		
b) fishing		
c) trapping		
d) railroad work		
e) pulp cutting		
f) picking wild rice		
g) picking seneca root		
h) at the hospital		
i) at the Indian agency		
j) at the school		
k) driving taxi		
l) at the Bay Store, general store, airlines		

m) mining		
n) other		
o)		
p)		
q)		

Does this family receive welfare? Yes _____ No _____

4. How long have you been living here? a) More than 10 years _____
 b) from 2 to 10 years _____
 c) less than 2 years _____

If less than 2 years, where was your previous residence? _____

Reason for moving: _____

Length of previous residence: a) more than 10 years _____
 b) from 2 to 10 years _____
 c) less than 2 years _____

If less than 2 years, where was this residence? _____

Length of this residence: _____

5. Do you plan to stay here? Yes _____ No _____
 If no, when do you plan to move next? a) this year (1967) _____
 b) next year (1968) _____
 c) eventually _____

Where do you plan to move to? _____

Reasons for moving: _____

6. Do you like it here? Yes _____ Reasons: _____

6. (Cont'd) No _____ Reasons: _____

Indifferent _____ Reasons: _____

7. How often in a year does this family (household) visit:

Reason for visiting

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| a) The Pas | _____ | _____ |
| b) Thompson | _____ | _____ |
| c) Thicket Portage | _____ | _____ |
| d) Wabowden | _____ | _____ |
| e) Churchill | _____ | _____ |
| f) Winnipeg | _____ | _____ |
| g) elsewhere | _____ | _____ |
| h) _____ | _____ | _____ |

8. For Indian Reserves only:

Is any member of this family (household) away from the reserve?

Yes _____ No _____ If the answer is Yes, is he or she away

1) Temporarily -- yes _____ no _____

If yes, name the place and province where he or she is now: _____

Reason for being away, e.g. job, what kind: _____

holiday _____

staying with relatives or friends _____

residential school _____

hospital _____

away up-grading courses such as
carpentry, secretarial, etc. _____

others _____

2) Permanently -- yes _____ no _____

If yes, name the place and province where he or she is now: _____

Reason for moving: _____

9. When your children finish school, do they intend to stay on a reserve? Yes ____ No ____

Do they intend to leave the reserve

Yes ____ No ____

10. Do you think living on a reserve is a good way of life for the Indian? Explain.

11. Do you think Indians will keep on living on reserves in the future? Explain.
