

Arctic Survival . . .

(Continued from Page 5)

quartered the carcass, loaded his pack bag with meat and started for home happy with the game he had caught.

When the first stanza of the chant ended, the drummers hit the first booming roll. Precisely at the same moment, the dancer became suddenly alive. A pause, at which the dancer stood up to his full height, his legs set wide. His arms rose over his head in a dramatic gesture.

In the next instant the heavy drum beat resumed. The drumming had steady succession of beats, pauses, and off beats according to what the hunter-dancer was doing.

Interpretation

His interpretation of the hunting story was done with amazingly precise timing with the beat of the drums. Although presented in semi-abstract manner, preceptive audience took in the entire story interpreted by the skill and art of the dancer told in two minutes. The dancer had captured the imagination and spirit of his audience. The dance was on in earnest.

After the elderly man finished his series of dances, other men in pairs and threes, continued the motions dances. They were beautifully coordinated, thrilling and contagious. There were moments of laughter when some dancers made a mistake.

General Dance

After the special dances were completed, the general dance began. This was the dance in which anyone could participate, men, women, and children. Women bobbed with the bend of their knees in time with the chant and the drum beat, their arms gesturing in their own feminine way of dancing. Men gesticulated vigorously, occasionally issuing loud, triumphal sounds out of their mouths, their right feet thumping hard on the floor.

With the succession of dances, the floor became crowded with happy dancers. Children who were learning the dance, learned more.

Around midnight, the dance finally came to an end. An



Flying fakes—during World War II, mock air fields in England were attacked more often than real ones.

elder of the church stood up and said, "We will now pray." The crowd stood up, bowed their heads and said the Lord's prayer.

The people dispersed and each family wended its way to its igloo relaxed and happy. Whatever tension that had built up during the lean times was gone and in place of it was hope for a better tomorrow.

Spectacle, But Much More

The Eskimo dance is a fine spectacle to behold but to the people of the north it is more than just a dance. It is a deep expression of a way of life of a people. Its rendition is performed with emphasis on the light-hearted side of life. It is at once intricate and vigorous.

It is a dance that has been established with subtleties of psychology woven into it and these subtleties are interpreted through the art and skill of the performer, not unlike the art and skill of a great ballet dancer.

A great dancer such as Christopher Tingook, interprets the spirit of his people. As he performs, the dance becomes an encouragement and a steadying force — a dance that had been established to ease the ever present pressure created by the great rigors of the north country.

Dance Discouraged

In being the way it is, the dance has been an intricately woven facet of culture in the life of the Eskimos. It is deeply woven into their lives. For this reason the dance of the Eskimos should never be discouraged and yet it is today.

Some religious denominations have discouraged the Eskimo dance calling it the work of the devil. Some of these denominations have successfully banned it. What happens when this comes to pass? It leaves a void in the lives of the Eskimos — a void that is not easily replaced.

The taking of this culture facet has led to some demoralization of the people. This is a great price to pay by the Eskimos who have lived intimately with the dance frowned upon by people who do not understand it; who do not fathom its deep meaning to the Eskimos who had embraced it as one of the most necessary outlets of the uplifting of the soul in their fight for survival down through the ages.

Spring Jamborees—

Canadian Villages Hold Carnivals

By LOIS KEATING

INUUVIK — May 5, 1974 — The spring Jamborees have taken place again this year. The Beaver Jamboree in Arctic Red River; The Fort Good Hope Easter Carnival; the Mad Trappers Rendezvous in Aklavik; the Peel River Jamboree in Fort McPherson; and the White Fox Jamboree in Sachs Harbour. Again, Inuvik had no special spring festival.

Puddles are appearing on the streets of Inuvik, and there's lots of mud. However, the ice roads on the river are still being used although they are no longer officially open.

The section of the new Dempster Highway between Inuvik and Arctic Red River, which has been open for a few months this winter, has now been closed, due to thawing conditions.

All land use operation in the Mackenzie Delta region (including Tuktoyaktuk) ended the first week in May. This means that all overland exploration travel must stop for the summer.

The only exception is at Sachs Harbour, where brief extensions have been given, due to extremely bad weather on the island, which prevented the crews from getting off the land by April 30.

Early on Palm Sunday morning, fire broke out in the historic All Saints Anglican Church in Aklavik. When the fire was discovered, it was already out of control and there was a strong wind blowing. Nothing was saved. Lost were many irreplaceable works of art.

A preliminary hearing regarding the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline inquiries was held April 22 in Inuvik. Justice Thomas R. Berger presided at the meeting, which was held mainly to determine where and when the inquiries should be held. It was generally agreed that Justice Berger should hold hearings in each of the communities which will be affected by the pipeline.

The main question now seems to be when? Some of the groups wanted them to be as soon as the end of this coming summer, whereas other groups, particularly C.O.P.E., the Indian Brotherhood and the Inuit Tapirisat, all feel that it will take at least another year to do work on all the information which has already been collected and to get this information to the people in a form that they can understand.

One hundred and nine Eskimo people from this area have now begun to receive checks under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement. Almost a thousand applications had been

sent in, but only a small number of those were accepted.

The Land Use and Occupancy study being conducted by the Inuit Tapirisat is nearly finished in the Delta area. Peter Usher is now putting together all the information which he, Bertram Pokiak of Tuk, Victor Allen of Inuvik, and Peter Thrasher of Aklavik, collected.

He is making maps to show the land-use for each community. When these are finished, they will be going back into the communities to show the people the finished maps and to see if they are correct.

When the project is completed, they will have a true record of the land that the Inuit people have traditionally used for trapping and hunting, because it will be the people's own record. This is the first step in working toward land claims.

The ITC is also doing the same kind of work in the central and eastern arctic and this will be finished later this year.

A group of senior citizens in the Delta area have been given a grant for \$9,438.00 under the government's New Horizons program, to hold two workshops to study and record traditional Loucheux and Hareskin Indian games. At these workshops, the games will be talked about and played and photographs will be taken.

Afterwards, it is hoped that a set of posters will be made up similar to those which have already been done for Eskimo games. Some of the Indian games have been forgotten by all but a few of the older people.

The Loucheux-Hareskin Games Group hopes to bring these people together at the workshops and in this way the games will be recorded and kept for future generations.

Alex and Hope Gordon made a trip by skidoo from their home in Inuvik to Kaktovik on Barter Island. It took them three days each way, averaging 100 miles per day. They spent several days with relatives and friends in Alaska and then returned home. Alex and Hope are known to many Eskimo Olympics fans, as they are members of the Mackenzie Delta Drum Dancers.

The trappers at Sachs Harbour have had an extremely good trapping season this year. Thousands of white foxes have been caught. With the high prices which are being obtained the average full-time trapper on Banks Island will be making more than \$20,000.00 this year.

David Nasogolok has already caught over 1700 white foxes, which is more than anybody can ever remember one person getting in a season, and which will net him around \$67,000.00.

The average price being paid at the auctions for a white fox pelt is \$50.00 and some of the best furs are getting more than \$100.00.

We've now got the midnight sun and twenty-four hour daylight.

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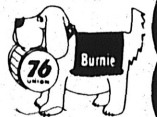


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CLOSURE DATE: June 19, 1974.

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