John Collin Yerbury

The Social Organization of the Subarctic Athapaskan Indians: An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction

Simon Fraser University

Ph.D.

1980

Dr. Charles A. Bishop

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE
SUBARCTIC ATHAPASKAN INDIANS:
AN ETHNOHISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

by

John Collin Yerbury
B.Ed., Simon Fraser University, 1971
M.A., Simon Fraser University, 1973

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department
of
Sociology and Anthropology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
July 1980

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The Social Organization of the Subarctic Athapaskan Indians:

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The Denés or Northern Athapaskans of the Alaskan Subarctic and the Canadian Western and Central Subarctic, the Pacific drainage and the northermmost extremity of the Great Plains have long been regarded as having a regional variation in social structure, of which the most evident variation is the east-west gradient from relative cultural simplicity towards relative complexity. The groupings to the east of the Mackenzie River are simpler and more fluid than their counterparts in the west, with some groups, such as the Kutchin, having an intermediate position that reflects their geographical position in the gradient. It is argued that the simplicity and fluidity found in the east are not traditional features of their culture. Rather, these are the result of adjustment to new circumstances stemming from European contact.

This thesis presents and interprets historical documents in order to determine if salient features can be found that may denote forms of social organization among the Northern Athapaskans during the initial indirect and direct contact period that may have been important in prehistoric times. It also traces the currents of change that swept over the Athapaskan peoples during the protohistoric and historic periods, which resulted in a realignment of social relationships and in profound changes in their aboriginal way of life. The primary documents include the accounts of fur traders, explorers, officials, missionaries, and early ethnographers who recorded historical and cultural data. These historical materials have been complemented with information extracted from recent ethnographic studies among these peoples so that the causal factors accounting for change in their
social organization can be delineated.

A preliminary reading of these early documents and other literature on the Athapaskans led to the hypothesis that the aboriginal Canadian Athapaskans in the Mackenzie-Arctic drainage region had a matrilineal descent system with the possibility of clan organization. The system was based on matrilocal residence patterns that would have been highly adaptive to the Canadian Subarctic because it allowed for: 1) the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions; 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of unpredictable movement of migratory animals, and in areas where there is mass slaughter of megafauna; and, 3) the necessity to retain women in their natal territory, for gathering purposes, while men's hunting pursuits took them away for extended periods.

It is further hypothesized that the bilateral form of cognatic descent identified among the twentieth century Arctic drainage Athapaskans by June Helm (1965) was a postcontact development. In prehistoric times, unilineal kinship structure, most likely matrilineal, was altered by the fur trade and related events, first through a transitional stage, involving the fluid, informal, composite hunting band, a refugee-like group as defined by Service (1971:77), during the initial indirect and direct European contact period. Later, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the bilateral form of cognatic descent similar to that described by modern ethnographers among the Mackenzie-Arctic drainage groupings developed.

The ethnohistorical literature indicates that the early contact period was somewhat catastrophic for the Canadian Athapaskans and that the later stabilization of the Canadian Athapaskan way of life occurred only after
these Indians had adjusted to a trapping economy. Prior to this stabilization, conditions favored a situation in which nuclear families could move from one set of bilateral kinsmen to join with others, according to specific subsistence and trapping pursuits. All aspects of life for these Athapaskans became reconcilable to such mobility resulting in the mesh of kinship relationships and bilateral descent. Bilateral descent resulted from shifting group alliances and involved adaptive strategies to maintain survival among those Athapaskans whose members had experienced depopulation, forced displacement into less productive habitats, and environmental depletions leading to the amalgamation of remnant groups. European contact both direct and indirect, was the primary cause. These factors, it is argued, account for the fluid and shifting communities described in the anthropological literature where unilineal descent and clans no longer are socially and ecologically adaptive. The regional variation in social structure of the east to west gradient from relative cultural simplicity of social organization toward relative complexity, it is argued, can be explained in terms of the relative intensity, albeit often indirect, of European contact.

The use of both published and archival documents facilitate the effort to define the character of the contact situation in its initial stages among the Canadian Athapaskans. Although empirical data on early contact social organization are meagre, inferences may be drawn from the historical documents that suggest aboriginal conditions. The records do, however, indicate the catastrophic intensity of contact and the conditions accounting for the historical development of the composite band.

Changes stemming from European contact in the Alaskan Subarctic and Canadian Western Subarctic and Pacific were less intense and they occurred
somewhat later than to the east. The ethnohistorical evidence indicates fewer groups were displaced and depopulation was somewhat less than among the peoples in the Mackenzie-Arctic drainage area. As a result, the aboriginal social organization of the more westerly Athapaskans was less profoundly altered during the early contact period. The early ethnohistorical materials, thus, reflect conditions that tend to approximate the aboriginal state. Since the Kutchin have an intermediate position in the east-west gradient and since they contain characteristics found in both divisions, they provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate the hypothesis. Thus, their culture history provides a comparative perspective on the character of the continuity of the relationships of the various ethnic groupings with their environmental zones throughout the contact period. From these data and others relating to eastern groups, inferences based on empirical association are made about aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan social organization.
To: Elizabeth, Shawn, and Ashley
You could not step twice in the same river; for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on.

Heraclitus (c. 540 – c. 480 B.C.)

When the people of an unstratified native society barter wild products found in extensive distribution and obtained through individual effort, the structure of the native culture will be destroyed, and the final culmination will be a culture type characterized by individual families having delimited rights to marketable resources and linked to the larger nation through trading centers.

Robert F. Murphy and Julian H. Steward
I am indebted to a number of people who took time from busy schedules to share with me the benefit of their intellectual experiences in assessing and observing similar problematic materials.

A complete listing of the people to whom I am indebted in the course of this research would fill a number of pages. I do wish, however, to particularly express my gratitude to Dr. Ian Whitaker for helping me to crystallize the idea of this research subject very early in my graduate studies. Dr. Whitaker also deserves very special thanks for his assistance after the sudden illness of my former senior supervisor, Dr. Harold Hickerson. To him, I express my sincere appreciation for his suggestions, support, and encouragement throughout my research.

To Dr. Charles A. Bishop, my senior supervisor, I am especially indebted for his knowledge of ethnohistory and the valuable criticisms and suggestions that he was able to offer during the course of my exploration into his field of study. I also owe an immense debt for his prolonged clinical scrutiny of both the arguments and style of my work. And most of all, I would like to thank him for insisting that the final product of my work should be my own.

I would like to express my appreciation to Drs. David Aberle, Herbert Alexander, Cyril Belshaw, Shepard Krech III, Eleanor Leacock, and Joan Townsend who have given me assistance in the completion of this study and my coursework. I would also like to thank Dr. James VanStone, my external examiner, for his helpful criticisms and comments.

This study could not have been completed without the assistance of
archivists. I am especially indebted to the personnel of the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to research their extensive documents. To Shirlee Anne Smith, the Hudson's Bay Company archivist, I am particularly indebted. I wish it was also possible to acknowledge my indebtedness to the deceased fur traders, explorers, and missionaries whose manuscripts I examined. I am also indebted to the personnel of the Jesuit Archives of Gonzaga University, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives for their assistance.

To Janice MacLellan who assisted me in the typing of this dissertation, I am indebted. Without Janice's perseverance and patience at the typewriter this dissertation would hardly have been possible.

A dissertation so largely about social organization and kinship ought to be dedicated to those who are so closely involved with me in it, patiently, with devotion, encouragement, and unending tolerance, for a not always tolerant husband and father during this exercise: to my wife Elizabeth and family.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Alaskan Subarctic and the Canadian Western and Central Subarctic, the Pacific drainage and the northernmost extremity of the Great Plains is an area of great regional variety, all of it with vigorous relief and trenchant topography. The climatic influence of these features has created a number of distinct regions or biotic zones of tundra, immense coniferous forests, grasslands, high mountain barriers and discontinuous regions of river, and lake valley bottoms (Fig. 1). Climatic influences affect flora and fauna association patterns. Within each biotic area, species of trees, shrubs, flowers, mammals, birds, and insects interact and prosper within the various ecological niches. This interdependence of species includes man in the total life community of all of the biotic areas. Man, plants, and animals are mutually adapted. The environmental factors of climate, topography, soil, vegetation, mammals, fresh-water fishes and birds functioned under the controlling factors of climate and topography. These biotic elements made up the prominent, if not decisive, part in the lives of the precontact Athapaskans. Recognizing this, it is imperative to emphasize that man's culture history and his environment are interrelated. One set of factors cannot be well understood without knowledge of the other. The following discussion of the Northern Athapaskan Indians keeps in the forefront these complex ecological relationships.

The boundaries of the Alaskan Subarctic and the Canadian Western and Central Subarctic, the Pacific drainage and the northernmost extremity of
the Great Plains terrestrial biotic zones include the area that the Northern Athapaskans were reported to have exploited during the aboriginal period. The territories of the various Northern Athapaskan cultural or dialectal groupings are indicated on the accompanying map (Fig. 2) for convenience (Swanton, 1952). The cultural groups that are of specific interest to this study include the Eastern Kutchin, Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Beaver, and Sekani. Throughout the text, the general classification of "Canadian" Athapaskans, based on subgrouping of languages by comparative lexicostatistics, will be applied to designate the above groups (see Dyen and Aberle, 1974).

The vast area occupied by the Northern Athapaskans extends from approximately fifty-two degrees north latitude to the Arctic Sea coast and from Hudson Bay almost to the shoreland of Norton Sound in Alaska. The Athapaskans were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen, who subsisted entirely on native resources. Their activities were intimately related to the resources and conditions of the environments in which they lived in the pre-contact period.

The influence of European penetration on the Athapaskans, who exploited these varying ecozones, during the initial indirect and direct contact periods profoundly affected aboriginal systems of life-sustaining interactions. European penetration led to new adaptations in many spheres of organization. The exploitation of the environment by both native populations and the Europeans, with their more efficient technology, radically altered ecosystemic relationships. The expansion of European trading post settlements throughout the Subarctic, Pacific drainage and Great Plains area was generally perpetuated and/or followed by the diminishing beaver
FIGURE 2

NORTHERN ATHAPASKAN CULTURES
(Adapted from Swanton, 1952)
and megafaunal populations as it was in eastern Canada (Leacock, 1954:39; Bishop, 1970:1-15). Beaver and the larger fauna were exploited by the Indians for their furs and meat, and these by-products were traded to Europeans. With the expansion of European influence and contact into the Athapaskan terrestrial biotic zones, it is clear that the relationship of three reciprocally related variables: the environment, the culture of the precontact Northern Athapaskans and the presence of Europeans, has played a critical role in the formation of the Northern Athapaskan cultures as modern ethnographers have recorded them. It is again imperative to emphasize that man's culture and his environment interact systemically. One set of factors can not be well understood without knowledge of the other.

Ethnohistorical data, involving the interpretation of primary and original documents covering the historical (postcontact) period, are employed to elucidate cultural-ecological relationships historically. Therefore, it is necessary first to review the contemporary use of ethnohistoric methods in cultural-historical research and also to review the current time perspectives or chronological frameworks used in Subarctic anthropological research. Once historiographical and methodological approaches for this study have been established, it is then possible to critically assess current cultural ecological theory and the manner in which it is used to explain aboriginal Northern Athapaskan social organization. Following these tasks, a differing theoretical model of Northern Athapaskan cultural-ecological history will be presented as a backdrop for assessing social organizational changes.
A Review of Contemporary Ethnohistorical Reconstructions and Methods

Prior to the 1970s, there were a number of excellent field studies made of specific Northern Athapaskan groups and communities in the Canadian Northwest Territories and Yukon, and in the state of Alaska (Osgood, 1933, 1936b, 1937, 1940, 1958, 1959; Honigmann, 1946, 1949; McKennan, 1959, 1965; Heim, 1961, 1965; VanStone, 1965; Slobodin, 1962; Balikci, 1963). Although many of these studies have been concerned with the cultural ecology of contemporary Athapaskan bands and communities, and with the factors of cultural change resulting from European contact, they characteristically have not demonstrated the important advance that ethnohistorical research can make to the analysis of long term sociocultural and environmental change. Other than brief acknowledgements of historical documents by some authorities, there is little demonstration of how the historical documents can be interpreted to show historical changes in sociocultural organization that have occurred as groups adapted to the altered ecological systems of the postcontact period, and to the imposed technoeconomic and technoenvironmental conditions of the initial indirect and later direct European contact period. In essence, these earlier studies of Athapaskan groups generally have not provided an extensive historical and comparative perspective for the entire contact period.

Since the early 1970s, there has been a growing interest in issues relating to the ethnohistory of the Northern Athapaskans. James VanStone (1974) and Richard Slobodin (1975) both have suggested lines of future research that include the use of an ethnohistorical approach in order to assess issues involving cultural continuity and change. The more recent
ethnohistorical publications on specific Northern Athapaskan groups suggest that there are two main theoretical viewpoints influencing Subarctic specialists, and these viewpoints are based on a theoretical dichotomy involving the interrelated issues of continuity and change.

The documentary research of Beryl C. Gillespie (1975, 1976) and J.G.E. Smith (1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1978) generally postulates an argument for cultural continuity between precontact and twentieth century Chipewyan subsistence and settlement strategies. In other words, both authors have attempted to document through the use of archival and published historical data that Chipewyan socioeconomic and sociocultural patterns have, for the main, persisted from the late prehistoric period until recently. This viewpoint, discussed in detail in subsequent chapters, is in sharp contrast to the historical research of Joan Townsend (1970a, 1970b, 1973) on the Tanaina and Shepard Krech III (1976, 1978b) on the Kutchin who argue for and demonstrate sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes in Tanaina and Kutchin cultural patterns respectively during the postcontact period. Both authors argue that European contact and the fur trade brought about significant socioeconomic adjustments and extensive depopulation. They also account for cultural persistence. While similar types of issues and factors were debated among Algonkian specialists prior and during the 1960s (see Leacock, 1954; Barnouw, 1961; Landes, 1961; Rogers, 1962; Hickerson, 1966, 1967b), only "limited" exchanges have occurred among Northern Athapaskan specialists, and, as Slobodin (1975:283) observed, we can "...boast no parallel to the apparently endless debate on Ojibwa 'atomism'...it does reflect a certain lack of intellectual liveliness in our interchanges." This can be attributed, in part, to the recency of Northern Athapaskan research and to
the lack of ethnohistorical research on cultural change and persistence and on cultural ecology.

In spite of the paucity of ethnohistorical studies of Northern Athapaskan cultures, a number of scholars have employed primary and original documents pertaining to Algonkians within an implicit methodological framework that illustrate how historical data can be fruitfully interpreted. The work of the historian A.C. Bailey (1937) on conflict and fusion between the Eastern Algonkians and the fur traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1504-1700) could be described as one of the earliest examples of ethnohistorical research on Canadian Indians. Through the use of historical data, he was able to document that the early fur trade had far-reaching influences. For example, he was able to identify the Iroquoian groups who were forced by the Eastern Algonkian tribes to evacuate the St. Lawrence region. More importantly, Bailey identified the development of new socio-economic arrangements among the Eastern Algonkians as a result of contact with Europeans and the fur trade. He was able to add historical evidence of a collective or communal ownership of territory in pre-Columbian times that changed through contact to a more individual type of ownership through the influence of the fur trade. This interpretation was in sharp contrast to F.G. Speck's description (1928) of land ownership among marginal hunting peoples. From evidence based on fieldwork (1914-1915), Speck asserted that individual or family ownership of territory had existed in the aboriginal period. Bailey, of course, succinctly demonstrated that there is no historical evidence of individual or family inheritance of territories in any of the instances cited by Speck. Speck did not take issue with Bailey's findings, perhaps because the latter's manuscript was published by the New
Brunswick Museum and had a limited circulation. The debate was to be taken up by the anthropologist Diamond Jenness.

Diamond Jenness (1932) formulated similar conclusions to those of Bailey on the subject of the possession of private hunting grounds. He (1932:122) concluded from historical sources that "...it does not appear at all certain that this system of land tenure pre-dates the coming of Europeans..." Jenness suggested that it was the influence of the fur trade that engendered individual ownership. For example, the Canadian Athapaskan Sekani began to partition band territory into family hunting grounds "...at the headwaters of Peace river during the last hundred years, after the necessities of the fur trade compelled the families to disperse among different creeks and rivers" (1932:124). Speck, his student Loren C. Eiseley (1939), and John M. Cooper (1939) took issue with Jenness's position on this subject. The result was an extended controversy that finally culminated with the results of Eleanor Leacock's research.

Through field work in 1950 among the Montagnais-Naskapi of the Labrador Peninsula at Natashquan along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and through the analysis of historical material on these people, Leacock (1954) questioned once again the aboriginality of the "family hunting territory." Her field data combined with the historical materials conclusively showed a shift from collective or communal tenancy to the family hunting territory and private forms of ownership. This was clearly a consequence of the fur trade that led to the establishment of inherited rights to trap lines by related individuals or an individual.

In essence, the examination of primary and original documents such as the Jesuit Relations and other early French material by Bailey, Jenness and
Leacock displays the potential of such analyses as well as its applicability to research for the Northern Athapaskan area. The description of changing man-land relationships and of sociopolitical and socioeconomic adjustments arising from contact with Europeans and through the fur trade should allow for better comprehension of the Northern Athapaskan situation. In general, their theoretical perspective also has broad implications for the contemporary social theory on indigenous Northern Athapaskan populations, in the light of J.M. Penard's attempts (1929:200-224) to demonstrate the existence of family-owned hunting territories among the Chipewyan and in the knowledge that the history of the fur trade and its impact upon Northern Athapaskan sociocultural organization has not been adequately understood or developed.

The unparalleled illustration of the ethnohistorical method includes the work of the anthropologist Harold Hickerson, who has encapsulated the intellectual contributions of Jenness, Leacock, and others. His employment of primary documents began in the mid-1950s with work on Indian land claims under the auspices of the Ohio Valley-Mississippi River Research Project subsidized by the United States Department of Justice. It was necessary for him to utilize primary documents "...to discover and verify occupation and migration patterns, and the make-up of social groups of numerous people" (Hickerson, 1970:2). The materials gleaned from various accounts of fur traders, explorers, officials, and missionaries culminated in a number of recent publications on the Chippewa or Ojibwa and their neighbors (1956, 1960, 1962a, 1962b, 1963, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1970 and 1971). In his demonstration of the contribution that ethnohistory can make to the theories of cultural change and adaptation and of cultural evolution, he also has
provided us with new and contrary information on widely held contemporary perspectives of traditional Chippewa culture.

Recently, his material on the Chippewa has been presented in book form to illustrate ethnohistorical methods (1970). Here, it was his task to discuss three problem-oriented subjects: 1) the protohistoric social organization, the clan as an evolutionary problem; 2) tribal ceremony and politics, the Midewiwin; and 3) Chippewa and Dakota warfare. In each case, a different research strategy was required in order to illustrate a particular ethnohistorical method. The reconstruction of the protohistoric social organization was achieved through the utilization of primary and original documents and their interpretations as well as the application of the anthropological technique of analyzing surviving kinship terminology to reconstruct past forms of social organization. His use of these documents also accounts for change in social organization through time due to European contact.

The second problem, the origin and function of the Midewiwin, was concerned with the "when" and "why" of its development. The documents of priests, fur traders, and the work of later authorities such as the American frontier anthropologist and Indian agent, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, helped resolve these problems. In order to solve the second problem, Hickerson also employed comparative materials pertaining to the neighbors of the Chippewa to support the thesis that the Midewiwin was postcontact. Through the use of both negative and positive evidence, he was able to show the postcontact origin of the Midewiwin.

The final problem-oriented study dealt with Chippewa and Dakota warfare. Hickerson (1970:65) used primary documents as well as data from
conservationists, geographers, ecologists, and others to infer that there was a close association between differentially changing ecological factors and Chippewa-Dakota warfare during the contact period.

Although the historical records on the Chippewa are somewhat richer than for the Northern Athapaskans, Hickerson's methodological suggestions of how to select and to interpret documents and finally to elicit conclusions from them are critical for the reconstruction of aboriginal Northern Athapaskan social organization and ecological conditions and of subsequent systemic changes. His emphasis on the historical approach and the comparative study of documented change has been a move toward addressing some of the problems of cultural anthropology in the United States that Fred Eggan (1954) outlined in his paper, "Social Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Comparison." A comparative study of the Northern Athapaskan area would too seem to be "...now ripe for a new integration which should be more satisfying than [than] the older ones" (Eggan, 1954:757).

More recently, Charles Bishop (1974) has provided a detailed study of the successive eras of change and adaptation among the Subarctic Northern Ojibwa through the use of both field and historical materials. His study suggests that the Northern Ojibwa social and economic organization of the seventeenth century changed from a clan-totem system to a flexible bilateral system in the contemporary period. His focus on social and economic change stemming from altering relationships with fur traders, missionaries, government agents and contiguous Indian populations, and from changes in the environment makes it important for us to view the Northern Athapaskans against the background of ecology and of history.

Another important study of the fur trade and the Indian has been under-
taken by Arthur Ray (1974), a cultural-historical geographer. He has examined the role of the Cree and Assiniboine in the fur trade in Manitoba and Saskatchewan between 1660-1870. Ray's research is important to us since his careful analysis of Hudson's Bay Company archival data has enabled him to determine changing cultural boundaries, fur trade conditions, and ecological adaptations in the region extending from northwestern Ontario to central Alberta. The Assiniboine and Cree, who expanded into and occupied the area throughout most of the fur trade period, acted as middlemen to several of the Canadian Athapaskan groups. Information on the environment and ecological conditions of the parkland belt between the Subarctic boreal forest and the Plains grasslands region provide invaluable insights into prehistoric Canadian Athapaskan ecological adaptations. Ray's study also includes historical details on the flow of European trade goods, the various epidemics and demographic changes in Indian populations, and the destruction of game and fur-bearing animals during the nineteenth century (see Ray and Freeman, 1978). His processual analysis of historical data dealing with Indian-trader relationships and ecological adaptations is important for our research on the contiguous Canadian Athapaskan populations.

Having reviewed some of the more general studies, which utilize documentary research, it is now necessary to consider some of the methods that have developed through the integrated use of historical documents and other sources of data. This is necessary before we can construct an empirically-based temporal framework to account for the culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans.

While this research project represents a general effort to apply the
direct historical approach (cf. Steward, 1942), it will specifically at-
ttempt to integrate archaeological, linguistic, ethnographic, and historical
data to describe the culture history of the Northern Athapaskans.

Archaeologists were the first to combine historical and archaeological
data to articulate or merge the recent prehistoric and earliest historic
eras. Although ethnoarchaeology (James and Lindsay, 1973), as a research
method, has been refined over the last two decades, it has not been sys-
tematically applied to the culture history of the Northern Athapaskans,
except for Alaskan groups researched by Oswalt (1967), Townsend (1973), and

Indeed, there has not been a great deal of archaeological work done in
the Subarctic compared to other areas of North America. Nevertheless, the
research strategy here will be to use any available archaeological or
historical data that will assist in reconstructing the Athapaskan culture
history immediately preceding and following the point at which prehistory
and history merge in a single continuum. This method will facilitate
interpretations of the degree and nature of change in aboriginal culture
after contact.

It is also necessary to combine ethnohistorical data with linguistic
data on the asymmetries in shared innovations among those groups consti-
tuting the Canadian Athapaskans. The recent works of Dyen and Aberle
(1974) and of Howren (1975) demonstrate that the geographical position of
individual Canadian Athapaskan groups are not concordant with their posi-
tion in the linguistic matrices and dendograms. Linguistic data based on
the distribution of kinship innovations support archivally-based interpre-
tations that the Canadian Athapaskans were severely disarranged by contact
conditions. For example, the Hare, a population contiguous to the Kutchin, bear slight linguistic resemblance to the latter but a relatively close relationship with the more distant Beaver (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:249-251). These linguistic relationships have important theoretical and generative implications for the hypotheses to be presented in this study. Furthermore, empirical data on features of Canadian Athapaskan social organization are also drawn from Dyen's and Aberle's (1974) lexical reconstruction of proto-Athapaskan kinship systems. Their conclusions that early Canadian Athapaskan social organization was matrilineal (1974:289-291) will add substance to our model of cultural change.

The primary and original source materials used in this analysis are derived from a large number of available documents. Extensive use of both archival and published data obtained from fur traders' journals and correspondence, explorers' narratives, and missionary diaries spanning the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries are employed in this reconstruction of Athapaskan culture history. The analysis and the interpretation of primary and original sources attempts to establish a "framework of facts" for which there is significant probability. A series of critical procedures for assessing the probability of historical facts have been established over the years by historians (Bloch, 1954; Carr, 1961) and, more recently, by anthropologists (Pitt, 1972; Carmack, 1972; Hudson, 1973). Their guidelines for the use of historical data and documentary sources are considered essential to this research.

The primary and original documents, used in this study, are also both ethnographic and historical in content, that is, ethnohistorical. They are also ethnohistorical in the sense that they were written by non-members of
the cultures described (Sturtevant, 1968:457). Conventional historiographers would consider the sources to be historical since they document the Euro-Canadian activities at the time they are produced. From the historian's point of view, the publications of field ethnographers are also primary documents. They reflect the state of anthropology as a science at the time they are written. Thus, just as it is the task of the historian to re-evaluate older views so it is the task here to re-examine interpretations made in previous ethnographies against the published historical accounts and new unpublished sources from perspectives gained through familiarity with current anthropological theory and methods.

It is also necessary to evaluate the nature and rate of change among the Canadian Athapaskans during the postcontact period through the use of a coherent time perspective or chronological framework. Since documentary research by Subarctic specialists is recent, it is suggested that current chronological models need to be re-examined and restructured. This is done in an attempt to establish an empirically-based temporal framework. The model will serve as a heuristic devise for producing a more precise culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans and for providing a proper comprehension of their changing cultural and ecological conditions.

Present Chronological Frameworks: A Critique

Several ethnologists and ethnohistorians of the Central Subarctic (Helm and Damas, 1963; Helm and Leacock, 1971; Helm, et al., 1975; Rogers and Smith, 1973; Bishop and Ray, 1976) have grappled with the problem of demarcating qualitative sociocultural stages of change in the way of life
of the people in this region. The conceptual models of Helm and Leacock (1971), Rogers and Smith (1973), and Helm, et al. (1975) attempt to delineate or label eras: the Historic period is divided into three units or successive stages: the incipient-early contact, the contact-traditional, and the modern or government-commercial stages, following the earlier work of Helm and Damas (1963). The fundamental assumption that underlies the hyphenated phrase, "incipient-early contact" formulated by Helm, et al. (1975:312-313) is that it emphasizes "...the beginnings of knowledge, experience and response by Indian culture to the European cultural presence rather than face-to-face contact of Indian and European." Helm maintains that "incipient contact" refers specifically to the condition of access to trade goods only through Indian and Eskimo middlemen while "early contact" refers "...to direct but initial or irregular contact by at least a portion of a "tribal" population with agents of European culture." Like Rogers and Smith (1973), she assumes, it is suggested, that little socioeconomic change occurred during this era (1975:312). In short, she considers only the prehistoric and historic as being important in her dating scheme.

For the most part, Helm's formation of the Incipient-Early Contact Stage was based, on one hand, on the lack of historical documents and, on the other, on the lateness of Euro-Canadian intrusions because of the seclusion of the Mackenzie Basin. However, it is argued here that these factors have created an illusion of cultural-historical continuity, which Helm and several others have failed to appreciate. It will be shown that the fur trade had a great impact on many Canadian Athapaskans for decades before they experienced direct contact and for a century before trading posts were built in their territories. The effects of trade, both direct
and indirect, have been largely discounted. Owing to this omission in Helm's analysis, a full chapter will be devoted to trade rivalries, warfare, and changing territorial boundaries, most of which occurred within her incipient-early contact period to illuminate both direct and indirect influences on Athapaskan culture. The early documents demonstrate that changes were of a much greater magnitude than previously assumed.

Because in the past many scholars did not make full use of historical sources, certain assumptions were made about the effects of early European influences. Until Indians had become dependent upon items of European manufacture, it has been assumed that few or no changes occurred in the social and economic arrangements of Indian societies. For instance, according to Helm, et al. (1975:312), during the Incipient-Early Contact Stage, Indian groups were:

...not yet fully committed to the dual economy of the contact traditional stage, when items of European manufacture—guns, implements, utensils, clothing, tea and tobacco—have become "necessities," and to obtain these necessities the Indian group is committed to regular procurement of fur (or post provisioning) which substantially reorders the group's relationship with the natural and sociocultural environment.

Given the lack of specific historical details on the dissemination of European trade goods from one Indian group to another more distant group, it is easy for one to assume that culture change was insignificant. Helm indicates that only some Chipewyan adjacent to the Cree of the Hudson Bay region were receiving English trade goods by 1700 and that by 1714 only a few Chipewyan had traveled to York Factory. The Copper (Yellowknife) and Dogrib Indians, it is inferred, probably did not obtain trade items until the period 1725-1750 (1975:313). While we may sympathize with Helm's admission that direct historical data are lacking, we will see in the
following chapters that these early sources provide some important clues about socioeconomic and territorial rearrangements during Protohistoric times.

Samuel Hearne's journal pertaining to the 1770s, a primary source for Helm and others although a basic and important one on the Chipewyan and other Athapaskans, was written after many changes had already occurred. Thus, Hearne's materials cannot alone be taken to reflect true aboriginal conditions. The very richness of Hearne's documentation on peoples for whom there is comparatively little prior published data, has directed attention away from earlier sources that indicate that the fur trade at least indirectly had had a considerable impact on these Indians for decades prior to the 1770s when Hearne made his now famous trek across the tundra.

The importance of fur trade relationships among Indian groups and between Indians and European fur traders during the latter part of this era (1730s-1760s) is evident in a number of accounts, but not all. Helm, et al., for instance, writes that (1975:313-314):

"East of the Rockies, the first contacted tribes—Cree, Chipewyan, then Beaver and Yellowknifes—obtained firearms and turned to fur-raiding and general bullying of their defenseless Athapaskan neighbors, and, when possible, of each other. The "Slave Indians," as a notable example, emerge in the literature as a contemptuous designation by the armed Cree of defenseless groups in the lands abutting the southwest side of Great Slave Lake and along the Upper Mackenzie. (It is questionable that the "Slave Indians" were in aboriginal times a dialectical or cultural unit.) Groups of Sekani and Dogribs were also harried and forced to flee customary territories by Beaver and Yellowknives, respectively (Jenness 1937; Franklin 1824)...."

Helm and the others are aware that the fur trade produced trade rivalries, warfare, and a displacement of cultural groups. However, they assume, as will be discussed in detail later, that these factors did not substantially alter Indian relationships with their natural and sociocultural environ-
ments. This view is not supported by the data. It is argued here that the events, which took place during the Incipient-Early Contact Stage (which includes portions of what will be designated the Protohistoric and Historic Period), are significant to an understanding of socioterritorial realignments. Thus, Helm's "Incipient-Early Contact" stage or era has not generated an interpretive framework that could contribute to a clear understanding of the dynamic interaction, which took place in the Eastern and Central Subarctic throughout the Protohistoric Period.

The next era, Contact-Traditional Stage, relates to the stable conditions of the later trading post and mission life. This era was first defined by Helm and Damas (1963:10-11) as referring to a specific community pattern:

The prime criterion...for the advent of the contact-traditional horizon is the establishment of all-native communities made up of permanent dwellings—log cabins for the Athapaskans and gangmat or sod, canvas and wood shelters for Igluligmiut. We consider this physical evidence of significant decline in the nomadism and cultural independence of the aboriginal and early contact period.

In an attempt to provide a more general definition to comprehend the way of life for Subarctic Athapaskans as a whole during this era, Helm, et al. has recently (1975:311-312) suggested that the "contact-traditional" should correspond to her earlier "stabilized fur mission stage" (Helm and Leacock, 1971:353):

Two prime conditions of the contact situation of this era must be recognized. First, contact with the western world was channeled preeminently through the few agents of the two major institutions: the church and the fur trade. Secondly, contact with these figures was infrequent, and most of the Indians most of the time pursued their activities apart from the presence of Europeans.

More indirect factors of change include nineteenth-century technological developments, increasing biological and cultural interpenetration between European and Indian peoples, and alterations in the formal political and legal relations between Indians and the Euro-Canadian governments. Even in the latter instance, however, formal change only slowly had consequences for Indian life.
The Contact-Traditional Stage, therefore, like the earlier era is also characterized as a period during which little culture change occurred. She leaves us to guess at how changes from one era to the next come about. In fact, she defines eras implying change, but these would seem to apply to Europeans rather than Indians. For her, there was continuity in Indian culture.

Helm's assumptions about cultural continuity are shared by Rogers and Smith who state that "...most aspects of culture changed little until late in the period and most changes were directly related to the technological innovations introduced by the Europeans and by demands of the fur trade" (1973:14). To justify their assumptions, they assume that the Subarctic Indians have been subjected to more accelerated and far-reaching pressures for socioeconomic change over the last few decades than at any other era of their contact history. These changes have occurred during the third successive era in Northern Athapaskan contact relations, the Modern or Government Stage, which logically follows the Contact-Traditional Stage. According to Helm (1975:310-311):

...The term "government-commercial" is suggested by a phrase of E.S. Rogers (n.d.) reporting on contemporary life among the subarctic Algonkians. Other efforts to capture the dominant tenor of present trends are encapsulated in the phrases "government-industrial" (Helm and Leacock 1971), "micro-urban" (J. Smith n.d.), and "period of planned change," suggested by John Honigmann. They indicate that within the last few decades the subarctic Indians have become continually more subject to pressures that issue from big government, large-scale commerce and industry, aggregation into white-dominant settlements, and the accelerated communication of aspects of white man life-styles.

The difficulty in dealing with a hypothesis that postulates far more rapid change over the last few decades than at any other time during contact history has been extensively examined by Bishop and Ray (1976). In reviewing both W.J. Mayer-Oakes's (1970) chronology for an historic archaeological site in the central Manitoba region and Roger's and Smith's chronology for the Canadian Shield Subarctic, Bishop and Ray find that "...too little work has
been done on early contact cultures to establish a clear contact baseline from which the degree and rate of acculturation can be scaled" (1976:128). According to their argument, then, we should not build chronologies of culture histories based on a priori assumptions about the rates of culture change before we have a more thorough knowledge of the early contact cultures. In other words, these chronologies should have avoided the cardinal historiographical caveat against reading into the past the relations of the present (cf. Hickerson, 1970:26-27).

A Suitable Chronological Framework for the Subarctic Athapaskans

Given prior shortcomings, the need for a chronology that will provide concrete insights into the contact history of Euro-Indian relationships is obvious. An alternative chronology that deals specifically with these basic problems will be suggested here.

The more recent attempt of Bishop and Ray (1976) to establish a Subarctic chronology offers a heuristic model, which should be empirically tested against the available published and archival data. In terms of the earlier conceptual models of Helm and Damas (1963), Helm and Leacock (1971), Rogers and Smith (1973), and Helm, et al. (1975), Bishop and Ray have clearly defined the chronological units, which are employed in the chapters of this study. Because Bishop's and Ray's model is a spatial one based on Subarctic Algonkians of the northern Prairie Provinces, Ontario and Quebec and the Siouan Assiniboine rather than the Subarctic Athapaskans, the temporal sequence of these chronological units has to be adjusted to the specific variables of White-Indian interactions and, of course, the subsequent sociocultural changes among Subarctic Athapaskan populations. In
order to analyze the processes of change, it is now essential that a suitable chronological order of distinguishable historic periods be delineated for the eastern Subarctic Athapaskans.

Bishop and Ray (1976:124-125) begin their inquiries into a suitable Central Subarctic chronological framework by stressing that the units designated as the Prehistoric, Protohistoric, and Historic periods require considerable clarification, in order that they may become operational terms in the social sciences. They first maintain that the Prehistoric Period terminates, as trade goods or other Euro-Canadian influences reach an area. The Protohistoric Period, which follows, is demarcated by the influx of trade goods or influences such as disease and includes the time during which Indians traveled outside of their territories to obtain goods for themselves or for exchange with more distant Indians. The authors argue that Indian middlemen should be included within the Protohistoric Period since these people did very little trapping and were relatively independent of the fur traders. Finally, the Historic Period commences when Indians come into contact with the fur traders in their own territories and are themselves involved in the trapping of fur bearing animals. It is emphasized that the two latter periods, the Protohistoric and the Historic, overlap in time depending upon the geographical area. This has important implications for the Mackenzie drainage Athapaskans. The Protohistoric Period would appear to have had a greater time depth than formerly assumed, and, in essence, the amount of sociocultural change would have been more significant than has been characterized by most Athapaskan specialists (see Janes, 1976 and D.M. Smith, 1976). In short, Athapaskan specialists tend to merge the Historic Period into the Prehistoric Period while downplaying the importance
of the Protohistoric Period.

The reconstruction in this study employs these three chronological units. It is first concerned with the period roughly between 1680 and 1769, when the Canadian Athapaskans were being initiated into new conditions imposed by Euro-Canadian traders and Indian middlemen. This unit of time, following Bishop and Ray, is designated as the Protohistoric Period. The epoch begins with the historic communiqué of May 21, 1680 to Captain Thomas Draper with the instructions to build a factory on New Severn (Churchill) River for trade with the Northern (Chipewyan) Indians (Rich, 1948:14). Although prior forms of contact are implicit or can be inferred, it is the above empirical documentation that presently demarcates the end of the Prehistoric Period and the beginnings of the Protohistoric Period for the Chipewyan. Historical sources presently establish the beginnings of the Protohistoric Period among the Yellowknife and Dogrib as 1689 (Kelsey, 1929:25; Rich, 1958:255, 1959:47; Kenney, 1932:51), while the Northern Indian "Strangers" (Beaver and Slave) were not documented until 1715-1716 when a few parties of these "Strangers" made several visits to York Factory (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 28). While it is evident from historical sources that the Northern Indians or Chipewyan visited fur trade posts on a regular basis and acted as middlemen to other more remote Athapaskan groups, it is important to extend the Protohistoric Period until at least 1769 and perhaps later when the traders who came to form the Northwest Company began to establish trading relationships within the heart of Athapaskan territory. The establishment of direct contact with Euro-Canadian traders occurred gradually in the Mackenzie River drainage system, and it was not until the 1830s that all Athapaskan Indian groups had in the main entered the
Historic Period even though they had been greatly influenced prior to this.

A particular problem with the use of this highly generalized dating scheme is the variability of time and rates of change from group to group and area to area. Within the threefold division, it is necessary to demarcate major events or transitions that culminated in qualitative socio-cultural shifts in the way of life of each of the Canadian Athapaskan groups. Since only documentary sources are employed in this study to establish chronological stages or eras, the Prehistoric Period is not dealt with, and is left to archaeologists. Within the Protohistoric and Historic Periods, manageable units or eras are devised to describe or reflect significant culture change.

The alternative model to be outlined here closely follows that discussed by Bishop and Ray (1976). Essentially, their model has both a spatial and a temporal dimension. As noted, the temporal dimension involves the three main periods: Prehistoric, Protohistoric, and Historic. The spatial dimension is also defined. Shortly after each post was established, it was encircled by Local, Middlemen, and Indirect Trade Areas. Two significant features characterize the Local Trade Area. First, the activities of hunter, trapper, and trader are undifferentiated since most Indian men were involved in all. Second, because these Indians lived in the vicinity of the trading post, which they visited several times a year, they rapidly became dependent upon European trade goods. The Middlemen Area was occupied by groups of Indians more distant from the post who had become trade specialists or middlemen. Although these Indians may have trapped fur-bearing animals, most of the furs that they acquired for trade at the post were obtained through exchange with even more remote Indian groups. The
middlemen continued to exploit their resources for subsistence purposes rather than for exchange. The **Indirect Trade Area** included those Indian groups who obtained their trade goods from middlemen. These hinterland groups seldom visited the trading posts because of the hardships of travel over great distances of sometimes several hundred miles. They had to either back-pack their furs or drag them on sledges. Often they were prevented from establishing direct contact with the trading post by the middlemen who guarded their positions jealously. The **Middlemen** and **Indirect Trade Areas** had fluctuating boundaries due to fur trade inter-tribal rivalries and the gradual expansion of traders into, hitherto, unoccupied regions.

Bishop and Ray insist that although their spatial model was designed for the French-English fur trade era that ended in the Central Subarctic in 1763, the model can be used to demarcate changes in socioeconomic relationships through time in other regions and at other times. Thus, these spatial dimensions reflecting the native way of life, the Local, Middlemen and Indirect Trade relationships, are temporal as well as spatial units, and can be considered as eras within the **Protohistoric** and **Historic Periods**. The **Indirect Contact Era** of trade and the **Middlemen Era** would be included in the **Protohistoric Period**, as previously defined, while the **Local Era** falls fully within the **Historic Period** because contact was direct and regular.

The common mistake made by most other Subarctic specialists is to consider the **Historic Period**, denoted by the establishment of trading posts in a given area, as the time during which significant sociocultural change began. Using the earlier work of Ray (1974:61-93, 1975b:586-602) and Heidenreich and Ray (1976:44-49), Bishop and Ray stress the importance of trade during the **Middlemen Era** for technological change as well as for
socioeconomic changes or adjustments, which were needed to facilitate this trade on the part of the middlemen and their trading partners. Thus, it is shown that significant culture change had taken place during both the Indirect Contact and Middlemen Eras, long before the Local Trade Era and the Historic Period began in northern Ontario and the prairie provinces. This implies that the entire sociocultural fabric of Athapaskan groups, through a period of approximately one hundred years, had already been permeated and transformed by, and integrated into, the European commercial system by the time that the Historic Period began shortly after 1769.

The schematic chronological diagram of the post-contact period devised by Bishop and Ray has been modified to accord with the western Subarctic (see Table 1). The Indirect Trade and Middlemen Eras are included within the Protohistoric Period, but the onset and termination of this period and its eras vary considerably. To determine these, the contact history of each regional and local group has to be discussed in turn.

The Early Fur Trade Era (1769-1800) is included within the Historic Period. Local trade was centered around a few trading posts, and trade relationships included Indians who were simultaneously post hunters, trappers, and traders, as well as those Indians who were involved as middlemen or who received trading goods bartered to them by middlemen. For the Athapaskans, the Indirect, Middlemen, and Early Trade eras also overlap in time during the Historic Period. The Early Fur Trade Era, which also includes early European expeditions into Athapaskan territory, precedes the next era, the Competitive Trade Era. The latter era, lasting from 1800 to 1821 is characterized by large scale competition among the Northwest Company, XY Company, and Hudson's Bay Company, which had devastating effects on Indians. The
### TABLE 1

**CHRONOLOGY OF PERIODS AND ERAS IN THE WESTERN SUBARCTIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Era</th>
<th>Dates and Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREHISTORIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTOHISTORIC</td>
<td>Middleman Era</td>
<td>1680–1769. There is considerable regional variation in terms of the onset and termination of this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indirect Trade Era</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORIC</td>
<td>Modern Era</td>
<td>1945–. Establishment of permanent Indian communities with schools, medical facilities, etc. while trapping, hunting and fishing continue government subsidies provide an increasing proportion of income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trading Post Dependency Era</td>
<td>1821–1890. Trapping as a basic subsistence pattern necessary to survival as a result of trading post dependency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Fur Trade Era</td>
<td>Earliest visitations of Europeans to Indian settlements or territories to 1769–1800.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Bishop and Ray, 1976)
Northwest Company had been subjected to intermittent competition with smaller companies in Athabasca prior to 1801, but with its comparatively well developed organization it found the smaller competing companies no serious challenge in this area. The formation of the New Northwest Company or XY Company, as it came to be called, out of a domestic feud among Northwest Company partners initiated a period of intense competition marked by violence between the Northwest Company and the XY Company Company in Athabasca between 1801-1804. This early phase of violent competition set a precedent for the succeeding years of fur trade rivalry between the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies from 1804 until 1821. This era, to be described in detail below, was characterized by the bullying and cajoling of Indians, the increased use of "High Spirits" or rum to gain advantage over Indians who otherwise would have had a commanding position because of fur company rivalry, the presentation of plentiful gifts and Chief's or Captain's outfits in an attempt to win loyalty, and the introduction of the debt system once posts were established throughout Athapaskan territory (see Fig. 3). These conditions, as shall be documented, led to qualitative changes in native sociocultural and socioeconomic systems. This era of fierce competition was ruinous, not only to the Indians, but to the fur traders as well. Trade rivalry strategy involved the policy of building competing posts side by side, particularly in the Peace River area where pemmican was secured to provision the northern posts and the outgoing canoes. Fur trade returns and provisions steadily declined after 1800. The losses suffered by competing companies led first to the union of the smaller companies with the Northwest Company in 1804, and, finally, to the union of the Northwest Company with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, which
FIGURE 3
HISTORIC TRADING POSTS
culminated in the inauguration of the Trading Post Dependency Era.

The Trading Post Dependency Era, lasting from 1821 to 1890, is marked, in contrast with the preceding era, by profound peacefulness, by monopoly control over a continental domain, and by increased stability of native populations, through the formation of trading-post bands and trapping parties in both the Athabasca and Mackenzie Districts. The development of trading-post bands or socioterritorial groups occurred as groups of Athapaskans became dependent upon specific posts for trade goods and provisions. By the early 1830s many Indian economic activities in the Mackenzie and Athabasca Districts had in the main become subject to fur trader control. During the 1820s and 1830s, Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, campaigned in an effort to keep the missionaries out of the Company's territories because he thought of them as a disruptive influence to the fur trade. It was feared that missionary activities would keep the Indians from trapping and working for the posts. After 1846, Simpson was pressured by missionaries and a growing population of fur traders and their halfbreed offspring to allow both Catholic and Protestant missionaries on Company-controlled territory. In particular, the 1846 petition signed by 977 halfbreeds and presented to Earl Grey, the Colonial Minister, had the most influence on Hudson's Bay Company policies. However, it was not until the 1850s and 1860s that the Company looked on religion and education as calculated to train the Indians to what it considered to have been an orderly life and as assisting the Company in the acquisition of fur bearers procured by Indian trappers. After 1858, the Hudson's Bay Company assisted the Oblate and Church Missionary Society personnel in their work in the Athabasca and Mackenzie Districts. The missionaries gained considerable
influence and control over the Athapaskans and accelerated sociocultural change. However, within the Trading Post Dependency Era, we will be specifically interested in the data between 1821 and 1860, which include only the first two years of missionary influence. The fur trade was the most influential economic and cultural force linking Athapaskans and Europeans between 1680 and 1860. Thus, the period from 1680 to 1860 is a convenient temporal unit for this study.

Bishop's and Ray's Era of Early Government Influence, 1890-1945, can be applied to Athapaskans as well. Although the fur trade continued as an important economic activity, other new acculturative or selective influences soon began to further alter the Indian way of life. The regularization of the fur trade in the preceding era and the proliferation of the range and quantity of store-bought commodities through the expanding Canadian economy in this era represented a further basic transformation in native productive relations. Trade, now, should not be looked at as merely a supplement to economics based, in part, on production within the community, but as a necessity. With trade as the crucial factor in furnishing the means of gaining a livelihood, the declining fur trade left the natives destitute of the very means to ensure their survival. The importance of government officials in off-setting the imposed hardships of Euro-Canadian market conditions on the Indians characterizes the Era of Early Government Influence. Government Indian agents and officials played an increasingly influential role in Indian life. This era ends about 1945 when the Modern Era began, demarcated by the construction of homes in villages, schools, and nursing stations supported by government monies.

From the foregoing discussion of the chronological framework to be
employed in this study, it should be clear that the fur trade was the prime mover for successive alterations in Canadian Athapaskan economy and social organization until recently. Before providing the empirical details on economic and sociocultural change within the framework of the temporal and spatial model, it is necessary first to re-examine theoretical studies of cultural ecology and sociocultural organization and to propose a theoretical model accounting for sociocultural change.

An Evaluation of Cultural Ecological Approaches

While there has been a general lack of acquaintance with the history of the fur trade and its impact on Northern Athapaskan cultures, there have been some attempts among Subarctic specialists to develop a proper comprehension of cultural ecological conditions.

Julian Steward (1955) was the first to develop theoretical and methodological statements concerning cultural ecology. His views have had considerable influence in anthropology and on Subarctic specialists. While it is commonly concluded that he was not concerned with cultural ecology in the analytic and processual sense, but with the question of regularities and evolution in culture (Bennett, 1976:217), it is still necessary to review the three fundamental procedures of cultural ecology as developed by Steward (1955:40). Steward's "method of cultural ecology" includes the analysis of: 1) the interrelationship of exploitative or productive technology and environment; 2) the behavior patterns involved in the exploitation of a particular area by means of a particular technology; and 3) the extent to which the behavior patterns entailed in exploiting the environ-
ment affect other aspects of culture. Using these procedures as a methodological tool, Steward then examined cultures at various levels of socio-cultural integration to determine regularities that arise out of environmental adaptations. Steward's conclusions concerning types of social organization to which the Northern Athapaskans are adapted was a significant theoretical advance, and will be discussed in detail later.

Andrew P. Vayda and Roy Rappaport (1968:477-497) have outlined a number of difficulties with Steward's methodology. There are three main points that have a bearing on Northern Athapaskan studies. First, we can question the existence of significant correlations between the cultural traits such as forms of social organization and ecological adaptations. Steward did not assemble an adequate cross-cultural sample for testing his correlations. In the case of the Subarctic Athapaskans, he chose examples from the Mackenzie Basin to arrive at an association between particular cultural traits and ecological adjustments. The Alaskan or Northwestern Athapaskan cultures, then known to ethnographers, were not considered in detail. In the latter case, any variation in types of social organization from Steward's model was attributed to Northwest Coast influence (1955:147-148). Second, we can question the assumption that ecological adaptations are causative (Vayda and Rappaport, 1968:485). Although there may be a correlation between ecological adaptations and cultural traits, it is difficult to avoid a teleological statement of causal processes (see Richerson, 1977:1-22). Steward, in part, tends to avoid the pitfalls of linear causation by allowing for a feedback or systemic process involving other factors such as outside influences, culture history, and human choice. This is clear in the case of the Carrier Indians whom he portrays as once having had composite
bands that changed to a matri-clan organization through Northwest Coast influence (1955:148). His procedure, nevertheless, suggests that he was highly selective as to which cultures he would allow latitude of choice or decision making in the context of social action. These factors and that of cultural history and outside influences as explanations in the case of the Mackenzie Basin Athapaskans are not considered, and Steward's argument is reduced to a linear causation model for them, in which large herding animals cause the formation of composite bands (1955:149). Finally, even if Steward's correlations are reliable and cultural traits are shown to be dependent variables, we can not assume that their presence will be automatic. For instance, Vayda and Rappaport (1968:486) cite the nonexistence of patrilineal bands among the Australian Aborigines and the African Bushmen. These cultures are two examples out of seven used by Steward as archetypes of groups with patrilineal bands.

Despite these questions, which deal mainly with the cross-cultural use of ethnographic materials, Steward's work revived an interest in the consideration of questions concerning the relation between cultural and environmental phenomena. Beginning with Steward, we also have a shift in theoretical position from models of linear causation to feedback or systemic models in which multiple factors can be considered as equally strong causal possibilities (Bennett, 1976:166).

The feedback model was utilized first by Clifford Geertz in his study (1963) of the influence of ecological variables on the evolution of culture in Java. The primary postulate of his model is the interdependence of culture and physical factors. According to John Bennett (1976:166), human activities are "...seen to either upset natural phenomena, to maintain
them, or to create new balanced environments." The formulation of types is not the object of the feedback model, rather it is the process that brings results that is of interest.

Bennett's (1969) study of Canadian plainsmen and his more theoretical discussion of cultural ecology (1976) adds additional meanings to the concept. In line with Steward and others, he refers first to cultural ecology as the study of "...how human utilization of nature influences and is influenced by social organization and cultural values" (1969:11). This approach that allows for a feedback or systemic process specifically studies the interrelationships "...between population, culturally styled needs and wants, the division of labour, technology and methods of production, and the ways of dividing natural resources among those who need and use them" (1969:11). Important to this study, Bennett attempts to analyze these factors on a continuum of change, a problem that is often ignored. His second meaning of ecology emphasizes adaptation or adaptive behavior (1969:11). Within his model of adaptive dynamics, he includes an adaptive behavior process involving decision making and choice, "...which may or may not be under the control of the systemic processes" (1976:166). In this case, control or stability is reached by human decisions and agreements, and not by automatic processes beyond human awareness. The adaptive dynamic approach does not deny the existence of automatic processes nor does it deny the possibility of human error. The emphasis on human choice (and error) as used by the adaptive dynamic model has to be considered while discussing the continuum of change in Northern Athapaskan ecological relationships.

So far we have considered adaptive processes that have been identified
as responsive changes to either short term environment fluctuations or long
term changes in environments. Charles D. Laughlin and Ivan A. Brady (1978:2) have presented a model that is concerned with "...predictable variations in behavior caused by decrements in the level of conceptual system functioning under conditions of environmental disruption or stress." It is their conclusions (1978:3) that successful adaptation depends in great part "... upon the range and efficiency of perceptual, cognitive, and cybernetic synchronization among members of a given population." In addition, these synchronization patterns are also concluded to be manifested, challenged, and altered most overtly in terms of sociability, exchange, food production, political behavior and ritual action under conditions of environmental stress, especially unremitting deprivation. The processes of adaptation to prolonged or intense environmental deprivation requires consideration when reconstructing the Northern Athapaskans' culture history. This becomes particularly cogent when one recalls the previous discussion of the impact of Europeans and the fur trade upon Eastern Algonkian peoples.

The "ecological niche" concept has been employed or referred to by several Subarctic specialists (Helm, 1962; David M. Smith, n.d.; J.G.E. Smith, 1978). Helm (1962) has had considerable influence on others who employ the concept. Helm's (1962:633) definition of an ecological niche as "...the place of a group in the total environment, its relation to resources and competitors..." is based on Barth's (1956:1079-1089) concept. In cases where part of a band's resources are shared by other societal groups within its spatial exploitative range, Helm (1962:633) suggests that we should look at environment in "...yet another dimension—namely, environment as...
resources and groups beyond the society but within its experiential field." The concept of *secumana*, following Birket-Smith (1930), is an especially "...useful perspective when the focus of inquiry is the local or regional society undergoing culture change through culture contact" (Helm, 1962:633).

Thomas F. Love (1977:29) has recently acknowledged that the niche concept has provided important insights into mechanisms supporting coexistence among competing populations within ecological communities when used by biological ecologists. The concept, however, has not been precisely applied by anthropologists. The terms "niche" and "habitat" are often confused. Habitat is the place where an organism lives while ecological niche is more inclusive. The latter term includes the physical space occupied by the organism and its functional role in the community (Love, 1977:29). Love (1977:31) suggests that Barth's confusion of "niche" with "habitat" mars an otherwise insightful conceptual framework while Helm's term *secumana* "...a group's social and biological environment—is of little analytical utility because it does not demarcate an operational field for research." Although Helm suggests that hers and Luries's (1961) work on the subsistence economy of the Dogrib Indians employs this concept, its adoption and development is nowhere apparent; nor is its development apparent in the work of David Smith (n.d.) and J.G.E. Smith (1978) on the Chipewyan. Furthermore, the *secumana* concept as used by Subarctic specialists is not diachronic since it makes no attempt to focus on a well defined continuum of change as outlined in the previous section.

The conceptual framework of niche as developed by Love (1977:34) is a heuristic device for providing "...insights into community structure and directing our attention to underlying processes of competition, mutualism,
predation, or specialization." However, his reference to the process of predation requires further discussion. It is suggested here that he confuses predation with aggression. Predation results in the slaughter of animals for food while aggression involves the intraspecific use or threat of violence, usually in competition over scarce resources (Van Den Berghe, 1978:42). Otherwise, it is suggested that the niche concept does direct attention "...to those economic, kinship, political, and social organizational features which confer competitive strength or advantage to a group" (Love, 1977:32). Therefore, the concept will be used, in part, to focus on or direct attention to intercultural and/or intracultural competition over scarce resources. It assumes that these types of competition are a major force in structural change and transformation through time.

Donald L. Hardesty's (1977) *Ecological Anthropology* also provides an overview of the concepts and principles of an ecological perspective. His discussion of human population ecology and of how humans get along and interact with other ecological populations in their physical environment will be useful to our discussion of the postcontact Canadian Athapaskans since he provides clear examples of the important relationships among different human populations including predation, competition, cooperation, and mutualism. Competition, for instance, is described as particularly common in relationship to scarce resources and is expressed as warfare. Warfare, as we will see, was a feature of Cree expansion into Athapaskan territory during the Protohistoric Period. The discussion of "population growth" and "carrying capacity" as ecological processes will further explain our description of eighteenth and nineteenth century Canadian Athapaskan ecological adaptations to the northwestern transition boreal forest.
Robert McC. Netting's (1977) modular publication, *Cultural Ecology*, includes several of the individual problem areas discussed by previous authors. His work is of additional interest since it focuses on the crucial factors affecting hunter-gatherers. Netting's discussion of the relationship of hunter-gatherers to their physical environment should provide valuable insights into their subsistence techniques and conditions of life, their social organization and population sizes, and their differing concepts of territoriality.

Having reviewed several of the more important theoretical and methodological studies relating to the cultural ecology of the Subarctic and having suggested the reasons why the interpretive framework of some of these approaches will be adopted or integrated into this research, it is now necessary to re-examine theoretical studies of Athapaskan sociocultural organization and to propose an alternative model to those currently used.

Theoretical Perspectives on Hunting and Gathering Societies

Given the general historical and cultural-ecological background to this research, the theoretical issues relating to hunting and gathering societies requires a general review before discussing the case of the Northern Athapaskans.

There are various approaches to delineating the characteristics of hunting and gathering societies at the band level. Steward distinguished three forms of social organization that he suggested were indigenous: the patrilineal band, the composite band, and the matrilineal band. Because the patrilineal-patrilocal band was so widespread, it has received considerable
attention and various explanations have been given for its occurrence (see Dyen and Aberle, 1974:378). Most explanations focus on residence patterns rather than descent. This may be because descent systems are assumed to be ideologically determined and hence random, while residence patterns reflect the material conditions of society. Thus the material conditions that create a patrilineal descent ideology are virilocal-patrilocal residence. The material conditions for virilocal-patrilocal residence as outlined by various theorists (see Dyen and Aberle, 1974:378) are: 1) an environment in which the principle food is game that is nonmigratory and scattered, which makes it advantageous for men (assumed to be the food getters) to remain in the general territory of their birth (Steward, 1955:135); 2) where food resources are evenly distributed and tend to be constant from year to year, territory is clearly demarcated and stable, and, considering the nucleus of males, so is group membership (Sahlins, 1959:58); 3) expectable in exogamous band society because of the importance of the solidarity of males in hunting, sharing game, and particularly in offense-defence (Service, 1962:54); 4) where the enhancement of males promotes their status, importance, and influence in relation to the opposite sex (Murdock, 1949:206); and, 5) because men have economic territories, the patrilineal, patrilocal lineage-band has maximal autonomy in social interactions (Williams, 1974:105).

The exceptions to nonpatrilocal bands have been accounted for by the same theorists (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:378), usually on ecological grounds. The exceptions are attributed to conditions where: 1) the chief food was game, which occurred in large herds, requiring a large hunting aggregate (Steward, 1955:149); 2) food resources vary in local abundance seasonally
and annually (Sahlins, 1959:58); 3) groups have experienced breakdown, disorganization, depopulation, defeat, removal or some such hazards (Service, 1962:109); 4) the economic contribution of women whose level of contribution was above that of men (Murdock, 1949:205); and, 5) there was an unusual local concentration of population because of trade villages and permanent food windfalls, and situations where the females' work was critical to the group (Williams, 1974:106). Both Service and Williams suggest that indigenous hunters and gatherers were organized into patrilocal bands, although only Williams maintains explicitly that they were also patrilineal.

In the 1960s, there was a tendency to consider the patrilineal and patrilocal band or both as not prototypical in cultural history (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:378; Lee and Devore, 1968:7-8). This trend was first articulated in the "Man the Hunter" symposium at Chicago in 1966 (Williams, 1974:1), and it continues to influence more recent interpretations of hunting-gathering societies (Lee and Devore, 1968; Damas, 1969b; Bicchieri, 1972; Spooner, 1972). It is generally concluded that the great majority of North American societies were characterized by "...social systems of a bilateral rather than unilineal type, and indeed constitute well over half of the known bilateral societies of the entire world..." (Murdock, 1968:19). The fluidity of band composition appeared to be the most characteristic feature of hunters-gatherers, although participants in the symposium "...disagreed on whether this flexibility was basic to the hunting way of life or whether it was a product of recent acculturation."

Matrilineal-matrilocal systems, it has been suggested, occur among more sedentary societies and there is an association between fishing and sedentarization (Murdock, 1949:44; cf. Dyen and Aberle, 1974:379). There
are a number of social and ecological conditions that would have made matri-local residence adaptive, including: 1) the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions (Martin, 1974:19); 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of unpredictable movement of migratory animals, and in areas where there is mass slaughter of megafauna; 3) the necessity to retain women in their natal territory for gathering purposes, while men's hunting pursuits take them away for extended periods (Gough, 1961:556; Helms, 1970:197); and, 4) the advantage to men to know two hunting territories (McClellan, 1964:9).

The various approaches to delineating the characteristics of hunting and gathering societies provide several possible options for the Northern Athapaskans. This entails discussion of the various theories on these peoples' social organization.

The Problem

The Northern Athapaskans of the Alaskan and Pacific drainage, the Canadian, Western, and Central Subarctic, and the Plains have long been regarded as exhibiting a regional variation in social structure, of which the most evident variation is the east-west gradient from relative cultural simplicity toward relative complexity (Osgood, 1936a). It has been stated that the groupings east of the Mackenzie River are simpler and more fluid than their counterparts to the west, with some groups, such as the Kutchin, having an intermediate position in the gradient. The ecological conditions of the westerly Athapaskans allowed greater cultural complexity, matrilineal
organization, and greater sedentarization while the ecological conditions of the easterly Athapaskans were not compatible with matrilineal and sedentary social life (Osgood, 1936a:21). This major dichotomy proposed by Cornelius Osgood (1936a) has had considerable influence on Subarctic specialists, and it will be an important focus in our research.

Steward (1936) has also been a key figure in developing the theoretical models for Canadian Athapaskans, as well as Northern Algonkians. As noted, he attempted to identify the material state of sociocultural relationships in terms of their articulation with the production, distribution, and consumption processes within the context of particular ecosystems. The process of analysis has been labelled by Steward as the "method of cultural ecology" (1955:30). In applying this method to the Athapaskans and Algonkians, Steward (1936:338-342; 1955:144-148) argued that the basic form of sociocultural integration found among these peoples was the composite hunting band. His term "composite" was devised to describe communities of unrelated nuclear or biological families who were "...integrated to form villages or bands of hunters, fishers, gatherers and simple farmers on the basis of constant association and cooperation rather than of actual or alleged kinship" (1955:143). The level of sociocultural integration was thought to be the result of two distinctive cultural ecological processes. The composite hunting band was prevalent in "...an area of low population density and of primary reliance upon large herds of migratory game..." and that such bands "...are of theoretical interest, second because among many there co-existed family ownership of fairly small and precisely bounded areas for trapping fur-bearing animals, especially beaver, and band ownership of large areas for hunting game" (1955:143-144). Steward contends
that the system of family land ownership was a post-European development, the consequences of the fur trade (1955:144). He thought, however, that the composite band prototype was precontact.

Service (1962:76-78), building upon and modifying Steward's model, has concluded that the aboriginal social organization of the Canadian Athapaskans was quite different than it was in the contact period. His conclusions are based on June Helm MacNeish's research (1960). Through an analysis of the terminological systems for the Hare, Slave, and Chipewyan, Helm (1960:290) concluded that the aboriginal system was a bifurcate-merging type. This system is consistent with unilineal descent, local exogamy and cross-cousin marriage. The causes for the loss of the aboriginal social organization and for the development of the modern fluid, informal, composite band, in Service's analysis (1962:77), clearly lie "...in the initial shocks, depopulation, relocation, and other disturbances in the early contract period which produced refugee-like groups of unrelated families among the Indians even before the time of the American Revolution." It is his assumption that the aboriginal Athapaskan social organization was very different, and that the practical form for foraging peoples is the patrilocal band (see Service, 1971:x). His first assumption is correct, the latter is not.

More recently, B.J. Williams (1974) has developed a more sophisticated version of the patrilocal-patrilineal band model. Like Service, he believes it applied to the Northern Athapaskans and accepts the former's argument for widespread postcontact disruptions. He explains away the evidence for matrilocality by arguing that this was a postcontact development stemming from a growth in the importance of women's labor in preparing hides for
In summing up the theories of Steward, Service and Williams, it should be pointed out that they worked in the absence of historical evidence. Their aim was to establish world-wide types and so they tended to over-generalize. There are, of course, patrilocal-patrilineal band societies. However, the Northern Athapaskans do not fit this model.

An alternative model has been suggested by others. A bilateral prototype has been proposed by Helm who has focused her research on cultural-ecological relationships among Canadian Athapaskans of the Arctic drainage. Her work (1965:361) suggests that Steward's definition of the composite band, applied to the Athapaskans, is somewhat nebulous with regard to kinship and settlement patterns. She has modified his concept to include regional and local bands as well as multiple family task groups.7 All types have "...a model of alliance and recruitment based on the principle of social linkage through bilateral primary bonds of one conjugal pair to another" (1965:380). She argues that bilateral kinship as a socially coherent system represents an adaptive adjustment to such environmental disasters as low points of the rabbit cycle, fish failure, regional failure of the moose, or of caribou migration. Thus, she states that "...aboriginal Dene (Athapaskan) populations were small in size and low in density,..." and "...that population was unstable with decimation through famine occurring at what may have been rather cyclical intervals" (1965:382). Because the bilateral system allows "multiple kinship avenues" to group affiliation, a highly adaptive form given unstable, and unpredictable, environmental conditions we should be wary of postulating the assumption "...that all human kind at the hunting and foraging level have been allowed by the nature of their environmental
resources to achieve a unilocal, band-exogamic system of societal integration" (1965:383). The bilateral system, in her formulation, would appear to have an aboriginal base since she asks: "Could conditions in truly aboriginal times have been better?" (1965:382). I will return to her pointed question later in this discussion.

Such controversy regarding the organization of Canadian Athapaskan societies is expressed in Helm's modification of Steward's concept of the composite band and her reaction to Service's rejection of any form of environmental determinism for social organization. This has led her to conclude that the standard aboriginal system of social organization was bilateral (1965:381). These conclusions were reached before she made a thorough survey of the historical evidence. Furthermore, input-output studies of surviving marginal hunters-gatherers show that all of these peoples' material wants are usually easily satisfied if they continue to maintain a fully sufficient means of production (Sahlins, 1972:1-39; 1965). In fact, as it shall be demonstrated, the Canadian Athapaskans, of whom Helm spoke, had been displaced northward into the full boreal forest and the Mackenzie drainage system by the Cree between 1759-1764 (Garvin, 1927: 152, 250; Hearne, 1971:136-180, 354-357). Thus, one is led to question her basic assumptions concerning recurring environmental disasters as a cause for certain forms of aboriginal social organization.

J.G.E. Smith (1975, 1976b, 1978) and Henry Sharp (1977a, 1977b) have also proposed that bilaterality was the primary principle of social integration among the precontact and postcontact Chipewyan. Smith's and Sharp's arguments for bilaterality include: the Caribou Eater Chipewyan and most of the Subarctic peoples have rules of cognatic descent to organize their
"hunting group" for the exploitation of barren-ground caribou (Smith, 1978: 78); and the Caribou Eater Chipewyan's traditional orientation to caribou hunting is through a "hunting unit," a restricted form of cognatic descent group (Sharp, 1977b:378). Both authors assume continuity in social structure since they also assume that basic subsistence resources and adaptive strategies have remained relatively unchanged from contact until recent times. Neither assumption holds up under historical scrutiny. It will be demonstrated that subsistence resources have changed considerably through time as has social organization.

Historical data sought from library and archival sources for this study, combined with a reading of past and present field studies, have indicated that somewhat different interpretations may be made about aboriginal Northern Athapaskan social organization. The theories of Osgood, Steward, Service, Helm, Smith, and Sharp do not adequately explain the development of sequential historical stages of sociocultural organization; nor does the more recent attempt of Williams to revive the patrilocal/patri-lineal band argument seem convincing when applied to the Athapaskan data. By testing these theories against new historical information, it has become possible to present a new hypothesis.

It is hypothesized that in prehistoric times, unilineal kinship structure, most likely matrilineal, was altered by the fur trade and related events, first through a transitional stage, involving the fluid, informal, composite hunting band, a refugee-like group as defined by Service (1971: 77) during the initial indirect and direct European contact period. The development of the bilateral form of cognatic descent among the Mackenzie-Arctic drainage groupings, similar to that described by modern ethno-
graphers (Helm, 1965; Smith, 1975; Sharp, 1977) took place during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. In sum, it was a post-contact development.

More specifically, it is hypothesized that the aboriginal Canadian Athapaskans had a matrilineal descent system with the possibility of clan organization. The system was based on matrilocal residence patterns that would have been highly adaptive to the Canadian Subarctic because it allowed for: 1) the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions; 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of unpredictable movement of migratory animals, and in areas where there is mass slaughter of megafauna; and, 3) the advantage of retaining women in their natal territory, for gathering purposes, while men's hunting pursuits take them away for extended periods.

It will be shown that the early contact period was somewhat catastrophic for the Canadian Athapaskans and that some degree of stabilization of the Canadian Athapaskan way of life occurred only after these Indians had adjusted to a trapping economy. Under such conditions, it is hypothesized that a situation arose in which nuclear families moved from one set of bilateral kinsmen to join with others, according to specific conditions of subsistence and trapping pursuits. All aspects of life for these Athapaskans became reconcilable to altered ecological and trade conditions creating mobility that resulted in the mesh of kinship relationships and bilateral descent.

Bilaterality was, then, an ecological response of adaptive significance among those Athapaskan groups that suffered depopulation, displacement, and
ecological privations stemming from European contact and producing amalgam
groups. These factors, to be the primary focus of discussion in this pro-
ject, it is argued, account for the fluid and shifting communities in which
unilineal descent and clans no longer are socially and ecologically adaptive.

The more recent regional variation in social structure of the east to
west gradient from relative cultural simplicity of social organization to-
ward relative complexity, it is argued, can be explained in terms of the
relative intensity of the direct and indirect effects of European contact.
The use of both published and archival documents will facilitate the effort
to define the character of the contact situation in its initial stages among
the Canadian Athapaskans. Although empirical data, which allow for recon-
struction of their aboriginal social organization, are meagre, inferences
may be drawn from the primary documents that suggest that the factors af-
fecting the Athapaskan peoples during early contact times subsequently led
to the historical development of the composite band.

European contact in the Alaskan Subarctic and Canadian Western Sub-
arctic was less intense and occurred later than to the east. By intensity
is meant that fewer groups of Indians were displaced by others, and they
suffered less from environmental changes, disease and conflict. As a result,
the ethnohistorical materials provide more empirical data suggestive of
aboriginal social organization on the more westerly Athapaskans during the
early contact period. Data pertaining to the Kutchin support this. The
Kutchin have an intermediate position in the east-west gradient and they
also contain characteristics found in both divisions. As a result, they
provide an opportunity to present a more extensive historical and compara-
tive perspective on continuity and change as these related to other Atha-
paskan groups. From these data and also from the earliest statements of traders pertaining to eastern groups, inferences, based on empirical association, can be made about aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan social organization. We now consider the order of presentation in which these issues will be discussed.

Order of Presentation

The next five chapters in the text provide historical materials chronologically. The ethnohistorical technique of "downstreaming" from the contact era to the trading post dependency era is the method employed.

Chapter Two discusses two eras, the Indirect Trade Era and the Middlemen Era. These eras are within the Protocontact Period and include the time span roughly between 1680 and 1769.

Chapter Three will concentrate on the Canadian Athapaskans including the Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Satudene, Yellowknife, Chipewyan, Beaver, and Sekani. The discussion will focus on trade rivalries, warfare, and changing territorial boundaries. This chapter will encompass the period roughly between 1680 and 1860, when the Canadian Athapaskans first came into direct contact with the fur traders. The emphasis will be on the period to 1769. The period following 1860 is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is not that these data are unimportant as witness the information contained in some of Petitot's (1887, 1888, 1891, 1895) works. However, most of the important social and ecological changes producing the conditions described in the later ethnographic accounts had already occurred. Thus, Chapter Three will analyze the events of the Protohistoric Period and early Historic
Period in order to weigh the effects of contact on Canadian Athapaskan culture up to 1860 so as to determine the extent and direction of change.

Chapter Four concerns itself with the Early Fur Trade Era (1769-1800). It was during this era that Samuel Hearne (1770-1771) explored Canadian Athapaskan territory. Also the first trading posts within the area north of Lake Athabasca were established.

Chapter Five discusses the Competitive Trade Era (1800-1821). The era, on the whole, was a period of intense competition among the Northwest Company, the XY Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company. This competition resulted in an increase in the use of alcohol and the distribution of greater quantities of trade goods, which along with new European diseases and ecological alterations disrupted native sociocultural systems, and led increasingly to the dependency of the Indians upon the traders.

Chapter Six concentrates on the period following the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company in 1821. The era 1821-1860 is marked, in contrast to the preceding era, by policies that attempted to stabilize the fur trade. The result was an extraordinary profitable fur trade, and the development of well-defined stable populations of trading post Indians, dependent upon the trading posts for basic necessities of life. Thus, the era is called the Trading Post Dependency Era. This chapter will show how, once permanent posts were established throughout the Mackenzie and Athabasca Districts, the Indians adjusted to the trading post dependency relationship. The emergence of one-trading post bands, the Satudene, will illustrate the processes of change.

Chapter Seven will examine historical information, primarily from the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, on fur trade conditions and general
ecological adaptations in the regions occupied by the Canadian Athapaskans both before the 1760s and between 1760 and 1860. This comparison will highlight the intensive activity that the trade engendered, and the cultural-ecological changes that were occurring as a result of changing tribal boundaries that produced alterations in the economic and demographic arrangements of Canadian Athapaskan societies.

Chapter Eight details the changes in social organization of the Canadian Athapaskans during the period 1680 to 1860. By the latter date only remnants of earlier forms of social organization were left. New modified forms of organization were the product of population alterations, new ecological adjustments, and activities in areas hitherto unused for subsistence and trapping pursuits.

A discussion of the adequacy of the proposed general model of cultural change constitutes the final chapter. The hypothesis, which proposed that all the Northern Athapaskans prior to European intervention were characterized by exogamous, matrilineal clans, needs to be re-evaluated against the empirical data used to support this claim. The criteria employed to evaluate change and to characterize levels of sociocultural complexity will be carefully and critically re-assessed.
Hickerson was influenced by the classic work (1940) of the historian George Hunt on the Iroquois-Huron wars. This research required abundant and essential documentary evidence to show that the warfare was imposed through conflict among rival European powers and their trading companies, as well as intertribal conflict over territorial occupancy and access to lucrative trade routes. These factors can be seen as deriving from the fur trade economy, which was, in Hunt's view, the sole determinant for the Iroquois-Huron wars. Although Trigger (1969, 1976) and Schlesier (1976:129-144) have recently criticized Hunt's use of economic determinism to account for warfare, it is the recognition of the dynamics of change through documentary research and the conclusions drawn from such material as described by Hunt that is important. Hunt's work has influenced Hickerson and others who have applied documentary history or ethnohistory to specific research problems (see Fenton, 1978).

Eggan (1954:757) suggested that we should return to some of the basic problems, which American ethnologists were tackling in the 1920s and 1930s, using new methods and points of view and a greater range of concepts. The Plains area was seen as ripe for a "new integration" since there was an abundance of archaeological data, documentary data, and monographs on cultures within this area. The Southern Athapaskans in the Plains and the Southwest were also considered open for new comparative studies.

Identification in square brackets throughout this study are the author's own. Errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammatical structure have not been altered in any of the citations. The use of *sic* has been excluded since it would appear so frequently in the citations.

Simpson, in an effort to uphold his policy, attempted to have Bishop Evans removed from Norway House in 1844 because the latter declared Sunday traveling an ungodly act. This was seen as direct interference with the trade. There were also more fundamental differences between Simpson and Evans. Evans proposed to settle the Indians down as agriculturists and artisans (Rich, 1959b:529; Morton, 1959:810n). This fundamental change in activities would inevitably threaten the fur trade at Norway House and elsewhere if allowed to be implemented.

Sahlins (1964:134) has indicated that researchers tend to discuss the relations between cultures as "...carried on as a thing apart, mostly under the traditional head of "acculturation" and thus not so much from the perspective of adaptation as from that of assimilation." It is necessary to recognize that cultures act as selective factors upon one another. Similar perspectives on this subject are found in the work of Joseph Jorgensen (1972).
6. Service, in his recent edition (1971) of *Primitive Social Organization*, has not altered from his earlier position (1962) that the most practical form of organization for foraging peoples is the patrilocal band (1971:x).

7. Honigmann (1946, 1964) and Slobodin (1962) have both developed taxonomic units for the Athapaskan groups that they studied. Honigmann described microcosmic extended family groups or bands among the Slave (1946:64) and Kaska (1964:84). Slobodin (1962:73-74) summarized the characteristics of the Peel River Kutchin groups as having trapping parties, local groups, meat camps, fish camps, trading parties, and band assemblies of fifty to seventy families. Helm's (1965) regional and local bands and multiple family task group have been widely accepted as a heuristic devise for describing Northern Athapaskan group structures and, thus, receives more attention in this thesis. For Helm (1968:119), the regional band's prime focus of identity is "...the territorial range; a task group forms in response to a specific and localized resource; the strength of primary kin bands holds the local band together in space and through time."

8. Dyen and Aberle (1974:120-121) have outlined two bases for inferences. One is the demonstration that a particular pattern is empirically associated with certain social features in a large enough number of cases to make relatively secure predictions. The second kind of inference is based on experience and intuition. Inferences based on experience rest on an impressionistic assessment of data trends and are subject to disproof if data proves them to be false. Inferences based on intuition are weaker, according to Dyen and Aberle (1974:121). For example, it is assumed a certain terminological pattern such as step sister's father equals father's brother makes sense if the group practices leviratic marriage. Inferences based on experience and intuition are often combined.
CHAPTER TWO

THE PROTOHISTORIC PERIOD (1680-1769)

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Canadian Athapaskan culture during the Protohistoric Period. This period, lasting from about 1680 to 1769, is divisible into two eras: the Indirect Trade Era and the Middlemen Era. As noted in Chapter One, the Protohistoric Period precedes the Early Fur Trade Era which begins when local trade conditions are established. As we shall see, both the Indirect Trade Era and the Middlemen Era reflect a situation in which the Canadian Athapaskans either lacked direct trading contacts with European traders or they operated as middlemen outside of their homelands, taking large quantities of trade goods inland. Special attention is given to the activities of the Northern, or Chipewyan, and Cree Indians since their geographical position was closer to trading posts on Hudson Bay, and they distinctly demonstrate the interactive processes of trade during the Protohistoric Period. In general terms, this study will demonstrate that the Canadian Athapaskans established new socioeconomic relationships through the fur trade. More specifically it will discuss the impact of European trade goods on these people. This will provide a background for assessing the amount and direction of cultural change by the time the Early Fur Trade Era began.

The termination of the Prehistoric Period and the commencement of the Protohistoric Period for the Chipewyan or Northern Indians is presently demarcated by the historic communiqué of May 21, 1680 to Captain Thomas Draper with the instructions to build a factory on New Severn (Churchill)
River for trade with these Indians (Rich, 1948:14). This Hudson's Bay Company directive would suggest prior knowledge of and, possibly, indirect or direct trade with the Chipewyan. The Protohistoric Period among the Yellowknife and Dogrib can be documented as beginning about 1689 (Kelsey, 1929:25; Rich, 1958:255, 1959:47; Kenney, 1932:51), while the Northern Indians "Strangers" (Beaver, Hare, and Slave) were not mentioned until 1715-1716 when a few trading parties arrived at York Factory (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 28). Although it will become evident from historical sources that the Northern Indians or Chipewyan visited fur trade posts on a regular basis and acted as "homeguards" and as middlemen to other more remote Athapaskan groups, it is necessary to extend the Protohistoric Period until at least 1769 and perhaps later in more remote areas until such time when European traders began to establish trading centers within the Mackenzie River drainage system.

Recent scholars (Helm, et al., 1975; Gillespie, 1975, 1976; Smith, 1975, 1976a, 1978) have tended to overlook, or dismiss as unimportant, the tremendous changes created by the fur trade during the Protohistoric Period. Smith (1975:422), for one, assumes that "...changes from the aboriginal conditions were minimal" at the time of Samuel Hearne's expeditions between 1769-1772. The illusion presented by these scholars is that the cultural and economic patterns of the eighteenth century Canadian Athapaskans were essentially aboriginal. This basic assumption will be tested against the historical data.
The Initial Period of Trade (1680-1715)

During the first four decades of the fur trade along Hudson Bay, which began about 1680, the French and English vied with each other over access to the trade of the various Indian groups inhabiting the vast western hinterland. Between the period 1689 and 1715, archival evidence also suggest that the Cree and Northern Athapaskans were involved in protracted warfare over access to York Factory and its trade routes and over retention of fur-bearing-grounds extending as far west as Lake Athabasca. Intertribal conflict resulted in considerable bloodshed effected mostly on the unarmed Northern Athapaskans by the gun-bearing Cree who were able to gain exclusive control over the inland trade of York Factory during these years.

An examination of York Factory's account books for the years 1688 to 1697 illuminates, to a large extent, the nature of Cree territorial and trade expansion (see Ray and Freeman, 1978, passim). Guns, powder, and ammunition were traded in large quantities at York Factory and its outpost, New Severn. Although the guns were of relatively poor quality, the Indians near the post soon became dependent upon them (Rich, 1958:429); but, more importantly, they were used as Cree weapons of war. Because of their geographical location, inland Northern Athapaskans were forced to traverse Cree territory for trade at York Factory and New Severn. The Cree were in a strategic position to establish themselves as middlemen to inland populations (Ray and Freeman, 1978, passim). Firearms gave them the decided advantage.

The 1688-1689 York Factory and New Severn account books show that a total of 370 guns were traded during this season (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/1).
The 1689-1690 list of annual goods traded indicate an increase of firearm trade to a total of 488 (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/2). Although there is a slight decrease of gun sales to only 315 the following year 1691 (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/3), in 1692 the number of guns reached its highest point of sales with a total of 532 traded (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/4). Accounts for the season 1692-1693 are not available, perhaps due to French and English rivalry and conflict in Hudson Bay (Rich, 1958a:301-306). The 1693-1694 and 1696-1697 accounts show that 493 and 379 guns were traded respectively (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/5 and 6). The French were also actively engaged in trade along the Bay throughout this period, and, no doubt, firearms were traded. In addition, the French continued to trade guns during the period 1696-1697, in which they had possession of York Factory, or Fort Bourbon (see Table 2).

Following the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which gave the English control of Hudson Bay, firearms were never sold in such large quantities. The 1714-1715 York Factory account book lists only 290 guns traded (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/7), and in 1715-1716 the total guns traded were 156 (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/8). The low figures for guns traded during 1715-1716 may be due to the failure of the supply ships to arrive from England. Captain James Knight, then Governor of York Factory, was assiduously attempting to initiate peace between the Cree and Chipewyan, who had been driven from the headwaters of the Churchill River onto the Barren Grounds.

The trade in powder and shot demonstrates the growing dependence upon firearms during this period. The 1688-1689 York Factory and New Severn reports indicate that 9,573 3/4 lbs. of shot and 4,609 3/4 lbs. of powder were traded (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/1). In 1689-1690, trade in powder and shot amounted to 6,520 and 14,786 pounds respectively (HBC Arch., B.239/d/2).
### Table 2

**Early Posts in the York Factory Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Post Name</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Fort Bourbon I</td>
<td>Built by Pierre Esprit Radisson on south bank of Hayes River. Destroyed in 1683.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Fort Nelson I</td>
<td>First HBC post built by Zachariah Guillam and John Bridgar on north bank of Nelson River. Used for five or six years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Guillam's Post</td>
<td>Built by New England Company under the direction of Benjamin Guillam on Gillam Island. Burnt the same year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Chouart's Post</td>
<td>Built and manned by the French to intercept inland trade. Built on Rainbow Island. Burned the same year and rebuilt in 1684 and abandoned that year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684</td>
<td>Abraham's Post</td>
<td>Built to control both sides of Nelson River. Constructed on Walker’s Point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684</td>
<td>York Fort I</td>
<td>Built on north shore of Hayes River - built by HBC. Held by French between 1687-1714 and was called Fort Bourbon II. This is where Jérémie and La Potherie stayed most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684</td>
<td>La Martiniere's Post</td>
<td>Built to control French Creek by the French, used only for one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>French Post</td>
<td>Built to replace Radisson's post. Used only one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Fort Phillippeaux</td>
<td>Built by Jérémie on south shore of Hayes River near Ten Shilling Creek. It was sacked in 1712.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>York Factory II A</td>
<td>Built by HBC after Treaty of Utrecht by Captain James Knight. Used until 1742.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after 1742</td>
<td></td>
<td>Several new rebuildings were done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The York Factory figures for 1690-1691 and 1691-1692 reflect a steady trade in these items, and they are indicated in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

**GUNS, POWDER, AND SHOT TRADED 1688-1697**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>1688-9</th>
<th>1689-90</th>
<th>1690-91</th>
<th>1691-92</th>
<th>1693-94</th>
<th>1696-97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder</td>
<td>4609 3/4</td>
<td>6520</td>
<td>4830</td>
<td>6620</td>
<td>4612</td>
<td>5152 ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot</td>
<td>9573 3/4</td>
<td>14786</td>
<td>12040</td>
<td>14840</td>
<td>12819</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(HBC Arch., B. 239/d/1-6)

The 1695-1696 accounts are nonexistent since the Hudson's Bay Company did not send a shipment to the fort in 1695 because their "...warehouses were full of goods, and the marketts in London soe dull, wee could sell none" (Rich, 1958:331). Details on the trade of powder and shot for 1696-1697 are not clearly indicated (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/6). During the period (1696-1713) in which the French controlled the trade at York Factory or Fort Bourbon, as it was then called, it is clear that these items were in demand. For instance, Monsieur Jérémie in 1713 spent the whole winter in Fort Bourbon, "...not daring to go outside. They [the French] had no goods and their trade was at a standstill, with their Indians dying round them for lack of powder and shot..." (Rich, 1958:429). The Indians had lost their skill with the bow and arrow, becoming totally dependent on firearms for hunting; the French bore "...witness to the speed and completeness with which the Indians lost their skill..." (1958:429).
There is no doubt that firearms were used as weapons of war, and there is empirical evidence to validate the occurrence of warfare between the Cree and the Chipewyan and Dogrib. Claude Charles Le Roy de la Potherie's letters provide testimony. In his account (Tyrrell, 1931:261-267) of the tribes that come to trade at Fort Nelson, he describes the Atimospiquaries, meaning "dog's rib" in Cree, who had no trade since they dared not traverse the territory of the Maskgenehirinis (Swampy Cree) with whom these Athapaskans were at war (1931:265). Those Atimospiquaries who traded with the French assembled in a large party of twelve to fifteen hundred on the shore of a lake following the spring breakup to prepare for the long trip to the Bay. De la Potherie was not able to give an accurate number of those who came to trade since when they were at war, they were not able to trap beaver. He does indicate that ordinarily "...a thousand men, some women, and about six hundred canoes may arrive" (1931:266). The consequences of this intense intertribal warfare was to affect the policies of Knight while in residence as Governor at York Factory.

In his first year at York, Knight attempted to arrange peace treaties between the gun-bearing Cree and the Chipewyan and inland Athapaskan groups as far west as Lake Athabasca. There were several Athapaskan slaves at York Factory when Knight assumed command and their information interested him. One, a slave woman, had been taken "...ab t 20 months before all or most part of her friends being either taken or killed..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, folio 25). Before the woman died on November 22, 1714 Knight was able to extract information to suggest a profitable trade could be inaugurated if the incessant warfare between the Cree and Athapaskans was brought to a halt.

Various Athapaskan slaves reported on the effects of this protracted
warfare, a situation that began almost a quarter of a century before when Henry Kelsey traveled inland. According to Knight's May 6th, 1715 discourse with these Indians (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 26d):

...they [Athapaskan slaves] tell me there is abundance of People in it still but the Indians [Cree] has Destroyed a great - many thousands of them...I told them I was there friend & was very angry with those Indians for going to war with them and killing so many of them as they had done...and I would send some Guns with them to force there way down they was very well Pleased at that and told me that in two or three years there would abundance come down...here is not one Indian in the country can speak a word of that Language and it is a very difficult Language to Learn they Speak thro the throat so and Speak very Quick. I could think of no better way to bring this design about both for Security and trade than I have taken yet this might have been done 20 or 30 years ago ten times easier and with 40 times less charge and 5 or 6 thousand men Lives might have been SAVED as has been cutt of since the English settled here before they came to Supply these Indians with Guns they kept at a Distance these Northern Indians are 5 times as many but I cannot understand there ever was peace betwixt them....

Knight's Indian reports suggested to him that there "...has been above 6000 Men besides Women and Children killed...." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, folio 28) through warfare in the wooded valley of the Churchill River. Although the reports are probably exaggerated, warfare, no doubt, had a devastating effect on the Athapaskans. Few Athapaskans could be persuaded to bring their furs past the Cree down to the factory.

In the spring of 1715, Governor Knight held a series of councils with incoming bands of Indians to persuade a policy of peace. Unlike Jérémie who held similar councils, Knight took practical measures to ensure his strategy. On June 11, 1715 he summoned the Cree Home Indians to a council and promised "Large presents of Powder, Shott & tobacco with other Necessarys" if they would go with William Stewart and a "Slave woman" to the Northern Indians to construct a peace treaty. The party grew from a band of twelve to twenty-five men and their families. More councils, presents, and pledges of peace
occurred before the party left on June 27, 1715. According to the York Factory account books, the Governor "...was pleased to Give these Following Goods to ye Captain of the River & 25 Indians to go to ye North Sea along with the Slave woman..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/7). These goods included, among others, 600 lbs. of shot, 170 lbs. of powder, fifty lbs. of tobacco, and 100 flints. The trade goods given to William Stewart and the Slave woman were considerable, amounting to a value of about 745 1/24 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/7). More supplies were sent to Stewart in the 1715-1716 season after his expedition had encountered a large party of Chipewyan, which included 160 men. The bulk of the supplies were presents such as sixty hawk bells, seventy-two knives, twenty-eight hats, eighteen Ivory combs, twenty-seven yards of cloth, fifteen blankets, twenty-four fire steels, twenty scrapers and several other items of quantity (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/8, folio 6). It is difficult to determine the value of the trade goods since the total of 184 1/2 Made Beaver includes the presents given to incoming Northern Indians at York Factory.

Besides initiating trade, Knight was also implementing practical measures to assure the self-defense of the Northern Indians, and he gave them guns "...and trained em up to the use of em whilst here [York] whereby they may Defend themselves if attacked by any of their Enemys in there Return home and to learn their Country Men the Use of em as also to head em when they come to trade with us" (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/8, folio 6). Seven guns along with fifty lbs. of shot, eight powder horns, and twenty-eight lbs. of powder were given to the Northern Indians during the 1715-1716 season (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/8, folio 6). The spadework for peace, which would allow Indians to trap furs, would seem to have been completed during
the first two seasons at York Factory after the English regained the post.

The Policy of Peaceful Expansion (1716-1769)

The policy of peaceful expansion of trade into this vast hinterland had a series of setbacks. In the fall of 1715, the ship did not arrive with trade goods and supplies for that year's trade. The incoming Indians found that trade goods had to be rationed out in 1716. In consequence, it was reported that one-third of the Indians died of starvation on their return home since they lacked powder and shot for hunting (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3). The situation for the traders was also one of desperation during these early years. A flood in the spring had damaged part of their provisions, and the fall migration of the geese lasted only eight days. Provisions were scanty and the post's flour supplies were expended by January 25, 1717. These events engendered dependence upon local land resources. Henceforth, each post extracted seasonal resources such as caribou, waterfowl, fish, hare, and partridges for provisioning purposes on a seasonal basis. The provisioners, often local Indians, played a prominent part in the individual activities of each post. The genesis of a well-established Local Trade Area for the Cree had its incipience at York Factory during the 1716-1717 winter. The hunting, trapping, and trading activities of local Indians were undifferentiated since most Indian men were involved in all.

The extension of the trade to the Northern Indians was heavily beset by problems. In spite of Knight's peace-making attempts, the Cree continued to threaten incoming Northern Indians. Those Chipewyan who did approach York Factory would not return to their country. As Knight de-
scribed their reasons on September 29, 1715 (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 5):

...& 4 of ye Northern Indians which I am liked to be troubled with all Winter ye 3 men Northern Indian...not being able to prevail with them to go into their own Country ye Winter—for those 2 Reasons first they alledged they Shall be Starved in Crossing the great Barren Deserts in ye Winter where there is nothing to be had to keep—alive nor no fireing to be got. The Next Reason if they go up into the Country amongst the Mischenipee [Cree] Indian they will be in danger of being cut off by them in their Return home.

These particular Northern Indians were finally taken by boat to the Nelson River. Unfortunately, the party was massacred by a group of Eskimo while it was crossing the Churchill River. The Cree, at this time, were also sending raiding parties among the Chipewyan. With these events in mind, Knight began to plan the construction of a post on the Churchill River as a resort for the Chipewyan who could reach the post with tolerable security across the barren grounds. In order to implement this plan, two Northern Indian boys and a "Slave woman" were trained as interpreters. In the fall of 1716, Knight considered sending the woman to her people to bring them down for trade and for council. The attitude of the Cree postponed this plan. The "Slave woman" continued, however, to impress Knight with details on the potential of trade with the Northern Indians. It was his intention of sending two Englishmen and her to establish trade relationships in the spring. The details of his plans and her reports are contained within his diary accounts for February 5, 1716 (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 23):

...had compleated it by going among all the Nations thereabouts & to Acquaint them what Commoditys wee deal for & what Seasons they must Gett there Skins in and how they must Dress them & Stretch em. And further Said upon consideration of my making her [Slave woman] brother a Captain he should Go Amongst them Indians that had the Yellow Mettle...they was very Good Friends [with Yellowknife] when they parted and feasted one another She Said She did not Expect to do what she went about before 2 years & half was Expired but she would send in all the Indians as soon as possible for trade & that there was a 11 Great Nations as was there friends as understood one Another and
that their is 5 Great bordering upon their friends that does not understand each other but doe marry one amongst another one of those Nations goes by the Name of Martin Indian by there abounding with such Great Quantity of Martins they have amongst themselves and are clothed with them another is Called the Buffalo Indians by the Abundance of white Buffalo as is in there Country. Another Nation they call fish Indians they Liveing So much upon fish. Another Nation they call Ice Indians they haveing so much ice in that part of the country.

As likewise Another Partridge Indians they Call which She Said in time she did no 6 Nations but she could bring them all to trade. She was Resolved not to go to Lives with her husband without he would Accompany her when She went to Manage their Bussiness....

Untimely for Knight, the Northern Indians were sick throughout February, and they all eventually died from a lingering illness. Knight lost his interpreters and the woman who appeared to have considerable influence among the Northern Indians. He was, as a result, concerned about the consequences of their deaths. He feared that the Northern Indians would not approach York Factory "...since so many come to York F. & die from sickness" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 31). To further exacerbate his problems, incoming Northern Indians reported that they had had a miserable winter, and found much fault with the guns, which were "...broke &' out of Order before the middle of Winter all the 4 New Guns as was amongst them..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 38). The French gun used by the same party was superior, lasting four years, and was the only thing that kept them alive (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 38).

Knight was able to secure another Northern Slave woman on May 15, 1717 paying sixty skins value for her. She was to serve as the first interpreter at Fort Churchill, or as it was then called, Prince of Wales Fort. On July 10, 1717, Knight placed York Factory under the charge of Henry Kelsey, and sailed to the Churchill River for the construction of this new post.

Knight's trade expansion policy was far from being centered upon the
Chipewyan alone, though they appeared to be the most promising Indians in terms of furs and minerals. It was his endeavor "...to make a peace in the whole Country Round from N to S'Wt for a 1000 Miles" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1). This also included Athapaskan groups in the vicinity of Lake Athabasca. At the time when William Stewart and the "Slave woman" were setting off on their peace mission, a party of Cree who had driven the Chipewyan and Dogrib out of the Valley of the Churchill came to the fort with descriptions of the Lake Athabasca region. The descriptions rendered by these miscreants on June 27, 1715 are precise testimonial evidence to their penetration into this country (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, folio 43):

...I [Knight] had some Discourse at the Great River [Athabasca River] it runs into the Sea on the Back of this Country & they tells us there is a Certain Gum or pitch that runs down the river in Such abundance that they cannot land but at certain places & that it is very broad & flows as much water....

Knight discussed with the Cree the necessity of peace, and they indicated themselves "...Incliable to it...as likewise all Indians that Hath been here that borders anywhere about the Country" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1). The Indian leader, a Captain Swan, was appointed as an ambassador of peace to the Indians beyond the headwaters of the Churchill River. The presents of trade goods were less than those given to Stewart and his companions. The account books indicate that Knight "...Gave to the Capt & 15 of the great Water Indians as an encouragement to make peace with those Indians bordering on the Western Seas [Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake] 8 lbs. of Brazil Tobacco, 4 lbs. of English Role Tobacco, 6 hats, 20 Knives, 4 awls, and 6 fire steels" (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/7, folio 7).\(^8\) The Swan and his party of twenty canoes did not return until June 5, 1717. According to Knight, The Swan "...as I made mention of formerly in my Journal that I
had sent to the West Seas to endeavor to make a peace with all the Indians
quite through he went from hence about this time 2 years with 25 Canoes in his
compt and has done what he went about ..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 54).
The Swan brought a young lad about "...16 years old of them Indians as he
had made a peace with..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 54). The Indians
that the Swan made peace with were, no doubt, Athapaskan speaking peoples.
Knight observed that "...those Indians as Capt Swan went & made peace with
which is the Northern Indians friends..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 78).
He lamented on the fact that these natives were not supplied with guns and
other necessities for defense against the Cree. The Athapaskans, possibly
Beaver, Hare, and Slave, were promised trade goods, especially guns. Both
parties treated "...one another very civilly & like friends & feasted Sung
danced & smoked the friendship pipe with great rejoicing" (HBC Arch., B.
239/a/3, folio 54). The Swan's party was outfitted for another journey to
the area where a great peace gathering had been arranged for his return
(HBC Arch., B. 239/d/9).

The Swan did not reappear until June 12, 1719. Henry Kelsey's journal
entry notes that the "...Indian nam'd Swan the peace maker was in...& says
he wintered with those Indians beyond Churchill att the river whose streams
run to the Westward...& so he brought a sample of that Gum or pitch that
flows out of the banks of that river..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/5, folio 52).
The Athapaskans were apprehensive about coming back with Captain Swan to
York, and when "...they did till they came in the borders of this peoples
[Cree] Country but all the persuasion he could use he could not gett them
any further..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/5, folio 52). Swan was told that if
he did not bring these Indians down the next trip, Kelsey would not...
Give away Goods for Nothing..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/5, folio 52). The failure of Swan to bring Northern Athapaskan Strangers down to York Factory was determined, in part, by the events of the previous year.

In the winter of 1717-1718, a war party of Cree fell upon a group of Chipewyan and "...destroyed them all & not only them but another party they came a [indecipherable] except some Boys whom they brought here two of which I have traded being about twelve years Old viz one for a gun the Other for a Blanket & four ground Braz Tobac..." (HBC Arch. B. 239/a/4, folio 24).

The boys were secured by Kelsey in anticipation that they would be a means of making peace between the Cree and their country people. The boys were not Chipewyan since a Northern Indian reported that their language was closely related, and the two peoples had friendly relationships (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/4, folio 24). Needless to say, these marauding ventures on the part of the Cree had widespread repercussions.

In a letter to Captain Knight on July 13, 1718, Kelsey wrote about the appearance of the Indian, Tom's father's brother, from Captain Swan's party who related that "The Swan" had made peace with some of the Strange Indians. They had tented together all winter and were beginning to make canoes for the return trip to the Bay "...at which time they heard of Cumnawakthic haveg killed Some of their Countrymen..." and the Strangers ran away (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/4, folio 30). Kelsey had a long discourse with the Cree perpetrators to whom he gave Brazil tobacco and other presents in order that they should stop warring. In addition, he also threatened to withdraw the trade from these Indian leaders if their people broke the peace.

The appointment of "Indian Leaders" or "Captains" was an instrument developed by Governor Knight to initiate the trade and peace among the
various Indian groups. The Hudson's Bay Company traded directly with the leaders who, in turn, would trade with their people. The leaders attracted around themselves "bands" or "gangs" of Indian men who were both trappers and trading middlemen. The leaders or captains and their followers brought in the fur returns of their region during late spring and early summer. The leaders were always treated with distinction, receiving special attention by the governor in his residence as well as the customary presents of tobacco, spirits, and clothing. The trading goods, which they secured, and their personal presents placed them in a special status position when they returned to their country. This strategy on the part of the Company eventually led to comparative peace throughout the vast trading hinterland. For the trading leader, peace became a profitable state of affairs.

By 1720, Cree and Northern Athapaskan hostilities had subsided. The Swan had successfully made peace "...with those Indians att the head of Churchill River..." and had lived with them another whole winter (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/6, folio 31). The Swan was awarded with a present consisting of a coat, tobacco, and knives. His party on its arrival at York Factory on June 16, 1731 brought with it two Northern Strangers who spoke "...of a Great River that Vents itSelf to the Westward...", which could either be the Athabasca or Mackenzie River (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/6, folio 32). The Athapaskan Strangers were told to send scouts everywhere "...to give No=stice of the peace, and that they dont mollest nor affront any of their Country Indians they Shall meet..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/6, folio 21). The Strangers who made the peace were given a value of forty-six Made Beaver in trade goods. Although Kelsey expected the Northern Strangers to return the following year, it is evident that "The Swan" and his party had
established themselves as middlemen in Athabasca country (Morton, 1939:134).

We will see that this trading relationship between Cree and Athapaskans was to remain in effect between 1759 and 1764 when protracted warfare between the two peoples again erupted, upsetting this long term relationship. By 1720, the Northern Athapaskan trade had shifted northward from York Factory to Fort Churchill or Prince of Wales Fort. The details of the resulting major man-land reorientations will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The Development of the Northern Fur Trade: Fort Churchill

Churchill River was chosen as a promising site for an adjunct to the posts on the bottom of the Bay for several reasons. The development of a white whale fishery for oil and the desire to bring the furs from the vast hinterland stretching to Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake areas were important reasons, but played a lesser role in the determination to settle at Churchill than the desire to prospect the interior copper mine and to search for the Northwest Passage (Rich, 1958:440-442). Knight had received reports and samples of a large ore body from his Northern Indian informants on several occasions (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 23), and both he and the Committee were equally beset with the bright prospect of developing a mine. In fact, this possibility of developing the copper and possible gold reserves was to remain an interest of the Company and its personnel until after Samuel Hearne's journey to the Coppermine River area in 1770-1771. Notwithstanding the interests of a paying mineral discovery, it was the fur trade that prospered and became the mainstay of the post.

The first decade at Prince of Wales Fort was occupied with attempts to
induce the Northern Indians to trade in furs. The first Chief Factor, Richard Staunton, employed a boy, Richard Norton, during 1718-1719 to winter with "...the Indians [Cree] to divert 'em from going too warr, & to Desire 'em to go to trade at York Fort, and not to come here [Churchill] for they should not have any Encouragement..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The Cree, in general, were not receptive to Staunton's policy. Although Staunton interposed his authority by sending Norton "...to view their motions & so to be a dictater between 'em by his Language to keep 'em in the pale of Modesty for a better decorum & amicable trade..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1), the Cree "Captain of the River" or "brenchifyo" threatened to interpose "...his authority in his Nation to make a general warr with the Northern Indians ...." He further "...Threatnes that his Son's Son Shall wage war the Next Summer..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1; HBC Arch., B. 239/d/9, folio 70). The Cree were concerned that they would lose their advantage over the Chipewyan once the latter obtained guns and other trade items.

In an attempt to discourage the Cree from warfare and to encourage Chipewyan traders, Staunton gave the Indians almost a full standard of trade for their furs. The fur returns for 1718-1719 amounted to about 1,110 1/2 Made Beaver with 989 5/8 Made Beaver in trade goods being traded. The "overplus" (see below) gained was only 120 7/8 Made Beaver. Staunton was careful to justify the low overplus by observing that "...the Cause of the Over pluss being So Small and the Expenses So large, the latter is Upon account to Keep the Southern [Cree] Indians at peace, the Other for to Incourage the Northern Indians to hunt I haveing given them to the full of the Standard for Each Particular they brought" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1).

The traders employed a "factor's" or "double standard" of trade. Each
Chief Factor, in terms of expenses and competition, employed their own standard by raising the values of trade goods above that which was stated in the "official standard of trade" determined in Europe (Ray, 1974:63-65). This policy was implemented by simply demanding more beaver per item of trade goods or by assigning short measures on commodities such as beads, cloth, shot, powder, and other items involving volumetric, linear, and weight measurements (1974:63). The posts generally exceeded the base level and the gain was reported as "overplus." The overplus was often reinvested in the trade as gifts to Indians and their Captains. The Captains, in particular, were given lavish presents during the earlier trade period to give to the members of their trapping parties and trading bands in order to inveigle their participation in trading activities. The Captains, thus, received considerable social prestige from redistributing the gifts among their followers.

The Fort Churchill account books show that the official standard of trade did not alter much in time (Tables 4, 5, and 6) although the overplus totals continued to rise until the French consolidated their competitive position in the 1750s. As we will see, the overplus totals began falling along with fur returns, reaching the lowest point during the 1770s at the height of the Montreal-based competition and the major smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782.

Northern Indian trade began to increase from 1720 onward. On April 23, 1719, two Chipewyan boys and a girl were sent from York Factory to penetrate into Chipewyan territory to encourage and determine the extent of trading activities. It was not until June 6, 1719 when Staunton received intelligence that "...the Indians from the North would be here to-morrow
morning, being all Clothed in Deer Skins; but Saw no goods they had for any trade, it being a bid Sine of their being poor)...." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The twenty-four Chipewyan men had "...but 4 martins amongst them all, & those verry bad and good for nothing, not Strecht; their beaver being—just the same, & not drest rightly,..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The Indians informed Staunton that furs were abundant in their territory, but they had almost starved the previous winter. Staunton informed them that he would not dispense with trade goods if they again came empty handed. He could not "...but admire at those miserable & lasey wretches, not also gett provisions for their family's nor goods to propogate a trade for their security & benefitt...." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The Indians were given a gentle admonition and discourse for their failure. The party brought four guns that they had received the previous winter, and were supplied with powder and shot to hunt provisions on their return trip. On June 13, 1719 they were sent away, given a full standard of trade to encourage trapping, and one Yellowknife Indian in this party was persuaded to go to the copper mine (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1).

In the following year, only twenty-three Northern Indians arrived and in a poor condition. Nevertheless, Staunton was informed that the major portion of their countrymen had an abundance of furs that they would bring on sledges during the winter. The Yellowknife Indian who was sent the previous year to the copper mine had not been successful in his endeavor since on their return trip his party was forced by starvation to the coast of Hudson Bay where the Eskimo killed several of them (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). Some Northern Indian "Strangers" also approached Churchill during June of 1720, and reported that peace had been restored among them and the Cree.
## TABLE 4.

### THE COMPARATIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1722</th>
<th>By Company Skins as Beaver</th>
<th>By Factor Skins as Beaver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole parchment moose valued</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half ditto</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressed ditto</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw ditto</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old bears</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubit ditto</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parchment Buffalo</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiquchatch</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catt</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otters</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martens</td>
<td>3 as 1</td>
<td>3 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Foxes</td>
<td>1 as 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray ditto</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red ditto</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White ditto</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wejacks</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer skins</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feathers</td>
<td>10 as 1</td>
<td>10 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White parchment Beaver</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half ditto</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat ditto</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 42/d/3
### TABLE 5

**AN ACCOUNT HOW AND IN WHAT MANNER THE FACTORS ARE CAPABLE TO GIVE THE COMPANY THE OVERPLUS TRADE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trading Goods</th>
<th>Company's Standard Valued as Beaver</th>
<th>Factor's Standard Valued as Beaver</th>
<th>Overplus Gained Beaver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beads of sorts lb.</td>
<td>1 as 3</td>
<td>1 as 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettles brass of sorts</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot of sorts</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Brazil</td>
<td>1 as 3</td>
<td>1 as 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English roll</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia leaf</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermilion oz.</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 24</td>
<td>22 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish hook of sorts No.</td>
<td>5 as 1</td>
<td>5 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandy English gallon</td>
<td>1 as 4</td>
<td>1 as 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankets No.</td>
<td>1 as 9</td>
<td>1 as 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth brood yds.</td>
<td>1 as 4</td>
<td>1 as 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flannel yds.</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duffles yd.</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gartering worsted yds.</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awl blades No.</td>
<td>4 as 1</td>
<td>4 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayonets</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Combs</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td>1 as 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Steels</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td>1 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flints 10 as 1</td>
<td>10 as 1</td>
<td>10 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>1 as 16</td>
<td>1 as 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun worms</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasses looking 1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatchets</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Chisels</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawks bells brass 6 as 1</td>
<td>6 as 1</td>
<td>6 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knives</td>
<td>4 as 1</td>
<td>2 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needles</td>
<td>6 as 1</td>
<td>6 as 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder horns 1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net lines</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td>1 as 1 1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 42/d/3 (1722-1723)
Figure 4

PORT CHURCHILL TRADE RECEIPTS (1722-1788)
(Graph format adapted from Ray, 1974)

HBC Arch. B.42/d/5-65; Davies 1965:349-50
Staunton saw a good prospect of a flourishing trade. The returns of 1720 showed a significant increase over the previous season with 9,874 Made Beaver traded. The value of goods dispersed amounted to 6,497 13/16 Made Beaver with an overplus of 3,376 3/16 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The overplus was high compared to the next season (see Fig. 4).

Although Staunton reported in June 1721 that the Northern Indians had more furs than ever before, and that they were trading as middlemen with the more distant Yellowknife (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1), the returns were considerably lower than the previous year with 2,625 Made Beaver. The standard value of goods traded was 2,432 9/12 Made Beaver with an overplus of 192 5/12 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2, folio 13). Richard Norton and an Indian boy had set off in the spring to encourage trade. He returned on June 4, 1721 with a band of eighty Northern Indians "...they being all men & not one woman; altho two of those Indians are Copper Indians, wch Some of the Northern Indians came up wth. In th: Winter, 4 persuaded them to Come a long & wth them..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). Several other small parties of Northern Indians came to Churchill "bringing much" with intentions of going "...into ye: Woods In ye: Winter a Hunting: & come in Summer" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). Staunton hoped that they would return since "...they are not affraid as formerly" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). Even though the Cree were at peace with the Northern Athapaskans, Staunton was still concerned about an outbreak of hostilities. Thus, forty canoes of "Missinnpee" (Cree) Indians from the upper Churchill River region were refused trade and told to go to York Factory since Churchill was for the Northern Indians (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/1). The Cree were turned back about the time that the large party of Northern Indians was present, and his decision probably served to invigorate Chipewyan
The prospects of favorable returns for the 1721-1722 season induced Staunton to send two Northern Indians and "the woman" (Churchill's first woman interpreter?) among the Chipewyan. They were provisioned on September 14, 1721 and sent to their country "...promising they will hunt for Goods and Acquaint their Country men, what Goods wee want, also the furrs they see..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2). It seems that Staunton's plan was successful because on the evening of June 7, 1722, eighty-four Northern Indians came to Churchill by land. All the Northern Indians traded, "thay having brought more Goods, than ever for the Number there is in the Gang and very well stretched and Scraped Especially the small Furrs..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2). The Chipewyan were encouraged to trap marten for which there seemed to be an almost insatiable market (Rich, 1958:444). As a result of this demand, Staunton had to alter his standard of trade and noted "Altho our Standard of trade be 1 1/2 Beav pr hatchett & Ice Chissell also 2 knives for 1 marten & the Hathets & ice chisels 3 martens each It being the Standard to encourage them to catch Small furrs by Captain Knight" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2). What Staunton meant by his notation was that the official standard of trade was one and one-half Made Beaver for each hatchet and ice chisel, and one Made Beaver for two knives. Since three marten were valued at one Made Beaver, the hatchets and Ice chisels were traded at one Made Beaver each while knives were traded at one-third their value. The trade in small furrs, especially marten, was common to Churchill. Unfortunately, no specific details of fur returns are available other than a reference to twenty-two bundles of fur having been packed, which may not have been all of the furs (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2).
In 1722, Richard St. Aimon was recalled from Churchill to be succeeded by Nathaniel Bishop. The Committee again encouraged the development of a white whale fishery and the discovery of the copper mine. Richard Norton, who Knight had earlier sent inland to dictate peace between the Cree and Athapaskans, was sent to Churchill to initiate the search for copper (Rich, 1958:449-450). When the previously mentioned Yellowknife Indian made his appearance in the spring of 1724 with a small party of twenty Northern Indian men, women, and children, Norton attempted by "better encouragement" to impel him to search for furs and metal. Otherwise, the Indian would not receive any more free goods (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3, folio 27).

Inasmuch as there was renewed interest in the fishery and the copper mine, the two-thirds improvement of the fur trade over the 1722 season ascribed a great deal of new interest in the expansion of the fur trade (Davies, 1964:84-85). It was in great part strengthened by the appearance on June 18, 1723 of a "Strange" Indian "...that Never see no Europeans..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3, folio 28). The reason why he and his bârd mates came was because a Cree party of six canoes had made peace with the Strangers during the previous winter. The Stranger was..."...Show'd our Goods to and gave them some small presents, telling them withall to bring Cannoos of those Strange Natives next Spring, the Language of those Strangers being very much like our Northern Indians that Comes here to trade" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3, folio 28). The Strangers would have been of the Beaver, Hare (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:249-250), and Slave Indians from the Lake Athabasca area. In addition to prospects of future trade with these Indians, other small parties of Northern Indians were also arriving with "...but very little Goods Some of them Never having been here before..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3, folio 28).
They too were encouraged to participate in the trade. Other incoming Northern parties brought "bulky packs" consisting of mostly marten and some beaver. The account books show that 1,020 marten were traded with a value of 340 Make Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/3). In all, 4,080 whole parchment beaver, 420 half parchment beaver, and 1,199 coat beaver were traded along with bear, otter, wolverine, cat, fox, wolves, and moose skins. The returns totaled 6,493 Make Beaver while the standard value of goods traded was 5,796 11/12 with an overplus of 696 1/12 (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/3). So there was clear anticipation of continued fur trade expansion.

The activities of two Northern Indians, for the first time, were not restricted solely to the trapping of furs. In the spring of 1723, two Chipewyan were employed as goose hunters (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3). The number increased in later years as a distinctive spatial structure of a Local Trade Area emerged.

The impetus for increased trade at Churchill was curbed during the period 1724-1727 due to the resumption of warfare between the Cree and Northern Athapaskans. The Upland (Cree) Captain who was sent to trade with the Northern Stranger during June 1723 returned in September of 1723 for "...a fresh supply to meet him, he Expecting the Stranger to bring Some of his Country Men to trade here Next Spring..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/4, folio 7). The Captain intended to go to the Northern Strangers' country after receiving Brazil tobacco and other necessities. However, the next year's reports from Cree informants suggest that the Captain had "...fell into the hands of his Enemies who has killed in Going back into his own Country and he Could not goe into their Country without Blood Sheed..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/4, folio 28). Doubtless, this event contributed to and demarcates the beginnings of
renewed warfare and raiding.

The Cree were at war with the Chipewyan in the winter of 1725. An incoming gang of 104 Northern Indian men reported to Norton on June 13, 1725 "...that the Southern Upland Indians had been to Warrs in their Country Last winter & has Distroyd a Vast quantity of their Country men..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5). Several of the Chipewyan men and their families had been plundered of most of their season's furs (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5). Arthur Dobbs (1745:44) recalled this conflict stating that thirty Cree warriors also made war against "...the Attimospiquais, Tete Plat, or Flacootes de Chiens [Dogrib], a Nation living Northward on the Western Ocean of America..." about the year 1725 (see Fig. 5). Nevertheless, warfare had little effect on fur returns, especially marten. Marten returns amounted to a high of 1,200 or 400 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5), and the Chipewyan party of 104 men brought 800 marten, besides other furs (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5). However, the returns were lower than the previous season with only 4,689 Made Beaver. The standard value of goods purchased was 4,121 1/6 Made Beaver with an overplus of 567 5/6 (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/5; Davies, 1965:111-112).

The impact of warfare on the Northern Athapaskans is clearer for the following two seasons, 1725-1726 and 1726-1727. Marten returns dipped to a low of 120 in 1725-1726 with an additional decrease to seventy in 1726-1727 (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/6 and 7). Besides involvement in warfare with the Cree, several Chipewyan were killed by the Eskimo during 1725 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5). The trade in marten and small furs was disappointing throughout this period of conflict. Yet, the overall fur returns continued to increase as the Cree began bringing the majority of the furs traded (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5, folio 29). Table 6 shows the returns for the ten year period 1725-1735.
FIGURE 5
A SECTION FROM JOSEPH LA FRANCE'S MAP, 1739-1742
TABLE 6

TOTAL OF MADE BEAVER RETURNS, VALUE OF GOODS TRADED, AND OVERPLUS, 1725-1735.
(Rounded to nearest whole number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Made Beaver</th>
<th>Trade Goods</th>
<th>Overplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1724-1725</td>
<td>4,689</td>
<td>4,121</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725-1726</td>
<td>5,640</td>
<td>5,006</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1726-1727</td>
<td>6,169</td>
<td>5,508</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1727-1728</td>
<td>6,647</td>
<td>6,211</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728-1729*</td>
<td>11,716</td>
<td>7,581</td>
<td>4,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729-1730*</td>
<td>9,256</td>
<td>6,124</td>
<td>3,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1731*</td>
<td>7,455</td>
<td>4,797</td>
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<tr>
<td>1731-1732</td>
<td>14,198</td>
<td>9,428</td>
<td>4,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>1732-1733</td>
<td>12,673</td>
<td>8,450</td>
<td>4,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733-1734</td>
<td>9,559</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>3,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1734-1735</td>
<td>10,551</td>
<td>7,002</td>
<td>3,549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Great efforts were made by Richard Norton, Bishop's successor in 1724, to reinvigorate Chipewyan trade. Incoming Cree and Chipewyan parties were counseled in the way of peace (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/6, folio 29; HBC Arch., B. 42/a/7, folio 20). As soon as the rivers were clear of ice, usually towards the end of May and early June, the Cree began to arrive in canoes each manned by two or three men to a canoe. The Chipewyan normally brought the results of their trapping and trading across the barrens about the same time. During the first two weeks of June, parties of both Cree and Chipewyan often assembled at Fort Churchill. The small parties of Chipewyan in the 1725-1727 seasons were particularly apprehensive about the Cree rendezvousing at the fort at the same time as themselves (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/7). The small amount of surplus might well be attributed to presents and to manipulation of the Factor's standard of trade, which offered to assure peace and to encourage trapping and trading activities (see Table 6). Within the fort, Norton invited the Indians' leaders to discuss their seasonal activities, receiving from Norton his satisfaction or agreement. During this period of intertribal warfare, Norton, of course, indicated his disapproval for their activities with mingled friendliness and firmness. For example, in the second week of June 1727, forty-three canoes of Cree and a gang of eighty Chipewyan men arrived and were treated with formality and "...after having had Some Discuss with them [Chipewyan] & the Uplanders [Cree] forwarming their Warring they traded and went away..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/7, folio 20).

The natives' meeting at Churchill fully allowed Norton the opportunity to unite both parties into friendship, which appears to have been successful. However, the Northern Indians brought but few marten in the spring of 1727. When Norton asked them the reason, their answer
...was they did attempt to go into the woods where their marten ground is but meeting with a southern Indians track caused them to return from going any further, they being afraid that they might be enemies a coming to wars with them, but now they see they are at real friendship with each other so they will not be afraid but will endeavour to catch martens and other small furs to bring to trade (Davies, 1965:119).

There was a fair prospect of an increased trade of small furs and the Northern Indians did bring in some bears, cubs, wolves, wolverines, and about 150 marten with a few cats and a small quantity of beaver; the Cree bringing coat beaver and parchment (1965:120).

With the difficulties of intertribal warfare behind them by 1728 the Churchill traders were anxious to strengthen the trade by encouraging the Northern Indian parties to come down on a yearly basis. Most parties brought their returns in every second season. One solution toward encouraging an annual trade was to advise the natives to draw nearer to Churchill. This policy was adopted by Anthony Beale in July 1729, and, in large part, denotes the incipience of a Local Trade Area (Davies, 1965:139). The major portion of trading Chipewyan, however, continued to remain in their more familiar fur bearing and trading grounds in the interior, and they were merely encouraged to trade annually. This policy is particularly clear in the journal passage of Thomas Bird on June 15, 1731 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/11):

...A Gang of 113 Northern Indians Came here & I traded with them this Afternoon & gave them some small presents to Encourage them to come down yearly....

The presents given to the Indians consisted of a variety of items. The Churchill account books for 1730-1731 list the following gratuities presented to Leading Indians.
TABLE 7

GRATUITIES, 1730-1731

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 1/2 yds. broad cloth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 lbs. of Powder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 lbs. of shot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 lbs. Brazil tobacco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 oz. virmilion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gal. of brandy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yds. of cloth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 lbs. of Role tobacco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 yds. of gartering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 doz. Coat Buttons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Long knives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 laced hat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lbs. of thread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 needles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 twine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 42/d/11

The value of these items was more than seventy-five Made Beaver and served to promote a regular annual trade.

The number of Northern Indian traders steadily increased after 1728 for the next two decades. Between 1728 and 1732, the numbers of returning Chipewyan traders ranged between seventy to 100 men annually (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/8-12, passim). These trading parties ranged anywhere from two to 113 members. Besides trading, the Indians came to Churchill for the purpose of having their guns repaired by an armourer, who was appointed to the post about 1727-
1728 (Davies, 1965:139). A few Chipewyan again began hunting geese for the fort in April and May of each year. Following the goose hunting season, they returned inland with powder, shot, and other necessities to trap furs. There was, in addition, an increasing number of Chipewyan who remained at the fort as post provisioners. This developing fur trade network also encouraged a few Northern Strangers from the Lake Athabaska region to come in with the Cree (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/5 and 12, passim).

The main feature of the trade from the 1730s onward was its orderliness. The Northern Indians were trading for greater quantities of "necessaries" such as guns, powder, shot, hatchets, ice chisels, knives, kettles, broad cloth, and other goods. For instance, in the spring of 1733, two large Northern parties arrived consisting of fifty and fifty-nine Indians respectively (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/13). Since they constituted the majority of incoming traders, we can assume that their trade transcended that of the other parties. Their trade contributed, in part, to the sale of 138 kettles, 153 guns, 900 lbs. of powder, 2,216 lbs. of shot, 915 knives, 235 3/4 yds. of broad cloth, 200 hatchets, thirty-four Ice chisels, 256 awls, besides a variety of other goods. Luxury goods were also in high demand by this time with about 477 lbs. of Brazil tobacco, 554 lbs. of Leaf tobacco, 260 lbs. of Role tobacco, 210 lbs. of beads, and 300 gal. of brandy traded (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/13). This pattern of Chipewyan trade was to persist almost uninterrupted until the smallpox epidemic in 1781-1782 (see Figs. 6, 7, and 8).

It should not be assumed that the Chipewyan demand for European goods was limited as Gillespie has suggested (1975:366). The types and quantities of goods that the Chipewyan and Cree were taking into the interior for their own use and for trade with more distant Northern Athapaskans were consider-
FIGURE 6
FORT CHURCHILL TRADE IN METAL GOODS
HBC Arch. B. 42/d/5-55 (Graph format adapted from Ray, 1974)

FIGURE 8
FORT CHURCHILL TRADE IN POWER AND SHOT (1722-1788)
able. Their demands were only limited by their capacity to transport trade goods to the interior.

In addition to furs, several Northern Indian bands began to provision Churchill with meat in the mid-1730s. Richard Norton, the Chief Factor, described the meat as "Buffalos flesh" although it was probably muskox meat (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/15). The only exception to this pattern of regular trade with the Northern Indians was the 1735-1736 season. The journal of S. Napper fails to note the appearance of Northern Indians (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/16). The omission of references could reflect Napper's failure to enter the happenings at Churchill from day-to-day, although there is an evident fluctuation in fur trade returns between 1735-1736 and 1736-1737. The 1735-1736 returns were 8,673 Made Beaver while the 1736-1737 returns were 16,759. The low returns of 1735-1736 could reflect the Chipewyan's failure to arrive that season due to weather conditions. The winter was a particularly harsh one in which forty starving Indians arrived on April 14, 1736 to receive "victuals" of "Burgee" — a thick oatmeal porridge, and salted geese (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/16). The following winter was also harsh, and the Northern Indians complained to Norton that there had been no snow. This, of course, meant that the caribou were scarce since they remained on the tundra, and the Indians were forced to live on fish most of the winter (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/17). However, this did not prevent almost 200 Chipewyan from trading. In fact, a single party of 150 men arrived on June 11, 1737 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/17). All things considered, the reasons for lack of direct references to Northern Indians in 1735-1736 were, thus, probably due to the prevailing weather conditions.

There was an alteration in the pattern of Northern Indian provisioning
activities from 1737-1738 onward. Small groups of Indians began to sled caribou, moose, and muskox meat and other goods to the post in mid-November and early December of each year. They would await the permanent cover of snow which allowed them easier traction of large quantities of meat. In the 1737-1738 season, the incoming Northern parties included twelve Indians on November 10, nine on December 1, two on December 16, seven on December 25, five in March, and two on April 16 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/18). The five Northern Indians who arrived in March were retained as post hunters for the goose season. By 1743-1744, the Northern Indians were bringing their families to the post in April where provisions were given to all. The Chief Factor would disperse these arrivals after a few days to "goose" camps to await the return of the geese in May. The journal of James Isham for 1744-1745 is clear on this development. When several parties of Chipewyan returned in April, on April 22, 1745, Isham "...Sent 15 Northern Indian men, & their familys 50 in Number to tent at Long Point to kill Geese..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/27). There were seventy-two Northern Indians at Long Point by April 26 with an additional five families joining the hunt on May 4, 1745 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/27). In essence, these developments demarcate the characteristics of a full-fledged Local Trade Area where the activities of hunter, trapper, and trader were undifferentiated. One group of Northern Indians, under the leader Long Chin, was definitely involved in all of these activities. Thus, by the mid-1740s, some Chipewyan could be classified as homeguards who were beginning to form the nucleus of a trading post band.

As Churchill steadily fostered the development of its Northern Indian local and hinterland trade areas during the later 1730s and early 1740s, it appears that the post may have been affected by competition with the French.
in 1744. That year, out of a party of sixty to seventy canoes, only twenty-five canoes returned to Churchill, and in the following season about 100 canoes did not return to the post (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/25, 27). It is difficult to determine whether the series of posts established by de la Verendrye and sons on Lake Dauphin and the first Fort Bourbon located where the Saskatchewan runs from Cedar Lake to Lake Winnipeg were attracting some of these Cree (Rich, 1958:521-522). The fear of the French establishing an inland trade and diverting the Indians from Hudson Bay may account for the possible concern expressed in James Isham's journal passages at that time. Isham, of course, received correspondence from Fort Albany and Moose Factory where French rivalry was definitely affecting the company trade. It is certain, however, that the Cree traded with seven large canoes of Canadians in 1751 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/36, folio 59). In the spring of 1751, Jacques Repentiqy de Saint Pierre instructed a French party to ascend the Saskatchewan River from The Pas to the mountains. It is not clear whether the party followed the north or south branch of the Saskatchewan (Rich, 1958:524).

The fact that a party of ten Cree canoes arrived at Churchill with French trade goods and with knowledge of the French party suggests their presence on the North Saskatchewan (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/36, folio 59).

Between 1744 and 1751, the Chipewyan and Cree trade continued unabated with the exception of the 1748-1749 season. Joseph Isbister, the Chief Factor, lost several of his Northern Indian hunters and their families due to sickness (influenza) and starvation. The epidemic appeared to be widespread with even the incoming Cree parties "...all Verry badly gooded & complain that they are Starved that a great Mortality has been amongst them ..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/32). Isbister spent seven lbs. of powder, eight
lbs. of Duck shot, twelve lbs. of partridge shot, two yds. of red cloth, fifteen lbs. of Brazil tobacco, sixteen flints, three Ice chisels, four fire steels, and sixteen assorted knives in an effort to remove the starving Indians from the post (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/d/28, folio 9).

Epidemics and starvation would seem to be closely correlated. Hunters contacting a contagious disease were unable to provide for their families. Starvation resulted. The Northern Indians were directly affected by these factors. On July 1, 1749 Isbister reported "...20 of our Northward Indians whoe also Traded, the litter mater of goods they brought and Complained much that all their Countries men are Destress'd & Starv'd because therre is no beast to be found in their Country & have not been able to Catch any Goods nor will this Year..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/32). Sickness and uncertain migration of animals constituted dire distress, and the post invariably provided assistance for starving families. The fur returns dropped from 13,707 Made Beaver in 1748 to 11,336 Made Beaver in 1749, reflecting the season's events. The following year's fur returns were again up to 13,622 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/28-30).

Much of the gain in returns that traders obtained in the 1740s was lost during the 1750s (see Table 8). The 1751-1752 season was noted, in particular, for its low returns. Joseph Isbister suggested three reasons for their decline (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/38):

...(there are three things, which I contribute the Smallness of our Trade to, first, y' Sickness amongst the Natives, Secondly the advance made by french Since [undecipherable] & lastly y' Indians going to ware with y' Strange Indians that Never, Trades with y' English, out of revenge for those they have lost - by ye Sickness....

The Northern Indians' trade was, however, unaffected by these events. Their involvement as trappers, traders, and hunters provided stability to Church-
ill's trade during the period when the Cree were at war. Nevertheless, Chipewyan and Eskimo hostilities did have the potential to erupt into open conflict during the 1752-1753 season. Ferdinand Jacobs, the newly appointed Chief Factor, was compelled to keep one old Chipewyan man "...as an Hostage until I have an Ekomay Boy Brought to me with the Northern Indian Take from the Ekomays Last Summer, but not in a hostile manner..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/40, folio 56). The problem was resolved when Jacobs bought the Eskimo boy from a party of eighteen Chipewyan on July 28, 1753. The boy was used in the service of the Company as an interpreter (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/40, folio 63).

For the Cree-Home Indians and the traders at Churchill, the winter of 1753-1754 was a difficult one. While the Cree hunters were starving, the Northern Indians had an abundance of provisions. Seventy Northern Indians served as post hunters for the season. Jacobs noted in a letter to Thomas White, Chief Factor of Moose River Fort, on January 24, 1754 that we "...have had very bad Season for Provisions, but by the Assistance of the Northern Indians, have been well provided with fresh meat for this Winter, 70, of which came, loaded with Venison, Fat, Tongues, viz..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/1a, folio 4). Other journal passages suggest that there actually may have been more than seventy Northern Indian hunters provisioning (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/42). Whatever, their services were indispensable to the maintenance of Churchill.

The post had developed additional obligations to the Indians over the years. Sick and disabled Indians often arrived at the post to secure aid. If they died at the post, they were given a burial there. On occasion, when adult males died, their families were taken care of by the traders. As Jacobs described a particular incident (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/42, folio 8):
TABLE 8

THE TRADE OF CHURCHILL*
1735 - 1760

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Furs etc. Taken</th>
<th>Goods Traded</th>
<th>Overplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1735-36</td>
<td>8,073</td>
<td>5,283</td>
<td>2,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1736-37</td>
<td>16,759</td>
<td>11,173</td>
<td>5,586</td>
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<td>1737-38</td>
<td>10,967</td>
<td>7,303</td>
<td>3,665</td>
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<td>1738-39</td>
<td>23,697</td>
<td>15,798</td>
<td>7,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739-40</td>
<td>9,990</td>
<td>6,609</td>
<td>3,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-41</td>
<td>13,383</td>
<td>8,859</td>
<td>4,524</td>
</tr>
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<td>1741-42</td>
<td>16,824</td>
<td>11,407</td>
<td>5,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742-43</td>
<td>18,541</td>
<td>12,344</td>
<td>6,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>16,365</td>
<td>11,665</td>
<td>4,700</td>
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<td>1747-48</td>
<td>13,707</td>
<td>8,981</td>
<td>4,726</td>
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<td>1748-49</td>
<td>11,336</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>3,836</td>
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<td>1749-50</td>
<td>13,622</td>
<td>9,069</td>
<td>4,554</td>
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<td>12,508</td>
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<td>1751-52</td>
<td>9,609</td>
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<td>6,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1759-60</td>
<td>10,310</td>
<td>6,863</td>
<td>3,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* rounded to nearest whole number

Source: HBC Arch., B. 42/d/16-40

October 10, 1753...it is to be observed that the Indian man that Dyed 25th [Oct. 9 also] of Last month Left two Widows & 4 Helpless Children & the man that Dyed Last Night has left two widows and 5 Small Children so that there is no body to provide for there 4 widows & 9 Children but two Indian Lads One about 19 the other 15 Year of Age, a Small Help for So Large a family but Mean they will be a Burdon to this Factory all the winter....

This was a common occurrence over the years, and May of 1776 is a case in
point. A late snowstorm killed seven family members of the Chipewyan goose hunters while some of the survivors lost their extremities (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/92; Williams, 1969:315). The invalids required an extended sustenance by Churchill. In fact, one woman's feet were amputated, and she had to be transported about the post on a sled. In times of utter despair, Churchill's support was their last hope for life.

The fur returns of the Cree continued to decline in the 1750s. By the spring of 1760, only thirty-eight canoes of Cree appeared at the post. The inquiries of Chief Factor Moses Norton suggest two reasons "...three of they [Cree] told me that Several of the Indns was gone to warr & some gone to York Fort..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/53, folio 44). The 1759-1760 season does serve to demarcate the beginning of protracted warfare between the Cree and the Beaver, Slave, and Hare Indians. This period of warfare was to create a major man-land reorientation among these Canadian Athapaskan peoples who were forced by the Cree to inhabit areas hitherto unoccupied on a permanent basis. This subject will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

The variety and quantity of trade goods sold during the period of warfare did not decline significantly (see Figs. 6, 7, and 8; also see Appendix 1-3). In fact, the sales made between 1760 and 1764 reflect, to a large extent, the Northern Indian trade since the majority of the Cree were at war with the more distant Beaver and Slave Indians, and those Cree canoes that arrived were generally "poorly" gooded (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/60). An examination of Churchill's account books and trade data for the period 1760-1764 make it possible to acquire some insights into the variety and quantities of trade goods that the Chipewyan were procuring for their own use and for more remote Indian populations.
It is often assumed by recent scholars that the demand for trade goods was minimal before Hearne's journey (Smith, 1975:422). Indeed, Gillespie (1975:366) has recently stated that besides "...bringing few furs and wasting ammunition with their poor marksmanship, the Chipewyan demand for European goods was limited." A close examination of the trade data provides a sounder basis for understanding trade relationships during this period.

Figures 7 and 8 show the annual trade in arms and ammunition. The 1760-1764 account books reveal that 389 guns, 2,940 lbs. of powder, 6,828 lbs. of shot, 10,322 gun flints, and 313 powderhorns were traded (see Appendix 1). It is suggested that the Chipewyan purchased the majority of these items and, in fact, were becoming reliant upon them. This is contrary to Smith's (1975:422) suggestion that at the time of Hearne's journey (1769-1772) muskets "...were beginning to replace bows and arrows among some Chipewyan bands, but the Yellowknives had no muskets and some Chipewyan bands had not a single flint-lock among them." The growing dependency upon firearms is also revealed by the amount of powder and shot traded as well as the notations in the account books regarding provisioning activities. For instance, in November 1760, Jacobs' recorded that he gave away ten lbs. of powder, twenty lbs. of shot, and assorted items to the Northern Indians for 2,890 lbs. of venison, sixty tongues, ten hearts, and snowshoe knitting (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/42, 46). Throughout the period 1719-1781, the quantity of arms and ammunition traded annually remained fairly constant.

The records of Indian purchases of metal and luxury goods and of sundries indicate that the Chipewyan were the most important buyers and that the Indians in the hinterland were receiving a regular supply of trade goods through Chipewyan middlemen. The totals for the 1760-1764 period are 1,091
hatchets, 590 kettles, 3,703 knives, 942 ice chisels, more than 583 files and 1,301 awls (see Appendix 2). The consumption of clothing items are interesting in consideration of Smith's (1975:422) view that the Chipewyans' "...needs were limited to axes, ice chisels, knives, and files." Clothing purchases included about 1,647 3/4 yards of broad cloth, 428 yards of gartering, and 183 blankets (see Appendix 3). The sales do not include lace, flannel, and duffels, which were also purchased. Luxury goods and sundries show roughly the same pattern of demand. Two hundred and sixty-seven pounds of assorted sizes of beads were sold. Other items included approximately 251 yds. of net lines, 186 looking glasses, 363 Ivory combs, 2,886 lbs. of Brazil tobacco, 166 lbs. of Leaf tobacco, 192 lbs. of Role tobacco, and 953 1/2 gals of brandy. Besides those items listed in Figures 6, 7, and 8, the Chipewyan purchased buttons, bayonets, fire steels, burning glasses, hats, hawksbells, rings, medals, needles, tobacco tongs, trunks, twine, scrapers, sashes, thimbles, and tobacco boxes. Considering that Smith (1975:422) has estimated the early eighteenth century Chipewyan population to have been roughly 4,000 people, we can not assume that their demand for European trade goods was limited. From the volume of trade goods purchased during this period, it is clear that the Chipewyan and their trading partners living in the indirect trade regions had become very dependent upon certain European material items by the 1760s. 15

The Indirect and Middleman Eras: Intertribal Conflict and Continued Fur Trade Expansion

Intertribal conflict and hostilities followed in the wake of Churchill's trade expansion. Even the more remote Canadian Athapaskans were becoming
increasingly dependent upon European trade goods. Yet few of these Northern "Strangers" came regularly to Churchill. Instead, Cree middlemen provided groups such as the Beaver, Hare, and Slave with trade goods. The position of middleman for the Cree was relatively uncontested between 1717-1759. However, by the 1760s, some of the Chipewyan were also clearly specializing as middlemen. The trappers for these Chipewyan were the Yellowknife and Dogrib Indians since the Chipewyan's territory produced fewer furs (Glover, 1962: 115). Although these more distant Indians were encouraged to come themselves to Churchill for direct trade, the trading Indians, both Cree and Chipewyan, objected and sometimes violently.

The Churchill journals provide testimonial evidence of intense fur trade rivalries among tribal groups during this period. The Beaver, Hare and Slave in the Peace River region and the area north of Lake Athabasca by 1760 were attempting to bypass their Cree middlemen in an organized effort to establish direct contact with Churchill. According to Ferdinand Jacobs (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/55, folio 45):

July 31, 1761...NB It is to be observed that three Indian men & two women of a different Tribe that Never, see a European nor any off the Companies settlements before Came here to trade with the Said Northern Indians, with whom I traded Largely, and Appointed one of them Leader of his Tribe, and gave him & the Others Handsome Presents upon Promise of bring more of their Tribe down with furrs to Trade, also Sent a young Northern Indian man [Matonabbee] who is a Proficent in the Languages with them, well fitted Out, to keep Pace with the Southern Indians [Cree] & them, as they used to Trade with the Southern Indians who may Now be jealous that those Strangers have got to the Fountain Head of Trade....

Jacobs correctly anticipated in 1761 that the Cree would protect their middleman role jealously. It seems that the Cree interceded by attacking the Canadian Athapaskans on their return trip from Churchill, but the news of these events did not reach Jacobs until the following summer (HBC Arch., B.
...at Noon 32 Northern Indians Came here with whome I immediately Traded, "Eight of those Indians Never see a European, and are part of those Indians I have been Endeavouring to bring to Trade at this Factory, they had a Pretty many Goods, they also Confirm what the Leader of the Beaver [Cree] Indians has been Guity off in Killing Part of their Tribe, the Father of the man that, I made a Leader Last Year was one of them the Beaver River Indians Killed, by which Means this Factory has Suffered in the Trade by the Loss of those Indians that was Kild, and Driving the Remainder, So Far, all that they Could not Come to Trade, as well as the Loss of those Indians that Kild them by Diserting this Factory, being afraid to Come....

Armed with guns, these Cree middlemen had an upper hand over their Canadian Athapaskan neighbors, whom they drove into the northwest transitional boreal forest and Mackenzie drainage system and the Upper Peace River (see Fig. 1). Relocated in this area where they were protected by their relative isolation, we will see in subsequent chapters that the Canadian Athapaskans were forced to rely on resources that, in general, were less abundant and lucrative than in their former habitat with its large wood bison herds.

The hitherto unpublished journals, letters, and accounts of Ferdinand Jacobs provide significant details on intertribal fur trade competition. In the summer of 1762, at least two large parties of Cree were at "Warr." In a letter, dated August 23, 1762, Jacobs complained to Humphrey Martin, Governor of York Factory, about Churchill's greatly diminished fur trade returns from the Lake Athabasca natives (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/8):

...I have been unexpectedly disappointed in Our Trade, by Not One Cannoe of ye Athuppiscaw Indians Coming down to Trade, this year being gone to War, And that Odd Rogue Caw=win=ne=cut-tow, who with his Gang was with you this Summer...I Say that Old Rogue & some of his Tribe has Kild at two Different Times, Several of those Northern Indians whom, I have been Endeavoring to bring down to this Factory to Trade, which Intemidated the rest So much that only Eight of them Came here this Sum....

The Cree or Atha'pec ska' Indians did not come down to Churchill during 1763-1764 since "...they not Returning as yet from War..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/60,
Warfare continued unabated throughout the 1764-1765 season although Moses Norton was informed that a great many Cree were coming in the next season (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/11, folio 1). Either the successful mediation of Matonabbee as ambassador of peace or the success of Cree depredations upon the Canadian Athapaskans allowed eighteen canoes of "Atha'he skaw" Indians to continue their trade in 1766 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/64, folio 44). Unfortunately, Churchill was short of trade items such as blankets, cloth, and other woolens for which these Cree mostly traded (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/64, folio 45). Thus, Norton was obliged to be very "kind" to them to encourage future trade.

The Churchill traders also attempted to induce the Yellowknife and Dogrib Indians to establish direct trade during this period of conflict. The Chipewyan leader, Captain Keelshies, was fitted "...out for the year [1763-1764] to Endeavour to bring some of them [Yellowknife] near to Trade if he Succeeds have Promised him a handsome Reward..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/59, folio 44). Keelshies' party of forty Northern Indians did not return until November 20, 1764. They were not able to get the Yellowknife to return with them. This did not discourage Moses Norton although there were several obstacles to overcome (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/62, folio 23):

...in the first Place those far Indns has but very little Knowledge of the use of Guns, and without they were Expect in this usefull Article they cannot supply themselves with Provisions in the Barren way they have to Come as for Instance those far Indns that come to the Fort in Mr. Jacobs time only two of them Returned to their own Country which has intimidated the Rest that they cant be prevall'd on to Come So Great a Distance as the Northern Indians supplies them with Iron work for they will get 9 or 10 Beaver for a Hatchet 4 or 5 for a knife to which makes one be of Opinion that the Northern Indns will Rather be a Hinderance to their Coming to the Fort then otherwise in order to keep that Monopoly in their own Power as much as they can....

Keelshies and his party were instructed to bring in the Yellowknife and to
clothe themselves in beaver skins rather than caribou. This would allow the party to increase their returns by ten or twelve Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/62, folio 24). Keelshies led a dozen Yellowknife Indians back to Churchill although in the interests of his middleman position made sure that "... long before they arrived at the Fort, he and the rest of his crew had got all the furrs from them, in payment for provisions" (Glover, 1962:117-118). While at Churchill, he laid "...claim to great merit for having brought those stranger" (1962:117-118). Norton, of course, presented the Yellowknife with presents to encourage their trade. However, Keelshies marooned them on an island in the Churchill River where they eventually succumbed to starvation. Hearne saw their remains on the island in 1772 (1962:117-118). Nevertheless, by 1771, a party of thirty "Northern Copper" Indians did come to trade "... well gooded, the leader of them being by appearance one that has much Influence among them have establish'd him the captain of his country men, their Number was 30 and they brought above 4000 Made Beaver in sundrys, besides some shoe Leather..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/80, folio 79). The party and their leader, "Ben, Ka-hu, theed," were encouraged to come again. In the main, however, the Chipewyan retained an exclusive monopoly over their middleman position to the Yellowknife until the Montreal traders reached the Athabasca region.

The development of direct trade with the Dogrib became important to Churchill traders in 1764. A Chipewyan leader called "Owl Eye" arrived at the post in August 1763 after a three year expedition to the Coppermine River and to the Dogrib. Owl Eye informed Norton that he had "...Been w th a Strong tribe of Indians who has not Been to the Fort, & has not the usse of Guns & thus Country Abounds w th Small Furrs but has no contrivence to ketch them..."
(HBC Arch., B. 42/a/60, folio 68). The Indian was outfitted with ammunition and received a promise that he would be made a Captain if he brought in the Dogrib. Owl Eyes returned in 1766 with three "Dog Ribb" Indians. They had very few furs of their own since they were compelled to give them to Owl Eyes for protection and for escorting them across Chipewyan territory. A Dogrib was made Captain and the three were encouraged to bring a greater number of their countrymen to the post (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/64, folio 45). Two Dogrib returned with the same party of Chipewyan in 1768, and appear to have remained at the post for several seasons (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/70, folio 30; HBC Arch., B. 42/b/17).

A mortality among the Indians during the early part of the winter of 1768 and the anticipated Hearne expedition may have kept the Dogrib at Churchill. Starvation and sickness was widespread among the natives throughout 1768-1769. The Northern leader, Idosliazer, and twenty-five of his party died in October of 1768 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/74, folio 13). It was intended that Idosliazer would lead Hearne to the Coppermine River (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/16, folio 8). Chawchinahaw was appointed to succeed Idosliazer.

Illness prevented the Northern Indians from provisioning Churchill in the fall of 1768 and by January thirty Chipewyan were dead from the epidemic while many more were sick (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/15, folio 3). Not only were there low fur returns, but the post was forced to provision the Indians (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/15, folio 10). Throughout the winter, starving Chipewyan arrived from distances of 200 miles (320 km) for supplies of powder and oatmeal to support their people (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/74, folio 36). On April 13, 1769, Churchill was supporting a local population of ninety-one Chipewyan (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/74, folio 36). Starving Indians also broke into the
provision house at North Point during the spring and pilfered 150 partridges and all the small utensils (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/74, folio 42). Sickness and starvation continued unabated into October, 1769 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/77, folio 6):

October 24, 1769...This Evening 40 Northern Indians Including Men, Women, and Childrens came to the Fort with Furs to Trade. Tolerably well gooded, but some very Sickley by which, I thought it Necessary to dispatch 2 men and Natives to go and bring those 2 Natives that was most dead about 12 miles from the Fort.

The almost inevitable consequences of these events apparently meant that expansion of trade to both the Dogrib and Yellowknife was curtailed. The northern Indians were unable to trap and trade with more remote Canadian Athapaskans, the results of which are reflected in the poor fur returns of 6,171 1/3 Made Beaver for 1768-1769 which provide silent testimony for the prevailing conditions (see Table 9).

In part, Samuel Hearne's journeys were initiated in an attempt to increase trade from the low returns of 1768-1769, and to continue the attempts to develop trade in the remote, noncompetitive region. The failure of his journeys in November 1769 with Chawchinahaw and in February 1770 with Conne-e-queuee could have been caused by the previous period of starvation and sickness. Chawchinahaw's party was in want of provisions and some of the natives were still very sickly in early November 1769 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/77, folio 7). They were unprepared to initiate a lengthy expedition into the interior.

Matonabbee was chosen to lead Hearne in December 1770. Norton had originally planned to send Idosliazer as guide for the expedition, but with his death Matonabbee was selected for several reasons. Matonabbee had established himself as middleman with the "...Dog Rib; Strong Bow [also Dogrib]
### TABLE 9

**THE TRADE OF CHURCHILL**

**1761 - 1788**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Furs etc. Taking</th>
<th>Goods Traded</th>
<th>Overplus</th>
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<td>7,042</td>
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<td>14,505</td>
<td>10,509</td>
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<td>1785-86</td>
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<td>1786-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>1787-88</td>
<td>6,423</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94 - 1776-1777

*rounded off to nearest whole number

Source: Account Books, HBC Arch., B. 42/d/41-65
Me-tas-ke-ma-ga-nakṣ [indecipherable] & the far Copper Indians; and has Instructed them in the art of catching Furrs, which before they only used to get no more than for Cloathing their Children and making Sox for their feet &c..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/80, folio 22). Matonabbee and another leader named Cubie led a large following of more than 400 natives (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/16, folio 4; HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 16). The importance of their trade at Churchill was noted as early as 1763 (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/9, folio 6). By 1763, Matonabbee had already achieved considerable prestige and influence by freeing Captain Keelshies from the Athabasca Cree and by establishing peace between the Cree and Canadian Athapaskans (Glover, 1962:225-226). His trade and middleman position was to figure prominently in the affairs of Churchill during the 1770s.

Hearne's expedition did serve to stimulate Northern Indian trade during 1771-1772. Over 400 Northern Indians arrived with furs in the spring of 1772. Their furs and those of 116 canoes of trading Cree produced the trade of 20,043 Made Beaver, the largest returns since 1738-1739 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/83). Once Hearne's up-country trading contacts were completed, it seemed time for a marked increase in profits. By 1773, however, the number of Company interior competitors from Montreal was becoming overwhelming. That year, Churchill's Cree traded the major proportion of their furs with a "Pedlar" named "La-Swan" (perhaps, Francois le Blanc or Saswe) (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/86, folio 59). The diminishing returns during 1774-1776 compelled Hearne to develop "...a new method which is that of sending my Northern Indians inland to trade the Furrs from the Athapuscow [Cree] Indians which plan has already so far exceeded my most sanguine expectations that I now send the Company 12685 Made Beaver..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 43).
Hearne fitted out Matonabbee for that purpose (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 15). Matonabbee was instrumental in bringing a party of over 300 Chipewyan men, women, and children to Churchill on November 4, 1776 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 8). This was the largest party of Chipewyan arriving as a unit during the eighteenth century and was certainly an important trading party. It is apparent, though, from the returns of subsequent years that Hearne's plan was not successful, for even Matonabbee was to trade with the Pedlars. In 1779, Peter Pond returned from Athabasca country to Cumberland House to tell William Walker how he had traded "...with the Northward Indians that Mr. Samuel Hearnewas along with Mit' tee' na' pew and his gang" (Rich and Johnson, 1952:6). The consequences of this new trade rivalry inaugurated the Early Fur Trade Era, involving the visitations of Europeans to Northern Athapaskan territory. Settlement by Euro-Canadians on Athapaskan lands during the 1770s marked the onset of the Historic Period for the Canadian Athapaskans and the end of the Protohistoric Period.

Significant inroads had been made by the Montreal traders into the exclusive Indirect and Middleman Trade regions of Churchill by the late 1770s. The Cree no longer needed to travel the long distances to the bay, the new interior trading posts being more accessible. In fact, few Cree "Homeguard" Indians remained at Churchill after 1777. That year, Hearne observed that the Cree had "...for several years past so decreased by death and inter-marriage with other Indians which occasioned their leaving this place, that at present we can only muster thirteen hunters including every Boy Capable of lifting a gun..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/96, folio 38). It was the Northern Indians who brought in the majority of furs and provisions throughout the 1770s and early 1780s. But even their activities were to be further inter-
ruptured by two events in 1781-1782.

One was that pitiable disaster, the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782: This scourge swept eastwards and northwards across North America (Lamb, 1970: 74-76). Hearne estimated that the epidemic killed nine-tenths of the Chipewyan. Although his estimate may be high, the epidemic had more than a fifty percent mortality rate at Churchill. In December 1783, Hearne noted that "Sickness and famine has made such havock amongst my home Indians during my absence that out of 69 that I left all well only 32 is around here safe, amongst whom there is but 6 men & Boys that can lift a gun, the Remainder being all women and Children" (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/26). In May 1784, four incoming Northern Indians informed Hearne that the famous Northern Leader, Matonabbee, and most

...of the prinsaple Northern Indians are all dead together with that valuable tribe of Southern Indians called the Athapuscw Indians, for tho they seldom of late, have come to any of the Company's forts themselves, yet they procured the greatest part of the furs that the Northern Indians used formally to bring to this place, and was for more than 10 years past, at least 7/8 of the whole trade.... (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/103, folio 25)

Needless to say, the epidemic proved disastrous to the fur trade in general. The Pedlars on the Athabasca River in 1782-1783 brought out only seven packages of beaver (Morton, 1939:334). While the returns at Churchill in 1783-1784 were but 1,019 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/103).

The other development, which was to work against Churchill's trade network, was the capture and burning of this post in 1782 by the French admiral, Jean Francois Galaup Comte de la Perouse. The deplorable result was that the Chipewyan were without the means of trading and securing sustenance at the height of the epidemic. Profound changes had occurred in the Chipewyan way of life over the decades before the epidemic and capture of Churchill.
The trade musket had virtually eliminated the bow. Hearne reported to Marquis de la Jalle, his captor, that the Indians were "...utterly dependent on their annual trade with the Europeans. It had become an absolute necessity to them, they had lost the art of hunting with the bow and arrow..." (Rich, 1959:87). His comments were based on the day-to-day observations of the Northern Indians. Often the natives were left in dire straits for lack of ammunition. An example of this dependency is evident in his November 15, 1776 report when Hearne noted that "...10 more Northern Indian came in with a few furrs and were almost Starv'd for want of ammunition..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 9). There are earlier reports by Ferdinand Jacobs in November 1760 indicating their dependency as well (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/55, folio 14):

...6 Northern Indian men came here to Stay, they tell me they want go from the Factory having no Guns nor ammition to Support themselves, I shall therefore Employ them in Shooting Partridge & doing other Labour ....

It is difficult to determine the effect of Churchill's closure during 1782. Doubtless it had a profound effect since those Indians who were dependent upon trade goods would either have suffered extreme deprivation or died.

In a letter to Humphrey Martin on July 1, 1784, Hearne reported that "...when the famous Leader Matonabbee heard that Prince of Wale's Fort was taken & destroyed by the French, he hung himself" (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/26, folio 16). He also noted that most of the other leaders among the Northern Indians were dead, and many others through necessity had gone to the Pedlars. It seems more likely that Matonabbee died from smallpox, although his death as reported by Hearne was an ending befitting a most "humble" and "obedient" servant of the Company. Leaders such as Keelshies, Heosthee, Thlew-sa-nellie, and the "rogue" Chawchinahaw were not heard of again, and they, most likely,
succumbed to the epidemic. Most of the "carriers," as Hearne (Glover, 1962: 51-52) described them, abandoned their trip to Churchill, "...which they frequently run great risques of being starved to death in their way thither and back" (1962:51-52). Hearne strove to revitalize the trade during his remaining seasons at Churchill. In 1787, he traded with four Northern Indian men and their wives, and gave them "...some presents to carry to some principal Leaders of the Northern Indians who are now beginning to drain out from the Athapuscow Country in order to renew their Trade with this factory..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/108, folio 25). One large party of sixty Northern Indians did appear the next season, but brought only three white fox furs and four deer skins. It was their intention to hunt for the post. Several other groups also arrived bringing only about 1,000 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/110). Although the traders expended a large quantity of goods as gifts from 1786 to 1789 to induce the Northern Indians to bring in their trade, the annual trade shrivelled from its normal 14,000 Made Beaver or so in the 1770s to a mere 3,390 5/6 Made Beaver in 1790 (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/114, folio 2a). Nevertheless, the patterns created by the Company's trade throughout the Protohistoric Period had established permanent influences over several generations of Canadian Athapaskans. Although the monopoly of the Northern Indian trade was not regained following the smallpox epidemic and seizure of Churchill, the Indians continued to depend upon and to trade with the opposition who were establishing themselves in the vast hinterland occupied by the Canadian Athapaskans, a situation that would lead to a long period of bitter rivalry.
Recapitulation

The discussion so far has dealt with the Protohistoric Canadian Athapas-
kans. It has focused on the developing spatial structure around the Bay
posts, especially Churchill. The data support the view that Churchill had a
distinctive spatial structure of Local, Middleman, and Indirect Trade Areas
during this period. The Local Trade Area began to develop as early as 1723,
but was interrupted by intertribal warfare. Following the termination of
hostilities in 1729, it was Hudson's Bay Company policy to advise at least
one large group of Chipewyan to draw nearer to Churchill. An increasing
number of Chipewyan served in the capacity of hunter, trapper, and trader for
the post from the 1730s on through the Protohistoric Period.

The Middleman and Indirect Trade Areas emerged much earlier than the
Local Trade Area. The Cree, who controlled the distribution of European trade
goods and the supply of furs for the Bay posts after 1670 (Ray, 1974:13),
became the Indian trade specialists—the middlemen. Although they trapped
some of the furs, the majority of their furs came through trade with more
distant Indians. So beyond the Middleman Trade Area there was the Indirect
Trade Area where Indians obtained all their trading goods through the middle-
men. It is likely that the Chipewyan occupied an Indirect Trade Area before
1680, and the historic communiqué of May 21, 1680 to Captain Thomas Draper
(Rich, 1948:14). It is also likely that the Yellowknife and Dogrib were in
a similar position by 1689 (Kelsey, 1929:25; Rich, 1958:255, 1959:47; Kenney,
1932:51). The period of protracted warfare between 1689-1715 temporarily
disrupted the developing spatial structure. For the Canadian Athapaskans,
intertribal conflict resulted in considerable bloodshed and in the loss of
access to York Factory, its trade routes, and the fur-bearing grounds at the
head of the Churchill River, stretching as far west as Lake Athabasca. The successful mediation by Captain Knight, while at York Factory during 1714-1717, helped to re-establish the former trading network. By 1720, the Cree were again middlemen to Canadian Athapaskan populations in the Athabasca Lake region. This relationship, as we will see in the following chapter, was to remain virtually unchanged until 1759-1764 when intertribal warfare erupted, causing major man-land reorientations. To the north, Chipewyan groups were in direct contact with Churchill by 1720. While it is difficult to determine the extent of intratribal and intertribal Middleman and Indirect Trade contacts, they, no doubt, existed as they did elsewhere (Ray, 1974:51-71; Heindenreich and Ray, 1976:34-37; Ray, 1978:26-34). By 1721, the Chipewyan acted as middlemen to the Yellowknife. They also had a similar relationship with the Dogrib before 1760. This relationship, which is discussed elsewhere, lasted until the 1790s when opposition companies established posts north of Great Slave Lake. These Chipewyan middlemen were even instructed by Samuel Hearne in 1776 to trade furs from the former Athapuscow (Cree) middlemen. This class of middlemen or trading specialists among the Chipewyan denotes, in part, the great changes in Canadian Athapaskan cultures as they became more and more dependent on European trade goods and the trading post. Indeed, significant cultural change had taken place by the time the Local Trade Era and Historic Period began after 1769.

In short, the conclusions reached in this discussion of the Protohistoric Canadian Athapaskans are contrary to those proposed by Helm, et al. (1975); Gillespie (1975, 1976); and Smith (1975, 1976a, 1978). We can not assume, as Smith does (1975:422), that changes in Chipewyan culture were minimal at the time of Hearne's journey. The period from about 1689 to 1769 can be con-
sidered one of profound change in the aboriginal way of life. The Canadian Athapaskans were fully immersed within an Indirect, Middleman, or Local Trade network by the 1760s, long before Hearne's trek to the Coppermine. Aboriginal subsistence patterns had been altered by fur trade induced economic and social relationships before the onset of the Historic Period.
NOTES

1. Captain Thomas Draper was instructed on May 21, 1680 in the "...manner how to Deale with, the Northerne Indians" (Rich, 1948:14). Prior contacts with Company personnel suggested that "...those Northern Indians are more rude & barbarous than those where wee are already settled, Wherefore you must use the greater circumspection, that they be not encouraged by your remissnesse to make any attempts upon you. But be sure you deal justly wth. them, and let no body offer them any ill usage to provoke their revenge" (Rich, 1948:14).

2. In 1689, the vessel, Northwest Fox, was sent north of Churchill to construct a post in the hope of bringing "...down the 'Dogsides [or Dogrib] to trade" (Rich, 1958:255). Also in 1689, an expedition under Henry Kelsey set out to "...discover & Endeavor to bring to a Commerce ye northern Indians Inhabiting to ye Northward of Curchill River & also ye dogside nation" (1929:25). Although Dogside is considered by Gillespie (1975:355) to be a general name for the Chipewyan, it is evident that the fur traders clearly distinguished differences among the Northern (Chipewyan) and Dogside (Dogrib) peoples by 1689 (Rich, 1958: 255, 1959:47). The Yellowknife or Copper Indians were known before Captain Knight's arrival at York Factory (Kenney, 1932:63-64). The Northern Indian Strangers (Slave and/or Beaver) from the area of Lake Athabasca were not mentioned at this early date although parties of Strangers had visited York Factory before 1717. Captain James Knight, Governor of York Factory, noticed that there was a dialect difference between the Chipewyan and Northern Indian Strangers (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 28). This early observation is supported by the later observation of Richard Norton, Governor of Fort Churchill. He noted on June 18, 1723 that "...the Language of those Strangers being very Much like our Northern Indians that Comes here to trade" (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/3, folio 28).

3. The "homeguard" Indians were local trappers and, often, they were post provisioners, guides, and messengers. They were the first to arrive at the post, usually toward the end of April. The "Half Home" Indians were the next to arrive, then the more distant "trading" Indians. The latter arrived toward the end of May through the first week or so of July.

4. The dependence on and the effectiveness of firearms for the Northern Athapaskans before the introduction of breechloading guns in the nineteenth century has been questioned (VanStone, 1976:205; Krech, 1976:218-219; Slobodin, 1962:31; Gillespie, 1976:10; Smith, 1975:422; Sharp, 1977a:39; Alexander, per corr.). Between 1650 and 1850, the main aim of designers of the flintlock musket was to increase the reliability and rate of fire. Although improvement in accuracy and range was of secondary importance, it should be indicated that the theoretical effectiveness of musket fire was about 40 to 53 percent at 100 yards, and 18 to 30 percent at 200 yards. The higher percentage would represent trained
soldiers while the low percentage was ordinary soldiers (Hughes, 1975: 26-27). Thus, the maximum effective range was between 100 and 200 yards (1975:11). This would exceed the potential effectiveness of a bow and arrow. It was a very short-ranged weapon with a "stopping power" that was formidable. Hughes (1975:11) described how one contemporary writer put it, "it would stop a bison in its tracks; and a man hit by it would almost invariably have been incapacitated if not killed" at range between 100 and 200 yards. This single shot weapon was capable of two or three shots a minute, and I estimate that in the Subarctic between 25-35 percent of the shots misfired, compared to 15 percent and 25 percent under dry conditions (Hughes, 1975:165). The degree of dependence upon firearms by the natives is difficult to assess. Although when we look at the number of furs and the amount of labor input required to purchase guns, ammunition, and other related items, it is obvious that these trade items had an effect on native culture. In sum, we cannot dismiss the effectiveness and significance of firearms to the native hunters or to Europeans; otherwise, this innovation would never have been adopted, and we would still be using bows and arrows, pikes, and bayonets.

5. These peoples would include the Savannah or Maskegons or Swampy Cree, the Assiniboine, the Oaskquiasquamais or Saulteaux, the Sioux, as well as the Dogrib and Chipewyan.

6. The Cree had established themselves as Home Indians prior to 1716-1717. From 1716-1717 onward in time, their local trade activities were virtually uninterrupted.

7. The gum or pitch was used by nineteenth century fur traders for several purposes. The Inspecting Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, W.J. Christie, noted in his October 2, 1872 journal that this "...natural tar or petroleum is used in pitching the boats of Athabasca and Mackenzie fur District" (Saskatchewan Archives-Regina). It was also used to tar house roofs.

8. The "great water" would be Lake Michinipi, later known as Reindeer Lake. The terms might also be general ones for the upper Churchill River, upstream from its confluence with the Reindeer River (Ray, 1974:70).

9. The Slave and Beaver will be identified in the next chapter as those groups occupying the area in the vicinity of Lake Athabasca.

10. According to La Potherie (Tyrrell, 1931:265), the Attimosprquias or Attimospiquais and the Tete Plat or Plascotez de Chiens means "dog's rib." Tyrrell (1931:265n) suggests that La Potherie's description refers to all the northern Chippewans [Chipewyan] who live between the northwest coast of Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie River. However, other historians (Rich, 1958:255, 1959:47; Kenney, 1932:51) have noted that the traders clearly distinguished differences among the Northern, Copper, and Dogside peoples by 1689. We should not, therefore, classify both groups as one. La Potherie mentions in his account (1696-1697) that there had been no trade with the Dogrib yet because they were at
war with the Cree. The Chipewyan or Northern Indians had already established some trade with the English and French by this time.

11. It is possible that the marten may have been trapped before warfare broke out. Beaver returns would have been directly affected since they are trapped in the spring.

12. It is difficult to determine the precise number of Chipewyan who remained at the post as provisioners. The April 22, 1728 journal entry indicates two Northern Indians and their wives arrived and stayed on to hunt geese. They reported another large party was coming (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/8).

13. Gillespie's assumptions (1975:366) were based on one account of a party of fifteen Chipewyan who arrived during the 1750 season after thirteen days' journey to purchase one pound of powder and a hatchet and ice chisel each. There are a number of other factors to be considered for the season 1750-1751. First, Joseph Isbister, the Chief Factor, was having difficulties with his men because they were intercepting the Indian trade. Second, seven canoes of French Pedlars had also intercepted the trade of the Cree middlemen and trappers. Third, between 1749 and 1751 both the Cree and the Chipewyan were affected by starvation and disease, probably influenza (the "Fluxe"). Finally, we have to account for other groups such as "...16 Northern Indians arrive here with some goods to trade—sent to hunt..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/36).

14. The fur returns fluctuate in the absence of competition, too. I have already noted the influence of weather conditions and epidemics. Marten returns were, no doubt, affected by the cyclical nature of hare populations, as well as other predator returns.

15. It appears that the Chipewyan had become dependent upon guns, ammunition, knives, axes, and so forth. Jacobs noted particulars on this dependency in his November 1760 report when he wrote (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/55, folio 14):

   ...6 Northern Indian men came here to Stay, they tell me they want to go from the Factory having no Guns nor Ammunition to support themselves, I shall therefore Employ them in Shooting Partridge & doing other Labour....

While most of the goods listed can be designated as luxury goods, it should be indicated that the Chipewyan had significantly altered their aboriginal economic system toward harvesting furs for trade.

16. The fact that the Cree had been at war with the Dogrib during the periods 1696-1713 and 1725-1727 may account for their not having established direct trade with the Hudson's Bay Company by 1764.

17. Smith (1976c:86) has indicated that before 1769-1772, when Hearne explored the interior, European impact had been limited and there is no
evidence of epidemic disease or other factors which could have caused widespread disorganization. The Chipewyan were somewhat disorganized by disease for a period of two years before Hearne's journey. There were other epidemics mentioned in the text above.

18.- Fur returns continued to be affected by cyclical resource failure. For instance, resources were so scarce that Hearne remarked that it was the worst he had ever experienced at Churchill (January, 1778), and "...A great number of our Northern Indians were Starv'd to death in the summer and fall..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/b/23, folio 4).
CHAPTER THREE

THE POSTCONTACT CANADIAN ATHAPASKANS: 
TRADE RIVALRIES AND CHANGING TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES

This chapter will concentrate on the Canadian Athapaskans—the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Slave, Hare, Beaver, and Sekani—during the period roughly between 1680 and 1860 when these peoples became immersed in the fur trade. It was during the early part of this period that trade rivalries, warfare, and changing tribal territorial boundaries occurred. Analysis of historical events of the period is undertaken in order to weigh the effects of contact in order to determine persistence and change in Canadian Athapaskan culture.

Within the past few years, several re-evaluations have been made of aboriginal territorial boundaries separating contiguous Algonkian and Canadian Athapaskan groups. Particularly notable among these studies are Beryl Gillespie's (1975, 1976) discussion of the territorial expansion of the Chipewyan and James Smith's (1976a) studies of the Cree. Both scholars have attempted to demonstrate through the use of published and archival records that Cree groups were the aboriginal inhabitants of the Churchill River drainage system as far west as Lake Athabasca and that the Athapaskan people, the Chipewyan, were the intruders into Cree territory as a result of the fur trade. Gillespie (1976:10) has asserted that the "...anthropological literature has erroneously described the Cree peoples as pushing northward at the beginning of the fur trade although all the historical evidence indicates a very different situation," while Smith (1976a:415) has suggested that it
was the name "Cree" that was moving westward with the traders. Regarding Cree expansion into the Peace River and Lake Athabasca region, Gillespie (1975:354) has expressed her doubts by suggesting that if the "...Cree were 18th century invaders of the Athabasca Lake region, due to fur trade factors, it is, as yet, an invasion without historical or archaeological evidence." In essence, both scholars argue that Cree intrusions into Canadian Athapaskan territory were not as extensive as had been formerly believed (see Fig. 9). This lack of a significant re-orientation of Athapaskan and Algonkian man-land relationships specifically supports their claim for historic continuity in Cree and Chipewyan culture. In general, historical continuity has broad theoretical implications for models of all the Canadian Athapaskan indigenous populations.

Their position is in contrast to the earlier views of Hlady (1960:41), Hodge (1906:276), Janes (1973:41), Jenness (1932:385), Petitot (1883:650), VanStone (1965:6), and others that the aboriginal Chipewyan occupied the territory north of Lake Athabasca and Cree Lake, south along the Churchill River, west to the Peace River region, and east to Hudson Bay. The fluctuations in Chipewyan boundaries have been attributed to the gun-bearing Cree who were supposed to have forced the Chipewyan northward toward the shores of Great Slave Lake and into the surrounding taiga-tundra region. Later, the Chipewyan gradually regained their former territories as their involvement in the fur trade intensified during the direct contact period (see Fig. 10).

A re-examination of the historical evidence sheds doubt on Gillespie's and Smith's recent views by showing a number of fundamental errors in their interpretation of the historical data related to their re-evaluation of con-
tiguous Algonkian and Athapaskan boundaries. Both the published and archival evidence and interpretations relating to all the Canadian Athapaskan groups are reviewed, and then both the linguistic and archaeological data and interpretations of aboriginal placement and migrations are examined. The employment of these data will show that, contrary to Gillespie's and Smith's interpretation, Algonkian movements did, indeed, involve significant accretions of Canadian Athapaskan territory as well as large scale displacements of their population by force. This is a conclusion similar to that reached by an earlier generation of prominent historians and anthropologists (Morton, 1939:11-12; Innis, 1930:202-203; Jenness, 1932:254; Mandelbaum, 1967:6; Secoy, 1953:42-43).

This discussion will also show that traditional assumptions concerning aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan boundaries are based upon a standardized ethnographic error created by the collapsing of history into the ethnographic present and that the Chipewyan occupied the barren grounds northeast of Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes and east to southern Keewatin until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The early expansion of their eastern and southeastern trapping and trading area was accompanied with considerable bloodshed. The later expansion southward and southwestward was accompanied only by minor outbreaks of hostility and complaints of trespass, but no real warfare. Warfare was a feature of Cree expansion into the Peace River and Lake Athabasca region, resulting in a displacement of the Beaver, Sekani, Slave, Dogrib, and Hare populations from their precontact habitat in the vicinity of present-day Wood Buffalo Park.

A detailed discussion of archaeological, linguistic, ethnographic, and historical data on these subjects will afford a glimpse into the indirect and
direct contact period, and it will attempt to identify historical continuity and change and to propose an interpretation that seems generally to fit the facts. It is first necessary, however, to determine the early location and distribution of the Canadian Athapaskans, including the present-day groups known as the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Slave, Hare, Beaver, and Sekani.

Warfare, Trade and Changing Territorial Boundaries During the Protohistoric Period

The Chipewyan and Yellowknife

It was the Chipewyan ("Pointed Skins") or Northern Indians who were the first Athapaskan group to make contact with Europeans before the 1680s along Hudson Bay (Rich, 1948:14, 35; Rich, 1958:255; see Chapter Two, p. 117n; HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1-3, passim). They have been described as the largest tribe of Athapaskans and the most widely distributed to the west and northwest of Hudson Bay (Jenness, 1932:385; Gillespie and Helm, 1969:xxvii). Although Gillespie (1975:355) states that the first historical reference to any Athapaskans comes in the last decade of the seventeenth century, historical sources show that as early as May 21, 1680, instructions were sent out to Captain Thomas Draper to build a factory on New Severn (Churchill) River for trade with the Northern Indians. This historical reference, as suggested earlier, implies prior knowledge of and, perhaps, prior contacts with Athapaskan speaking peoples (see Chapter Two, p.117n). No post was established for the season 1680-1681 (Rich, 1948:14), but on the 15th of May 1682, instructions were sent to John Bridgar, Governor of Fort Nelson "...to penetrate into the country to make what discoveries you can, and to get an
Acquaintance and Commerce with the Indians there abts" (Rich, 1948:35). These included the Northern Indians.

Prior to the 1680s, it was Jens Munk, the Danish explorer, who was the first to report evidence of natives in the vicinity of Churchill where he wintered during 1619-1620. Traces of native encampments and trails were noted, although the natives made no attempt to trade or to make contact (Gosch, 1897b:23). The encampments suggest the presence of Caribou Eskimo (Rich, 1949:181). It was here that they procured wood for their boats and runners for their sleds (Gosch, 1897b:28-29).

After Munk's expedition, no further exploring expeditions visited the western side of Hudson Bay until 1631 when Captain Luke Foxe and Captain Thomas James both arrived in the area to explore a possible route for the trade of the East. Captain Foxe passed the mouth of Churchill River, but he did not enter. His landing in 1631 in the vicinity of where Fort Nelson was built a half century later suggests the presence of either Indians or Eskimos in the area. The signs included (Foxe, 1635:216):

...the frame of a tent standing which had lately been made, with the studdie of the fire, the haire of Deere, and bones of fowle, left here, ...we have seene no Salvage [savage] since I came, although I caused fires to burne night and day, but the woods are so thicke, as cannot be seene 12 score yards, so that none could come to us, but by water.

The occupancy of the Hayes River area is cleared up somewhat with Thomas Gorst's notes of a voyage aboard the Prince Rupert (under Capt. Zachariah Gilliam) in 1670 to Fort Nelson under the direction of Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, the man who had become Pierre Esprit Radisson's partner in the exploration of North America and one of the originators of the Hudson's Bay Company. Gorst, familiar with Algonkian cultures to the south, recorded details on what are mostly Cree occupation of the area. He notes (Nute,
There is a very fine Marsh land and great plenty of wood about a mile beyond the Marshes yet not very large. There were ye remains of some of ye Natives Wigwams and Sweating houses and some pieces of dressed beaver skins, and they supposed the indians had not long been gone from that place further southward or higher up into the country.

The sweat lodge was common in the eastern woodlands of Canada, and it was used by the Cree. Although several of the Athapaskan tribes used sweathouses, they were not frequent among the Chipewyan. There is no indication of Chipewyan along the coast of Hudson Bay during these early years of European exploration.

Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law, Medard Chouart des Groseilliers, working under the auspices of the English did initiate expeditions into Hudson Bay to procure furs in 1668 and 1669. The expeditions were a success and the government through Charles II granted "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" a charter on May 2, 1670 confirming to them the trade of Hudson Bay. The Company adopted the policy of maintaining permanent trading posts, known as "forts" or "factories," although it was 1682 before permanent posts were established beyond James Bay. A determined attempt to establish Fort Churchill was made in 1689. By then, the Cree or Home Indians, as they were called by the fur traders, were allies of the Company, and were entrenched as middlemen in the trade with the Chipewyan or Northern Indians whom they tried to keep from firsthand contact with the fur traders (Ray, 1974:13-14).

The French also were directly involved in both overland and maritime trade in the Bay. We can assume that these fur traders were drawing Indian trading parties from a vast territory shortly after 1670. Owing to French trade encirclement, the Hudson's Bay Company eventually constructed a post.
on the Churchill River (see Fig. 3), which was to bring the Indians down to trade, thereby avoiding the need to take the company's trade inland (Rich, 1958:255, 434-435; HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 26-28). In 1689, the vessel, Northwest Fox, was sent north of Churchill to settle a new post in hope that the post would "...bring down the 'Dogsides' [Dogrib] to trade" (Rich, 1958: 255). The previous year, in June 1688, specific instructions were issued to Governor Geyer of York Fort that "...the Boy Henry Kelsey bee Sent to Churchill River with Thomas Savage because Wee are Informed hee is a very active Lad Delighting much in Indians Compa. Being never better pleased then when he is Travelling amongst then" (Kelsey, 1929:xxiv). It was not until late June 1689, that Kelsey's expedition set out to "...discover & Endeavour to bring/to a Commerce ye northern Indians Inhabiting to ye/Northward of Churchill River & also ye dogside Nation" (1929:25). The party was accompanied by a Northern Indian boy who was a Cree slave at Hayes River. Due to ice conditions the party made slow progress, and they were put ashore only some twenty leagues from Churchill. From there, they traveled about 125 miles northward. The expedition did not make contact with any Indians due to fear of the Eskimo by the slave boy. They returned to Churchill without being successful. The post had burned down during Kelsey's absence. After this rather abortive attempt to establish a post at the Churchill River in 1689, it was twenty-eight years later before an attempt was made to refound in 1717.

During the intervening period when the French held York Factory (1694-1714), the fur traders, Nicolas Jérémie (1926:20-21) and Claude Charles Le Roy de La Potherie (Tyrrell, 1931:265-266), both describe the hostile relations between the Cree and the Chipewyan and Dogrib. Athapaskan-Cree warfare
seems to be linked to Cree territorial expansion along the northern and northwestern frontiers between the upper Nelson River and as far as the head of the Churchill River. Warfare lasting over a period of several decades eventually took great toll of the Chipewyan and Dogrib populations, and resulted in Cree occupancy of portions of their territories after the 1720s. Any attempts of the Chipewyan and their congeners to establish trapping areas and trading contacts in this region were temporarily interrupted. This warfare and decimation of the population also must have altered their socio-cultural organization (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1-5, passim; see Chapter Two, p. 63).

When York Factory was regained by the English in 1714, Captain James Knight was given authority to rebuild the northern factories and to expand the fur trade. Knight's plans were influenced by several motives, among them the desire to establish trade with the Northern natives and with the Eskimo whose southern boundary extended to the Churchill River. An essential requirement for this plan was to resolve existing conflicts between Cree and Athapaskans. The Cree were equipped with firearms and had the upper hand over any Northern Indians who attempted to approach the English trading posts on the bay shore, and, as a result, Northern groups remained out of range of regular European contact through fear of Cree hostility. As noted in the previous chapter, Knight reported in 1715-1716 that as many as 6,000 men had been killed along the Cree-Chipewyan boundary, most of the dead being Chipewyan (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 26-28). Although the figures are with little doubt exaggerated, warfare, nevertheless, would have had a devastating impact upon aboriginal Chipewyan culture. Depopulation from warfare alone would shed doubt on Smith's claim (1975:422) that Chipewyan
cultural change from the aboriginal condition was minimal at the time of Hearne's historic journey to their territory in 1770-1771 (see Chapter Two, p. 100).

Determined to stop hostilities, Knight convinced about 150 Home Indians or Cree that they should make a peace mission to Northern Indian territory in June 1715. Accompanied by a Chipewyan woman captive (Thanadelthur or ''marten shake,'' known also as the ''Slave woman'') and William Stuart, a company trader who spoke Cree, the party left York Factory with the instructions to look for furs, make peace, and above all ''...to make a Strict Enquiry abt. there Mineralls...if you find any Mineralls amongst them You must seem Indifferent not letting them know nor the Indians as goes with You as it is of any Value but to bring back some of Every Sort you see'' (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, folio 43-44). The latter motive actually overrode Knight's ambition to expand the fur trade (Kenney, 1932:63-65).

The peace party moved slowly from Hayes River toward Churchill, since the natives lacked the personal conviction to make peace. They did not reach Churchill until late August. An outbreak of sickness had increased the party's dilatoriness. From Churchill they headed into the barren grounds along a course that took them northwest into the interior. News of their progress did not reach York Factory until April 22; 1716, when a letter to the Governor dated October 6, 1715 arrived. It described a rather grim picture of sickness, famine, and near death. The party had broken up into small groups, some of which returned to York Factory bringing the distressing news. The letter describing conditions about 100 miles west of Churchill reported that the party was ''...in a Starving Condition at this time Wee still push on in our Journey The Captain is willing to go though but afraid
that wee shall gett no provisions Wee have eat nothing this 8 days I do not think as I shall see you any more but I have a good heart" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 23). Two bands continued until they reached wooded country on the far side of the barren grounds where "beasts" were plentiful. Turning more to the westward, one of the bands accompanied by Stuart and Thanadelthur, followed tracks in the snow and came across the bodies of nine Northern Indians killed by the other band of Cree. Over the tensions of a counter-attack, the party was ready to fall back to York. Stuart and the Slave woman persuaded them to remain in camp for ten days while the woman made contact with her countrymen. On the tenth day, the woman returned with 160 Northern Indian men. After the killing of the nine Indians was explained, the Cree and Chipewyan smoked the peace pipe, exchanged gifts and hostages, and discussed the trapping and processing of furs for trade at Churchill (Kenney, 1932:55-56).

The embassywintered in the north and returned in March 1716 to York Fort, arriving in May after a journey of about sixty days (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 31). Knight's desire for the "Yellow Mettle" was the subject of disappointment, since Stuart's informants indicated that it came from a land farther west, suggesting that the party had not reached the territory of the Yellowknife.

Stuart estimated that his party had been 1,000 miles from the factory and in latitude 67°N when they met the Northern Indians, but Knight suspected that the distance was 600 miles and the latitude about 63° to 65°N. The historian, Arthur S. Morton, however, has estimated (1939:133) that Stuart traveled 700 miles inland, east of Slave River and south of Great Slave Lake into the wooded country. Stuart described this area as "...a very Plentifull
Country for Beasts there they found the tracks of the Indians" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 29). The time of Stuart's arrival in this area would have been approximately late September or early January when the caribou had completed their annual wintering migration southward into the woodlands. The eastern protocontact boundary of the Northern Indians may have been located on the caribou crossing locations, which are situated halfway between the Thelon River and the Keewatin-Manitoba border, where the Kazan and Dubawnt River systems present hydrographic barriers to caribou movement. Thus, the findings of Stuart's expedition may have served to demark the eastern protocontact boundary between Chipewyan and Cree (see Fig. 11). The tracks of scattered hunting groups were evident and the Slave woman traveled for several days before she was able to find a sizeable group of above 400 of her countrymen who had gathered for the revenge of their dead (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2, folio 27). With the establishment of Fort Churchill in 1717, the Chipewyan began to expand their territory eastward across the barrens to Hudson Bay while forcing the Eskimo to the coast, then northward to Whale Cove (Robson, 1752:63-64). It was Captain Knight's intention that the Churchill River post should be reserved for trade with the Northern Indians (Kenney, 1932:90).

This brings us to the subject of the eastern protocontact boundaries and fur trade rivalries. With the establishment of a factory at Churchill in 1717, it was the policy of the Company to supply the Northern Indians "...with Goods, that is, Guns & Ammunition" (Kenney, 1932:59). The Chipewyan were trained in the use of firearms by the traders (Kenney, 1932:59). The Chipewyan needed guns for defense against the Cree and for pushing the Eskimo northward while expanding their boundaries east to Hudson Bay for
FIGURE 11

PRECONTACT DISTRIBUTION: CHIPEWYAN FUR TRADE EXPANSION
(Yerbury, 1980)
trade purposes. At one point Knight considered the Eskimo as the aggressors and set up palisades commanded by four bastions to protect his post (Kenney, 1932:90; Rich, 1958:443).

Indian and Eskimo hostility had intensified beginning about 1700 (Kenney, 1932:59; Robson, 1752:63-64). The general movement of Chipewyan across southern Keewatin displaced the Eskimo eastward and northward, but not without a struggle (Robson, 1752:64). As late as 1717, the southern boundary of the Eskimo was at Churchill. Knight observed this when he first arrived at Churchill. He recorded (Kenney, 1932:115-116):

...upon the Outer point of the River as wee came in abundance of Iskemays [Eskimo] Tents Standing that it looked like a Town; & our people as put up ye Beacon sayth that they be very Large Tents, bigg Enough to hold 50 people;/ And that thare Tents was made so thick with turf, Dirt & Driftwood that they believe they had Wintered thare as our Northern Indians did meet with; & that their Could not be less than 3 or 400 of them by their Tents & Warehouses, finding above 200 of the Latter where they had kept thare Provisions, they being built with Stones & Driftwood. & that they See the Place Where they had built thare Great boats....

During July 1717, a party of Northern Indians was ambushed along the Churchill River by the Eskimo who killed six members. The survivors retreated to the south and were plundered by a band of "Home" Indians. The situation at Fort Churchill stabilized in later years as the Eskimo shifted northward and as the Cree expanded westward. By 1720, the Eskimo were finally driven away to the northward, "...so that a tract of land of more than three hundred miles extent from north to south, lies almost waste, without trade and without inhabitants" (Robson, 1752:62-64). Chipewyan territory now included the tundra-taiga region in Keewatin extending to Hudson Bay (see Fig. 10).
Protocontact Boundaries and Fur Trade Rivalries

There is no evidence to support the traditional view held by Hlady (1960: 41), Hodge (1906:276), Janes (1973:41), Jenness (1932:385), Petitot (1883: 650), and VanStone (1965:6) that prior to this displacement the Chipewyan occupied territory in Keewatin extending to Hudson Bay. Nor does the early contact information on the location and distribution of the Chipewyan agree with the traditional idea that prior to this displacement, the Chipewyan inhabited the region north of Lake Athabasca and Cree Lake, south along the Churchill River, and west to the Peace River area. The traditional view is that the Cree displaced the Chipewyan northward toward the shores of Great Slave Lake and into the barren ground, but ethnohistorical data suggest that this is a standardized ethnographic error and that the Cree only shifted westward during the 1720s and later, according to the vicissitudes of the fur trade (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1-5, passim). Armed with guns and desiring furs, they moved out gradually into the Prairies to find fresh fur trapping areas and to expand their middleman positions (Rich, 1958:436; Ray, 1974: 21-23), and by the 1730s some of the Cree were permanent Plain dwellers (Bishop, 1975:159-161). They soon became an important influence north of Lake Athabasca and in the Peace River regions where they invaded the area inhabited by the Beaver, Slave, Dogrib, and Hare. The Cree did keep the Chipewyan in their precontact territory, the barren grounds, northeast of Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes and east to southern Keewatin until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Chipewyan were not displaced northward into this area.

This also brings into question Smith's (1976a:415) and Gillespie's (1976:16) doubts concerning Cree expansion westward and northward. Gillespie
I (1976:10) has stated that the "...anthropological literature has erroneously described the Cree peoples as pushing northward at the beginning of the fur trade although all the historical evidence indicates a very different situation," while Smith (1976a:415) has suggested that it was the name "Cree" that was moving westward with the traders. Recent archaeological surveys of Lake Athabasca by Wright (1975:142) indicate that there is no evidence for the prehistoric presence of the Cree. Even on Black Lake to the east, the Cree occupation appears to have been late and weak. The principle expansion of Cree territory after 1715 seems to have been between Reindeer Lake and Lake Athabasca (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1-5, passim; Dobbs, 1745:44; Burpee, 1907:307-361; Hearne, 1971:348-357; Rich, 1949:5n, 1958:436; Ray, 1974:22). For instance, Henry Kelsey's 1717 journal suggests that the Cree-Athapaskan boundary was east of Lake Athabasca and the Athapaskans were "...so fearful that altho...they promised to come here [York] with him [Swan] which they did tell they came in the borders of this peoples [Cree] County but all the persuasion he could use he could not gett them any further..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/5, folio 52; also see Lamb, 1970:249). The demands of the fur trade entailed intensive competition between the Cree and Canadian Athapaskans over trading and trapping areas.

The ethnohistorical evidence suggests that the aboriginal Chipewyan were an edge-of-the-forest people. They inhabited the barren grounds during the summer exploiting the caribou, fish, and waterfowl. In the winter, they returned to the forest-tundra zone where they continued to hunt scattered droves of caribou and the moose as well as small game. Historical descriptions of their aboriginal habitat portray it as a rich life-sustaining environment. Samuel Hearne, who explored the region in 1771, noted in March
1771 that at this time, a number of Chipewyan still "...live generally in a state of plenty, and, in truth, the most independent also" (1971:82) and are "...seldom exposed to the griping hand of famine, so frequently felt by those who are called the annual traders" (1971:82). Their employment of the caribou surround or pound was an aboriginal technique of hunting which was so "...successful, that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter; and when the Spring advances, both the deer and the Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren..." (1971:80). This type of subsistence pursuit was not profitable to the fur trade companies (1971:80-81).

However, as trapping took hold it was necessary for Indians to move into the northwestern transition forest zone to exploit fur-bearing animals (Hearne, 1971:80-81, 320-322). The general change in subsistence patterns from hunting pursuits to intensive trapping activities in an area away from the caribou crossings brought a growing dependence upon the traders (Rich, 1949:177, 312, 1959:87-88; Hearne, 1971:320-322). It was a fur company policy to supply them with food in the early years of the trade (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/18; Rich, 1938:372). By the 1790s and until 1852, pemmican was the primary provision obtained from the provision posts on the Plains of Saskatchewan and an area along the Athabasca and Peace Rivers (Morton, 1939:347; Innis, 1950:302). Life in the northwestern transition zone was characterized by frequent periods of starvation for those Chipewyan who became dependent on the fur trade. The journals (Tyrrell, 1934:90, 359-360, 540; HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1, folio 16, 36) of fur trade personnel such as Joseph and Thomas Frobisher (1775), Philip Turner (1790-1792), Malcolm Ross (1790-1792),...
Peter Fidler (1792) and others describe in detail the Chipewyan's loss of self-sufficiency and the periodic famines among them. For example, Malcom Ross noted in his April 5, 1890 journal that (HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1, folio 17):

...2 of the Indian men [Chipewyan] & their Families that arrived the first Inst went of and say they intend going to Churchill the next year, with their next winters Hunt: for all this years Labour, they have hardly so much ammunition as will keep them one month in the Summer, I gave them a little Tobacco and ammunition for which they was Very thankful....

And, Peter Fidler (Tyrrell, 1934:540) also noted on January 30, 1792 that a:

...Jipewyan came here from the Big Island he slept 2 nights in coming from thence he has left his Family there & some others They are very near dead some of them thro hungar he is come to get victuals & to return tomorrow....

At the beginning of the nineteenth century and later, three groups of Northern Indians can be defined: the Chipewyans in the taiga-tundra zone west of Hudson Bay (Etoen-eldili-dene or Caribou Eaters), the Yellowknife in the taiga-tundra between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes and north to Musk-ox Lake (Back, 1836:232), and the Mountainees (Les Montagnais). The Yellowknife were considered by the Hudson's Bay Company officials at Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake to be the most indolent set of Indians in the Athabasca District, living on the swarms of caribou which inhabited their country and remaining quite independent of the fur traders (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/4, folio 30). It was not until 1823 that the Company was able to influence the Yellowknives to pass the summer trapping beaver in the vicinity of old Fort George, a former Northwest Company post on the strait at the outlet of Great Slave Lake. It was company policy to persuade the Yellowknives to move from their lands to this unoccupied trapping territory so as to reap some good from their labors (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/4, folio 30). The
population of Yellowknives on May 20, 1823, amounted to 192 people "...viz 48 men, 51 women, 49 Boys and 44 Girls" (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/7, folio 2). The destructive quarrels between them and the Slave, Hare and Dogrib Indians over the latter's encroachment into Yellowknife trapping and hunting territory during 1823-1824 reduced their population by thirty-four (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4).

Through the giving of lavish company advances and through their subsequent growing dependence upon European trade goods, the Yellowknives were drawn fully into the fur trade by 1826. The 1826 spring census gave the Yellowknife population at Fort Resolution as 158 with "...44 men capable of wielding the hunts, 38 women, 45 boys under 12 years of age and 31 girls under 12 years of age" (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/7, folio 2). The Yellowknives played a lesser role in the early fur trade than their counterparts, the Mountainees. The Mountainees have been described by the traders as those Chipewyans who became fur hunters in the northwestern transition zone (Rich, 1938:370-371). This groups has been subdivided into five regional or trading bands by Smith (1975:432-435). The shift by these Chipewyan to this zone created further changes in their aboriginal territorial boundaries. This movement will be dealt with now (see Fig. 10).

Population Movements and Changing Territorial Boundaries: 1778-1879

The establishment of Peter Pond's Post on the Elk (Athabasca) River south of Lake Athabasca in 1778 made it unnecessary for the Cree and Chipewyan to make the long and difficult trip to trade at Fort Churchill. The Chipewyan begun to expand southward across the boreal forest to the new post.
Their trip to Churchill across the barren grounds often required a period of seven months to complete (Masson, 1960a:29). The movement of the Chipewyan southward to the traders on the Athabasca River caused Samuel Hearne to overestimate the depopulation of Chipewyan at Fort Churchill from the smallpox epidemic of 1781. Hearne noted that (Tyrrell, 1911:200):

> Since this journal was written before 1781, the Northern Indians, by annually visiting their Southern friends, the Athapuscow Indians, have contacted the small-pox, which has carried off nine-tenths of them, and particularly those people who composed the trade at Churchill Factory. The few survivors follow the example of their Southern neighbours, and all trade with the Canadians, who are settled in the heart of the Athapuscow country....

It was the Chipewyan who remained in the area of Fort Churchill that suffered most from the epidemic. Other groups, who remained relatively untouched by the disease, began to expand into the Ile à la Crosse region by 1784 pushing back the weakened Cree whose population had been reduced by smallpox.

The explorer-trader, Alexander Mackenzie of the Northwest Company, described their territorial boundaries about 1789. The territory began "...at Churchill, and runs along the line of separation between them and the Knisteneaux [Cree], up the Missinipi [Churchill] river to the Ile à la Crosse, passing on through the Buffalo Lake, River Lake, and Portage la Loche: from thence it proceeds by the Elk river to the Lake of the Hills [Lake Athabaska]..." (Garvin, 1927:120; Lamb, 1970:149). The Chipewyan at Lake Ile à la Crosse considered themselves to be strangers in the area at the time (1779) that Europeans arrived there (1927:86-87). The Cree allowed them to hunt north of Fort du Trait, but the Chipewyans were subjected to contributions when encountered by the Cree (Garvin, 1927:87). Mackenzie noted that when Europeans first penetrated into the region both tribes were numerous. However, following the smallpox epidemic, there would appear to
have been only forty resident families of Cree with from about thirty to 200 families of Chipewyan depending on the season (1927:87). The reduction of the Cree population would have allowed the Chipewyan to make inroads in the vicinity of Ile à la Crosse. They were very active in the area during 1790-1791 when Philip Turner and Malcom Ross wintered at Ile à la Crosse.

The diary of Daniel Williams Harmon for August 25, 1808 describes the Indians at Ile à la Crosse as mostly Chipewyan with a few Cree (Lamb, 1957:114). By 1812, the fur trader David Thompson reported that the Cree were progressing southward from Ile à la Crosse while between fifty and sixty small canoes of Chipewyan were at the old Post of Ile à la Crosse (Tyrrell, 1911:559).

Similar patterns are evident at Fort Chipewyan. The Rev. Emile Petitot, a scholar who published grammars and dictionaries on three Athapaskan dialects and numerous articles on the natives and the history of Athabasca, described the situation at Fort Chipewyan (1883:651):

These relations [trader-Indian] continued to the time when Joseph Frobisher established Fort Chipewyan, on the shores of Lake Athabasca, in 1778, for the North-West Company, at which date there was as many as 1200 Redskins settled on the lake. But the white man brought with him the horrible disease of small-pox, till then unknown to the Americans, which made great ravages among the Tinney, and more than decimated the Crees, driven to the southern part of the lake by the warlike attitude of the Chipewyan. Influenza, the epidemic catarrhal infection attacking the tribes at regular intervals of about seven years, completed the work of the small-pox. Reduced to a very small number, the Crees ceased all hostile action against the Chipewyan....

The area adjacent to Fort Chipewyan, including Lesser Slave Lake, Lake Athabasca, Slave River, Peace River, and the shores of Great Slave Lake, was originally the habitat of the Slave, Dogrib, and Hare (see Fig. 11). These groups were pushed back to the west beyond Great Slave Lake into the northwestern transition forest and Mackenzie drainage system by the Cree during
the period 1759-1764, and about 1764 the Cree were encouraged by Matonabbee to establish a peace treaty with the Slave and Beaver Indians at Peace Point (Hearne, 1971:348-357; Rich, 1949:xxvii, 5n; Barrow, 1967:32-33; Morton, 1939:294-295; Jenness, 1932:385; Innis, 1930:149; HBC Arch., B. 42/a/35, folio 45; see Chapter Two, p. 104).

Smallpox in Athabasca country during 1781 would have weakened the Cree's hold on this area making it easier for the Chipewyan to expand southward. By 1820-1821, the Athabasca District was controlled by Chipewyan.

Sir George Simpson, the Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, noted information on Chipewyan aboriginal territory as well as information on their historical expansion in his report on the Athabasca District for 1821. In his words (Rich, 1938:355-356):

The Chipewyans do not consider this part of the Country to be their legitimate Soil [Fort Wedderburne, adjacent to Fort Chipewyan]; they come in large Bands from their own barren Lands situated to the North of this Lake [Lake Athabasca] extending to the Eastern extremity to Gt. Slave Lake and embracing a large Track of Country towards Churchill. The Compys, Traders at the latter Establishment, made them acquainted with the use and value of European Commodities and being naturally of a vagrant disposition and those articles becoming necessary to their Comforts, they shook off their indolent habits, became expert Beaver hunters, and now penetrate in search of that valuable animal into the Cree and Beaver Indian hunting Grounds, making a circuit easterly by Carribeau Lake [Reindeer Lake]; to the South by Isle à la Crosse; and Westerly to the Banks of Peace River, and so avaricious are they, that the prospect of Gain I have no doubt would head them much further, did not the more Warlike Tribes to the Southward and Westward intimidate them. The greater proportion of them however remain in their own barren Lands, where they procure sustenance with little exertion as the Country abounds with Rein Deer....

It was the Company's policy to create a situation in which the Indians became totally reliant upon the traders and left their "Epicurean Habits." Fur was the primary object of Company activities in the fur-bearing grounds, and it was the duty of all their servants to use whatever means in their power to induce the Indians to procure furs and other commodities for trade.
(Hearne, 1971:82-83; Rich, 1938:58-59). The movement of Chipewyan from the life-sustaining barren grounds to the boreal forest was encouraged through the giving of generous presents and the extension of lavish amounts of credit (Rich, 1938:66, 73). The traders were very successful at this enterprise. The Chipewyan became the majority group at Fort Chipewyan and in the surrounding area as early as 1808 when Harmon observed that "...a few Crees but a great number of Chipewyans resort to this establishment" (Lamb, 1957:115).

In the 1827-1828 census, the Chief Factor, Alex Stewart, reported 123 Chipewyan and thirty-seven Cree (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/26, folio 5). Petitot's census figures for 1862 and 1879 indicate their continuance in time at the Fort (1883:652):

...There were 900 Chipewyans and 300 Crees at Fort Chipewyan in 1862, but in 1879 I could only find 537 Chipewyans and 86 Crees, even including those living on the river Athabasca....

Chipewyan territorial boundaries did not extend much beyond those demarcated by Mackenzie in 1789 (Garvin, 1927:120). The migrant groups tended to increase their hold on posts located along their southernmost boundaries while exploiting the interior boreal forest for fur-bearing animals. The development of trading post bands or socioterritorial groups and trapping parties occurred as groups of Chipewyan became reliant upon specific posts for European commodities. Often the Chief Factor dispersed groups to specific areas for particular fur-bearing animals to meet the demands of the fur market. Care had to be taken in the dispersal to avoid an encroachment on and an usurpation of the fur-bearing territory of the neighboring posts and their recruited Indian laborers (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/24, folio 53). Despite precautions, conflicts occurred (1825-1827) between the Chipewyan and Beaver Indians at Hay River (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/23, folio 4; HBC Arch., B. 181/a/7,
and between the Chipewyan and Slave Indians on the Liard River (HBC Arch., B. 116/a/1-7, passim; HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 3). The fur trade journals of Fort Chipewyan, Simpson, Liard, and Resolution make constant references to subsistence needs, availability of fur-bearing animals and trade as the controlling variables for the conflicts. The situation on the Liard River was described clearly by Fort Simpson's Chief Factor, Edward Smith, who recorded in his fur trade journal of April 10, 1825 that (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 3-4):

...another party of Chipewyan from Great Slave Lake headed by two leaders Grand Jeune Homme and Brosson Blanc have passed to the West of the Liard River—where they intend making Canoes to come down the Liard River in June from thence up McKenzie's River to Slave Lake—here, our Indians are hemed in on all sides by those of the Athabasca District that of Slave Lake in particular—what benefits the latter place can receive for allowing their Indians—to wander so far from home and their hunts in consequence remaining one year on hand before they can be sent to market—is a question yet to be solved while their own Country about Slave Lake is still rich enough to give them employment—where they can work without injuring their neighbours—which the contrary will always be the Case as long as they are allowed to come within our Indians hunting Grounds—the Chipewyans have a double interest in coming among the McKenzie River Indians—first, they find a few Beaver more than in their own Country—2nd Having their necessaries much cheaper at Slave Lake than our Indians in this River—they can afford to barter their property with the Slaves and have handsome Profits while the McKenzie River Indians still pays it cheaper than from the Comp F. Stores—at Slave Lake or Peace River a Chipewyan gets a Gun for 12 skins comes among Our Indians sels it for 17 Skins—by this barter the Chipewyan gains 5 Skins and the Slaves has it Three Skins Cheaper than from their own Traders—will take the earliest opportunity to acquaint our Athabasca friends of this evil—which if not timely stoped may be followed up with some disagreeable consequence between us and our Indians—it being for the benefit of the Concern in general to keep the Indians at this River distinct and separate from mixing with the Chipewyans...

The Chipewyan intrusions into these areas lacked permanency. The traders who could only lose through warfare stabilized Athapaskan occupancy areas to promote heavy exploitation of the land for its fur-bearing animals. The fur trade journals of the late 1820s and early 1830s show increased stability
of populations in both the Athabasca and Mackenzie Districts.

To recapitulate, I have attempted to demonstrate that the widely held assumption that the aboriginal Chipewyan had occupied the territory north of Lake Athabasca and Cree Lake, south along the Churchill River west to the Peace River region, and east to Hudson Bay is an ethnographic illusion created by the collapsing of history into the ethnographic present. Instead, the records indicate that the Chipewyan occupied the barren grounds northeast of Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes and east to southern Keewatin until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The early expansion of their eastern and southeastern trapping and trading area was accompanied with considerable bloodshed. The later expansion southward and southwestward was accompanied only by minor outbreaks of hostility and complaints of trespass, but no real warfare. This chapter has sought to query the recent re-evaluations of contiguous Algonkian and Athapaskan boundaries that suggest that Cree movements did not involve accretions of territory or large scale displacements of population by force.

*The Dogrib, Slave, Hare, Beaver, and Sekani*

Armed with guns and seeking furs, the Cree, who had driven the Chipewyan out of the headwaters of the Churchill River between 1694 and 1714, began to penetrate into the Athapaskan-held territory near Lake Athabasca and the Athabasca River about 1714-1715 (Rich, 1958:512). Captain Knight was informed on June 27, 1715 by some Cree "Home Guard" Indians, local trappers and post provisioners, "...abt the Great River it runs into the Sea on the Back of this Country & they tells us there is a Certain Gum or pitch that runs down the river in Such abundance that they cannot land but at certain
places & that it is very broad & flows as much water..." (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, folio 43). Details about the area and its inhabitants compelled Knight to initiate a Cree expedition under the leadership of a Captain Swan "...to make peace with those Indians bordering on the Western Sea" (HBC Arch., B. 239/d/7, folio 7). A party of twenty-five canoes were sent in 1715 as ambassadors of peace to re-establish friendly relations with the Athapaskan peoples, who occupied the area between the source of the Churchill River and the "Western Seas," in other words, Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake.

Captain Swan's party did not return from its expedition until June 4, 1717. The Cree reported a friendly reception by the Athapaskans, following their initial alarm of the Crees' presence. Various Athapaskan bands visited the peacemakers and together they "...treated one another very Civilly & Like friends & feasted Sung Danced & Smoked the Friendship Pipe with Great Rejoicing" (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 54). According to Henry Kelsey, the Cree were not able to induce the Athapaskans to come down to the Bay to trade. Swan reported that they were intimidated by continued Cree-Chipewyan warfare; although persuaded to travel with Cree to York Factory, they would not cross the boundaries of Cree territory, east of Lake Athabasca (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/5, folio 52; also HBC Arch., B. 239/a/4, folio 30; see Chapter Two, pp. 69-70). The Cree Captain was instrumental in establishing his party as middlemen to the Athapaskans of the west and the fur factories of Hudson Bay; a Cree-Athapaskan relationship virtually uninterrupted until 1724-1727.

This early historical evidence contradicts Smith's suggestion (1976:415) that "...it was their term Cree (and its variants) that spread west and was applied to Cree groups known by other names, or unknown until the relatively late exploration of the Canadian Northwest...." If the term Cree spread
west it was taken there by Captain Swan and the other Cree middlemen and trappers who accompanied him or followed him or both. This historical material also answers Gillespie's doubting statement (1975:334) that if "...Cree were 18th century invaders of the Athabasca Lake region, due to fur trade factors, it is, as yet, an invasion without historical or archaeological evidence." Indeed, we will see the variables of warfare, hunting, and trade appearing concretely in the historic description of Cree territorial expansion during the early protocontact period.

Protocontact Boundaries and Fur Trade Rivalries

The shores of Lake Athabasca and the forested areas along Slave River stretching northward to Great Slave Lake were formerly occupied by the Étcha-Ottine ("gens à l'Abri" or "people dwelling in the shelter") (Petitot, 1883:650, 1887:106, 1888:292-293, 301; 1891:102-103; 1893:312) or W.F. Wentzel's Echel-la-o-tina (Gens des Bois) (Masson, 1960a:85). The Cree who raided and plundered these people call them "Awakanak" or Slave (Petitot, 1888:292-293). It is the latter name with which they became best known by both French and English traders. Between 1759-1764, the Slave were dispossessed of their aboriginal territory (see Fig. 11). As we will see later, they fled northward to the shores and islands of Great Slave Lake. The Cree continued to send war parties among the Slave until they were driven away from Great Slave Lake into the full boreal forest by 1777 (Lamb, 1970:174; Carvin, 1926:152; Masson, 1960a:85, 1960b:68). The place names, Lake Athabasca and Slave River, signalize the original territory of the Slave (Carvin, 1927:137; CMS, A-91:5).
The Dogrib (Thlingchadinne) and Hare (Kawchadinne) who inhabited the area in the immediate vicinity of Great Slave Lake also began their migration northward at the same time (Hodge, 1906b:744, 1906a:667; Petitot, 1883:649-650, 1888:292-293). The Dogrib still inhabited the shores of Great Slave Lake in 1727 when a Cree raiding party forayed into the area (Dobbs, 1745:44; see Chapter Two, p. 83). The fur traders have roughly interpreted the Dogrib name for Great Slave Lake as Thlee chag gah coah (HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1) after the Dogrib name for themselves, Thlee choggah (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/2). Expelled from their aboriginal habitat, they came to occupy the territory inland between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, to the east of the Mackenzie River. They were prevented from approaching the mouth of the Churchill River by the eastern Chipewyans, who guarded their middlemen positions between the Dogrib and the Bay posts.

The Hare could have inhabited the southernmost sections of the Mackenzie River, within easy access to the resources of present-day Wood Buffalo Park. The Fort Simpson journal of John McLeod (October 1, 1824) indicates that the Cree harried and plundered a party of Hare Indians north of this region on the Rabbitskin River. This river takes its name from the Hare Indians (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, folio 21):

...Near Riveire du Paux Lievre—this River takes its name from a party of this tribe of Indians having been destroyed at a Lentuce Pinacle by a party of the Athabasca Cree...

Driven from their lands by the Cree, they resorted to the area north of Great Bear Lake on the Mackenzie River, the series of Lakes northeast of Great Bear Lake, and the Anderson River (Petitot, 1883:644-650). Their displacement has also been suggested by the recent dialectological work of Dyen and Aberle (1974:249-250).
Mackenzie's journals provide us with detailed information about the intensive fur trade rivalries and the displacement of Athapaskan populations in the area. While on his journey down the Mackenzie River on June 25, 1789 he noted that the Cree frequently sent war parties against the Slave who occupied the shores and islands of Great Slave Lake. He wrote (Garvin, 1927:152; Lamb, 1970:174):

...I was surprised to find that the greater part of the wood with which it was formerly covered [Old Fort Island; Lamb, 1970:174n], had been cut down within twelve or fifteen years, and that the remaining stumps were become altogether rotten. On making inquiry concerning the cause of their extraordinary circumstance, the English Chief informed me, that several winters ago, many of the Slave Indians inhabited the islands that were scattered over the bay, as the surrounding waters abounded with fish throughout the year, but that they had been driven away by the Knisteneaux [Cree] who continually made war upon them....

His observation also included signs of Cree encampments and Slave lookout posts that were situated on high hill tops in the area for defensive purposes (Garvin, 1927:159-161). More information on fur trade rivalries and displacements are found in his journal account for October 13, 1792 (Coues, 1897:510n; Garvin, 1927:240; Lamb, 1970:238):

On the 13th [Oct. 1792], at noon, we came to the Peace Point: from which,...the river derives its name, it was the spot where the Knisteneaux [Cree] and Beaver Indians settled their dispute;...When this country was formerly invaded by the Knisteneaux, they found the Beaver Indians inhabiting the land about Portage la Loche [Methy Portage], and the adjoining tribe were those whom they call Slaves. They drove both these tribes before them, when the latter proceeded down the river from the Lake of the Hills [Athabasca], in consequence of which that part of it obtained the name Slave River. The former proceeded up the river; and when the Knisteneaux made peace with them [1760 or 1761], this place was settled to be the boundary.

Peter Fidler's journal of a journey with the Chipewyan to Slave Lake records additional information on Cree activities in the Mackenzie drainage system. He described a Cree raiding party which was returning from the Mackenzie River on September 11, 1791 (Tyrrell, 1934:498-499):
...we met 4 Canoes of Southern Indians [Cree] of the Beaver river, 7 men & 3 women, who are returning back to their own Country from War, they went in the Spring and the Cree that accompanied us all Summer was their relation & missed them in the Athapescow Lake...They had the Scalps of 2 Men, one quite greyhaired & the other one belonging a Young Man they had a severe scuffle before they got the young one Killed...They also killed one Women they met them coming towards the Slave Lake House as they supposed to Trade as they had a few Beaver skins with them, with hatchets, Ice chisels & c marked on them probably these were the articles they wished to purchase they met them to the Westward of the Slave Lake coming down a river that falls into it They were of the Dog ribbed tribe—& use Canoes....

The 1806 Northwest Company’s Great Bear Lake journal of the trader Alexander McKenzie, who was a nephew of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, also describes the Cree invasions. He wrote (BCPA, A-B-40-M193):

...The Slaves (say) Dog Rib Indians is about 250 men and boys. They were formerly on the Borders of Slave Lake but were driven hence by the Creees....

A statement by another Northwest Company trader, Willard-Ferdinand Wentzel, made on March 27th, 1807, succinctly records Cree encroachments throughout the area. The Beaver Indians that Wentzel describes are most likely migrant groups of Slave. The Beaver and Slave could have been either the same people or two closely related divisions. The Beaver apparently originally lived on the south side of Lake Athabasca while the Slave lived on the north side. The Cree drove the Beaver into the Peace River Valley to the west side while the Slave fled north. Wentzel wrote (Masson, 1960a:85) of these inhabitants of the Mackenzie River as being:

...a branch of the tribe of the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they had been formerly separated and then driven this way by their inveterate enemies the Creees who, previous to the introduction of European arms into this quarter, were continually waging war against them. These wars exterminated great numbers of them, so that they were at length reduced from a numerous tribe to but about 200 men.

Wentzel’s descriptions are reinforced by similar observations in George Keith’s letter to Roderic McKenzie during January 1807 (Masson, 1960b:68).
Displacement and depopulation of the Slave were seen as the result of Cree encroachments:

The Natives of this establishment call themselves "Beaver Indians," a name which they claim descendants from the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they were separated some ages ago, when attacked by enemies. The terror caused by this sudden attack induced them to fly for safety to the northwestward....

And,

...According to them, the population has increased since the establishment of McKenzie's River Fort by the whites, who have protected them from the inroads of other tribes, which previously killed numbers them.

The Rev. Emile Petitot has encapsulated primary particulars on this sequence of events (1883:659-650):

Lake Athabasca, the Slave River, and the shores of the Great Slave Lake were the exclusive territory of another tribe of Tinney to whom the epithet of Slaves [Slavey, Dogrib, and Hare] was given, from their natural timidity and cowardice....

The Indians using the Algonquin tongue, such as the Crees, Savanois, Grands-pagnes, and Ojibbeways, carried on a pitiless war against the Athabascan Tinney or Slaves, who from natural timidity gave up their territory to their enemies, and fell back on the Great Slave Lake, pursued by the Crees, who made a great slaughter among them. Various islands and archipelagos retain the name and the memory of these dreaded Ennas (strangers, enemies), including Dead Men's Isle; which keeps alive to this day the recollection of the defeat of the Katchó-Ottiné, subsequently called Slaves. From that time, this portion of the Tinny family never ventured south, but remained in the cold lands and swampy forests of the north, where they became split up and settled under the names of Dog-ribs, Hareskins, Highlanders, Slaves, &c. Their different tribal dialects vary but slightly intre se differing much more widely from the Chipewyan.

Similar patterns of warfare are also seen among the Beaver and Sekani Indians. The Beaver or Tsattine ("dwellers among the beavers") inhabited the area about Athabasca River and Lesser Slave Lake north to Athabasca Lake and east to Methy Portage (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, passim; Coues, 1897:510n). Following the early Cree expeditions under Captain Swan (1715-1719), the Beaver Indians were driven from this area along with the Slave. The general
displacement of populations occurred along several fronts. The Assiniboine, allies of the Cree, were at war with some of the more southern Beaver and Sarsi as early as 1717 (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/3, folio 34). To the north, the Cree were involved in warfare with the Dogrib on Great Slave Lake before 1727 (Dobbs, 1745:44; see Chapter Two, pp. 82-84). The later but similar displacement of Beaver and Slave about Athabasca Lake found the Slave on Great Slave Lake where even there they were pursued by the Cree until forced to the west into the boreal forest by 1777 (Garvin, 1927:152; Masson, 1960a: 85, 1960b:68; BCPA, A-B-40-M193). The Beaver or Tsattine were driven to the north bank of the Peace River, which they named Tsades or the river of beavers (Petitot, 1888:292). Smallpox in Athabasca country in 1781 weakened the Cree's hold on the area making it easier for the Beaver to expand by the 1800s along Peace River from below Fort Vermilion to the Rocky Mountains, up the Liard River to the north, and south of Little Slave Lake. Their territorial displacement and expansion was at the expense of their congeners, the Sekani ("dwellers on the rocks").

The Sekani or Rocky Mountain Indians (Lamb, 1970:249-250) originally inhabited the upper Peace River area. The Beaver, armed with guns and themselves displaced by the Cree, drove the Sekani across the Rocky Mountains. The process whereby the Sekani were displaced is recorded in Alexander Mackenzie's Peace River journal account for January 10, 1793 (Lamb, 1970: 249-250):

Among the people who were now here, there were two Rocky Mountain Indians, who declared, that the people to whom we had given that denomination, are by no means entitled to it, and that their country has ever been in the vicinity of our present situation Peace river. They said, in support of their assertion, that these people were entirely ignorant of those parts which are adjacent to the mountain, as well as the navigation of the river; that the Beaver Indians had encroached upon
them, and would soon force them to retire to the foot of these mountains. They represented themselves as the only real natives of that then with me....

Prior to 1780, the Sekani Indians obtained European trade items through Cree middlemen; but the Sekani and Beaver Indians were both anxious for direct exchange with white traders. The need to end their economic dependency upon Cree middlemen and their desire to obtain guns for defensive purposes were met by the establishment of Northwest Company posts in their territory. These posts were later to serve a twofold purpose, since not only did they function as trade centers for the Sekani and Beaver but also as way stations for the New Caledonia brigade. The abandonment of various posts while the Northwest Company dominated the region between 1788-1818 was accompanied by continuous Sekani complaints of having to cross Beaver territory for trading purposes.

In Simon Fraser's first journal at Rocky Mountain Portage, April 12th to July 18th, 1806, we are given details of warfare between the Sekani and Beaver Indians resulting from competition for fur-bearing grounds, or due to the plundering of the Sekani by the Beaver. This may have caused a significant reduction in Sekani population. Fraser noted (Lamb, 1960:178):

...In the evening [May 9, 1806] called all the Indians to the door, to know how many there are of them, which we found to be forty men, thirty women and seventy nine boys, girl and children, and their is another band near at hand not yet arrived, and there are several gone to work the Beaver which form in all of these seen here about 60 men, 40 women and upward of 100 boys, girls and children. Formerly they say they were much more numerous, but the Beaver Indians war excursions continually diminished them, and the greatest loss generally fall to the share of the women, which added to the number the Beaver and Rocky Mountain Indians [Western Beaver Indians] continually took from them, may account for the unequal proportion there is between the men and women.

Daniel Harmon's dairy for the years 1810-1819, during which time he had assumed the superintendency of New Caledonia (British Columbia) under the
auspices of the Northwest Company, also indicates that the trapping of beaver may have caused considerable displacement of native populations between Rocky Mountain Portage and Stuart Lake. He recorded in his diary of October 22, 1810 that his party soon was to (1957:131):

"...Over take a Band of Indians, who a few days since left the Fort to go and hunt the Beaver on the other side of the Mountain. They call themselves Sicannies [Sekani] but it is supposed that formerly they belonged and were part of the Beaver Indian Tribe—who on some quarrel separated themselves from their Countrymen by leaving their lands to come higher up the River & who are now as I am informed a pretty numerous Clan or Tribe...."

Here again, there is suggestive historical evidence that the relationship of war, hunting, and trade emerge concordantly with Cree territorial expansion during the protohistoric period. Often this expansion took the form of a chain reaction. As the Cree expanded at the expense of the Beaver, the Beaver put pressure on the Sekani. Thus, it is clear that the presence of Cree had a pronounced effect on all of the Canadian Athapaskans. The demands of the fur trade entailed a situation in which all these peoples were drawn into intensive competition.

Warfare was a major preoccupation of the eighteenth century Cree who invaded the Athabasca Lake region, and who accreted Canadian Athapaskan fur and large game areas. But warfare and disease also had more drastic effects. Tribal displacements imposed on the Northeastern Athapaskans created a situation in which they were forced to occupy territories hitherto unused by them for subsistence and trapping pursuits. The poverty of these regions produced conditions of deprivation and frequent starvation. Thus, ethno-historical evidence demonstrates that eighteenth century change was rapid and pronounced with major re-alignments of social relationships and with profound changes in the Canadian Athapaskan aboriginal way of life.
Linguistic and Archaeological Evidence

To date, the application of the direct historic approach has lacked sufficient data to account for the culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans. Even now it is necessary to combine archival data with the sketchy linguistic and archaeological materials. Despite gaps, an intradisciplinary approach that integrates all the available data will greatly facilitate understanding. This will add substance to our discussion of culture change and contact among the postcontact Canadian Athapaskans.

Recent dialectological studies made by Dyen and Aberle (1974) and by Howren (1975), and based on the distribution of innovations, infers that the present geographical locations of individual Canadian Athapaskan groups are not concordant with their position in the linguistic matrices and dendrograms. Interestingly, archaeological sequences (Noble, 1975:761) for the prehistoric ancestors of the Eastern Chipewyan (A.D. 660), and historic Slave (A.D. 1760-modern era), Dogrib (A.D. 1850-modern era), and Hare (unknown) Indians have little time depth. These linguistic and archaeological data lend support to the interpretation presented here that these Canadian Athapaskans were severely disarranged by contact conditions. For instance, the geographical position of the Hare does not correspond with their position in Dyen's and Aberle's matrices (1974:249). The distribution of specific kinship innovations suggests that the precontact Hare were displaced from an area close to the precontact Beaver (1974:250). This is supported by the archival records. The journal of John McLeod (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, folio 20) clearly indicates that the Hare were in the area of the Peace, Hay, and Rabbetskin Rivers sometime during the eighteenth century. There is no archaeological data on the Hare (Noble, 1975:766). Thus, the inferences
drawn from both linguistic and archival data are similar.

There is a greater linguistic homogeneity of kinship innovations among the Tahltan, Southern Tutchone, Kaska-Ross River Tutchone, and Slave than there is between the Slave and the other Canadian groups although the differences are small (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:251). This is not surprising since the 1807 Northwest Company letters of Wentzel (Masson, 1960a:85) and Keith (Masson, 1960b:68) suggest that the Slave and Beaver were linguistically close. From an archaeological standpoint, the late Slave prehistoric complex has little time depth. The Julian site (Jcrw-13/1) on Fisherman Lake (Millar, 1968:130) has been radiocarbon dated at A.D. 1760 (I-3192). This site is included within the late prehistoric Spence River complex with nine other components southwest of Great Slave Lake. Although if the date is correct, it would clearly fall within our Protohistoric Period. Slave artifact inventory indicates a reliance on a fishing subsistence base. The camp sites, which are located near fishing grounds, contain unilaterally barbed harpoons, rib-bone awls, bone picks, drills, net sinkers, wedges, abraders, pebble hammerstones, linear and circular bifacially chipped Chi-Thos, and other lithic tools (Noble, 1975:766). There is continuity between the late prehistoric, protohistoric, and early historic archaeological assemblages throughout the area. The establishment of the Slave in the territory southwest of Great Slave Lake from Hay River west to Fort Liard and northward to Fort Simpson during the period 1760 to the present (Noble, 1975) is in essential agreement with the earlier ethnohistorical conclusions in this chapter that the Slave were displaced into the region during the Protohistoric Period.

The Dogrib were excluded from Dyen's and Aberle's (1974:239) work be-
cause of the lack of sufficient data. More recently, Howren (1975:580) has attempted to show the close unity of Bear Lake, Hare, and Dogrib dialects. Ethnohistorical evidence does suggest that the Hare and Dogrib were in close proximity to each other and that they began their migration northward at the same time. The Bear Lake trading post band or the Satudene Indians emerged only as a distinct sociocultural entity during the fur trade period. Dogrib contacts with the fur traders and the Cree would appear to date to the late seventeenth century. However, no great archaeological time depth is presently available for this group. Noble (1975:767) has defined only two periods, that include the modern era, which is established as post-1900, and the historic Fort Rae phase dated between 1850 and 1900. He (1975:770) has also hypothesized that the Dogrib had a western or northwestern origin beyond Lac la Martre, and that they did not push into the northwestern area of Great Slave Lake much before 1770. The historical data suggest that Noble's proposal is only partially correct. The Dogrib were forced into the bush region west and north of Lac la Martre by the Cree, and only returned to the northwestern area of Great Slave Lake with the cessation of Cree intrusions during the Protohistoric Period. There are no linguistic or archaeological data to refute this ethnohistorical inference.

The Sekani and Sarsi share enough linguistic innovations to suggest extensive contact in the past. Although the Sekani and Sarsi are separated by the Beaver, Dyen and Aberle (1974:251) indicate that the precontact Sekani were probably located immediately north of the Sarsi. Their inferences clearly show that the Beavers' early location was farther to the east than after contact. Historical data support this inference by describing the Beaver as occupants of the area about Athabasca River north to Athabasca
Lake and east to Methy Portage (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/1, passim; Garvin, 1927: 240; Coues, 1897:510n). James Wright's (1975:137) archaeological evidence indicates that there were two major cultural traditions in the Lake Athabasca region. The western portion of the lake had a northern Plains tradition oriented toward bison hunting while the eastern portion had a boreal forest derived tradition oriented toward caribou hunting. Wright (1975:9) hypothesizes that the eastern "...portion was occupied by the Athabascan-speaking peoples who historically are the Chipewyan while the western portion of the lake was occupied by another group; possibly Athabascan speaking Beavers."

In contrast to Wright, it is suggested here that the eastern portion was occupied by the Beaver and Slave while the western portion was inhabited by the Sarsi, the only Canadian group that continued to hunt bison after Cree intrusions. This would place the Sarsi immediately south of the Sekani, and would fit the conditions for the distributions suggested by Dyen and Aberle (1975:251).

Although the linguistic and archaeological records are incomplete, it accords remarkably well with the historical evidence and interpretations presented here. Dyen's and Aberle's assertions based on their linguistic matrices and maps of innovations, and the shallow archaeological sequences presented above support the inference that Cree expansion, based primarily on trader competition over furs, involved significant accretions of Canadian Athapaskan territory as well as large scale displacements of the indigenous population by force.

To summarize, it has been shown that there are a number of fundamental errors in Gillespie's (1975:354) and Smith's (1976:415) interpretations of the historical data. Warfare was a feature of Cree expansion into the Peace
River and Lake Athabasca region, and, contrary to Gillespie's belief (1975: 354), there is both historical- and archaeological evidence. Also, the recent re-evaluation of contiguous Algonkian and Athapaskan boundaries by both Gillespie (1975:354, 1976:10) and Smith (1976a:415), which suggest that Cree movements did not involve significant accretions of territory or large scale displacements of population by force, has been challenged. Algonkian movements, as suggested by an earlier generation of historians and anthropologists, did involve accretions of Canadian Athapaskan territory as well as large scale displacements of their population by force. Finally, ethnohistorical evidence has demonstrated that eighteenth century change was rapid and marked by major re-alignments of social relationships resulting in profound changes in the Canadian Athapaskan aboriginal way of life. The linguistic and archaeological data tend to reinforce the historical evidence and help to explain further the complexities of the fur trade period.

Conclusions

The implications of these data for historic continuity are clear. It is apparent that the fur trade and European expansion westward resulted in significant man-land reorientations through depopulation, migration, displacements, and the formation of new social groups from the remnants of earlier ones and also as a result of the formation of trading post bands. These factors altered Canadian Athapaskan subsistence practices and social organization. Although the historical determination of precontact tribal boundaries will always remain problematical, nevertheless, the present use of the direct historic approach has led to some new insights into changing territorial boundaries, which have increased our understanding of early
contact Canadian Athapaskan culture and long term change processes.

A number of standardized ethnographic and historical errors have been pointed out. The errors have been perpetuated by Subarctic specialists who have relied primarily upon materials gathered in the field to reconstruct what are supposed to have been aboriginal baseline conditions. The errors made by this method are by no mean trivial and their implications will be discussed in the following chapters.
NOTES

1. "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into the Hudson's Bay" later became known as the Hudson's Bay Company.

2. The caribou crossings would have served as central locations for hunting groups. It is surprising that Stuart's expedition traveled more than 600 miles to contact the Chipewyan, although his journey was circuitous. There is little evidence for a more easterly contact boundary. Nash (1975:168) does suggest that "...there is a slender thread of continuity permitting us to postulate that the later prehistoric component (at Little Duck Lake) represents the Chipewyan prior to European contact." His line of reasoning which links up his Duck Lake Phase with the Caribou-eater Chipewyan rests on the Direct Historical Approach (1975:175-176). Evidence of continuity is based on the lack of trade goods in the early historic components in the region and the statement of Smith (1975:24) that suggest that it is a fact "...the Chipewyan were not well integrated into the fur trade and all they really required from the Europeans were hatchets, files, ice-chisels and knives" (Nash, 1975:175). We should be wary of these latter statements and others (Janes, 1976:344), since early archival and published materials suggest that the fur traders' attempts to bring the natives to the Bay and to make them productive members of the fur trade were accomplished within a very brief time period. In fact, the lack of trade goods may have been due to the Chipewyan's practice of using their trade goods for only one season before trading them to more remote groups that did not have direct contact with the posts. The Chipewyan returned to the post without trade goods, but with furs.

3. Recent archaeological surveys (Wright, 1975:142) of Lake Athabasca prehistory suggest that there "...is no evidence...for the prehistoric presence of the Cree. Even on Black Lake to the east, the Cree occupation appears to be late and weak...." The principal expansion of Cree territory after 1715 appears to be between Reindeer Lake and Lake Athabasca (Rich, 1958:436; Ray, 1974:22). Smith (1976) has expressed his doubts concerning Cree expansion westward while suggesting that it was the name "Cree" which was moving westward. The historical sources militate against this suggestion and it will require future archaeological research for verification.

4. In 1727, Richard Norton noted that the Chipewyan had to move to the boreal forest during the winter to trap marten (Davies, 1965:119). This meant that the Chipewyan trappers had shifted from traditional subsistence activities. Later Samuel Hearne noted on several occasions that the Northern Indians had also lost the art of hunting with the bow and arrow (Hearne, 1971:322; Rich, 1959b:11, 87; HBC Arch., B. 42/a/94, folio 9; see Chapter Two, p. 112). The dependence upon trade goods necessitated the trapping of furs to barter for goods, which the Chipewyan could not produce themselves. The fur trade engendered new economic and ecological adaptations.
5. Wright's (1975:137) archaeological evidence indicates that there were two major cultural traditions in the Lake Athabasca region. The western portion of the lake had a northern plains tradition oriented toward bison hunting while the eastern portion had a boreal forest derived tradition oriented toward caribou hunting.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE EARLY FUR TRADE ERA (1769-1800)

The Early Fur Trade Era inaugurated a new phase in the Subarctic Athapas- 
kans' history involving rivalry between the "pedlars" (as the Hudson's Bay 
personnel referred to the traders from Montreal) or "Canadians" and the Hudson's 
Bay Company traders. In the summer of 1774, the Hudson's Bay Company was 
forced to abandon its policy of remaining at the bayside posts and encouraging 
Indians to bring their furs overland to the forts. It established its second 
inland post, Cumberland House, the first being Henley House on the Albany 
River (1743). After 1786, Hudson's Bay men began setting up the first of a 
long line of posts inland on Rainy River and the Assiniboine. This new phase 
was heralded, in part, by the earlier expeditions into this vast trading 
hinterland.

The Hudson's Bay Company, as described in previous chapters, had formerly 
depended upon and fostered an organization of Chipewyan middlemen, living on 
caribou herds along the edge of the barren grounds, to trade at profitable 
rates with more distant Chipewyan and other Athapaskan groups. These hinter-
land groups were unable, because of resistance by these middlemen and the 
formidable distance, to visit the Bay factories themselves. The commerce with 
the Athapaskans in the valley of the Slave River, along the rivers of Great 
Slave Lake, and in the basin of Lake Athabasca was conducted to underwrite, 
in part, the decline of fur trade returns among the southern posts on the 
Moose and Albany Rivers. The continuation of the trade, via Chipewyan middle-
men, was seriously challenged by the penetration of Canadian traders from
Montreal and Grand Portage along the Churchill River during the early 1770s.

Early English and Canadian Interior Exploration, Expansion, and Rivalry

The success of the last decades of the Middlemen Era can be attributed, in part, to Matonabbee, the Chipewyan trading chief, who acted as ambassador and mediator between the Athapaskans and Cree who during the late 1750s and early 1760s had been at war with one another. The earliest visitation by a European, Samuel Hearne, to this vast middleman and indirect trade zone can be attributed to the peace treaty between the Chipewyan, Beaver and Slave, and the Cree at Peace Point about 1761 (see Fig. 12) (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/55, folio 45). Following several years of relatively successful trade through Chipewyan middlemen, Moses Norton, Governor at Prince of Wales Fort or Churchill, instructed Samuel Hearne on November 6th, 1769 to visit the Indians and to encourage this trade. In Norton's words (Hearne, 1971:xlviii-xlix):

2 dly, Whereas you and your companions are well fitted-out with every thing we think necessary, as also a sample of light trading goods; these you are to dispose of by way of presents (and not by way of trade) to such far-off Indians as you may meet with, and to smoke your Calimut of Peace with their leaders, in order to establish a friendship with them. You are also to persuade them as much as possible from going to war with each other, to encourage them to exert themselves in procuring furrs and other articles for trade, and to assure them of good payment for them at the Company's Factory.

It is sincerely recommended to you and your companions to treat the natives with civility, so as not to give them any room for complaint or disgust, as they have strict orders not to give you the least offence, but are to aid and assist you in any matter you may request of them for the benefit of the undertaking.

If any Indians you may meet, that are coming to the Fort, should be willing to trust you with either food or clothing, make your agreement for those commodities, and by them send me a letter, specifying the quantity of each article, and they shall be paid according to your agreement. And, according to the Company's orders, you are to correspond with me, or the Chief at Prince of Wales's Fort for the time being, at all opportunities:....
FIGURE 12
PRECONTACT DISTRIBUTION
(Yerbury, 1980)
After two previous unsuccessful expeditions, Hearne and Matonabbee left Churchill on December 7, 1770, with one of Matonabbee's wives in attendance. During his circuit of the wide territory between Churchill, the Arctic at the mouth of the Coppermine River, and Great Slave Lake and the Slave River, his expedition met several parties of Indians who were acting as middlemen in the area between Great Slave and Athabasca Lakes and Churchill. While it is suggested that a thriving commerce existed between these parts and Churchill, Hearne describes, in detail, the overwhelming difficulties of transporting furs across the interior of this country, the extent to which trade goods had filtered into the area, and the extent of Cree ("those brutes") depredations into Dogrib territory. As Hearne reported in length (1971:176-180):

The Copper Indians set a great value on their native metal even to this day; and prefer it to iron, for almost every use except that of a hatchet, a knife, and an awl: for these three necessary implements, copper makes but a very poor substitute. When they exchange copper for ironwork with our trading Northern Indians, which is but seldom, the standard is an ice-chissel of copper for an ice-chissel of iron, or an ice-chissel and a few arrowheads of copper, for a half-worn hatchet; but when they barter furs with our Indians, the established rule is to give ten times the price for every thing they purchase that is given for them at the Company's Factory. Thus, a hatchet that is bought at the Factory for one beaver-skin, or one cat-skin, or three ordinary martins' skins, is sold to those people at the advanced price of one thousand per cent.; they also pay in proportion, for knives, and every other smaller piece of iron-work. For a small brass kettle of two pounds, or two pounds and a half weight, they pay sixty martins, or twenty beaver in other kinds of furs. If the kettles are not bruised, or ill-used in any other respect, the Northern tradeeers have the conscience at times to exact something more. It is at this extravagant price that all the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians, who traffic with our yearly traders, supply themselves with iron-work, &c.

From those two tribes our Northern Indians used formerly to purchase most of the furs they brought to the Company's Factory; for their own country produced very few of those articles, and being, at that time, at war with the Southern Indians, they were prevented from penetrating far enough backwards to meet with many animals of the fur kind; so that deer-skins and such furs as they could extort from the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians, composed the whole of their trade; which on an average of many years, and indeed till very lately, seldom or ever exceeded six thousand Made Beaver per annum.
At present happy it is for them, and greatly to the advantage of the Company, that they are in perfect peace, and live in friendship with their Southern neighbours. The good effect of this harmony is already so visible, that within a few years the trade from that quarter has increased many thousands of Made Beaver annually; some years even to the amount of eleven thousand skins. Beside the advantage arising to the Company from this increase, the poor Northern Indians reap innumerable benefits from a fine and plentiful country, with the produce of which they annually load themselves for trade, without giving the least offence to the proper inhabitants.

Several attempts have been made to induce the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians to visit the Company's Fort at Churchill River, and for that purpose many presents have been sent, but they never were attended with any success. And though several of the Copper Indians have visited Churchill, in the capacity of servants to the Northern Indians, and were generally sent back loaded with presents for their countrymen, yet the Northern Indians always plundered them of the whole soon after they left the Fort. This kind of treatment, added to the many inconveniences that attend so long a journey, are great obstacles in their way; otherwise it would be as possible for them to bring their own goods to market, as for the Northern Indians to go so far to purchase them on their own account, and have the same distance to bring them as the first proprietors would have had. But it is a political scheme of our Northern traders to prevent such an intercourse, as it would greatly lessen their consequence and emolument. Superstition, indeed, will in all probability be a lasting barrier against those people ever having a settled communication with our Factory; as few of them choose to travel in countries so remote from their own, under a pretence that the change of air and provisions (though exactly the same to which they are accustomed) are highly prejudicial to their health; and that not one out of three of those who have undertaken the journey, have ever lived to return. The first of these reasons is evidently no more than gross superstition; and though the latter is but too true, it has always been owing to the treachery and cruelty of the Northern Indians, who took them under their protection.

Copper was used extensively by the Yellowknife Indians at the date of Hearne's journey. Hatchets, awls, knives, and kettles were important trade items, although the Chipewyan exchanged these goods for furs at a usurious rate. Hearne realized that any attempt to get the Yellowknife to trade at Churchill was futile since the distance was too great and the Chipewyan would plunder them on the way. The superiority of iron implements and guns gave the Chipewyan an overwhelming advantage over the Yellowknife and Dogrib Indians. The Dogrib to the west of Great Slave Lake lacked iron implements. Although the Chipewyan were at peace with the Cree, Cree aggressive intrusions into
Dogrib territory are noted in Hearne's journal. The exploitation of the abundant beaver preserves about Great Slave Lake by the Dogrib was conditioned by Cree harassment. The Cree had been in the process of gradually occupying the successive fur-bearing areas from the lower Churchill to the Mackenzie and Peace Rivers ever since they had acquired guns beginning in the 1680s. The northern limit of Cree depredations by 1770-1771 would appear to have been Hearne's Anaw'd Lake or Enemy Lake (see Fig. 12) (Morton, 1939:298). To the west, the Cree were already far down the Mackenzie River if the information provided by a Dogrib woman is reliable (Hearne, [180-]). Hearne's attempts to foster increased and direct trade among these distant Athapaskan groups were destined to failure because of the Chipewyan middlemen, the Cree depredations, and the assured penetration of Canadian traders into the Hudson's Bay Company's internal trade network.

Hearne reached Churchill on June 30, 1772 at about the same time as Matthew Cocking was reaching York Factory with his report on the intrusions of the Canadians along the Saskatchewan River. The reports of Hearne and Cocking and the knowledge of Thomas Curry's (Pedlar) successful penetration and interception of a great part of the York Factory trade from the Saskatchewan River during 1771-1772, led Moses Norton, the Governor of Churchill, to suspect that even the secluded trade at Churchill was threatened by the Pedlars (Morton, 1939:299-300).

In 1773, Joseph Hansom was dispatched from Churchill inland along the Northern Indians' customary route (Morton, 1939:289-290). Hansom's primary task was to observe and report on Pedlar activities in the Company's preserve. His circuitous route took him up the Churchill over the height of land to Athapapuskow Lake, down the Sturgeon-weir River and Lakes Namew and Cumber-
land to the Saskatchewan and back along the Grass River route from York Factory. As Hansom returned from the area east of the south branch of the Saskatchewan, he found that Thomas Frobisher, from Montreal, had established a log-house on the east end of Cumberland Lake along Whitey Narrows. Here Hansom spent the winter, being forced to do so since the Pedlars had conscripted all of the Indians to hunt for them as Home Indians. His reconnaissance of Pedlar activities indicated significant in-roads had been gained. The Pedlars had about twenty canoes with Joseph Frobisher and Le Blanc François on the Saskatchewan in the Frobisher-McGill-Blondeau interest. William Bruce, a Frobisher man, was on the "Bloody" (Red) River in the hinterland of the Severn and Albany Rivers, while Maurice Blondeau was on the Saskatchewan (Morton, 1939:305-313). Captain James Tute representing the McBeath and Graham interest was on the Red Deer River. An old Canadian who had spent thirty years among the Cree Indians was also in the area with three canoes equipped by a Montreal merchant named Solomon (Morton, 1939:302-305; Rich, 1959b:66-76). Besides the obvious power of the Company's rivals, Hansom was equally concerned with the practical difficulties of Indian middlemen getting overland to Churchill. His concerns were further exacerbated by the "pillaging" of his Indians by Joseph Frobisher. On Hansom's return in the spring of 1774, he was leading a large party of Indians from the Saskatchewan to the Churchill River via Sturgeon-Weir River. As he crossed Portage du Traite or Frog Portage, he met Joseph Frobisher who was waiting the arrival of Louis Primo (or Primeau), a former Company winterer, interpreter, and guide, who was rallying the Indians in the Frobisher interest. Hansom's Indians were not excluded from this assignment (Rich, 1959b:70). Although Frobisher's interference affected trade at York Factory (Ray, 1974:}
52), the returns at Churchill were not greatly reduced. Returns over a number of years averaged about 13,000 Made Beaver, and in 1774 the returns were still a very respectable 15,846 Made Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/54). Nevertheless, Frobisher's heterodoxy persuaded the Company officials to move rapidly in establishing interior forts. Within a month (June 23, 1774), Samuel Hearne was instructed to establish an inland post at Pine Island Lake (Cumberland House), about sixty miles above the Pas. The Hudson's Bay Company, thus, abandoned its profitable century-old policy of encouraging Indians to bring their furs to the posts on the Bay. The conditions of competition led the Hudson's Bay Company to build many more inland posts in future years. The Pedlars, however, provided a truculent resistance, and were always the aggressors, especially in their eventual expansion into the Athabasca drainage system.

The general atmosphere of the period following 1774 was one that denotes the beginning of intensive, large scale trade to the northwest and the subsequent founding of the Northwest Company. McGill, Frobisher, and Blondeau were outfitted with a large shipment of supplies and trade goods including 1,000 gallons of high wines (4,000 gallons when watered down) for their service and the Indians in 1775 (Morton, 1939:307). Thomas and Joseph Frobisher and Alexander Henry, the Younger, wintered on Beaver Lake with forty men (see Fig. 13). Messrs. Finlay, Paterson, Holmes, and Cadotte wintered at Fort des Prairies where fur returns were exceptionally high. In the spring of 1776, Thomas Frobisher and six men built a fort at Portage du Traite near the temporary site of 1774 and during June 1776, Frobisher ascended the Churchill to meet the incoming Indians from Athabasca (Morton, 1939:319-320). At the entrance to Ile à la Crosse Lake, Frobisher, accompanied by Henry, met
Chipewyan with whom they traded for 12,000 beaver skins and large numbers of otter and marten pelts (Innis, 1930:195). The Chipewyans described to Frobisher and Henry Lake Athabasca, Peace River, Slave River, and Great Slave Lake. This reconfirms that their middlemen activities were drawing furs from a vast area by 1775. The returns intercepted by the Pedlars were substantial. For example, Churchill's returns dropped from 15,846 in 1774 to 7,373 in 1775 (HBC Arch., B. 42/d/54, 55).

The Pedlars were well astride of the fur trade inland from Churchill, York, Severn, and Albany before Peter Pond had gone up to Grand Portage from Fort Daughin in 1776. In addition to Pond's traders in 1776, the Pedlars consisted of two opposing factions including those mentioned above. Peter Pond, as is well-known, was to initiate direct trade within Athabasca. Pond had wintered at Fort Dauphin on the Saskatchewan in 1775-1776 before leaving for the forks of the Saskatchewan in 1776. He passed the winter of 1776 and 1777 slightly above the forks on the north branch of the Saskatchewan. In the spring of 1778, Pond moved to Sturgeon Lake. The fur traders on the Saskatchewan pooled their stock to send Pond to the Athabasca drainage system following the successful trading of Thomas Frobisher in the preceding year (Innis, 1930:196). St. Germain, Waden, McBeath, Paterson, Adhemar, McGill, Frobisher, McTavish, and Oakes were, probably, the important contributing parties in Pond's success (1930:196). His passage to Athabasca was by way of the Churchill, Ile à la Cross Lake, Lake Clear, Buffalo Lake, River La Loche, Lake La Loche, Portage La Loche or Methy Portage, and the Clearwater River to the Athabasca River, where he built Old Establishment or Old Pond Fort about thirty miles from Lake Athabasca (see Fig. 14). Capital requirements and the requisite concentrated production of dried meat and pemmican necessitated the
cooperative arrangements of Pedlars to support and carry on trade from the
Saskatchewan to Athabasca. Pond's expansion into Athabasca was an important
causal factor in the eventual formation of the Northwest Company, involving
the eventual amalgamation of Pedlar interests from 1779 to 1782.

In 1781, instead of returning to Old Establishment, Pond arranged with
Étienne Waden to intercept the Chipewyan coming down the Churchill River.
Waden and Pond were to operate in a common concern; however, both men were
provided by separate supporters and the two could not work in conjunction. In
March 1782, Pond and his clerk, Toussaint le Sieur, killed Waden (Morton,
1939:334-335; Innis, 1930:199; Rich, 1959b:118). Waden's death was one of the
factors that led to the disruption of the copartnership of Pedlar interests.

In the trading season 1782-1783, two groups of Pedlars competed for the
Athabasca trade. By then the smallpox epidemic was raging among the boreal
forest Chipewyan and returns consisted of only seven packs of beaver. Pond
wintered at Old Establishment during 1783-1784 and returned with large
quantities of furs to Grand Portage in 1784. In his absence, a successful
attempt had been made to unite all the inland winterers and all the larger
Montreal capitalists in a common concern. After Pond's return to Athabasca
country in 1785, he helped to establish Laurent Leroux's post at the mouth of
the Slave River in the summer of 1786. Opposition was also present in Atha-
basca during 1785-1786. John Gregory, Peter Pangman, Alexander Mackenzie,
Norman McLeod, and John Ross, dissatisfied with the arrangement of 1784, had
formed a partnership (Innis, 1930:199). John Ross sent Cuthbert Grant to
establish a post in opposition to Leroux in 1786. The severity of opposition
resulted in the murder of John Ross by some of Pond's men in the winter of
1786-1787. The death of Ross precipitated a consolidation of interests in
1787. The amalgamation inaugurated the further expansion of trading posts, the exploration of the Mackenzie River by Alexander Mackenzie in 1789, the development of local trade networks, and the general diminution of Chipewyan middlemen activities.

The Canadian Northern Interior Enterprise: The Struggle for the Trade of the Mackenzie and Peace River Drainage Systems, 1789-1800

For the Dogrib, Hare, and Slave Indians of the Mackenzie River drainage system, the beginning of large scale trade within their territory was to have important consequences. Although a few Dogrib, Hare, and Slave may have occasionally gone to York Factory on Hudson Bay before 1717, it was not until 1786 that they had direct trading relationships with White traders. The purpose of Cuthbert Grant's and Laurent Leroux's posts were to encourage direct trade with these "Far" Indians. The immediate success of this new post (Slave Fort or Old Fort Resolution) at the mouth of Slave River led to the building of a fort farther north. A large number of natives from the country surrounding Lac la Martre were quickly drawn into the Northwest Company's fur trade network, and a temporary post was built on that lake in 1789. Before its establishment, the natives were obliged to make winter journeys lasting almost a month over distance of some 200 miles (over 300 kilometers), back-packing their furs or dragging them on sledges (Masson 1960a:95).

As late as 1789, the year of Alexander Mackenzie's expedition down the river which now bears his name, there were still groups of Dogrib and Slave Indians living along it who possessed no apparent articles derived from trade. Mackenzie (Lamb, 1970:182-183) refers in his journal to Hare Indians he met
four or five miles above the mouth of the Great Bear Lake who were still unacquainted with the use of tobacco and who did not possess iron. They were encouraged to trade with the Dogrib who would act as middlemen. Interestingly, the Mackenzie Eskimo to the north were already trading for iron, presumably through native middlemen who had direct contact with the Russians. The prospects of trade led to the construction by Roderick Mackenzie in 1790, of a winter post on a small island at the entrance to the Mackenzie River. The beginnings of a distinctive spatial structure of trading posts ringed by local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas is in evidence for the first time within Athapaskan territory.

Through rather halting beginnings, regular trade was established at Lac la Martre in 1793, to acquire command of the river. Another post (Old Fort) was erected eighty miles below Great Slave Lake, on the right bank of the Mackenzie River, by Duncan Livingston in 1796. Over a three year period, a profitable trade was established with the Dogrib and Slave, and by 1799 Livingston was attempting to extend it to the Eskimo.

The fur-trade journals of 1800 and later contain conflicting reports on the ensuing deaths of Duncan Livingston, three Canadians and an interpreter. In most of them and in current history books, it is suggested that the Eskimo killed Livingston’s party about eight days march north of Old Forty (Innis, 1930:201; Masson, 1960a:95). It is fortunate that a differing, and more detailed account of their murder was recorded in one of the few surviving Northwest Company journals, formerly kept at Great Slave Lake.

On 15 December 1800, a Chipewyan trading chief, Grand Blanc, gave James Porter, another trader of the Northwest Company, an account of Livingston’s death. Although the narrative is not always clear, it is apparent from it
that Eskimos were not responsible for the murder of his party. Rather, Grand Blanc's story suggests that Livingston's Slave guides were the perpetrators. The Slave were often called Beaver Indians in the early journals and letters of the Northwest Company. This rare account of Livingston's death runs as follows (Provincial Archives of Alberta, Porter, J. 1800):

...Note—Cheenalize or Grand Blanc gives this very strange relation as follows that the Red Knives [Yellowknife] who past the last winter and part of the proceeding Summer among the Beaver Indians [Slave] of McKenzie River had seen the place where the deceased Mr. Livingston and his people had been killed & that they found a great deal of Powder Shot & Ball Part of which they Brought along with them the latter articles was scattered over the ground & the Powder was covered over with a piece of Bark of the Large Canoe of which were several with part of their Sails, Borke & Cut to small Pieces & Small pieces of Cloth that he calls Chief Cloth which appears to be some of Mr. L[Livingston's] cloth[e]'s that they had Cut up there he also says that it was not the Esquimaux that killed them Because they were never known to have been so far up River for according to his account it is not a very Great Distance below the Fort at a place where there is a Great many Islands in the River, he says the Beaver Indians account is entirely false & the wounds he had thro the flesh or rather the Skin of his arm had been done by himself to make it appear as if he had been wounded by an enemy with arrows the better to conceal his Crime as an accomplice of the Bloody action—he likewise adds that the other two Indians who were along with them & reported to be killed are still alive & that one of them has a Gun & Kettle that he took away after the action the father of the same young man told this to the Red Knives who reside near Lac la Merde [Lac la Martre] that he told his son not to take away those things that belonged to the dead white people because they might bring him Bad Luck & Perhaps kill him but he would not be persuaded and carried them off nevertheless he's still alive with out any evil Consequences from the Gun & Kettle. the Red Knives would have told this to Mr. Thomson last spring but he having Pillaged their furs & treated them roughly they were afraid to Speak thinking /thro their simplicity/ if he was to know that they had the ammunition that belonged to his dead relations that he would be still more exasperate against them consequently they Set off to their land & took the amm't along with them it is Probable they may Come here in the Course of this winter which if they do we shall Know the truth of the above assertion

For the most part, the foregoing lengthy narrative, besides correcting a standardized historical error, reflects the unsettled conditions of the era. Traders penetrating into the vast region north of Lake Athabasca were beset
with innumerable difficulties during the late eighteenth century. Spurred on by the intense competition of the fur trade, and encumbered by lack of satisfactory means of transportation and communication, the traders were forced to rely to a large extent on the local Indians for supplies and provisions. In this area, reliance on the Indians for supports and furs was not always possible since the fur trade often led to intertribal hostilities as was earlier discussed. As a result, the traders were obliged to organize bands of trading post hunters who supplemented the quantities of pemmican secured from the Saskatchewan and Peace Rivers (Tyrrell, 1934:452).

The effects of the expansion of the fur trade into the Peace River drainage system were just as pronounced. The Sekani Indians on the headwaters of the Parsnip River were receiving iron through an elaborate trade network via Carrier and Nahanny middlemen from the Pacific Coast by 1793 (Lamb, 1970:287). Both Pond and Mackenzie noted the former importance of Cree middlemen in the area of the Peace River. Before Northwest Company posts were established, the Cree were in a strategic middlemen position with the Beaver Indians with whom they traded at exorbitant prices. Interestingly enough, the circumstances of trade and trade rivalries created a situation whereby warfare and trade coexisted. Not only had the Cree driven the Chipewyan and Slave northward, but they had also driven the Beaver Indians from their territory around M'athy Portage by 1765. Mackenzie (Lamb, 1970:271, 279-280) reported that Cree intrusions along the Peace River war trail had penetrated even above the junction of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers (see Chapter Three, pp. 152-155). War was still being prosecuted by the Cree in 1793 in this area as well as along the Mackenzie as late as 1791 (Tyrrell, 1934:498-499). However, the warfare as practiced by the Cree was at its height from the mid-1770s
until posts were established along the Peace River and the area of Great Slave Lake. Although the Beaver still feared their Cree enemies in 1793, they were now well armed with European guns and could defend themselves against Cree depredations. Moreover, the power position of the Cree had been debilitated by the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782. The Chipewyan by virtue of the interruption of their former middlemen role in the territory north of the Churchill River had begun to expand southward into former Cree territory, occupying a stronger middlemen position along the North Peace River. Under these circumstances of trade relationships, the Beaver became antagonistic toward the Chipewyan.

Posts had been established along the Peace River as early as 1786. Under Peter Pond's direction, a post was built near the present Fort Vermilion above Vermilion Falls during that year. Other establishments were built below Carcajou and further up the river by 1792 to replace Pond's fort. In 1792, Mackenzie built a post at the forks of the Peace and Smoky Rivers before his journey to the Pacific in 1793. In 1794, Old Beaver River Fort (Rocky Mountain Fort) was built and a continuous trade was maintained until 1805. It is often assumed that the latter fort was not constructed until 1798 (Innis, 1930:204), but John Stuart's Western Caledonia journal (Fort McLeod or Trout Lake Post) of 1823 recounts his early affairs in this region (HBC Arch., B. 119/b/1):

...I got the other Canoes to cross to the Island and we encamped on the site of the Old Beaver [Moberly] River Fort, first established in 1794 and where ten years afterwards I wintered....

The only existing Northwest Company journals of this post are from 1799 to 1800, but it is clear that the post was in existence earlier. Journal passages suggest that John Finlay wintered here during 1796-1797 before his
exploration of the Finley River in 1797 (Wallace, 1929:40; PAA, 74-1). It is also evident that a pattern of local, middleman, and indirect trade areas was in existence soon after 1786 as we shall see. The journal does not provide much information on these trading relationships, except the names of well-established trading chiefs including Jimatush, the Cigne chief, and L'Homme Seul.

Some details on trade areas and Beaver/Chipewyan rivalry for this period may be gathered from the 1798-1802 journal of John Thompson (PAA, 7401). Thompson's journal of a post on the Lower Peace, known as Grand Marais, adds information on the above subjects as well as the pending era of intense competition. The latter subject is outlined first.

Following the Jay Treaty of 1794, a number of Montreal firms such as Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy, and Forsyth, Richardson & Co., which had lost their trading areas to the Americans, diverted their attention to the more profitable areas of the northwest. By 1799, the Northwest Company partners were reaching the end of their seven year agreement of 1792. Alexander Mackenzie had been a party to this agreement; however, at the close of his contract in 1800, he entered into a partnership agreement with Forsyth and Ogilvy to form the "New Northwest Company," commonly recognized as the XY Company. The XY Company was to offer intense opposition to the Northwest Company. Thompson was directly affected by the new partnership, and his journal passages of 1800-1802 represent a rare XY Company record.

The 1798-1799 Northwest Company journal of John Thompson includes sketchy details on the complexity of intratribal and intertribal trade rivalries in the local and middlemen zones. The following are some selected passages from Thompson quoted at length to illustrate his difficulties (PAA, 74-1):
October 18, 1798...must go in land to hunt no fresh provisions at post—Inds. news from Peace river...from the upper Fort [Rocky Mountain Fort] bad news from that Quarter a War Party having kill or wounded several of the Beaver Indians....

December 9, 1798...I am now fully convinced that a Chipewaans is not capable to Hunt for a Fort. Our Hunters Returned one of the Best amongst the few Chepewans of this place yet he is not able to keep himself from starving, altho there is Plenty of Animals....

February 5, 1799...In the forenoon Two Chepewean arrived gave them each 4 inches of a Dram. Slept one night on their way here they came from the English Chief whose band consists of thirteen men, he has sent them here for Ammunition Tob & Rum & to know whether he & his young men may come here to pay the Credit they took last fall at Fort Chipewean] ...[told to trap whole credit before they come...They complain much for want of Ammunition....

February 10, 1799...In the evening Two Chepewean Boys arrived in a great fright, they come from the English Chief, who has sent Them here to inform us that they are Pursued by the Enemies, whose Tracks & Fire they have seen, they say that their Parents are by this time all killed & request of one to send French men for their skins, as otherwise the wolves will destroy them all....

February 13, 1799...followed the tracks that caused so much Fear which in the end turned out to be that of the Beaver Indians It is the Teton & his Band....

It is clear that shortly after 1794 a situation existed in the Lower Peace River drainage system in which trading posts were already becoming ringed with at least local trade areas. Thompson's Grand Marais journal gives details on four different parties of Chipewyan and one party of Beaver who were involved in trapping, trading, and post provisioning. The leaders of the trapping parties included Quellichow, Nailyeiro, English, White Partridge, and The Hands. The latter three leaders were Chipewyan although it is not possible to determine which of the first two names represents the Beaver group, and Teton, another leader, should also be included in this trading system. The activities of Chipewyan in this area was largely a continuation of prior roles attained elsewhere through contact. Their presence,
as trade specialists, was necessary during the initial phase of trading post establishment, even though it engendered intertribal feuding lasting long after the Competitive Trade Era terminated. Such were the problems which confronted traders in the Peace River region prior to direct opposition that began in 1800.

The Hudson's Bay Company's Expansion into the Athabasca Lake and Peace River Region, 1769-1800

The rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company had continued unabated throughout the time that the Northwest Company was expanding into the region north and west of Lake Athabasca. Generally, the Hudson's Bay Company could do little to combat this, so indomitable and well equipped was their opposition. Moreover, following the success of the Frobisher campaign between 1775-1777 of intercepting Hudson's Bay Company furs and Peter Pond's success in Athabasca during 1778-1779, the disastrous smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782 was a decapitating blow to Hudson's Bay Company trade from Athabasca. The full measure of the smallpox disaster is difficult to determine. Hearne has suggested that nine-tenths of the Northern Indians were destroyed by it, but his point of reference seems to have been the pitiable situation at Fort Churchill. Doubtless, the epidemic was severe enough to demarcate a major sociocultural shift in the Indian way of life for many groups. The desolation of this disease and others will be discussed later.

The epidemic of smallpox and its consequences were followed by the capture of Fort Churchill by the French in 1782. During the last stage of the War of American Independence, France had sided with the colonies. In 1782, Jean Francois Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse, a French admiral, invaded Hudson
Bay and captured Fort Churchill, blowing up the fortifications. York Factory was also burned to the ground. These events, combined with the death of Matonabbee, completely interrupted trade at Churchill. Mackenzie's general history of the fur trade describes the situation (Lamb, 1970:131):

Till the year 1782, the people of Athabasca sent or carried their furs regularly to Fort Churchill, Hudson's Bay; and some of them have, since that time, repaired thither, notwithstanding they could have provided themselves with all the necessaries which they required. The difference of the price set on goods here and at that factory, made it an object with the Chepewyans, to undertake a journey of five or six months, in the course of which they were reduced to the most painful extremities, and often lost their lives from hunger and fatigue. At present, however, this traffic is in a great measure discontinued, as they were obliged to expend in the course of their journey, that very ammunition which was its most alluring object.

The conditions under which the Hudson's Bay Company could succeed through an organization of Indian middlemen was undermined by these events. Although the English regained their posts in 1783, the Company continued to be plagued by a succession of disasters. For instance, even though William Tomison brought down over 6,000 Made Beaver from Cumberland to York Fort, the supply ship was late in arriving (Rich, 1959b:114). Tomison had to return inland unequipped and so was forced to purchase ammunition and supplies from the Pedlars. Although the supply vessel arrived, the goods and ammunition remained in the store, and the inland posts lay in a state of inertia. As a result of these historical events, the Company paid no dividends for the years 1783, 1784 and 1785. It took three years of renewed activities of reestablishing posts to recover from the ruinous conditions of 1781-1783. By 1786, however, the Company was in a secure enough position for David Thompson to establish Manchester House on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River, 425 miles (680 km) above Cumberland House. South Branch House was built on the south bank of the Saskatchewan River about sixty-five
miles (104 km) above the forks in 1787. The Gros Ventres or Falls Indians plundered Manchester House in the autumn of 1793, and South Branch House was destroyed by these Indians on June 24, 1794. The renewed aggressive eruption of Company men was noted by Alexander Mackenzie in a letter dated at Rivière Maligne, September 1, 1787 (Masson, 1960a:19-20) and by Angus Shaw in a letter dated at Lac d'Orignal, December 16, 1789 (1960a:31-32). After 1790, Philip Turner, in company with Peter Fidler and Malchom Ross, spent several winters (1790-1792) exploring for possible Company routes to Athabasca and Great Slave Lakes. The Athapascow journal (HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1) of Malchom Ross (1790-1792) provides some understanding of Company problems, opposition, and fur trader/Indian relationships. Selected passages from Ross's journal illustrate these:

September 21, 1790...put up in the Track [Woody Lake] that heads to Churchill from the Inland Country we passed 2 Carrying places one of 90 yards & one of 370 [Pot Hole portages] where there was some Northern Indians formerly used to take at Churchill....

December 19, 1790, Ile à la Crosse...gaining acquaintance with those Indians [4 Chipewyan men with wives] we are strangers too—& does not understand any thing, of their Language & at the same time the Canadians understands & can tell them many things against our proceedings, which nothing but Lensity & Presents will overcome....

Through December 20-29, 1790, the incoming Chipewyan Indians were received with presents consisting of three point blankets, tobacco, brandy, and knives. They were generally unhappy with Mr. Small, the Northwest Company trader, whose rate was twenty beaver for a gun and three for an ice chisel. The Chipewyan knew of no other Hudson's Bay post except Churchill and wished to have one in their country. Ross was informed that trading parties were going to Churchill in the summer of 1791, and he sent two Canadians to intercept them. In March 1791, incoming Chipewyan were described by Ross as being nearly starved to death. Ross gives the following details of Indian and
Hudson's Bay Company activities (HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1, folio 17-27):

April 5, 1791...2 of the Indian men & their Families that arrived the first Inst, went of and say they intend going to Churchill the next year, with their next winters Hunt; for all this years Labour, they have hardly so much ammunition, as will keep them one month in the Summer. I gave them a little Tobacco & ammunition for which they was very thankful....

April 28, 1791...I engaged 2 u chep y wyan Indian men to pilot us to the 'Thapescow, I fitted them out with Knives ammunition & some other necessary's to go and build canoes....

June 2, 1791 Buffalo Lake...2 Indians accompanied the Canadians tells us the ground is all burnt upon the other side of the Theen't nelly note neth or (Methy carrying place) where any provisions was to be got, the Indians used used to be there is all gone down to the Athapescow as they could live upon their own ground....[does not know what they will do as result of lack of provisions]

June 12, 1791...these Jepowyans is such a race of Indolent people that whenever an Animal is killed they cannot be got to move from the place till nearly the whole is destroyed....

June 25, 1791...passed a Canadian House [Old Fort] deserted sometime since it is the House that Peter Pond settled in 1778 upon E side of the river, a branch upon W side about 1/4 mile from the House towards the Beaver Indians (or Chan not eenah) Country a tribe that none of your Honour's Servants has beheld; by report bordering near the Stony mountain, by what I can learn from the Indians great returns is made from there & most of the provisions that the Canadians use is the produce solely of that Nation....

June 29, 1791...There is not any Indians at this Place that can Pilot us any farther than the Slave Lake (or Thlee chag gah ooah) neither did I expect to find any at this season of the Year. for pretty good care has been taken by the Canadians to have everybody out of the way that they imagine would afford us any Intelligence or Information In my humble opinion nothing will be made of this expedition; so much at your Honor's heart until a Trading party takes place and that at 2 Diff. settlements; this is the place of Intelligence but not for Provisions The Canadians carries on their Trade in a very orderly method; they have 5 settlements upon this side of the Methy carrying: viz 2 up the Peace River one very near the Stony Mountain the make great returns from that places also a vast quantity of Provisions from the Lower Settlements, course from this Lake....

The preceding extracts provide information on the routine of post life, the struggle to obtain provisions, the extent of Northwest Company expansion, and a fur trader's reflections on the Chipewyan. Throughout June of 1791, Ross
complained several times about the Northwest Company traders' attempts to interrupt his intelligence gathering. These activities later became a characteristic of company rivalry in the area. Although the Cree are often mentioned in the journal as post provisioners, Ross was more concerned with the Chipewyan activities around Great Slave Lake in which he was led to understand was the very center of Chipewyan country, abounding in furs and provisions. The Peace River was described by Ross as a lucrative area (August 19, 1791; HBC Arch., B. 9/a/l, folio 32):

...arrived [3 canoes] from the Peace river, loaded with Provisions; this is their second Cargo this year from that Place; there cannot be less than 7500 lbs. of Provisions; indeed that is a remarkable fine Country for provisions both Summer & Winter as, also, for Furs—we was employed carrying wood....

Philip Turner's journal for 1792 also reports on the potential of the Peace River area for provisioning. According to Turner (Tyrrell, 1934:452), the Canadians could send three men in a single canoe to the Peace and fetch down two tons of dried provisions in one load. The canoe operated most of the summer supplying the Athabasca settlement and the northern posts. Fresh and dried buffalo meat was also secured from the Beaver Indians for liquor. The Chipewyan were not inclined to trade their provisions for liquor at this early date; however, powder and shot were used to draw provisions from them.

It was generally agreed upon by both Turner and Ross that a post on Athabasca Lake could only survive if it was supported by a subsidiary post on the Peace River. Subsistence also was a basic problem for Indians and traders during the months of December through February in the region north of Lake Athabasca. Nevertheless, the information gathered on trade returns for 1792 suggests that Athabasca Lake was a good center for trade (Tyrrell, 1934:456):
Slave Lake...54 Packs and much more expected this trade is about half Martins  
Peace River about...150 Packs little except Beaver  
Athapascon Lake...about 90 Packs mostly Beaver  
D° River...25 Packs D°

In all, about 20,000 Made Beaver in furs, a large proportion of them marten, were extracted from this area. In Table 10 the approximate Canadian rate of exchange is given by Turner (1934:451):

**TABLE 10**

**HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADE VALUES FOR 1791-1792**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Athapascon Made Beaver</th>
<th>Peace River Made Beaver</th>
<th>Slave Lake Made Beaver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Pr Pint</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun</td>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder</td>
<td>Pr 1b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knives</td>
<td>No 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankets</td>
<td>3 point 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12 or 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>Pr yard</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 300 Indians traded at Lake Athabasca. Even the Yellowknife Indians or Ross's "Tall chu ap nat eenah" were actively engaged in trade with the Canadians during the spring of 1792. There also are frequent critical comments in Turner's and Ross's journals regarding the Canadians' methods of trading and the treatment of Chipewyan women. Such activities, no doubt, produced unrest among the Chipewyan, as witness Ross's comment (HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1):
April 28, 1792... The Jepowyan Indians complains very much of the injustice done them by the Canadians in taking their women by force—some of the Canadians keeps no less than 3 women & several 2—an Instance happened this Day of the Injustice of the Canadians in the Traffic of the Fair Sex—a Canadian that had 2 women before, went to their Tents and took a young woman away by force, which was the only support of her aged Parents; The Old Indian her Father interfered he was knocked down & dragged some Distance by the hair of his head, altho' so Infirm with age, that he is obliged to walk with a stick to support himself—such is the goings on in this Quarter, all this is encouraged by their masters, who often stands as Pimps to procure women for their men, all to get the men's Wages from them....

Philips Turner's journal (1934:449) of May 2, 1792 adds that the Masters seized women for their husband's or father's debts then sold them to their men for 500 to 2,000 Livres. Frequently their guns and tents were also expropriated. The conditions were ripe for Hudson's Bay Company opposition in the area since the Indians had begun to seek assurances that traders would settle, probably so that they could avoid such harsh treatment.

Philip Turner, Mackintosh Ross, and Peter Fidler were experienced and well-acquainted with the necessary requirements to oppose the Northwesterners in Athabasca. Unfortunately, Joseph Colen and William Tomison, then prominent in the affairs of the Company at York, were indifferent to their proposals for Athabasca that included the diligent adoption of the Northwest system of provisioning and supplying. Company organizational policies continued to be adapted to the posts along Hudson Bay where canoe loads of supplies and provisions were dispersed to the interior each spring. The limitations of these policies were obvious since it was not possible to extend beyond the Saskatchewan and into Athabasca. Under William Tomison, the "Inland Chief," trade was established to the Saskatchewan through the construction of several posts including Gordon House up the Hill River in 1794, Fairford House one mile below the mouth of Reindeer River in 1795, and Bedford House on the west shore of Reindeer Lake in 1796 (Rich, 1959b:143). The latter was built to
replace Fairford House. In 1796, David Thompson left Bedford House to survey from Reindeer Lake to Lake Athabasca. Needless to say, the Company provided little man-power and supplies and at the end of his 1796-1797 survey, he received a letter from Joseph Colen, the "Resident" at York, telling him that however extensive the yet unknown countries, his surveys could no longer be sanctioned (Rich, 1959b:151). The rigidity of Company policies led to Thompson's defection to the service of the Northwest Company. The first of a series of posts in Athabasca was not initiated until 1802 when Peter Fidler established Nottingham House at the west end of Lake Athabasca and Thomas Swain was sent to establish Mansfield House in the Peace River. Through the first two decades of 1800, there gradually developed an elaborate supporting system of transportation, communication, and management, which allowed the Company to compete with greater effectiveness and intensity in this vast trading hinterland.

Summary

The effects of the fur trade during the Early Fur Trade Era on the economy and on the social and spatial arrangements of Canadian Athapaskan populations would have been significant. The former organization of Chipewyan middlemen altered considerably following the early European exploring expeditions and the establishment of trading posts in the region north and south of Lake Athabasca. By 1790, the construction of posts north of Great Slave Lake and along the Mackenzie River had begun to establish a less expansive spatial structure of trading posts ringed by local, middlemen and indirect trade areas among the Dogrib, Hare, and Slave. It is clear that shortly after 1794 the same situation was present among the Beaver and Sekani
in the Peace River drainage system. Besides a growing economic dependency upon the local traders, these populations were drawn into intertribal warfare with the Chipewyan who by virtue of the interruption of their former middle-men role were beginning to expand their territorial boundaries south and southwestward. The effects of intense intertribal competition, which began in the protohistoric period, were seen to continue as a disruptive influence on Athapaskan groups throughout the Early Fur Trade Era. The forthcoming Competitive Trade Era, a period of violent competition among the various competing fur companies, was to create further changes in the Athapaskan way of life.
NOTES

1. The agreement was between Todd, McGill & Co. and Forsyth, Richardson & Co. The two companies agreed to form a Bank at Montreal for transacting a common business for a period of seven (1792-1799) years (Innis, 1930: 416-417).
CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMPETITIVE TRADE ERA (1800-1821)

The competitive trade era was, on the whole, a period of violent rivalry among the Northwest Company, the XY Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company. During the early fur trade era, the Northwest Company had been subjected to intermittent and sometimes unrestrained competition with somewhat novitiate competing enterprises in the Athabasca and Mackenzie Districts. The eventual coalescence of two small rival companies, which included John Ogilvy and John Mure and the legal firm of Phyn, Inglis and Company of London, and their six winterers, under the direction of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, resulted in competition of unremitting turbulence after 1800. The new enterprise passed under the name of the New Northwest Company or XY Company.

The XY Company's policy reflects a special effort to secure the rich fur-bearing grounds of the Athabasca region. Besides establishing depots at Île à la Crosse and Green Lake, the Company built posts contiguous with those of the Northwest Company in Athabasca. These included depots adjacent to Fort Chipewyan, the Great Slave posts, Fort Liard on the Mackenzie River, and on Great Bear Lake. In the Peace River area, it maintained two posts by 1800 and eventually four were established by 1803-1804, while the Northwest Company operated five: Rocky Mountain Fort, Horse Shoe House, Fort Vermilion, Grand Marais, and Fort du Tremble. Pelmican from the Peace River country was needed to support the wintering parties on Lake Athabasca and to provision outgoing canoes. The provisioners consisted of fur trade personnel and various parties of Chipewyan, Sekani, Beaver, Cree, Iroquois, and Saulteaux.
Trade rivalry also produced other social changes. The intense competition among the various companies resulted in a proliferation of somewhat localized trading post bands. Within each trading post band, there were smaller trapping parties of closely related individuals under the direction of a Company appointed chief.\(^1\) Presents and Chiefs' Outfits were given freely by the various companies to acquire the loyalty of leading Indians. At times, Indians were mistreated by traders if they attempted to change their allegiance. Mistreatment of Indians seems to be more apparent during this era than at any other time. As in the past, however, disease continued to take its toll of the various Canadian Athapaskan populations. Often it was accompanied by starvation among groups who either had been forced into biotic zones characterized by cyclical resource failure or had become fully involved in trapping activities at the expense of subsistence tasks. We will also see that the Canadian Athapaskans' dependence upon trade goods, especially upon firearms and ammunition, was growing. In addition, the period is marked by the increased use of alcohol, which had a detrimental effect upon the Indian population. An examination of historical documents pertaining to the Peace River, Athabasca, and Mackenzie Districts will demonstrate that the fur trade conditions were generating continuous and cumulative sociocultural change among the various Canadian Athapaskan groups.

XY and Northwest Company Rivalries: 1800-1804

The era of rivalry, as mentioned above, was characterized by a steady increase in the use of liquor, especially after 1800. During the 1790s, the consumption among the Canadian Athapaskans and the Cree had averaged 9,600 gallons. It is estimated that the consumption had increased to 10,098 gallons
in 1800 (Rich, 1959b:228-229). By 1803, the Old Company was using 16,299 gallons and their opposition over 21,299 gallons (1959b:229). The intensity of competition during the 1800-1804 period is revealing when compared to the average consumption in the years 1806-1810 of 9,700 gallons (Davidson, 1918:91). The impact on the Canadian Athapaskan Indians is difficult to determine, although Willard-Ferdinand Wentzel, in the service of the Northwest Company, observed that competition led to drunkenness, murder, theft, besides many other vices (Masson, 1960a:96).

Liquor was not the only trade commodity that was dispersed extravagantly in an effort to win the loyalty of Indians. Presents of Captain's or Chief's outfits were given in a strenuous attempt to gain support of influential Indians. Wentzel's March 27, 1807 letter to Roderick McKenzie reflects the character of the contest between the rivals and its ruinous nature to the trade and the Indians (Masson, 1960a:96):

   With respect to the Indians, the care and attention that is paid (I was going to say to their persons) to them for the sake of their skins. renders them much more civilized and cunning. By this, they take a footing which, with time, induces them to commit actions which otherwise they would not have dared to mention. Indolence, robbery and murder are the consequences of an opposition in trade: people would suppose it would rouse their attention to industry, having goods at a lower price, but far to the contrary; drunkenness, idleness and vice are proffered; they are, indeed, of a beggarly disposition. Thus no good can be derived from the turbulent struggles of opposition in this country; it destroys trade, creates vice, and renders people crafty, ruins good morals, and almost totally abolishes every humane sentiment in both Christian and Indian breast.

   A considerable decline in fur returns was experienced by all parties due to the competition and also due to the death of many natives (Masson, 1960a:95). According to Peter Fidler (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 3), during the summer of 1803, thirty-seven Chipewyan hunters died in the vicinity of Fort Chipewyan from a disorder that Fidler describes as "...a stomach complaint
with great lassitude and shortness of breathing—generally carrying the afflicted off in less than 14 Days...." The resultant diminution of returns due to these conditions are obvious from the available figures. In 1799-1800 the Northwest Company extracted 648 packs of ninety lbs. each with fifteen half loaded canoes (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 23), while in 1803, the returns amounted to only 182 packs from twenty-eight loaded canoes. The XY Company's returns were even lower. Each year between 1800 and 1804 they sent in ten canoes: returns were two packs in 1800, ten in 1801, thirty-one in 1802, and eighty-four in 1803. The conditions of competition as described by Peter Fidler are similar to Wentzel's report. His September 12, 1803 journal entry tells us (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 4, 10):

...Found Mr. Swain here & every one with him that ought to have been up Peace River he went up there in June remained there a few days & returned back here. This disappoints us much for Provisions—as that is the only place to get any at for the journey out in the Spring. Fortunately we have a little of our Provisions remaining we brought with us from Isle a la Crosse—while will serve to send away 2 Canoes for the Slave Lake—as all the Jepewyans or the greater part of them are at that place—and as there is every prospect of making a few furrs there, more so than up Peace River it will be the best for the Companys interest to send there in preference to the other place—as the Indians there is such very great drinkers & they are so liberely supplied by both old and new Company that they will kill but few furrs—until regulations are made between these Companys—as at present since they have been here, they are showing whom can give away the most goods & the lastest to the Indians—for nothing—as not 1/3 of the furrs are now killed by them that was when the Old Co. was alone, with only 5 Canoes of Goods—that they now do with 20 Canoes such is the wide difference in such a short time.

And on December 23, 1803,

...Mr. Kennedy & 3 Canadians of the New Co. arrived from Clear Lake & confirms the former account of the Inds. killing very few furrs—indeed they have now very little occasion to work as they are liberally supplied betwixt those two companies with Goods at a meere nothing—& until some arrangements are made or one of the Parties giving way—still less may be expected from these Indians than they even at present kill. Mr. Kennedy says that all the Indians belonging both sides have not killed as yet above 120 MBv- which is a mere nothing for upward of 40 Indian hunters.
The cost of maintaining the Athabasca District and the diminishing returns are illustrated in part by Fidler's journal. The increased bullying, plundering, and cajoling of the Indians by the XY Company and Northwest Company led to their revolt in 1804. That year, the Chipewyan killed two men and their families at Fond du Lac on the eastern side of Lake Athabasca and four men were killed within five miles of Fort Chipewyan (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 11). The Chipewyan, through fear of the Canadians, did not trade in Athabasca during this season, but traveled to Churchill instead. The bulk of Northwest Company trade returns for 1803-1804 were secured by the Iroquois in the Peace River region. According to Fidler, the Old Company employed 195 men that year to the north of Methy Portage. They extracted 315 packs of eighty-five lbs. each, of which seventy-six were trapped by 110 Iroquois up the Peace River. The skins received from the Iroquois were paid for with money since very few trade goods were available (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 21). The circumstances of this protracted trade rivalry led to the union of the Northwest Companies on November 5, 1804, but not before the death of the Northwest Company master at Great Bear Lake during a quarrel with an XY Company man over Indians.

The Hudson's Bay Company and the Opposition: 1800-1806

The Hudson's Bay Company was not absent during these years of severe and even homicidal rivalry. The results of competition were not nearly as severe for the Company since it was a matter of Company policy to avoid physical conflict. Peter Fidler and Thomas Swain were constantly instructed to avoid outright conflict with their rivals in Athabasca. They received fixed wages, and there was no incentive to risk the intense competition necessary to secure
large returns. During the 1803-1804 season, Thomas Swain received only 218 Made Beaver at Great Slave Lake while Fidler received about 256 Made Beaver. The Hudson's Bay Company men were outnumbered by five to one. Besides these obvious problems, the natives were not receptive to the Hudson's Bay Company's presence. When Fidler established Nottingham House in 1802, he attempted to induce the Indians to trade with him by giving them credits far cheaper than the other companies. It would appear that the failure of the Hudson's Bay Company to establish posts following the survey of 1791-1792, as promised, had left the natives dubious of the Company's intentions. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the Company could undermine the opposition when the latter were giving the Indians cut-rate standards of trade. Fidler noted on March 31, 1803 that the opposition made the Indians pay two beaver for one gunflint, or five balls, and two beaver for a knife while the greatest chief only got ten and one half pints of mixed rum for nothing four years before, but during 1803 everyone received a "...Chief's Coat and 8 Gallen Kg. also of rum for nothing" (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 19). Furthermore, the Indians were intimated by the opposition, and if they were known to trade elsewhere they were sure to receive a good drubbing (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 9).

In the Peace River area during 1802-1803, Thomas Swain was not able to successfully establish Mansfield House among the Beaver Indians. Although he was granted permission to build a post on the Peace by the Beaver Indians, he could not obtain post hunters because of his inexperience with the Beaver and because of Northwest Company interventions. As he states (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2, folio 6):

January 10, 1803...We are obliged to leave this place for want of a good Hunter and provisions,—as in the fall when I arrived here—the Indians was all Strangers to me, and I did not know a good hunter by a bad one, as I was informed it was Customary when Strangers came to New
Lands that they should acquaint the Chief of the Tribe, that they was in need of a Hunter to supply the Fort during the Winter with fresh Provisions—In Consequence I followed the Customs and begged the Chief to supply me with a good one and he gave me a young man telling me at the same time he was a good Hunter, but we soon found to the Contrary, but too late to help ourselves, the NW Company sent all the Indians that is capable of hunting (excepting those engaged to hunt for their own Fort and a few old men) to a Settlement of theirs lower down the River where they have no opponents—In short the NW Company has done all that laid in their power to stop us from Building here, and they do not scruple to tell us we have no business in this part of the Country—....

The Northwest Company traders circulated unfavourable stories about their opposition, and the Indians did not always allow the construction of new posts. On October 6, 1802, six XY Company traders were ordered not to ascend the Peace River. The party under James Keith was told by the Beaver that if "... they offered to go up the river they [Beaver] would kill them, their reason was owing to some Disorder that came amongst their Country people this Summer, which killed 10 of them, and they said it was the New Company that brought bad Indians amongst them which was the occasion of the Deaths..." (HBC Arch., B. 42/a/2, folio 1). It should be noted that the Beaver Indians were generally suspicious and unreceptive to trader activities. Only a few years had elapsed since the Cree had forcefully usurped Beaver territory, making the Beaver occupy Sekani territory. The Chipewyan and Iroquois were now involved in trapping and provisioning throughout the Peace River region. Also, the wide-spread use of alcohol among the Beaver had exacerbated their low level of tolerance toward intensive fur trade activities. Mansfield House was thus established primarily as a provisioning post, and failed because of these circumstances. Swain and his men returned to Nottingham House on January 23, 1803 in a starving condition (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 15).

Fidler's Nottingham House journal suggests that conditions for significant inroads in the Peace River area were not totally unfavorable. The Beaver
-200-

-Indians were reported to have favorable knowledge of the Churchill people.
Formerly all the Beaver Indians used to go down to Churchill to trade although
only three old men were still living that had made this trip (HBC Arch., B.
39/a/1, folio 9). The reception reported by Thomas Swain is not as positive
as is indicated by his journal entry for January 10, 1803 (HBC Arch., B. 224/
a/1, folio 9; HBC Arch., B. 41/a/2, folio 6):

...they [Northwest Company] do not scruple to tell us we have no business
in this part of the Country—The Beaver Indians do not imitate the
mountainers or Chipewyans in the least, as the former is a brave bold
Nation, although not above two hundred men in number from the age of 15
years to 70—which is scattered from the entrance of Peace River to the
Rocky Mountain in which space the NW Company has 5 Settlements. They
are very troublesome at the Houses when in liquor and wish to have every
thing they ask given to them for nothing if denied they are affronted,
and wish to take things wright or wrong, they are always armed Drunk or
sober as it is a Custom among them to go with a large Bayonet in there
hand, a Knife hid under there Stockings and sometimes two—but when they
are sober they are very quiet and behave very well to the white people,
but will not allow any white man take there furs or Provisions from them
by force, but will give it to anyone they please.

The failure of Mansfield House as a provisioning post forced Fidler and
his men of Nottingham to rely on fish, the greater part of which were suckers
(HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 11). The winter of 1802-1803 was unusually
severe, and the Indians and traders alike suffered from hunger throughout
Athabasca. When some of the Chipewyan on Great Slave Lake fell victim to
hunger, the opposition traders were nearly forced to abandon their houses on
the lake. Interestingly, the New Company traders reported that buffalo and
moose were abundant; however, the Chipewyan are "...none of them good Hunters
—they principally depend upon fish caught at the Slave Lake—and that they
have 25 miles to bring them to their house which is situated that distance
from the Lake up the Slave river..." (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 22). The
buffalo were, no doubt, in the vicinity of Buffalo Lake southwest of Fort
Chipewyan. Also, moose were still abundant along Slave River during the early years of this era.

In February 1803, Fidler made plans for the establishment of a post on Great Slave Lake (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/1, folio 16). It was necessary to dispatch Swain to Peace River to re-establish Mansfield House for provisioning purposes. Swain returned to Nottingham after spending only a few days up the Peace River during June 1803 (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 4). The Peace River appeared to Swain to be inactive for both opposition companies, and he had lost his Indian hunter to the Old Company, which threatened to take the man's wife away. He was, thus, forced to return to Nottingham (HBC Arch., B. 41/a/1). Fidler was concerned about provisions since the Peace River was the only place from which provisions were obtained to support Nottingham and the journey out in the spring. Nevertheless, with the provisions from Ile à la Crosse, Fidler was able to send two canoes with Swain to Great Slave Lake for the establishment of Chiswick House.

Sickness among the Indians and opposition pressure were an ominous challenge to this post. Out of the twenty-eight Chipewyan canoes that arrived at the opposition posts on October 4, 1803, only three canoes approached Swain's post. The Indians under a trading chief named Mr. Ratt and his brother were threatened by the Northwest Company traders and told that they would be killed (HBC Arch., B. 41/a/1, folio 7; HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 18). Swain often complained of his men being debauched by the opposition as well (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3). Chiswick House had to rely upon Fidler for provisioning. On May 6, 1804, ten bags of pemmican were sent to Swain's men since they had "...been under the necessity of eating Parchment Skins this winter several times—They could take but very few fish..." (HBC Arch., B.
Generally, the Indians were in a state of disarray because of the large number who had died the previous summer. Those who were involved in trapping almost starved to death (HBC Arch., B. 41/a/1, folio 11). The rest had abandoned the fur-bearing grounds to return to the caribou crossings, and so Swain was not able to procure furs. In his letter to Fidler on April 10, 1804 he reports (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 18):

...I am sorry to tell you I have got no furrs from Indians this winter, as the greatest part of them was at their own Lands, when I arrived here last fall and did not return till the middle of winter and the Old Co. prevented any of them from coming to our house, by the bad story's they tell them, which frightened them to come near us, until now, that they are beginning to get the better of their fright, but too late for us as they have no skins....

The situation at Lake Athabasca was similar. The only active Chipewyan belonged to a large trapping party from the Athabasca River who trapped about 300 Māde Beaver. Fidler observed that most Indians had gone to Ile à la Crosse since they were "...afraid to come here [Lake Athabasca] because of last years sickness...afraid to come here as such a number of their Countrymen died hereabouts last Summer..." (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 19). The number of deaths was considerable, amounting to thirty-seven men and some women (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3, folio 16). Interestingly, there were no reports of children's deaths.

The following season, 1804-1805, was also unsuccessful for the Hudson's Bay Company at both Nottingham and Chiswick Houses. Meanwhile, the Chipewyan were protesting the Northwest Company's harsh and barbarous treatment of them (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 14-15). Following the killing of the Northwest Company traders and the pillaging and burning of their posts, the Chipewyan either retreated to their own lands or to Churchill for trade. There were few prospects for trade during this season and Fidler was concerned
that the Hudson's Bay Company should abandon Athabasca all together (letter of January 12, 1805; HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 10-11). Perhaps, because of Thomas Swain's prospectus of favorable trade for the 1805-1806 season, this event was delayed. In a letter to Fidler from Chiswick House on March 2, 1805, Swain accorded the low returns to the Chipewyan atrocities. The Chipewyan were numerous around Great Slave Lake, and had appeared too late in the season to trap furs in the Peace River area near the Beaver Indians. The Chipewyan intended to trap for furs rather than going to their lands "...so that there is every expectation of a good Trade from this Quarter next season ..." (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 15). Although Swain's fishery was unsuccessful all winter, he was able to get an Indian to hunt for him. He also had compelled two of his men to tent with the natives and to procure what furs they could.

Following the arrival of news (on May 6, 1805) that the Northwest Company and XY Company had amalgamated on November 5, 1804, the Northwest Company asserted new pressures.² The Hudson's Bay Company was overwhelmed since they were outnumbered by three or four men to one. The May 23 and 24, 1805 journal entries complain of constant threats by Northwest Company personnel (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 19-20). On the arrival of an Indian sled at Nottingham House, Duncan Campbell, a Northwester, cut the dogs from the sled and took the furs to his post. One Hudson's Bay Company man was beaten for interfering and fifty to sixty Northwest Company men were sent by A.N. McLeod to behave in a riotous manner at Nottingham House (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 19-20). Northwest Company depredations continued unabated into the next season.

On Fidler's return to Nottingham House from Ile à la Crosse on September
11, 1805, he found a Canadian block-house within 200 yards of the post. Within hours the North-westers had pitched a tent four yards from his dwelling to keep the Indians away (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/5a, folio 9). A month before, the Canadians had destroyed a canoe, pulled up their garden, and prevented the Hudson's Bay men from fowling. The people at Chiswick had received the same treatment. Fidler was compelled to enter an agreement with the North-westers, which prevented the Hudson's Bay Company from trading with the Indians, and in turn, the Canadians would pay the Indians' debts. The value amounted to about 300 large beaver skins, 200 beaver worth of other furs, six bags of pemmican, and the meat of ten moose. Needless to say, the North-westers did not honor their part of the agreement. During the winter, the Nottingham men were subjected to continued harassments by the North-west, Samuel Black.

Black had moved an observation hut next to Fidler's window during the period of the agreement. His mischievous activities included the placing of bark over Fidler's chimney, which nearly burnt the house down. Fidler wrote a letter to Alexander McKenzie asking to have Black removed. The Canadians continued to obstruct the Indians' trade with Nottingham, although two Chipewyan did manage to trade fifty-two and one half Made Beaver besides a little meat while the Canadians were away. The injustices suffered by Fidler's men were summed up in Fidler's letter to the Governor at York Factory on December 23, 1805 (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/5a, folio 9):

...The Canadians during all the summer had used the most unjustifiable means to prevent our people from getting any thing from Indians and since last spring—none has been here—in an open manner—The Canadians privately destroyed our Canoes that we had to go after Indians—pulled up our Garden stuff—come into the House and examined every Skin Mr. Swain Traded there: Pitched 2 Tents within 5 yards of our House—and would not suffer a single Indian to come near us—even the sight of a Canadian is sufficient to keep them away they are so very much afraid—at the Slave Lake they have forcibly taken Indians out of our House who come to Trade—whenever our men went on Duck Hunting for their livelihood, They
were always accompanied by some of the Canadian who followed and frightened every thing away—and it has been their determination to starve our people if possible—our men had such a very disagreeable summer, that not a man would remain another if his wages was doubled—we shall therefore be under the necessity of having this in the spring—so very few of us are situated as we are against such numbers of the worst actions & resigns that we are not able to do anything here advantageous for the Company—and in order to make the most for the Company Mr. Swain & myself told the Canadian Prospectors here, that if they would pay us all our outstanding Credits amounting to 500 MBv we would withdraw all our people away from this next Spring which they at last agreed to....

Although the fishery allowed the Company men to winter without food scarcity, Samuel Black continued his malicious behavior. On January 8, 1806, Black made a tent four yards from Fidler's window and when asked to remove it Black told Fidler to kiss his ass. Black examined everything and everybody coming in. To make matters worse, he prowled around at all hours of the night, shouting, farting, and discharging his gun (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/5a, folio 11-13). The forthcoming instructions to abandon the Athabasca enterprise were long overdue. Fidler's journal does, however, suggest that the Northwest Company's fur returns were higher during the 1805-1806 season.

The extent and organization of trade by the opposition is reflected in the number of trading chiefs arriving at their posts. Between April 13, 1806 and June 11, 1806 when Fidler's journal terminates, the incoming Indians included twenty-seven Chipewyan from Slave River under Merlaw, twenty Chipewyan from Birch Hill under Old Rabbit, several Indians on May 2, a Chipewyan Chief with seven men on May 10, sixteen canoes on May 28, and eleven canoes on June 1. These passages suggest the establishment of local trade conditions. In this era of intense competition, details on trade processes are often overshadowed by daily entries describing the fierce rivalry. The few surviving Northwest and XY Company records do provide some information on the interactive processes of trade.
For the purpose of reconstruction, the 1805-1806 journal of Great Bear Lake by Alexander McKenzie is the most informative source. From 1798 to 1804 McKenzie was a wintering partner in the service of the XY Company. After the amalgamation of the two companies in 1804, he became a partner of the Northwest Company and from 1804 to 1808 he was in charge of the Athabasca region. His Great Bear Lake journal is perhaps one of the better unpublished sources on the intricate fur trade system and the Indians of the area. Information from his journal, when combined with the Masson papers, James Porter’s Slave Lake journal, and the XY Company journal of John Thompson, provides a glimpse into the period of adjustment of Indians following direct European contact.

The Indians that hunted in the area adjacent to Great Bear Lake during the period of McKenzie's observations were Yellowknife, Slave (or Dogrib), and Hare Indians (B.C. P.A., A-B-40-M193). The Yellowknife at Great Bear Lake numbered about twenty-five men with their families. Their lands were on the east side of the lake where the Great Bear Lake caribou herd foraged. The remainder of the Yellowknife, according to McKenzie, were about one hundred men who trapped at Great Slave Lake. Every trapping party had their chief (or Buordene) and each chief had from ten to thirty men according to his esteem or the men's fear of him (B.C. P.A., A-B-40-M193). Alexander McKenzie's letter of March 2, 1791 to Roderic McKenzie notes that the Yellowknife did not have a chief at that date, and it would be proper to appoint one. The Yellowknife were expected to act as "Carriers" for the Slave Indians who trapped mainly marten (Masson, 1960a:36). The center of trade was Slave Lake Fort at the entrance of Slave River. John Thompson’s journal of 1801 suggests that these Yellowknife had assumed the role of middlemen with the
more distant Slave (P.A.A., Thompson ms.).

The Slave Lake journal of James Porter notes details on these early Yellowknife hunters, trappers, and traders (P.A.A., Porter ms):

March 7, 1800...an Indian arrived from the Grand River [Mackenzie River] they left the Lodges 9 days ago they bring Good news from that Quarter that all the Red Knives [Yellowknife] has their Credits & a Good many Skins....

April 20, 1800...The Red Knives arrived in all 60 men....

May 9, 1800...they talk of Going to the Caribou country Because they are afraid that the English Come in the fall & They have such inormous Credits of old from Churchill that are afraid to See them at same time they are overloaded with Credits from The NWest Company & some of them from the little Companies that they are quite discouraged....

May 29, 1800...3 Red Knives arrived from their Lands with a train Gave them a dram...they left the Rat their Chief on the other side of the Lake with a Band of about 20 of his relations they slept 8 nights since they left their Lodges....

January 9, 1801...There are now [undecipherable] of an hundred Indians come from there Lands & taken Credits here Since the end of November last besides an equal number /if not more/ including all men & Boys in the Same Bands that has not come to the House....

January 16, 1801...posted up the Book the Credits of this Place now out among 199 Indians amounting to 6816 Skins....

John Thompson's XY Company journal of Mackenzie River for January 11, 1801 adds more details (P.A.A., Thompson ms.):

...Martin armed back—Slave had traded their furs with...what few they had-made in the Fall the Red Knives from Martin Lake had already traded from them. Besides, they [Slave] did not give themselves much trouble to look for skins, but Spent their time according to their usual custom, that is, Fishing...I am now fully convinced that the Indians who are in that quarter of the country, are an idle worthless set of beings and I am much afraid that Little good will be ever made of them....

From the foregoing accounts it appears that a large number of Yellowknife were being drawn from their territory north of Great Slave Lake (Tyrrell, 1934:446-447; HBC Arch., B. 9/a/1) to participate in the fur trade during the period 1791-1805. Initially, Chipewyan chiefs were appointed to oversee their
trapping activities since, according to Alexander MacKenzie (March 2, 1791): "...none of their own principal men can have sufficient authority" (Masson, 1960a:36). The Yellowknife under the leadership of the English Chief and Mr. Ratt are referred to as Chipewyan in the Hudson's Bay Company journal of Mr. Swain in 1805. The names Chipewyan and Yellowknife are used interchangeably by McKenzie as well. By 1823, the only Yellowknife referred to was a party of 192 people "...viz 48 men, 51 women, 49 Boys and 44 Girls" (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/7, folio 2). They are most likely part of the Yellowknife population noted in McKenzie's Great Bear Lake journal.

In sum, it would appear that the Slave Lake and Mackenzie River posts were developing a system ringed with local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas. For the Yellowknife the roles of hunter, trapper, and trader were not differentiated prior to about 1800. However, as more posts were established in the Mackenzie and Athabasca Districts, the spatial structure of local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas altered, reducing the extent of middlemen and indirect trade areas and, for some Indians, eliminating them altogether. This pattern of trade can be seen to some extent in McKenzie's (1805-1806) journal accounts of the Slave, Dogrib, Hare, and Kutchin Indians (B.C. P.A., B-40-M193).

The Slave and Dogrib Indians were not differentiated by McKenzie, who considered them to be the same peoples (see Chapter Three, p. 151). Their population trading at Great Bear Lake was about 250 men and boys. Formerly, they were on the borders of Slave Lake, but had been driven to Great Bear Lake by the Cree. In McKenzie's estimation, they were very poor hunters, hunting the beaver in the spring and fall only. Their principal diet was fish, caught with nets of green willow.
The Hare Indians were estimated to have had a population of 300 men, of which only 115 had been out to trading posts. They were considered indolent since they killed very few beaver, hunting mainly marten and muskrat. Traders had been among them only three years, since 1802. When Fort Good Hope was erected in 1804 about 100 miles downstream from Manitou Island near the Ramparts, some began trading there. During McKenzie's trip down the Mackenzie River in June and July of 1806, he found several Hare Indian trapping parties with whom he traded. There are indications that trading chiefs had already been appointed, among them including one who was called Cene or Rapid Chief. Below the Eskimo River, a few parties were met and McKenzie appointed other trading chiefs including "...Yakeban being the greatest Raskall amongst them I made a chief of him I gave him a flag and informed him the use of it..." (B.C. P.A.-B-40-M193). The primary purpose of McKenzie's trip was to induce the Kutchin, McKenzie's Loushens or Strangers, to trade with the Northwest Company. Reference to the Kutchin had been made by the chief of the Great Bear Lake Indians the previous fall.

On July 6, 1806, McKenzie met a group of Kutchin, also called Quarrelers, who wintered along the Great Bear Lake caribou migration route northeast of the lake. From the descriptions it appears that they were already trading beaver, muskrat, marten and bear skins, since their clothing was garnished with blue and white trade beads. Because they were already trading, McKenzie describes them as less indolent than the other Indians along the river and in his opinion the country "...would recompense any trouble or pains that may be taken with it..." (B.C. P.A.-B-40-M193). These Kutchin had been involved in warfare with the Mackenzie Eskimo who were pressing up the river. In the previous year (1805), about thirty canoes of Eskimo had encamped for two days
in the vicinity of Eskimo River in order to fight with the Kutchin.

The source of the Kutchins' blue and white beads were McKenzie's Apertinus Indians (Mountain or Atabatives?). The Kutchin were reported to camp ten nights before meeting them on a river, which was three or four miles broad. The area was supposed to have had a large quantity of beaver.

The extent of the development of local trade areas with increasingly smaller middlemen and indirect trade zones is shown in McKenzie's instructions to a party of Dogrib he encountered on his return up the Mackenzie River during late July of 1806. He stated (B.C. P.A.-B-40-M193):

July 20, 1806...put on shore to breakfast at 5 lodges of Dogrib Indians of the Forks [Liard and Mackenzie Rivers]. They have been called Beaver Indians by some in this country but they are dog Rib (or Slave). their intention was to go and join those of the same nation at Great Bear Lake. I desired that they would return to their Fort, that any Indians that left their Fort would not receive a pipe of tobacco at any other Fort, they promised not to go farther down and as soon as the leaves were yellow they would return to the Forks (or Fort). I embarked after giving them each two inches of Tobacco and camped 16 miles below Rocky Mountain Fort....

This passage suggests that local trade was becoming centered around individual posts where Indians were becoming dependent upon individual traders with whom they had established trade relationships. There is no indication of middleman and indirect trade activities taking place south of the Eskimo River by 1806 with the exception of the so-called Nahanny Indians.

W.F. Wentzel had been sent to discover the Nahanny during 1806 by McKenzie, who remained at the Forks to await Wentzel's return. The latter had not been successful in establishing contact with the Nahanny. We learn from Wentzel's letter to Roderick McKenzie on March 27, 1807 that he had been informed by Indians that the Rocky Mountains were "...inhabited by several tribes of Savages, namely, Nahanies, Dahoteena and Nombahoteenais, besides many others who are unacquainted with white people. The only information I
can get concerning these Natives is that they inhabit these rocks, live upon
caribou and goat flesh and make war upon each other" (Masson, 1960a:78).
The trading system of middleman and indirect trade zones continued, as we
will see, until the early 1830s for the isolated Nahanny.

It is important to stress that the so-called Beaver Indians described by
McKenzie and Wentzel were actually Dogrib and Slave Indians. Wentzel also
states this in his letter to Roderick McKenzie (Masson, 1960a:85):

The inhabitants of the country [along the Mackenzie River] which I have
endeavoured to describe are the Beaver Indians, but their original name
is Echel-la-o-tuna or Gens des Bois Forts, and pretend to be a branch of
the tribe of the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they had been
formerly separated and then driven this way by their inveterate enemies
the Cree who, previous to the introduction of European arms into this
quarter, were continually waging war against them. These wars exterminated
great numbers of them, so that they were at length reduced from a
numberous tribe to but about 200 men.

According to Wentzel (1960a:85-86), their language was analogous to the
Peace River Indians, who were about seven or eight days walk from the Mac-
kenzie River people. Though he noted some affinity between the two languages,
differences were also noted in their manners and customs such as the belli-
cosity, ferocity, and violence, characteristic of the Beaver Indians, but not
present among the Slave and Dogrib. The Indians at the Forks of the Mackenzie
River and those of the Liard River were all Slave and Dogrib although they
wished to make it appear otherwise. Wentzel computed their numbers to be
about three hundred.

The gradual development of local trade conditions is more difficult to
document for the period 1807-1815. The Hudson's Bay Company was to remain
out of the Athabasca District until 1815 when Colin Robertson and John Clarke,
former clerks of the Northwest Company, were sent to re-establish posts on
Lake Athabasca after which more detailed information is available in the post
journals. Competition was again renewed in this area after 1815 and lasted until 1821 when the two companies amalgamated.

For the intervening period, 1807-1815, the letters of W.F. Wentzel and George Keith are the most informative on conditions in Athabasca. In 1810, the Northwest Company proposed to establish fur trade boundaries between it and the Hudson's Bay Company (Davidson, 1918:130-131). The proposals were to remain in effect for twelve years. The Northwest Company was to have Athabasca, Churchill River, Beaver River, and most of the region north and west of the Saskatchewan. Each company attempted to take advantage of monopoly preserves to underwrite losses suffered in areas of direct competition. The Northwest Company's use of the Athabasca region was to serve this purpose. However, there was a general reduction of stores and provisions throughout the northwest by 1810 due to the increase in expenses created by the intense competition. The traders along the Mackenzie River were forced to depend upon the precarious resources there. The cyclical failure of hare along the Mackenzie River in 1810 was the cause of starvation, death, and low fur returns (Masson, 1960b:97). Wentzel's April 30, 1811 letter to Roderick McKenzie carries significant details on the causes and consequences of this event (Masson, 1960a:106-107):

This last winter has been the most melancholy and most disastrous that could ever have befallen to any one single man to support without becoming torpidly stupid or totally senseless. Our distresses and sufferings have been so great; that, of four Christians [Wentzel Poudrier, Pilon, William Henry] who left at this establishment last Fall, I am the only survivor, and in a state more easily conceived than described, when I inform you that, from the 13th of December 1810 to the 12th January, we knew, nor saw any kind of meat but dressed moose, deer skins and green parchment skins. At this date we received only seven plues [Values of seven beaver skins] of fresh meat and were upon this little supply no less than eight months, of course it was but two meals. From that period to the 11th of March, we lived upon nothing else but dried beaver skins; our number was then increased to thirteen, and fifteen during the space of twenty-two days. We destroyed in order to
keep ourselves alive upward of three hundred beaver skins besides a few lynx and otter skins. Since that time to the present day we have a meal now and then; at intervals we are still two or three days without any-
thing. All my men are dead of starvation, viz: Louis LeMai Poudrier and one of his children, Francois Pilon and William Henry, my hunter.

I am unable to describe my own position; all my Indians have starved more or less; from one small band only, I received news yesterday evening that five were dead of hungar; but of the majority of the Natives, I have not heard of since the month of November, they were already at that period gnawing the clothing they had upon themselves.

Hares have totally failed throughout all parts of the country and large cattle [mainly moose] have been uncommonly scarce at this place in particular, and the cold has been, this winter, the severest I have ever yet known....

During the 1812-1813 winter, Alexander Henry, four men, and some women and children were massacred at Fort Nelson on the Liard River by the Slave and Dogrib. George Keith (Masson, 1960b:125-126) attributed the massacre to the Indians' continued state of starvation and lack of supplies, particularly their want of ammunition upon which they had become dependent for hunting. The traders were left in an uncomfortable and almost unsupportable situation between 1810 and 1814 (Masson, 1960b:126). The War of 1812 had further exacerbated the difficulties during those years by reducing the supply of trade goods (Masson, 1960b:125). The winter of 1814-1815 was much like the previous year in the Mackenzie district. Furthermore, Wentzel's letter (Masson, 1960a:109-110) of February 28, 1814 notates the declining fur-bearing resources and what he considered to have been the noxious activities of the Mackenzie Indians. The dwindling resources were attributed to the Iroquois who were brought into the region as hunters, to provide the trading posts with game. The Iroquois between 1803 and 1814 had reduced the resources to virtually nothing according to Wentzel so that the Athapaskan Indians frequently complained of the want of beaver. As a result of this and the lack of trade goods, they had become sufficiently restless to form a conspiracy
during the spring of 1813 to massacre all the Northwesters of Fort Chipewyan "...and Big Island, in the Peace River as well as Moose Deer Island Establishment at Slave Lake" (Masson, 1960a:109). The Chipewyan were the aggressors and Wentzel's party remained apprehensive throughout the season. Lower down the Mackenzie River, the Loucheux or Kutchin also were creating problems for the traders since for two successive years they had not received beads. When unable to get beads, their favorite trade item, they preferred to withhold their peltries. All in all, these events greatly diminished the returns. The collective exertions of 1813 and 1814 for the whole Athabasca District did not exceed 380 packs (Masson, 1960a:114). Also, Wentzel informed McKenzie that all the old journals and account books, and the Athabasca library in general, were almost completely destroyed due to neglect, such were the circumstances of the time.

The policies toward the Mackenzie's River department were in need of reform. In Wentzel's evaluation, trade in the whole of the district still could have been a profitable venture with planning that ensured the proper promotion of Northwest clerks and a regular supply of trade goods (Masson, 1960a:114-115). Low fur returns, transportation expenses and Indian problems had resulted in the abandonment of several posts throughout the Athabasca District. The Athabasca District had eight posts in 1815, compared to fifteen posts in 1806. The former included "...Slave Lake, Turtle Creek, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Vermillion, Hay River, Dunvegan, St. John's and Pierre au Calumet in Athabasca River; being two posts in the Slave Lake, two of Fort Chipewyan and four in the Peace River" (Masson, 1960a:115). In 1815, the total McKenzie's River department fur trade amounted to only sixty-four packs. Wentzel's later "Account of Mackenzie River" outlines the consequences of
these policies (Innis, 1930:274-275):

By this time the concern [Northwest Company] conceiving the department [Mackenzie River] incapable of defraying the expenses ordered it to be evacuated altogether, which was accordingly done in the summer 1815 to the great hazard of our lives, for the natives having obtained a knowledge of our intentions had formed the design of destroying us on our way out.

Notwithstanding that no promises had been made of returning at a future period to trade with them. I was sent the following summer with six Canadians in a large canoe and a small supply of goods to renew the intercourse. In the course of my passage down the river as far as Fort Good Hope I fell in with several parties of all the different tribes and was welcomed by them with extravagant demonstrations of joy. They danced and cried by turns, rushing up to their knees in the water to pull my canoe ashore, begging at the same time that the whites would return to their lands and promising their utmost endeavours to render our situation with them as comfortable as possible. I explained to them that it did not depend upon myself but on the partners at Fort Chipewyan to whom I undertook to make a report of their request and advised them to hunt furs and prepare provisions in the expectation that it would be granted; I also assured them that if we did not resume our deserted establishments a canoe would certainly go down every year to trade their furs and bring them the most useful supplies. This pacified them and they agreed to exert themselves in collecting pelttries.

With the cessation of trading activities at the Mackenzie River post, opposite the mouth of the Dahadinni River, Wentzel moved to Great Bear Lake post for the winter if 1814-1815. The Bear Lake Fort, later called Fort Franklin, had been re-established in 1812 by George Keith after having been abandoned seven years before. Both Keith's and Wentzel's letters to Roderick McKenzie for the period 1812-1815 demonstrate the emergence of a trading post band, dependent upon trade goods (Masson, 1960b:96-123; 1960a:109-115; see Chapter Six, pp. 297-303). The natives of this post considered themselves composed of three autonomous units, assuming the names of Red Knives, Filthy Lake and Grand River Indians, and the People of the big or long arrows (Masson, 1960b:106).

Keith's Filthy Lake (Martin Lake Dogrib) and Grand River (Mackenzie River Slave) Indians were not seen too frequently at Bear Lake before 1812. Al-
though they considered themselves as two distinct groups, Keith, like Alexander McKenzie before him, classified them together, because their language, customs and manners were similar (1960a:111). Keith notes that their names are "... doubtless derived from the country they respectively inhabit" (1960b:111). The Big or Long Arrowed (Hare) Indians were beginning to resort to his establishment. He had been successful in attracting about twenty Hare to trap, but the rest continued to hunt and fish north of the fort (1960b:117-124). His description indicates their exploitation of the Great Bear Lake caribou herd and their occupancy of the area prior to 1812. The Red Knives (Yellow-knife), numbering about fifteen married men, had frequented the post since its establishment about the year 1800 (1960b:106). Keith suggested that the Yellowknife were a branch of the Chipewyans, having the same manners, customs, and language with little variation (1960b:106-107). It was the intention of Keith to exploit the country around Great Bear Lake for its marten and muskrat since the region lacked beaver. The Company was not successful in developing a profitable establishment on Great Bear Lake by 1815-1816 and the area was abandoned.

Developing Patterns of Trade and Fur Trade Competition (1815-1821): Lake Athabasca, Great Slave Lake, and the Peace River Area

For the Northwest Company, the decline of returns, Indian unrest, and the reduction of posts was followed by increased competition in Athabasca. In 1815, the Hudson's Bay Company made a persistent effort to encroach upon the Northwest Company's virtual monopoly of trade in Athabasca. Colin Robertson and John Clarke established Fort Wedderburne on Lake Athabasca and to the north Fort Resolution was built on the south shore of Great Slave Lake about
four miles south of the mouth of the Slave River. Unfettered competition was, again, introduced to the Athabasca District.

The Athabasca expedition had a disastrous winter, and eighteen members of the party starved to death in the Peace River (Masson, 1960a:117). Upon their arrival at Lake Athabasca, the Northwesterners attacked and plundered the Hudson's Bay Company men who had attempted to obtain Indian provisioners from among the seventy or so lodges on the lake. The Northwesterners threatened the Indians, and successfully thwarted the Company's efforts to obtain provisions (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/6, folio 19). They were able to extract four hundred packs of furs, during the 1815-1816 season while the Hudson's Bay Company traded for less than five packs in this district (Masson, 1960a:117). The Northwestern's trade for Fort Chipewyan depot was from a hundred to a hundred and eighty packs of principal beaver weighing ninety pounds each (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/6, folio 6). In general, then, the Hudson's Bay Company's expedition was in a state of disarray for the whole season. Not one of the establishments was able to weather out the winter without depending upon the Northwesterners for provisions. The Northwesterners also kept the major part of the Company's goods in their stores (Masson, 1960a:112).

During the 1816-1817 season, the competition was just as fierce. Archibald Norman McLeod, a Northwesterner, appointed himself Justice of the Peace and arrested a number of Hudson's Bay men for breach of the peace (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/8, folio 7). About fifty men, after being kept without food for several days, were forced to take an oath that they would not return to the region (Davidson, 1918:157). This was reported to have caused a loss of from £40,000 to £50,000 to the Hudson's Bay Company (1918:157). McLeod also took the Company's best Indian provisioners (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/7), and those Indians
who approached the Company post were put in irons (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/8, folio 46). Needless to say, few Indians came to trade.

The North-westers continually sent their chiefs over to convince the few Indians who remained as post hunters to defect. The Company managed to retain their principal hunter, La Bute, until he was taken by force to the Northwest Company post. After the Company trader, Campbell, was beaten, his men were forced to arm themselves with guns and knives. The North-westers surrounded them and forced the Hudson's Bay men to pay bail. After this, the Company made one attempt to actively trade with a band of Indians at Clear Lake. The journal entry for September 21, 1816 gives some details on this phase of competition (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/7, folio 3):

> September 21, 1816...NW had a Band of Inds. Encamped there [Clear Lake] & one of their Half Breeds in charge of them before we arrived NW took 4 of our Indians the other two made resistance Mr. Divor's party took everything belonging to the Inds. Knives, Guns, Tent, Provisions etc. & even a Child belonging to one of those who made resistance as well as their whole Property....

Fort Wedderburne was seized on March 23, 1817 following the two seizures of Green Lake Post on December 21, 1816 and again on March 20, 1817, and following the capture of Ile à la Crosse post on March 17, 1817 (Davidson, 1918:157). The primary archival sources mainly cover the period from April 15, 1817 until September 13, 1817 when John Clark was illegally detained by the North-westers (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/10, folio 1).

The 1817-1818 season was just as unproductive for the Hudson's Bay Company. The North-westers continued to escort the Indians, preventing contact with the Company (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/13, folio 30). The Hudson's Bay Company's men, under the supervision of Francois Decoligne, were not able to make a pack while the North-westers brought out about 430 packs from Athabasca in the spring (Davidson, 1918:153).
In September of 1818, the Hudson's Bay Company intensified its activities throughout Athabasca under the leadership of Colin Robertson. Robertson re-established Fort Wedderburne, while Charles Thomas, under John Clark, established Fort St. Mary's in the Peace River before the Northwesterners returned from Rainy Lake. To the north, Aulay McAulay was at Fort Resolution in opposition to Wentzel's Slave Lake Fort.

The Fort Wedderburne people had frequent disputes with the Northwesterners upon their arrival. Often Samuel Black was the gadfly who manipulated and bullied the traders into improper actions. Finally, on October 11, 1818, Colin Robertson was seized and taken prisoner to Fort Chipewyan by a Northwestern party under Black. The Hudson's Bay Company affairs were attended to by Robert Miles, Robertson's clerk (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/14, folio 1). The Northwesterners attempted to take Robertson back to Canada in the spring of 1819, but Robertson managed to escape. Nevertheless, the Fort Wedderburne venture again was unsuccessful.

Charles Thomas' Fort St. Mary's journal suggests that a sedulous attempt was made to secure provisions and furs in the Peace River. In early October, an Indian hunter was engaged to provision for the winter. The Indian embarked on October 2, 1818 in a canoe after dispatching one of his wives inland to acquaint his uncle (The Ragian) of his joining the Hudson's Bay Company. The hunter requested that The Ragian should join the provisioning party (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/1, folio 14). Also included among Clark's recruits were the Trading Chiefs, Alleries, Baptiste Bipon and a Saulteaux. (A number of Saulteaux had arrived in the Peace River during the early phase of the competitive era.) The Saulteaux at St. Mary's included an elderly man and his two sons who had married two sisters of the Beaver Indian, Baptiste Bipon. Bipon also had the
elderly man's daughter for his wife. The old man had two more sons along the Smoky River. The old Saulteaux and one of his sons were dispatched up to the Northwest Company's Fort Dunvegan to advertise the Hudson's Bay Company's arrival in the Beaver Indians' territory. The Beaver were invited to trade and the Saulteaux's relatives were also asked to join the Company and to settle their old debts (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/1, folio 19).

The Northwesterners had two systems of prices, one paid by the Iroquois and Saulteaux, the other by the Beaver. The price of goods to the former amounted to only half that paid by the Beaver Indians.

Intelligence from the Beaver Indian Chief, Baptiste, indicated that the Northwesterners were using their old trick of spreading rumors about the Company's men to arouse suspicion and discontent among the Beaver Indians. Baptiste reported that he had fallen in with a trapping party of Cree who had taken debts from the Northwest Company post at Lesser Slave Lake in 1817. The Cree wished to trade with Thomas. Baptiste also reported that it was the English, Hudson's Bay Company men, who had persuaded these Cree to make war upon the Mountain Beaver Indians during the summer. One of the Mountain Beaver had been killed, and it was anticipated that there might be some danger for the Company's establishment next summer (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/1, folio 31). Clark and Thomas were able to draw a number of Beaver Indian trapping parties under their auspices. As Thomas noted in his journal entry for April 19, 1819 (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/1, folio 48):

...they [Indians] were well received by Mr. Clarke, and who made a speech to them, the principal point of which was, that now as they belonged to the English they must never trade the least Furs with the NW Co., they all promise to be faithful and Mr. Clarke wishing to appoint one of the Principal of them as the Chief, to hold and use his influence on occasions, Le Dé [W. pinoualisa Le Dé] was unanimously chosen, who was immediately invested with the authority, clothed with a fair Capot....
The success of the 1818-1819 season over other seasons can be attributed to the late arrival of the NorthWesters from Fort Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake). When the NorthWesters arrived at Fort Chipewyan in October 1818, Clark and Thompson had already left for Peace River with the canoes. After the settlement and distribution of outfits, the season was already considerably advanced, and the NorthWesters were stopped by ice. The Peace River people were stopped below the falls, and the Mackenzie River brigade was obstructed by ice at Moose Deer Island on Great Slave Lake (Masson, 1960a:122-123). The Hudson's Bay Company thus had a safe advantage in the Peace River during this season.

With respect to the northern quarter, the NorthWesters were opposed at Great Slave Lake by Aulay McAulay who re-established Fort Resolution for the season. According to Wentzel, McAulay and his twenty men continued in "...status quo, not having even conversed with an Indian, but subsisted by the produce of their nets, not, however, without suffering incredible privations. Thus it may be said that the opposition (at least so far as our information goes) have as yet no solid footing in Athabasca" (Masson, 1960a:123). McAulay's journal indicates that Wentzel's men provided fierce competition upon their late arrival in October 1818. As early as October 10, 1818, McAulay was apprehensive of starvation because the Indian provisioners were kept away (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/1, folio 1-10). The November journal entries indicate his difficulties (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/1, folio 14, 16):

November 1, 1818...The NW are following up their usual custom of running after the poor Indians in all directions with armed men and drives them before them like a flock of sheep to their fort and treats them as they think proper...  

November 30, 1818...The NW following us every Inch—we cant even build a shit-House or go to Stool but what they must build along side and follow us at every step or motion we take...
The Northwest returns for the Mackenzie department during the previous year was ninety packs of peltries, and they expected no considerable diminution of returns because of their delay on arriving (Masson, 1960a:123-124). They were successful in thwarting the Hudson's Bay Company's efforts for 1818-1819. McAulay's report to the Governor and Committee is clear on this subject (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/1, folio 24):

Altho this is the third year we have wintered at this Lake we unfortunately have had very little intercourse with the natives of it. This has been owing to many disappointments that we unfortunately met with—so that it is very difficult for one to give any satisfactory account of this district.

There appears to be a great number of Indians about this Lake—where the N W Company have three posts established on the borders of the Lake from those three establishments they generally turn out yearly from 80 to 90 Pack of excellent Furs—Each pack weighing for 85 to 90 pounds weight. These furs they get from the Indian for a near trifle in comparison to the value of the Furs.

The natives that inhabit round the Lake go by the name of the Chipewyan Tribe which tribe are numerous besides there are several other tribes goes by the name of Yellow Knives and others by that of the Slave and Rapped Indians—these last mentioned inhabit the northern parts of the Lake, Mckenzie River Marten and Great Bear Lake.

The Chipewyan Indians are no ways given to war with there neighbouring tribes and other nation of Indians are of a very quite disposition and no ways given to stealing or cheating and are a sober set and industrious set of Indians and not much given to drinking strong liquors as most of the other Tribes of Indians are....

The foregoing report also characterizes the ongoing process whereby a local trade network was developing among the Mackenzie natives.

In the 1819-1820 season, the Northwest Company was threatened by the Hudson's Bay Company's efforts to issue bench warrants against a number of Northwesterners. Governor Williams proceeded to enforce the warrants by intercepting a number of outgoing Northwest Company men at Grand Rapid. Several men were arrested although none were ever brought to trial. The affairs of the Northwest Company were, it appears, merely subjected to inconvenience by Williams' actions.
At Fort Wedderburne, Mr. Todd had equipped fifty-eight Indians including boys for the Hudson's Bay Company. The Trading Chief, Pouce Coupee, was provisioning for the fort (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/15, folio 6). However, the whole of the north country in the fall of 1819 was affected by measles and whooping cough. Wentzel pessimistically noted in his May 23, 1820 letter that these diseases had been so fatal among the natives that one-fifth of the population between Rainy Lake and Athabasca had been destroyed (Masson, 1960a:130).

Todd's journal entries for October 27, 1819 describe measles and whooping cough as depriving the natives "...of the means of subsistence the whole of their cautions in approaching an animal being rendered abortive by a single cough..." (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/15, folio 9). Amongst one trapping party under Eynon, the measles indirectly carried off eight persons, principally women and children. These deaths were attributed to the poor hunts since the survivors did not hunt, following custom, after the death of their relations (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/15, folio 33, 61).

At Fort Resolution, fur trade competition continued unabated throughout the season with the Northwesterns intercepting the Indians as they came in. William Brown's Hudson's Bay Company journal also reported that measles were raging among the natives there (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/2, folio 61):

January 12, 1820...In the forenoon Bone & Terrient 3 who went off on the 25th of last month 3 returned. It appears some of the relations of the Indians died and that the survivors, according to their ignorant & superstitious custom, destroyed their property and stoped hunting—the consequence of which was they have not procured a single skin, and have starved ever since—....

The fort was beset with difficulties throughout the season. The fishery failed in December, and the supply of trade items was low. Thus, the Indians could not be supplied adequately. Food shortages and measles resulted in low returns for Athabasca. The Hudson's Bay Company was able, however, to
establish trade with a party of Yellowknife during the spring of 1820. The caution with which the Yellowknife approached Todd's post was a diagnostic feature of the Competitive Era. As Brown remarked (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/2, folio 6):

April 13, 1820...In the morning a band of Indians arrived consisting of 6 men and a Boy...The above and Yellow Knife Indians from Mountain Island—who have come here all the way on purpose to trade with us—Two of them who came in head of the rest thro' the wood as spies, to find us out...they traded the most part of their skins &c for ammunition they are very modest and different in their behavior from those forward and impertinent fellows belonging to this. Being no ways debauched by the gaining of opposite interests—which ultimately tends to pervert the minds of the best Indians in the Country—they seldom either drink or smoke—But an opposition will soon plant these pernicious vices amongst them....

Brown's 149 page journal consists, in the main, of details on the intense competition in the area. The Company was able to establish more contact with Indians during this season than during any other season (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/2, passim).

In the Peace River area, it was anticipated before the Hudson's Bay Company's arrival that returns and provisions would be low during the 1819-1820 winter because a party of Cree Indians from Lesser Slave Lake had been at war with the Beaver Indians. Informants reported that the Cree had routed and scalped six or seven of the Beaver (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/2, folio 8). The anticipated poor trade resulting from these activities did not materialize. St. Mary's and Colville houses had made a reasonable summer trade, both in furs and provisions. By October 1819, the Company had nearly three-fourths of the Peace River Indians under their auspices. However, Clark was forced to allow part of the Indians to return to the North-westers since he had insufficient trade commodities. He retained their chief, a man of much influence, so that he still had influence with this party. Clark did not hesitate to
note that if it had not been for the scarcity of goods and men, his opponents would have made a small return in the Peace River (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/2, folio 17).

Clark also received favorable accounts from the Rocky Mountain Indians (Sekani), requesting the Company to establish in their country, which was reported to be full of beaver. The Sekani were so eager for trade that they had concealed provisions in different parts of the road for Clark's men. However, the establishment of a post was not foreseen until the next year (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/2, folio 35).

The list of Indians who traded regularly at St. Mary's and Colville houses and who were recorded in the journals indicates that a local trade network was fairly well developed. Besides the Iroquois, Saulteaux, and Chipewyan hunters, Clark had arranged and sent off the following Indians (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/2, folio 92):

April 24, 1820—St. Marys...1st Band Chief de Guere, Maine Pogue, Big Ears, Big Eyes, The Little Deer, Picotte, Bull & Frizie.—2nd Band, Lamalice, Rapids Brother, Taspott, Becasse, Fox and the Little Man—The first band makes their Summer hunt towards Lac de Bouef—The Second towards the Battle River.—The Fox, Little Man, Taspott & Becasse intends to visit Colville house during the Summer.—These Indians have done little or nothing during the winter, owing principally to the sickness and death of a number of their relations.—We have lost ten of our best hunters, men that were strongly attached to the Company, such a number of casualties, among those who warmly espoused our cause, has furnished materials for the daily fabrications which our Opponents are sending forth against us....

The Fort St. Mary's journal entry for April 24, 1820 provides additional information that the Beaver Indians suffered from the consequences of fur trade competition, disease and subsistence hardships (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/2):

The natives of Peace River are naturally of a delicate constitution, and so much addicted to spirituous liquors, that nine out of ten dies of a rapid decline. The first symptoms is the hollow cough, and when this once seizes them, four or five months puts a period to their existence.
This last winter has been very severe on the natives from the quantity of snow, and the intensity of the cold. We had about forty Indians last fall, and strange as it may appear, there were only two men in that number, that could be termed aged, and neither of these exceeded fifty or sixty years, and I am told upon very good authority, that these individuals were the oldest men of the Tribe.

George Simpson who was placed in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company affairs in 1820 dispatched fifteen canoes to Athabasca that year. The Northwest Company was to have the upper hand in this department during the last year of competition, which was characterized by continuing hardships among the Indians. During June of 1820, the Indians around Fort Wedderburne suffered from dysentery (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/16, folio 5), while those at Fort St. Mary's were reported to be starving since a number of the hunters were dying of the infectious disease. The incoming Indians at Athabasca were prevailed upon to not go to their lands, but to proceed up the Peace River in quest of furs and provisions. William Brown was greatly concerned about the lack of supplies for the northern department, it being destitute of every article for carrying on trade, and also for procuring the means of subsistence. The summer fishery did not produce enough fish for subsistence partially because there was no twine to fix the nets. Furthermore, although the geese were numerous in the fall, there was no ammunition to hunt them. In consequence, the Indians became impatient, and declared that they would join the North-westers or hunt their way to Île à la Crosse, Fort Deer (Caribou) Lake, and the other Hudson's Bay establishments to the south (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/16, folio 22).

When trapping bands and hunting parties were dispatched as usual during October, Hudson's Bay men were sent out to oversee trapping and hunting activities and to protect the furs from the North-westers. The October 6–9, 1820 journal of Fort Wedderburne describes these activities (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/16,
October 6, 1820...In the evening Pouscoupee—Grand Coquin—Naskitka—
Grand Titon with 3 of his sons & one sone in law went off accompanied by
Geo. Sutherland—they proceed first to Lac du Brochet & From there to
the Bark Mountain—Boucher & 2 men accompanies them to Lac du Brochet in
purpose to trade Geese—Lizeete, his Brother—Lascurrie—Pouscoupee's
Brother—Pichic & his Brother—Cayienne—Grand Titon's tall son and the
Bustard went off also accompanied by Jean Philip, & Hubert Lemai—who are
to proceed first to Lac Clair and then go in the direction of the Bark
Mountain—which appears to be intended as the grand rendezvous—Mr. Lamake
& 3 men accompanying them to Lac Clair—for the double purpose of pro-
tection them, and procuring some geese—....

October 9, 1820...In the afternoon A you nah or Squint Eyes DuKlakagan
—Eazzino—The Swan—and two or three young Lads who are engaged in Fort
Hunters went off accompanied by Chauvit....

During the winter of 1820-1821, the post employees suffered privations
since an insufficient quantity of fish was laid up due to the lack of twine,
which had arrived too late in the fall to lay up a stock of fish. Also, the
lack of trade goods forced the Indians to abandon Fort Wedderburne for Church-
ill and Ile à la Crosse. This was of great concern to Brown since the Company
had given the Indians trade goods on credit. It appears that the trader at
Ile à la Crosse gave the Chipewyan from Athabasca presents and goods at a
lower price, and so Brown anticipated that the Indians would not be induced
to trade at Fort Wedderburne (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/17, folio 2). This would be
a problem of immediate importance in the rearrangements of the interior,
following the forthcoming amalgamation.

The situation north of Fort Wedderburne was similar. At Fort Resolution
the incoming Indians throughout the period from June to October 1820 were
forced to abandon their trapping and trading activities. They were compelled
by the Hudson's Bay Company personnel to return to their lands to snare
caribou because the Company lacked ammunition: "...got the Indians now
reconciled to go to their lands until fall where they can make out a subsist-
ence without ammunition..." (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3, folio 10). The boreal forest area did not have large herding animals in sufficient abundance to allow the Indians to both subsist and trap, using precontact technology. The Indians required ammunition.

Starvation among the traders was also evident during the summer, and one Northwester actually died. The supplies arrived in the second week of October 1820 and the local trading Indians were dispatched to their hunting grounds. The October 13-15, 1820 journal entries provide data on the process whereby a trading post band and trapping parties were forming (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3, folio 17-18):

October 13, 1820...the Bark and band left the Fort /highly pleased/ for their hunting grounds these Indians are to go beyond the Rain Deer mountain where they say beaver are still numerous, and they assured us that they will not send or come to the Fort until the last Ice therefore we entertain the most sanguine hopes of their marking excellent hunts...

...Chinnayhey and his young men left the Fort for their Hunting grounds. These Indians are to proceed to Buffalo Lake in the vicinity of which Lake, Beaver are still plentiful they assured us that they would exert their utmost endeavors to pay their Credits before spring....

October 15, 1820...our old Chief (White fish) and his band and Cadien Sappin left the fort...they are to hunt that tract of ground between the Buffalo Lake and the Peace River which Country has not been visited by any of the Chipewyan tribe for many years past....

Indian groups attached to the post were not entirely successful in trapping and provisioning during the winter. There were a number of factors involved in their failure. Noted in McVicor's journal were sickness, starvation, death, and the Indians' traditional customs (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3, folio 19-25):

November 26, 1820...Ft. Hunters who bring the following disagreeable intelligence—"That our Hunters are in a state of starvation, and that there is no appearance of their making any exertion as long as their Brother /one of the NW Hunters/, who is at the point of death, lives, and what is more distressing the Old Chief with when he, Cadin, was, in also with the band, and the sick person being his son, has given up all ideas of Hunting this Season." and what will be an additional aggravation is that when his son will leave this world, the old man and the rest of
his sons will in conformity with their religious notions tear and cut up all their Clothes, which will render them miserable during the season....

December 21, 1820...In the evening Mistas arrived with Shantlra who came from the Carribou Country—this Indian states that all our Indians as well as those of the NW in that Quarter are starving and consequently doing nothing....

January 28, 1821...Delage arrived from the Indians he was sent with last fall, and gives the following unpleasant statement—"that the Bark /our principal Chief/ and Band after they left the Forst last fall proceeded with every dispatch towards the Rein Deer Montagne, where they found Beaver lodges in great plenty and the Indians commenced to work them with much spirit, but unfortunately the Bark, by using too much exertion stressed himself to such a degree that he was passing out blood in his mouth & nose continuing for fifteen Days, and at length expired, when his Relations /consistent with their superstitious notion/ tore and cut up all the Furs and property they were in possession of...that as soon as the deceased was interred his wife and young son separated from the other Indians immediately and directed their course across the Rein Deer Montagne in search of Chilliara and four more of her Sons who have gone there on the first ice to look out for Beaver....

The death of the Bark was the most severe stroke of bad luck that these traders could have experienced since not only did the loss of the trading chief affect the Company, but also the hunts of all Bark's relations for that season were lost. It was additionally reported that no fewer than six of the Company's trading Chipewyan died in the course of the previous summer (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3, folio 25).

The continued practice of appointing trading chiefs was a necessity for the Companies during the period of competition. Before trading chiefs were appointed, the Indians were able to manipulate the credit system to their advantage by taking debts at one post in the fall and by returning to a rival post in the spring. The Indians could easily take a double return. The Hudson's Bay Company, as described before, was the first to devise a system whereby they would win the allegiance of the trapping party leaders through preferential treatment and presents, particularly the issuing of the "Captains Outfit." This system enhanced the authority of the trapping party leader in
the eyes of his followers (Ray, 1974:37-40). The system was effective, con-
sidering that traditigmally the Athapaskan Indian leaders held little auth-
bority. Needless to say, all the companies adopted this system and used it to
 manipulate the Indians. A trapping party leader who failed to inveigle his
followers to trap or hunt sufficient returns to pay their credits would be
denied his symbols of office. For returns in excess of credits, the chief
was always given additional presents. At the death of a chief, the organiza-
tion of the trapping party was disrupted. McVicor's journal account for
February 28, 1821 describes the consequences (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3, folio
29):

February 28, 1821...At sun set Lavellent arrived from Nattichus
Lodge with 10 Beaver Skins being all that this Indian killed during the
Winter—Lavellent stated "that in the fall the Indians appeared very
anxious to make exertions to pay their Debts but as soon as their Leader
(the Old white fish, whose son died) left their tent they all separated
in different directions—and Nattichu the Indian he remained with being
a poor animal hunter—was unable to procure a subsistence and in conse-
quence starved very severly—The other Indians he has not heard of since
they separated, but he is of opinion that they will make little or no
Exertion—on account of their having no Leader to Lead them on"—....

As the competition between the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies intensi-
fied, there was a proliferation of smaller trading parties under the direction
of one or more chiefs—each pledged loyalty to one or other of the companies.

Presents of Chiefs Outfits were given freely by both companies to win the
loyalty of leading Indians, and the standards of trade in Athabasca continued
to decline. The later reorganization of trading post bands and parties during
the monopoly period sought to eliminate this expense, and the supply of furs
was adjusted to price levels underwriting the cost of gifts to leaders.

For the Northwest Company at Great Slave Lake, the competitive struggle
had reached a desperate state during the 1820-1821 season. Their Agreement
was to run out in 1821, and the Co-partnership, as it stood, would dissolve.
They had been outfitted in the summer of 1820 with the clear intentions of providing effective competition to their opponents. Although the Hudson's Bay Company journals at Fort Resolution suggest that the Northwest Company was successful (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/3), the arrival on September 20, 1820 of the Hudson's Bay Company's express canoe with George Simpson, the new northern commander at Fort Wedderburne, was to bring the Northwesterns' overwhelming advantage during this era to an end.

In the Peace River District, the Hudson's Bay Company trade was poor during 1820-1821. The Saulteaux had made an excellent spring hunt in 1820, but the Beaver Indians had done little or nothing to provide provisions and furs. The lingering effects of sickness rampant among them the previous winter was the principle reason they did not exert themselves. Also, when several Beaver Indians were sent to the Battle River to hunt dry provisions in August 1820, they were affected by a "consumptive disorder" that carried off a number of the Company's best Indians. The common practice of destroying property further reduced returns considerably, as did starvation, which was reported up the Smoky River and on the White Earth Plains where the Beaver and the Iroquois hunted during the winter. The Iroquois and Beaver Indians suffered the same consequences (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/3, folio 14-17). Despite these setbacks, the Company continued to appoint trading chiefs. For example, the Claire Pocque, a Beaver Indian, was ordained a chief with a great deal of formality through the presentation of a medal and a suit of Chief's clothing (HBC Arch., B. 190/a/3, folio 18).

Although the negotiations between the two companies had closed with an agreement to unite on March 26, 1821, the news of amalgamation did not reach Fort Wedderburne until August 1, 1821 (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/20, folio 9).
George Simpson immediately set to work to organize trade personnel, the provisioning of posts, and the supply networks with the greatest possible economy in the Northern department. "OEconomy" was the watchword and personnel were appointed according to their experience and ability. Simpson's instructions allowed a considerable amount of self-sufficiency in the handling of post affairs. Nevertheless, the instructions were clear that post managers would be judged solely by the amount of beaver returns they obtained. The immediate task of introducing the Indians to the new monopolistic regime was undertaken quickly. The formal process of assembling the Indians and informing them of the new policy is illuminated in James Keith's journal of September 1823 (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/22, folio 63-64):

"...The Preamble & substance of our Harangue being as follows—"You [Chipewyan] have long waited with patience you accustomed supplies withstand in the least importuning us & although we would be much pleased to have an opportunity of addressing your absent Friends in conjunction with yourselves we will no longer prolong your ennuibly postponing a compliance with your demands—already two years have elapsed since you have been supplied from one Fort, & the cause of this charge has no doubt been fully explained to you—The Tribes in general have become indolent & vicious, & malignant diseases had swept off numbers of them—The whites also had become quite ungovernable & ferocious among themselves—all was vice & anarchy—the Country degenerating from bad to worse, till the King—your & our great Chief became angry & interfered. Commanding that these evils Should cease—that we must Join stocks From one Fort & restore tranquility by resuming the old happy Routine under which your Father & Grand Fathers lived & died contented—that by such compliance he would guarantee us the exclusive possession & property of the Country without admitting any Intruder or suffering a recurrence of former evils—Thus situated our attention would now be directed to ameliorate your situation—you have long been oppressed with a heavy load of Old Debts. & often been complaining of the high Price of our goods—These will will now remedy—Such & such articles you are to pay so high. you will now be allowed to purchase at 1/4 less—the Old Debts of those who may exert themselves in winter will be wiped off in spring those in Provisions excepted which will be depend and on your exertions in Summer—we will no longer encourage Indolence or Rogery—a mink or Prize will be set before you to guide—a animale your exertions & the distinction between good and bad Hunters will only be made in Spring after the Hunts are closed, when Presents will be awarded to the deserving also a distinctive Badge to the best Hunter, bearing the likeness of our
Sovereign exhibited on a new HB medal whose hand writing Producing one of our Commissions & the Company's common seal attends the Identity of the Representation & grant of the Country, would be suspended & worn about his neck during his stay at the Fort in spring, & be left on his departure as the distinctive Badge for similar exertions another year—These are the advantages held out to you, to obtain what you have only are trifling & nominal sacrifice to incur that of being deprived of a relinquishing your wanted gratuities of Ammunition Tobacco &c on taking debt, which will only be felt by the indolent & underserving, having operated as an indirect encouragement to indolence & nonextion."

In their reply, these were unusually concise /it being customary with Chipewyans to utter a monotonous repetition without end/ & unexpectedly much pleased expressing their thanks at our Sovereigns & our attention & kindness to them, which they were sorry to observe, the exhausted state of the country & the gloomy prospect of disease & death staring them and their children in the Face, allowed them but faint hopes of repaying otherwise than by words, & after a few other pros & cons—I broke off conversation with...the sound of two Large kegs of Indian rum....

The problems of the amalgamation were resolved within two years, and the Hudson's Bay Company brought the wide fur field north of Lake Athabasca and west of the Rocky Mountains again into production. In the course of time, a line of posts was established at vantage points along the Mackenzie and Peace rivers. After the Union of 1821, the Company began the exploitation of their vast continental domain, enmeshing more and more Indian specialists as trappers in this vast exploitative network.

Summary

From the foregoing account of the Competitive Trade Era, it is evident that the intense competition among the various competing companies resulted in a proliferation of smaller Indian trading post bands and trapping parties under the direction of one or more chiefs each of whom pledged loyalty to different companies. The territorial extent of the spatial structure of local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas continued to alter and decline. It is
clear that the Canadian Athapaskan Indians were growing increasingly dependent upon European Trade goods throughout this era, but had not yet reached a point of total dependence. That is, although subsistence and trapping activities were greatly facilitated by trade goods, most Indians could still survive without these. However, the monopoly of trade by the Hudson's Bay Company created the milieu in which total dependence, and hence total control, could be achieved. The termination of competition in 1821 allowed the Hudson's Bay Company to control and restrict the trading activities of bands to specific posts. The Indians were soon drawn into a system in which trapping became the essential means of acquiring necessary trade goods at the same time trapping came to interfere with subsistence activities. In the following chapter, we will see that the Indians were even forced to barter furs for provisions. At that point, the Canadian Athapaskans had become completely dependent on the trading post for their very survival.
1. A trading post band includes all of the various trapping parties that have a regular and usually lengthy association with a specific post. Each trapping party consists of a group of closely related Indians that trade regularly with the same post upon which they depend. The party is under the direction of a post appointed leader.

2. The Northwest and XY Company personnel did not receive news that the two companies had amalgamated on November 5, 1804 until May 6, 1805 (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/4, folio 17). The XY Company had lost £70,000 during its period of competition, and they could not accumulate sufficient capital to continue trade (Innis, 1930:257). The Northwest Company asserted intense opposition to the Hudson’s Bay Company following the amalgamation.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRADING POST DEPENDENCY ERA (1821-1860)

In this chapter it will be shown that once permanent posts were established throughout the Mackenzie and Athabasca Districts, Indians became increasingly dependent upon them. The union of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies in 1821 inaugurated a new era in the history of the Canadian northwest further intensifying this dependency. The period from 1821-1840 is marked, in contrast with the preceding era, by profound moderation, by an extraordinarily profitable fur trade, and by the development of well-defined relatively stable populations of trading post Indians, dependent upon the trading posts for basic necessities of life. The monopoly served to attach Indians to specific posts and to increase their dependence on traders. The primary underpinnings of this economic system was the stabilization of exploitative relationships. The dependence upon traders was based on several mechanisms, including the reliance on trade commodities, the fear of the withdrawal of the trading post or trade, and, finally, the debt system. Needless to say, this was not to be an era of socio-cultural stability for the Indians, who were, increasingly, relegated to a subordinate position. It does, however, mark the beginnings of another stage of qualitative change in their way of life.

The documents provide a fairly consistent view of the dynamics of Indian-White relationships for the period from 1821 to 1840. During this time, the Hudson's Bay Company trade monopoly gradually resulted in the emergence and evolution of trading post bands and trapping parties. One such
band, the Satudene of Fort Franklin, will be discussed to illustrate the general social evolutionary processes that were occurring during these times. It was during the period 1821-1835 that all Indians became directly involved in the fur trade thus ending the role of the few remaining middlemen traders who had continued to operate in the Liard River drainage system.

The Fur Trade Cultural Units and Group Location

In 1822, W.F. Wentzel was directed to assume charge of Fort Simpson, constructed on an island at the forks of the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers. The Governor and Committee specifically instructed him to render the post self-sufficient. In order to guarantee Fort Simpson's permanency, John McLeod was ordered to construct Fort Liard, on the Liard River near the mouth of the Black River (see Fig. 15). Fort Liard was to provide the seasonal provisions, consisting mainly of moose meat, while Fort Simpson was to become the depot and administrative center of the Mackenzie fur trade district.

The natives, who had formerly used the Northwest Company's Fort of the Forks, were instructed to trade at Fort Simpson. These local fur trappers and hunters included Slave, Dogrib, Beaver, and Sekani Indians. In the fall each incoming trapping party was supplied for their winter hunts after being assembled and instructed through a speech to undertake industrious actions. The 1822-1823 Fort Simpson reports and journals indicate that the traders had considerable knowledge of the various Indian groups whose trade they wished to encourage.

McLeod's first district reports (1823) note the general area occupied by the various ethnic groups (see Fig. 16). The Dogrib were described as
MAP OF THE CASSIAR
(Adapted from Honigmann, 1964)
FIGURE 16

INDIANS AND ESKIMO IN 1725
(Adopted from Jenness, 1932)
occupying the whole of the eastern side of the Mackenzie River as far east as Martin Lake and north to Great Bear Lake. It was estimated that this "tribe" amounted to "...about two hundred men and Boys capable of pursuing the Chace—they have 5 Leaders who possess little or no authority—and are divided into Six families" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/1, folio 3). To the west from the source of the Mackenzie River down to the mouth of the Liard River and from there up the Liard for about 200 miles (320 km) were the lands claimed by the so-called Beaver (Beaver-Sekani) Indians whose numbers amounted to about seventy hunters. This group was thought to have consisted of six families and two leaders (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/1, folio 3). The next group, described by McLeod, was the Rocky Mountain or Forks (Slave) Indians. They consisted of about forty to fifty hunters who were in an intermediate position between the Dogrib and Beaver. Under two leaders, their group occupied a hunting territory bounded on the south by the Nahanny River and on the west by the Rocky Mountains up to the Liard [Mountain] River, which discharges itself into the Mackenzie River somewhat to the southward of Great Willow Lake River (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/1, folio 4). As we will see, it was the Dogrib, Slave, and Sekani-Beaver who became dependent upon Fort Simpson during the 1821-1840 period.

Besides these groups, the Dahotinne (Nahanny) Indians occupied the Rocky Mountain area from the Rocky Mountain River north to Old Fort Good Hope on the left bank of the Mackenzie River, 130°W and 67° 27'N. About forty Dahotinne were resorting to Fort Norman in 1823. It is difficult to ascertain to which Athapaskan culture the Dahotinne were most closely related since Edward Smith described them as "...supposed numerous—in their Native habits and Customs they appear to have come from quite another stock, than
the Slave who inhabit the low Countries in the borders of Mackenzies River" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 3). They were considered distinct from a party of Dogrib who also traded at Fort Norman (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/1, folio 4; HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 3). The Dahotinne may well have abandoned the area occupied by the Slave on account of the encroachments of the latter, following their displacement by the Cree between 1759-1764 (Masson, 1960b: 68).

The Hare Indians were said to have inhabited the country "...between Bear Lake and Copper Mine River on one side and Mckenzies River on the other" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 3). Their hunting grounds were bounded on the northwest by the "Squint eyed" Indians (mixed group of Hare-Kutchin) and on the northeast by the Eskimo. Their numbers were imperfectly known as also was the interior of their country in 1823 (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/1, folio 3). The traders at New Fort Good Hope on Manitou Island in the Mackenzie River described them as a "poor miserable set of Indians" who suffer much from want of provisions, "seldom a Winter passes but some of them die for want of subsistence" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 3).

Fort Good Hope was relocated about 100 miles (160 km) further upstream in the summer of 1823 at the request of the Loucheux (Kutchin) Indians. The Eastern Kutchin consisted of about 120 hunters under two leaders. Using the population ratio proposed by McLeod for the Liard Indians where "...every Hunter has a Women, and every Women two Children," then the Kutchin known to the traders would have numbered about 480 people (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 1-3). Their lands were on both sides of the Mackenzie River from below Old Fort Good Hope down to the Vermilian (Red) River. About sixty Kutchin traded regularly, and they trapped mainly muskrat. Unlike the displaced Hare,
the Kutchin did not appear to suffer from privations (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 4).

All of these groups, including several Chipewyan and Nahanny parties, were soon drawn in to form a well-defined population of trading post Indians. The Nahanny, during the period 1821-1835, were the only people whose trade still involved indirect and middlemen conditions where they received trade goods from both the Russians and the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company traders were to initiate expeditions to encourage the Nahanny to establish direct trade, and, thus, virtually eliminate competition. A discussion of the Nahanny and the fur trade will be the subject of future research.

Expansion and Settlement in the Mackenzie Drainage System

With the establishment of permanent posts throughout the Mackenzie District, the various Indian groups attached themselves to particular posts and through regular annual visits, and through intermarriage coalesced into trading post bands composed of trapping parties. It was Hudson's Bay Company policy to regulate and stabilize Indian populations in order to ensure their trade at specific posts. The development of the specific trading post bands and their constituent trapping parties associated with Forts Simpson and Norman are now described.

Fort Simpson

Although the designation of hunting grounds and the chiefs of various bands and trapping parties are not clearly indicated in the journals and account books of Fort Simpson, it is possible to determine, in part, the
extent of trading post band and trapping party organization by 1822-1823. The Fort Simpson trading post Indians included Dogrib, Slave, Sekani-Beaver, and Nahanny. There were several bands, each with one or more chiefs, including (Table 11):

**TABLE 11**

**FORT SIMPSON TRADING POST INDIANS**  
**1822-1823**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band/Party Description</th>
<th>Chiefs/Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Grand Cheveau (Ekaustaibethaw) and Ehcalais and a party of twelve men and boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Martin Lake leader (Yawetloo) and followers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Horn Mountain Chief (Yudawbethaw) and party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Willow Lake party under Cuhoobah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Porcupine trading party with Neeaballasbethaw, Thingthaullebethaw, and Zeeloubethaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trapping party of the Prince and Grande Chefe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bear Mountain party with Bethachibethaw and Tackebethaw or Onkauchille</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Martin Lake leader Ethe-thaw-e-bethaw and party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lac du Sol party including Chanenedebethaw and Catzebethaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Lakes party under Kecoulatsbethaw or Ecorse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Francois Noir party</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Robe de Castor party</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>and several other trapping parties, including a number of Chipewyan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, passim*

Besides these trapping parties a number of Indians were engaged to hunt moose, hare, and partridge for winter provisions (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, passim).
All the incoming Indians during the spring of 1823 were equipped and ordered "...not to come in with Provisions untill the Latter end of August—This measure has been adopted with a view to save expense, as we [the traders] have a superabundance of Poor provisions in Hand—throughout the whole Department..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 47). Those Indians, who did not trap or hunt during the winter season, were reprimanded by Wentzel (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 47):

June 7, 1823...[the Prince] brings word that he was prevented by his father in law however he did not escape a severe reprimand for his want of faith—That party to whom he was attached have done nothing....

There were frequent cases of starvation during the summer of 1823. When one trapping party of four men, five women, and eleven children arrived on July 20 and requested provisions, Wentzel was compelled to supply them with meat to prevent "...them from flying to the fishing Lakes—in order to secure a Fall Hunt of the Beaver—otherwise they would not make any—[indecipherable] we have a considerable quantity of Dried meat in Store that is actually mouldering into dust—these considerations induced me to be more liberal than I should otherwise have been..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 56). The latter account suggests the onset of an important change in basic economic relationships. The Indians had begun to barter furs for provisions rather than leaving their trapping grounds for subsistence areas. For the Canadian Athapaskans this economic relationship was to increase their reliance upon the trader.

There are indications that a party of Chipewyan middlemen were intercepting Slave trappers before their arrival at Fort Simpson. The Chipewyan were offering two measures of powder for one beaver skin. Wentzel observed that the Chipewyans' manipulation of the disparate values of trade goods
between the Athabasca and Mackenzie Districts would harm the trade of his quarter if left unchecked (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 1). Every attempt was made to establish local trade networks throughout the Mackenzie District, including among the so-called Nahanny Indians. The returns listed in Wentzel’s journal include fifty-three packs from Fort Good Hope and twenty-two packs from Fort Liard for the season of 1822 (see Table 12). The District returns for 1822-1823 were 134 packs and three kegs of castoreum (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 57).

The reports of 1823-1824 indicate that Fort Simpson was the trading resort "...of 130 Indians of the Slave Tribe, not excluding those from Martin Lake commonly called the Dog Ribs who may form about 40 more..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 6). At the provisioning post, Fort Liard, Edward Smith reported that there were about eighty-eight males above ten years of age and eighty-six males under ten years while there were seventy-six women and fifty-seven girls. Smith accorded the wide difference between males and females as "...owing to barbarism customs of the women in destroying some of the female Children—so far no argument has been able entirely to make them do away unnatural customs..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 22-23). These migrant Slave Indians may have used female infanticide as a method of population control in response to their displacement into the mountainous region along the Mackenzie River that lacked sufficient resources for continued population growth. It was an area of low carrying capacity.

The residents of Fort Simpson depended chiefly on the produce of the fort hunters for their subsistence. This dependence often left them in a precarious position, especially in the winter season. For instance, during October of 1823 the Martin Lake Indians along with the trapping parties of
Table 12

Number of Pelts Extracted from the Mackenzie District
(Forts Simpson, Norman, Good Hope, and Liard)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Species</th>
<th>1822</th>
<th>1825</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1835</th>
<th>1840</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castoreum</td>
<td>134 lbs.</td>
<td>185 lbs.</td>
<td>150 lbs.</td>
<td>135 lbs.</td>
<td>135 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>1,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten</td>
<td>9,740</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>3,595</td>
<td>11,586</td>
<td>4,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>36,008</td>
<td>32,875</td>
<td>16,151</td>
<td>26,806</td>
<td>26,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skunk</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>1,531</td>
<td>3,677</td>
<td>2,285</td>
<td>2,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>392</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>20 lbs.</td>
<td>109 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>436 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanskins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;   &quot;</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moose</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribou</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Quills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/1, 7, 23, 47b, and 64
the Prince and Francois Noir were starving. These Indians were not able to
hunt due to a lack of snow. This essentially meant that the Indians could
not hunt moose while trapping. They were largely restricted to hunting
smaller animals such as the hare for survival. Subsistence based on small
game reduced the mobility necessary for trapping. Smith observed that during
the winter season the Mackenzie Indians camped the same way as the Chipewyan
and Cree, and only "...necessity makes them decamp when they have exhausted
the Hares or Animals around them..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 9).

The Indians were still able to take advantage of the novitiate trading
system, and had comparatively little difficulty obtaining food and supplies
from sources other than where they obtained their credit. Wentzel continued,
throughout the winter of 1823-1824, to complain bitterly that the Indians
were not only being spoiled by the Chipewyan and Yellowknife middlemen, but
also by other Company traders who knew nothing about their Fort Simpson
credits. He observed that "...the rate at which the food is sold to them
shows there has been some mismanagement in this, many articles being sold
the same price as to the Chipewyans, which the great expense of keeping the
goods as he can but very ill admit..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 11).

Beside the important reference to middlemen activities, it is again notable
that the natives were trading for food. Although animals abounded throughout
the Fort Simpson area, winter conditions for hunting were difficult since it
was extremely cold and windy. Throughout March of 1823, the Indians were
starving in all directions, even though they were well supplied with guns
and ammunition. The Indians were just not able to approach the animals with-
out detection.

Post provisioners, who were not involved in trapping activities in the
heart of the northwestern transition boreal forest and the Upper Mackenzie riverine forest zones, brought in 1,155 lbs. of grease, 14,428 lbs. of dried meat, 4,289 lbs. of pounded meat, and 1,265 caribou tongues (HBC Arch., B. 200/d/2, folio 9). These provisions were not only used to support the District’s personnel, but also the Indian trappers. The abundance of post provisions may account for the lack of sickness among the Indians during the 1823-1824 winter since sickness and starvation are usually directly related. There was only one account of sickness: an "...elderly man arrived [December 3, 1823] from a party of Indians below the Fort with a Story of woe saying His son in law, His Brother, his wife, his daughter and himself—were all sick..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 16). Later accounts of starvation were often directly correlated with sickness.

A Chipewyan party from Great Slave Lake encroached upon the trapping territory of Grand Cheveux's party during the 1823-1824 season, preventing Cheveux's group from trapping beaver. As a result they received only part of their trading good demands and were told not to come with only excuses for having failed in their hunts. Smith and Wentzel knew "...their Country to be extensive enough to afford them employment both for hunting Beaver and Martin—if they [Slave Indians] wanted us to supply them with their necessaries they must be more industrious &c—when they called on us for an Ax or a Knife or Ammunition we made out no excuses—but supplied them all according to their mind..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 28). The threat of withholding credit ensured that the Indians would trap on a seasonal basis. The trapping parties and bands mentioned in the 1823-1824 journals were the same as those of the previous year with the addition of two trapping parties from Lac du Lole.
Warfare between the Dogrib, Slave, and Hare and the Yellowknife Indians in the territory along the waterways between Great Bear and Martin Lakes disrupted the 1823-1824 winter hunts. The Grand Jamb and four Yellowknife Indians were killed while on their way to Great Slave Lake (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 35). The Yellowknife Indians traditionally occupied the rich life-sustaining taiga-tundra area between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes and north to Musk-ox Lake. The Great Bear Lake and Radium caribou herds in the area of Great Bear Lake (see Figs. 17 and 18) were the basis of Yellowknife subsistence. They continued to inhabit this area and to exploit the timbered portion to the south for fur-bearing animals. The displacement of Dogrib, Hare, and Slave into this wooded region and their later trading post provisioning activities threatened the Yellowknife occupation of the area. In consequence, the Yellowknife tyrannized the Slave, carrying off their women and children and robbing them of their property, which often left the Slave and their congeners destitute of the means to procure a subsistence in an area not overly abundant in large game animals and other natural resources.

At last, during the winter of 1823, after much suffering at the hands of the Yellowknife and a growing need for access to more productive fur lands and the rich life-sustaining borders of the Barren Grounds, the Martin Lake Slave and Dogrib and the Hare of Great Bear Lake combined to destroy their oppressors and thereby gain access to these lands. The Yellowknife never recovered their former ascendancy. This competitive strife was recorded in the Fort Simpson journal by the traders, W.F. Wentzel and John McLeod on April 8, 1824. The Martin Lake Slave chief, Kanoohaw, described the conflicts with the Yellowknife that were presented as nearly as possible in Kanoohaw's words. Because the pacific attitudes and values of the Slaves
FIGURE 18

CARIBOU SPRING MIGRATION AND SUMMER DISTRIBUTION
(Adopted from Morris, 1973)
were still emphasized, the narrative plays down the bellicosity, ferocity, and violence characteristic of groups living in a state of chronic warfare (see Wheeler, 1914:47). The only first hand account of Canadian Athapaskan warfare recorded in the historical journals provides testimonial evidence of this (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, folio 4-6):

Our Fathers of old have been killed by the Red Knives a recollection painful to our feelings, yet forgotten by us, we always loved a peaceful life, which all our neighbours can confirm and we will appeal even to the Whites who have now known us for a long succession of years if we have not ensured every species of ill treatment and indignity from the Red Knives with the utmost forbearance, not from a fear of losing our Lives, for we must all die one time or another, but solely from a desire to live and die in Peace. —we suffered our Wives, our Daughters and our Brothers to be taken from us, with their Children. Our Furs also, this we considered of little importance, they were only skins of Animals, but even our Nets upon which our existence depended, were likewise taken from us, and frequently our Axes, Guns and whatever was most useful or necessary to our maintenance, and left so destitute of means to procure us a subsistence, that it has not seldom happened that many of our friends, and relations have died in consequence of Starvation! and when we met again with the Red Knives, and enquired what was become of our women they had pillaged from us, or how they lived, the answer we received in return was, that they had died of sickness, or that they had been drowned. Stories we knew to be false for they had been murdered. Still we always pretended to credit what the Red Knives thought proper to tell us. This life we have led long before, and ever since the Whites have come among us. However, last spring a Red Knife (Tousignomia) who had already pillaged us of 3 of our women and murdered them, tore a fourth from us, this last, while her Husband was asleep, put an end to his existence by cutting his throat! This deed was so far from being approved by us, that many of our Elders were determined in their first meeting with the Red Knives to take the women and murder her in their presence, notwithstanding that we were convinced the woman had acted from a fear of becoming a sacrifice as the three former of her nation, but our love of preserving peace dictated this measure. However, as there are in all nations people of different passions and feelings so it happened on this present occasion, that every one of our Old Men did not agree in opinion, and the majority were decidedly for war should the Red Knives attempt to revenge the murder committed by the woman. They alleged that it was useless to talk of peace any longer when every days experience showed that the Red Knives instead of being satisfied with plunder and Pillage, only increased in durity toward them. That the Gros Pied [this is the Yellowknife chief, Akaitcho, mentioned in Sir John Franklin's journal] the greatest of the Red Knife Leader had collected a Strong Party last spring for the avowed purpose of making war, first upon the Hare Indians, and then on the DogRibs, it was these
motives which led the Gros Pied to make the circuit of Great Bear Lake, a route which he never had attempted to before, and which he knew to be a barren Country having no Beaver to allure him, but his views were to war, first on the Hare Indians, and then take his route through our Country on his return to consult the same ravages upon us. This Knowledge led us to assemble in a considerable Party near the confines of Great Bear Lake, to defend ourselves, but not to commence hostilities Toward the latter end of the Summer before any cold had set in, and whilst collected. The Grand Jarube with 6 young men of the Red Knives (without their families which they had left four days march from our Camp) came up to us loaded their Guns with Ball and sharpened their Dags and Knives in our presence, telling us at the same time that few of us would see tomorrow's sun, and abused us and said they should not rest satisfied until they had killed a number of us in revenge for the Death of Taisignonai we were on our guard but did not attempt any thing, every night the Red Knives came about our camp, to see if we were asleep rage and fear at length made us destroy him and his Party, and the women and children were destroyed afterwards, not long after in the direction of Copper Mine River on the route leading from Martin Lake to Great Bear Lake. The Hamcon and Petit View with a Party of 7 followers met with a camp of DogRibs, only 6 men including the Petit View came to us many of our old men were here again disposed to make overtures towards establishing a Peace, but this was overruled by the majority who alleged that perhaps the Gros Pied had already cut off a number of our nation and that altho we should allow the Hamcon to escape, he would never forgive us the Death of his Brother the Grand but would seize the first opportunity to revenge it therefore to ensure our safety it was necessary to destroy as many of the Red Knife Indians as we could. In course of the night therefore a number of our Young men rushed into the Camp of the Red Knives (who were sitting with several of the Slaves) and discharged their Guns, without caution, and then run away. The consequence was that the Petit view and Ventre (Hamcon Brother) were the only Red Knives that were killed. The others escaped unhurt but first Killed one of our Young Men and stabbed three more beside the confused manner in which our Party had fired they wounded four of oursevles.—and the Party of Red Knives who escaped joined the Hamcon and cut off 6 men and their families of our Tribe—This is the whole of what we know—and have been concerned in: we are willing to return to Peace but are persuaded the Red Knives will not keep measures with us, and we are convinced they will always succeed in getting the upper hand of us, but what shall we do? if we are quiet they treat us like Dogs if we revenge they go beyond all bounds, only Death then is our position. We are People, and since it must be so, well let us Die like men—I shall not say when we will again come to the Fort for I am not sure of living, if we are alive you may expect us about the middle of Summer, for we are far off, we will sleep 10 nights to return to our families.—

To recapitulate: This warfare was a function of competition over access to large game and fur-bearing animals, and was waged primarily in the areas
where these resources were most plentiful. Since war had lethal consequences for its participants, it is doubtful that the combatants fully understood why they were fighting. They were inclined to explain the war by describing their personal feelings and motivations experienced immediately prior to the conflict. The common explanations by the Slave included adultery, abduction of relatives, personal indignities, pillage and revenge.

Knowledge that conflict was due to a shortage of large game and fur-bearing animals was not a sufficient motivation to provoke them to hand-to-hand combat. Thus, the masking of these deeper causes by psychological motives was advantageous for the Slave who succeeded in gaining ascendancy over the Yellowknife. This destructive quarrel resulted in the deaths of no less than thirty-four Yellowknife who were either killed in actual combat or starved to death after having fled to an area they never before had frequented. Repeated conflicts among the belligerents were avoided through the effective mediation of the fur traders, R. McVicor and P.W. Dease during September, 1824.

Returns for the department were directly affected by the warfare and only 148 packs of furs were sent to Fort Chipewyan on August 5, 1824 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, folio 23). The Fort Liard returns sent to Fort Simpson on May 25-27, 1824 included thirty-three packs of furs, "...41 Bales Dried meat, 200 lbs. pd. 3 Bales Grease, 8 Bags Pemican, 1 Bale Pack Cords, 13 Parchment Skins, 1 Bag Barley, 1 Keg Castorium, [undecipherable], 6 Fat moose Skin in Bag &c..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, folio 12). From Forts Good Hope and Norman, the depot received fifty-five packs and eighty-three packs respectively (see Table 13).
TABLE 13

FUR TRADE RETURNS: 1823-1824

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Furs</th>
<th>Fort Liard</th>
<th>Fort Simpson</th>
<th>Fort Norman</th>
<th>Fort Good Hope</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Large</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Small</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Large Common</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Small Common</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, cuttings</td>
<td>59 ¾</td>
<td>108 ¾</td>
<td>11 ½</td>
<td>4 ¾</td>
<td>183 ¾</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cuts</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Marten</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>2,858</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>7,478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

148 Packs, 3 kegs of castoreum

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/4

In general, the natives throughout the district suffered from starvation during the summer of 1824. For instance, the Horn Mountain Chief and party, the Robe Castor and the Bark and their parties, consisting of twenty men and boys, returned to the Fort all starving. Even the Indians at Martin Lake were short of provisions and asked "...to purchase meat for Beaver, this the third instance this summer [1824] of Indians offering Fur for provisions..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, folio 22). The high water conditions of the Mackenzie River and its tributaries during the summer months impeded fishing activities. Thus, the trading post and its provisions became the mainstay for the Fort Simpson trading post Indians.

Much anxiety, caused by intergroup fur trade competition, was present among the Indians during the late summer of 1824. Several Chipewyan quarreled with a party of Beaver Indians, and four of the latter were killed. Reports
were rampant that the Hare were joining the Yellowknife with intentions of attacking Forts Good Hope and Norman (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, passim). Ehcalais and his Slave followers continually complained about the Liard Indians who were encroaching upon their trapping grounds. To further exacerbate the competitive situation, Grand Cheveux's trapping party had penetrated into the territory between the Liard and Nahanny Rivers where they killed a Nahanny Indian. Rumors suggest that the deceased was one of White Eyes' sons (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, folio 28), and it was feared by the traders that this event would disrupt their attempts to promote Nahanny-trader relationships.

Warfare between the Yellowknife and the Dogrib, Slave, and Hare during the previous winter continued to have a disruptive influence as well. During November 1824, incoming parties of Dogrib from Martin Lake reported starvation as a result of their involvements in warfare. These Dogrib had deserted the wintering grounds of the Radium caribou herd to hunt in the area adjacent to the Mackenzie River, and "...being no more on their own Lands consequently follows to them Starvation—they have eat some of their Skins and fear much Cold weather now fast approaching..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, folio 31). The Dogrib were forced to eat their dogs and "...in one instance some had recourse to the bodies of their deceased Children who had previously died from Want..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/5, folio 36). Nevertheless, this party of Dogrib was scolded for not trapping because of their fear of the Yellowknife. The traders made every effort to compel all the Indians to trap while relying on hare and moose for subsistence. Despite such advice, frequent reports of starvation characterize the Fort Simpson journal reports for 1824-1825. Incoming Indians were given meat and a few measures of shot and powder to
sustain them during the spring trapping season. The account books also indicate that trade returns were slightly lower during the 1824-1825 season (see Table 14). Also, the first record of Indian debts is given (see Table 15).

**TABLE 14**

**FUR TRADE RETURNS: 1824-1825**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Furs</th>
<th>Fort Liard</th>
<th>Fort Simpson</th>
<th>Fort Norman</th>
<th>Fort Good Hope</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Large Common</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Small Common</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Large Fine</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Small Fine</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten</td>
<td>2,934</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>6,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>4,466</td>
<td>25,442</td>
<td>32,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 124 Packs and 3 kegs of castoreum

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/5, folio 83

**TABLE 15**

**OUTSTANDING DEBTS: 1824-1825**

| Fort Liard | 83 hunters due in Made Beaver = 1,708      | 1,708 |
| Fort Simpson | 150 hunters due in Made Beaver = 1,928     | 1,928 |
| Fort Norman | 60 hunters due in Made Beaver = 705        | 705   |
| Fort Good Hope | 21 hunters due in Made Beaver = 237 ½     | 237 ½ |

Average to each hunter 19 3/4 Made Beaver

Note: The number of Indians as above does not imply the whole number at each post as there are many who had no debts at all, especially Fort Norman and Good Hope [sic].

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/4, folio 89
Trade was also affected by the Chipewyan from Great Slave Lake under the trading chiefs, Grand Jeune Homme and Prosson Blanc, who were trapping and trading up the Liard River. In the 1825-1826 journal for Fort Simpson, Edward Smith complained that his Indians were hemmed in on all sides by those of the Athabasca District. The Chipewyan had a double interest in encroaching upon the lands of the Mackenzie River Indians. First, they were able to find a few more beaver than in their own country; and second, their provisions were bought much cheaper at Great Slave Lake. The Chipewyan were still able to work as middlemen to some of the Slave trapping parties. At the Great Slave Lake posts and at those of the Peace River, a Chipewyan paid twelve beaver skins for a gun and sold it for seventeen beaver skins to the Slave, who still received it about three beaver skins cheaper than from the Mackenzie District traders (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 3-4). As a result Smith intended to inform the Athabasca personnel promptly since "...it being for the benefit of the Concern in general to keep the Indians at this River distinct and separate from mixing with the Chipewyan—..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 4). A greater stabilization of the trade was necessary for both districts if the trade was to be improved and if Indians were to become more dependent on specific trading posts.

In the late spring of 1825, the Fort Simpson traders were able to convince a party of Dahotinnes (Rocky Mountain Slave) and Nahanny (Sekani) to use Fort Simpson as their place of resort. It appears that White Eyes was chosen as their leader (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 6).

Throughout the summer, Smith was pestered by a group of Slave from Martin Lake under Ethabethow who required meat. On June 1, 1825, there were more than fifty Indians at the post who required food and who would not return to
their grounds until ammunition arrived (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6). Included among the Fort Simpson trapping parties was another Chipewyan party under a leader named Langly who had hunted about Hay River for many years. However, the murder of four Beaver Indians during the previous summer had forced this party to abandon Fort Vermillion where they had debts. As a result, Langly's party used the Great Slave Lake Chipewyan as their middlemen so that the Fort Simpson traders lost their Mackenzie Indians' spring hunts (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 24-27).

The Indians west of Fort Simpson and up the Liard River were further affected by the massacre at Fort St. John the previous winter. There were numerous stories about the murderers having been seen in the upper parts of the Mackenzie River and its tributaries. Such activities disrupted trapping activities. To induce the Indians to trap and hunt for provisions, the traders had to make persuasive arguments since, according to Smith, the memory of past animosity between the Slave and Sekani and the Cree and Beaver Indians was still fresh in their memories. Even though the Slave and Sekani were relatively secluded, the first news of war compelled them to abandon trading pursuits. Smith concluded that every effort had to be made to separate the Mackenzie District Indians from those of the Athabasca District to avoid upsetting their winter and spring hunts again (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6). It was estimated that the Liard Indians had lost six packs due to Chipewyan interference and to general inactivity in the spring of 1825. Smith's journal repeatedly laments the harmful influence of the Athabasca Indians. For example, a major party of twenty to twenty-five trappers under Beaver Robe from the upper part of the Mackenzie River traded all of their returns with the Chipewyan. Other parties also traded with the Chipewyan so that
only three-quarters of the preceding year's returns were obtained by the Fort Simpson traders.

The winter returns were more favorable even though the Indians complained that moose suffered a disease. While hunting, the provisioners would often find dead moose, whose flesh when eaten by their dogs caused the dogs to swell and die (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 41). Nevertheless, willow grouse, hare, and fish were plentiful enough to sustain the traders through the winter. The returns for 1825-1825 amounted to forty-five packs from Fort Simpson with a total of 101 packs for the District. Fort Liard sent in eighteen packs, nine bags of pemmican, and 2,544 lbs. of dried meat. These provisions consisted mainly of moose meat, which apparently had no ill effects on the traders (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/7, folio 10).

The Chipewyan continued to pose a problem for the Fort Simpson traders during the 1826-1827 season. They frequently visited the post for ammunition and tobacco, and it was reported that they had killed a party of Slave Indians near the Horn Mountains during the spring of 1826. Generally, however, the season was favorable to both the traders and the Indians. Provisions and furs arrived almost daily from October through April. Several Nahanny and Dahotinne Indians, some of whom had not seen white men before, arrived with furs. The Fort Simpson ration book indicates that the post continued to support trapping parties during their spring hunts. The expenditure of provisions for March 1827 shows that 286 fish, 3,157 lbs. of fresh meat, 1,180 lbs. of dry meat, 141 lbs. of pounded meat, 131 lbs. of grease, 497 hares, and 614 lbs. of pemmican was consumed mostly by visiting Indians. Edward Smith estimated that these provisions would have supported the Fort Simpson personnel for at least two months. In those regions where there was a
seasonal abundance of large animals, the Indians spent most of the winter hunting rather than trapping furs. The traders were gravely concerned about the Indians' failure to trap although the comparative statement of trade from 1824 to 1826 indicates a gradual increase (see Table 16).

**TABLE 16**

**COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF TRADE FOR MACKENZIE RIVER DISTRICT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Beaver</th>
<th>Beaver Coating</th>
<th>Muskrat</th>
<th>Lynx</th>
<th>Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32,873</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>6,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>3,133</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14,727</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>9,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>3,508</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>25,422</td>
<td>2,836</td>
<td>10,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>4,861</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>30,744</td>
<td>3,944</td>
<td>6,949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/11

For the first time a detailed record of the Indian population dependent upon Fort Simpson was recorded (see Table 17). Smith's May 15, 1827 journal entry reads as follows (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/8, folio 45):

...From the best information I have been able to get during winter from the Indians as they come in for their supplies and from Prince and Laokaibithaw [trading chiefs] to day—I find the Indian population in the dependences of this place to be as follows:
The number of Dogrib and Rocky Mountain (Slave) Indians who had no debts surprised Smith. These Indians were, nevertheless, involved in the fur trade since they gave their furs to those who traveled to Fort Simpson. The total number of Dahotinnes was not known at this date (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/8), although more details on them and other Mackenzie District groups are available in the District reports. Smith's abstract of Indian debts, outstanding debts, and populations are included below (HBC Arch., B. 200/3/7, folio 6) (see Tables 18 and 19):

**TABLE 17**

**THE FORT SIMPSON TRADING POST BAND (1826-1827)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Hunters</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Hunters</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Simpson debt Book—Dogr</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Mountain depending on AÇ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the same Tribe who get no debts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AÇ on AÇ Nahanny</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AÇ on AÇ Dahotinne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>868</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table 18

**Abstract of Indian Debts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balances 1826</th>
<th>1826 Hunts in Made Beaver</th>
<th>Balances 1827</th>
<th>1827 Hunts in Made Beaver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Made Beaver Acct.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Made Beaver Acct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Liard</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>3,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Simpson</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>3,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Norman</td>
<td>1,387</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Good Hope</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>Trade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Table 19

**Abstract of Indian Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Children Under 10</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Liard</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Simpson</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Norman</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Good Hope</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/e/7

---

# Table 19

**Outstanding Indian Debts: 1827-1828**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97 hunters due in Made Beaver</td>
<td>97 hunters due in Provisions</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Liard</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Simpson</td>
<td>78 hunters due in Made Beaver</td>
<td>78 hunters due in Provisions</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Good Hope</td>
<td>35 hunters due in Made Beaver</td>
<td>35 hunters due in Provisions</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/14a
Smith also noted that the Beaver Indians of Fort Liard had only four leaders while the Fort Simpson Dogrib and Rocky Mountain Indians were organized under nine leaders. There were still forty-five hunters, along with thirty women, and sixty-five children of the Dogrib and Rocky Mountain Indians who were not indebted. The population also included eighteen Nahanny hunters with thirty women and sixty-five children. The Upper Dahotinnes were estimated to have thirty hunters, twenty-five women, and fifty children. The last two populations were organized under one leader. The Fort Norman Hare, Dogrib, and Lower Dahotinnes had five leaders while at Fort Good Hope the remainder of the Hare and the fur trading Loucheux had three leaders (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/7, folio 6). The various leaders were still given presents to induce their followers to trap (see Table 20).

**TABLE 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTS GIVEN AT FORT SIMPSON—SPRING 1827 (in part)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Cheveux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 scarlet chief's coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 scarlet chief's hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Linnon shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair cord Blue Cloth Trouser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 Circle Feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tin Tob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Scarlet Chief coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 common wool hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 Orlce Feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Linnon Shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cotton handkerchief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair blue cloth Housory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Noir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cut tob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 comb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*In all, twelve Indians were given gratuities.)

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/1a
During the 1827-1828 season, the Chipewyan, it seems, were dictating where the Slave could or could not trap, a practice that traders were trying to curtail. [The Slave leader] (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/9, folio 17):

...now askes [Smith] advise what to do wheither to work the Beaver or leave them to the Chipewyans who are to return [to the Slave trapping area]—sent them to work them—I have long since represented to the Athabasca Gentlemen the necessity of endevouring to Keep their Indians near home—or they will continue to hurase the Slaves (McKenzie River Indians) until the same Catstophe is acted over again as with the Copper Indians....

Despite these attempts, the Chipewyan were to remain a problem for several more years.

While whooping cough and the scarcity of large animals posed some problems to the Indians throughout the winter, increased trapping activities are evident. For the first time, a party of Rocky Mountain Indians attempted to establish trade at Fort Simpson. Smith was short of guns and kettles to meet these newcomer's demands. It appears that guns were in great demand by this group (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/9, folio 25). There had been similar desires for guns and ammunition by a party of six Nahanny and ten Dahotinne men during the previous year (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/7, folio 1). The returns for Fort Simpson were: seventy packs, ninety-five lbs. of castoreum, and eleven bags of pemmican, demonstrating the continued expansion of fur trade networks surrounding the post (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/9, folio 35). The Mackenzie District returns for 1828-1829 were 161 packs (see Table 21).

The Martin Lake trapping units remained idle while the Slave Lake Chipewyan were making considerable beaver hunts near them (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/10, folio 13). This situation was to continue throughout the 1829-1830 season. In one instance, the Chipewyan acted as mediators between the Martin Lake Slave and a Yellowknife party under Ekycho, who had exchanged words with the
TABLE 21

MACKENZIE DISTRICT CARGO PACKS SENT OUT: 1828-1829

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st canoe</th>
<th>2nd canoe</th>
<th>3rd canoe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49 packs</td>
<td>56 packs</td>
<td>56 packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>60 lbs. Dried meat</td>
<td>30 lbs. Dried meat</td>
<td>38 lbs. Dried meat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st canoe 7 bags of pemmican 50 Reindeer tongues
2nd canoe 6 bags of pemmican 20 Reindeer tongues
3rd canoe 6 bags of pemmican 12 Reindeer tongues
3 kegs of castoreum

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/20

Slave. The Chipewyan, meanwhile, continued to hunt the area around Martin Lake (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/11, folio 13-14).

The beaver were becoming scarce in the Fort Liard region and the natives were encouraged to husband their resources but "...when they leave them unmolested—the Athabasca Chipewyans comes behind and destroy what they thought they could depend on—The Chipewyans are a selfish Tribe—and ruin their neighbours Country to save their own" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/9, folio 2).

Competition among the various groups, however, did not seriously affect the fur trade returns for the Mackenzie District. Returns totalled 222 packs and four kegs of castor (see Table 22). The total represents a considerable increase over the 1828-1829 seasonal returns of 161 packs. The attraction of several new trapping parties over a two year period contributed significantly to this increase. For instance, the District's fur trade expansion policy incorporated a party of Umbahotinne and Nahanny. It was also expected that the Umbahotinne would make a concerted effort to induce a new group, the
TABLE 22

MACKENZIE DISTRICT RETURNS: 1829-1830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Fort Simpson</th>
<th>Fort Liard</th>
<th>Fort Norman</th>
<th>Fort Good Hope</th>
<th>Fort Halkett</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bears, black large</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bears, cub</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bears, Brown large</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bears, Brown cub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grizzly, Large</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grizzly, cub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, Large</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>1,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, small</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver, coating</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castoreum</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moose, dried skins</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox, silver</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox, cross</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox, red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox, white</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>1,657</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>2,233</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2,192</td>
<td>11,389</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan skins</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan quills</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/23

Tooitchoetinne or Tooe chohottinne (Tutchone), to establish trade with Fort Simpson by the spring of 1830. However, the two parties became involved in warfare, and it was necessary for Edward Smith to council the leader of the "imbahotinne "...to restrain His Followers from any attack on the defenceless Tooitchoetinne mild and conciliating measures are the surest methods of re-

-267-

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/23
ate suspension of warfare was encouraged to guarantee successful trade relationships with both parties.

According to the Umbahotinne, the boundaries between his people and the Tooctchoetinne (Tutchone) were located where "...the Waters run in a Contrary direction from Mckenzie's River" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/8, folio 11). The Tooctchoetinne would have occupied the Pacific drainage area west of the Liard River. They named themselves the Tooctchoetinne or "the people of the Big Lake" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/8, folio 12). The Nahanny and Umbahotinne claimed "...the Mountains as Our Lands—being divided from us only by the Nahanny River" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/3, folio 11). The Umbahotinne, who reported to Fort Simpson, were the same Indians as the Dahotinne who resorted to Fort Norman. They spoke the same Athapaskan dialect, and the only distinction that could be made between the two groups was that the Umbahotinne lived in goat country while there was a scarcity of goats in Dahotinne country (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/8, folio 11). Thus, by 1830, even these relatively small and remote Indian populations were drawn into the trade.

During the 1829-1830 season, Fort Halkett was established at the mouth of the Toad River on the left bank of the Liard River in order to attract the thirty to forty Sekani (Thekanne) hunters of this area. The Sekani had been separated "...since Spring in Four divisions—mention is also made of a Tribe totally unacquainted with the Whites that they meet with and whose Country is rich in Beaver..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/11, folio 6). The latter were a small division of the Sekani called the "Sandy People" from the vicinity of the west branch of the Liard River (HBC Arch., B. 85/a/2, folio 2). Edward Smith's map shows the location of the various Liard River populations (see Fig. 19). There were also two divisions of Sekani on the west branch of the
FIGURE 19  MAP OF THE LIARD RIVER
A detailed account of the Indian population (1829) is available for the majority of Indians in the District (see Table 23).

### Table 23

**The Mackenzie District Indian Population: Outfit 1829**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leaders &amp; Chiefs</th>
<th>Hunters</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total Natives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Simpson</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>620</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Liard</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Norman</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Good Hope</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>187</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/e/9, folio 6
The 1830-1831 season was characterized by "...a general complaint of Want of Animals and dearth of Provisions" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 5). Throughout September 1830 various Indian parties were making excessive demands upon the post's provisions and supplies. The snowshoe or varying hare (Lepus americanus Erxleben) population had reached its nadir in the summer and fall of 1830. The traders, of course, recognized "...that the chief support of Fort Simpson has always been Hares, and that whenever the Hares failed, the People invariably suffered" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/10, folio 3). Signs of starvation were apparent everywhere. For instance, during the winter five members of Big Partridge's party arrived at Fort Simpson, destitute of their hare skin clothing, and reported that they had eaten part of their beaver parchment (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 26). In all, eleven people starved to death between September and April 1830-1831 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 38). Not only was the trade directly affected; but, in addition, the Canadian Athapaskans observed the custom of destroying all their personal belongings at the death of a close relative. Hardships combined with this practice meant that the trading post was compelled to underwrite the support of these destitute individuals. The case of Jack's Uncle (Zeckebethaw) typifies the immediate consequences of the custom (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 19):

...Jack uncle came in from Black French mans camp—cold hungary and naked having lost his eldest daughter (a Girl) last summer and his father in law lately....

Explanations for this wide-spread practice of destroying the personal possessions are not readily apparent.

Edward Smith's summary of the following fur trade season (1831-1832) is satiated with observations of continued starvation and loss of life (HBC.
Arch., B. 200/a/13, folio 38):

...Here closes the Journal of Fort Simpson for the season [May 31, 1832] and since its commencement until its close I seldom have witnessed for a whole season such a continued stress for provisions for immediate consumption...the sufferings of the surrounding indians has been unparalleled in the History of the Forks Mckenzie River....

A single party of forty Chipewyan died from starvation in the vicinity of Fort Liard. Some of the Sekani families at Fort Halkett perished while several Slave Indians in the Upper Mackenzie River also died (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/13, folio 27-37).

Attempts had been made by the Dogrib and Slave to exert further encroachments on Yellowknife-held territory along the Radium and Bluenose caribou migration routes. It was reported on August 31, 1831 that the Martin Lake Slave killed five Yellowknives. By October, the Yellowknife had retaliated against the Slave. However, Beaulieux, the Martin Lake Dogrib leader, had succeeded in convincing the Slave to avoid undertaking further hostilities and strife. Nevertheless, these unexpected events deprived the post of provisions for the season. The resultant inactivity of the Indians was based in both fact and fantasy. In Smith's words (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/13, folio 18):

The fear they [Dogrib and Slave] had of the Yellow Knives wither real or affected is there excuse for not collecting any provisions....

Undoubtedly, this contributed to the intensification of starvation throughout the District during 1832-1833. In an effort to eliminate the dependence upon hare and caribou hunters, Edward Smith initiated a policy of having provisions brought in by open water to Fort Simpson to make it "...independent both of Hares and Hunters" (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/10, folio 2).

There were a significant number of policy changes in 1833. These
included: (1) a decrease in the price of furs and an increase in the price of trade goods; (2) the termination of the position of trading post chiefs; and (3) the introduction of the "ready barter" system of trade. The immediate objectives of the Company were to increase profits and to decrease expenditures. John Steward, who replaced Edward Smith in 1833, promptly set about cutting down on post overhead. One method was to eliminate people or "mouths" from the post (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 7-9). From the Company's point of view, too many Indians were already fully dependent upon the post, and it was desired that the combination of all these managerial strategies would stimulate increased trading activities. However, the Company was forced to change or modify its policies since the Indians were unable to cope with the new economic arrangements.

There is brief mention of a circular to Mackenzie District posts on a new pricing policy for furs (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 7), but unfortunately, we are not given precise details on the new standard of trade, although it is apparent that the price of trade goods was increased. Steward's circular essentially informed the Mackenzie District personnel that (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/11, folio 5):

"...It is a mistaken idea that a high price will even induce the Indians to bring a larger quantity, quite the reverse they are naturally indolent, when they get their wants for little they will labour but little, and if they could get their wants for nothing they would do still less...."

In most cases the change in pricing was met with skepticism. The Chief Factor of Fort Good Hope recorded his doubts (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/11, folio 6):

"...The Indians in the vicinity are in a manner reconciled to the change [pricing] because they cannot help it, and are in a great measure dependent on the Fort for their wants, but the Loucheux Indians are quite
the reverse, they are independent of us, and I am rather apprehensive
the present decrease in the value of Furs will be the means of driving
them [from] the Establishment....

In addition to new pricing measures, the Company activated a policy of
dealing directly with individual trappers. It was anticipated that this
method would encourage or motivate individuals who were proficient trappers
to increase their yield. This required the elimination of trapping party
leaders or captains who had formerly received preferential treatment through
the giving of gratuities and advanced status. It appears that in rare cases
leaders may have selfishly exploited members of their parties. Steward
describes in some detail the termination of deferential treatment to one of
the Martin Lake leaders (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 11):

...I also gave Beaulieu his gratuity of twelve pounds and paid him for
six pounds due to him by the men for Bargains made last winter...[had
dispute with Beaulieu or Tsatsseebetha (?) over new pricing]. It is the
advantage he has had at this place that have made him of consequence
with the Indians, and it is far more easy to reduce him again to a
cypher than it was to bring him to notice. It is best placing him on a
level & trading with him the same as the Indians and he will no longer
have the means of trading with them and making a profit of one third
and more, often more than one half on every skin he trades as for him-
self he is no hunter. It is the Martin Lake Indians who hunt for him
and it is the advantage he has that enables him to employ them. The
advantage he has now lost, and if the Athabasca Gentlemen to whom he
means to have resource to thinking he will have greater advantage from
them than here, do not meddle with him, he will become what he always
was—a worthless vagabond without either rule or consequence....

Control of this leader's trading activities within the Mackenzie District was
easily maintained since the posts had an accurate record of the trading
transactions of individual Indians by 1833 (see Table 24). It had been Company
policy for many years to extend debts to individuals in order to be able to
apply pressure to indolent trappers from whom new credits could be withheld
until they increased their yield. The record of individual balances allowed
the traders to govern the activities of dissatisfied natives—they could not
choose where they wished to trade. As Steward pointed out, Beaulieu could easily be kept in line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hunts in Made Beaver</th>
<th>Debt Balance</th>
<th>Credit Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Alichay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheechay</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasno</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heesluneyjay</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashluyay</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kighcha,j</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koosutchay</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Anglis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meekhay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meegh,hgh</td>
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<td>Mallesoday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuncheny</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanasechoy</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Youatheta</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Yugello</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turgayayug</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., R. 200/a/16
The introduction of the "ready barter" system was imposed reluctantly in 1833. This system necessitated the Indians exchanging furs directly for trade goods, rather than receiving goods in advance. Although such a policy was designed to avoid economic risks, the fur traders realized that the Indians would suffer severe hardship and the trade would decline. Steward wrote (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 16):

...I gave them [Slave] a few Iron works on Debt and regret that the system of Debt giving is done away with in McK River. It has quite detached the Indians from the Establishment and has tended more to reduce the Return than all other causes put together. There is not one much conversant with Indians who does not know that the Indian Trade never was and never can be carried on to advantage where no Debts are given. They are naturally improvident and it is not only the supplies given in the fall on debt that enables them to hunt in Winter but then much discernment is necessary to know when to give and when to refuse....

It was also feared that some of the Dahotinne and Nahanny, who had been recently introduced to the fur trade, would discontinue trapping with the cessation of the debt system. To encourage trapping activities, the traders generally dispensed with official policy and allowed Indians to have a limited amount of debt (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 17):

...gave him [October 12, 1833] four skins in Debts as an encouragement for the rest of the Party to come here. They are down at the old Rocky Mountain House and have not been here the two years. They remain chiefly in the mountains where they lives wild, but when an but few Furs to be had hence the causes of their coming here but seldom, only when they want a little ammunition and it is but little they require. Since the system of giving Debts was done away with they idle their time doing nothing....

Although the November reports of the provisioners suggested that hare were once again numerous, within two months the hare hunters had largely exterminated this animal. It was a case of wishful thinking on the part of the traders that the hare populations would become abundant within a season after reaching their nadir since, on the average, it requires from six to fourteen years for the animal to attain its maximum numbers (McTaggart Cowan
and Guiguet, n.d.:101). The traders intensified the post's fishing activities as a substitute for their dependence upon hare. They had the impression that fish resources were inexhaustible. By the end of October 1833, the post provisioners had 10,560 fish in stock (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 19-24). These fish, supplemented by caribou meat, would have supported the post, if the caribou hunts had been successful. However, there were frequent reports of caribou scarcity and of starvation from all the posts, which exploited the Radium and Bluenose herds. The Indians as well as the traders suffered and as a result very few Indians were seen during the winter and summer at Fort Norman, "...and in consequence there are but little of Returns..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 41). Likewise there was not a single caribou killed in the vicinity of Martin Lake "...and many of the Indians are dead some from disease and others have Starved to death..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 44). The abolition of the debt system also had effectively undermined the means whereby Indians obtained essential provisions before engaging in trapping activities.

Because of these unfavorable results, the ready barter system was replaced in December 1835, and a small amount of credit was extended to the natives. Many Indians had died from starvation the previous winter, especially at Fort Good Hope. The journals for 1835-1836 are generally pessimistic concerning the District's attempts to remain virtually self-sufficient and to maintain a steady trade. Nevertheless, throughout August and September of 1835, Fort Simpson Indians arrived regularly with furs and provisions, but unfortunately (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/17, folio 14):

...the whole of them [Indians] collectively did not bring a sufficiency of provisions to form one day's rations for the establishment. This is different from what used to be the case some few years ago....
However, by mid-September reports on provisioning were much more favorable. The fall fishery at the Rapids on the Mackenzie River had been established while the summer fishery at Big Island was terminated for the season. Large supplies of moose meat were constantly arriving at Fort Simpson while the Fort Liard provisioning activities were deemed unusually good. By the end of September the Indians had dug up the potatoes, which were relatively abundant. The hare, which had been extremely rare in past years, were once again numerous. For instance, on December 3, 1835, 472 hare were brought in and three days later 496 more were obtained by the hare hunters. In fact, by mid-December the hare provisioning party under Grand Cheveux was told to hunt marten since the post would no longer take hare (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/17, folio 21). The marten, of course, were once again plentiful since as predators they too largely depended on hare. The number of marten pelts extracted from the District in 1835 was extremely high compared to the 1830 and later 1840 seasons. While the 1830 and 1840 returns were 3,595 and 4,872 respectively, in 1835 the Indian trappers brought in 11,586 marten. Fox returns also show a significant increase over the 1830 total of sixty-three (see Table 25):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUMBER OF PELTS EXTRACTED FROM THE MACKENZIE DISTRICT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year: 1835</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bear Black Large</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bear Brown Large</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Castoreum</strong> 135 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fisher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fox</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lynx</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marten</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wolves</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mink</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/47b
The Fort Simpson Indians, in general, suffered very little. For example, the party of old Bedsibetha from Martin Lake had passed the summer on the barren grounds beyond Martin Lake and collected by their account a considerable quantity of provisions, a large proportion of which was left on the barren grounds between Martin Lake and the Coppermine River since the weather conditions had changed rapidly. The caribou, however, remained very abundant in the region surrounding Martin Lake (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/17, folio 21, 31).

For Fort Simpson, it was a favorable season although the same cannot be said for Forts Norman and Good Hope. Both establishments lacked provisions, and Fort Norman's management was disrupted by conflict (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/17, folio 27):

...three of the halfbreed servants [Fort Norman] of that Establishment [fell] upon a party of Indians of whom they killed twelve individuals say 3 men, 1 woman and 8 children places the Establishment in a most alarming and dangerous situation....

Events, such as these, disrupted both trapping and provisioning activities. But as we will see later, there was still a general scarcity of resources in this region, and scarcity was the main determinant of events.

The favorable conditions contiguous to Fort Simpson and the reintroduction of the debt system improved the trade, and commerce was revived with a party of fifteen Dahotinne men who desired mainly guns, ammunition, and kettles (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/17, folio 32). The changes in policy and ecological conditions clearly demonstrate the system of mutual interdependence of trader and Indian. The trader depended upon the Indians for provisions, and provisions insured the maintenance of the post for the Indians who had become dependent upon trade goods. In turn, during times of resource scarcity, the post provided short term assistance to hungry Indians. If sufficient food supplies were in stock, Indian trapping parties were granted
debts on food and other "necessaries," which allowed them to continue trapping. Thus, the role of the fur trader was also that of a middleman in the redistribution of surplus provisions.

The activities of trapping and trading at Fort Simpson during the late 1830s continue to demonstrate the interdependence of trader and Indian. Both parties were always in a precarious position with regard to food supplies, and it was not possible to rely on one basic resource in the Mackenzie District. For instance, throughout June and July 1836, the caribou hunters in the vicinity of Martin Lake rendered Fort Simpson a considerable quantity of meat. On July 9, 1836, José with twenty-one followers and Little Chief, alias Tecumnebetah, brought in 544 tongues, 650 lbs. of dried meat and thirty-five lbs. of bear meat. They had returned mainly for ammunition to enable them to continue hunting (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/18, folio 6). On July 21, 1836, 2,480 lbs. of dried moose meat was delivered from Fort Liard. However, those Indians who depended on fish from the Mackenzie River were unable to acquire any because the water level was too high in July and August. Their position remained insecure until September and October when fishing activities were back to normal. By then, the Martin Lake Indians were destitute of caribou, a situation that was to continue until February 1837. However, throughout this season they were able to live on hare, which remained plentiful (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/18).

During the following two seasons, 1837-1839, similar seasonal and regional patterns of resource variability prevailed. During July 1837, the Mackenzie River was too high, making fishing impossible, and starving Indians families collected at the post. The traders could not compel them to return to their local areas until the fall fishery became productive. The caribou
were generally abundant from November through March, and Indian parties frequently had to return to the post for ammunition. Meanwhile, those Indians who depended upon hare were subjected to starvation in the Horn Mountain region and up the Liard River. They complained "...of a scarcity of hares ..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/19, folio 23). Several parties moved to the Upper Mackenzie River where the hare were plentiful although incoming parties complained of starvation because they lacked snares. Accounts of local fluctuations in the hare population were symptomatic of an impending decline in their numbers.

This sequence of seasonal resource variability is repeated during 1838-1839. In June 1838, the high water conditions of the Mackenzie created a situation where a "...great many starving families have taken up their quarters in the immediate vicinity of the Fort. Their only subsistence is on berries which fortunately happen to be very numerous this season" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/20, folio 5). Following the berry season, the Indians were again subjected to further stress by the general failure of hare and scarcity of caribou. In consequence, they turned to the grouse as a substitute. However this meant that their movements were restricted to areas where the grouse were abundant, and did not allow sufficient mobility for trapping pursuits (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/20, folio 10):

...José [José?] our Marten Lake Leader arrived with 7 of his followers the party passed the summer on this side of the Lake in the Strongwoods and actually do nothing, they are not bring an ounce of provisions, and with the exception of the Leader who brought 40 M.B. the best individual hunt was 15 skins and the whole is nearly Rats....

At Fort Liard, the Indians were forced to eat their beaver pelts, and at Fort Halkett both the hare and fish provisions were scanty, causing the Indians to pillage the fort (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/20).
Conditions were to remain unfavorable for several seasons to come. Groups, which had a surplus of provisions, received payment from the traders. In general, however, Fort Simpson's provisions were insufficient to support the entire native population. Even their once abundant fisheries had become depleted by 1850 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24):

...a total of 5080 [fish] out of these 1100 are not eatable so that short allowance if not actual starvation is inevitable for the remained of the Long and dreary Winter before us...both ourselves and to the Indians before spring time.

Starvation, death, and cannibalism characterize the journal entries of 1840-1842. The caribou were scarce in some regions and no less than fifteen people died in the vicinity of Martin Lake during August 1840 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24, folio 6). In February 1841, three of the "Chief Munque" sons came from the upper end of the Horn Mountains along with their uncle for provisions, but on their return to their trapping unit they found (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24):

...that no less than 5 of the party (4 children and a Woman) fell victims to the ravenous appetites of the survivors. Those on arriving at the Lodge last night [February 26] found a man in the act of wasting an arm of his own wife whom it is supposed he had killed but a few moments before....

On March 4, 1841, a party of starving Indians arrived "...consisting of a women & six children all reduced to Skeleton & almost naked..." and two days later a boy was eaten by his father (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24). Trapping was partially abandoned by most groups for the necessity of the food quest. For instance, on March 16, 1841, two young men "...from du Nord [arrived and] we got 130 lbs., half-dry meat they give a miserable account of the Fur-hunts of this Band of Indians Starving all winter and doing nothing..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24). In contrast to these events, the party of José at Martin Lake had a windfall of caribou, which allowed this group to both trap and pro-
vision. His party returned several times throughout the winter and on two noteworthy occasions, December 12, 1840 and April 21, 1841, brought a relative abundance of both furs and provisions (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/24):

December 12, 1840...José the Marten Lake Chief arrived with 17 followers and 14 trains loaded with 400 lbs. dried meat, 660 Tongues and 17 lb. Grease and about a Pack of Sundry Furs....

And

April 12, 1841...the Marten Lake Chief with a party of 40 men and boys arrived...3,600 lbs. half dry meat, 180 lb. Bear mt 600 Deers Tongues and 65 M.B in prime Furs....

Successful groups brought a steady supply of furs throughout the periods of the cyclical fluctuation of resources (see Tables 26 and 27). It is necessary to add that those who suffered directly from food shortages were, nevertheless, compelled to trap when they could since trapping had become a basic subsistence activity. It was the trade in furs that allowed the Indians to obtain trade goods necessary for survival (Bishop, 1978:219). The journal entries underscores this dependence on store goods (August 22, 1841; HBC Arch., B. 200/a/26):

...Several families of Indians having collected about the Fort Since my arrival [John Lewis]. Sent them all off this afternoon having given them supplies of Ammunition....

And, (August 6, 1842; HBC Arch., B. 200/a/27):

...Girav [Giroux] & his party also came in starving they got a little ammunition in debt & they went off—....

Often, though, the traders were forced to underwrite the cost of provisioning the Indians at the post for an extended period. John Lewis lamented on this occurrence throughout his 1842-1843 journal. For example, after having given a party ammunition on August 6, 1842, he received "...a great squad of Indians [on August 8, 1842] with their families dropped in from all quarters—With What?—Nothing" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/27). By January 12, 1842
### TABLE 26

**MACKENZIE DISTRICT FUR TRADE RETURNS (1839-1840)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Fort Simpson</th>
<th>Fort Liard</th>
<th>Fort Norman</th>
<th>Fort Good Hope</th>
<th>Fort Halkett</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear Black large</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Large</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Large</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat</td>
<td>37 1/2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42 1/2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castoreum</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox cross</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1,518</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>5,406</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2,084</td>
<td>18,577</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otters</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quills</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/64, folio 24-25

### TABLE 27

**FORT SIMPSON RETURNS (1841-1842)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear Black Large</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cub</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Large</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Large</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox cross</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>2,817</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribou</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castoreum</td>
<td>33 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/a/25
there were "...now upwards of 40 Indians. Men, women & children at the Fort all depending on us for a mouthfull..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/27). Additional Indian parties continued to arrive in February 1842 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/27). 

...The Carniwal [Giroux], & Young Frs. Noir with others of Laman's party arrived this evening [February 5], in the last stage of existence, having been compelled by starvation to eat all their furs, this is a heavy burden upon our fish store, there being now upwards of 50 starving Creatures hanging about us,...

Thus, by 1840, it is evident that the Indians who traded at Fort Simpson had become dependent upon the post, not only for trade goods, but for food in times of need as well. Those groups, who relied upon hare, remained clearly associated with the post until 1844 when hare once again became plentiful.

As conditions for one group improved, those for another deteriorated. The caribou in the vicinity of Martin Lake were scarce and reports indicated "...that the Indians in the vicinity...are the next thing to Starvation, procuring a precarious subsistence by fishing..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/29).

Like the others, these natives began to nucleate about the post so that by April 20, 1844 several families were "...encamped in the vicinity of the establishment & continually playing us for something to satisfy the cravings of hunger..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/29). The resource base was to remain unbalanced until 1845-1846 when it stabilized, thus allowing the Indians to obtain quantities of furs (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/30):

...The departure of the boats for the Portage naturally brings to a close the Outfit of 1845 the most prosperous ones in the records of Mackenzie River not only are the returns greatly increased but provisions are also abundant at the principle Establishment—no privations have occurred at any of the Post as was frequently the case in former years.

Fur trade returns were heavy from all quarters so that the Mackenzie District had a "clear" gain of £25,000 with Fort Simpson trading £9,154.6.8 furs in value (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/30).
The traders continued to supply starving Indians with food whenever there were cyclical periods of resource failure. On occasion food was sent inland to starving parties to prevent their nucleation at the post. This also prevented the Indians from playing on the sentiments of the trader (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/32). Besides environmental instability, the Indians were frequently affected by various epidemics of which whooping cough and influenza were a problem during 1857-1858. Several persons of all ages succumbed to these afflictions (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/32, folio 55-65). These illnesses, of course, directly affected the fur returns.

For the main, the nature of the fur trade and the interdependent relationship between traders and Indian producers continued to function relatively unchanged throughout the nineteenth century at Fort Simpson. Indeed, the much later journal accounts of the post for 1908 differ little from those of earlier times. For instance, throughout the period 1907-1908, the natives were subjected to another hare failure, and it was noted that (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/42, folio 121):

...Naduah & the Saulteaux's son arrived again last night with the same old story. Starving again. This is getting beyond a Joke. Had to give them more provisions....

In sum, a developed trading post band whose Indians had become fully dependent upon the post is in evidence by the 1840s, if not considerably earlier. Although both traders and Indians relied upon each other for provisions during particularly harsh periods, trapping for the Indian had become a primary subsistence pursuit. Only trapping could provide the furs necessary to obtain trade goods. The trade goods, especially ammunition, had become indispensable for survival. Even those Indians, who at various times had an abundance of resources, had to balance their trapping and hunting activities.
The hunting and bartering of food insured the continuance of the post. On the other hand, it was in the interests of the trader to provide for those Indians who lacked sufficient food, since to allow them to starve would have been detrimental to the trade. In sum, the trader became a middleman in the redistribution of food surplus. The delicate balancing of trapping and provisioning activities was one of the main adaptive strategies implemented during the trading post dependency era at Fort Simpson. Thus, ecological and trade conditions created a relatively permanent band composed of hunting and trapping parties closely associated with this post. Although abandoned at various times, the debt system was one mechanism that efficiently served to oblige Indians and to maintain stability at the post by fostering Indian dependence on the trade. By 1857-1858, all the natives in the Mackenzie District were accounted for and enmeshed in this vast trading post dependency web (see Table 18). These conditions were operating to demarcate significant qualitative changes in their sociocultural system. In order to demonstrate that the situation at Fort Simpson was not unique, it is now necessary to observe the early development of a trading post band and trapping parties at another post associated with Fort Simpson—Fort Norman.

Fort Norman

Fort Norman, located on the west side of the Mackenzie River about thirty miles (48 km) above the mouth of Great Bear River, was established in 1822 to accommodate the Dogrib, Hare, and Dahotimy (CCH Arch., B. 200[3], folio 3). As in the case of groups associated with Fort Simpson, the development and the stabilization of trading post relationships will be examined during the periods 1823-1825 and 1833-1840. The discussion will focus
## TABLE 28

### CENSUS OF INDIAN POPULATION (1857-1858)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Simpson</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave, Dogrib, Hare</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahanny</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Rae</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogrib, Hare, Yellowknife</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peel River</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutchin</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon Loucheux (6 tribes)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Liard</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekani</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahanny</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Resolution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan, Yellowknife, and a few Dogrib and Slave</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Good Hope</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loucheux or Bastard Kutchin</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahanny</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Norman</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogrib</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahanny</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Halkett</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekani or Thekani</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanay Monde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poalard Khamier</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Lake</td>
<td>677</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Indians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*F = Male; F = Female

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/136, folio 183-184
on those factors that created dependency upon the post.

The period 1823-1825 is distinguished by the establishment of regular links between local groups and the trading post. Attempts by various other Great Slave Lake District Indians to institute trade at Fort Norman were discouraged by the Chief Factor, John McLeod. Indians, not associated with the fort, were given "...a suitable admonition from Mr. McLeod not to come here any more with their trade, but to go to place they belong to..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/3, folio 8). The debt system acted to regulate the trading activities of Indians and encouraged, through the withholding of credit, the active participation of Indian trappers who had become dependent on trade goods.

Guns had become an absolute necessity by 1822 and the Indians were left in dire straits if ammunition was not available. Indians appeared at the post requesting ammunition on June 24, 1822, the date of Fort Norman's first journal entry (HBC Arch., B., 152/a/1; folio 1). The dependency upon the fort for powder and shot are particularly apparent for the 1824-1825 season. For example, incoming Indians during July 1824, remained at the post "...until such time as the canoe arrives from above in hopes of getting a supply of Ammunition..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 6). It was necessary for the traders to encourage provisioning activities among those groups that had an abundance of resources. This guaranteed the continuance of the post and a supply of provisions for those Indians who had a shortfall of resources in their local areas. There are frequent reports of Indians returning with both furs and provisions throughout the 1823-1825 period even though there are also frequent accounts of food shortages in the vicinity of Fort Norman through these same seasons. For instance, the following examples illustrate the situation (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 7, 10, 15):
August 6, 1824...Seven Indians and their families arrived they complain of their having starved during the summer, and come here for the purpose of getting a little to satisfy the cravings of hunger....

September 29, 1834...Two families of Indians arrived, they complain very much of having Starved, and are apparently in a very weak condition....

December 15, 1824...An Indian arrived from above, in a very reduced state, he complains of having suffered greatly for want of the means of subsistence....

The Indians were usually given a supply of provisions and ammunition, and were sent back to their trapping areas. Some arrived with the intention of remaining at the post, since they were incapable of finding a subsistence in the regions where they hunted. Nevertheless, Fort Norman was not able to feed these Indians as the post's stock "...of provisions being so low, as not to admit of us being so liberal, as we otherwise might be" (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 15). Fort Norman's location adjacent to the northwestern transition zone where food resources were scarce, meant that the Indians were subjected to repetitive and cyclical incidents of resource deprivation. The traders were not always able to stockpile sufficient provisions to ward off starvation among its Indian trappers. The insufficiency of resources to assure survival accounts for the frequency of death through starvation and cannibalism. There is evidence for both as early as December 21, 1824 (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 16):

"...An Indian arrived from above. An informed us that he and his relations have been in want of provisions ever since fall, that some of their Children have paid the debt of nature in consequence, and that his brother with the other survivors were on their way to the establishment, being the only resource left them from sharing the same fate."

There are several more reports of death from starvation during 1824-1825. Little Chief's trapping party that hunted in the Great Bear Lake area lost fourteen members through hunger, the largest number of deaths recorded for a
single group that season (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 22). A conservative estimate of the total number of deaths among Fort Norman Indians is about twenty-nine individuals. They were most likely all Dogrib since the few Hare and Dahotinny who arrived did not report deprivation. In 1825, it was estimated that there were 490 Dogrib associated with Fort Norman. Thus, the twenty-nine deaths would have represented about six percent of the Dogrib population. Such a mortality rate in time would have led to a restructuring of Dogrib social organization including post-nuptial residence patterns. Survivors from decimated groups would either have joined other trapping parties or perhaps they would have continued to hunt in smaller units in isolation.

In 1825, Fort Norman's population was composed of six hunting and trapping parties. These included four Dogrib trapping parties, one Hare party, and one Dahotinny party. The party of Hare consisted of fifty-three individuals while the Dahotinny numbered 101 (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/9, folio 6). By 1829, it is suggested that very few natives, if any, were unaccounted for at Fort Norman. The period 1833-1840 saw a continuation of the relationships established during 1823-1825.

Ecological stress in the form of deprivation continued to be a regular occurrence at Fort Norman. The cyclical failure of the hare, in particular, posed as an unremitting threat to the survival of Indians dependent upon this resource. Frequently, survival necessitated their reliance upon the post for food. During periods when the Indians relied on post provisions, the traders were left with no effective solution to the dilemma of also having to depend upon the Indians for procuring surplus provisions. The continuance of Fort Norman was frequently threatened by deprivative phases in resource avail-

ability.

During the 1833-1834 season, the Fort Norman traders were able to supply small numbers of starving Indians who arrived for gratuities of food (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/12, folio 8, 11). The post had a relative abundance of fish, hare, grouse, moose and caribou meat, to distribute to small parties suffering local decremental shortages. After the 1833-1834 year, hare became very scarce. But not all Indians in all areas suffered from food shortages. For instance, when Henderson, the Chief Factor, set out in December 1834 to determine "...how the outer Indians [later called the Satudene] are getting on in their fur hunts not having heard nor seen any of them as yet..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 9), upon his arrival at Stuart's Lake, he found that they "...are exerting themselves more in their hunts than at this period last season and as martins is are more-numerous than what have been these few years past I expect they will make tolerable good hunts towards spring as Provisions is getting scarce...in fact there is no Hares in this quarter ..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 10). In contrast, several Outer Indians returned to the post in April, showing signs of intense starvation having eaten the few beaver skins that they had trapped. The traders feared that some Indians might have died from starvation (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 16). Although traders supplied hungry Indians with food to tide them over until the water fowl returned in early May, they were generally apprehensive about their own stock of provisions (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 17):

...an Indian and family arrived craving for a Mouthful to eat which we can't well afford....

These conditions persisted into the following season (1835-1836). Even the post's provisioning party under the direction of the Indian, Comba, and his
father-in-law and brother-in-law were suffering privations. Comba's party was outfitted and sent to Great Bear Lake '...altho I [Henderson] cannot well afford to give them one mouthful..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 11). Henderson succinctly described the situation in the area of Fort Norman (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 11):

...Starvation is the news all around this Post. they all call out—no Hares.

The scarcity of hare left the traders in a precarious position "...as well as the poor Indians" (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 10). Besides the latter's reliance upon the hare for food, the Indians fashioned their clothing out of hare skins (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 8, 13). Because of the continuing shortage of hare, by the winter of 1837-1838 the Fort Norman Indians were not properly attired for the extreme Subarctic temperatures, "...and remain at Fisherys wher they do not good for themselves or the Company..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 15). The Indians, however, were not themselves exploiting the fish as might be expected, but rather were content to coalesce for handouts at the Company's various fisheries. A party of Indians was finally compelled through starvation to pilfer 200 or 300 fish in December 1837 (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 15). These rather severe circumstances continued from 1835 until 1845 when the hare population at last began to increase. Even the Mountain Indians or Dahotinne who were considered "...the best support of this Establishment...", suffered from food shortages during these lean years (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/15, folio 14). In fact, one of the Mountain Indians arrived in September 1837 with thirty lbs. of half dried goat meat to report "...the melancoly news of the Death of his relations last winter. he is the only one of 33 that is surviving, and Perhaps
Mor—as their was another Party that—we hard nothing of Since Spring 36..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 10). In the first case, an entire trapping party almost became extinct. This particular party would have represented about five percent of the 644 Indians associated with Fort Norman in 1839 (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/7) or thirty-two percent of the Dahotinny (HBC Arch., B. 200/e/9, folio 6). There are other accounts of deaths and cannibalism (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/15, folio 18, 28) from deprivation, which would have affected sociability and social relationships with other trapping parties. The effects of deprivation on social organization are examined in Chapter Eight.

In addition to unremitting deprivation, the Dahotinny were also affected by warfare with "strange" Indians "...that they used to trade their Furs from..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 15). It seems that the Dahotinny were in the process of expanding the normal range of their territory through warfare. Faced with deprivation, this was an adaptive response. According to the Mountain Indians (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/13, folio 13):

...they are all going to the heights of McK River a part of the Country Whare they never used to reside they have been at war During the last winter with another tribe that resides at the other side of the Mountains which never seen the face of a White which is the occasion of them going to that quarter to put themselves in security which will inger this Post a great deal. the Indians that resides about this Establishment are all gone to the outer Lands thru fear of that tribe coming upon them and it is not of our power to make them belive other ways....

Warfare between the Dahotinny and their neighbors resulted in "many" deaths (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 3). The other Indians were unable to defend themselves since they had no firearms (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 6). The Dahotinny's expansion of their territory was fraught with considerable apprehensions. It appears that a party of "Seven Brothers" instigated the
encroachment upon their neighbor's territory, but were afraid "...to go to their hunting ground—where they killed so many poor people..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 9). As a result, their party starved and were "...so much reduced with hunger that they will perish—they have eaten their goat skin blankets—and deer snares..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/14, folio 23). The "Seven Brothers" and their relatives were not able to adapt successfully to fishing since "...those mountain Indians is unequaint with fishing and by the Establishment they are miserable..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 3). The other viable adaptive alternative was to go to "...the Deer Lands, where they are like kings..." (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 4). However, this was not encouraged by the traders because there are few fur-bearing animals on the tundra. Thus, the Dahotinny remained in the mountains west of Fort Norman where a large party perished during the winter of 1837 (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 10). The traders encouraged them to remain in this area by issuing "...a little ammunition to their brothers which I hope will supply them with food and clothing" (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 23).

There were similar adaptive responses among other trapping parties associated with Fort Norman. Continuing deprivation was producing internal stresses among Indian groups: "Persons under duress who refused to share the limited resources or perhaps who engaged in cannibalism became social outcasts. The journal account for April 23, 1837 suggests this (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/15, folio 26):

...and Indian and Family arrived brought nothing but hunger with them—also one of the Louchu Indians arrived from Bears Lake. Some of our outer Indians debouched him from his relations—and how leave him in a strange Part of the Countery with no gun or any other arm Wher with he might be Supported....

It is likely that the Outer Indians or Satudene had expanded into Kutchin
territory to exploit the Great Bear Lake caribou herd. Under the conditions of severe deprivation, normal patterns of cooperation may have yielded to overt competition between the two groups for differential access to this strategic resource. On the other hand, intragroup competition may have created social cohesion among the Outer Indians, who later formed a distinct ethnic unit known as the Satudene. The formation of the Satudene as an entirely new socioterritorial group will be discussed in the next section.

Dependence upon trade goods and trapping as a basic adaptive strategy characterized the Indians associated with Fort Norman by the 1830s. Furs were required for purchasing ammunition, guns, cloth, and other necessities. However, food shortages during the periods 1823-1825 and 1833-1840 often necessitated the search for provisions over furs, often leading to the expansion of groups into new resource areas. Intergroup hostilities from such encroachments sometimes resulted. Hardships also produced internal stresses since sociability required that the limited resources be shared. The likelihood that hoarding of food or failure to share was increased and such behavior was deemed anti-social. In essence, survival meant a delicate balance had to be established between trapping and subsistence activities. When surplus provisions were available, the trading post issued food and supplies to encourage the continuance of trapping and to decrease tension and conflict between and within the different groups. By the mid-1830s, there was a well-defined stable population of trading post Indians, dependent upon Fort Norman for basic necessities of life.
The Genesis of a Trading Post Band: The Satudene

This section will describe the development of a new socioterritorial group during the period 1824-1860. The new group included the Hare, Slave, and Dogrib, as well as some Yellowknife. It is suggested that the hub of their trapping and subsistence activities centered around what later became known as Forts Franklin and Confidence on Great Bear Lake (see Fig. 20).

Cornelius B. Osgood, the first ethnologist to study this group (1928-1929), designated it as a politically autonomous unit, called "...the Satudene or, translated, Great Bear Lake people" (Osgood, 1931:33). Osgood (1931:33) was uncertain "...whether they were always an independent group or whether they have become such during the past hundred years, due to conditions created by European contacts." The use of archival and published data will serve to demonstrate the emergence of the Satudene as a trading post band under fur trade and altered ecological conditions.

Margaret W. Morris (1973:5) has recently described the Satudene as a hybrid group that emerged from the Hare, Slave, and Dogrib only after they had been pushed toward Great Bear Lake during the late eighteenth century. Through the use of published historical documents, she has attempted to reconstruct the condition for the "aboriginal" Satudene (Great Bear Lake Indians) whose descendants are the present Fort Franklin Indians (1973:4-5, 16). It is suggested, contrary to Morris, that it is extremely difficult to reconstruct aboriginal groups and conditions for a sociocultural entity that did not exist until the nineteenth century.

The Historical Development of a Trading Post Band

It has been demonstrated in previous chapters that a significant re-
FIGURE 20
GREAT BEAR LAKE
(Adapted from Jenness, 1932)
orientation of Canadian Athapaskan man-land relationships occurred between 1759-1764, by which time fragmented segments of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave social units were scattered throughout the Mackenzie River drainage system. Their members were not long without access to European trade goods and contact with traders. As late as 1812, each ethnic group was identified by a separate name by George Keith, suggesting that each was still an autonomous unit. Keith notes that their names are "...doubtless derived from the country they respectively inhabit" (Masson, 1960a:111). Keith's Filthy Lake (Martin Lake Dogrib) and Grand River (Mackenzie River Slave) Indians were not seen frequently at Bear Lake before 1812. The Big or Long Arrowed (Hare) Indians were beginning to resort to his establishment. He was successful in attracting about twenty Hare to trap, but the rest continued to hunt and fish north of the fort (1960a:117-124). This description suggests that the Hare exploited the Great Bear Lake caribou herd and occupied this area prior to 1812.

Traditionally, the Yellowknife (Copper or Red Knife) Indians exploited the Great Bear Lake and Radium caribou herds near Great Bear Lake (see Figs. 17 and 18). From at least the early 1700s until 1824, they continued to inhabit this area, after which they began to exploit the timbered portion to the south for its fur-bearing animals. The Slave, Dogrib, and Hare had been displaced into the northwest transition forest region by the Cree, a movement that threatened the Yellowknives' occupation of the area. In consequence, the Yellowknife severely oppressed these migrants, carrying off their women and children, and robbing them of their property, which often left them destitute of the means to procure a subsistence in an area not overly abundant in large game animals and other subsistence sources (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4,
passim). Small, relatively autonomous groups of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave were at a disadvantage both in pressing and consolidating their expansion into this contested sector and in defending themselves against Yellowknife war parties. The Yellowknife effectively remained the main obstacle to penetration into the caribou migratory routes and seasonal ranges until the Dogrib, Slave, and Hare formed an alliance against the Yellowknife in 1823.

The alliance included the Slave from Martin Lake and the Mackenzie River, the Martin Lake Dogrib, and the Hare Indians of Great Bear Lake, who before 1800 gained access to part of the more northwesternly segments of the Great Bear Lake herd (Masson, 1960a:117). These natives combined under the leadership of Kanoobau, a Slave Indian. With the 1823-1824 coalition under Kanoobau, they were successful in gaining ascendancy over their Yellowknife opponents by 1824 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, passim).

The Fort Resolution census of May 1823 indicates that the Yellowknife population amounted to 192 people. The conflict with Kanoobau's followers reduced their number by thirty-four, either through coordinated attacks or through starvation precipitated by their flight into regions not frequented by migratory caribou herds (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/7, folio 2). After the 1824 defeat, the Yellowknife were encouraged, if not manipulated, by the fur traders at Forts Providence and Resolution, to remain as hunters for the forts or to expand into hitherto untrapped marten and beaver areas (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/4). The Yellowknife's disintegration at the hands of Kanoobau's party solidified the fur traders' hold on their labor for the production of raw furs. The fur trade was the final blow to their cultural and economic autonomy (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/4-7, passim).

The contested region, which Kanoobau's followers had acquired, included
three caribou wintering ranges around Great Bear Lake (see Figs. 17 and 18). The area between Bear River and Colville Lake and extending westward toward Willow Lake was occupied by a large migratory herd, while a lesser herd migrated into the area, across from Deerpass Bay to Caribou Point around Dease Arm and the Dease River. The Radium herd occupied the south shores of the lake between the Johnny Hoe River and Hornby Bay (Banfield, 1954:21-22; Morris, 1973:10). The movement of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave into the area not only opened up an abundant supply of large game for subsistence and post provisions, but also a prime supply of fur-bearing game (mostly marten and muskrat).

The various fur trade companies had never been successful in developing a profitable establishment at Great Bear Lake prior to 1821. Even after the coalition of the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821; forts were only established on Great Bear Lake for exploring purposes. Fort Franklin was constructed in 1824 for Sir John Franklin whose party was supplied with dried meat and caribou tongues by a few Dogrib (Franklin, 1970:56-57). The Dogrib were well established in the area hunting the Radium caribou herds and fishing along Great Bear Lake. Franklin distinguishes clearly between Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Kutchin, Hare and Dogrib in his journal (1970:56-57):

Beaulieu returned with his family, the Chipewyan hunters, and some Dog-Ribs, bringing a supply of dried meat, rein-deer tongues, and fat....

And (1970:64),

...on the 18th [December 1825] a party of sixteen Hare Indians, two Copper Indians, and a Loucheux, arrived with sledges of dried rein-deer meat and furs....

The fur trade journals of Forts Norman and Good Hope refer to the natives in
this area as Outer Indians throughout the period 1824-1837. In 1837, another explorer's fort, Fort Confidence, was built by Thomas Simpson and Peter Dease on Dease Bay at the northeast end of Great Bear Lake. Simpson and Dease, who secured provisions from the Dogrib, were still able to distinguish between the Dogrib and the Hare (1845:252-253, 265). Later, in September 1848, members of Sir John Richardson's Arctic Searching Expedition at Fort Confidence encountered "... various bands of Hare Indians, Dog-ribs and Marten Lake Indians, who resorted to the north-eastern arm of Great Bear Lake" (Richardson, 1851:351). Richardson noted that the Hare and Dogrib were forming a common entity (1851:3):

"... The Hare Indians (Ka-cho'dtinne) inhabit the banks of the Mackenzie, from Slave Lake downwards, and the Dogribs (Thling-e-ha'dtinne) the inland country on the east, from Martin Lake to the Coppermine. There is no perceptible difference in the aspect of these two tribes. They meet in the same hunting-grounds at the north end of Great Bear Lake, intermarry, and their speech scarcely differs even in accent...."

Richardson's observations lucidly describe the formation of two trading post bands, each consisting of groups of Indians who traded regularly with the same two posts (Forts Norman and Good Hope) upon which they depended. Regular use of the same post, the same hunting grounds combined with intermarriage intensifying endogamy were creating a new social entity.

Following the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the area after 1858, the missionary ethnographer, Emile Petitot, was still able to identify three main divisions including the Tseottine (Dogrib), Etechesottine (Slave), and Etatchogottine (Hare) Indians. Nevertheless, he (1893:65-66) suggested that all three should be classified as a single entity of their own. It was not until the twentieth century that the term "Satudene" was applied by Osgood (1931) to the entire sociocultural group which exploited
the region around Great Bear Lake. The term (1931:33) "Satudene" was derived from the Slave dialect, meaning "Great Bear Lake people."

In sum, the development of the Satudene as a distinct socioterritorial entity was motivated by the necessity of opening up new and more secure hunting grounds to satisfy subsistence and trading post provisioning needs, as well as the demands of the fur trade for fur-bearing animals. Between 1824 and 1860, the Dogrib, Hare, and Slave coalesced to form a trading post band, the Satudene, and during that time period, were able to gain control of a strategic resource area, and to exploit it free from Yellowknife interference. As the fur trade gained impetus during the same period and as Indians devoted more time to fur trapping, the Satudene's economic autonomy dissipated. Trapping became a basic subsistence pursuit. The Satudene are the ancestors of the present day Fort Franklin trading post band (Morris, 1973:5).

Conclusions

With the union of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies in 1821, the Canadian Athapaskans were soon to pass the critical point leading to complete dependency upon the trading post. The monopoly had irrecusably served to eliminate the last spatial structure of Indian middlemen and indirect trade zones and to fasten Indians to specific posts throughout the Mackenzie District. The primary underpinnings of this economic system was the stabilization of exploitative relationships in favor of the Hudson's Bay Company. As we saw, this dependence upon traders by the Indians was based on several mechanisms, including the reliance on provisions and trade commodities, the
fear of trading post abandonment, and the debt system. Nevertheless, it should be made explicit that the Indians were not passive recipients during the trading post dependency era. They increasingly saw the potential of exploiting new resources, the fur-bearing animals and animals for provisions, as items for directly procuring consumables through external exchange and conversion into food and other "necessities" for survival (Laughlin and Brady, 1978:25). Trapping had become the basic adaptive activity underlying the Mackenzie District trading post bands and trapping parties. Unremitting and cyclical deprivation in resource availability were problems for both the Indian and trader. Deprivation throughout this era often necessitated the search for provisions over furs, the expansion into new resource areas, the retraction of intragroup cooperation, and social restructuring because of deaths and population shifts. In short, survival meant a delicate balance had to be maintained between trapping and subsistence activities. When surplus provisions were in stock, the trader issued food and supplies to encourage the continuance of trapping and to decrease tension and conflict over subsistence resources between the different groups, which traded at the post. By the mid-1830s, there were well-defined populations of trading post Indians associated with and dependent upon Mackenzie District posts for basic necessities of life. The Trading Post Dependency Era serves to demarcate another stage of qualitative change in the Canadian Athapaskan way of life.
1. The period 1825-1833 is not covered due to the condition of the journals for that time period. They would require a considerable amount of time to decipher.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CANADIAN ATHAPASKAN ECOLOGICAL ADAPTATIONS

This chapter discusses the economic and ecological bases for prehistoric and postcontact Canadian Athapaskan cultures. It is postulated that several prehistoric Canadian Athapaskan populations had direct access to the northern extension of the mixed-wood forest region, the natural habitat for a major North American herd of wood buffalo (see Fig. 21). The Canadian Athapaskans were hunter-gatherers, who subsisted entirely on naturally occurring plants and animals (see Netting, 1977:8). Their productive activities and social organization were, doubtless, intimately related to the resources and conditions of the environment in which they lived in the precontact period.

The influence of Cree and European penetration on the Athapaskans, who exploited the mixed-wood forest zone during the initial indirect and direct contact periods, profoundly affected aboriginal Athapaskan ecological and economic systems. The Slave, Dogrib, and Hare groups, who were forced from their precontact habitat by the Cree between 1759 and 1764, adopted new ecological and socioeconomic strategies. As a result of trade rivalries and warfare, these Canadian Athapaskan populations were forced to move to the northwestern transition forest zone for subsistence and trapping pursuits, which they had not hitherto used. It will be demonstrated that the environmental poverty of this zone, which had been virtually unoccupied, produced deprivation, frequent starvation, and eventually forced Indians to depend upon the trading post for survival. These environmental conditions also made the Indians more susceptible to diseases. Economic dependency upon the
trading post and evidence of female infanticide to maintain a stable balance between population and food resources during the 1820s suggest that old subsistence patterns and sociocultural arrangements had altered since these Indians had occupied new environmental zones, and had become accustomed to receiving a regular supply of trade goods.

To understand the nature of these adaptations, it is necessary to reconstruct the economic and ecological bases of the precontact, protocontact, and early direct contact organization of the Canadian Athapaskan populations.

Precontact Ecological Adaptations

The territory occupied by the Slave, Dogrib, Hare, Beaver, and Sekani during the prehistoric period was, for most of these groups, a distinctly different type of biotic area than that of their nineteenth century descendants (see Fig. 21). The historical evidence indicates that there were significant man-land reorientations during the mid-eighteenth century, and that the precontact Slave, Dogrib, Hare, and Sekani occupied the northern extension of the mixed-wood forest region. The prehistoric occupation of this biotic zone would have offered these groups a different array of food resources than is commonly assumed by Subarctic specialists (Helm, 1965:381-383).

The most important additional and abundant food resource found within their precontact habitat was the major North American herd of wood buffalo \((Bison bison Athabascae Rhoades)\). The greater portion of the mixed-wood forest zone is included within the present-day Wood Buffalo National Park, which still has the largest free-roaming bison herd in the world (Park, 1969: 35). Because the wood bison, which occupy a habitat that is considerably different from that of the Plains bison \((Bison bison bison)\), have different
was for only a short distance to new food resources (Soper, 1941: 347). Being a browsing animal, the wood bison would tend not to overgraze its habitat. Unlike the plains bison, a grazing animal, the wood bison was a browser, rather than a grazer, and subsisted or foraged on several species of grass, including broom, vanilla, June, meadow, sedge, and feather (Rorabacher, 1970: 11; Park, 1969:68). The bison foraged for grasses amid a heavy forest growth of black and white spruce, trembling aspen, jack and lodgepole pine and poplar (Rowe, 1972:36-37; Park, 1969:68), as far north as Great Slave Lake (Hornaday, 1887:384-385). From more recent studies of wood bison behavior, it appears that this animal exploited the large areas of open land with its park-like structure of jack and lodgepole pine and rocky hillsides as well as the open muskegs, river deltas, and upland meadows and plains (Park, 1969: 68). The seasonal movement of herds would have allowed the Athapaskan Indian a year-round subsistence base in this region. If the herds moved at all, it was for only a short distance to new food resources (Soper, 1941:347). Being a browsing animal, the wood bison would tend not to overgraze its habitat. Park (1969:60-61) observed that some herds covered distances of from twenty to one hundred miles while others travelled only five to ten miles if they moved at all. The movement was easterly during the winter (1969:60). Herds today are considerably smaller than those in this region during the late prehistoric, protohistoric, and early historic periods. Before the decimation of the wood bison by Cree and Beaver Indians and white hunters during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries (Rich, 1938:379-380), the larger herds may have placed greater demands on foraging
areas, causing movement over longer distances. Nevertheless, it is important to re-assert that the Canadian Athapaskans had the largest of the land animals of North America available to them in their precontact territory. However, by 1820-1821, the herds had already begun to diminish. Sir George Simpson noted in his Athabasca journal that the herds in the vicinity of Fort Chipewyan were rarely found within six to eight days journey of the Fort, having been over-hunted by both Indians and traders (Rich, 1938:379-380).

The moose (Alces alces andersoni) ranged throughout the mixed-wood zone browsing on the wide variety of plants such as mosses, sedges, grasses, and herbs (Kelsall and Telfer, 1975:120-121). Since few of the plants are available during the winter, the important winter foods are willows, aspen, birch, and balsam fir (McTaggart Cowan and Guiget, n.d.:378). Lodgepole pine in the western section and jackpine in the eastern section of the zone were most likely eaten when other food was scarce or unavailable during winters with heavy snowfall (n.d.:378). Their presence in this area was noted in Sir Alexander Mackenzie's description of the resources south of Great Slave Lake. His June 9th, 1789 journal notes that (Lamb, 1970:167-168):

...The Indians tell me that at a very little distance on both sides the River [Slave] are very extensive Plains, where there are vast Herds of Buffaloes, and that the Moose Deer and the largest kind of Rain Deer keep in the Wood close by the River.

The population density of the moose is difficult to determine using historical data. Nevertheless, Mackenzie's remarks would suggest that the moose was a valuable food resource in this area. To the north in the area surrounding Fort Norman and along the Liard River the moose (Alces alces gigas and Alces alces andersoni) constituted a significant part of the Indians' annual provisions. North of the mixed-wood zone, traders hired Indian hunters to
secure moose meat for making pemmican. It is possible that this animal may have been hunted out in the mixed-wood zone sometime before 1821.

The caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), mentioned in Mackenzie's journal, exploited the area north and northeast of the mixed-wood zone. Probably, the Dogrib, Slave, and perhaps, the Beaver had access to the Beverly population of barren-ground caribou, although it is usually assumed by Subarctic specialists that the Chipewyan had exclusive access to this particular herd (Smith, 1978:76). Since historical sources tend to support this assumption and the caribou exploit an area outside the mixed-wood zone, they are not discussed in this section. It should be mentioned that the Osborn caribou (*Rangifer tarandus osborti*) may have inhabited the mountain area along the southeast sections of the Liard River. The Sekani, the most westerly of the Canadian Athapaskan groups, then, could have exploited this resource before contact. The eastern limit of their range is unknown (McTaggart Cowan and Guiget, n.d.:33).

Small game was abundant and included fur mammals such as the muskrat, beaver, lynx, red fox, fisher, marten, black-footed ferret, mink, raccoon, weasel, wolverine and rabbit. In all, some forty-six species of mammals were available: Besides game, the lakes and marshes of the Peace, Slave, and Athabasca deltas are one of the most important areas for migratory waterfowl in all of North America. These areas receive migratory waterfowl from each of the four major flyways in North America (Guiget, 1967). This important traditional resting, breeding, and moulting sanctuary has a present-day seasonal influx of twenty-two species of ducks, five species of geese, plus swans, pelicans, grebes, gulls, shorebirds, and whooping cranes. Gallinaceous or scratching birds were also dispersed throughout the mixed-wood
zone. These included Richardson's blue grouse, an eastern race of spruce
grouse, Franklin grouse, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and three
species of Ptarmigan (Quiget, 1970). Most of the gallinaceous birds, similar
to the hare, were subject to a cyclic behavior that appears to extend over
ten year periods. Their populations increase to vast numbers over a period
of seven to ten years and then decline abruptly, so a region once harboring
coveys becomes devoid of a species. Human populations relying upon a smaller
species with a cyclic behavior would find themselves in a precarious posi-
tion, not unlike other animal predators. However, this was not the case
for the precontact Canadian Athapaskans since fish, besides wood bison, moose,
and small game, was also an abundant resource. All the lakes, sloughs,
river channels and backwaters of the area provided either winter habitat or
spawning areas for pike, Walleye (pickerel), cisco (Tullibee), lake trout,
inconnu, whitefish, and various other species. Lake Athabasca and Great
Slave Lake were later utilized by fur traders for their rich fish resource.

The resources of the mixed-wood zone were subjected to seasonal and
annual fluctuations in climate. Disease and short-term changes in climate
brought about irregular fluctuation of resources (Ray, 1974:29-30). Periodic
climatic change had a profound effect on both large and small game popula-
tions. For instance, large numbers of the bison of the Peace River area
were eliminated one winter, possibly 1837-1838, by a heavy snowfall, up to
fourteen feet deep. The bison died from suffocation (Park, 1969:125). The
near elimination of bison in this region has been attributed to this severe
winter. Over-hunting during this period also played a significant part in
herd reduction (Rich, 1938:379-380). Although the bison is a gregarious
animal, there is little evidence of chronic diseases. The occurrence of
bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis in present-day herds are the result of
contact with domestic cattle. However, bison were affected by other diseases
such as arthritis, arteriosclerosis, ophthalmia, cancer, pneumonia, and
mange, none of which reduced the herds significantly, if at all (Park, 1969:
126-128).

For the smaller animals, periodic changes in snowfall and rainfall had
considerable effect on their populations. All the shallow lakes, sloughs,
river channels, and backwaters have plants and small animals that depend for
their existence on annual flooding. Seasonal flooding recharges these
econiches with nutrients, however, excessive flooding has a profound effect
on animals such as the muskrat (Ray, 1974:30-31). Although fluctuations in
muskrat populations are often attributed to disease or cyclic behavior (see
Porsild, 1945, cited in Errington, 1963), climate is now considered the
limiting factor in population growth. The muskrat habitat is narrowly re-
strictive (see Stevens, 1951, cited in Errington, 1963:615). High water
conditions often drown many of the young muskrats and water conditions over
ten feet are too cold for the submerged food plants used by adult animals
(Ray, 1974:30; Stevens, 1951:615). In the winters of low water conditions
many "freeze out" (Porsild, 1945, cited in Errington, 1963:614). It also
appears that muskrats were susceptible to disease during dry periods.
According to Ray (1974:31), tulerimia bacteria reach high levels of con-
centration in stagnant water. Muskrat populations are then subjected to
epidemics, which take a heavy toll. No doubt other animal populations were
affected in a similar manner.

Seasonal or regular fluctuations in the mixed-wood zone would have had
a more anticipated effect on the availability of precontact food resources.
During the late spring and summer, there must have been a relative abundance of resources. Fish and waterfowl were plentiful along the lakes and rivers throughout the area. The wood buffalo was available in areas with stands of aspen or balsam poplar opening into upland prairies (Park, 1969:68). The herds tended to be more gregarious following the calving period during late April and May. Cows gravitated from the main herd to more secluded spots such as ravines or areas of tall grasses to calve (1969:70). After this seasonal activity terminates, small bands of bison tended to coalesce as larger herds for rutting. This period extended from June through September with rutting occurring mainly during early August (1969:77). Although the bison was readily available for precontact hunters, this animal displayed a restless, belligerent, unpredictable, and dangerous behavior during this particular period (1969:77).

Food resources were equally abundant in the late summer and early autumn seasons. The fall fisheries declined in productivity during late October and early November while the migratory waterfowl returned southward. The condition of the bison was at its peak during the autumn months. In the historic period, European and Indian hunters killed this animal to make pemmican during the autumn months. Bison hides were also in their prime from about the middle of October until mid-December (1969:110). It is suggested that the precontact Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Sekani, and Beaver made extensive use of this resource during the autumn. While December, January, and February were difficult months for Indian populations outside the mixed-wood zone, the wood bison were readily available within it. These animals were more sedentary during the winter than in any other season. It appears that this subspecies of bison does not move around much in winter, remaining
in one location for months at a time. Bison tend to stay in the larger meadows and plains (1969:116-117). Besides the bison, moose were also available.

Thus, the winter season cannot be looked upon as a lean period for precontact Indian populations inhabiting this area. In short, the mixed-wood zone must have been the most suitable area for occupation by Canadian Athapaskan populations in the precontact period since the availability of food resources was not paralleled in some of the contiguous biotic zones. Food could have been relatively easily obtained throughout all seasons. The ecological niche of the prehistoric Athapaskans would have been a generalized one with a broad width because of its rich subsistence variety (Hardesty, 1977:115). Petitot's suggestion (1883:649-650) that this area was the precontact habitat of the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave deserves more credibility than has been given in recent times. Furthermore, it is likely that in the late prehistoric period these Athapaskan populations were larger in size and higher in density than has been generally assumed by Helm (1965:382), because their biotic zone had a greater carrying capacity.

(ii)

The precontact Chipewyan and Yellowknife economies revolved around an entirely different biotic area (see Fig. 22). J.C.E. Smith (1975, 1976, 1978) has documented through the use of archaeological, ethnological, historical, and linguistic data the precontact position of the Chipewyan in the taiga-tundra or forest-tundra (see Rowe, 1972:62) environment. The Chipewyan and Yellowknife had a hunting and gathering economy that was regulated to migratory and nomadic habits of the four major herds of barren ground caribou. The Yellowknife and the Eastern Kutchin traditionally had access to the
Bluenose and Bathurst herds. The Bluenose herd normally splits into two segments during the winter season along the taiga region to the north and south sides of Great Bear Lake. The Bathurst herd, which the Yellowknife exclusively exploited, usually winters in the taiga region between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes (Smith, 1978:71). The remaining two herds, the Beverly and Kaministik, were exploited by the Chipewyan (Smith, 1975:416-420; 1978:70). There is some overlap of herds, particularly the latter two.

The Yellowknife and Chipewyan inhabited the barren grounds during the summer exploiting the caribou, fish, and waterfowl (see Fig. 22). In the winter, they returned to the forest tundra zone where they continued to hunt scattered droves of caribou and the moose (see Kelsall and Telfer, in Bédard, 1975:119) as well as small game. Historical descriptions of their aboriginal habitat portray it as a rich life-sustaining environment. Captain Knight's (1715-1716) journal describes Chipewyan resources and activities (HBC Arch., B. 239/a/2):

...those Northern Indians very rarely know what want is for provisions although they never want for cold Enough in the Winter for all the Deer [caribou] and Buffalo [musk ox] that goes to ye Norward in the Summer comes back in the first of the Winter to the Southward the Country is very Mountainous and full of great lakes where there is Plenty of all sorts of fish especially large Salmain thare by these lake Sides they sett an incredible number of Deer Snares and ketch abundance of Deer in them.

Samuel Hearne who explored the region in 1771 noted in March 1771 that at this time a number of Chipewyan still "...live generally in a state of plenty, without trouble of risk; and consequently must be the most happy, and, in truth, the most independent also" (1971:82) and are "...seldom exposed to the griping hard of famine, so frequently felt by those who are called the annual traders" (1971:83). The Chipewyan, similar to other more westerly
All caribou participate in this cycle—except those wintering on the barrens.

FIGURE 22
(Yerbury, 1980)
Athapaskan groups, employed the caribou surround or pound, which Hearne (1971:80) described as so "...successful, that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter; and when the Spring advances, both the deer and the Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren..." This type of subsistence pursuit was generally dependable.

There have been a number of recent articles that focus on barren-ground caribou population fluctuations, shift of foraging areas, and erratic movements of herds or subdivisions of herds (Burch, 1972; Kelsall, 1968:200-275; Parker, 1972:71-90; Smith, 1975:71-75, 1978; Krech, 1978b:722-723). Krech (1978b:722) has suggested that "...one might argue that population fluctuations or unpredictable movements observed in Arctic Drainage herds in the past several decades resulted in part from the reduction of these herds from an estimated 2,395,000 caribou in 1700 (Kelsall, 1968:145) to under 700,000 in 1950 (Banfield, 1954:20) and only 200,000 in the late 1950s (Kelsall, 1968:150). There are more options in range use open to 200,000 caribou than to ten times that number, and the adaptations of human social groups to each extreme number of caribou might have differed." Except for Krech, the other scholars have accepted the present-day caribou population figures as characteristic of aboriginal times, preferring to examine sociocultural arrangements among caribou hunters of the recent period as representative of prehistoric hunters (Smith, 1975, 1978a). Although insightful, these studies have not allowed for sociocultural and environmental change. This is clear in Smith's most recent work (1978:72):

While caribou were generally the dependable basis of an "original affluent society" (Sahlins 1968:85-9, 1972:1-39), at least some caribou available during each migration, there were variations in their numbers. For example, the total population of the herds of the Northwest Terri-
tory was estimated at 670,000 in 1950, and a low of 278,000 was reached in 1955 (Symington 1965:66-7)...

Smith assumes that ecological conditions and basic hunting strategies (1978:69) have persisted from aboriginal times. Albeit, the Caribou Eater Chipewyan of the recent past can be described as having an affluent society based on one-tenth of the caribou available in the protohistoric period (1700), their social arrangements must have had to alter to accommodate the smaller population of caribou who had ten times the options in range available to them (not to mention accommodation to fur trade conditions). We can not assume, then, that environmental conditions and sociocultural arrangements in the Subarctic never changed. However, we can infer that ecological conditions were much more favorable during the prehistoric and protohistoric periods, and that these more favorable conditions could have supported different forms of socioterritorial institutions.

In an attempt to account for population fluctuations and erratic or unusual movements of caribou, Smith (1978a) has suggested alternative or secondary resources available to the Chipewyan (see Ross, 1861:433-444). Although the precontact Chipewyan may have had periodic scarcity, it is suggested here that the secondary resources tended to be complementary rather than alternative. Fish was the second most plentiful resource. Lake trout, whitefish, walleye, pike, and several other species were found in lakes, sloughs, backwaters, rivers, and streams throughout the areas along the caribou migratory routes (Smith, 1978:72). Lake trout and whitefish were taken during their spawning season before freeze-up (1978:72). Moose (Alces alces andersoni) were relatively abundant to the south of the Chipewyan, but were only found in small numbers within the northwestern transition forest.
Musk-ox (Ovibos moschatus) in the area of the Thelon Game Sanctuary (see Fig. 23; Allen, 1913), no doubt, were an important resource for the Chipewyan (see Burch, 1977:135-154; Smith, 1978:72). Small game, such as the hare, was periodically available in relative abundance as was the marten, mink, lynx, porcupine, and beaver. Some of these animals were not eaten since they were taboo (Smith, 1978:72; Sharp, 1976:28). Bear (Ursus americanus) were also present in small numbers.

Although there is considerable contrast between the forest-tundra biotic zone and the mixed-wood biotic zone, the food resources of both areas were available in relative abundance, given native subsistence strategies and human population densities. Large game animals were available in sizeable populations in both zones. It is suggested that the ecological conditions of these two zones would have supported a relatively large aboriginal population, subsisting under relatively affluent conditions. Irregular fluctuations of resources brought about by disease or periodic changes in climate were not significant enough to affect the exploitation cycle of precontact hunters in these areas. Hence, the protocontact displacement of groups into sections of the northwestern transition forest zone, which could not support sizeable game populations, is an important issue.

In sum, we have examined the particular environmental context in which prehistoric Canadian Athapaskan populations exploited. It is necessary now to examine, through the use of historical documents, the environmental context in which Canadian Athapaskan populations found themselves after being displaced by the Cree during the mid-eighteenth century. Documentary evidence for these displacements has been discussed in a previous chapter. The critical issue to be resolved is whether aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan
FIGURE 23

MUSKOX POPULATIONS
(Adapted from Burch, 1977)
populations would have allowed themselves to suffer from environmental degradation when abundant food supplies were available in contiguous biotic zones.

Postcontact Subsistence in the Mackenzie Drainage System

About the beginning of the Early Fur Trade Era (1769), the Dogrib, Slave, and Hare were hunting and gathering in the northwestern transition boreal forest and the Upper Mackenzie riverine forest zones (see Fig. 21). Historical data indicate that during the final quarter of the eighteenth century these Athapaskan groups were still being forced even further into the northwestern transition zone toward Great Bear Lake by the Cree (Tyrrell, 1934: 498-499). There is also evidence that these groups had previously lost a significant number of their members due to intertribal warfare between 1759-1764. It is proposed that these migrant groups were then subjected to severe environmental pressures, because of the relatively low carrying capacity of the new areas, which caused the recorded instances of starvation and death. Even Sir George Simpson noted that there was more danger in this area from starvation than in any other part of North America (Rich, 1938:393). Furthermore, lacking immunity to European diseases, natives easily succumbed to these once they were communicated to them. It is suggested that substantial depopulation occurred among the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave during the protocontact and contact period, stemming from disease and subsistence hardships. This assumption is supported by the recent work of Krech (1978a) on contiguous Kutchin populations. The Kutchin (1978a:99), who were not displaced from their precontact habitat, are shown to have suffered a loss of over eighty percent of their aboriginal population in approximately one hundred years (1760-1860) of indirect and direct contact. This being the case, one would
expect similar if not greater effects for the populations in question, although it appears that Krech's estimate of depopulation is somewhat too high.

In order to evaluate the effects of these factors, it is necessary to reconstruct the resource base, the subsistence and economic activities of these groups, and subsequent demographic changes, resulting from disease and starvation.

Subsistence was precarious throughout the Mackenzie drainage and adjoining northwestern transition forest zone. The early reports of W.F. Wentzel and George Keith for the period 1800-1811 indicate that there may have been depopulation due to starvation. The particularly harsh winter of 1810-1811 resulted in low fur returns that was caused "...partly, by the death of many Natives" (Masson, 1960a:95, 106-107). Similar occurrences were reported by Keith for 1808 (Masson, 1960b:79). The later fur trade journals, especially those of Forts Simpson, Norman, and Good Hope between 1821-1842, give almost yearly reports of starvation among their trading post bands during the winter and early spring periods (these reports are cited in full below). Frequently, the result was death, as for instance in the winter of 1836-1837, when forty Mountain Indians (Nahanny) at Fort Good Hope perished as a result of severe privation (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/14, folio 19). During this same winter, cannibalism or intergroup predation was resorted to by a member of the Kutchin (Outer or Great Bear Lake) Indians associated with the fort (see Hardesty, 1977:152). It was reported by the trader, John Bell, on May 8, 1837 that this man "...ate no less than 6 individuals including his own sister whom he killed, the others died a natural death and of starvation. When questioned on the subject he candidly confessed." (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/13,
Other reports of cannibalism and starvation are mentioned in the 1841-1842 Fort Good Hope journal of Alexander Fisher (HBC Arch., B. 80/e/2, folio 1):

...I put then all hands at the Fort on half allowances spin out the time as far as possible, but at last in Feb 1 the famine was so great and dreadful both for Indians & Whites that tho' greatly reduced in strength I was obliged to save myself by undertaking a voyage to Ft. Norman to seek food & I then persuaded Mr. McBeath to send down Provisions and fetch up one of these men with his family, by the time they arrived I had revived a little in strength and returned to my Charge of Ft. Good Hope and found that 52 Indian men, women and Children had fallen victims and perished by famine all within 200 yards of the Fort, and the survivors of them were living on the carcases of their relations these Indians men and women kept always their axe in hand for self preservation & if any was found sleeping was instantly knocked on the head and as soon devoured by their best [last?] relations four perished in this manner the night after my arrival at the Fort.--I found my man and his family living on Moose Skins, Pack Cords, Bear Skins, Leather Sled Wrappers &c.

The provisions I took down from Ft. Norman served us until the arrival of Game, Geese &c. On the 28th May four Outer land Indians arrived at the Fort and report that they had fallen on several Ind. Camps but found all dead and the bodies so much eaten that they could not distinguish who they were....

The Indians who frequented Fort Good Hope were Hare and Kutchin. Descriptions of the events of 1842 were discussed for years afterwards, and are included in the November 8, 1858 diary account of the Reverend James Hunter (GMS, A-91; 1859:282). Similar reports of multiple deaths among the Dogrib are found in the Fort Norman diaries. In the winter of 1824-1825, the party of Little Chief lost fourteen relatives from starvation (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/4, folio 22). There were other deaths during that winter as well as most others. The winter of 1837-1838 was extremely difficult with many deaths (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/16, folio 10):

...One of the Mountain Indians [Nahanny] arrived and brought 30 lbs half dry goat meat. This Indian brought us the melancholy news of the Death of his relations last winter he is the only one of 33 that is Surviving, and perhaps Mr--as their was another Party that—we hard nothing of since Spring 36....
One major cause of privation and death was the cyclical failure of the snowshoe "rabbit" or varying hare (*Lepus americanus*). It appears that along the Mackenzie River the hare was one of the most important winter game animals for subsistence and clothing since the availability of other resources was limited. Those socioterritorial groups that relied exclusively upon it were subjected to extreme hardship during the periods of its failure. The above descriptions of starvation directly coincide with hare failures.

Another period of scarcity occurred during the winter of 1830-1831. The Fort Simpson journals describe the conditions of a Slave party under Big Partridge, who on February 23, 1831 complained "...of Starvation and their emaciated bodys say they tell the truth. This year they are even destitute of their Hare skin clothing and say they have eat part of their Beaver..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 26). Eleven Indians perished from starvation during that season. Chief Factor Edward Smith, noted in the summer of 1831 that he had seldom witnessed for a whole season such difficulty in finding provisions for immediate consumption, while the sufferings of the surrounding Indians had been unparalleled in the history of the Mackenzie River forks (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/13, folio 38). Similar fluctuations in the supply of hare and subsequent reports of starvation occurred throughout the history of this area, and these reports do serve to indicate the importance of this animal as a supporter of life for those Indians furthest away from the caribou migration routes.

Occasional variations in the caribou migrations sometimes provided an alternative source of provisions for groups who lived at a distance from the usual migration routes. While the Mackenzie River natives were suffering from hare shortages in 1831, the Dogrib at Martin Lake were fortunate in
having a plentiful supply of caribou (*Rangifer arcticus*). John McLeod's descriptions of the situation at Martin Lake on March 7, 1831 provide a striking contrast to that at Fort Simpson. He reported that the Dogrib were "...idling away their time with lots of ease and in the midst of plenty in the swamps Rein deer in plenty—and the Lake affords them a daily supply of excellent Fish. The largest and first I have yet seen..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 28). But in the winter of 1833-1834, the caribou did not appear in the vicinity of Martin Lake and many of the Indians starved to death or died from disease (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 44). There were similar reports of starvation at Martin Lake during the winter of 1835-1836 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/18, folio 19).

The appearance of caribou herds in the vicinity of Martin Lake in 1830-1831 may have been a rare migration of the Radium caribou herd southward. The more favored migratory routes and seasonal ranges of the Radium herd were the summer grazing grounds along the Coppermine River and the winter grazing range along the shores of Great Bear Lake adjacent to Hornby Bay and the Johnny Hoe River (see Fig. 24). This irregularity in their migratory pattern may have been a response to changing environmental conditions and the need to have adequate food supplies. Their winter grazing boundaries altered to include the area north of Martin Lake where there were alternate sources of lichens and shrubs, which constitute the animal's main winter dietary requirement (Kelsall, 1968:72, 132). Yet, the caribou was never common enough or accessible enough to be a dependable source of food for these migrant groups.

The caribou in the area of Great Bear Lake were only exploited by the Hare, Slave, and Dogrib after they coalesced and gained ascendancy over the Yellowknife in 1824. The Yellowknife traditionally had access to these
FIGURE 24*

CARIBOU SPRING MIGRATION AND SUMMER DISTRIBUTION

see also Figure 18 (adapted from Morris, 1973)
herds, and they were the main obstacle to Slave and Dogrib penetrations into the caribou migratory routes and seasonal ranges. The Hare Indians of Great Bear Lake had access to part of the more northwestern segments of the Great Bear Lake Herd before 1800 (Masson, 1960b:117).

The contested region included three caribou wintering ranges around Great Bear Lake as outlined by Banfield (1954). The area west of the Lake between Bear River and Colville Lake extending westward toward Willow Lake was occupied by a large migratory herd while a lesser herd migrated into the area across from Deerpass Bay at Caribou Point around Dease Arm and the Dease River (see Fig. 25). The Radium herd occupied the south shores of the lake between Johnny Hoe River and Hornby Hay (1954:21-22). The movement of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave into the area opened up not only an abundant supply of large game for subsistence, but fur-bearing game (mostly marten and muskrat) for trading purposes as well.

Moose (*Alces alces andersoni* and *gigas*), a browsing and solitary animal, are indigenous to the Mackenzie River, grazing in small numbers on the willows along its banks. They are also found in the willow thickets surrounding the various lakes. Moose meat constituted a significant part of the natives' annual provisions. The most favored moose hunting area was up the Liard River. Skilled moose hunters, usually Sekani, were hired by the Hudson's Bay Company, to secure large amounts of meat for making pemmican (HBC Arch., B. 116/a/4, 8, passim). Along the Mackenzie River, moose were more abundant in the area surrounding Fort Norman than elsewhere. Moose hunting techniques were complex. For the moose to be a reliable subsistence base, people were required to use their hunting knowledge and techniques to the fullest. The moose is not usually susceptible to intensive group
FIGURE 25

CARIBOU FALL MIGRATION AND WINTER DISTRIBUTION

"see also Figure 1"
hunting that would provide a regular provision of meat at given seasons (Schorger, 1956:2-3). Local movements are often altered in accordance with seasonal variations. For instance, because of a lack of snow during the winter of 1835-1836, the moose remained in the hills away from the river valleys. This caused starvation at Fort Norman. The moose population was also subjected to periodic diseases (Anderson and Lankester, 1975:24-43). Between 1825-1828, there are frequent complaints at Forts Norman and Simpson of such diseases. For example, Edward Smith, the Chief Factor at Fort Simpson, noted in his journal entry for September 12, 1825 that (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 11):

"...Indians complained of the animals (Moose Deer) being attacked with an unknown disease—in going a hunting and following the Tracks of a Deer, they often find them dead...."

The musk-ox is the only other large game animal that occasionally penetrated into the Mackenzie drainage. This animal was found in abundance on the barren grounds west of the Coppermine River and at the eastern end of Great Bear Lake (Masson, 1960b:103), but in the winter of 1830-1831, musk-ox were killed at Martin Lake (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/12, folio 31-32). No other reports are known of their presence in this region.

Some of the smaller fur-bearing animals were used as food by Indians. These included the beaver, muskrat, fox, lynx, mink, marten, ground squirrels, otters, and others. A number of animals were strongly tabooed as food by some of the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave subdivisions (Ross, 1867:307; Petitot, 1891:519, 562; 1893:56; CNS, A-91; Hunter, 1859:28). These animals included the lynx, marten, otter, and bear, which were eaten only during periods of starvation. The wolf, dog, and wolverine were also the subject of taboos and were not culinary items (Hearne, 1971:96-97, 306, 341; Garvin, 1927:123,
The natives could not rely on such small game since nowhere did they exist in large enough numbers to afford subsistence even for small-hunting parties. Unlike the hare, these animals did not breed and reproduce in large numbers, and several of these species were affected by the cyclic population fluctuations of the hare upon which they subsisted. Lynx and marten populations, in particular, declined when hares failed. The predatory animals relied chiefly upon the hare for their food, as did these migrant Indians.

Aside from the hare, migratory waterfowl were hunted during the spring. Their northward migration coincided with the spring breakup and a seasonal failure of fisheries. Bustards, geese, ducks, swans, plovers, gulls, pelicans, snipes, cranes, and others, generally made their appearance about the first week of May. The waterfowl were hunted and their eggs were collected until June, when fishing picked up. Waterfowl were again hunted for a brief time in the fall, when they gathered in large flocks for their southward flight.

The grouse (described by traders as a partridge), a non-migratory game bird, was indigenous throughout the region. Several species inhabited the area including Richardson's blue grouse, Franklin grouse, spruce grouse, ptarmigan, and others. It was the single most important bird for year-round subsistence. Like the hare, it was hunted mostly during the winter and it, too, was subject to cyclic fluctuations in numbers.

Although the moose, small game animals, and birds were basic to the subsistence of migrant Dogrib, Slave and Hare, fishing was extremely important to the subsistence of both Indians and traders. There are almost daily reports in the fort journals indicating the numbers of fish caught by
traders. During the summer, when there was little hunting and trapping, the Indians occupied fisheries along the Mackenzie River and on the numerous lakes and rivers. The principal lake fisheries were at Willow, Porcupine, Long and Trout Lakes. There were also numerous small lakes dispersed throughout the countryside.

The different varieties of fish caught in the lakes and rivers are the lake trout (inconnu), whitefish, white and red carp, pickerel, pike, blue fish, tolliby, and loche (Masson, 1960a:84). Fisheries were established at well known spawning grounds in the late spring and the summer for trout and in the fall for white fish.

During the Fur Trade Dependency Era, the fur traders hired Indians to regularly attend fisheries in the neighborhood of their forts. It was not a common practice for the natives to fish throughout the winter. The fall fisheries generally declined during December and few fish were taken until early March. The natives fished extensively in the late summer and fall to provision themselves for the winter period, when they were on the trapping grounds. Preserved fish was supplemented with hare, grouse, and moose. A general scarcity of these sylvan resources brought people to the fishing lakes (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/11, folio 9). Traders often attempted to supply the natives with meat during periods of scarcity; otherwise fur returns diminished. The situation along the Mackenzie River in 1821-1822 is a case in point. Not only had the summer fishery failed, but a scarcity of other resources compelled the Chief Factor at Fort Simpson to grant (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 56):

...them [Slave and Dogrib] the supply meat they required, and fat with a better grace, because I wish to prevent them from flying to the fishing Lakes—in order to secure a Fall Hunt of the Beaver—otherwise they would not make any....
The occasional failure of the summer and fall fisheries was due either to high or low water conditions. A failure to preserve a supply of fish for winter use created general apprehension among both Indians and traders. The journal of Fort Good Hope for 1837-1838 describes vividly the situation along the Mackenzie as early as September when the Indians were (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/14, folio 7):

...actually famishing having had not a morsel to eat there [Rapids on the Mackenzie] two days past! Such is the Scarcity of Fish in their part of the River that the Indians are already beginning to feel the first effects of winter's privations...

A fish failure was imputed by the Indians to the low state of the water (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/14, folio 3). The undependable mid-winter lake fisheries did not provide sufficient returns for subsistence during that winter. Privations and low fur returns resulted.

Summer and fall fishing was executed along the Mackenzie and its drainage system away from the trapping grounds. The Fort Simpson journal of W.F. Wentzel and John McLeod for 1824 gives us a picture of the seasonal movements of one trapping party under the leadership of the "Prince." The Indians trapped the area about the Horn Mountains in the winter. On March 24, 1824, the Prince brought the "...lamentable news that many of the Indians are Starving and have eaten their Furs and that it is firmly believed that one family have actually Starved of Starvation!" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, folio 1). All of the small parties in the surrounding area were forced to retreat to the fishing lakes. This account and the 1821-1822 Fort Simpson account indicate that the fisheries were located away from the winter trapping territory.

A later Fort Simpson journal recording on July 16, 1824, suggests the onset of a change in basic economic relationships, which made the movement
from the trapping grounds to subsistence areas unnecessary. This involved
attempts by the Dogrib and Slave in the vicinity of Martin Lake to purchase
meat in exchange for beaver pelts. Various other trapping parties also
offered fur for provisions during the same summer (HRC Arch., B. 200/a/4,
folio 22):

...An Indian from Martin Lake brought us 111 Rats, 6 Beavers, and 2 Black
Bears. being starving he asked to purchase meat for Beaver. this the
third instance this Summer [1824] of Indians offering Furs for Pro-
visions....

The major part of the fort provisions of meat and fish were supplied by
Indian hunters and fishermen who would otherwise have distributed their sur-
plus to other members of their socioterritorial group. In return for pro-
visioning the fort, they received trade goods. The trading post, then, be-
came a storage depository for provisions thus permitting Indian trappers to
forego basic subsistence pursuits while in quest for furs. During times of
economic necessity, they resorted to the trading post to trade for pro-
visions so as to continue their trapping activities.

Apart from meat, seasonal allowances of plants, berries, and roots were
consumed. When berries were plentiful, native attention focused on their
gathering. The berries that grew in this region were the poire, gooseberry,
raspberry, strawberry, red and black currents, thimbleberry, whortleberry,
cranberry, juniperberry, blueberry, rose buttons, and others (Masson, 1960a:
80). The roots of the Hedeyeum boreale or liquorice plant were eaten in the
summer. Labrador tea (swamp tea) was used as a form of tea. Other plants
and mosses were used to supplement meat or were eaten in times of starvation.

The migrant Slave, Dogrib, and Hare depended heavily on a wide range of
resources. A sensitive balance between subsistence pursuits involving a
number of alternative strategies and trapping activities was necessary in
this less than life-sustaining environment. Fishing was employed in the summer and fall, but was turned to in winter only when necessary. Otherwise, these people continued to trap while snaring hare, moose, and other smaller animals. Their winter encampments were moved when they exhausted the resources around them (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 9). With a general failure of subsistence resources, they resorted to the trading posts to rely upon the meat and fish held in storage for this purpose (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 11).

In sum, the reports of the early explorers and traders describe a way of life characterized by population displacement, migrations, and a great deal of mobility. Displacement by the Cree resulted in the migration of the Slave, Dogrib, and Hare northward to the northwestern transition boreal forest and the Mackenzie drainage system. The resource base there afforded subsistence only for small groups of hunters and their immediate families. Even then, these groups were subjected to frequent periods of starvation, which often resulted in multiple deaths. One can conclude that the subsistence base was nutritionally inadequate. Although it is not possible to estimate the percentage of food energy employed in the production of food, it is clear from the recorded cases of starvation that food output frequently did not exceed energy requirements, especially when groups were depending upon the "varying hare" as their primary source of food. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the precontact Canadian Athapaskans' subsistence strategy would have emphasized a more reliable source such as the wood bison. In terms of food energy output, it is reasonable to suppose the energy requirements to snare 600 hares would exceed the energy required to hunt one adult male wood bison (see Table 29). But caloric output does
not tell the whole story since hare meat is extremely lean when compared to bison or moose which have more nutrient per pound than hare. In short, subsistence in the northwestern transition boreal forest and the Mackenzie drainage system was a high-risk, low-return activity, while subsistence in the mixed-wood boreal forest region, it is suggested, was a low-risk, high-return activity. In rare instances, several groups of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave coalesced and migrated from this less than life-sustaining area to take advantage of the more promising subsistence and trapping areas along the migratory routes of the barren-ground caribou. In general, movement was undertaken by smaller groups in accord with seasonal shifts in subsistence and trapping pursuits. These were limited movements and occurred in the neighborhood of established trading posts. Often movements were dictated by the traders, who were required to meet fur trade company demands for specific fur-bearing animals.

TABLE 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mammals</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Pounds of Usable Meat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bison</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moose</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musk-ox</td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Bear</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribou</td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arctic Hare</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varying Hare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Displacements, migrations, inherent environmental instability, recurrent starvation, and small highly mobile social units among the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave were characteristic of the Protohistoric and Historic periods. These were certainly not typical of the precontact period as is proposed by Helm (1965). It will be demonstrated in the following chapter that the size and cohesion of trapping parties and the bilateral form of social organization of these parties were determined in great part by the availability of food and furs. These forms of organization had greater adaptive advantage where the subsistence base was restricted and unpredictable and where fur trapping requirements bound dependent Indians to the trading post. Taking these factors into consideration, it is now necessary to examine the extent of depopulation from disease among the Canadian Athapaskans. This postcontact factor should also be considered as a determinant of the formation of bilocal or multilocal and bilateral descent systems, especially since the recent cross-cultural tests of Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember (1972:399) show depopulation as a reliable and fairly strong predictor for this type of organization.

Disease

Perhaps the most catastrophic consequences of European contact in the Canadian Athapaskan area involved the introduction of European diseases. Depopulation, migration, and starvation stemming from the onslaught of disease resulted in a realignment of social relationships and in profound changes in the already altered aboriginal way of life. The effects of these variables on the Athapaskans require examination.

Epidemic or contagious diseases probably had not reached the Canadian
Athapaskan populations before about 1767-1769. Within a decade of Samuel Hearne's (1770-1771) exploring expedition to Athabasca, the western Indians were decimated (1780-1782) by a smallpox epidemic. Hearne described the fulminating consequences of this disease in his account (1795) of Northern Canada and of the life of the Cree and Chipewyan populations directly affected by it (Tyrrell, 1911:200):

Since this Journal was written [1769-1772], the Northern Indians, by annually visiting their Southern friends, the Athapuscow Indians, have contracted the small-pox, which has carried off nine-tenths of them, and particularly those people who composed the trade at Churchill Factory. The few survivors follow the example of their Southern neighbours, and all trade with the Canadians, who are settled in the heart of the Athapuscow country....

The explorer-trader, Alexander Mackenzie, of the Northwest Company, presented an impressive account of the destructive nature of smallpox in the area southwest of Battleford on the North Saskatchewan River (Lamb, 1970:74):

...this was the small pox, which spread its destructive and desolating and power, as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field. The fatal infection spread around with a baneful rapidity which no flight could escape, and with a fatal effect that nothing could resist. It destroyed with its pestilential breath whole families and tribes; and the horrid scene presented to those who had the melancholy and afflicting opportunity of beholding it, a combination of the dead, the dying, and such as to avoid the horrid fate of their friends around them, prepared to disappoint the plague of its prey, by terminating their own existence.

Emile Petitot described primary particulars on the situation at Lake Athabasca during the period of this major epidemic (1883:651):

These relations [trader-Indian] continued to the time when Joseph Frobisher established Fort Chipewyan, on the shores of Lake Athabasca, in 1778, for the Northwest Company, at which date there was a many as 1200 Redskins settled on the lake. But the white man brought with him the horrible disease of small-pox, till then unknown to the American [Indians], which made great ravages among the Tinney, and more than decimated the Crees, driven to the southern part of the lake by the war-like attitude of the Chipewyans. Influenza, and epidemic catarrhal affection attacking the tribes at regular intervals of about seven years, completed the work of the small-pox.
It is difficult to determine whether smallpox was communicated to the Yellowknife, Dogrib and Slave by their Chipewyan and Cree middlemen. Later explorers such as Mackenzie do not describe native reports of these diseases, nor do they observe smallpox scars. There are, however, reports of endemic disorders. Mackenzie, while on his journey down the Mackenzie River in 1789, observed a Hare Indian woman who had "...an Abscess in the Belly and is reduced to a mere Skeleton" (Lamb, 1970:191). His description of the Dogrib and Slave Indians, near Great Bear River show them to be "...all an ugly meagre ill made People particularly about the Legs which are very clumsy & full of Scabs by their frequent roasting them to the fire. Many of them appear'd very sickly..." (1970:183). Their morbidity was attributed "...to their Dirty way of living" (1970:183). However, sores, scabs, and skin ulcers are also diagnostic symptoms of avitaminosis resulting from a vitamin C deficiency. This was a postcontact phenomenon reflecting their inadequate diet. In contrast, the Mackenzie Flats Kutchin, who were not displaced during the Protohistoric Period, are described by Mackenzie as "...being healthy and full of Flesh and more cleanly" people than the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave (1970:192).

George Keith's report of Bear Lake post on the west end of Great Bear Lake describes (Masson, 1960b:104-105, 118) "gastro-intestinal diseases, caused by a relatively unhealthy environment and the natives' habit of being "...remarkably filthy in dressing their food and indeed in every other respect, hence it is no wonder they are subject to colics, and pains in the stomach and diarrhea" (1960b:105). In Keith's section on diseases, he remarks (1960b:118):
I am of opinion that the diseases to which the Natives are subject originate principally, if not entirely, from the dirty and loathsome manner in which they cook and prepare their food, particularly fish, which almost surpasses imagination, also to the most intemperate meals they make after being sometimes for a long time on short allowances. The general complaints, in consequence are colics, attended with gripes, squeamishness of the stomach and diarrhoea....

We cannot attribute morbidity as being the result of unclean living and eating conditions—unless we are willing to accept the tautology that the situation is what it is because that is the way it is. The alternative explanation advanced here is that morbidity was the consequence of the effects of disease upon nutritionally weakened Indians who had been placed or who migrated to a less than life-sustaining biotic zone. These postcontact conditions would have reduced disease resistance and immune response to the ravages of contagious diseases that had only relatively benign effects on the carrier population. The results of diseases such as measles, chickenpox, influenza, smallpox, and whooping cough were disastrous to native Indian populations while only mildly debilitating to the early fur traders. The wide variety of pulmonary or upper respiratory diseases also seriously affected the Canadian Athapaskans. The various European viruses had a virulent effect on the natives who presumably had concentrations of antibodies, but the wrong ones for coping with European strains of influenza viruses. The historical data displays the rather grim consequences of this predicament.

Sickness was prevalent among Chipewyan groups who were trapping in the northwestern transition boreal forest. In the summer of 1803, thirty-seven Chipewyan died in the vicinity of Fort Chipewyan from gastro-intestinal and respiratory infections (HBC Arch., B. 39/a/3). A number of the Slave and Dogrib groups, which had already been decimated by the Cree (Masson, 1960a: 85), and the Hare succumbed to sickness during the winters of 1808 (Masson,

Venereal disease was also a common complaint among the natives of the north. The diary of Daniel Williams Harmon for the years 1810-1819 provides us with a general account of disease among the Indians on the east side of the Rocky Mountains (Lamb, 1957:200):

...The venereal complaint is common to all the tribes of the north; many persons among them, die of a consumption; fevers, also, frequently attack them; and they are likewise troubled with pains in their heads, breasts and joints. Many of them, and especially the women, are subject to fits. For a relief, in nearly all of their diseases, they resort to their grand remedy, sweating.

Sir George Simpson, the Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company territories in North America, pointed out in his reports of 1820-1821 how disease among the Beaver Indians made it difficult to sustain a favorable return of furs unless the traders made attempts to recruit replacements for hunters who had succumbed to disease. Simpson's Athabasca records indicate his concern over the situation when he stated in a letter of September 1820 (Rich, 1938:61), to the trader, Duncan Finalyson of Peace River District that:

It is with more concern I learn, that there has been a mortality amongst the Beaver Indians this year, and that we have lost many valuable hunters; you will of course use every exertion to replace them, and increase the number of our adherents if possible, the liberal and well assorted outfit which is made up for the District, will enable you to equip one half the Tribe at least.

Diseases not only reduced the Indian population—they caused Indians to migrate to new areas where they believed they would be safe. Simpson's journal account for October 13, 1820 (1938:80-81), notes that:

...I received a Letter from Mr. Andries dated 4th Inst., intimating that in consequence of the Reports circulated by the N.W. of our total annihilation many of our Indians had deserted us. A most destructive malady such as that of last year had broke out in the Chipewyan lands, and carried away whole bands, and they are now dispersing in all directions, hoping that a change of residence may arrest the progress of the contagion...
The Forty Good Hope Kutchin Indians were affected by disease during 1825-1827. Incoming Kutchin trappers from the Trading River reported that their relations were all dying. John Bell accordingly went down to the river and found "...one dead and no less than 14 at deaths door" (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/4). The Hare during September 17, 1825 were also reported to be "...all sick and Capot Rough dead one of the best Hare Indians" (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/4). By February 12, 1826, Indian informants reported that "...their relations is of a dreadful nature the contagious distemper that broke out among them last summer has this winter carried off a great number of men women and children indiscriminately and many more at Deaths door without hopes of recovering. Among the former were some of the principal hunters" (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/4). The trade returns for 1825-1826 were considerably lower reflecting the rampant sickness. In fact, five members of a Hare trapping party reported to Bell that their relatives were almost extinct (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/5).

In 1833, Captain George Back was given the leadership of an expedition to render assistance to Captain John Ross and his party who had sailed in 1829 to the Polar regions under the auspices of the British government. The purpose of the expedition was to extend the existing knowledge of the Northern Coast of North America, much of which at that time was unexplored. Richard King, the surgeon and naturalist of the expedition, noted the conditions of the aboriginal people that his party encountered. He told of a contagious venereal disease among the Yellowknife, which reinforces Harmon's earlier observations (1836:54):

...next to the introduction of ardent spirits, a contagious disease, produced by the demoralizing intercourse of Europeans, has, more than any other cause, been the means of depopulating the country. It has of
late so extensively spread itself among them Yellowknife, that there was scarcely an Indian family which I met with during my progress through that vast territory that was not more or less affected with it; and to such a deplorable condition are the Copper Indians reduced by that scourages that in a few years, if some aid be not afforded them, they will cease to exist.

King (1836b:170-171) also reported that in one encampment there were between forty and fifty bodies scattered around making it impossible to walk any distance without stumbling against a frozen corpse. This was not considered to be a solitary instance of extreme misfortune since for two previous years, the natives in the vicinity of Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River had experienced the same fate. At the same time, Chipewyan trappers in the neighborhood of the Liard River were suffering from famine. The actual number of deaths could not be ascertained by King although he was able to account for the death of forty men. King considered that their wives and families were equally unfortunate, and that there could have been between one hundred and 150 deaths.

Another contagious disease was also rampant among the Hare and Kutchin during the 1834-1835 season. An incoming party of Kutchin on May 9, 1834 reported "...the Death of their Leader and 8 other Indians Since the beginning of this Year. who have Died of some unknown disease which rages among them for some time back" (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/11, folio 16). The Hare Indians reported "...a Family, consisting of Father, Mother and a grown up Son lately [March, 1834] Died of the disease so prevalent among them" (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/11, folio 13). Besides reports of death from starvation and Kutchin/Hare intertribal warfare during 1837-1838, there is evidence that the Mountain Indians lost forty members due to starvation and disease (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/14, folio 19).
Although the traders of Forts Norman, Simpson, Liard, and Resolution recorded almost annual incidents of starvation among the natives associated with their posts, disease is mentioned less frequently. At Fort Simpson during November of 1827, Edward Smith indicated that whooping cough was present among the children (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/9, folio 13), which probably had lethal consequences as it did among the Kutchin children at Peel River House in 1843 (HBC Arch., B. 152/a/3). Up the Liard River, migrant groups of Sekani were also suffering the same problems experienced by the Mackenzie Drainage people. In the winter of 1831-1832, "...twelve men, nine women, and eighteen children died of of hunger in the mountains to the westward" (HBC Arch., B. 116/a/10, folio 14), so weakening the survivors that they were vulnerable to disease. Between 1833-1834, six other people died of disease and starvation (HBC Arch., B. 116/a/-1, folio 22-23). Traders stated that these occurrences were common events.

The Fort Resolution journal reports are similar in detail although we have more accounts of disease. The Chipewyan, Slave and Yellowknife who visited this post were in constant contact with the Martin Lake Dogrib and Slave. The members of the trapping parties associated with Fort Resolution had left their traditional territory along the barren-ground caribou migration routes to trap furs within the northwestern transition boreal forest. As a result, they frequently faced starvation. The reports of Simon McGillivray for 1828-1829 are forbidding in detail. No less than fifteen Chipewyan died from starvation in the full boreal forest. Their plight was in marked contrast to the Chipewyan of the tundra-taiga. For example, many "...of the Chipewyans called Cariboux Eaters, who reside on their lands, have not paid us a visit this Winter; they are indifferent about us traders
—having the means sufficiently when Caribou are plentiful to keep away from the Fort" (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/9, folio 35-37). According to McGillivray, they did not receive any meat advances from him that suggests these trapping parties were receiving provisions. But even the Caribou Eaters were affected by contagious diseases. In the winter of 1835-1836, influenza was transmitted from the Fort Chipewyan trapping parties to all the natives in the vicinity of Fort Resolution as well as the Caribou Eaters. Besides six recorded deaths in November 1835, many others succumbed during December and January 1836, and those who survived "...abandoned all their effects, expecting to save themselves by flight, such was the consternation, produced, by their own fears, that it said many have died, that otherwise might have escaped, because starvation completed what the disease failed to accomplish ..." (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/11, folio 31). The conditions of the following seasons 1836-1838 were not much better and during this time eleven more individuals died from disease (HBC Arch., B. 181/a/13, folio 20).

In 1836, the Hudson's Bay Company commissioned Thomas Simpson and Peter Dease to undertake the completion of the survey of the northern coast of their territories which were left undetermined after the Franklin expeditions of 1819-1822. Simpson was careful to note in his journal all signs of contagious disease among the Canadian Athapaskans. He reported evidence of influenza and cholera among the Hare and Chipewyan Indians during the spring and summer of 1837, but by winter his journal states that many Indians were beginning to recover (1843:67, 203):

"...Messages were continually arriving with favourable accounts from the Indian camps; a pleasing contrast to the preceding winter, which is rendered memorable to the poor natives by the ravages of an influenza—scarcely less dreadful than the cholera—that carried off nearly two hundred of the distant Chipewyans...."
The Hare, however, "we found still suffering from the influenza" (1843:

In 1849, Eden Colvile was appointed Governor of Rupert's Land, replacing Sir George Simpson who had undertaken the duties of overseeing and reporting on the progress of the Hudson's Bay Company's attempt to establish fur posts on the Pacific Coast to serve as a buffer against the influx of American settlers and traders. Colvile's journal and letters to various senior personnel of the Company provide us with information on an influenza epidemic during December of 1851. In a letter of Archibald Barclay, dated the 16th of March 1852, Colvile states (Rich, 1956:119-120):

...From Athabasca my letters are dated Vermilion 10th Decr. and Fort Chipewyan 31st Decr. at the former place I regret to learn that disease has been rife among the Indians, as many as 50 souls including 24 of the best hunters having been carried off by the influenza....

Archival and published data demonstrate conclusively that all Athapaskan populations were affected by recurrent contagious diseases and starvation throughout the first two decades following monopoly trade. Growing concern for a declining and weakened Indian population prompted the traders to vaccinate the Indians in the vicinity of Fort Simpson for the first time in 1838 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/20, folio 6). We can presume that the vaccine was for smallpox since there was a smallpox epidemic in 1837-1838, and the Hudson's Bay Company had initiated the first massive vaccination campaign among the Indians of Western Canada (Ray, 1974:188-190). Influenza and the other diseases continued to rage among these populations. Because of continuous intertribal contact and frequent movement of traders throughout the Athabasca, Peace and Mackenzie Districts, we can assume that diseases were communicated readily, and had a widespread impact.

The disastrous effects of disease and starvation led to the depopulation
of the Canadian Athapaskans. This depopulation along with dependence upon the trading post brought about new social arrangements. Remnant families of formerly autonomous groups often united thereby increasing the heterogeneity of communities and local groups resulting in a "DP" camp type situation. Under the new ecological and trade conditions, former rules determining the structure of groups would have become dysfunctional. Such conditions would provide the basis for the development of the "composite band," as defined by Service (1972).

Infanticide

While European diseases and starvation were the main causes of depopulation, native cultural practices also operated to control population growth. Infanticide appears to have been the most important of these. The detection of infanticide elsewhere has received wide attention (Denham, 1974:191; Divale and Harris, 1976; Hardesty, 1977:133-135). Infanticide among hunters and gatherers is usually explained as being due to: 1) insufficient resources to support a larger population (Denham, 1974:191; Divale and Harris, 1976:531; see Lee and Devore, 1968:243-245); and, 2) the necessity of the human female to space children (Hayden, 1972; Birdsell, 1968:239, 1975:367-371; Divale and Harris, 1976:531). In situations where there is a chronic food shortage or unremitting deprivation, Woodrow W. Denham (1974:192) suggests that the suitable adaptive response is to practice "...preferential female infanticide, since the removal of females from a population has a long-term depressant effect on population growth." Short-term food shortages call for preferential male infanticide that does not have the long-term effects of female infanticide.
The existence of systematic infanticide among Canadian Athapaskans is not particularly difficult to document. W.F. Wentzel (1807) was one of the first Europeans to describe the practice among the Slave. He noted fewer females than males, "...the cause of which may be ascribed to the custom they have of often destroying the female children when just born" (Masson, 1960a: 86). It is apparent that the Slave were practicing preferential female infanticide. The reasons that they gave Wentzel for this custom "...is that it is a great deal of trouble to bring up girls, and that women are only an encumbrance, useless in time of war and exceedingly voracious in time of want..." (1960a:86). Their personal views and motivations tend to mask the deeper causes for infanticide, although the reference to food shortages is suggestive of causality. The Slave at Fort Liard also practiced female infanticide (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/3, folio 22-23). Previous passages explained this to have been an adaptive response to insufficient food resources. The Rev. James Hunter (CMS, A-91) describes infanticide as once being a general phenomenon among all the Canadian Athapaskans. He is not specific about preference of sex, except for the Kutchin who, it seems, practiced preferential female infanticide, a view supported by other accounts (see Kirkby, 1864:418; Hardisty, 1867:312; Divale and Harris, 1976:534; McClellan, 1975: 241-242; Krech, 1978a:93).

The census data strongly suggest female infanticide among the Canadian Athapaskans. The Mackenzie District population data for 1827 indicate an extremely asymmetrical sex ratio for adults. For instance, at Fort Liard there were approximately 147 males per 100 females, at Fort Simpson, 145 males per 100 females, while at both Fort Norman and Fort Good Hope there were 171 males per 100 females. This extreme ratio is not evident among
adolescents in the District, which may reflect the influence and attempts of Europeans to prohibit this custom. Evidence of the practice of female infanticide among the postcontact Canadian Athapaskans is well documented; however, an explanation for its occurrence is now necessary.

The practice of preferential female infanticide and a high rate of infanticide in general, it is proposed, was an adaptive response among postcontact Canadian Athapaskans to maintain their population in a stable balance with their food resources. Given that the Canadian Athapaskans were displaced into an area where they experienced cyclical decrements in resource availability, it is likely that migrant groups of Athapaskans could not permit too many mouths to feed. Thus, infanticide and especially female infanticide became the primary means of keeping the population down. Indians, no doubt, were aware that warfare, disease, and starvation reduced the overall population. They avoided or lessened the risks of starvation and intragroup competition by practicing infanticide. The high rate of disease and starvation, documented between 1820 and 1840, may have been the result of an imbalance between population and available food resources, caused by the successful attempts of Europeans to prohibit infanticide and by a general diminution of game animals due to overhunting (see Bompas, 1888:3). However, the data suggest that there was a continuous imbalance between native populations and food resources, and it is likely that infanticide continued to be widely practiced throughout the nineteenth century. The census data on Indian populations for 1857-1858 continues to show an extreme ratio between the sexes for both adults and adolescents (see Table 30). Unfortunately, the sex of children under ten is not given.
TABLE 30
SEX RATIOS OF ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS (1857-1858)
(Males per 100 Females)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Average Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simpson</td>
<td>148:100</td>
<td>122:100</td>
<td>135:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Slave, Dogrib, Hare)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rae</td>
<td>137:100</td>
<td>102:100</td>
<td>120:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dogrib, Hare,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowknife)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peels River</td>
<td>103:100</td>
<td>157:100</td>
<td>122:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kutchin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Yukon Kutchin)</td>
<td>111:100</td>
<td>159:100</td>
<td>129:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liard</td>
<td>136:100</td>
<td>158:100</td>
<td>146:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Slave)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Skani)</td>
<td>118:100</td>
<td>59:100</td>
<td>81:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nahanny)</td>
<td>122:100</td>
<td>157:100</td>
<td>138:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Hope</td>
<td>143:100</td>
<td>205:100</td>
<td>160:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hare)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Louseshe or Bastard Kutchin)</td>
<td>164:100</td>
<td>142:100</td>
<td>157:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>138:100</td>
<td>143:100</td>
<td>140:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Slave)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hare)</td>
<td>114:100</td>
<td>336:100</td>
<td>186:100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dogrib)</td>
<td>130:100</td>
<td>96:100</td>
<td>115:100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the Nahanny have not been included since the data are incomplete.

Source: HBC Arch., B. 200/d/136, folio 183-184

From the data, we can conclude that the extreme sex ratio is strongly associated with unremitting chronic food shortages and with the necessity to practice preferential female infanticide to maintain overall population stasis. Female infanticide was an adaptive response by the postcontact Canadian Athapaskans who were forced to occupy an area that could neither support their precontact population size nor sustain population growth.
This is further supported by the evidence pertaining to the Nahanny who may have occupied the area before the other Canadian Athapaskans (Masson, 1960b: 68). The Nahanny population of less than 500 people during the contact period was much smaller than that of the migrants to the area (see Chapter Six, p. 288). Under fur trade conditions, the new arrivals would have swiftly over-exploited the limited resources thereby creating food shortages and the Indian response to these, namely infanticide.

**Summary and Discussion**

The examination of the economic and ecological bases for prehistoric Canadian Athapaskan cultures in the northern extension of the mixed-wood boreal forest and the forest-tundra environment suggest that food resources of both areas were available in relative abundance, given native subsistence strategies and human demographic factors. Large game animals and other food resources were a reliable source of food energy. It is suggested that the ecological conditions of these two zones would have supported a relatively large aboriginal population, subsisting under relatively affluent conditions.

Ethnohistorical evidence documents the displacement of the Slave, Dogrib, and Hare northward into the northwestern transition boreal forest and the Mackenzie drainage system between 1759-1764. The resource base afforded subsistence only for small groups of hunters and their immediate families, and even then these groups were subjected to starvation, disease, and to further depopulation through the practice of preferential female infanticide. The Chipewyan and Yellowknife, like the other Canadian Athapaskans, also suffered considerable depopulation through disease and warfare. The Chipe-
wyän, of course, were affected by these factors before the beginning of the eighteenth century.

We can also infer that substantial depopulation and major man-land re-orientations resulted in major changes in aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan social organization. Depopulation and the need for new adaptive strategies in an inhospitable environment, doubtless, brought about the formation of new social arrangements. Canadian Athapaskan communities became increasingly heterogeneous, rendering meaningless, the principles upon which the aboriginal social structure had been based. Formerly unrelated ethnic groups frequently found themselves clustered together in a temporary "DP" camp type of situation, either near the trading post, or at some location in the bush where food could be obtained and where security from attack existed. Such conditions were rapidly leading to the development of the "composite band."

In time, however, the Indian way of life stabilized somewhat as the Canadian Athapaskans adjusted to a trapping economy. Bilateral social organization was congenial for groups who had suffered severe depopulation and who had adopted new adaptive strategies for subsistence and trapping pursuits. It is now necessary to reconstruct precontact and postcontact forms of social organization among the Canadian Athapaskans.
NOTES

1. It is difficult to find reliable figures on precontact and early contact herd sizes for the Plains bison, while figures on the wood bison are not available at all. This may account for the failure of Subarctic specialists to consider the wood bison as a primary source of food for the precontact Canadian Athapaskans. The notable exception is Thomas F. Kehoe (1973:190-195) whose archaeological work at the Gull Lake site in southern Saskatchewan suggests that the Avonlea people (A.D. 660±60 termination date) hunted the wood bison. Kehoe (1973:192) suggested that the Avonlea people "...were perhaps Athabascans." Up to about A.D. 800, the bones of the wood bison permeates the various layers. The bones of Plains bison were found thereafter (1973:194).

2. Indians often deliberately killed off the game about a trading post so as to make the employees more dependent upon them for meat (Bishop, personal communication).

3. Helm (1965:382) does not give estimates of aboriginal population but merely asserts that Dene populations were small in size and low in density.

4. Sharp (1976:28) outlined some of the mammals not considered edible by the Chipewyan. Inedible mammals were the ones which ate fish or were scavengers. These include the otter, marten, mink, and dog.

5. Robert R. Janes and Jane H. Kelley (1977:153-164) have recently described what appears to be recurrent crisis cult activities among Canadian Athapaskan groups in the Mackenzie Basin during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They (1977:164) suggest from the recurrent nature of the crisis cult, centered around individuals, that it was an ongoing Athapaskan adaptation to stress.

6. Joel S. Savishinsky (1971:604-618) has analyzed environmental sources of stress in an isolated village of Hare Indians. His findings indicate that high mobility serves to both generate and relieve stress within a social and ecological framework. He assumes that the food sources of the Hare have remained relatively unstable since aboriginal times (1971:608).

7. Denham's (1974:197) consideration of systematic infanticide among Pleistocene populations and present-day human and nonhuman primate populations indicates that the custom appeared to be exceptional rather than typical of hominid behavior. For the prehistoric Canadian Athapaskans, it seems probable that there was not a significant imbalance between population size and food supply making infanticide unnecessary. A reconstruction of their prehistoric resource base suggests the potential for a gradual population increase through time rather than the need to systematically reduce population. The exceptional nature of this practice reinforces the notion that some of the Canadian Athapaskans were forced into biotic zones which they hitherto had not exploited.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CANADIAN ATHAPASKANS: A RECONSTRUCTION

The historical data make it clear that significant changes in the Canadian Athapaskan way of life had occurred by the early nineteenth century. There were major man-land reorientations stemming from warfare, depopulation, displacement into areas poorly endowed with resources, and adaptations to demands of the fur trade. The combination of these factors over time appear to have led to new social arrangements. Since the subject of Athapaskan social organization has remained controversial, it has been necessary to demonstrate the historical changes experienced by the Athapaskans in order to set the stage for evaluating the various reconstructions of Canadian Athapaskan social organization.

Such features of social organization as kinship terms and patterns, descent, and residence will be evaluated against the historical evidence presented in earlier chapters.

Early Canadian Athapaskan Differentiation and Terminology

Since a pattern of equation and contrast are important for making inferences regarding prior social organizational features, the discussion of the Kutchin, an intermediate group between the western and eastern divisions of the Canadian Athapaskans, is necessary for this reconstruction. They contain characteristics found in both divisions. Dyen's and Aberle's (1974) lexical reconstruction of the Proto-Athapaskan kinship system and their
research conclusions are relied upon heavily in this chapter. Their research findings have been generally accepted by others (Wurm and Hockett, 1977:82-91), and until a more reliable and precise statement of Proto-Athapaskan and Early Canadian kinship systems is available, their conclusions are considered plausible.

Dyen and Aberle (1974:236-276) have analyzed Canadian Athapaskan differentiation through the linguistic technique "...of cluster analysis, the analysis of the geographical and/or cluster distribution of terms in a given meaning, and the analysis of the distribution of meanings for a given term ..." (1974:236). They conclude that Canadian dialects, are "...far more evenly and deeply differentiated than Hupic or Apachean" (1974:249). Through a consideration of their matrices, maps of innovations, and historical data, they suggest that the more easterly Athapaskans were "...severely affected by Cree expansion from the middle of the seventeenth century until the latter part of the eighteenth" (1974:250). Empirical data presented in previous chapters and based on Indian and fur trader observations and accounts, render their inferences plausible. They also suggest that sometime prior to 1650 some of the Canadian Athapaskans shifted from caribou hunting in the boreal forest to the northern Plains to hunt bison (1974:250). These references are in accord with the hypothesis presented long ago by Petitot (1883:649-650), and discussed in the previous chapter.

Using two secondary sources, DeVoto (1952) and Jenness (1932), they specifically argue that Cree territorial expansion and pressure must have "...disarranged the more easterly Athapaskans of the north considerably" (1974:251). Their sequence of inferences intimate a more extensive contact between the Sekani and Sarsi in the past, while the Beaver who are pre-
ently located near the Sekani and Sarsi probably lived farther to the east than at present (1974:251). Their evidence also suggests that the Hare were displaced from a location near the Beaver (1974:250). The Hare are deemed peculiar in their slight resemblance to the Kutchin with whom they are at present associated, and in their relatively close linguistic and cultural similarity with the Beaver who are at present geographically separated from them (1974:251). They account for this by suggesting that early Chipewyan pressure may have displaced the Hare from an area considerably south of their present location (1974:251). Again, the historical evidence presented in previous chapters that Cree pressure during the period 1759-1765 dislocated the Hare tends to confirm their hypothesis, as it does their view that the Slave were forced out of what was their southernmost territory (1974:274). In sum, historical observations and Dyen's and Aberle's inferences based on the distribution of innovations accord unusually well.

In terms of Canadian differentiation and the distribution of innovations (term plus meaning), the cluster analysis shows interesting results for proto-Athapaskan retentions in kinship terminology. Earlier homogeneity is indicated for at least the Tahltan, Southern Tutchone, Kaska, Ross River Tutchone, Slave, Hare, and Beaver. Dyen and Aberle argue that Iroquois cousin patterns were replaced by Crow cousin terms in Tahltan, Southern Tutchone and in some Kaska subdialects, while the Slave, Hare, and Beaver, it is suggested, retained some characteristics of the earlier Iroquois pattern (1974:275). Data did not permit a comparison of Dogrib and Dastudene with the above groups. The Kutchin, Yellowknife, Sarsi, Sekani, and Lower Carrier have Hawaiian systems (1974:274) although the Chipewyan
had Iroquoian cousin terms. Dyen and Aberle (1974:273) thus regard most of early Canadian as moving from an Iroquoian pattern with some Hawaiian terms to a full Hawaiian pattern. In sum, the primary features of most proto-Athapaskan and early Canadian are bifurcate collateral, with Iroquoian cousin terms.

Given these inferences based on recent kinship terminologies, it is possible to suggest descent patterns. Indeed, Dyen and Aberle (1974:291) suggest that the "...likelyest possibility that can now be seen is that early Canadian was matrilineal." This inference is based on two factors. The first is that the terminology indicates unilineality or double unilineality. The second is that the only form of lineality recognized in this area or in adjacent areas is matrilineality (1974:291). Furthermore, Aberle (pers. corr.) has noted that their ideas about matrilineality and early Canadian could apply specifically to any time not too long after Canadian became a separate Athapaskan language, could apply to a time when all of Canadian occupied regions further west than the later distribution, and to a time before they encountered the Cree. A portion of Canadian groups retained matrilineal patterns down to the ethnographic present. These include the Nabesna and Upper Carrier (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:291). Finally, Dyen and Aberle (1974:291) conclude that "...it seems plausible that there was a loss of matrilineal reckoning in the easterly Canadian area, but that in the greater part of this area cross-cousin marriage continued." Given these interpretations suggested by terminological analysis, ethnohistorical data have the potential of providing additional support for Canadian matriliney.

Emile Petitot often (1876a:xliii; 1876b:22) made reference to simi-
similarities between the Canadian Athapaskans and the Ancient Hebrew tribes. He stated that the customs, character, mores, social conditions of both peoples bore remarkable resemblance (1876a:xliii). To understand this comparison, it is important to note that by 1876 Petitot (1876b:24) had been influenced by John Lubbock's (Lord Avebury's) The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man (1870). Lubbock (1870:164-165) described the descent system of the Ancient Jews as being one "...in which the child is related to the mother, and not to the father; whence a man’s heir is his nephew on the sister's side—not his own child, who is in cases regarded as no relation to him at all..." Petitot's knowledge of Canadian Athapaskan customs and social conditions may have led him to make the comparison with those of the Ancient Hebrews although his view that the Indians were related to the Ancient Hebrews could also have led him to do the same. Lubbock did not, however, use the terms matriarchial or matrilineal in his book. Thus, Petitot's viewpoint is not clear although as we shall see both the Canadian Athapaskans and the Jews would seem to have had matrilineal systems.

Recent research by Lee Haas (1974) on modern Jewish matriliney clearly indicates that the practice of tracing Jewish descent through one's matrilineage is not a residual pattern from Ancient Hebrew history. In fact, Haas contends that the Ancient Hebrew societies had a strong patrilineal bias, befitting pastoral societies in general (1974:5-7). The matrilineal principle in Judaism, as suggested by Haas and by Lubbock and others, would be a product of modernization rather than relic of the past. Haas notes that the first written appearance of the requirement that one's mother be Jewish is found in the Mishnah. Descent, however, was traced patrilineally during the Mishnaic period (100 B.C.-200 A.D.), and the function of the law was to
discourage marriage outside of the Judaic faith (1974:9). The laws of the Mishnah received further discussion and elaboration, and by the sixth century A.D., they were written down in the Talmud. In regard to marriage and descent, the Talmud succinctly indicates that "For every woman who cannot enter a Jewish marriage...the offspring is like her. What is the case? This is the offspring of a concubine or a non-Jewish" (cited in Haas, 1974:12-13). The implication of this law is that it was, again, reinforced to prevent intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews and to maintain ethnic purity in a patrilineal-patrilocality society by ensuring that offspring of mixed marriages would be excluded (1974:12-13). The solution to the problem of how this law came to emphasize a matrilineal descent principle is seen as being the result of two nineteenth-century factors: 1) the disintegration of the traditional Jewish patrilocal community into widely dispersed, largely independent nuclear families as the primary social unit; and 2) the initiation of civil marriage as an alternative to religious marriage (1974:15).

Thus, when the Talmudic law "For any woman who cannot enter into a Jewish marriage with any man, then the offspring is like her" is applied in the context of neolocal residence and civil marriage, it introduced a matrilineal principle into the criteria for determining ethnic identity. The assumption that the father would be Jewish, too, was never written into the law by the compilers of the Mishnah and the Talmud.

The change to matrilineal descent patterns was not the original intention of the law. In Mishnaic times, Jewish society was patrilocal and Mishnaic law concerning marriage was addressed to the men. It was assumed that all the members of the community were Jewish; non-Jewish men as well as Jewish women married to non-Jewish men were not affected by the law.

In short, Haas's discussion of the matrilineal principle in modern Judaism does not contradict Petitot's argument influenced by Lubbock's views suggesting prior matriliney among the Canadian Athapaskans. It serves to add clarity and support to the discussion by demonstrating that the matrilineal principle of modern Judaism was widely practiced during the nineteenth century when Lubbock produced his major publications.

Emile Petitot's (1893:154-155) descriptive account of Canadian Athapaskan legends is highly suggestive of prior matrilineal principles. (It is by no means conclusive evidence.) In Yellowknife, Chipewyan, Hare, Kutchin, and Dogrib origin legends, it appears that some of these groups traced descent from a female, who in most cases was originally a mammal. In Petitot's (1893:154-155) words:

Chaque peuple de la nation denite a la prétention de se glorifier d'une origine transcendeante ou magique. Chippewayans et Couteaux-Jaunes disent qu'ils sont nés de l'union du premier homme avec une gelinotte, qui se métamorphosa en femme pendant son sommeil.

Les Loucheux ou Dindjié ont à peu près la même tradition. Ils reconnaissent pour épouse du premier homme la femme du jour ou du matin, fille du dieu Lune, dont les fils, nés avant l'homme, furent des gelinottes métamorphosées plus tard en Dindjité.

Les Peaux-de-Lièvre et les Flans-de-chien, beaucoup plus modestes, se donnent pour les descendants d'une femme déné et d'un sorcier kollowe qui, pendant la nuit, aurait eu la propriété de se métamorphoser en chien noir.

Thus, according to Petitot, each Dene group had an origin myth. The Chippewyan and Yellowknives believed they were descended from a man and a grouse. The latter changed itself into a woman during its sleep. The Kutchin had almost the same tradition. They recognized as the wife of the
first man, the woman of the day or the morning, who was daughter of the moon
god of whom the sons born before the man were grouse that changed later into
Kutchin. The Hare and Dogrib thought that they were descendants of a Dene
woman and a Koliouche [Tlingit] shaman who during the night had the
propriety of changing himself into a black dog.

From the evidence presented so far, it is reasonable to assume that the
Canadian Athapaskans were organized matrilineally. A further discussion of
marriage and residence patterns will provide additional evidence for
resolving the question of descent.

Polygamy, especially polygyny, is frequently mentioned in the literature
describing Canadian Athapaskans (Glover, 1962:200; Garvin, 1927:126; Masson,
polyandry, interestingly, is reported for nine groups, including the Hare,
Slave, Chipewyan, Sekani, Beaver, and Sarsi (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:279-280;
Slobodin, 1964). (The Copper Eskimo to the north of these Athapaskan groups
were reported by Jenness (1922:162) to have practiced polyandry as well.)
Dyen's and Aberle's (1974:279) tabular presentation of social organizational
features show the Hare, Chipewyan, Sekani, and Beaver as practicing sororal
polygyny. The noticeably high frequency of polygynous marriages and the
high frequency of otherwise relatively rare polyandrous marriages among
these Canadian Athapaskan groups may be a problem of standard definitions
for polygyny and polyandry.

Textbook usage describes polygyny as only existing when a man is
married to more than one woman, excluding one or more concubines, while
polyandry consists of those cases where a woman is married to more than one
man, and is without a husband or lover. The elimination of concubines and
cicisbeo, from the standard definition is restrictive since the phenomenon of extra-marital sexual intercourse is more predominant than polygamy.

H. Th. Fischer's article on "Polyandry" (1952) suggests the term polykoity, from the Greek word polukoitêoo (plural mating), should be considered. The term connotes sexual intercourse with several men or women. Polygyny and polyandry are designated by Fischer (1952:106) as forms of polykoity, permitted and acknowledged by specific cultures. If we follow his usage, polygyny comprises situations where a married man also lives in a concubinage. In the same way, polyandry admits those cultures in which the married women have a cicisbeo or in which the women allow sexual favors to brothers, comrades, or visitors of their husbands (1952:106). Polyandry, as defined by Fischer, is much more pandemic, and would include many Arctic and Subarctic groups.

Two examples of polyandry among the Canadian Athapaskans serve to demonstrate the validity of Fischer's viewpoint. James VanStone's (1965:64; see 1974:53, 81) work on the Snowdrift Chipewyan describes an example of polyandry brought to his attention while conducting fieldwork in 1960-1961. The ethnographic details fit Fischer's definition while violating the standard definition. In VanStone's example, one woman:

...whose husband was in the hospital in Calgary, acted as a sort of family sexual partner for his brothers, three of whom were over twenty and not married, in return for assistance in maintaining the household. This arrangement ceased, however, when the husband returned from the hospital (1965:64).

W. F. Wentzel's (Masson, 1960a:86) earlier (1807) account of the Slave custom of one woman being common "...to two brothers and often three..." refers again to sexual activities rather than marriage. In sum, both examples appear to be cases of cicisbeism rather than marriage, a lasting social,
economic, and sexual relationship. So wide an occurrence of this pattern suggests to Dyen and Aberle (1974:281) that it may be early Canadian.

The levirate, sororate, and sororal polygyny are also common enough to suggest their early presence among the Canadian Athapaskans. Franklin (1970:289) describes sororal polygyny as a custom of the Yellowknife for which they "...frequently marry two sisters, and there is no prohibition to the intermarriage of cousins, but a man is restricted from marrying his niece." In this instance, it is difficult to determine whether or not the example of polygyny violates the standard definition. There are insufficient data to warrant elaboration. Nevertheless, Canadian dialect terminology suggests non-neolocal residence and polygyny (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:281). It is likely that the residence will be matrilocal since sororal polygyny is particularly well adapted for matrilocality because "...the only women ordinarily available as secondary wives, without violating the residence rule, are the sisters and other close female relatives of the first wife" (Murdock, 1949:31).

In the case of cross-cousin marriage, Dyen and Aberle (1974:282-283) list sixteen systems for which they had information. For our purposes, only information pertaining to the Hare (Sue, n.d.), Slave (Helm, 1961), Chipewyan (Myer, cited in Curtis, 1928), Chipewyan (MacNeish, 1960), Beaver (Ridington, 1969), Sekani (Jenness, 1937a), and Sarsi (Myer, cited in Curtis, 1928) are considered. The Sekani and Sarsi lack preferential cross-cousin marriage (1974:284). The Sekani did not have special terms for cross cousins. The Slave apparently do not have special terms for a woman's male cross cousins, but use sibling terms (1974:284). The Chipewyan should have had bilateral cross-cousin marriage, but exhibit a patrilateral preference
and proscribed MBD marriage (1974:288). Dyen and Aberle (1974:288) have predicted that all but the Sekani and Sarsi had "...normative bilateral cross-cousin marriage, with or without asymmetrical preference." The high frequency of normative cross-cousin marriage suggests, on the basis of terminology too, that it was a feature of early Canadian (1974:289).

In sum, normative cross-cousin marriage, the sororate, sororal polygyny, and the levirate, it is postulated, would exert an influence on or would be affected by kinship terms identical with that of unilineal or double unilineal descent (Murdock, 1949:140-183). All the above factors point in the same direction, i.e., toward matriliny, as inferred by Dyen and Aberle (1974:290). These factors should also be associated with or exert a special influence on the formation of cultural rules prescribing the place of residence following marriage.

Dyen's and Aberle's (1974:281) inference that residence was non-neo-local among the Canadian dialects requires further elaboration. Matrilin eality is commonly associated with matrilocality, where a married couple normally live with or near the wife's parents (Murdock, 1949:147; Gough, 1961:511-554; Aberle, 1961:655-727). Indeed, Dyen and Aberle (1974:360) indicate that matrilocality "...is commonly regarded as prerequisite to matrilineality." They also note that matrilineality is commonly believed capable of surviving after matrilocal residence has changed. It will be suggested later in more detail, however, that a matrilocal bias may have persisted longer than matrilineality in the Canadian Subarctic. Table 31 presents the forms of residence for the Canadian Athapaskans, as established by Dyen and Aberle (1974:357-358). The large number of cases describing "initial" matrilocal residence are
TABLE 31

RESIDENCE PATTERNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear Lake (Satudene)</td>
<td>initially matrilocal</td>
<td>Osgood, 1932:77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td>invariable matrilocal</td>
<td>Goddard, 1916:22-222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initial matrilocal trend; high variability</td>
<td>Ridington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
<td>matrilocal trend</td>
<td>Curtis, 1928:148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogrib</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>matrilocal trend</td>
<td>Sue, n.d.:427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutchin Peel River</td>
<td>patriloc with some initial matrilocity</td>
<td>Osgood, 1936b:142-143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initially matrilocal</td>
<td>Slobodin, 1962:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutchin Crow River</td>
<td>patriloc with some initial matrilocity</td>
<td>Osgood, 1936b:147-148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rich patrilocal, poor initial matrilocal</td>
<td>Balikci, 1963:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutchin Chandalar</td>
<td>matrilocal bias</td>
<td>McKennan, 1965:51, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarsi</td>
<td>matrilocal</td>
<td>Curtis, 1928:102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sometimes initially matrilocal</td>
<td>Jenness, 1938:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>matrilocal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>patriloc</td>
<td>Honigmann, 1956:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekani</td>
<td>initially matrilocal</td>
<td>Jenness, 1937a:53-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>generally matrilocal</td>
<td>Mason, 1946:31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>matrilocalality common</td>
<td>Honigmann, 1946:162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initially matrilocal</td>
<td>Helm, 1961:67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowknife</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

probably a transition from a more rigid matrilocal residence pattern, than from any other form of post-marital residence (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:359). Thus, we can conclude that if the proto-Athapaskans practiced matrilocal
residence, there is a definite possibility that they also were organized matrilineally. Ethnohistorical and ethnographic data provide additional support for these conclusions.

Even after most of the above groups were displaced by marauding Cree during the eighteenth century, post-nuptial residence patterns had a matri-local emphasis suggestive of former matrilocality. The Rev. William C. Bompass, who spent a number of years in the Mackenzie Diocese and later was in charge of it, noted that among the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Slave, and Nahanny (1888:96):

This [mother-in-law accordance] does not seem to be enforced among the more Northern Indians, but a son-in-law is looked upon as a sort of hunter for his wife's parents. Their daughter does not leave her parent's camp, and even after marriage appears to be more under control than that of her husband.

Bompass's account includes the Dogrib and Yellowknife for which Dyen and Aberle (1974:357-358) lacked information.

Other fur trade journals often describe situations in which the son-in-law was under the authority of his wife's local group. For instance, W.F. Wentzel's Fort Simpson journal (June 7, 1822) described a situation where the Prince, a Slave Indians, was not able to hunt for the fort because "...he was prevented by his father-in-law" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 47). Most examples are less explicit in that they fail to distinguish between temporary and permanent matrilocality. The following examples illustrate the situation: "...La Misere arrived [Fort Norman] from Fort Good Hope he was accompanied by his son-in-law—" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/15, folio 6) or "...3 Indians arrived [Fort Liard] with a few furs and a little dried meat, an old man and his two sons-in-law who pass the winter in our vicinity here ..." (HBC Arch., B. 116/a/1, folio 28). These and other accounts at Forts
Chipewyan and Resolution provide inferential support for the existence of early historic matrilocal norms.

Teknnonymous naming is another source of evidence for matrilineality and matrilocality. Edward B. Tylor (1889) was the first to find the custom of tekronymy associated or in close connection with the "husband's residence in the wife's family..." (1889, cited in Graburn, 1971: 21). In the case of the Cree Indians, Tylor noted that (1971:21):

...Among these Indians the young husband, coming to live with his wife's parents, must turn his back on them, not speaking to them (especially not his mother-in-law), being thus treated as a stranger till his first child is born; wheréupon he takes its name, and is called "father of So-and-so," and thenceforth attaches himself to his parents-in-law rather than to his own parents. That is to say, he is ceremonially treated as a stranger till his child, being born a member of the family, gives him status as father of a member of the family....

A similar account of teknnonymous naming was recorded in the Fort Simpson journal (1858-1860) of the Rev. James Hunter who stated that the Dogrib and Slave (CMS A-91):

...have custom universal in all their race, of losing their original name upon the birth of a child; they are then only stated the father of so and so. But the Kléy dinneh [described as Dogrib by Hunter] go further still, they changed their name after the birth of every child, an unmarried man is called the father of his favourite dog, if he has one....

Hunter does not mention mother-in-law avoidance in his description of Slave and Dogrib customs; however, Bompas (1888:96) observed that among "...some Indians [Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Slave, and Nahanny] it is understood to be absolutely forbidden to a mother-in-law to look her son-in-law in the face, at least until the birth of his first child." Although the custom was no longer enforced among some of the more northern Indians, matrilocality was (1888:96, see above p. 366).

From the descriptions of teknnonymous naming, we can arrive at several
conclusions. First, it is the birth of a child which requires "kin" links among affines. Second, through the application of teknonyms, the prior opposition between kin and affine, as expressed by mother-in-law avoidance and reinforced through the terminological and descent system, is minimized or eliminated. The teknonym system of naming masks the opposition and thereby emphasizes group unity (Kaplin, 1972:262). In sum, the teknonym of "father of so-and-so" lays claim to the "kin" aspect of an otherwise ambiguous son-in-law and father relationship, especially in a matrilineal-matrilocal system.

There is strong evidence to suggest that matrilineality and matrilocality were features of precontact and early contact Canadian Athapaskan societies. Also, there appears to be a functional association between residence and descent (see Dyen and Averil, 1974:374). However, a number of Subarctic specialists have maintained that the Canadian Athapaskans' ecological conditions were not conducive to the development of unilinear systems, especially matrilineal ones (Osgood, 1936a, 1962; Helm, 1965; Smith, 1976b, 1978; Sharp, 1977a, 1977b). Having inferred that matrilineality and matrilocality were present among the prehistoric Canadian Athapaskans, it is now necessary to review the present information on matrilineal-matrilocal systems to determine the association between matriliney and prehistoric ecological conditions.

The Genesis of Matrilocality and Matrilineality

Under conditions of preferred matrilineal-matrilocal organization, the postmarital residence pattern brings together an aggregate of women who are
related to one another through women, their children, and their imported husbands (Murdock, 1949:148; Martin, 1974:19). The most common explanation for the practice of matrilocal residence is one based on the division of labor by sex (see Ember and Ember, 1971:571). It is assumed that if an extended family domestic unit is structured around sisters and their daughters, the women perform the basic subsistence operations. It is also commonly assumed that the introduction of agriculture into a society allows the females to elevate their economic contribution to a level above that of men (Murdock, 1949:205). In this type of society, women carry out the basic planting, weeding, and harvesting activities, involved in low scale agriculture. While Driver and Massey (1957) and Ember and Ember (1971) show a relationship between division of labor and sex localization for North America, Ember's and Ember's (1971) other findings, based on a world wide sample, show no consistent association between division of labor and female versus male localization. The more recent work of William Divále (1974) also suggests that there is no correlation between sexual division of labor and residence. Because there is variation from area to area between the two variables, the Embers and Divále sought other kinds of explanations. Through a series of statistical tests, both parties found an association between matrilocal residence and external warfare. In terms of the Canadian Athapaskans, however, these findings serve to question the possibility of their having had a matrilineal-matrilocal organization. Their environment is too far north for agriculture, and there are no data to demonstrate a relationship between precontact external warfare and historic residence patterns. While Cree-Athapaskan warfare and Canadian Athapaskan intertribal conflict may have engendered the development of matri-organizational features in the
Protohistoric Period, there is no evidence of external warfare during the Historic Period, which would have promoted the continuance of matrilocality patterns of residence.

The dominant subsistence activity of the Canadian Athapaskans was a combination of hunting, gathering, and fishing. M. Kay Martin's recent research (1974) on modern foragers suggests that the matrilineal-matrilocality model, *ab initio*, for our Athapaskans is, indeed, plausible. Using a sample of 147 foraging societies, she (1974:17) indicates that matriliney is found with greatest frequency at the highest latitudes, where the males are predominant in subsistence activities based on hunting and fishing. Matrilocal activity is also found to be well represented throughout the higher latitudes including the North American Subarctic (1974:17). For instance, Leacock (1955:32-33, 1973:86) has observed that the further one goes back in time the more one finds evidence of matrilocal activity among the Northern Algonkians. Martin's cross-cultural research findings are similar to those of Ember and Ember and Divale since she finds no supportive evidence for the commonly accepted division of labor interpretation for matrilocality. It is suggested that the key to the adaptive advantage in these high latitude matrilineal-matrilocality societies lies in the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions (1974:19). This would produce possible alliances among several territorial groups through kinship ties where males related by blood were dispersed. This should, theoretically, provide maximum intergroup cooperation for survival, and matrilineal-matrilocal societies should also be more stable and cohesive through the non-local distribution of male-held power and authority positions (1974:19-20).

In the Canadian Athapaskan Subarctic, uterine organization could have
been ideally suited to the intensive hunting of both wood bison and caribou.

If Martin's explanation for the matri-organizational features is correct then Canadian Athapaskans would have possessed a kin-based structure for the recruitment and consolidation of a large male labor force to cooperate in and to coordinate the hunting, flaying, and butchering of bison or caribou or both. Because of the cross-cutting nature of kin group affiliations there should have been fewer conflicts over the division of the products of labor and over locally used strategic resources.

Matrilineal-matrilocall communities would appear to be, in Martin's analysis (1974:21), adaptive in areas with abundant fauna or plentiful school fish. A large yield of protein foods could support a stable population unit of 100-150 people (Peterson, 1972:27). The question of Subarctic Athapaskan social organization has focused upon this issue. The issue has been whether all Athapaskans were blessed with abundance, or only some groups. Osgood (1936a:20-21) assumes only the Pacific Athapaskans lived in a state of plenty. He has contrasted the Pacific and Arctic Athapaskans and since his dichotomy has received general acceptance, it requires careful consideration. In Osgood's words (1936a:21):

...There is generally among the groups of the Pacific drainage a dependence on salmon, which is entirely lacking among those of the Arctic drainage. With salmon fishing goes an elaborate complex of traits connected with the catching and use of fish. A consideration of the types of shelter over the whole area brings to light a marked development of stable forms among the Pacific group in contrast to the more temporary forms of the other. This in itself may suggest the more sedentary social life of the Pacific division, in which we find also the unilateral kinship system as typical, a system as generally lacking among the Arctic group. Perhaps nothing stands out as sharply as the ceremonial life, including arts and games, in comparing the Pacific west with the Arctic east. In fact, the situation may be summed up by the statement that a consideration of over five hundred traits shows a generally decreasing complexity in the culture of the Northern Athapas-
kans from west to east with a sharply distinctive break between the relatively rich culture of the Pacific Drainage peoples and the essentially simple patterns of behavior of the aborigines of the Arctic east.
In a similar vein, Chang (1962) more recently established a typology of settlement and community patterns among several circumpolar societies. Two models of seasonal settlement patterns are noted among the Athapaskans. The Chipewyan, Satudene, Slave, Sekani, Beaver and Sarsi are described as spending a winter sedentary period at the edge of the forest and a summer wandering period in quest for large animals. Their community is portrayed as kinship-free, consisting of nuclear families that frequently change their community affiliation. The other pattern includes the Tanaina, Tahltan, Bulkley River Carrier, and Kaska who are described as occupying sedentary fishing camps for much of the year except when seasonally hunting migratory animals. These groups possess a kin-based matricentric community. The Kutchin are considered by both Chang and Osgood to be intermediate, having matrilineal clans and a kinship-free community.

There are a number of problems with these typologies. First, the emphasis upon fishing and a riverine economy as the determinant for uterine organization has been questioned by McKean (1959:126-127). He believes that only the Tanaina and Ingaliik depended upon salmon. Second, the classifications of Osgood and Chang are based on the assumption that totally different ecological situations prevailed in the two regions. Not only is the resource base assumed to be different but the western division is described as having a more abundant and predictable food supply than the eastern division. The formulation of these classifications makes no allowance for possible historical man-land reorientations. The groups in the eastern division at the time of their ethnographic description are assumed to be exploiting the same ecological niche as they did before contact. The historical data presented in the previous chapters suggest a considerable re-
alignment of populations. Third, a reconstruction of the precontact Canadian Athapaskans' resource base has demonstrated that it was relatively abundant. In sum, the reasons for the lack of unilineality and sociocultural complexity in the east, no doubt, should include such factors as dislocation, depopulation, resettlement, adjustments to a less than lifesustaining environment, loss of residential stability, disease, dependence upon fur trade, commodities, etc. (see also Dyen and Abele, 1971:403). The critical point, however, is that the prehistoric resources posited for Canadian Athapaskans were relatively abundant and relatively stable, and these could have supported a unilineal kin-based semi-sedentary population of modest size, through seasonal nucleation in temporary settlements. The retention of some matrilineal-matrilocal features and the historical reconstruction of the Canadian Athapaskans' resource potential renders these inferences plausible.

Although it is assumed here that societies with matrilineal-matrilocal features can exist in areas with abundant and stable resources, there is another perspective that should be considered. It is possible that matrilineal-matrilocal structures have adaptive value in areas of low productivity (Krech, 1978b:725). In areas of cyclical resource failure, uterine organization might well be adaptive since it is likely that not all groups will experience resource deprivation at the same time. Cross-territorial kinship ties among males related by blood have the potential of coordinating reciprocal food sharing activities. In fact, this may, in part, account for the retention of matrilocality in the Canadian Subarctic despite ecological change that would have rendered matrilineally-based groups functionally maladaptive. This hypothesis will receive further discussion.

Gough (1961:556) indicates that matrilocality may be characteristic of
societies "...in which women's work, of whatever kind, is done in or near the home, while men's pursuits periodically take them far from home." Although we have little data on what types of subsistence activities were performed by women, possibly because males were the primary recorders until recently, it is suggested here that gathering and hunting of small animals was of considerable importance. The collecting of small animals by an aggregate of related women may have been the mainstay of Athapaskan groups during those periods when males were away and engaged in the hunting of migratory animals. Nevertheless, there are no data to demonstrate that gathering was a more reliable Athapaskan productive activity than hunting, as it is with the !Kung Bushmen (Lee, 1968:41). The situation among the Bushmen, however, may be atypical of earlier times since there is some evidence from rock paintings to suggest that large game was formerly much more abundant in the Kalahari. Regardless, the removal of women from the group after marriage, it could be argued, would have been disadvantageous since a woman would have had to learn a new gathering territory following her marriage. On the other hand, matrilocality may have been an advantage to the primary producers—men, since they have knowledge of two hunting territories (McClellan, 1964:9). Although, in this case, we would have to assume that groups had well defined territories, and there is some doubt that these territories existed (see Peterson, 1975). There may be another advantage to matrilocality if men are absent for extended periods. From the point of view of the male, he may be more secure if his wife is left with her sisters, her mother, and her father than with non-relatives. The possibility of marital infidelity and cuckoldry would be reduced (A. Kehoe, personal communication). Henri Faraud, Oblate Missionary at Fort Resolution
(1851), noted that the Montagnais or Chipewyan people (1966:346):

Les amis croyaient se donner des prauxes de leur amitié, en se prêtant mutuellement leurs femmes, et cela, joint à la facilité avec laquelle ils s'en empruntaient, à toute cause qu'il n'y avait aucun lien de famille chez ce peuple, il résultait de ces usages que les enfants connaissaient leur mère, mais rarement leur père. [The friends believed they were giving proof of their friendship by giving their wives and because they were joined to another social group which they were proud of and there was no relationship between the family and the tribe, it is because of these customs that the children know their mother but rarely their father.]

The adaptive advantages of matrilineal-matrilocal institutions in the Canadian Subarctic outweigh the advantages of both patrilineality and patrilocality as proposed by earlier theorists (Steward, 1955; Service, 1962; see Chapter One).

Divale (1974:79) has suggested four conditions that cause matrilocal residence. First, it is proposed that when a large segment of a society migrates or is "...driven into a new region which is already inhabited by other societies of similar social complexity, matrilocal (uxorilocal) residence will develop" (1974:79). There is disequilibrium between the indigenous inhabitants and their environment due to the encroachment of another population. Warfare is one of the means through which a new equilibrium can be established. Given a situation of disequilibrium and given warfare as the means to resolve the situation, matrilocal residence would minimize internal group conflict and maximize group cooperation for external warfare.

The movement of Canadian Athapaskan populations into new habitats has already been demonstrated. It is suggested, however, that matrilocality was already present before Cree encroachment into their territory and was retained following the warfare and their expulsion into new ecozones as an adaptive mechanism for resource exploitation. (The matrilineal descent system, how-
ever, was replaced by bilateral descent, which emerged through the influence of the fur trade.) There is no evidence of continued and intensive warfare with the small groups of Nahanny whose territory they were forced to invade (the Nahanny appeared to have occupied mountainous areas, which were previously uninhabited). The suggestion that the precontact and protohistoric Canadian Athapaskans practiced matrilocality is supported by the fact that the most common form of residence known in the area or in adjacent areas for populations that did not experience dislocation or intensive warfare is matrilocality. The second condition, proposed by Divale, is overpopulation where segments spill-off into neighboring regions, resulting in disequilibrium between the indigenous populations and their environment. This condition is not in accord with the Athapaskan situation. Third, the introduction of new technology or new methods of exploiting the aboriginal resource base or a previously unexploited environment is considered as another factor producing matrilocality. Divale's example is the introduction of Malaysian food plants to the Bantu in the Nigerian-Cameroon region that allowed them to move into the Congo area, displacing the indigenous Bushmanoid peoples. In terms of the Canadian Subarctic, similar parallels can be noted. For instance, the Cree displaced by force the Beaver who in turn displaced the Sekani. However, in contrast to Divale, it is argued, again, that the Athapaskans retained matrilocality since it had adaptive value; relocation and external warfare did not cause it as Divale suggests. Finally, the European colonial expansion and the subsequent displacement of indigenous peoples are considered as causes. Since the Canadian Athapaskans were on the end of the domino effect, this condition is too similar to the first factor to be regarded as significant. In short, Divale's argument offers a
partial explanation for the retention of matrilocality among the Canadian
Athapaskans during the postcontact period, but it is doubtful that his
factors can account for the origin of the practice (C.R. Ember, 1974). The
importance of the conditions, which he regards as causal, will be reexamined
further.

In short, the inference that matrilocality was a feature of precontact
Canadian Athapaskan culture is generally supported both empirically and
logically. Various conditions have been presented that are assumed to favor
the existence of matrilocal residence. Those best suited for the Canadian
Subarctic are: 1) the distribution of males at marriage in a territory
other than that of their birth and their recruitment into authority positions
on a nonlocal basis, which requires the consolidation of several territorial
groups (Martin, 1974:19); 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food
sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of un-
predictable movement of migratory animals, as was more common an occurrence
in postcontact times as a result of herd reductions, and areas where there
is mass slaughter of megafauna; and 3) the advantage of retaining women in
their natal territory for gathering purposes, while men's hunting pursuits
take them away for extended periods (Gough, 1961:556; Helms, 1970:197).

So far, an attempt has been made to explain matrilocal residence rather
than matrilineal descent. It has been assumed, as Divale (1974:76) does
that "...descent systems are ideological, and an explanation of them can only
come from the material conditions that cause or nurture them." The material-
ecological conditions, which include the organizations of production and
distribution, that created matrilineal descent are uxorilocal-matrilocal
Service, 1962:122; Ember, Ember, and Pasternak, 1974:70; Divale, 1974:76). In order to explain matrilineal descent, we have to first explain matrilocality within the ecological context of the Canadian Athapaskans.

Thus, our discussion of early Canadian Athapaskan matriline has been, in large part, what J.M. Lewis (1965:106) would call a taxonomic exercise. No attempt has been made to explain the functional realities or operative principles of Canadian Athapaskan matriline or to determine the "strength" of their matrilineal systems (1965:87). Details on early Canadian Athapaskan succession, status, and inheritance, on the distribution of domestic authority, and on domestic, social, and political behavior, and so forth are lacking. For matrilineal descent systems, in general, these factors have not received the attention that patrilineal ones have and, according to R.M. Keesing (1975:62), matrilineal systems "...were in many ways slighted for 50 years of the study of social organization." The notable exceptions are Radcliffe-Brown's (1935) paper on matrilineal succession, A.I. Richard's (1950) paper on family structure amongst the Central Bantu, and Schneider's and Gough's matrilineal kinship (1961). (There are, nevertheless, numerous individual studies of matrilineal societies.) While the structural analysis of Canadian Athapaskan matriline would add to our understanding of their early descent system, it would not provide us with information on the "genesis" and "incidence" of matriliney unless we "...accept the tautology that the system or its parts is what it is because that is the way it is" (Sahlins, 1961:323). The genesis and incidence of Canadian Athapaskan matriline and matrilineal systems in general are probably to be sought, perhaps as suggested by Aberle (1961:725), in "...technology, division of labour, organization of work groups, control of resources, types of subsis-
tence activities, and the ecological niches in which these activities occur."

Because matriliney, as a category of analysis, is based on a membership criterion (Aberle, 1961:725), the origin of Canadian Athapaskan matriliney is best determined through the analysis of their post-marital residence patterns and ecological systems.

If there is a causal relationship between post-marital residence and descent, and if residence can be related to ecological factors, then descent systems indirectly must owe their existence to these same conditions. This would rule out diffusionist arguments. The early diffusion theorists proposed that matriliney either diffused from Asia or the Northwest Coast (Morice, 1892; Swanton, 1904; Olson, 1933). The diffusion hypothesis, however, requires that: 1) the conditions congenial for matriliney in Asia or on the Northwest Coast or both be explained; and 2) the means by which matriliney diffused from Asia to the New World and subsequently to the Canadian Athapaskans or from the Northwest Coast to the interior be accounted for (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:403). Dyen and Aberle (1974:403) have also concluded that the "...diffusion hypothesis for the Northwest Coast becomes complex by virtue of its requiring a diffusion in the face of obstacles."

For these reasons, the diffusion hypothesis is disregarded.

One final point should be made. In contrast to Osgood's (1936a) and Chang's (1962) argument that the westerly Athapaskans possessed unilineal descent groups because of their greater ecological stability, features generally thought to have been lacking among the easterly groups (see also Goldman, 1941:406), it has been suggested here that matriliney was present in both areas. If this was the case, the question arises as to whether or not Canadian Athapaskan social organization was even more complex. This com-
plexity could have meant the presence of clans, moieties, and phratries.

Since the Kutchin have been classified as intermediate between the two divisions (Osgood, 1936a:3-5), and since they are characterized as having matri-clans and a kinship-free community, it is necessary to reconstruct Kutchin social organization while simultaneously reconstructing the social organization of groups belonging to the eastern division. Because the Kutchin exhibit characteristics found in both divisions, they provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate the effects of change stemming from European contact that swept over the Canadian Athapaskan peoples during the early stages of the contact period.

The Question of Matrilineal, Exogamous Clan Organization

In previous sections we examined data for evidence of matrilocality and the possibility of matrilineality among the Canadian Athapaskans and data on the conditions favoring the development of unilineal systems. Here we approach the question of whether or not there is evidence of former "clan" systems among the Kutchin and Canadian Athapaskans: the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Hare, Dogrib, and Slave. First, we need to specify what we mean by a clan.

Murdock (1949:68) believes that there are three major specifications requisite for the formation of clans. They require: 1) an explicit unilinear rule of descent that unites its central core of members; 2) residential unity where the residence rule is not inconsistent with that of descent; and, 3) actual social integration where the group is an organized aggregation of families (1949:68). The previous examination of the data suggests
that the Canadian Athapaskans had the necessary prerequisites for clan formation, but it should be indicated that the appropriate conditions do not automatically entail their development. Evidence of clan organization, collective activities, or group functions must be observed or inferred from substantive data before we can characterize the Canadian Athapaskans as once having had genuine clans (1949:68-69).

The definition of clan varies from anthropologist to anthropologist, depending on their vantage point. The usage of clan in this section refers to social units comprised of unilineally related members who delineate their relationship through stipulated descent in which descent is assumed but cannot necessarily be demonstrated genealogically (Fried, 1957; Fox, 1967). Those social units where genealogical connecting links can be specified are called lineages. Both clans and lineages can exist at the same time within the same cultural group. Ember, Ember, and Pasternak (1974:89) note that there are at least two different models in the anthropological literature, which attempt to account for the ideological development of clan systems. The first was proposed by Mischa Titiev (1943), who suggested that clans develop when a lineage expands and segments, and their members reside in more than one community. Putative groups then develop because the notion of common descent is retained but genealogical connections are difficult to establish or they are forgotten. The formation of phratries and moieties occur in a similar fashion (1974:89). In contrast to Titiev, Fried (1957), Service (1965), and Fox (1967) imply or suggest that clan groups appear first and lineages develop later, if at all. The Embers and Pasternak (1974:89-90) indicate that there is synchronic evidence to support the latter approach. They suggest that putative groups
develop before lineages in a context involving external warfare. Unfortunately, in the case of the Canadian Athapaskans, there is no diachronic material to determine whether clans preceded lineages or the reverse, or whether there is an association between clans and external warfare. It is our task to determine whether clans existed and if so, why there is so little evidence for them today.

The material conditions for clan formation does warrant discussion. Various conditions have already been presented in the previous section to account for matrilocality and matrilineality. To summarize briefly, it was argued that the adaptability of matrilocal organization was its built-in mechanism for the articulation of localized kin groups through the non-local distribution of males (Martin, 1974). This mechanism provided the potential to achieve the highest level of productivity through the coordinated, communal exploitation of Subarctic resources (see Befu and Plotnicov, 1962:314). Matrilocal residence rules thus could create unambiguously discrete units of people for coordinated and communal subsistence activities, as was the case for the Northwestern Athapaskans. The Canadian Athapaskans' material conditions were also conducive to the possibility of matri-clan formation. In support of this hypothesis, let us consider the literature indicative of unilineal descent groups among the Kutchin and other Canadian Athapaskan groups.

The Kutchin

The Eastern Kutchin ("People") or Loucheux (name from French-Canadian voyageurs) bands include the Nakotcho-Kutchin of the Mackenzie Flats or Arctic
Red River, the Tatlit-Kutchin of Peel River, and the Tukkuth-Kutchin (extinct) of the Upper Porcupine River. The Western Kutchin divisions consist of the Vunta-Kutchin along the Crow River and Middle Porcupine or "Rat" River, the Tahjik-Kutchin on the Black River, the Kutcha-Kutchin of the Yukon Flats, the Natsit-Kutchin (Gens du large) along the Chandalar River, the Tennuth-Kutchin (extinct) on Birch Creek and the Dihai Kutchin (Osgood, 1936b:14-16; de Laguna, 1975:122; Krech, 1978b:712). There may have been more groups in the precontact and early contact period (Krech, n.d.).

The Precontact Kutchin

In early contact, and thus most probably in the precontact times, as we shall demonstrate, the Kutchin had a social system that was based on a matrilineal, exogamous clan system. Their social system was divided into three egalitarian divisions or matri-clans.

The mutual responsibility of clan members is not indicated in the early literature involving cases of rape, murder, injury, blood revenge, property, or the potlatch. However, clan members did seem to be responsible for giving a potlatch for the deceased member of another clan (Osgood, 1936b:126). William L. Hardisty, a Hudson's Bay Company trader at Peel River House, described the three divisions of Kutchin in 1866. He observed that the children received clan membership from their mother: "They receive caste from their mother" (Hardisty, 1867:315). A man could not marry a member from his own clan since "...when it does take place the persons are ridiculed and laughed at. The man is said to have married his sister, even though she may be from another tribe and there be not the
slightest connection by blood between them" (1867:315). Similar descriptions are contained within the unpublished manuscript of the Rev. W. Kirkby (1863) who wrote (MFA, Ms 4001):

It is the rule for a man not to marry into his own but to take a wife from the other classes. The offspring in every case belongs to the class of the mother.

By the 1860s, the rules were not being strictly observed. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that a matri-clan organization was the functioning system during the precontact period. The reference to the social ranking of clans, as it will be suggested later, was a feature of the contact period.

Besides data on Kutchin descent patterns, Hardisty's notes suggest that the Kutchin practiced matrilocal residence. For example, he (1867:315) reports that the Kutchin people:

...receive caste from their mother; if a male Chit-sangh [Yukon Flats Kutchin] marry a Nah-tsingh woman the children are Nah-tsingh, and if a male Nah-tsingh [Chadmalar River Kutchin] marry a Chit-sangh woman the children are Chit-sangh, so that the divisions are always changing. As the father die out the country inhabited by the Chit-sangh becomes occupied by the Nah-tsingh, and so on vice versa. They are continually changing countries, as it were....

Origin myths account for the three divisions noted by Hardisty through the belief that they originated "...when all fowls, animals, and fish were people—the fish were the Chit-sangh, the birds Tain-gees-ah-tsah, and the animals Nat-singh" (Hardisty, 1867:315). The three divisions may also reflect the local area that each group exploited. This may have resulted through time as local populations in their ecosystems developed areal sentiments and associated cultural symbols (Peterson, 1972:30). The area between the Yukon River and the Arctic Sea that the Nat-singh occupied was exploited for caribou while the Chitsah relied upon salmon, whitefish, and moose. The Tain-gees-ah-hta fished for salmon and hunted moose.
latter group would appear to have been an intermediate one between the other two divisions (Hardisty, 1867:315). The rules of residence were undergoing change at the time of Hardisty's report, and the three divisions were amalgamating.

Petitot (1876:88) described a moiety or two clan system among the Mackenzie River Kutchin, or Nakotcho-Kutchin whom it is commonly believed did not have this form of organization (Slobodin, 1962:45). According to Petitot (1876a:88):

\[\ldots \text{faudrait-il voir la raison de la division des Loucheux en deux castes, les Ettchian-kee ou gens de la droite, et les Nattskin-kee ou gens de la gauche. Ces deux castes, bien loin d'être opposées entre elles, ont au contraire pour but d'empêcher que les Dindjie ne s'abandonnent à des querelles intestines; car un Ettchian ne peut épouser une femme de sa caste, mais doit la chercher dans la camp des Nattsin-kee: et vice versa. Les Ettchian-kee sont réputés hommes-blancs, parce que, disent les Loucheux, ils se nourrissent de poisson et de la chair du renne. Les Nattsin-kee ou gens de la gauche, au contraire, sont tenus pour noirs, parce qu'ils font leur pature de l'explication que m'ont donnée les Dindjie de cette division nationale.}\]

Petitot described the two clans or "castes" as right and left hands. They were exogamous clans and each clan or division was reported to have eaten different foods. The third division that is common among the other Kutchin was not described by Petitot.

Leaders among the Kutchin had authority, but lacked power. Leadership positions were not inherited, and were transitory. These general patterns of Kutchin leadership are similar to those outlined by Morton Fried (1967:83) as characteristic of simple egalitarian societies. The fur trader, Strachen Jones, in the 1860s described the Kutchin political system as follows (1866:325):

They are governed by the same chiefs in peace and war. The authority of a chief is very limited, for the Indians are very unruly, and not at all disposed to submit to authority. The chiefs are
chosen either on account of their wisdom or courage, and not at all on account of birth. They have no insignia of office, and as for privileges they have all that they can take, and none that the others can withhold from them. The chiefs and old men are all who are entitled to speak in council, but any young man will not hesitate to get up and give his seniors the benefit of his wisdom.

The Kutchins' egalitarian matri-clan system was, no doubt, correlated with a pristine subsistence base of caribou and fish. John Bell, the Hudson's Bay officer who established Peel River House (Fort McPherson) in 1840, informed Richardson (1851:393-394) about the pounds used by the Kutchin for hunting caribou. The pounds Bell (1851:394) described "...appeared to him, from the condition of the wood to be more than a century old. They are hereditary possessions of the families by whom they were constructed."

The fence required a great amount of labor in both the construction and transport of timber. The wood was transported from a considerable distance (Richardson, 1851:394). The pounds extended for miles over an area where the caribou were driven vehemently toward a narrow passage in which stakes were set in the ground with their sharp points toward the entrance. The herding of caribou was a highly communal activity (Jones, 1866:323). Men drove the deer while women and children wounded all the caribou they could from behind the fence. The matricentric clan system most likely provided the necessary widened integration for the recruitment of labor through the nonlocal distribution of consanguine males.

Alexander Murray (1910:89), a senior clerk at Fort Yukon in 1847, also described the intensive fishing techniques of the Yukon Flats Kutchin in his journal. Fishing for trout and salmon was a summer occupation while whitefish were taken in the fall. The small tributaries to the Yukon River and the narrow parts of the lakes in Kutchin territory were barred with
stakes and large fish weirs were placed to entrap the fish. It is suggested, based on Murray's descriptions, that the fishing and processing activities required a large labor force and that the labor was recruited through their matri-clan system.

In sum, it would seem likely that the Kutchin had a flourishing egalitarian, matrilineal-matrilocal, exogamous clan system in the aboriginal period. Most of the Kutchin divisions had three clans, although the Mackenzie Flats people may have had only two. Leaders lacked the power to control the behavior of their clan mates. These positions were not inherited and depended on the ability of the individual.

Kutchin uterine organization appears to have been ideally suited to both intensive hunting and intensive fishing adaptations. The kin-based structure possessed a potential for consolidating a sufficient labor force for subsistence pursuits through the dispersal of consanguinally related males. This would have been a most adaptive sociopolitical structure for exploiting their resources (see Befu and Plotnicov, 1962:314). However, new ecological adaptations to the fur trade and to the Euro-Canadian market economy produced sociopolitical changes, and these adaptations require discussion.

The Protohistoric and Early Historic Kutchin: 1780-1860

The precontact Kutchin had an exchange economy dominated by reciprocal food sharing where exploitative patterns were functionally associated with matricentric structures. Euro-Canadian contact, resulting in native depopulation and an external market for furs, precipitated many changes in Kutchin economy and social organization. The egalitarian features in pre-
contact economic and political organization transformed into and are distinguished by rank features where there were status differentials through sumptuary specialization and ceremonial functions (Fried, 1968:468). The genesis of nonunilineal or cognatic descent had its incipience in the Kutchin transformation to a ranked society.

The development of ranking in which positions of valued status are limited so that not all individuals of ability are able to attain the position (Fried, 1967:109), and the adjustment to depopulation, encouraged the consolidation of cross-territorial sociopolitical ties through a combination of male or female links or both. This process appears to have been widespread. In fact, Ember, Ember, and Pasternak (1974:76-77) have found that Western-induced depopulation in a formerly unilineal society tends to create nonunilineal or cognatic descent groups. For the Kutchin, a non-unilineal descent system was an attempt to recruit labor for trapping as well as a socioeconomic mechanism whereby skillful trappers were able to acquire individual wealth and social status. The historical formation of trapping bands and parties seemed, in the long run, to favor nonunilineal or ambilineal-ambilocal structures rather than the former matrilineal-matrilocality type. Although some cooperative subsistence efforts survived during the fur trade period, the earlier cross-cutting pattern of uterine organization, which had functioned to articulate bands, was no longer adaptive within the context of external market conditions. The historical evidence bears this out and is now presented.

Vestiges of matrilineal, exogamous clan organization among the Kutchin are evident in the documents pertaining to the period from the 1840s to the end of the nineteenth century even though there is an indication that pre-
contact matrilineal organization was altering. Cultural change is implicit in the early documents of the first missionary among the Kutchin, W.W. Kirkby who reported to the Smithsonian Institution (1864:415) that:

There is, however, another division among them of a more interesting and important character than that of the tribes just mentioned. Irrespective of tribe, they are divided into three classes, termed, respectively, Chit-sa, Nate-sa, and Tanges-at-sa—faintly representing the aristocracy, the middle classes, and the poorer orders of civilized nations the former being the most wealthy and the latter the poorest. In one respect, however, they greatly differ, it being the rule for a man not to marry in his own but to take a wife from either of the other classes. A Chit-sa gentleman will marry a Tanges-at-sa peasant without the least feeling *infra dig*. The off-spring in every case belong to the class of the mother. This arrangement has had a most beneficial effect in allaying the deadly feuds formerly so frequent among them.

Kirkby's statement reveals the presence of exogamous clans, the practice of exogamy, and the custom of tracing descent through the mother's group. His reference to a form of social ranking based on the clan system is somewhat overstated through its comparison to the European class structure; nevertheless, it does suggest the presence of ranked clans since social differentiation is expressed through sumptuary marks of prestige. The degree of differentiation, which is a fur trade phenomenon, does seem to relate to the distance from the trading posts. If we use Hardisty's description, the Chit-sa were the closest to the posts during the early fur trade period while the Tanges-at-sa were the farthest away. The status position of the Chit-sa may have been enhanced through the trade relationship. If the Chit-sa are the Kutcha-Kutchin (Yukon Flats Kutchin) noted by Jones (1866:325), they were the traders. Jones described this group as the traders for Fort Yukon when he wrote (1866:324-325):

...they make very little fur themselves, but buy from the other Indians; their standard is called a *naki elk*, (beadclothing); it consists of long strings of beads joined together the distance of a foot;
The lines are seven feet long. The naki eik is equal to twenty-four made beaver, and one of the lines is one or more beaver-skins, according to the value of the beads.

In the typical ranked society, there is usually some form of paraphernalia that convey privileged claim to positions of status. For the Kutchin, blue and white beads served as the sumptuary mark of prestige. The Nakotcho-Kutchin in the vicinity of Mackenzie Flats were obtaining these beads from other Western Kutchin as early as 1806 (see Chapter Five, p. 209). Leadership positions were becoming more important during the nineteenth century since Richardson's journal (1851:391) tells us that to be "...accounted a chief among the Kutchin, a man must possess beads to the amount of 200 beavers." Kirkby (1863) also described their use (MPA, Ms 4001):

> Beads constitute the Indian's wealth. They are strung up in lengths of yards and fathoms and form a regular currency among them. A fathom being the standard and equivalent to the 'Made Beaver' of the Company.

The use of beads to mark the social prestige and status of the ranked clans and leaders as described by these early traders and missionaries, is, no doubt, a fur trade phenomenon.

Fur trading activities may have eventually contributed to the change from what may have been more localized social units or clans to nonlocalized social units. Both Kirkby and Jones have described each Kutchin tribe as having three ranked divisions during the contact period.

The fur trade and the subsequent acquisition of wealth would have contributed to the development of prestige positions, incipient stratification, and polygamous marriages. Hardisty indicates this when he wrote (1967:312):

> All the chiefs, medicine men and those who possess rank acquired by property have two, three, or more wives, so that only few of the young men have wives, unless they can content themselves with some
old cast-off widow, who, from ill health and the effects of bad treatment, is no longer able to perform heavy work....

He also described these women as "...literally beast of burden to their lords and masters" (1867:321), suggesting a change in the position of women among the Kutchin. The recent work of Leacock (1978:247-275) on "Women's Status in Egalitarian Society" indicates that the fur trade transformed reciprocal economic relations, and women, who acted as porters and fur processors, became a form of capital (1978:271). The conditions of the fur trade enhanced the status and power of men over women. Kirkby's unpublished manuscript gives us additional details (MPA, Ms 4001):

The object of the Kutchin is to have a number of wives whom he can use as beasts of burden for hauling of his wood, carrying of his meat and performing the drudgery of his camp. They marry young but no courtship precedes nor does any ceremony attend the union. All that is requisite is the sanction of the mother of the girl and often it is a matter of negotiation between her and the suitor when the girl is in her childhood.

The two early fur traders, Jones and Hardisty, also recorded observations similar to Kirkby on the practice of clan exogamy, the prescribed custom of tracing descent, and the preferred tendency toward the formation of ambilineal cognatic descent groups in which a person traced descent through any combination of male or female links. Jones recorded (1866:326) that:

...All the Kutchin are divided into three castes, called respectively, Tchit-che-ah, Tenge-rat-sey, Nasah-i. It used to be customary for a man belonging to one of these castes to take a wife from one of the others, but this has fallen into disuse.

And,

...A man may take a wife of the same band to which he himself belongs, but if he takes a wife from another tribe, the children belong to the tribe of their mother.

We have already noted Hardisty's report that names three clans—the
Chisah, Nat-singh, and Tain-gees-an-tsah. He pointed out that clans are exogamous, that they trace descent through the female, and that the clan ties are stronger than those of the nuclear family and the tribal unit (1867:315). His report strongly suggests that their culture was undergoing social change, and had been for a considerable time.

The accumulation of sumptuary goods from the fur trade, combined with a general decline in Kutchin population from disease resulting in an apparent loss of about eighty percent over the period 1750-1860 (Krech, 1978a:99), served to transform the aboriginal Kutchin egalitarian society into a nonunilineal and ranked society. For instance, the funeral potlatch, symbolic of rank, was reported to have lasted for ten to twelve days depending upon the status of the individual. It is an individual’s role as feast giver and host in intergroup celebrations in which the person of status most commonly shows his greatest influence and authority in a ranked society (Fried, 1967:134). In the case of the Kutchin, the men who prepared the funeral ceremony, were paid according to their rank. For instance, Jones (1866:326) has described this arrangement as follows:

This continues funeral potlatch for ten or twelve days...and the beads and other things provided by the person making the dance are divided, each person receiving a present in proportion to his rank; but this present is not entirely gratis, for some months afterwards the giver will come and say: "I gave you thirty 'made' beaver pay me fifteen and keep fifteen;" which has to be done, of course. The same way when a person dies, if he is a great man among them. Four men make his grave, or, rather, either burn him or hang him up in a coffin. The four are paid as follows: The first gets thirty, and pays ten made beaver; the next twenty-five, and pays ten; the next fifteen, and pays five; the next twelve, and pays three....

The use of beads and Made Beaver as a measurement of rank is a fur trade occurrence. There is no evidence to suggest that ranking is a precontact characteristic of Kutchin society. The importance of status positions may
have encouraged males to reckon descent from an apical ancestor or ances-
tress that had higher status or, due to disease, there may have been posi-
tions open that people could claim by changing the descent rules (as for
instance among the Kwakiutl). In addition, the clan groups may have
encouraged endogamy or widespread avunculocality in order to retain the
males and their offspring within the local group. Their labor was recruited
for trapping purposes, and males could pass wealth and status positions
directly from themselves to their sons.

The Kutchin were subjected to a severe reduction in population during
the fur trade period. A measles epidemic in 1847 reduced their numbers
considerably. The 1750 population has been estimated by Krech to have
numbered about 5,400. By 1847, it numbered about 1,550 persons, and by
1862 there were only about 850-900 (Krech, 1978a:98-99). Kutchin socio-
cultural life would have been directly affected.

Warfare also took its toll among the Kutchin. The Rev. Robert McDonald
described a division of Kutchin, the Suffeux, who were reduced to "...four
or five families the remnant of a once numerous tribe who have been reduced
by wars with eskimo and other Indians..." (MPA, Ms 4001). The Church
Missionary Society journal of the Rev. James Hunter supports McDonald's
description of the Kutchin. His diary report of November 17, 1858 describes
the Kutchin as "...formerly a very numerous people, but war and disease
have badly reduced them" (CMS A-91). Intratribal warfare among the
Kutchin seemed to be over women as noted in the Fort Yukon journal of
Alexander Murray for 1847-1848 (HBC Arch., B. 240/a/1, folio 5, 20):

July 7, 1847...This morning the customary harangues commenced be-
tween them and the Youcon Chief, which nearly ended in bloodshed.
The quarrel is (as all their quarrels seem to be) about a women.
And,

October 29, 1847... One of the Indians, here lately, passed on his way to the lower band, those he was with having taken his wife. Women are scarce among the Indians here and most of their quarrels originate from taking each other's wives.

A high mortality among the Kutchin women during the summer of 1846, and a high frequency of polygamy further exacerbated the situation (HBC Arch., B. 240/a/1). Warfare with the Eskimo seems to have resulted from an attempt by the Kutchin to retain their middlemen role in the fur trade. The Gens du Large and other Kutchin divisions visited the Eskimo to trade for fox furs. Attempts by the Eskimo to establish direct trade with the Hudson's Bay Company were prevented by the Kutchin. However, the Kutchin were in direct conflict with the Russians who also traded with the Eskimo. The situation engendered conflict, and in the summer of 1849 four Kutchin were killed by the Russians while trading for foxes with the Eskimo (HBC Arch., B. 240/a/3).

These brief comments on mid-nineteenth century Kutchin clan organization indicate that these groups were matrilineal, exogamous, ranked, and undergoing change toward a non-unilineally emphasized kinship structure through the influence of the fur trade and the effect of European contact, especially disease. This is reflected by the fact that the Kutchin were reported to have had a Hawaiian system of kinship nomenclature (Morgan, 1871:293-882; Spier, 1925:76-77; Osgood, 1936b:117-119; Murdock, 1949:223).

Under such conditions, one would expect that Kutchin groups of the mid-nineteenth century would be non-unilineal rather than unilineal. The terminological merging of relatives characteristic of generational systems shows an indifference toward bifurcation and an indifference toward bifur-
cation would be consistent with cognatic descent. Thus, descent groups rather than being unilineal by the mid-nineteenth century had changed to become cognatic or ambilineal-ambilocal groups.

In sum, the contemporary Kutchin known to ethnology—that is to say, the Kutchin culture based on the Euro-Canadian market economy—was a product of postcontact developments. The transformation of Kutchin culture from local unilineal descent groups to nonunilineal communities focusing upon trading settlements, the segments of which formed hunting and trapping camps, and/or fishing and trapping parties occurred within the first generation following direct Euro-American contact, that is by the 1850s. There seems to be little doubt that the breakdown of precontact egalitarian social organization occurred rapidly and under a number of conditions; population decline, warfare, the development of ranked clans during the protohistoric period, the fur trade economy and general White acculturation. The genesis of an ambilineal/ambilocal and ranked system had its inception in the kind of life determined by European exploration, conquest, and trade.

This examination of the historical evidence pertaining to the Kutchin has allowed us to note the persistence of old sociocultural patterns as well as to discover to what extent old patterns were being modified through contact. What are the implications of these conclusions for the Canadian Athapaskans? It has been hypothesized that the regional variation in social structure of the east to west gradient from relative cultural simplicity of social organization toward cultural complexity can be explained in terms of the relative intensity of European contact. Empirical data have been presented that suggest that the fur trade and European
expansion westward resulted in significant man-land reorientations resulting from depopulation, movements into new areas stemming from warfare and/or attempts to establish or maintain control of middleman and fur trade zones, and the coalescence of remnant groups about newly built trading posts. The character of the contact situation in its initial stages and throughout its longer contact history (1680- ), induced a significant realignment of social relationships involving profound change from the aboriginal way of life. It is, thus, suggested that there will be far less evidence of former complex patterns of social organization among the Canadian Athapaskans. In contrast, the period of contact was shorter among the Kutchin and Northwestern Athapaskans by at least a hundred years than among eastern groups. Although the Kutchin suffered severe depopulation, the available data indicate that the Kutchin retained more of their complex features of organization during the contact period than did the Canadian Athapaskans, and they also retained them for considerably longer. There were no major ecological reorientations among the Kutchin, and, subsequently, the material-ecological conditions conducive to the retention of clan systems remained relatively stable. Rather, it was due to marked demographic changes that the structure of clan groups altered.

The Canadian Athapaskans

The data have shown that the early Canadian Athapaskans had a matrilineal bias that suggests a loss of matrilineal reckoning among the eastern Canadian groups (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:291). It is also possible that there was a loss of matrilineal clan organization in the easterly Canadian
area. Through the relocation of Slave, Dogrib, and Hare populations between 1759 and 1764, through depopulation from disease, starvation, and warfare, and through changes in basic subsistence and economic activities wrought by the fur trade, one can make a case that matrilineal-matrilocality systems were rendered dysfunctional. It is suggested that the more distinct social units, which include the trading post bands and individual trapping parties, identified by explorers, fur traders, and missionaries were not clan units, although often based upon ties of kinship, but were, at best, remnants of aboriginal clans. Nevertheless, residual clan features, typical of their more westerly congeners, may have been noted by missionaries in the 1860s and later. Petitot, in particular, described residual features suggestive of a former clan system, which by the time of his residency, had been altered. Influenced by Lubbock (1870:351-352), Petitot (1876b:24) reported on several divisions of the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave who may have retained former totemic practices (Petitot, 1876a:36):

A ces prescriptions ils [the Canadian Athapaskans] joignaient ce que l'on a appelé nagualisme et totemisme ou adoration de la bête, forme de fétichisme la plus abjecte et la plus matérielle qui se puisse trouver, puisqu'elle fait de l'animal un dieu ou un suppôt de la divinité, et de Dieu un animal ou une incarnation brutale.

One of the widespread features of clan organization is, of course, the totemic complex of assigning animal names to unilinear descent groups (Murdock, 1949:49-50) where the animal or another class of objects becomes the fictitious ancestor of the clan members. The question is: what evidence is there that the Canadian Athapaskan groups possessed totems?

The "gens du Poil" or Etatchogottine (Enta-tohô-Gottiné), a division of the Hare northeast of Smith Bay on Great Bear Lake, had "...pour fétiche ou ellonhè pêlê, le loup blanc" (Petitot, 1893:66; see Hodge, 1906:439).
At other times, Petitot described the wolf as a general fetish (1888:7; 1893:406) or "steer" (1879:55) for all the Northern Athapaskans, which almost all the westerly Athapaskans have, and for the Hare in particular (1891:307; 1893:406). He stated (1893:406):

...c'est celle qui tenait le loup, pêle, pur le lare ou fétiche tutélaire des Dënë en général et des Peaux-de-Lièvre en particulier...

The Hare and, also, the Dogrib believed that they descended (se donnent pour les descendants) from "...l'une femme dënê, et d'un sorcier Kollouche qui, pendant la nuit, aurait eu la propriété de se métamorphoser en chien noir" (1891:154-155; see p. 360). These data are very suggestive, as Frederica de Laguna (1975:136) has suggested, it would "...seem to take very little to transform the social organization of a people like the Hare from one based on bilateral kindreds to one of interlocking and reciprocating unilineages." Cross-cousin marriage, bride-service, matrilocality, avunculocality, and the terminological equation of $MB=FZH=WF$ and $FZ=WM$ are deemed "...effective in creating or preserving matrilineal kin groups" (1975:136). While de Laguna is unsure whether the Canadian Athapaskans ever had clans and moieties, or whether they lost such exogamous units, she attributes their nonexistence as a result of ecological factors. The Western Athapaskans are described as having a variety of ecological resources within their territories while there is relative uniformity of resources among the Canadian Athapaskans (1975:136). The ecological resources of the Canadian Athapaskans are considered to have been the same as their precontact resources. A depletion of the resource base due to contact is not considered as a causal factor that may have contributed to the loss of an exogamous matr-clan organization. When this factor is
included, de Laguna unwittingly has made a strong case for clans among the Canadian Athapaskans.

The stress on cross-cousin marriage and the presence of matrilocal residence, it is suggested, would be adaptive to the hunting of large megafauna such as caribou and wood bison where male cooperation is important. Since in a matrilineal-matrilocal system the male members of a residence group are not in general members of the same descent group, marriage practices tend to shift toward cross-cousin marriage in order to induce male cooperation (Eyde and Postal, 1961:751). Males would influence their daughters or sisters or choose for them a husband who is a real or classificatory FZS or B. The FZS and B is a member of F's matrilineal descent group and is a person to whom the father has a close relationship as real or classificatory MB or B. The father and FZS and B, thus, have structured relations and should be accustomed to cooperative relations. The conditions favoring cross-cousin marriage would appear to be a situation in which residential cooperation is necessary among males through whom descent is not reckoned. They maximize the possibilities of local cooperation by prescribing marriage rules in which the residence group becomes a unit consisting of a line of related males and a line of related women.

It, thus, appears plausible that there is a strong case for the presence of exogamous, matri-clan systems among the Hare, and perhaps among the other Canadian Athapaskans who generally practiced cross-cousin marriage (see Dyen and Aberle, 1974:277). What is the evidence for totems?

The Tseottine division of Dogrib along the south shore of Great Bear Lake paid particular reverence to a dog (1893:66): "Les gens des Canots ou Tte-Otînâ, qui rêveraient klin ou le chien." The dog has been
described by Hodge (1906:824) as a totem for this division (see Petitot, 1891:154-155; also p. 360).

The Kraylongottine division of the Slave or Nahanny, who occupied the region between Willow Lake and the Mackenzie River, had "...le manito de prédilection était le loutre [otter], etson" (1893:66; see Hodge, 1906:730). Another Nahanny division, the Etagottine or Éta-Ottiné, venerated the lynx (1893:66). Hodge (1906a:439) also assumed that the lynx was their totem. Chipewyan and Yellowknife legends also suggest totemic features. In the case of their origin legend "...de l'union du premier homme avec une gelinotte [ptarmigan], qui se métamorphosa en femme pendant son sommeil" (1891:154). The Kutchin had more or less the same tradition, and they recognized "...pour épouse du premier homme la femme du jour ou du matin, fille du dieu Lune dont les fils, nés avant l'homme, furent des galinottes métamorphosées plus tard en Dindjié" (1891:154; see p. 360).

Petitot's frequent use of the words "fetish," "manitou," "otems," "todems," and "tademisme" (1876a:36-40; 1876b:24; 1879:55) requires clarification. In line with Lubbock's discussion (1870:351-352) of totemism, Petitot is referring to the deification of a class of objects, but he misused the words fetish and manitou. A fetish in Lubbock's definition (1870:351-352; 1911:86) is a single object the possession of which is supposed to give the possessor power over some spirit or demon. In contrast people who regard an animal, as their totem, feel that they are in intimate association with the whole species. The latter point appears to be the case for the Canadian Athapaskans. A manitou was described by Lubbock (1911:86) as the totem of an individual while the true totem relates to the group. Therefore, the Kraylongottine division had the
otter as a totem rather than as a manitous. In general, Lubbock's fundamental characteristics of totemism (1911:86-87) apply to the Canadian Athapaskans:

Totemism is no doubt founded on somewhat loose and vague ideas, but the fundamental characteristics may be said to be—
1. The descent from some object, generally an animal or plant.
2. The natural reluctance to do it any injury; and
3. Finally, the worship of the totem.

Their legends or traditions indicate that they trace original descent from either an animal or a bird. There is a natural reluctance to harm the class of objects, and they worship the totem as a group deity.

The 1858-1860 Fort Simpson journal of Rev. James Hunter describes the Slave Indians' treatment of the dog and mink with respect and forbearance. It appears that during periods of severe resource deprivation a Slave would "...sooner starve than eat a piece of a dog or a mink, and indeed will not even skin the latter animal when captured in their traps, although its pelt is a valuable article of barter" (CMS, A-91). This custom of a natural reluctance to do a class of objects any injury is a fundamental characteristic of totemism, albeit dogs and mink are not usually delicacies. Hunter also observed that from the long intercourse with the whites, "...from whom they have great respect and affections, most of the old superstitions and customs of these tribes [The Canadian Athapaskans, in general] are extinct" (CMS, A-91). The reconstruction of a former clan organization becomes especially difficult when there is evidence that the Canadian Athapaskans had undergone "directed culture change" (Spicer, 1961:520-521).

Both Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie recorded observations, suggestive of a totemic complex among the Chipewyan. Hearne (1971:363)
observed that the Chipewyan frequently took wolf cubs from their dens to
play with them. He never knew a Chipewyan to hurt "...one of them: on the
contrary, they always put them carefully into the den again; and I [Hearne]
have sometimes seen them paint the faces of the young Wolves with ver-
million, or red ochre" (1971:363). Mackenzie described similar practices
in which Chipewyan women never touch particular skins, including "...the
bear and wolf; and those animals the men are seldom known to kill" (Garvin,
1927:126).

L.A. Prud'Homme (1909), a Roman Catholic missionary, suggested that
each Chipewyan group had a symbolic animal. In his words (1909:52):

Dans ces régions désolées, pour se reconnaître ou indiquer à leurs
parents la direction où ils vont, les Montagnais ont l'habitude de
planter des pieux inclinés du côté de leur direction. Ils tracent
l'animal symbolique de leur tribu et le nombre de personnes qui
voyagent ensemble sur une écorce ou une peau qu'ils déposent au pied
de ces poteaux indicateurs.
[In these desolate regions, in order to recognize their way or to
indicate to their parents the direction where they are going, they
have the habit of planting some stakes, leaning the way that they
are going. They trace the symbolic animal of their tribe and the
number of persons travelling together on a bark or a skin that they
deposit at the foot of those stakes.]

It is difficult to determine whether these symbolic animals were totems.
However, Lubbock's (1870:351-352, 1911:86-87) fundamental characteristics
of totemism are present.

The majority of the Northwestern Athapaskan groups had clan, moiety,
or phratry names that are translatable into Wolf and Raven. The Kutchin,
who are intermediate between these dialect divisions and the Canadian
Athapaskans, retained the Wolf and Raven as symbolic animals for two of
their phratry divisions. The wolf was suggested to be venerated by all
the Canadian Athapaskans and by some subdivisions in particular. It is
possible that the subdivisions were composed of named consanguineal kin
groups. The use of wolf, lynx, otter, mink, and other animals as names
may have been important since a common name can identify a member of a kin
group who resides apart from his relatives due to matrilocal residence
patterns. This would have helped to maintain the consciousness of group
membership when male consanguines were dispersed through marriage (Murdock,
1949:50). Data on the functions of clans for these latter groups are not
available.

There is additional convergence in details between the two major div-
isions of Northern Athapaskans. Common to all was the execution of a type
of tattooing. There is an association between the totemic system of
clans and tattooing among the Northwestern Athapaskans (Osgood, 1936b:107,
1937:131, 1940:452, 1971:95; Allen, 1889:262; McKennan, 1949:87; Richard-
son; 1851:379; Zagoskin, 1967:61-68). The tattoos or face paintings serve
as a means of distinguishing among the clans or larger descent systems. 5
Hearne (1971:306) was the first European to describe the use of tattoos
among each division of Chipewyan, Yellowknife, and Dogrib:

Each tribe of Northern Indians, as well as the Copper and Dog-ribbed
Indians, have three or four parallel black strokes marked on each
cheek; which is performed by entering an awl or needle under the skin,
and, on drawing it out again, immediately rubbing powdered charcoal
into the wound.

Mackenzie (Garvin, 1927:123, 165) recorded similar observations on this
homogeneous custom among the Chipewyan, Dogrib and Slave. He also infers
that the tattoos distinguish Chipewyan individuals as members of different
social units suggesting the presence of clans. He writes (1927:123):

... Both sexes have blue or black bars, or from one to four straight
lines on their cheeks or forehead, to distinguish the tribe to which
they belong. These marks are either tattooed, or made by drawing a
thread, dipped in the necessary colour, beneath the skin.
Hearne's and Mackenzie's observations are supported by numerous descriptions of tattooing, made by fur traders (Masson, 1960a:86), explorers (Richardson, 1851b:8; Hooper, 1853:225), and missionaries (Kirkby, CMS, A-93, June 4, 1860; Bompas, 1888:91). The practice of tattooing continued until the latter part of the nineteenth century among some of the Canadian Athapaskan groups, as Bompas observed (1888:91):

...The women's faces were till recently often slightly tattooed with dark lines on the chin, formed by drawing a thread loaded with gun powder or colouring matter under the skin. The men were formerly much addicted to painting their faces with vermilion, but this has fallen into disuse among the tribes in contact with Europeans....

In sum, the association between the practice of tattooing and the presence of clans among the Northwestern Athapaskans allows us to make several inferences regarding the Canadian Athapaskans. First, because members of the western division, including the Han, Tanana, Tanaina, Koyukon, and Ahtena had both clans and tattoo markings for identifying clans, it can be inferred that the Ingalik once had clans, especially since they practiced tattooing. Thus, tattooing is empirically associated with clans in five out of six of the Pacific drainage groups so that clans are predictable for the exception. The intermediate group between the western and eastern divisions, the Kutchin, also had both clans and clan body markings. For the Canadian Athapaskans, we would expect that similar empirically associated features should produce relatively similar predictions. This is not the case, however, and so we must rely upon inferences. For instance, we know that the Hare, Dogrib, Yellowknife, Chipewyan, and Slave had tattoo markings for distinguishing among their various divisions. But, we do not have the same substantive data on clans as we did for the Kutchin and western groups. Because of this, it is necessary to rely on an
impressionistic assessment of data trends or inference based on experience (see Dyen and Aberle, 1974:120-121). For example, from the examination of the Northwestern Athapaskans as well as the Carrier, Tahltan, and Chilcotin, an impression was formed that clans and clan markings or tattoos are closely associated. Thus, given that the information on clans among the eastern division is insufficient to make an inference based on empirical data, it is still likely that the various dialect groups had clans that were associated with the practice of tattooing. This inference is made because these groups have a close linguistic relationship with dialect groups within the western division and because they retained residual clan features and the custom of tattooing, besides having a common ecological or material base. Taken all together, the evidence bearing on the possibility of a complex organization among the early Canadian Athapaskan societies seems to be suggestive of a former clan system with subsequent differentiation within the various dialect systems. This inference is open to further empirical investigation.

The Genesis of Bilaterality: The Canadian Athapaskans

A number of studies on persistence and change in North American Indian culture have described the shift from unilineality to bilaterality. Hickerson (1966:1) has encapsulated the intellectual contributions of a number of prominent anthropologists (Eggan, 1937, 1950, 1955; Spohr, 1947; Driver, 1961) who described the movement from unilinear to bilateral systems among the Siouian, Algonkian, and Caddoan tribes of the Mississippi-Missouri Valley, and the Muskogeans and Iroquoians in the southeast. He
also traces a shift from a unilineal (patrilineal) to bilateral form of social organization among two divisions of the Chippewa. Besides the North American instances, Dyen and Aberle (1974:363) note that one Indo-European system shifted from unilineality to bilaterality. Further, the North American data also indicate to them that a shift can occur within a relatively short period of time, and the shift can not only involve a change in principle of organization but the loss of a principle of organization. A system is likely to change by a loss more rapidly than by the addition of unilineal features. This is a crucial point in the analysis of materials pertaining to the Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Chipewyan, and Yellowknife.

James Oliver's (1962) analysis of the American Plains situation is also relevant. Among eleven historic Plains tribes that moved into the area after the appearance of the horse, Oliver shows that their new ecological situation on the Plains necessitated not only basic changes in material culture but basic changes in their social organization as well. He was able to trace the change in social organization from unilineal clan organization to bilateral kinship practices for several tribes including the Crow, Gros Ventres, Cheyenne, and Teton Dakota. It is uncertain whether or not the Assiniboine and Sarsi had unilineal clan organization before moving to the Plains, although it is highly conceivable that ethno-historical research may clear up this uncertainty as it has with the Cree (Bishop, n.d.). The Blackfoot, Comanche, Arapaho, and Kiowa-Apache, as far as it can be determined, appear to have had no unilineal clan organization. All of the Plains tribes developed a form of social organization that was fluid and flexible. Adaptation to the annual cycle of the bison necessitated a basic pattern of fragmented bands in the winter
months and large communal tribal units in the summer months (Oliver, 1962: 66-67). In terms of the dynamic Plains situation, it is necessary to seek out cultural similarities as well as differences to understand what happened to the social organization of the Canadian Athapaskan Indians since they have been under the European contact situation.

Several inferences about the Canadian Athapaskan kinship organization, marriage rules, and residence patterns were made in previous sections. It is deemed reasonable to suppose that these groups formerly had a matrilineal-matrilocal system.

There is, however, another theoretical approach that has received wide attention, and its proponents seem to vehemently question the plausibility of prior unilineality and unilocality. Helm (1965, 1969a, 1969b, 1972), Smith (1975, 1976b, 1978), and Sharp (1977a, 1977b) have tended to stress bilaterality as the primary principle of Arctic Drainage Dene social integration. They have reacted to both Steward's (1955) and Service's (1962) classifications of the Canadian Athapaskans. Steward (1955:142-144, 146-148) classified these peoples as being organized into composite bands, consisting of many unrelated nuclear or biological families. The composite band was considered to have been highly adaptive for the hunting of large migratory animals. In contrast, Service (1962:76-77) maintains that the composite band was caused by the disturbances of the early contact period. Typical of hunters and gatherers, the prior form of organization was believed to have been a patrilocal band organization. Needless to say, there is no evidence to suggest that the composite or patrilocal band was characteristic of the aboriginal Canadian Athapaskans. Yet on the other hand: Can we posit that the bilateral band was the basic social
unit among the precontact and postcontact Canadian Athapaskans?

Those who have depicted the characteristics of bilateral descent groups have different explanations for the occurrence of bilaterality among the groups whom they have studied. Hare, Dogrib and Slave bilaterality is attributed to environmental instability and recurring disaster where the "...mode of alliance and recruitment is based on the principle of social linkage through bilateral primary bands of one conjugal pair to another" (Helm, 1965:380, 381-382, see also 1969b:221). Smith argues that the Caribou Eater Chipewyan and most other Subarctic peoples (Smith, 1978:78) were bilateral due to the adaptive formation of the "hunting group," based on rules of cognatic descent for the exploitation of barren-ground caribou (Smith 1975, 1976b, 1978). In a similar vein, Sharp argues that the Caribou Eater Chipewyans' traditional orientation to caribou hunting by a "hunting unit," produced a restricted form of a cognatic descent group (Sharp, 1977b:378; 1977a). The latter also attempts to demonstrate the existence of a residential grouping, similar to the composite band (1977b). Furthermore, these authors explicitly state that all of these Athapaskan groups retained their bilateral form of social organization from the precontact period. This is assumed since the basic subsistence resources and strategies are also concluded to have remained relatively unchanged from contact until recent times (see Helm, 1965:382; Sharp, 1977a:35). For this general hypothesis to remain valid, it is necessary to demonstrate that the food resources either remained relatively constant through time such that Indians were subjected to starvation and death through famine at cyclical intervals. This interpretation finds little ecological support.

Historical data examined in previous chapters indicate that there is
little empirical evidence to support the view that environmental conditions remained unchanged after contact. First, we cannot assume that ecological conditions and basic hunting strategies have persisted among the Caribou Eater Chipewyan from aboriginal times (see Sharp, 1977a; Smith, 1978). The caribou population has decreased from an estimated 2,395,500 caribou in 1700 to only 200,000 in the late 1950s (Kelsall, 1968:150).

Although the Caribou Eater Chipewyan of the recent past can be described as having a modified version of the affluent society (Smith, 1978) based on considerably fewer caribou than during the Protohistoric Period (1700), social arrangements must have altered to accommodate to the smaller population of caribou, which must have ranged over a considerably larger area. Thus, we cannot assume that environment conditions and hence sociocultural arrangements in the Subarctic never changed. Nor can it be assumed that the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave lived under conditions characterized by famine occurring at cyclical intervals. Historical evidence indicate that there were major man-land reorientations and that the Hare, Dogrib, and Slave were displaced from a more favorable biotic zone during the period 1759-1764. We can, thus, infer that ecological conditions were more favorable during the prehistoric and protohistoric periods, and that these more favorable conditions supported different forms of socioterritorial institutions. Consequently, the bilateral systems, known to modern ethnographers, are doubtless a product of the postcontact changes in resources, the fur trade and population loss from epidemics.

Reliable population estimates of aboriginal Canadian Athapaskan groups are difficult to make. It is clear, however, that the resource potential of their aboriginal territory could have supported relatively large
aggregates of people—a residence unit of about 250 regular members (see Peterson, 1972:27). The various historic subdivisions of Hare, Dogrib, and Slave may have been former territorially based exogamous local groups linked together through cross-cousin marriage and totemic affiliations. If so, this may account for the evidence hinting at retention of totemic features, mentioned in previous sections. Possibly, fragmented segments of former clans had scattered throughout the Mackenzie drainage system even before these groups had continuous access to European trade goods and direct contact with traders. The size and composition of social units of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were influenced in great part by the availability of food and furs. Until 1823-1824, social units of Dogrib, Hare, and Slave and their movements were also determined and/or restricted by their proximity to the Yellowknife. Warfare with the Yellowknife in 1823-1824, had the effect of consolidating a large number of Dogrib, Slave, and Hare for a brief period. However, the fission of groups and their dispersal were the more general processes of the early contact period. These processes were ecologically adaptive in restricted habitats and for purposes of fur trapping. Under such conditions groups became increasingly bilateral. The extended family band or trapping party each with a distinct microterritory was the typical result. Such family groups when they clustered at fisheries or on caribou migration routes (local bands) did not form cohesive social units but evolved as a matter of expediency and retained a fluid membership. Any sense of consolidation resulted from their shared resources or their mutual concerns for market and trade personnel relations. Large group identity (see Chapter One, p. 55n), the trading post band (regional bands or macro-assemblages) can
only be demarked by their common exploitation of the various and variable resources surrounding the closest major posts, which were the hub of native socio-territorial groupings. The fur trade in the last analysis was the critical factor influencing Indian movements between and within their territories. Again, it can be reiterated that the genesis of an overall bilateral organization has its inception in the kind of life determined by the history of European exploration and trade.

The drift of social organization away from large aggregates toward smaller family groupings is particularly clear in the Fort Simpson census material of 1826-1827. The debt book lists a population of 171 trappers, 122 women, and 261 children, a total of 554 (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/8, folio 45). These figures represent all of the Dogrib and Slave for this entire trading post band who were involved in the fur trade at the fort. The sex ratio is skewed heavily in favor of males. Among the 171 male trappers the fort census lists nine leaders. The social groupings at the family level were organized into winter trapping parties (task groups) of from about ten to fifteen males, consisting of sons, brothers, brothers-in-law, and sons-in-law who were united under the leadership of a Company appointed chief. Often these separate trapping parties were instructed to hunt in specific areas to prevent encroachment upon one anothers territory. The description of an entire trapping complement of Slave men at Martin Lake in 1825-1826 illustrates this type of organization. The May 30, 1825 journal of Edward Smith records that "...a Party of Slaves from Martin Lake quarter arrived with Leader Ethabethow they were 16 in number..." (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 18). The sixteen people referred to represent male hunters. Through the use of the Fort Simpson account books,
it is possible to obtain a rough indication of the party's membership and relationships (HBC Arch., B. 200/d/3a, 10a). The Martin Lake Slave Chief, Ethabethaw or Ethe-thaw-e-bethaw, was, it appears, accompanied by his six brothers; Ellawlaw, Negodebouy, Ekenet-taghn, Edyawisochethaw, Thlingobethaw, and Thlingtsawbethaw. The party consisted of three nephews: Ka-ct-chille, Negodebouy, and Teyucatethebethaw as well as Ethabethaw's brother-in-law, Ko-ctchubethaw. There were several unassigned Martin Lake Indians who accompanied the party. There were other groups mentioned from time to time in the Fort Simpson journals including the Robe de Castors and Ecorces party on the Red Knife River near the small lakes (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/4, passim), the Grand Jeune Homme and Phosson Blanc located west of Liard River (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, passim), the Grand Cheveux and Little Bosseux from the upper parts of the Mackenzie River (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, passim), and several others (see Chapter Six). With the establishment of Fort Simpson under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1822, the natives who were divided between Forts de Liard and Alexander "...were ordered to consider this Post as their future place of resort" (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/1, folio 1). The total population figures (554 natives) in the 1826-1827 debt book can be seen to represent the Fort Simpson trading post band. The nine leaders and their followers constituted the separate trapping parties (task groups). The local bands thus consisted of a number of trapping and foraging units sharing common fisheries and resources.

There were similar bands at Forts Good Hope and Norman. The size of winter hunting bands at Fort Good Hope closely parallels that of Fort Simpson. Numerous reports of trapping groups with six to twelve men—usually sons, nephews, brothers, brothers-in-law, and sons-in-law—are
recorded. The largest party of men to arrive at Fort Good Hope before 1830 was recorded in the December 22, 1829, journal of John Bell. The trading group consisted of twenty-eight men and boys who had traveled fifteen days to reach the fort (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/8, folio 18). This party may have constituted several trapping parties of a local trading post band who combined to visit the trading post.

The arrival of a large contingency of trappers allowed the traders to direct their movements. The traders would hold a public meeting in which the Chief Factor addressed the crowd encouraging them to be industrious in their designated trapping grounds. The June 15, 1837 journal of John Bell describes such an event in which "...the principal men of the Rapid Indians being now upon this ground Fort, often referred to as the plantation, I have proposed to them that a select party of the best hunters should visit the upper part of Red River this summer, for the purpose of killing beaver, and I am happy to find they have unanimously complied with my wishes..." (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/10, folio 2).

Occasionally, a party was publicly scolded for trading at the wrong fort. Very shortly after the Hudson's Bay Company came to have a monopoly of the trade, a firm attempt was made to regularize Indian movements. The Fort Norman journal of January 28-29, 1824 describes the arrival of four Indians belonging to Great Slave Lake district. Their furs were received; however, John McLeod admonished the Indians by telling them that they can "...not come here any more with their trade, but to go to place they belong to..." (HBC Arch., B. 125/a/3, folio 8).

The continued appointment of "Trading Chiefs" may have helped to reinforce the formation of bilateral social units since the Trading Chief
may have maximized the productivity of his trapping party by recruiting the labor of both his consanguines and affines. Historical sources suggest that to attain the status of trading chief, an individual possessed superior hunting and trapping abilities as well as the ability to act as spokesman for his followers (Richardson, 1851b:26-28, see MaNeish, 1956). The latter ability, to act as the medium of communication, was formally validated by the Chief Factor who bestowed clothing, medals and other gifts on a promising person. This was the fur traders' recognition of a person already esteemed as a leader by his followers. Occasionally, chiefs were appointed who were not of mutual advantage to their adherents. An instance is exhibited in the December 15, 1826 Fort Good Hope journal of Peter Dease who described an Indian that (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/5):

...is not a "chief" altho' he is considered and regarded as such by his relations, and in my opinion more deserving from one that has been often cloathed by my predecessor.

This individual was appointed as the new trading chief. His success depended upon his ability to regulate the movement of his supporters in trapping and subsistence pursuits. Gifts in the form of ammunition, tobacco (white beads for Kutchin) and liquor were withheld by the traders if a chief's party was unsuccessful. This procedure motivated the leaders to direct their followers' activities with fervor. Edward Smith's Fort Simpson journal, July 9, 1825, recapitulated this technique. Smith had a conversation with a party of Fort Good Hope Hare under an elder called the Blanket about their (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/6, folio 33):

...lazy habits and indolent way of living—their Country abounding in musquash, martins, and, beaver, thru and thru; yet they were naked—and Goods in plenty in the store only wanting the first purchase—they promised to be more industrious and the elder already mentioned promised to conduct the young men to where their were beaver ensuing autumn towards the Mountens west...promised something from the store
next year if promise kept....

Although the above citation suggests that the Blanket had influence over his followers, he like most trading chiefs had very little coercive power. Rather, the role of chief was based on his power of persuasion and on the sentiments of kinship (Masson, 1960b:19; Franklin, 1970:270). Some of the chiefs held more prestige through these acquired attributes than others. The death of a prominent chief was frequently expressed with widespread disorganization and apprehension. The most common practice was to burn personal belongings and furs. An example of this custom is described in the Fort Simpson journal, February 1, 1827. After the death of Ethuthazurepectubow, a Horn Mountain Slave Chief, the trapping unit fled to the fort including (HBC Arch., B. 200/a/8, folio 30):

...Three of the brothers and elders son of the deceased chief were among this number—and nearly naked—one of the brother carried his sorrow so far as to cutt of his ears....

In general, there is a characteristic fluidity of trapping partnership units. Often the influence of chiefs was not sufficient to prevent their followers from joining other trading chiefs.

Aside from the question of influence and trapping party tenaciousness, there is also the problem of determining the composition of this unit. This is a difficult issue due to highly fragmented data, although we do have plentiful evidence regarding the relationship of men who formed the nucleus of trapping parties: In most cases, about eighty-five percent, those who trapped together and formed coresidential units were consanguines. These included father and son(s) and/or two or more brothers.

The Forts Good Hope (1826-1838), Simpson (1822-1837), and Norman (1824-1838) daily journal entries suggest that a high percentage of the son(s) or
brothers were unmarried. In one case at Fort Norman, a trapping unit consisted of seven brothers and their families. In general, the number of a Trading Chief's brothers are excessively high. The example of Ethabethaw's six brothers has been mentioned above. Three other examples would include: 1) Nenpee's five brothers, Tsaa-mnoobethaw, The-ectcha, Nakanete, Tsaa-mnna, and EtLarrie; 2) a party of four brothers, Chilliazebethaw, Ekazonbethaw, Ekehtheeabethaw, and Ketachaubethaw; and 3) Ehcalais' party of three brothers, Bedawchinnabethaw, Sekellebethaw, and Nanahadabethaw, along with three brothers-in-law, Thlingtsawbethaw, Tsitoabethaw, and Tsatheyebethaw (HBC Arch., B. 200/d/3a, 10a). It is possible that the large number of brothers may reflect the presence of a still functioning Iroquoian kinship system, since father's brother's sons and mother's sister's sons would be classified as brothers. Depopulation through disease and starvation would have considerably reduced the size of the trapping parties. Without kinship terminology, it remains impossible to validate an Iroquoian system.

In about eighty-five percent of the trapping parties, the affinal relatives of the trading chiefs were also present. For a sample of eighteen trapping parties associated with the various forts, the units consisted of fathers-in-law, sons-in-law, and brothers-in-law. Fathers-in-law and sons-in-law were represented in fifty percent of these more complicated units. The above and the recruitment of brothers-in-law for the other fifty percent of the cases suggests that the units had become bilateral (or were bilateral).

This becomes clear within some of the more complex trading partnerships. One of these units embodied as its core male unit the following: a Hare trading chief named Misere, the husband of his two daughters with their
little girl, his unmarried son and brother (a second married brother was with another band), his father, and the husband of his sister and their son. The membership also included five nonlineal relatives. This Fort Good Hope trapping unit mutually brought their furs to pay what appears to have been a common "debt," indicating some degree of stability as a party. A group such as this was probably bilaterally filiated around the leadership of Misere. Matrilocal residence seems to have been a prominent pattern as well (HBC Arch., B. 80/a/7 and 140). This general example is congruent with that of other units at Forts Simpson and Norman.

The relationship within these trapping and subsistence units do not give us very extensive understanding into the makeup of those groups that numbered between ten to fifteen males and their supporters. Since these migrant units could form in a diversity of ways and were not restrained by any unilineal principle of affiliation, we can assume that the larger units were bilateral, and could well include people not closely related at all. This general pattern fits given information on subsistence and trapping habits where there was a great degree of mobility and fluidity of groups involving constantly changing alliances favored by such ecological conditions.

A question pertaining to the frequency of matrilocal residence arises: Were these temporary arrangements with a wife's family a form of "bride service" as suggested by Helm (1961:67-68)? The answer derived from early archival data is "no," because we have examples of two or three generations of affines living with the same residential unit. Matrilocal residence would have remained adaptive, in some instances, for distributing or recruiting persons of common kinship for trapping and subsistence pursuits.
Matrilocality would also have been congenial where men were involved in activities away from their families for extended periods of time and where women prepared and transported furs (see Williams, 1974:37). Both the processing and trapping of furs and the hunting of caribou may have favored the retention of this residence custom.

Support for these inferences can be found in the theoretical work of Gough (1961) and Helms (1970). Gough (1961:556) indicates that matrilocality may be characteristic of societies "...in which women's work, of whatever kind, is done in or near the home, while men's pursuits periodically take them far from home." Mary Helms' research (1970) on the Miskito of eastern Nicaragua, the Caduveo (Mbayá) of the Paraguayan Gran Chaco, and the Apache shows a close association between matrilocal residence and the extended absence of males from the local group. Under conditions of contact, cultural stability and continuity were maintained through matrilocality and bilaterality when these groups were under the stress of involvement with more complex societies (Helms, 1970:208). In addition to cross-cultural data, ethnohistorical sources suggest that women's labor was critical to the preparation and transport of furs. Polygyny, particularly sororal polygyny, was common among the Canadian Athapaskans (Glover, 1962:200; Jarvin, 1927:126; Masson, 1960b:112; Franklin, 1970:289; Hunter, A-91; Bompas, 1888:97). Sororal polygyny is closely associated with matrilocal systems (Aberle, 1961:717-718). Both polygyny and matrilocal residence were features of the Canadian Athapaskans and seems to be tied in closely with women's labor during the fur trade period. To quote Bompas (1888:97):

...polygamy was practiced among the non-Christian Indians chiefly by the chiefs and leading men, and in the excuse that more than one wife was required by them, to dress their furs and skins, and carry their meat and effects, and do other camp duties.
So far we have assumed that the contact pattern of matrilocality was a retention de novo from the prehistoric period, rather than a new innovation. The examples of matrilocality in the historical data and the ethnographic examples in Table 31 suggest that there were a large number of matrilocal cases for the Canadian Athapaskans. We can assume that bilaterality and matrilocality were present among the postcontact Athapaskans. However, the bilateral-matrilocal model has a residence pattern that is considered as prerequisite to matrilineality (Murdock, 1949:209; Dyen and Aberle, 1974:371). Through the use of a stochastic chain approach, we can assume that there is a high frequency of association between matrilocal residence and matrilineal descent. If we assume the retention of prior bilateral descent and the postcontact development of matrilocal residence, it, thus, would be expected that the descent system had to change from bilateral to matrilineal, and then back to bilateral. The number of changes necessary exceeds that for a precontact matrilineal matrilocal model, changing to a bilateral, matrilocal system. The latter approach is comparable in simplicity and in consistency with the Northwestern Athapaskans' and cultures elsewhere in North America. A postcontact bilateral-matrilocal model for the Canadian Athapaskans is plausible.

In sum, there is no evidence to suggest that the precontact Canadian Athapaskans were normatively bilateral. The available data indicate, however, that a bilateral descent system emerged after the loss of the matrilineal principle of organization through the influence of the fur trade.
Conclusions

The analysis of data on kinship terminology, cross-cousin marriage, the sororate and levirate, sororal polygyny, and residence suggests that the Canadian Athapaskans once had a matrilineal descent system, based on matrilocal residence. It is further suggested that this system would have been highly adaptive for the Canadian Subarctic because of: 1) the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions; 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of unpredictable movement of migratory animals, and in areas where there is mass slaughter of megafauna; and, 3) the necessity to retain women in their natal territory, for gathering purposes, while men's hunting pursuits take them away for extended periods.

The question of whether or not there was evidence for a former "clan" system among the Canadian Athapaskans has been much more difficult to answer. Evidence does suggest, however, that a former system may have existed among the early eastern divisions even though the evidence is by no means conclusive.

The examination of the Kutchin and of the Canadian Athapaskans of known historical provenience has allowed us to arrive at several conclusions. For the Kutchin, we were able to trace the transformation from former local unilineal descent groups to nonunilineal communities. The determinants for change were the alteration of a former egalitarian clan system and the development of ranked clans, population decline, warfare, the fur trade economy, and white acculturation. In general, however, the influence of
European contact was much later than it was for the Canadian Athapaskans, and there is no evidence that the Kutchin were affected by major ecological reorientations. As a result, the Kutchin retained more features of cultural complexity than their congeners to the east. The contact situation to the east, as presented above, induced a significant realignment of social relationships involving profound change from the aboriginal way of life. Evidence suggests that there was a shift from matrilineal descent to bilateral descent with the retention of some matrilocality residence patterns.
1. If a term plus meaning is assigned to proto-Athapaskan but occurs in a dialect or language in other meanings, that term becomes an innovation. For instance, if a term that means father's sister's son (FZS) appears in Tahltan and the term was not assigned a FZS meaning in proto-Athapaskan, the term is an innovation in meaning for the Tahltan (Dyen and Aberle, 1974:136).

2. Leach's (1961:105-113) article "Polyandy, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage" assesses Fischer's (1952) argument and Leach also suggests that Fischer is correct if we use the Notes and Queries (1951) definition of marriage. In the case of the Northern Athapaskans, it would appear that the situation is one of plural mating or polykoity rather than polyandy or polygyny. The detailed work of HRH Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark (1955) on polyandry ignores the Fischer discussion of marriage and continues to discuss polyandry as a type of polygamy.

3. The subject of matiliny and diffusion has received detailed discussion recently in the works of Inglis (1970) and de Laguna (1975).

4. The technical vocabulary: ambilineal, omnilineal, cognatic descent or nonunilineal, refers to a descent system in which people trace descent to a founding ancestry through any combination of male or female links.

5. The Australian aborigines also decorated themselves with clan totemic designs and emblems (Peterson, 1972:20-22).

6. The account books list the brothers of Ethabethaw as Ellawlaw- Ethabethaw's first brother, Negodouy- Ethabethaw's second brother, etc. The relationships and membership of each trapping party were determined by observing the date at which the party arrived at the post. This data was then cross checked by using the post journals.

7. Fort Simpson had fifteen trapping parties as its trading post band while Fort Good Hope had six, Fort Liard had five, and Fort Norman had six. Social relationships within twenty-seven of the trapping parties could be determined through a combination of the data in the post account books and journals. This is approximately eighty-five percent of the trapping parties.
This study has attempted to reconstruct the culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans. It has recognized that it is impossible to view Athapaskan socioeconomic organization as a synchronic or unchanging phenomenon. The interaction of three reciprocally related variables—the environment, the cultures of the precontact Canadian Athapaskans, and the presence of Europeans must be viewed historically in order to understand the dynamics of cultural change. Man's culture and his environment form a continuum and one set of factors cannot be understood without some knowledge of the other. Contemporary ethnographic field methods, while useful, are insufficient. Although many aboriginal customs and traditions may have persisted from earlier times, it is suggested that these cultural traits are not firmly tied to subsistence and economic activities (Steward, 1955:37; see Bishop, 1974:340). The utilization of the ethnohistorical method, which involves the interpretation of primary documents covering the historical (postcontact) period, is the more successful one for elucidating an extended continuum of the Canadian Athapaskan cultures and their environment.

This reconstruction has had three basic aims, which are interrelated. First, it has sought to examine the current time perspectives or chronological frameworks used in Subarctic anthropological research in order to establish an empirically-based temporal framework for producing a more precise culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans and for providing a proper comprehension of their changing ecological and sociocultural conditions. Second,
it has attempted to reconstruct the economic and ecological adaptations of the precontact, protocontact, and early direct contact organization of the Canadian Athapaskan populations. Finally, after having provided a general historical and cultural-ecological background to this research, an attempt was made to reconstruct Canadian Athapaskan social organization and to demonstrate that their precontact matrilineal-matriloclal clan organization changed to a bilateral-matriloclal organization due to postcontact fur trade factors. A more thorough discussion of these basic aims is now necessary.

A Chronological Framework of the Canadian Athapaskans' Culture History

Bishop and Ray (1976) have distinguished a number of eras for the culture history of the Central Subarctic. There were a number of conditions under which their chronology was applied to Canadian Athapaskan groups. The Indirect Trade and Middlemen Eras were included under the Protohistoric Period (1680-1769). The Early Fur Trade Era (1769-1800) was included within the Historic Period, and it preceded the next era, the Competitive Trade Era (1800-1821). The union of the Northwest Company with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 culminated in the inauguration of the Trading Post Dependency Era (1821-1890). Within the Trading Post Dependency Era, we were only interested in the data between 1821 and 1860 when the fur trade was the most influential economic and cultural force in Canadian Athapaskan history. The period 1680 to 1860 was seen as the convenient temporal unit for this study, and the data indicate:

1) The Indirect Trade and Middlemen Eras (1680-1769)

During the Protohistoric Period (1680-1769), the data demonstrate that
Fort Churchill had a distinctive spatial structure of Local, Middlemen, and Indirect Trade Areas. The Local Trade Area began to develop as early as 1723, but was interrupted by intertribal warfare. Following the termination of hostilities in 1729, the Hudson's Bay Company attracted at least one large group of Chipewyan to serve in the capacity of hunters, trappers, and traders at the post from the 1730s on through the Protohistoric period.

The Middlemen and Indirect Trade Areas emerged much earlier than the Local Trade Area. The Cree, who controlled the distribution of European trade goods and the supply of furs for the Bay posts after 1670, became the Indian trade specialists—the middlemen. Although they trapped some of the furs, the majority of their furs came through trade with more distant Indians. Beyond the Middlemen Trade Area, there was the Indirect Trade Area where Indians obtained all their trading goods through the middlemen. It is likely that the Chipewyan occupied an Indirect Trade Area before 1680, and it is also likely that the Yellowknife and Dogrib were in a similar position by 1689. The period of protracted warfare between 1689-1715 temporarily disrupted this developing spatial structure. For these Canadian Athapasakans, intertribal conflict resulted in considerable bloodshed and in the loss of access to York Factory, its trade routes, and the fur-bearing grounds at the head of the Churchill River, stretching as far west as Lake Athabasca.

Captain Knight's (1714-1717) successful mediation helped to reestablish the former trading network. By 1720, the Cree were again middlemen to Canadian Athapasakan populations in the Athabasca Lake region. This relationship remained unchanged until 1759-1764 when intertribal warfare erupted, causing major man-land reorientations among the Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Sekani, and Beaver populations. To the north, Chipewyan groups were in direct contact.
with Churchill by 1720. While it is difficult to determine the extent of their intratribal and intertribal Middlemen and Indirect Trade contacts, they no doubt, existed. By 1721, the Chipewyan acted as middlemen to the Yellowknife. They also had a similar relationship with the Dogrib before 1760, a relationship lasting until the 1790s. Chipewyan middlemen even established a middlemen relationship with the former Athapuscow (Cree) middlemen in 1776. In short, the period from about 1689 to 1769 can be considered one of profound change in the aboriginal way of life for those Canadian Athapaskans who had become fully immersed into an Indirect, Middlemen, or Local Trade network before the onset of the Historic Period.

2) The Early Fur Trade Era (1769-1800)

The Early Fur Trade Era inaugurated a new phase in the Subarctic Athapaskans' history involving rivalry between the "pedlars" (as the Hudson's Bay personnel referred to the traders from Canada) or Canadians and the Hudson's Bay Company traders. The effect of the Early Fur Trade Era on the economy and the social and spatial arrangements of Canadian Athapaskan populations was significant. The former organization of Chipewyan middlemen altered considerably following the early European exploring expeditions and the establishment of trading posts in the region north and south of Lake Athabasca. By 1790, the construction of posts north of Great Slave Lake and along the Mackenzie River had begun to establish a less expansive spatial structure of trading posts ringed by local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas among the Dogrib, Hare, and Slave. The same situation was also present among the Beaver and Sekani in the Peace River region. Besides a growing economic dependency upon the trading post, these populations were drawn into intertribal conflict with the Chipewyan who, by virtue of the interruption of
their former middlemen role, were beginning to expand their territorial boundaries south and southwestward. The effects of intense intertribal competition, which began in the protohistoric period, continued as a disruptive influence among the Canadian Athapaskans throughout the Early Fur Trade Era. The forthcoming Competitive Trade Era created further changes in the Subarctic Athapaskan way of life.

3) The Competitive Trade Era (1800-1821)

The Competitive Trade Era was a period of intense rivalry by the Northwest Company against the XY Company and against the Hudson's Bay Company. The effects of intense rivalry among the various competing companies resulted in a proliferation of small Indian trading bands, organized under the stewardship of one or more chiefs who each pledged allegiance to different companies. The spatial structure of local, middlemen, and indirect trade areas continued to alter, generally reducing their territorial extent. The Canadian Athapaskans continued to have a growing dependence upon European trade goods throughout this era, but did not reach a point of total dependence. The termination of competition in 1821 drew the Canadian Athapaskans into a situation where they became completely dependent on the trading post.

4) The Trading Post Dependency Era (1821-1860)

The period from 1821-1860 is characterized, in contrast with the preceding era, by profound moderation; by an extraordinarily profitable fur trade, and by the development of a well-defined stable population of trading post Indians, dependent upon Hudson's Bay Company trading posts for basic necessities of life. The monopoly situation had also irrecusably served to eliminate the last spatial structure of Indian middlemen and indirect trade
zones and to fasten the Canadian Athapaskans to specific posts throughout the Mackenzie District. The dependence upon traders was based on several mechanisms including a reliance on provisions and trade commodities, the apprehension of the withdrawal of the trading post or trade, and the debt system. The Indians were not passive recipients to the influence of trade and traders but increasingly saw the potential of exploiting fur-bearing animals and game animals for provisions in order to procure consumables through external exchange and conversion into subsistence and "necessities" for survival. The Trading Post Dependency Era demarcates another stage of qualitative change in the Canadian Athapaskan way of life.

From the foregoing discussion of the period 1680 to 1860 and its eras of culture history, it is clear that the fur trade was the prime mover for successive alterations in Canadian economy and social organization. It is now necessary to reconsider our findings concerning changing Canadian Athapaskan cultural-ecological conditions.

**Canadian Athapaskan Ecological Adaptations**

It is evident from the culture history of the Canadian Athapaskans that new economic and ecological adaptations had to occur among all their populations. A reconstruction of the economic and ecological basis of precontact Hare, Dogrib, Slave, Sekani, and Beaver populations suggest that these groups occupied the mixed wood zone that had a natural abundance of food resources, particularly that of the wood bison. This biotic zone was the most suitable place for occupation by these precontact Canadian Athapaskans since the availability of food resources was not paralleled in some of the unoccupied contiguous zones. It is likely that their populations were larger in size
and higher in density than has been previously assumed by Subarctic specialists.

By the beginning of the Early Fur Trade Era (1769), the Dogrib, Slave, and Hare were hunting and gathering in the northwestern transitional boreal forest and the Upper Mackenzie riverine forest zones. These groups, who had previously lost members of their population due to intertribal warfare with the Cree, were subjected to unremitting and cyclical deprivation in resource availability following their displacement into these biotic zones between 1759 and 1764. Severe environmental pressures led to starvation, disease, and considerable depopulation. The natives conscientiously attempted to balance population with food resources by practicing preferential female infanticide. Depopulation and the need for new adaptive strategies, doubtless, brought about the need for new social arrangements.

The precontact Chipewyan and Yellowknife economies revolved around an entirely different biotic zone, the taiga-tundra or forest-tundra environment. The Chipewyan and Yellowknife had a hunting and gathering economy, regulated to the migratory and nomadic habits of the Bluenose, Bathhurst, Beverly, and Kaminuriak caribou herds. Historical descriptions of their aboriginal habitat portray it as a rich life-sustaining environment. The reduction of herd size through time from 2,395,000 in 1700 to under 500,000 in 1950 may have altered these peoples’ subsistence techniques. The post-contact period and the fur trade brought about new adaptive strategies. For those groups who moved into the boreal forest to trap or who acted as middlemen, they were subjected to considerable depopulation through disease, starvation, and warfare.

We can infer that substantial depopulation, major man-land reorienta-
tions, and new adaptive strategies for subsistence and trapping pursuits had a significant effect on aboriginal social organization.

**Canadian Athapaskan Social Organization: A Reconstruction**

It is clear that there were significant changes in the Canadian Athapaskan way of life following contact. The combination of the above factors, through time, led to new adaptations in social arrangements. The analysis of data on kinship terminology, cross-cousin marriage, the sororate and levirate, sororal polygyny, and residence suggest, with relative certainty, that the Canadian Athapaskans once had a flourishing matrilineal descent system, based on matrilocal residence. Uterine organization, it is suggested, was highly adaptive for the Canadian Subarctic because it allowed for: 1) the distribution of males and their subsequent recruitment into nonlocal authority positions; 2) the potential to coordinate reciprocal food sharing activities in areas of cyclical resource failure, in areas of unpredictable movement of migratory animals, and in areas where there is mass slaughter of megafauna; and, 3) the retention of women in their natal territory, for gathering pursuits, while men's hunting pursuits take them away for extended periods.

The question of whether or not there was a former "matriclan" system among the Canadian Athapaskans is, so far, by no means conclusive. The information on the retention of residual clan features, and the use of tattooing to mark social divisions is in common with other western Athapaskan groups who had these features as well as a clearly defined clan system. Because the Northwestern Athapaskan cultures have a close linguistic relationship with the Canadian dialect groupings and because they have a common
ecological or material base, it is reasonable to infer that the Canadian Athapaskans had a former clan system with subsequent differentiation within the various dialect systems. It is reasonable to propose that the Northern Athapaskan cultures retained a high degree of relative conservatism or stability before European contact, and the regional variation in social structure of the east to west gradient from relative cultural simplicity of social organization towards relative complexity has a historical provenience.

The examination of an intermediate group in the east-west gradient, the Kutchin of known historical provenience, suggests several conclusions. For the Kutchin, it is possible to trace the transformation from local unilineal descent groups to bilateral communities. The determinants for change were population decline, warfare, the alteration of ranked clans and the development of social classes, the fur trade economy, and white acculturation. In general, the influence of European contact was much later than it was for the other Canadian Athapaskans, and there is no evidence that the Kutchin were affected by major man-land reorientations. As a result, the Kutchin retained more features of cultural complexity than their congeners to the east.

The contact situation among the other Canadian Athapaskans induced a significant realignment of social relationships involving profound changes from the aboriginal way of life. Evidence suggests that there was a shift from matrilineal descent to bilateral descent with the retention of some matrilocal residence patterns. Matrilocal residence continued to remain adaptive, in some instances, for distributing or recruiting persons of common kinship for trapping and subsistence pursuits. Matrilocality was congenial where men were involved in activities away from their families for
extended periods of time. Both trapping furs and the hunting of caribou may have necessitated the retention of this residence custom. In addition, matrilocality was probably advantageous because the preparation and transport of furs was women's work and critical to the trapping unit. Thus, it was desirable to keep daughters within the unit as compared to sons. The bilateral descent pattern, however, was an adaptive response by these Athapaskans whose members had suffered depopulation, migration, displacement and amalgamation due to European contact.

In sum, it is argued that the proposed general model for cultural change is able to account for changes within the protohistoric and historic periods. It should be clear now that it was the fur trade which acted as the catalyst for successive modifications in Canadian Athapaskan culture history, cultural ecology, and social organization. Those who wish to debate the model must do so in terms of essentially the same source materials.
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Source: HBC Arch., B. 42/d/1-65
### APPENDIX 2

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## APPENDIX 3

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<td>28 816</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>1779-1780</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>263 1/4</td>
<td>61 919 1/2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>51 19</td>
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<td>1780-1781</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>- 28</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1781-1782</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>- 289 1/4</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>1782-1783</td>
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<td>- 114</td>
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<td>1,086 11/12</td>
<td>169</td>
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