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THE UNGAVA VENTURE
OF THE
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,
1830-1843

by

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A dissertation
submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Cambridge, July 1969.

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It is a pleasure to acknowledge here my association, between 1962 and 1967, with Université Laval. During that time, as chargé de recherches of Laval's Centre d'Etudes Nordiques, I supervised the preparation of a bibliography of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, a task that aided me greatly in seeing the region in its bibliographical perspective.

Research for this thesis was undertaken mainly in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, London. I should like to thank the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to read and to quote from their documents. Only those who have worked in these archives will, I think, understand the warmth with which I should like

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And among the very many persons to whom I owe thanks for their conversation, comment, and criticism, I should like to mention especially Dr. Gloria Cline, Mr. Clive Holland, Miss Elaine Lingham, Mr. W. Gillies Ross, Dr. Abraham Rotstein, Dr. Charles Turner, and Dr. Glyndwr Williams. Miss Lingham typed a fair copy of an early draft of my manuscript and Mrs. D. Tanfield has made the final copy. For painstaking care in this tedious labour, I should like to express both my thanks and admiration.

Preface

The primary source of information for this thesis is the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. The information I derived from documents there is supported by reference to the published literature and by the experience of intermittent residence, 1953-1962, in and near Schefferville, Quebec. I have never before submitted this thesis, nor any part of it, to this or to any other university for any degree, diploma, or qualification, nor am I submitting it, or any part of it, concurrently to any other university for any reason. I have done the research for this thesis by myself, without collaboration.

As further evidence of research in the historical geography of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, I submit two published works herewith. They are "The exploration of New Quebec" (Cooke, 1964), which will be found in an inside pocket of the cover, and Bibliography of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula..., a work prepared in collaboration, (Cooke and Caron, 1968).

July 1969

Alan Cooke

Introduction

During the thousand years that the peoples of lands bordering the North Atlantic Ocean have had knowledge of each other and have exchanged, in varying measure, their goods, migrants, and ideas, the Quebec-Labrador peninsula might as well not have existed, for it has had virtually no share in that general exchange. Only during the past twenty years has the territory's existence become a fact of popular knowledge and a subject of ready reference in the world's press. Not until 1954 was the interior of the peninsula linked by rail to the traffic of the world and, only then, was any of its few resources made steadily tributary to world need.

Present-day development of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula has required an immense capital investment, modern techniques of travel and construction, and a scientific understanding of the environment. Yet there had been one other attempt, extensive in scope and long-continued, to carry goods from the remote interior of the peninsula to world markets. In the forty years after 1830, the Hudson's Bay Company, with techniques of trade and travel that had served them well elsewhere, tried, now in one way, now in another, to carry on a profitable trade in furs from the interior. But the high hope at first entertained for this enterprise, called

from its beginnings the Ungava venture, was disappointed. The venture succeeded in only a small way.

The Hudson's Bay Company began to look eastward after 1821, when it absorbed its rival, the North West Company, and thereby ended a long and bitter struggle that had exhausted the resources of both companies. In the next years, under the shrewd and tactful governorship of George Simpson, every effort was made to reduce the expenses of all aspects of the Company's operations. Simpson strove also to expand the fur trade by sending men into remote and hitherto undeveloped regions.

It was the Company's practice to develop a region defined by a drainage system that offered a convenient means of transport into it. The problems the traders faced in developing interior regions, both east and west of Hudson Bay, were chiefly of logistics and supply. They did not have to overcome any war-like nations, nor especially dangerous wild or poisonous animals, nor any virulent endemic diseases. The hard facts of physical geography presented certain barriers, but they had to deal also with problems presented by native cultures. These problems were often serious because neither the traders nor their superiors understood the values of alien cultures.

Under Governor Simpson's supervision, the Pacific Coast and the Columbia River basin began to yield rich returns, and

he pressed forward the occupation of the Mackenzie River basin. These regions, the one reached by sea, the others by large rivers navigable in summer, were accessible with relative ease. The great expanse of Precambrian Shield west of Hudson Bay, today called Keewatin District, offered no easy travel routes and remained virtually untouched in Simpson's time.

Simpson first gave active attention to the Ungava Bay region a few years after publication, in 1814, of the remarks and observations of two Moravian missionaries, who, guided by Eskimos, had visited the bottom of Ungava Bay during the summer of 1811.

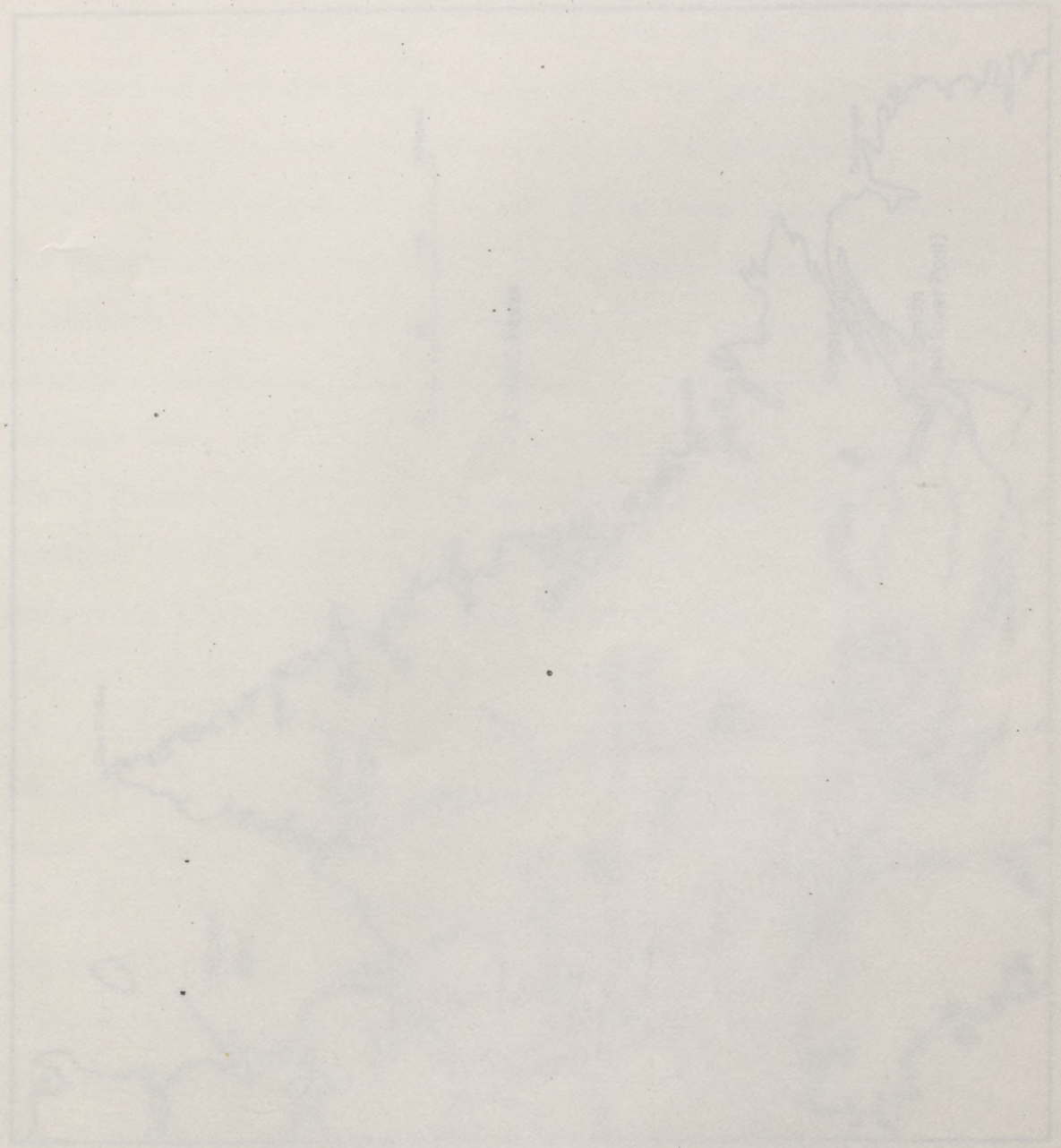
The assumption made by the Governor, on the basis of scanty and imprecise evidence was that, if there existed in the region near Ungava Bay resources of game sufficiently rich to support a native population, then those resources and that population ought also to be able to support a profitable fur trade. However, as soon as communication between Ungava Bay and the central interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula had been established, the Company's interest from general became specific. The traders still bought anything that might be sold in the market at a profit, but their primary object from that time forward was the fur of the marten.

To Governor Simpson's surprise and anger, and to the

dismay of everyone else concerned with the commercial promise offered by the region, prolonged and determined efforts to turn to account the fur resources - one of which, the marten, was of special value - met with only gradual and partial success. In this great land mass, the Company's plans and arrangements had continually to be revised and modified. The final - and relative - success of the Ungava Venture owed more to trial and error than to wise planning based on experience.

The interest of the Ungava venture to students of the fur trade and of Canadian history generally lies precisely in the fact that it was a marginal operation. In retrospect, the venture may be regarded as a testing ground of the Hudson's Bay Company's methods of management and trade. Here geographical conditions were extreme. Here the Indians were of a peculiar intractability. And here the traditional methods of planning and supply, of management and accounting were severely strained. Flexible and efficient though traditional methods had proved to be in other regions dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company, in the circumstances presented by the Ungava venture they were insufficient. Fort Chimo, the main establishment, was ultimately abandoned because of general agreement that the post was losing money. But surviving records reveal that the Ungava venture was, in fact, making money. The whole episode is a curious

chapter in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company,
an illustration of failure in success.

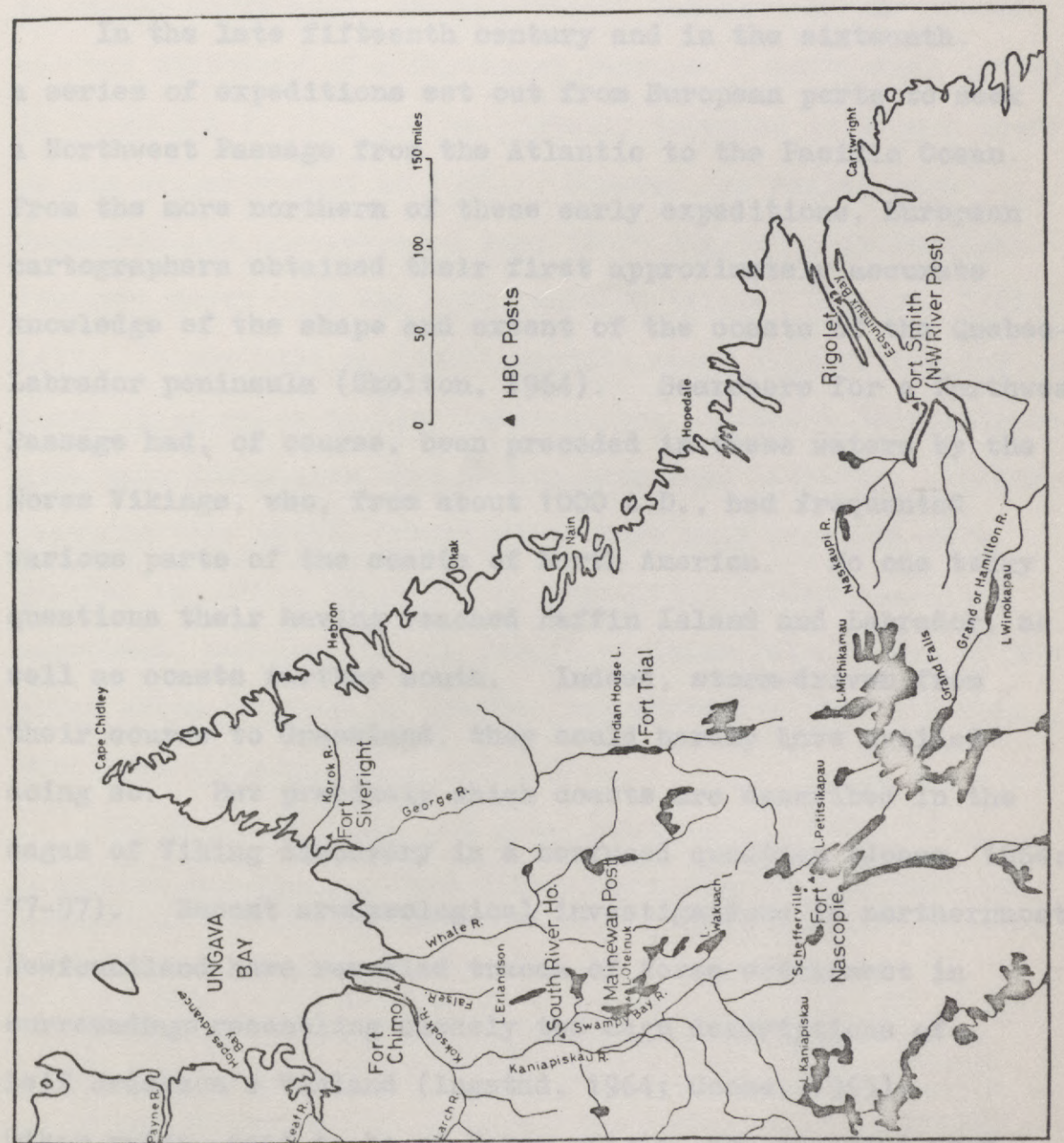


blame of everyone else concerned with the commercial process
offered by the region, prolonged and defeated efforts to
turn to account the few resources - one of which, the water,
was of special value - not with only gradual and partial
success. In this great land mass, the Company's plans and
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Map 1. Location of the Ungava venture

EARLY HISTORY OF THE QUEBEC-LABRADOR FRONTIER



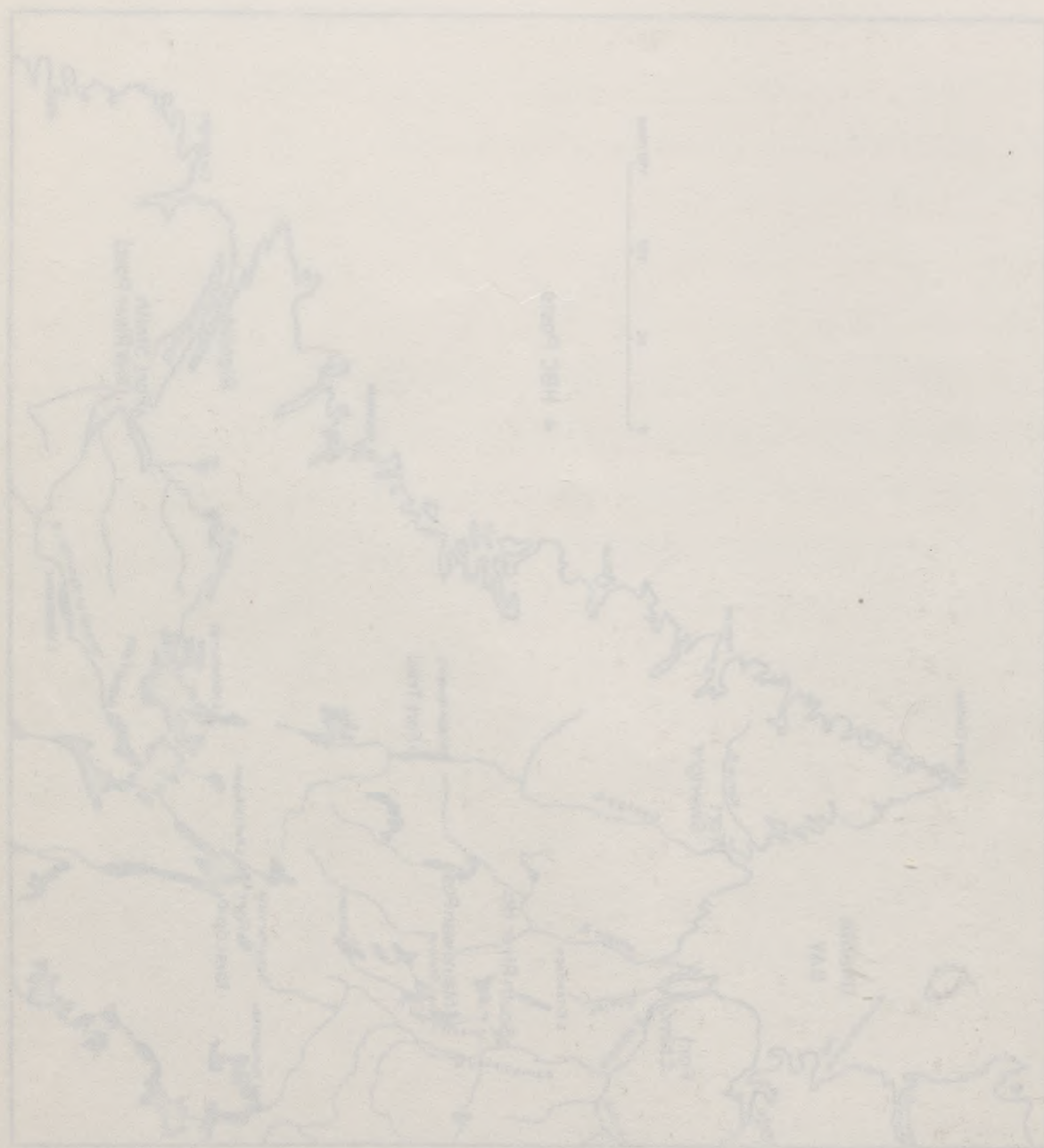
The name of Cape York, west of Ungava Bay (see, 1965).
Following from 1497-1498, 1499-1500, 1501-1502, 1503-1504, 1505-1506, 1507-1508, 1509-1510, 1511-1512, 1513-1514, 1515-1516, 1517-1518, 1519-1520, 1521-1522, 1523-1524, 1525-1526, 1527-1528, 1529-1530, 1531-1532, 1533-1534, 1535-1536, 1537-1538, 1539-1540, 1541-1542, 1543-1544, 1545-1546, 1547-1548, 1549-1550, 1551-1552, 1553-1554, 1555-1556, 1557-1558, 1559-1560, 1561-1562, 1563-1564, 1565-1566, 1567-1568, 1569-1570, 1571-1572, 1573-1574, 1575-1576, 1577-1578, 1579-1580, 1581-1582, 1583-1584, 1585-1586, 1587-1588, 1589-1590, 1591-1592, 1593-1594, 1595-1596, 1597-1598, 1599-1600, 1601-1602, 1603-1604, 1605-1606, 1607-1608, 1609-1610, 1611-1612, 1613-1614, 1615-1616, 1617-1618, 1619-1620, 1621-1622, 1623-1624, 1625-1626, 1627-1628, 1629-1630, 1631-1632, 1633-1634, 1635-1636, 1637-1638, 1639-1640, 1641-1642, 1643-1644, 1645-1646, 1647-1648, 1649-1650, 1651-1652, 1653-1654, 1655-1656, 1657-1658, 1659-1660, 1661-1662, 1663-1664, 1665-1666, 1667-1668, 1669-1670, 1671-1672, 1673-1674, 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I

EARLY HISTORY OF THE QUEBEC-LABRADOR PENINSULA

In the late fifteenth century and in the sixteenth, a series of expeditions set out from European ports to seek a Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. From the more northern of these early expeditions, European cartographers obtained their first approximately accurate knowledge of the shape and extent of the coasts of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula (Skelton, 1964). Searchers for a Northwest Passage had, of course, been preceded in these waters by the Norse Vikings, who, from about 1000 A.D., had frequented various parts of the coasts of North America. No one today questions their having reached Baffin Island and Labrador, as well as coasts farther south. Indeed, storm-driven from their course to Greenland, they could hardly have avoided doing so. But precisely which coasts are described in the sagas of Viking discovery is a confused question (Jones, 1964: 77-97). Recent archaeological investigations in northernmost Newfoundland have revealed traces of Norse settlement in surroundings resembling closely the saga descriptions of Leif Erickson's Vinland (Ingstad, 1964; Cooke, 1965). Other ruins, said to be of Norse origin, are reported from the region of Payne Lake, west of Ungava Bay (Lee, 1966).

Following John Cabot's 1498 landfall in Newfoundland



or Labrador (Skelton, 1966)*, King Manuel of Portugal began to show interest in northwestern exploration. In 1500 he granted a patent to search for new lands in that direction to Gaspar Corte-Real, whose personal interest in the venture was the discovery of a Northwest Passage. Corte-Real landed in Greenland in 1500 and he probably intended to return there on his second voyage in 1501. However, he sailed past Greenland and discovered a land "2000 miglia" from Portugal, "between north-west and west, unknown before" (Oleson, 1964: 143). A map made by Albert Cantino about 1502 of the new coast is no guide to its location, but Cantino's descriptions give some indication that it may have been Labrador. After visiting this coast, described to have much snow and many rivers, the three ships of the expedition sailed south and separated, possibly in the Strait of Belle Isle. Two of the three ships returned to Lisbon, but Corte-Real and his ship were lost (Oleson, 1964: 141-144).

Survivors of these and other voyages in search of a Northwest Passage reported fishing grounds off Newfoundland.

* In this cursory historical account, reference is frequently made to entries in the first volume of Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 1000 to 1700 (Brown, ed. 1966). The biographies are succinct and attention in them is directed especially to the person's relation to and importance in Canadian history. Each biography carries a bibliography of the important primary and secondary sources of the subject.

Large numbers of European ships began to frequent these grounds, but more than 30 years passed after Gaspar Corte-Real's visit before anyone else of whom record tells approached the coast of Labrador (Biggar, 1901: 1-5).

In 1534, François I, King of France, sent Jacques Cartier "to discover certain islands and lands where it is said that a great quantity of gold and other precious things are to be found" (Trudel, 1966: 165), and to search for a Northwest Passage. From Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland, Cartier coasted northward to the Strait of Belle Isle and crossed to Labrador. He had no kind words for the land he sighted, calling it in a memorable phrase "the land God gave to Cain". Discouraged by this coast, he turned south and explored the west coast of Newfoundland. Although he was in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he failed, on this occasion, to discover the St. Lawrence River. In the next year, he returned, found the great river and sailed inland as far as its first rapids, today the site of Montreal. In 1541-1542 he returned to the St. Lawrence River to seek precious metals and to consider sites suitable for colonisation (Trudel, 1966).

Martin Frobisher, the first Englishman to lead a search for a Northwest Passage, pointed the way to Hudson Bay by sighting the broad and dangerous strait that leads into it. During his first expedition, in 1576, Frobisher had found on the southeast coast of Baffin Island a large bay, which he

named for himself. Because a specimen of mineral from Frobisher Bay that he had brought home was believed by some to contain gold, he returned there in 1577 to open a mine and again in 1578. It was during the outward leg of his third voyage, with a fleet of 15 ships and a company of some 300 men, that he mistook his way and found himself in a "mistaken straytes", into which the further they sailed the wider it grew. Frobisher intensely desired to continue the exploration of this exciting discovery, but his orders, which were to mine gold, and the responsibility of so large a fleet prevented his prosecuting the discovery of Hudson Strait (Cooke, 1964; 1966).

The entrance to Hudson Strait was again sighted in 1587, this time by John Davis. While coasting southward from Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island, after exploring what is now Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, he came upon the opening and noted its size. He named its southern limit Cape Chudleigh (now Chidley) but did not enter it (Lardner, 1966).

To follow Frobisher's clue of the "mistaken straytes", the East India Company, long a supporter of the search for a Northeast Passage, sent its first expedition in search of a Northwest Passage. In 1602, Captain George Weymouth entered the strait with two ships, sailed well into Ungava Bay, and concluded that this strait was more hopeful for a passage than Davis Strait. But, discouraged by sickness among his crew and by the lateness of the season, he returned without

having sighted Hudson Bay (Dunbabin, 1966). Undeterred by Weymouth's failure, the East India Company sent out in 1606 the Hopewell, Captain John Knight, a veteran of Danish voyages to Greenland. Knight landed somewhere near present-day Nain, Labrador. Not long after landing, he and three others set out to explore an island, from which trip they never returned. They were probably attacked by Eskimos (Cell, 1966).

Finally, in 1610, Henry Hudson renewed the search, supported by some of Weymouth's sponsors. He penetrated Hudson Strait and, on 3 August, named the northernmost tip of Quebec, which is also the western extremity of the strait, after a sponsor, Sir John Wolstenholme. His journal ends as the land began to fall away southward into the great inland sea that bears his name. For the remainder of the voyage, for details of exploration and of the first wintering by Europeans in Hudson Bay, for the mutiny of some of the crew and their abandonment of Hudson and others, history relies on accounts, probably prejudiced, written by the mutinous survivors. These scanty records, which are to be doubted from some points of view, were, nevertheless, enough to establish in broad outline the depth and eastward dimension of Hudson Bay (Neatby, 1966).

In 1612, Hudson's sponsors renewed the search by sending out Thomas Button, whose course through Hudson Strait direct to the west coast of Hudson Bay was followed by William Baffin

in 1615, by the Dane, Jens Munk in 1619-1620, by Luke Foxe in 1613 and by Thomas James in 1631-1632 (Dodge, 1961: 127-178). William Gibbons and Robert Bylot, in 1614, had, like John Knight before them, met with difficulties along the Labrador coast that prevented their entering Hudson Strait. Of Hudson's successors, only Munk entered Ungava Bay, and that he did by accident.

The great mass of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, now outlined on maps, held little further interest to the European mind of the time. The failure of these many expeditions to find a passage through the west coast of Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean, together with their reports of hardships from cold, scurvy, starvation, and shipwreck, of which the last and most eloquent account was that by Thomas James, discouraged so thoroughly the hope of finding a Northwest Passage that the search was not renewed until 1719 (Cooke, 1966). In that year, the Hudson's Bay Company sent James Knight on an exploration of northwestern Hudson Bay from which he never returned (Williams, 1962: 1-20). Indeed, after Thomas James's departure from Hudson Bay in 1632, there is no record of a European visit to it until 1668, when the Nonsuch, Captain Zachariah Gillam, guided to the mouth of Rupert River by Medard Chouart des Groseilliers, passed the winter there for the purpose of trade (Rich, 1958: 21-43). So profitable were the returns of this voyage that its promoters in London

incorporated and obtained from King Charles II a charter under the title "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England tradeing into Hudson's Bay". By this charter, granted 2 May 1670, they held as a monopoly rights to the soil and trade of all lands drained by rivers flowing into Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait (Rich, 1958: 53). Thus early did the Hudson's Bay Company come into possession of the hinterland of Ungava Bay, but more than a century and a half passed before an officer of the Company, William Hendry, first stood within sight of Ungava Bay and looked about him for prospects of trade (Davies and Johnson, eds., 1963: 69-99).

No doubt, in the course of time, the Hudson's Bay Company would have turned to this region as a territory ready for the development of the fur trade. But, in fact, the Company's attention was drawn to it by the enterprise of the *Unitas Fratrum*, commonly called the Moravian Brethren, a protestant missionary group active among the Eskimos of northern Labrador since 1771. In 1811, two of the missionaries, Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Knoch, sailed with Eskimos from Okak around Cape Chidley into Ungava Bay. They ascended both the George and the Koksoak rivers short distances. They found the region of the lower Koksoak River relatively attractive in comparison with northern Labrador and felt encouraged in their idea of opening a missionary station there, which the Eskimos of the region had repeatedly asked them to do

(Leechman, 1947).

The Moravians published an account of their journey (Kohlmeister and Knoch, 1814) and the next year their representatives took up with the Hudson's Bay Company the prospect of establishing a mission station in Ungava Bay. Probably because the Moravians supported their missionary activities by trading with the natives to whom they preached, the Company did not grant their permission (Williams, 1963: xxxvi-xxxix). John McLean's understanding of the situation supports this view.

The Company having learned, through a pamphlet published by the Moravian missionaries of Labrador that the country [near Fort Chimo] produced excellent furs, were induced by the laudable desire of "ameliorating the condition of the natives," to settle it ... The Moravians, finding their intention thus anticipated, left both the cure of souls and trade of furs to the Company. (Wallace, ed., 1932: 202.)

In 1816, the Hudson's Bay Company initiated a programme of exploration inland from the Eastmain coast by sending George Atkinson to follow the Great Whale River to its source (Williams, 1963: xxxix). In 1818, Atkinson canoed from Richmond Gulf nearly half the distance to Ungava Bay before returning to Hudson Bay by crossing to the head of Little Whale River, which he explored in its descent (*ibid.*: xl-xli). In 1820, James Clouston, "one of the most under-rated of the Company's explorers" (*ibid.*: xlvi), crossed with Indians overland from Lake Nichicun to Lake Kaniapiskau.

Then, by canoe, he reached a point on the Koksoak River about 100 miles above its mouth before returning to Rupert House by way of Clearwater Lake and Richmond Gulf "in the longest journey yet made by a European in the Labrador peninsula" (*ibid.*: xlvi).

These explorations were undertaken to learn more of the resources and geography of the interior, to find out the number and movements of the natives, and to check on rumours of competition from Canadian traders. Clouston persuasively urged the establishment of inland posts. The Indians of the interior were not, he argued, likely to become regular trappers unless they had posts near them. The difficulties of a long journey to a distant post were so great, birchbark for canoes was so scanty,

... and the incumbrance of keeping Furs by them for some years: satisfy my mind that these Indians concern themselves nothing at all about Furs till such time as their supply of necessaries are turning short, and that they intend to visit some place to obtain a fresh supply (B19/e/1/6d, quoted *ibid.*: xlv).

In 1816 Clouston had sent a party from Neoskweskau to establish an outpost at Lake Nichicun, but the outpost and Neoskweskau were both closed in 1822, following the amalgamation in 1821 of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 313-315). The adverse effect of these closures was felt when, in 1822, the lease of the King's Posts was taken up by a Quebec

merchant and competition from that direction began to be felt by the traders in James Bay (Williams, 1963: 1).

So affairs stood until 1826, when George Simpson, already governor of the Northern Department of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, was made governor of the Southern Department also. Moved by Simpson's hand, the history of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula then took a great step forward: "... within a few months of his appointment to the Southern Department he seems to have decided that the interior of Labrador should be tested in the same way as the new regions of the west were being probed for new hunting grounds" (*ibid.*: 11).

Within the next year, Simpson had formed detailed plans. He proposed, first, to have a canoe route explored from Hudson Bay to Ungava Bay, then to establish a post at the mouth of the Koksoak River in order to have both Indian and Eskimo trade as well as both land and sea communication. "All the documentary evidence supports John McLean's later statement, that the Ungava venture was emphatically Simpson's personal project" (*ibid.*: 111).

In 1828, William Hendry and George Atkinson crossed with Indians to the Larch River from Richmond Gulf and descended to tidewater on the Koksoak River. They were obliged to return in haste, without having accomplished their mission, the choice of a site for the proposed post, nor were their

reports of the country traversed encouraging. Undeterred, Simpson pressed forward with the scheme. Finally, on 9 August 1830, Nicol Finlayson, having led a party from Moose Factory to Richmond Gulf, then across to Ungava Bay, began to build Fort Chimo at a site about 30 miles above the mouth of the Koksoak (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 111-112).

Once Fort Chimo was occupied, the main effort of the Ungava venture, to be described below in some detail, was directed toward the creation and supply of subsidiary posts in the central interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Governor Simpson, in near total ignorance of the geography of the interior, doubted neither the existence nor the practicability of canoe routes whereby posts in the interior, once set up, might be supplied (Wallace, ed. 1932: 203). Nor was the Governor entirely wrong, but the routes were hard to find and, when explored, they proved exceedingly difficult to use.

The problems the traders faced in exploration and in the transportation of goods into and from the interior were imposed chiefly by the physical geography of the region. The physiographic barriers of distance and altitude were aggravated by aspects of the region's hydrography and climate. Once the physical obstacles had been overcome - or had, at least, been met - and posts had been established in the interior, there were still problems of a different order

that faced the conduct of the fur trade. The elements of vegetation and wildlife, familiar to the traders from western regions, had adapted distinctively to the physical conditions of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula and were, therefore, in some respects strange to them. And, in the Naskapi Indians, they met a conscious and stubborn resistance to their attempts to develop the fur trade.

Before turning to the history of the Ungava venture, some remarks on the geography and on the peoples of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula are offered as background and to assist in understanding the difficulties the Hudson's Bay Company faced in this quarter.

The peninsula forms part of the Precambrian Shield, which extends to the north and west of Hudson Bay. Nearly the whole of the peninsula has been recently glaciated, and it stands today as a vast, level, with local elevations of a few feet. The surface is covered by a thin layer of glacial till, which is in places a few feet thick. The rocks are of various kinds, but the most striking feature is the presence of a large number of small, rounded boulders of granite and gneiss, which are scattered over the surface. The highest part of the peninsula is the central plateau, which is about 1000 feet high. The coast is low and indented, with a few small bays and inlets. The climate is cold and dry, with long winters and short summers. The vegetation is sparse and consists of low shrubs and grasses. The wildlife is also sparse and consists of caribou, moose, and various birds.

The Naskapi Indians, who live in the central part of the peninsula, are a people of the Eskimo stock. They are hunters and gatherers, and their main food is caribou. They are known for their skill in hunting and for their knowledge of the country. They are also known for their resistance to the traders, who tried to introduce them to the fur trade. The Naskapi Indians are a brave and independent people, and they have a strong sense of their own identity and culture.

II

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Physiography

In broad view, the form of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula is that of a vast trapezoid, depressed at its northern end, raised at its southern end, and curved upward on both its eastern and western sides (see map 2). It is essentially a peneplain tilted to the north. The peneplain rises slowly to a level of about 3,000 feet near its southern rim, where it drops sharply in the formation known as the Laurentide Scarp toward the St. Lawrence River (Hare, 1950: 615).

The peninsula forms part of the Precambrian Shield, which encircles the gigantic saucer-like depression of Hudson Bay. Nearly the whole of the peninsula has been recently glaciated, and it stands now either as naked bedrock, with glacial evidences clear upon it, or more or less thickly covered by glacial sediments. Within the mass of ancient crystalline rock occur a few belts or zones of sedimentary and volcanic Proterozoic rocks, the most striking of which is the Labrador Trough, a geosyncline that extends from the central height of land north-northeast to Ungava Bay.

The Koksoak-Kaniapiskau River basin, which lies mainly within the Labrador Trough, carried a large part of the traffic of the Ungava venture and was familiar territory to the fur

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BELT

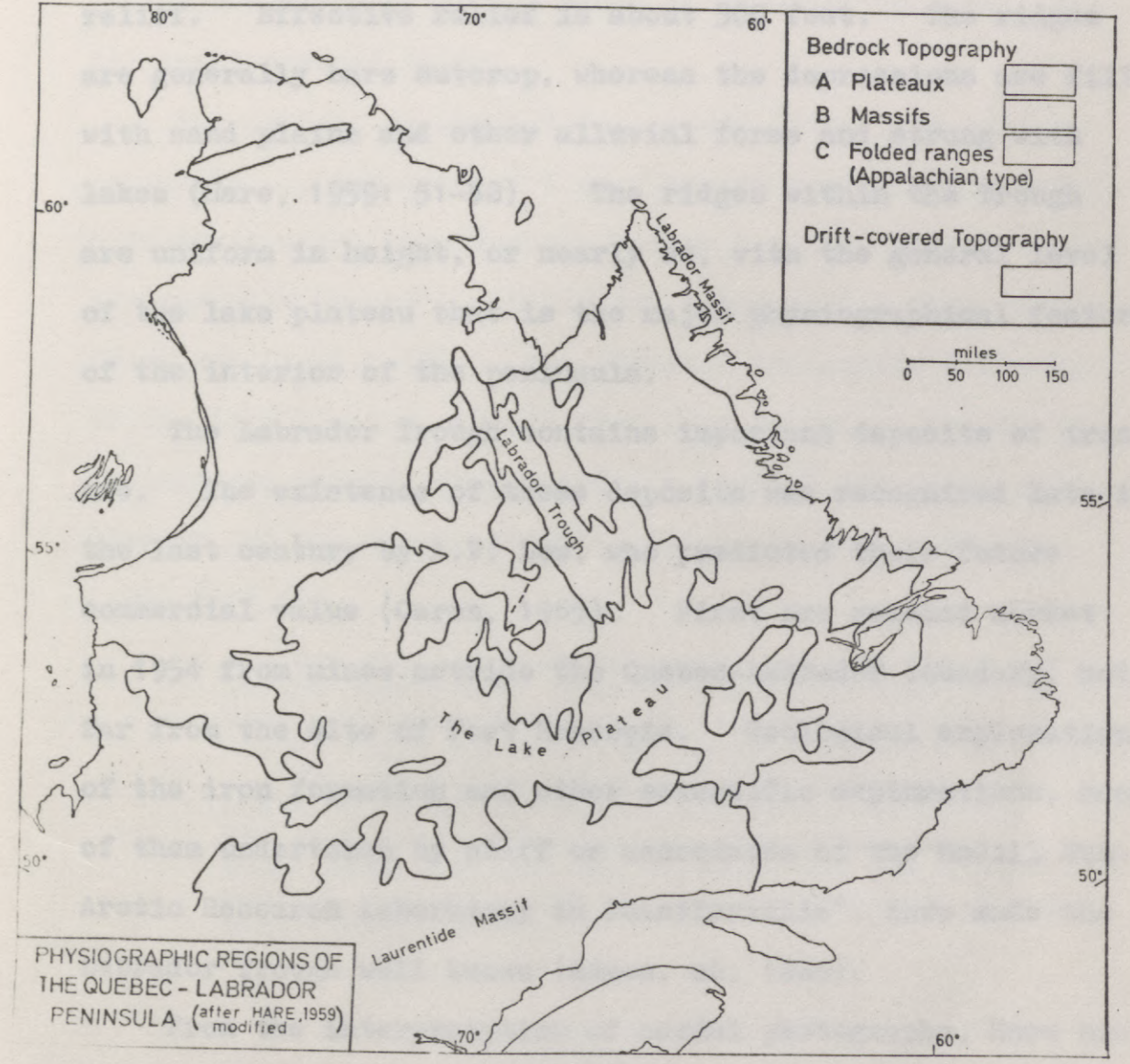
Introduction

In broad view, the form of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula is that of a vast trough, depressed at its northern end, raised at its southern end, and curved upward on both the eastern and western sides (see map 2). It is essentially a peninsula tilted to the north. The peninsula rises slowly to a level of about 2,000 feet near its northern end, where it drops sharply in the formation known as the Laurentide. Long toward the St. Lawrence River (Hare, 1959, p. 115).

The peninsula forms part of the Laurentian Shield, which contains the igneous cover-like deposition of Hudson Bay. Nearly the whole of the peninsula has been recently glaciated, and its surface now shows an eroded landscape, with glacial evidences that upon it, or more or less thickly covered by glacial sediments. Within the zone of ancient crystalline rock occur a few belts or zones of metamorphic and volcanic Proterozoic rocks, the most striking of which is the Labrador Trough, a zone which extends from the central height of the north-northeast to Ungava Bay.

The Quebec-Labrador River basin, which lies mainly within the Labrador Trough, carries a large part of the traffic of the St. Lawrence and was formerly a highway to the fur

traders. The Trough, as a physiographic unit, ranges from 15 to 50 miles wide and offers typical ridge-and-valley



Map 2. Physiographic regions

traders. The Trough, as a physiographic unit, ranges from 15 to 50 miles wide and offers typical ridge-and-valley relief. Effective relief is about 300 feet. The ridges are generally bare outcrop, whereas the depressions are filled with sand plains and other alluvial forms and strung with lakes (Hare, 1959: 51-52). The ridges within the Trough are uniform in height, or nearly so, with the general level of the lake plateau that is the major physiological feature of the interior of the peninsula.

The Labrador Trough contains important deposits of iron ore. The existence of these deposits was recognized late in the last century by A.P. Low, who predicted their future commercial value (Caron, 1965). First ore reached market in 1954 from mines astride the Quebec-Labrador boundary, not far from the site of Fort Nascopie. Geological exploration of the iron formation and other scientific explorations, many of them undertaken by staff or associates of the McGill Sub-Arctic Research Laboratory in Schefferville*, have made the Labrador Trough well known (Adams, ed. 1966).

From the interpretation of aerial photographs, Hare has identified four main physiographic divisions in the Quebec-

* Schefferville was, at first, called Knob Lake, which name is still carried by the weather station operated for the Department of Transport by the McGill Sub-Arctic Research Laboratory. The town is located near Knob Lake about 12 miles north-east of the site of Fort Nascopie, which stood on the north arm of Lake Petitsikapau (Mattox, 1964).



Labrador peninsula (1959: 41-56). They are (1) bedrock-controlled plateaux; (2) upland areas of the massif type; (3) upland areas of folded range or Appalachian type; and (4) drift-covered belts.

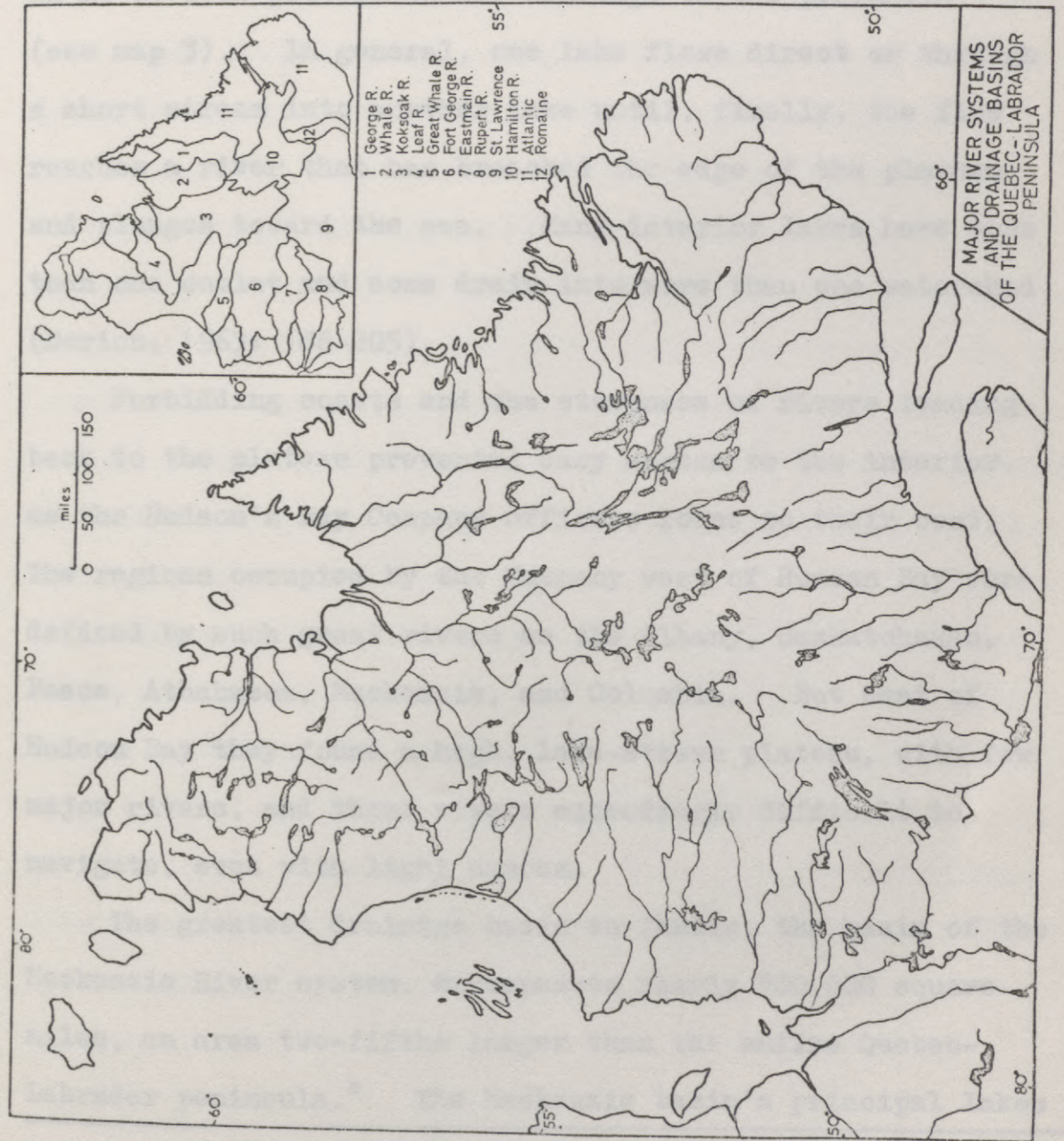
The central or Kaniapiskau massif, "the core of the peninsula ... consists of a very rugged plateau on granitic bedrock in which the fracture system has been etched out to a remarkable degree". Elongated lakes occupy many of these fractures (*ibid.*: 48). The "immense crescentic drift-belt" of the Lake Plateau extends from Lake Bienville around the Kaniapiskau massif, from which its drumlin and esker systems diverge, to the George River. It ranges from 1,300 to 1,900 feet and

... has the greatest abundance of open water bodies in the peninsula. Most of these are shallow, island-studded lakes which are merely flooded depressions in the drift sheet or the underlying plateau surface. ... The proportion of open water, measured over units of about 280 square miles, and excluding the water bodies comparable with this [area] or much bigger, varies from 10 per cent to 35 per cent of the area, the average being about 15 per cent (*ibid.*: 52-55).

Hydrography

The hydrographic network of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula reflects with striking simplicity the region's physiography and climate: abundant precipitation and low evaporation ensure a plentiful supply of surface water; depressions

Map 3. Hydrographic regions



Maps based on sheets in Atlas of Canada (Canada. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, 1957: 10 and 33)

in the bedrock and glacial debris hold the water as lakes, many of them large and markedly irregular in shape. There is no obvious pattern to the drainage of the peninsula (see map 3). In general, one lake flows direct or through a short stream into another lake until, finally, the flow reaches a river that has breached the edge of the plateau and plunges toward the sea. Many interior lakes have more than one outlet and some drain into more than one watershed (Dorion, 1963: 186-205).

Forbidding coasts and the steepness of rivers leading back to the plateau prevented easy access to the interior, as the Hudson's Bay Company officers found to their cost. The regions occupied by the Company west of Hudson Bay were defined by such great rivers as the Albany, Saskatchewan, Peace, Athabasca, Mackenzie, and Columbia. But east of Hudson Bay they found a high, lake-strewn plateau, with few major rivers, and those rivers exceedingly difficult to navigate, even with light canoes.

The greatest drainage basin in Canada, the basin of the Mackenzie River system, encompasses nearly 700,000 square miles, an area two-fifths larger than the entire Quebec-Labrador peninsula.* The Mackenzie basin's principal lakes

* The elevations and area of lakes given here are taken from Canada Year Book 1968 (Canada Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1968: 10-13).

have remarkably low elevations in comparison with those of the peninsula east of Hudson Bay. Lake Athabasca, with an area of 3,120 square miles, stands at 699 feet; Great Slave Lake, with 10,980 square miles, at 512 feet; and Great Bear Lake, the largest of them with 12,275 square miles, at 390 feet. The Mackenzie River, to the head of its Finlay River tributary, is some 2,600 miles long. Except in the uppermost reaches of its tributaries and at occasional rapids, it is everywhere easily navigable with large canoes. In its lower 1,400 miles, from the junction of the Slave and Peace rivers, there is but one interruption, a sixteen-mile stretch of rapids above Fort Smith, N.W.T., to vessels as large as river steamers and diesel tugs.

East of Hudson Bay, by contrast, the largest drainage basin is only some 55,800 square miles in area. Its main artery, the Koksoak-Kaniapiskau River system, is only 660 miles long. Yet Lake Kaniapiskau, 210 square miles in area, stands at 1,850 feet, an elevation nearly three times that of Lake Athabasca, although Lake Kaniapiskau is less than half of Lake Athabasca's distance from the sea.

Climate

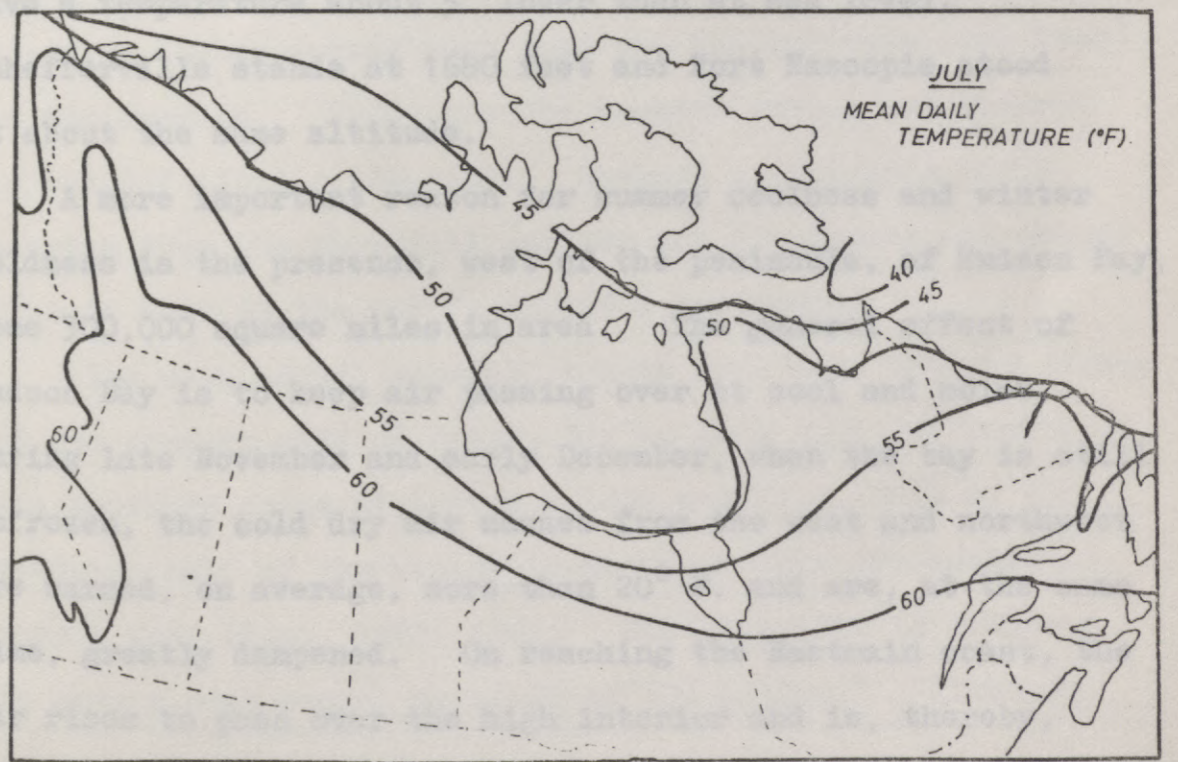
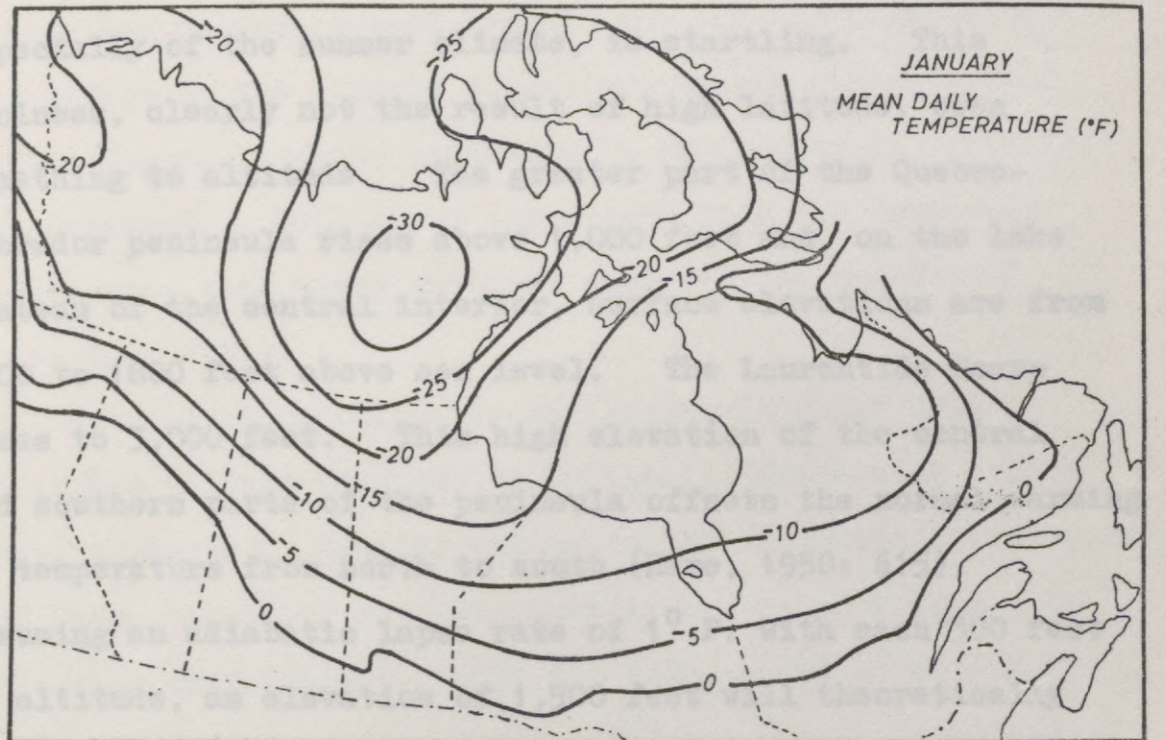
Climate ranks with physiography as a serious inhibitor of movement, particularly by canoe, in the Quebec-Labrador

peninsula. No subject, not even the trade of furs, is more amply noted than the weather in journals kept at Hudson's Bay Company posts during the nineteenth century. Here again, the traders found that conditions east of Hudson Bay were considerably different from conditions they were used to farther west.

In commenting on the marked bioclimatic disparity between the European and North American shores of the Atlantic Ocean, Rousseau has pointed out that the Arctic zone dips farther south in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula than anywhere else and that, in so doing, it pushes neighbouring bioclimatic zones still farther south (Rousseau, 1964: 29).

On a map of Canada that shows mean daily temperatures (see map 4) the isobars indicating summer temperatures fall southward from the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory toward the Quebec-Labrador peninsula through some 15° of latitude. The southward displacement of winter-temperature isobars, from west to east, is less strong, between 5° and 10° of latitude. In January, the mean daily temperature of most of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula ranges between 0° to -15° F; in April between 30° to 15°; in July between 60° to 50°; in October between 40° to 30°.

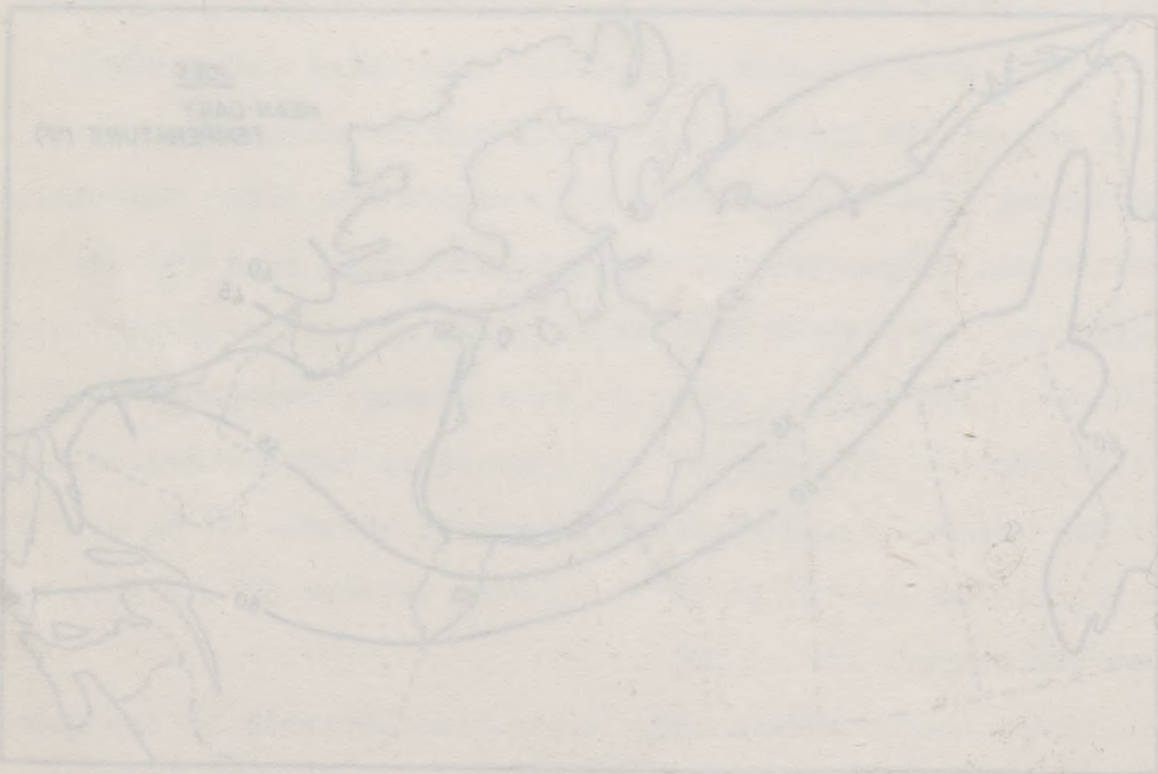
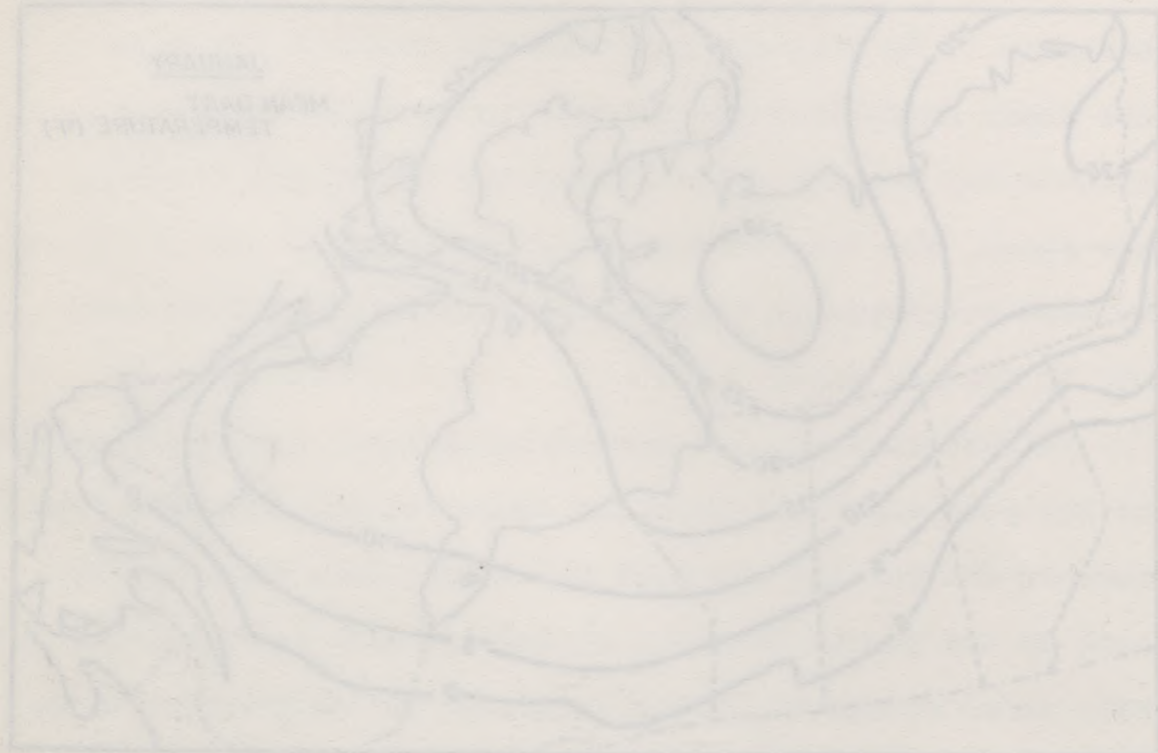
When one considers that the median latitude of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula (55° N.) is also the latitude of densely populated Europe, the coolness of the region's climate,



Map 4. January and July temperatures, modified from Thomas (1953: 15 and 23)

especially of the summer climate, is startling. This coolness, clearly not the result of high latitude, owes something to altitude. The greater part of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula rises above 1,000 feet and, on the lake plateau of the central interior, surface elevations are from 1500 to 1800 feet above sea level. The Laurentide Scarp rises to 3,000 feet. This high elevation of the central and southern parts of the peninsula offsets the normal warming of temperature from north to south (Hare, 1950: 615). Assuming an adiabatic lapse rate of 1° F. with each 300 feet of altitude, an elevation of 1,500 feet will theoretically have a temperature about 5° lower than at sea level. Schefferville stands at 1680 feet and Fort Nascopeie stood at about the same altitude.

A more important reason for summer coolness and winter coldness is the presence, west of the peninsula, of Hudson Bay, some 300,000 square miles in area. The general effect of Hudson Bay is to keep air passing over it cool and moist. During late November and early December, when the bay is still unfrozen, the cold dry air masses from the west and northwest are warmed, on average, more than 20° F. and are, at the same time, greatly dampened. On reaching the Eastmain coast, the air rises to pass over the high interior and is, thereby, cooled again. Early winter is, therefore, a season of cloudy weather and high snowfall. By the beginning of January,



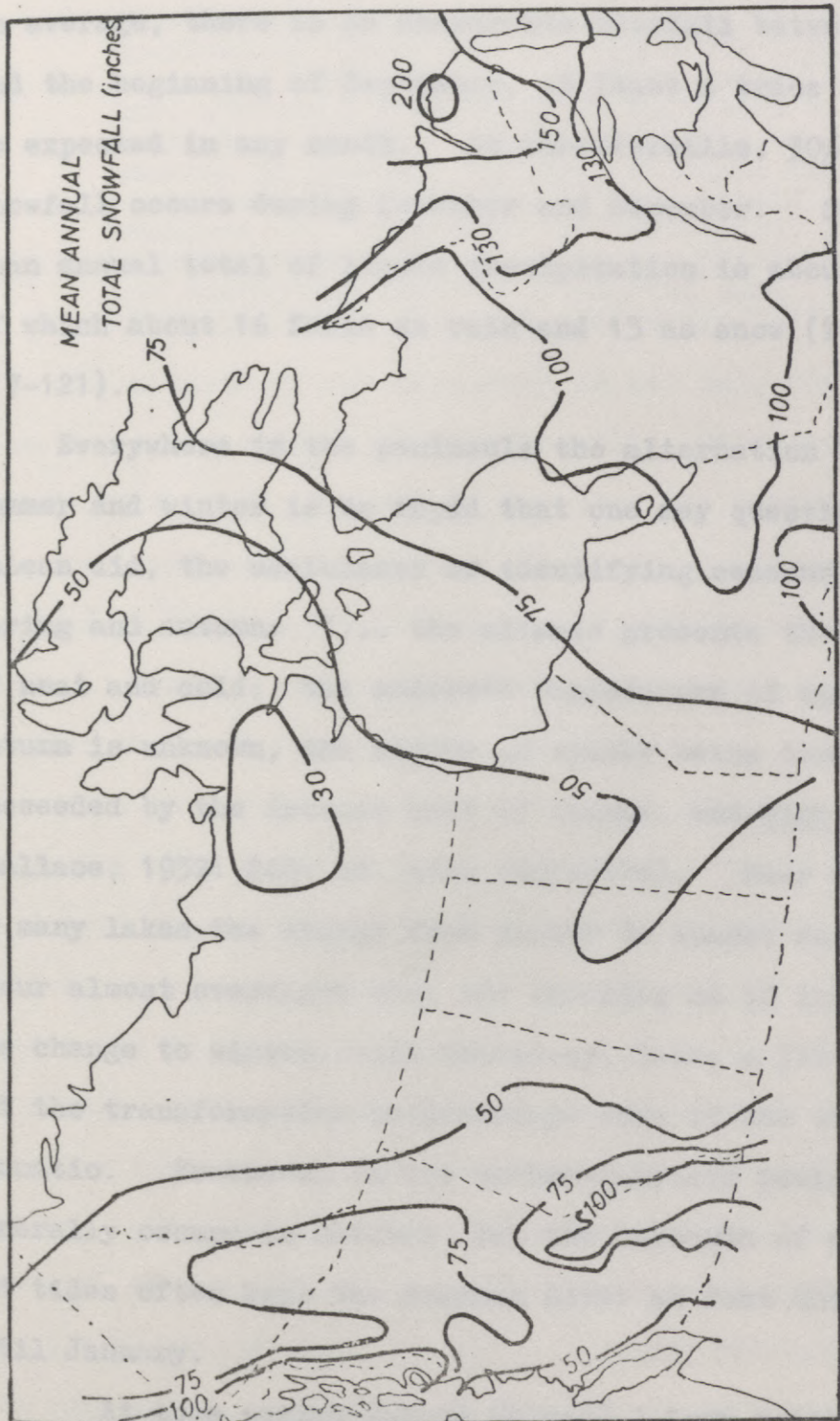
Hudson Bay is ice-covered (except for off-shore leads) and its effect on the climate of eastern Canada generally and on the Quebec-Labrador peninsula in particular is virtually non-existent. Cold polar air masses from the Northwest Territories then sweep eastward over the bay unmodified (Burbidge, 1951).

Precipitation values in the peninsula range from 15 inches (liquid measure) to 50 inches, decreasing from south to north. Similar values in the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory are very much lower, ranging from 5 to 15 inches only (Thomas, 1953: 128-129). "Measurable snowfalls are experienced in the central and western portions of northern Quebec during more than one hundred days [per year] on the average. These are the highest values experienced in Canada" (*ibid.*: 124-125). Nowhere in mainland North America does the snow fall earlier and lie longer and deeper than it does in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula.

The mean annual snowfall ranges from less than 60 inches on the western side of Ungava Bay to more than 200 inches on the southern coast of Labrador (see map 5). Most of the southern half of the peninsula has more than 120 inches of snow a year (Tout, 1963: 126). Schefferville is reckoned to have a mean annual snowfall of 130 inches.* Although,

* In a paper describing a snow survey of the Knob Lake drainage basin, it is suggested that snow gauges, such as the one used at Schefferville, undermeasure falling snow by about 23% and that, therefore, the figure for snowfall at Schefferville should be about 153 inches a year (Adams *et al.*, 1966: 110).

Map 5. Snowfall



Map based on a sheet in Atlas of Canada (Canada. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, 1957: 25)



The present-day snow-cover
is also significant.

on average, there is no measurable snowfall between mid-June and the beginning of September, at least a trace of snow may be expected in any month. At Schefferville, 30% of the snowfall occurs during November and December. Schefferville's mean annual total of liquid precipitation is about 29 inches, of which about 16 falls as rain and 13 as snow (Tout, 1963: 117-121).

Everywhere in the peninsula the alternation between summer and winter is so rapid that one may question, as John McLean did, the usefulness of identifying seasons called spring and autumn: "... the climate presents the extremes of heat and cold; the moderate temperature of spring and autumn is unknown, the rigour of winter being immediately succeeded by the intense heat of summer, and vice versa" (Wallace, 1932: 248; cf. also B38/e/5/4). Near a large lake or many lakes the change from winter to summer may be said to occur almost overnight with the breaking up of ice in spring. The change to winter, with freeze-up, takes a little longer, but the transformation in landscape once it has occurred is dramatic. Freeze-up in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula generally occurs in October, but the strength of current and tides often kept the Koksoak River at Fort Chimo open until January.

At this period [wrote McLean] I have neither seen, read, nor heard of any locality under heaven that can offer a more cheerless abode to civilized man than Ungava. The rumbling noise created by the ice,

when driven to and fro by the force of the tide, continually stuns the ear; while the light of heaven is hidden by the fog that hangs in the air, shrouding everything in the gloom of a dark twilight. If Pluto should leave his own gloomy mansion in tenebris tartari, he might take up his abode here, and gain or lose but little by the exchange. ... When the river sets fast, the beauties of the winter scene are disclosed - one continuous surface of glaring snow ... (Wallace, 1932: 249; cf. also B38/e/5/4).

The climate of the peninsula is not only cool, it is also wet and cloudy. At Schefferville, February, the least cloudy month, has only 45% of the possible sunshine. November, the cloudiest month, has only 17% of the possible sunshine. On average there are 100 days a year with no recordable sunshine. Winter, when temperatures are lowest, is the sunniest part of the year (Tout, 1963: 182, 200).

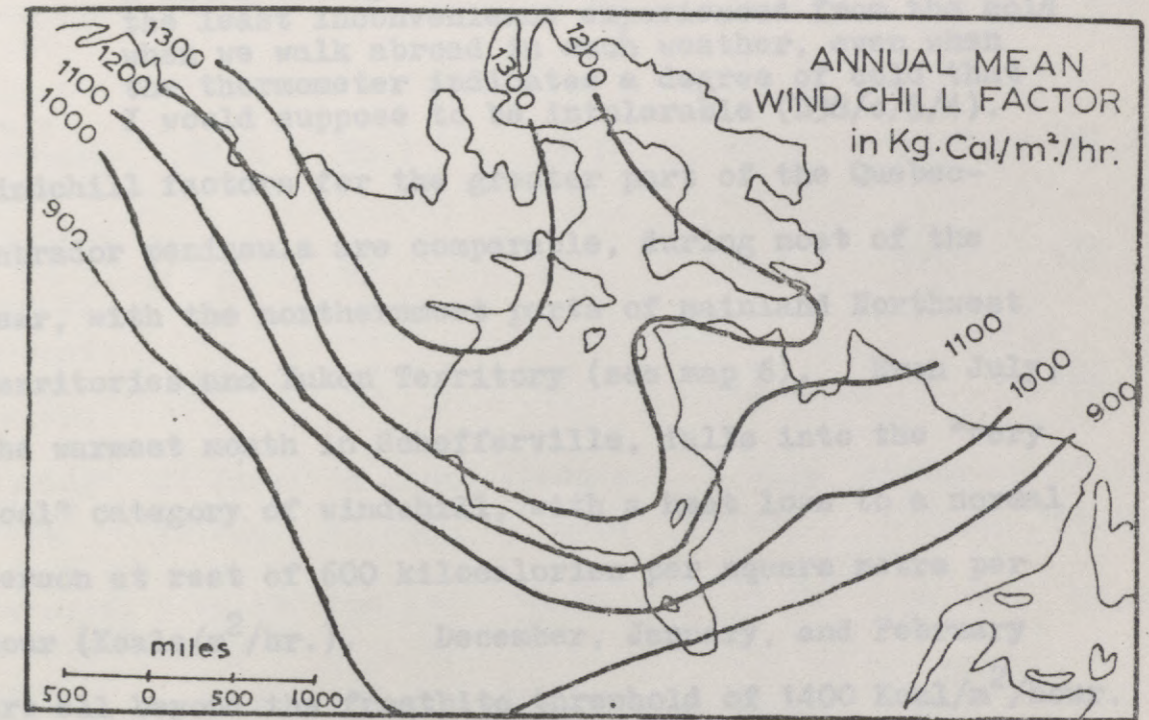
Wind in a cold climate is, in some respects, more dangerous than the cold itself. Persons who have lived in frigid climates agree that a protracted spell of settled cold weather, say, between -20° F. and -40° F., is much preferable to warmer weather, say, -10° F. to 20° F. because, in winter, the warmer weather is almost certain to be both stormier and windier and, therefore, in terms of windchill, colder. Windchill is a useful concept based on the fact that the rate at which heat is lost by convection depends upon wind speed (Thomas and Boyd, 1957). Although measures of windchill are only an approximation, they serve to compare the actual feeling of cold with the fact of low temperature, for one feels

when driven to and fro by the force of the tide, continuously stirs the sea; with the light of heaven is hidden by the fog that hangs in the air, obscuring everything in the gloom of a dark twilight. If this should leave his own gloomy mansion in torrida torrida, he might take up his rhoda base, and gain or lose but little by the exchange. ... When the river runs fast, the bounding of the winter seems are disclosed - one continuous surface of shining snow ... (Valencia, 1932: 249; cf. also 1934/2A).

The climate of the peninsula is not only cool, it is also wet and cloudy. At Bobadilla, Biscaya, the least cloudy month, has only 45% of the possible sunshine, the cloudiest month, has only 1% of the possible sunshine. On average there are 100 days a year with no recorded sunshine. Winter, when temperatures are lowest, is the sunniest part of the year (Tous, 1967: 182, 200). Wind in a cold climate is, in some respects, more dangerous than the cold itself. Persons who have lived in high altitudes agree that a prolonged spell of settled cold weather, say, between -30° F. and -40° F., is much preferable to warmer weather, say, -10° F. to 20° F. because in winter, the warmer weather is almost certain to be both stormier and windier and, therefore, in terms of windchill, colder. Windchill is a useful concept based on the fact that the rate at which heat is lost by convection depends upon wind speed (Thomas and Boyd, 1957). Although measures of windchill are only an approximation, they serve to measure the actual feeling of cold with the fact of low temperature. For one thing

colder at low temperature with wind than at a lower temperature without wind. Malan understood the circumstances, if not the concept.

In calm weather [at Fort Chino] we have generally a clear atmosphere and a serene sky, but in



Map 6. Windchill

Modified from Thomas and Boyd (1957)

colder at low temperature with wind than at a lower temperature without wind. McLean understood the circumstance, if not the concept.

In calm weather [at Fort Chimo] we have generally a clear atmosphere and a serene azure sky, nor is the least inconvenience experienced from the cold when we walk abroad in such weather, even when the thermometer indicates a degree of cold that I would suppose to be intolerable (B38/e/5/4).

Windchill factors for the greater part of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula are comparable, during most of the year, with the northernmost parts of mainland Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory (see map 6). Even July, the warmest month in Schefferville, falls into the "very cool" category of windchill, with a heat loss to a normal person at rest of 600 kilocalories per square metre per hour ($\text{Kcal}/\text{m}^2/\text{hr.}$). December, January, and February are all beyond the frostbite threshold of $1400 \text{ Kcal}/\text{m}^2/\text{hour}$, when exposed flesh freezes quickly (McCloughan, 1962: 50; Tout, 1963: 205).



Temperature and precipitation data for selected stations
in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula¹

	Fort Chimo	Knob Lake	Nitche- quon	Port Harri- son	Cart- wright	Goose Bay
Mean January tempera- ture	-11.0°F	-9.4°F	-9.1°F	-13.0°F	7.5°F	2.2°F
Mean July tempera- ture	53.3	55.1	56.7	48.0	55.7	61.4
Highest on record	90	88	90	86	97	100
Lowest on record	-51	-59	-57	-57	-36	-38
Spring ²	27 June	19 June	14 June	5 July	26 June	10 June
Fall ²	10 Aug.	23 Aug.	13 Sept.	20 Aug.	9 Sept.	14 Sept.
Total precipi- tation ³	16.47 INCHES	29.40	29.64	15.51	38.15	32.93
Snow- fall ⁴	69.5 INCHES	134.5	108.4	64.5	183.1	157.6
Days with precipi- tation	146	185	193	134	179	173

1. Data from Canada Year Book 1968 (Canada Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1968: 61).
2. Average dates (last in spring, first in autumn) of freezing temperatures (32°F. or lower).
3. Precipitation in all forms (total rainfall and 1/10 of the total snowfall).
4. Average number of days with precipitation (all forms).

Vegetation

The northern forest reflects, as does any cover of vegetation, the influences of latitude, insolation, climate and physiography. Vegetation itself affects physiography and climate to some extent, and it has important influence on the forms of life that dwell in and with it. The uniformity and breadth of the northern forest and its remarkable southward extension in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula form one of the region's most striking features. These aspects of the forest cover are chiefly due to an underlying uniformity of physiography and to climate which, as described above, is, for latitude, cooler and more humid than any other in the Northern Hemisphere.

When flying over the central interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, one looks down on an endless monotony of coniferous forest, a carpet of greenish-black riddled by swamps and lakes beyond number and by the bare tops of rounded hills and ridges. Fully three-quarters of the peninsula lies within the northern forest zone. The northern limit of the forest runs northeast from Richmond Gulf to take in the lower valley of the Leaf River, then dips to skirt the coast of Ungava Bay around to the Korok River. From there it drops sharply south to circumscribe the high massif of the Torngat Mountains. The eastern, southeastern, and most of the

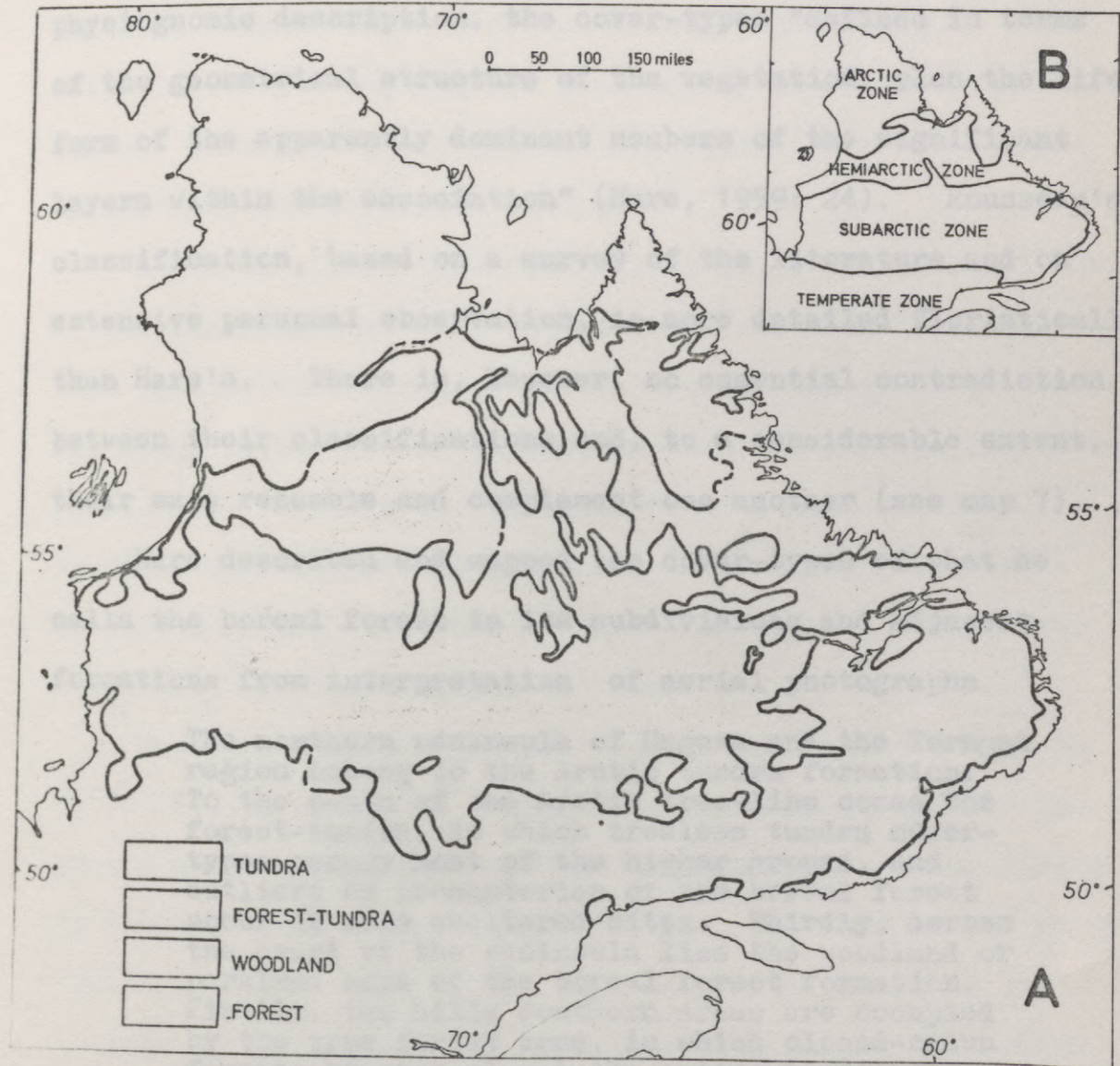
Temperature and precipitation data for selected stations in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula

Station	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Umanak	-11.0	-8.4	-5.1	2.3	7.1	12.5	17.2	19.8	17.5	12.1	6.2	1.5	124.7
Repulse	-12.0	-9.5	-6.2	1.1	5.8	11.2	15.9	18.5	16.2	10.8	5.1	0.4	124.7
St. Lawrence	-13.0	-10.5	-7.2	0.1	4.8	10.1	14.8	17.4	15.1	9.7	4.0	-1.2	124.7
Fort Reliance	-14.0	-11.5	-8.2	-0.8	3.9	9.0	13.7	16.3	14.0	8.6	2.9	-2.1	124.7
Fort Chipewyan	-15.0	-12.5	-9.2	0.2	2.9	8.0	12.7	15.2	12.9	7.5	1.8	-3.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-16.0	-13.5	-10.2	0.8	1.9	7.0	11.7	14.2	11.8	6.4	0.8	-4.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-17.0	-14.5	-11.2	1.4	0.9	6.0	10.7	13.2	10.8	5.4	-0.8	-5.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-18.0	-15.5	-12.2	2.0	-0.1	5.0	9.7	12.2	9.8	4.4	-1.8	-6.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-19.0	-16.5	-13.2	2.6	-1.1	4.0	8.7	11.2	8.8	3.4	-2.8	-7.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-20.0	-17.5	-14.2	3.2	-2.1	3.0	7.7	10.2	7.8	2.4	-3.8	-8.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-21.0	-18.5	-15.2	3.8	-3.1	2.0	6.7	9.2	6.8	1.4	-4.8	-9.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-22.0	-19.5	-16.2	4.4	-4.1	1.0	5.7	8.2	5.8	0.4	-5.8	-10.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-23.0	-20.5	-17.2	5.0	-5.1	0.0	4.7	7.2	4.8	-0.8	-6.8	-11.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-24.0	-21.5	-18.2	5.6	-6.1	-1.0	3.7	6.2	3.8	-1.8	-7.8	-12.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-25.0	-22.5	-19.2	6.2	-7.1	-2.0	2.7	5.2	2.8	-2.8	-8.8	-13.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-26.0	-23.5	-20.2	6.8	-8.1	-3.0	1.7	4.2	1.8	-3.8	-9.8	-14.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-27.0	-24.5	-21.2	7.4	-9.1	-4.0	0.7	3.2	0.8	-4.8	-10.8	-15.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-28.0	-25.5	-22.2	8.0	-10.1	-5.0	-0.3	2.2	-0.2	-5.8	-11.8	-16.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-29.0	-26.5	-23.2	8.6	-11.1	-6.0	-1.3	1.2	-1.2	-6.8	-12.8	-17.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-30.0	-27.5	-24.2	9.2	-12.1	-7.0	-2.3	0.2	-2.2	-7.8	-13.8	-18.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-31.0	-28.5	-25.2	9.8	-13.1	-8.0	-3.3	-0.8	-3.2	-8.8	-14.8	-19.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-32.0	-29.5	-26.2	10.4	-14.1	-9.0	-4.3	-1.8	-4.2	-9.8	-15.8	-20.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-33.0	-30.5	-27.2	11.0	-15.1	-10.0	-5.3	-2.8	-5.2	-10.8	-16.8	-21.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-34.0	-31.5	-28.2	11.6	-16.1	-11.0	-6.3	-3.8	-6.2	-11.8	-17.8	-22.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-35.0	-32.5	-29.2	12.2	-17.1	-12.0	-7.3	-4.8	-7.2	-12.8	-18.8	-23.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-36.0	-33.5	-30.2	12.8	-18.1	-13.0	-8.3	-5.8	-8.2	-13.8	-19.8	-24.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-37.0	-34.5	-31.2	13.4	-19.1	-14.0	-9.3	-6.8	-9.2	-14.8	-20.8	-25.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-38.0	-35.5	-32.2	14.0	-20.1	-15.0	-10.3	-7.8	-10.2	-15.8	-21.8	-26.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-39.0	-36.5	-33.2	14.6	-21.1	-16.0	-11.3	-8.8	-11.2	-16.8	-22.8	-27.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-40.0	-37.5	-34.2	15.2	-22.1	-17.0	-12.3	-9.8	-12.2	-17.8	-23.8	-28.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-41.0	-38.5	-35.2	15.8	-23.1	-18.0	-13.3	-10.8	-13.2	-18.8	-24.8	-29.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-42.0	-39.5	-36.2	16.4	-24.1	-19.0	-14.3	-11.8	-14.2	-19.8	-25.8	-30.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-43.0	-40.5	-37.2	17.0	-25.1	-20.0	-15.3	-12.8	-15.2	-20.8	-26.8	-31.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-44.0	-41.5	-38.2	17.6	-26.1	-21.0	-16.3	-13.8	-16.2	-21.8	-27.8	-32.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-45.0	-42.5	-39.2	18.2	-27.1	-22.0	-17.3	-14.8	-17.2	-22.8	-28.8	-33.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-46.0	-43.5	-40.2	18.8	-28.1	-23.0	-18.3	-15.8	-18.2	-23.8	-29.8	-34.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-47.0	-44.5	-41.2	19.4	-29.1	-24.0	-19.3	-16.8	-19.2	-24.8	-30.8	-35.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-48.0	-45.5	-42.2	20.0	-30.1	-25.0	-20.3	-17.8	-20.2	-25.8	-31.8	-36.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-49.0	-46.5	-43.2	20.6	-31.1	-26.0	-21.3	-18.8	-21.2	-26.8	-32.8	-37.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-50.0	-47.5	-44.2	21.2	-32.1	-27.0	-22.3	-19.8	-22.2	-27.8	-33.8	-38.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-51.0	-48.5	-45.2	21.8	-33.1	-28.0	-23.3	-20.8	-23.2	-28.8	-34.8	-39.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-52.0	-49.5	-46.2	22.4	-34.1	-29.0	-24.3	-21.8	-24.2	-29.8	-35.8	-40.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-53.0	-50.5	-47.2	23.0	-35.1	-30.0	-25.3	-22.8	-25.2	-30.8	-36.8	-41.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-54.0	-51.5	-48.2	23.6	-36.1	-31.0	-26.3	-23.8	-26.2	-31.8	-37.8	-42.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-55.0	-52.5	-49.2	24.2	-37.1	-32.0	-27.3	-24.8	-27.2	-32.8	-38.8	-43.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-56.0	-53.5	-50.2	24.8	-38.1	-33.0	-28.3	-25.8	-28.2	-33.8	-39.8	-44.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-57.0	-54.5	-51.2	25.4	-39.1	-34.0	-29.3	-26.8	-29.2	-34.8	-40.8	-45.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-58.0	-55.5	-52.2	26.0	-40.1	-35.0	-30.3	-27.8	-30.2	-35.8	-41.8	-46.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-59.0	-56.5	-53.2	26.6	-41.1	-36.0	-31.3	-28.8	-31.2	-36.8	-42.8	-47.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-60.0	-57.5	-54.2	27.2	-42.1	-37.0	-32.3	-29.8	-32.2	-37.8	-43.8	-48.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-61.0	-58.5	-55.2	27.8	-43.1	-38.0	-33.3	-30.8	-33.2	-38.8	-44.8	-49.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-62.0	-59.5	-56.2	28.4	-44.1	-39.0	-34.3	-31.8	-34.2	-39.8	-45.8	-50.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-63.0	-60.5	-57.2	29.0	-45.1	-40.0	-35.3	-32.8	-35.2	-40.8	-46.8	-51.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-64.0	-61.5	-58.2	29.6	-46.1	-41.0	-36.3	-33.8	-36.2	-41.8	-47.8	-52.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-65.0	-62.5	-59.2	30.2	-47.1	-42.0	-37.3	-34.8	-37.2	-42.8	-48.8	-53.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-66.0	-63.5	-60.2	30.8	-48.1	-43.0	-38.3	-35.8	-38.2	-43.8	-49.8	-54.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-67.0	-64.5	-61.2	31.4	-49.1	-44.0	-39.3	-36.8	-39.2	-44.8	-50.8	-55.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-68.0	-65.5	-62.2	32.0	-50.1	-45.0	-40.3	-37.8	-40.2	-45.8	-51.8	-56.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-69.0	-66.5	-63.2	32.6	-51.1	-46.0	-41.3	-38.8	-41.2	-46.8	-52.8	-57.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-70.0	-67.5	-64.2	33.2	-52.1	-47.0	-42.3	-39.8	-42.2	-47.8	-53.8	-58.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-71.0	-68.5	-65.2	33.8	-53.1	-48.0	-43.3	-40.8	-43.2	-48.8	-54.8	-59.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-72.0	-69.5	-66.2	34.4	-54.1	-49.0	-44.3	-41.8	-44.2	-49.8	-55.8	-60.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-73.0	-70.5	-67.2	35.0	-55.1	-50.0	-45.3	-42.8	-45.2	-50.8	-56.8	-61.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-74.0	-71.5	-68.2	35.6	-56.1	-51.0	-46.3	-43.8	-46.2	-51.8	-57.8	-62.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-75.0	-72.5	-69.2	36.2	-57.1	-52.0	-47.3	-44.8	-47.2	-52.8	-58.8	-63.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-76.0	-73.5	-70.2	36.8	-58.1	-53.0	-48.3	-45.8	-48.2	-53.8	-59.8	-64.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-77.0	-74.5	-71.2	37.4	-59.1	-54.0	-49.3	-46.8	-49.2	-54.8	-60.8	-65.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-78.0	-75.5	-72.2	38.0	-60.1	-55.0	-50.3	-47.8	-50.2	-55.8	-61.8	-66.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-79.0	-76.5	-73.2	38.6	-61.1	-56.0	-51.3	-48.8	-51.2	-56.8	-62.8	-67.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-80.0	-77.5	-74.2	39.2	-62.1	-57.0	-52.3	-49.8	-52.2	-57.8	-63.8	-68.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-81.0	-78.5	-75.2	39.8	-63.1	-58.0	-53.3	-50.8	-53.2	-58.8	-64.8	-69.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-82.0	-79.5	-76.2	40.4	-64.1	-59.0	-54.3	-51.8	-54.2	-59.8	-65.8	-70.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-83.0	-80.5	-77.2	41.0	-65.1	-60.0	-55.3	-52.8	-55.2	-60.8	-66.8	-71.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-84.0	-81.5	-78.2	41.6	-66.1	-61.0	-56.3	-53.8	-56.2	-61.8	-67.8	-72.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-85.0	-82.5	-79.2	42.2	-67.1	-62.0	-57.3	-54.8	-57.2	-62.8	-68.8	-73.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-86.0	-83.5	-80.2	42.8	-68.1	-63.0	-58.3	-55.8	-58.2	-63.8	-69.8	-74.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-87.0	-84.5	-81.2	43.4	-69.1	-64.0	-59.3	-56.8	-59.2	-64.8	-70.8	-75.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-88.0	-85.5	-82.2	44.0	-70.1	-65.0	-60.3	-57.8	-60.2	-65.8	-71.8	-76.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-89.0	-86.5	-83.2	44.6	-71.1	-66.0	-61.3	-58.8	-61.2	-66.8	-72.8	-77.1	124.7
Fort Reliance	-90.0	-87.5	-84.2	45.2	-72.1	-67.0	-62.3	-59.8	-62.2	-67.8	-73.8	-78.1	124.7
Fort Resolution	-91.0	-88.5	-85.2	45.8	-73.1	-68.0	-63.3	-60.8	-63.2	-68.8	-74.8	-79.1	124.7
Fort Smith	-92.0	-89.5	-86.2	46.4	-74.1	-69.0	-64.3	-61.					

southern coasts of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula are rimmed by tundra.

Black spruce (*Picea mariana*) is "overwhelmingly the most numerous tree" in the forests of the peninsula. (Hare, 1959: 23). Three other conifers occur widely and may be locally dominant: white spruce (*Picea glauca*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) and the larch or tamarack (*Larix laricina*). The deciduous hardwood trees, paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), and aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), although widespread, have only local distribution in conditions that especially favour their growth. Hardwood shrubs, which include birches (notably *Betula glandulosa*), willows (*Salix* spp.), and alder (*Alnus* spp.) are widely distributed. Especially along rivers, lake shores, and in marshy places, these shrubs form almost impassable thickets of densely interwoven branches. Labrador tea (*Ledum* spp.) is common in open situations and there are several fruiting plants of low stature, of which the most conspicuous are the bake apple (*Rubus chamaemorus*), cranberries and blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), and other Ericaceae. Ground cover ranges, with varying soil and moisture conditions, from grasses and sedges to thick layers of feather mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) or of lichens (*Cladonia* and *Cetraria* spp.).

Both Hare (1959) and Rousseau (1961, 1964) have published



Map 7. Zones of vegetation

A. Modified from Hare (1959)

B. From Rousseau (1961)



analyses of the vegetation of the peninsula. Hare aimed at physiognomic description, the cover-types "defined in terms of the geometrical structure of the vegetation, plus the life-form of the apparently dominant members of the significant layers within the association" (Hare, 1959: 24). Rousseau's classification, based on a survey of the literature and on extensive personal observation, is more detailed floristically than Hare's. There is, however, no essential contradiction between their classifications and, to a considerable extent, their maps resemble and complement one another (see map 7).

Hare described and mapped the cover-types of what he calls the boreal forest in its subdivisions and adjacent formations from interpretation of aerial photographs.

The northern peninsula of Ungava and the Torngat region belong to the Arctic tundra formation. To the south of the Arctic tree-line comes the forest-tundra, in which treeless tundra cover-types occupy most of the higher ground, and outliers or promontories of the boreal forest occur in more sheltered sites. Thirdly, across the heart of the peninsula lies the woodland or parkland zone of the boreal forest formation. Finally, the hilly southern areas are occupied by the true forest zone, in which closed-crown forests blanket almost the entire landscape. This forest zone passes southward into the mixed temperate forest outside the territory investigated (Hare, 1959: 32).

Hare describes tundra as "treeless barren lands, usually with permafrost"; forest-tundra as "thin woodland on low ground; tundra elsewhere; permafrost usual"; woodland or parkland as "open-spaced stands of woodland or 'parkland'";

Map 7. Zones of vegetation
A. Modified from Hare (1959)
B. From Rousseau (1961)

permafrost locally"; and, finally, the forest (true forest zone) as "closed-crown forests, densely shaded floor" (Hare, 1959: 24). His map (marked A on map 7) shows the whole central interior of the peninsula occupied by a broad band of woodland and of forest tundra.

Rousseau allows that Hare's work gives an excellent view of the ecological mosaic, but he considers that Hare did less than justice to the matter of its latitudinal zonation because the elements he used as parameters were too limited (Rousseau, 1964: 16). Chiefly on the basis of floristic evidence, Rousseau has divided the peninsula into biological zones (marked B on map 7), which he calls the arctic, hemiarctic, subarctic, and upper temperate zones.

The subarctic zone, which extends from about 51° N. to 55°30' N., is an almost pure formation of black spruce, the ground covered in some places by lichens and in other places by sphagnum mosses and glandular birch, the most common shrub (Rousseau, 1964: 46). This zone has three principal landscapes: (1) dry taiga, an open park-like forest, 95% black spruce of slender shape, mostly 5 to 10, but sometimes 15, metres high, and a ground cover of white lichens; (2) wet taiga, in which larch is added to the black spruce and the ground is covered by a spongy layer of sphagnum mosses; and (3) subarctic swamp or bog which, like the wet tundra of the arctic zone, is treeless and is covered by shrubs and

herbaceous plants common to them both (Rousseau, 1964: 46-47).

In the hemiarctic zone, there is a fine mosaic of taiga and tundra communities, which form discrete, topographically controlled areas or patches of subarctic and of arctic vegetation. Both communities keep their individuality rather than grading one into the other through a transitional zone. The taiga occupies sheltered valleys, stopping at the edges of slopes. As in the subarctic zone, dry ground is occupied by lichens, marshy ground by mosses. Black spruce constitutes 95% of these valley forests. Larch, which grows only on swampy ground farther south, is here found occasionally on slopes. Patches of hemiarctic tundra have more or less the same elements as true arctic tundra (Rousseau, 1964: 55-56).

The northern boundary of the hemiarctic zone, which is also the southern boundary of the arctic zone, runs from 57° N. on the Eastmain coast, through 58°30' N. in the centre, to 56° N. in Labrador. The landscape of the arctic zone is divided into lichen-dominated dry tundra and moss-dominated wet tundra, the latter passing gradually into marshes or bogs. There is an intermediate form of tundra that, at first glance, looks dry: xerophilic plants occupy the upper parts of unevenly spaced clumps or tussocks but, just a little lower, marshy plants grow rooted in a muddy substratum (Rousseau, 1964: 68-69).

The Hudson's Bay Company was fortunate in the fact that the northern limit of the forest extended to tide-water on the Koksoak River. They would have found it impossible at this period to establish a post anywhere north of the tree-line, for they needed local wood for houses, fuel, and many other purposes. But they were unfortunate in the fact that, although paper birch is widespread in the peninsula, only near James Bay, Lake Mistassini, and along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River does it grow to sufficient size to provide canoe bark (Williams: 1963: lxii; Rousseau 1964: 42). Nor was there then any substitute like canvas for bark. The lack of this essential material, abundant where needed in the rest of the Company's territories, had a serious and adverse effect on the progress of the venture. Lack of canoes delayed the occupation of the interior for years and the continued scarcity of bark was an ever-present hindrance to travel. The natives felt the lack of bark, too. If the Company had found it possible to import bark to Fort Chimo in sufficient quantity to offer in trade, the Indians would have been willing to pay well for it (B38/b/2/20d).

The wide band of forest tundra or dry taiga of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula must be among the most fire-prone zones of vegetation in the world, and there are many references to forest fires in the post journals and in the published literature (Elton 1942: 300-303). The traders and others

blamed the fires mainly on the Indians, who started them, sometimes through carelessness but often deliberately, to signal to others their presence in a given location. It is anomalous that a summer remarkable for cool, moist, cloudy conditions should allow the development of an extremely combustible forest. This extreme combustibility is due chiefly to the lichen-covered floor of extensive tracts of open parkland. The lichen, which ranges from about two inches to as much as eight inches in depth, is always sodden at its base, where it frequently rests on bedrock or on frozen soil. But it dries rapidly on its upper surface and, when ignited, almost explodes into flame. Fire passes along the top of dry lichen with great speed, especially with wind, and easily ignites in its passing the resinous needles of the coniferous trees. Often the trees are not killed by the fire itself, but die slowly because their roots have been exposed and because the fire has made the ground bare, arid, and sterile. Many years pass before forest cover again develops.

One reason for the frequency of these forest fires in the past and, indeed, at present is the Indian practice of burning chunks of lichen to make a smudge. The lichen is ignited, then turned upside down so that the burning surface is not exposed to the open air. This arrangement produces instantly a thick white smoke, which, though acrid, is not

unpleasant to breathe. Anyone stopping for any reason would, if possible, build a smudge immediately, for the smoke is a protection against the mosquitoes and black flies. Great care should, of course, be exercised in extinguishing the smudge before leaving it and the Indians must often have been careless in this respect. The destruction these great fires have caused to wildlife is beyond calculation.

Wildlife and the fur trade

There are about 50 terrestrial mammals in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula (Harper 1961: 18-21), but "omitting small shrews and such", Elton lists only eleven predatory land mammals for the region north of about 54°N. and six herbivores (Elton 1942: 253-256). A list prepared by John McLean (B38/e/5/3d) is nearly identical with Elton's list, which includes black bear (Ursus americanus), wolf (Canis lycaon), coloured fox (Vulpes ?fulva), Arctic fox (Alopex lagopus), marten (Martes americana), weasel or ermine (Mustela spp.), mink (Mustela vison), wolverine (Gulo luscus), and otter (Lutra canadensis) for the carnivores, and caribou (Rangifer arcticus), porcupine (Erethizon dorsatum), hare (Lepus spp.), beaver (Castor canadensis), musquash or muskrat (Ondatra zibethica), and red squirrel (Sciurus hudsonicus) for herbivores.

McLean's list included lynx (Lynx canadensis), "extremely rare", and, among the bears, "Grizzle" and "Arctic" as well as "Black". His Arctic bear is, of course, the polar bear (Thalarctos maritimus), properly speaking a marine mammal, although it is often found along coasts and occasionally inland (Lewis and Douth 1942; Harper 1961: 110-112). The grizzly bear is something of a mystery, perhaps a recently extinct species (Elton 1954; Harper 1961: 104-110), for there is no contemporary record of it in the region.

Surprisingly, McLean does not mention mice and lemmings, which are at the base of the food chain of the predators. The study of their cycles of population and of the relation of these cycles to the populations of larger animals is the chief subject of Elton's fascinating monograph, Voles, mice and lemmings (Elton 1942). In it, he presents a mass of statistical information related to the ecology of the northern half of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula (which he terms Ungava) taken from the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company and of their rivals during the early twentieth century, Revillon Frères, of the Moravian missionaries, of departments of the Government of Canada, and from the published literature. He develops his arguments with powerful persuasion, from many points of view, and always with a delightful grace and humour.

Although all the animals of the peninsula had some importance in the fur trade, either as suppliers of pelts or as food for fur-bearing predators, only a few of them figured largely in the returns of the Ungava venture. Of these, marten was by far the most important. It was the most numerous pelt traded - more than 10,000 were brought to market - and it accounted for more than half the value of the fur returns.

The marten is omnivorous and likes wooded country. It eats squirrels, mice, shrews, rabbits, birds and their eggs, insects, and it can even catch fish (Peterson 1966: 2521). "In contrast to the thousands of Martens taken for the fur trade, a pitifully small number ever reach museums. It is this great dearth of museum material that constitutes a serious and long-standing obstacle to the determination of the ranges of the subspecies" (Harper 1961: 112). Harper quotes Hagmeier's opinion that the identification of the subspecies *M. a. brumalis*, which is supposed to occupy the parkland and forest-tundra of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, is "complete arbitrary" (Hagmeier 1958: 1). It was this variation or subspecies of the marten that formed the most valuable part of Fort Chimo's returns and on the quality of which Governor Simpson commented so favourably and frequently. When the first returns came to market, one lot of 186 marten sold at 34/3d. each, "an exceptionally high price" (Williams

1963: lxxi, n.7). The marten is easy to trap but, in common with furs of all kinds, except beaver and muskrat, they

are at their best in the early winter. New fur replaces the short summer hair in the fall, growing to its full length and completely covering the animal by late November or early December. Later on there is a tendency for some of the fur to wear off, especially the top hair in long-haired animals. ... The later in the season it gets, the looser both the top hair and the underfur become in their attachment to the skin and the more likely they are to come out. They also become more brittle and prone to break off. The rumps, shoulders and sides are the parts of an animal most likely to show this "rubbing" (Ruttle 1968: 15-16).

The marten is subject to a ten-year cycle of abundance and scarcity in most of its North American territory, but in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, instead of the ten-year cycle, there is "a short abrupt fluctuation of three to five years" (Elton 1942: 273). The cycle is not clearly evident in the Ungava returns, 1830-1942, owing to the intermittent attention the Naskapi Indians gave to the trapping of them. However, 1842 appears to have been a peak year here as it was for the Moravian traders on the coast of Labrador (*ibid.*: 275-276).*

In an interesting aside, Thomas Corcoran, reporting on Outfit 1837 at Fort George, complained of the lack of marten and fox. "... one of the most sensible Indians" assigned

* The returns in marten at Fort Chimo were: 1830, none; 1831-1832, 1,058; 1833, 288; 1834, 429; 1835, 310; 1836, 206; 1837, 260; 1838, 1,443; 1839, 1,741; 1840, 592; 1841, 1,659; 1842, 2,595.

1957: Jaxl, n.7). The writer is easy to trap but, in common with two of all kinds, except beaver and muskrat, they are at their best in the early winter. The fur replaces the short summer hair in the fall, growing to its full length and completely covering the animal by late November or early December. Later on there is a tendency for some of the fur to wear off, especially the top hair in long-haired animals. ... The fur in the season it gets, was looser both the top hair and the underfur became in their attachment to the skin and the more likely they are to come out. They also become more brittle and prone to break off. The writer, however, and other writers have noted that the fur of an animal does likely to show this "ruffling" (Austin 1958: 12-16).

The writer is subject to a ten-year cycle of abundance and scarcity in most of the North American territory, but in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, instead of the ten-year cycle there is a short abrupt fluctuation of three to five years (Austin 1957: 273). The cycle is not clearly evident in the Ungava returns, 1870-1945, owing to the infrequent attention the Eskimo Indians gave to the trapping of them. However, this appears to have been a peak year as it was for the Eskimo Indians on the coast of Labrador (Austin 1957: 273). In an interesting aside, Thomas Gordon, reporting on the fur trade at Fort George, complained of the lack of marten and fox. "... one of the most sensitive Indians" assigned

in return in return of Fort George notes: 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 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Fox returns of the Ungava venture

Outfit	Silver	Cross	Red	Blue	White	Total	References
1832 ¹	34	68	102	4	416 ²	624	B38/z/1/284 B239/h/1/42
1833						154	A51/13/92
1834						775	A51/31/186 A51/14/79-80
1835	27	45	60		313	445	A15/32/26 A51/16/138 B38/z/1/8
1836						928	A51/16/138 A51/33/197 A54/111/25,27,29
1837						200	A15/34/246
1838	2	11	22	6	629	670	A15/35/223 CN 107/10/2 ³
1839	19	41	73	6	866	1005 ⁴	A15/37/209 CN 107/10/2
1840	25	38	71	5	744	883	A15/38/237,254 B134/b/9/36-37
1841 ⁵						419	A15/39/238,278
1842						612	A15/40/203
						<u>6715</u>	(total number of foxes brought to market)

1. Outfit 1832 includes returns of Outfit 1831.
2. B239/h/1/42 gives 407 white fox.
3. A document, copied from data in archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the Bureau of Animal Population, Oxford.
4. A15/37/209 gives a total of 1001 fox.
5. B134/b/9/36-37 gives an incomplete break-down of the fur returns for the outfit.

It is extremely rare. Both the silver and cross phases occur with increasing frequency toward the northern part of the coloured fox's range (Peterson 1966: 205-208)

The three colours or phases of fox are hereditary varieties, and not separate species. There is no colour bar in these fox populations. Silver, cross, and red mate together; whether with equal enthusiasm we do not know, but certainly they do.... (Elton 1942: 280).

McLean had realized that these foxes of many colours were actually of but two species.

The report I have had, both from natives and white trappers, confirm the opinion that certain varieties of the fox belong to the same species - such as the black, silver, cross, and red; all of which have been found in the same nest, but never any of the white or blue. The former, too, are distinguished for their cunning and sagacity; while the latter are very stupid, and fall an easy prey to the trapper; a circumstance of itself sufficient to prove a difference of species (Wallace, ed. 1932: 253).

The rare silver fox was the most valuable fur, individually, brought to market during the 1830's. In 1836, two fine silver fox skins from Ungava got £25-5-0 each and the next two lots, of nine skins each, got, respectively, £22-5-0 and £24-10-0 a piece (A54/111/25). These few very valuable furs did much to enhance the profitability of fox furs generally. In the five outfits for which there is a description of the colours of fox sold (see table of fox returns), the majority of them are white fox (2,968 white fox out of a total of 3,627 fox, or just

over 80%). White fox, although easy to trap in large numbers, was not, unfortunately, worth much at this period and was lumped with other foxes and sold in large lots at prices between five and ten shillings each (A54/111/26-30).

After a penetrating analysis of the statistics of fur returns of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1868-1924, and of Revillon Frères, 1913-1924, in the region of Ungava Bay, Elton concluded that the populations of the two species of fox

practically always ... went up and down together. ... the connexion was very close, and can hardly be ascribed to purely trading influences, since there was such a wide difference in collecting grounds, and different bias in the Indian and Eskimo hunts. It is not necessary to flog any further the dead Ungava fox. I think that any reasonable panel of biologists would agree that Ungava had for these fifty-seven years a real, terrific, oscillation in foxes, that had formed one of the chief themes of life of people living in that region; and that it had a cycle usually of from three to four years (Elton 1942: 423).

He then continued, in a further chapter, to demonstrate that the cycle of fox population rested on the cycle of the mice and lemmings.

Third - a very distant third - among the returns in value, but only sixth in numbers of skins traded, was otter. Less than 800 skins of this water-loving animal were brought to market. It was, like the marten, a superior fur and got high prices. Perhaps it was less common than the marten but, more likely, it was less easily trapped (Harper 1961: 121-124).

Fourth in value and third in number of skins were deer-skins, that is, caribou hides. More than 5,000 deer-skins were taken to market and, although the sum they realized was not great (about £900), this animal was, in certain respects, the most valuable of all the natural resources of the region, for it sustained the Indians, and it formed an essential part of the food of the Eskimos and of the traders themselves. The skins, being heavy, bulky and difficult to transport any distance, must all have been taken very near Fort Chimo. Probably the traders obtained the greatest number of them by their own efforts, for they resisted paying the Indians for them, hoping thereby to encourage them to hunt marten.

There are many descriptions of the caribou herds of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Elton (1942: 362-389) and Harper (1961: 129-144) have summarized and commented on this extensive literature. Today, what appear to have been three main herds of caribou are reduced to tiny fractions of their former numbers and they no longer follow their migratory habits, which McLean described in his Notes.

There are two varieties of the rein-deer - the migratory, and the stationary or wood-deer: the latter is a much larger animal, but not abundant; the former are extremely numerous, migrating in herds at particular seasons, and observing certain laws on their march, from which they seldom deviate. The does make their appearance at Ungava [Loksoak] River generally in the beginning of March, coming from the west, and directing their course over the barren grounds near the coast, until they reach

George's River, where they halt to bring forth their young, in the month of June. Meantime the bucks, being divided into separate herds, pursue a direct course through the interior, for the same river, and remain scattered about on the upper parts of it until the month of September, when they assemble, and proceed slowly towards the coast. By this time the does move onward towards the interior, the fawns having now sufficient strength to accompany them, and follow the banks of George's River until they meet the bucks, when the rutting season commences, in the month of October; the whole then proceed together, through the interior, to the place whence they came (Wallace, ed. 1932: 253-254).

McLean's view that there were two varieties of caribou is supported by science. The most recent investigator of caribou taxonomy has concluded that Rangifer is one circum-polar species, with a number of sub-specific variations (Sanfield 1962). Formerly there were thought to be two species in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, the eastern woodland caribou (R. caribou caribou) and the barren-ground caribou (R. caboti) (Harper 1961: 129, 139).

Eskimos brought in the items that were fifth, seventh, eighth, and ninth in order of value in the returns. They were, respectively, rendered oil from marine mammals, walrus and narwhal ivory, sealskins, and whalebone. Together these items earned just over £800. The trade with the Eskimos might have been very much greater than it was, if the traders had encouraged them as heartily as they encouraged the Maskapis. The remaining products brought to market were not sufficiently numerous or profitable to merit discussion

George's River, where they halt to bring forth their young, in the month of June. ... being divided into separate herds, ... a direct course through the interior, ... same river, and remain scattered about on the upper parts of it until the month of November, when they assemble, and proceed slowly towards the coast. ... By this time the deer have become towards the interior, the term being not sufficient strength to accompany them, and follow the banks of George's River until they meet the banks, when the killing season commences. In the month of October, the whole herd proceed together, through the interior, to the place whence they came (Killico, ed. 1833: 25-26).

here. They will be found listed below in a discussion of the economics of the Ungava venture.

A word should, nevertheless, be said about an animal that was conspicuous in its relative absence, the beaver. Why the beaver should be so scarce in the interior of the peninsula is unknown. There have been few studies anywhere of the factors that control distribution and population of this valuable animal, and none at all in the interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, although recently a programme of research has been undertaken in the lower Rupert River basin (Drolet 1965). The animal's spread seems likely to have been inhibited by the physical conditions of the interior, for alder, one of its preferred foods, is abundant around lakes and along streams in the valleys of the plateau. Finlayson, somewhat exaggerating Erlandson's report of 1834, had described parts of the country south of Fort Chimo as abundant in beaver. But the returns speak for his error: only 219 were brought to market.

The few bears caught supplied a meat that the Indians especially liked. Porcupine was taken when found, both to eat and for its useful and decorative quills. These animals, which are slow and can be killed with a stick, were sought when ammunition was low. And finally the snowshoe rabbit, although rare, was snared for food in the interior (Elton 1942: 254-255; Rousseau 1961: 58). Around Fort Chimo the

Arctic hare was plentiful, but it occurred only very rarely in the interior (Harper 1961: 36-37).

Birds formed some part and fish a very important part of the diet of the natives and of the traders and, therefore, by reducing the expense of importing provisions, may be considered an aspect of the returns of the fur trade. Willow and rock ptarmigan (Lagopus lagopus and L. mutus) and spruce grouse (Canachites canadensis) were sometimes plentiful about the posts in winter and were then shot or trapped in nets (Godfrey 1966: 107-112). But, according to McLean, these birds, which he called partridges, "cannot be trusted to as a means of living, as every part of the country affords them food, and when much annoyed at one place they move off to another" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 261). In the spring, when the ducks and geese passed by just after break-up on the inland lakes, they made a welcome change from winter fare. But the main fly-way for the migrating wildfowl lay along the coasts of Hudson Bay, where they were, at this period, an essential part of the people's diet and, in feathers, formed a voluminous part of the trade returns (Barnston 1861).

McLean was interested in the possibility of marketing eider down. In 1840 he asked what the price of it was and added that he then had 200 or 300 pounds of it and had just learned the method of cleaning it (B38/b/2/79). Governor Simpson replied loftily that the price of eider down, like

the price of everything else, depended upon its quality. Let it be sent clean to market, he said, and "the proceeds will shew you how far the collection of it should be encouraged" (B38/b/3/3). But the experiment came to nothing, for the post was closed soon after this exchange.

One of the annual duties at every post was the autumn fishery. At Fort Chimo, they do not seem to have fished the Koksoak River near the post, finding the current too rapid and the nets filled with seaweed (B38/e/2/1). Anderson, just before closing Fort Chimo, remarked that the salmon (Salmo salar) taken were "exceedingly large & rich", but that they could not preserve more than they caught in one net (B38/a/8/63). It appears, from this remark, that with better nets or better knowledge of techniques they might have turned the salmon run to practical advantage. But they did fish for trout (Cristovomer namaycush and Salvelinus fontinalis) and white fish (Coregonus clupeiiformis) in the lakes within a twenty-mile radius of the post. Finding the places in them where the fish gathered each autumn to spawn was a matter of patience and luck. They learned that

Where Fisheries have been established, an extraordinary decrease has been annually experienced. Our principal station produced 1100 white fish last autumn, the preceeding year 3000, and this autumn only 250! This falling off has been felt in every Lake where Fisheries have been established even for a couple of Seasons (B38/e/5/6d).

On occasions when the fall fishery had been small and other provisions were inadequate, they had to string their nets below the ice. Until 1948, the native method was "still the laborious procedure of digging holes in the ice every 5-10 feet and pushing a pole from hole to hole to take the first line under the ice" (Dunbar and Hildebrand 1953: 88). The ice cover on the lakes, in 1948, varied between 42 and 54 inches, and the variation appeared to be inversely correlated with depth of snow cover (ibid.: 87).

The fishery occurred at an inconvenient time, when many tasks to prepare for winter had to be undertaken at the same time. At Fort Nascope, the men were sometimes delayed in their return from Esquimaux Bay and had little time for fishing before freeze-up. In the interior the lakes were larger and the fishing returns were more stable. At Fort Nascope, they were usually able to preserve between 3,000 and 6,000 pounds of fish (B139/a/4/2d), whereas at Fort Chimo the returns were usually less than 3,000 pounds.

Fishing was the last resort of the Indians, when they happened to miss the caribou during the autumn migrations, they must then draw their living from the lakes, with unremitting toil - boring the ice, which is sometimes from eight to nine feet thick, for the purpose of setting their hooks, and perhaps not taking a single fish after a day's hard work. Nevertheless, they must still continue their exertions till they succeed, shifting their hooks from one part of the lake to another, until every spot is searched. They understand

the art of setting nets under the ice perfectly. Towards the latter end of December, however, the fish gain the deep water, and remain still to the latter end of March. Not a fish enters the net during this period (Wallace, ed. 1932: 261).

The records of the Hudson's Bay Company, the reports of the natives, and the published accounts of later travellers in the region are virtually unanimous in asserting that no confidence was to be placed in local resources of food. That there was food in the caribou and other animals, birds, and fish, no one doubted. In fortunate seasons, natives, traders and travellers have lived in plenty. But in bad years, without imported provisions, the traders went on short rations and, but for good fortune, more than once might have starved, as the Indians had starved before their arrival and continued to do so until modern times (Elton 1942: 357-359).

Life and travel

In this rigorous environment, the simple problems of day-to-day existence occupied the majority of the traders' waking hours and a large part of their energy. Hauling water, cooking and baking, washing and mending, felling trees and cutting firewood, fishing and hunting were daily chores with which everyone at a remote post was more or less engaged. There were also many tasks of an intermittent nature, such as building and repairing their log houses and stores, making

and mending nets, attempts at gardening, looking after dogs, and searching the forest for suitable wood to make such things as axe, adze, and spear handles, gunstocks, staves, tent poles, canoe paddles and poles, snowshoes, dog-sleds, flat or man-hauled sleds, and canoes. Building a canoe involved gathering "crooked wood", usually suitably shaped roots, for the canoe stems, wattape (spruce roots) for sewing and spruce gum for caulking the canoe. Merely keeping alive was a full-time occupation in circumstances that required near-total self-sufficiency.

There remained, of course, the actual conduct of the fur trade and its manifold activities. Treating with the natives, whether or not they had furs, was a time-consuming process. Storekeeping, in which some goods were traded, some were given as presents, and others still were traded on credit, was a complicated process not easily reduced to accounts. There were servants' bills, inventories, indents, letters, and reports to write. Cleaning, sorting, and packing furs received in trade was a tedious but essential part of the business. The servants at each post were regularly sent out to camps in winter to support themselves by fishing and hunting and to undertake what trapping they could manage at the same time. Through incompetence, laziness, or bad seasons for fishing and trapping, the servants' hunts never amounted to very much, and they were frequently driven by need

to return to the post. It was then that they were obliged to rely on imported provisions, which were supposed to be used only during journeys when there was not time to fish and hunt for food.

In addition to these sedentary or localized occupations, there was the serious work of exploring routes into the Quebec-Labrador peninsula and of transporting men and goods to outposts in the interior. The traders, in their attempts to accomplish these ends, were, for a long time, baffled and frustrated by the physical conditions of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Their experience of wilderness travel had been gained in country that was very different from the high, flat, lake-strewn plateau that stretched with bewildering monotony over awesome distances. The similarity of lakes and rivers, the sameness of tree-lined shores, the rarity of conspicuous landmarks in a uniform physiography combine to confuse the traveller. Even today, with the aid of modern maps based on aerial photographs, travel through this undifferentiated country is difficult.

Long pedestrian journeys across a landscape of this nature are virtually impossible in summer - quite impossible if economy of time is an important factor. Winter journeys on snowshoes, on the other hand, are relatively easy, for then the swamps, bogs, and lakes are transformed from interruptions to travel into avenues for it. Erlandson

in 1834 and McLean in 1838 crossed overland in winter from Fort Chimo to Esquimaux Bay by this means. But they found the snow, within the wooded valleys and on the smaller lakes, so deep and soft that they never attempted to carry the heavy pieces of a trading outfit inland by dog-sled. For this essential task they had no other means of transportation than canoes and for canoes they had first to find navigable lake-and-river routes.

The problems of getting inland were, in their elements, simple enough. It was a question of paddling, tracking, and portaging a canoe and baggage from tide-water up to the central plateau of the peninsula, which stood at some 1,500 feet or more above sea level. Once on the plateau, it was possible to travel in nearly any direction by the

innumerable irregularly shaped lakes, which vary in size from ponds to lakes hundred of square miles in extent. The lakes of each valley are connected by a stream, usually with a rapid current and without definite banks, following the lowest levels of the surface between lake and lake. As the streams become larger they are often split into numerous channels by large islands; many of the lakes discharge by two or more outlets flowing into the next lake below. There results a bewildering network of waterways hard to follow or map. These streams are seldom broken by falls; and as an example of the uniformity of the grade, it may be mentioned that the Hamilton River above the Grand Falls can be ascended to the heads of both its main branches without a portage (Low 1909: 51).

The Naskapi Indians proved unreliable as guides and unhelpful as canoeemen. The traders could, sometimes, find a reluctant

guide to assist exploration but they had to find out by trial and error, virtually unaided by the Indians, which routes were best suited for transporting goods. Trial and error was a slow and painful method of search, with one route into the interior after another tried and found wanting. In fact, there was no single route that was obviously best and they finally had to use a supply route that was the best of all the possibilities.

Broadly speaking, there are four directions of access to the trapezoid of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. That from the south was used by the Indians. With their light canoes and indifference to efficient use of time, they were able to follow some of the very steep rivers that pour down from the Laurentide Scarp to the St. Lawrence River. The Hudson's Bay Company, however, never attempted to carry an outfit inland from the south.

The Company had limited success from the west. The major rivers flowing into Hudson Bay had been explored during the two decades before Fort Chimo was built and, in 1816, Thomas Ishbister established a post at Lake Nichicun, about 1,700 feet above sea level.

Parties from the [Eastmain] coast with trade canoes took seven or eight weeks to make the journey upstream by Nichicun by way of Rupert River, negotiating more than seventy portages as well as narrow creeks and shallow lakes where submerged rocks threatened to rip open the bottoms of their canoes. In 1835 a new route along the Eastmain River was tried, but with even less success (Williams 1963: lxxii).

The post at Lake Nichicun was closed from 1822 to 1834, when the Company re-opened it and built an outpost at Lake Kaniapiskau with the intention of communicating through them with Fort Chimo (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 313-316). But the post at Lake Kaniapiskau proved to be the limit of canoe supply from Hudson Bay, and there was never any communication between these posts and Ungava Bay.

When, in 1828, Hendry had explored an overland route from Hudson Bay to Ungava Bay, he had to make 29 portages from Richmond Gulf to the height of land and another 24 in descending Larch River to Ungava Bay (Williams 1963: 11v). It was plain that Fort Chimo could never be supplied from Hudson Bay and supplies for the Company's attempt to exploit the interior from the north had to be brought by ship. But it proved as impossible to dominate the interior from the north as from the south and west. Erlandson had required four small canoes and eleven men to carry an outfit of only 18 pieces to establish Fort Nascopie on Lake Petitsikapau, "which insufficient means of transport", McLean observed, "entirely precluded the possibility of supplying the [interior] District, or even a Single Out Post, with anything equal to an ample Outfit" (B38/e/5/2d). Under McLean's direction, the traders explored canoe routes up the Kaniapiskau-Swampy Bay River system, the Whale River drainage, and the George River drainage as means of reaching Lake Petitsikapau.

They repeatedly found the upper reaches of these routes too shoal for canoes and more than once had to abandon their attempt to reach Fort Nascope from Fort Chimo or to leave part of their baggage behind.

There are few activities more pleasant than paddling a canoe down a smooth fast stream or around a lake, but the work of tracking and portaging a canoe upstream may be unfavourably compared with the labour of Sisyphus, whose boulder was, at least, neither fragile nor perishable. The course of his work did not lie along the bed of a mountainous stream nor, in the legend, is there any mention of mosquitoes and black flies. Difficult though this work be, all other discomforts of wilderness travel pale beside the continuous torment offered by the hordes of biting insects. This scourge, being beyond easy description, is scarcely mentioned in the reports and letters relating to the Ungava venture.

These biting insects, mosquitoes (Culex and Aedes) and black flies (Simulium, Prosimulium, and Cnethia) are well known in all sub-Arctic zones and have provoked many a heart-felt cry from tortured writers who have described these regions. If clear scientific evidence is lacking that the insect hordes of the interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula are unique in the extremity of their numbers and blood-thirstiness, there is at least literary evidence to support

the contention (Cooke 1954). Of the two, black flies are by far the worse affliction. Rousseau, in phrases that contrive to omit the hysterical tone many writers have brought to the subject, has described them well.

Les mouches noires qu'on respire, qu'on éternue et qui nous laissent ensanglantés, font presque oublier les nuées de maringouins. Le temps d'avaler une tasse de chocolat, trente bestioles y tombent. On ne peut fermer un carnet de notes sans hécatombe. Le ciel en est parfois obscurci au point de rendre la photographie impossible. Immobilisé dans la tente un jour de pluie, en quête de statistiques, après une simple vaporisation de D.D.T., j'ai évalué à plus de dix mille les cadavres gisant dans la petite tente (Rousseau 1964: 49).

It is not too much to suggest that, before the development of modern insect repellents, these insects caused greater suffering than the intensity of winter cold.

Finally, in 1842, McLean discovered a practicable canoe route to the interior from the eastern side of the peninsula. Instead of spending weeks tracking and portaging up increasingly shallow streams to the plateau, he found, at Big Hill, below Grand Falls on the Hamilton River, a portage where it was possible to gain in a few days' hard work about 1,000 feet of elevation, the greater part of the ascent to the plateau. This portage, no doubt rightly described as "purgatory on earth" (Connolly n.d.: 131), led from the deep valley of the Hamilton River to a series of small lakes on the plateau itself. The traders could then take their canoes

through these lakes back to the Hamilton River above the Grand Falls. They never attempted to supply Fort Chimo by this route and probably it would have been impossibly difficult to carry supplies overland so far in one summer.

There is, in respect of the fur trade, less to say of the problems the Indians had to face in living and travelling through the interior. Unlike the traders, who tried to get from one place to another with maximum speed, the Indians were living what was to them an ordinary life while on the move. They travelled as families, moving slowly, stopping where convenient, with no fixed plan of movement and no schedule tighter than that imposed by the seasons. They had little baggage and found their food along the way. They knew the country, or such parts of it as held food enough for them, and they had in their understanding of the behaviour and movements of the animals a resource unknown to the traders.

Their independence was offensive to the traders. Yet, it is from the Indians' point of view that the problems of travel ought to be regarded. It was during the winter, especially the early winter, when days were shortest, snow fell most often and lay deep and soft in the forest, when, in short, travel was at its hardest, that the traders wanted them to abandon the security of the caribou herds and turn to hunting the inedible marten in the hungry country of the interior. As Finlayson admitted, the Naskapis agreed

that the country south of Fort Chimo was "a Fur Country, but [they] say nothing else can be got in it except Frogs" (B38/e/2/13). It is not, on reflection, surprising that the Indians refused to leave Fort Chimo when caribou were plentiful there.

for the Norsemen, the first Europeans to see among them. Indeed, the colonizing enterprise of the Greenlanders in Vinland, begun about 1000 A.D., was abandoned after a few years because of the superior numbers of the natives (called Skraelings by the Norse), whose society the Norse settlers had envied. By the mid-16th century, however, the European rediscovery of the coast of northeastern North America was limited not to superior raw material, but to superior strategy, tactics, and social organization.

In eastern Canada, as elsewhere in the Americas, the natives were, what might be called, "civilized" in the sense that they had a social organization, a political structure, and a system of exchange. However, the Indians of the northern forests had a social organization that was able to preserve itself with equal vigor at this time as it had done in the past. Until our own day, the Indians have retained their own way of life. The new civilization that has come to this part of the world is a result of the fact that the Indians required the assistance of the white man. But, for the trader's purposes, it

III

THE NATIVE PEOPLES

The natives of Greenland and of the New World were a match in warfare for the Norsemen, the first Europeans to come among them. Indeed, the colonising enterprise of the Greenlanders in Vinland, begun about 1000 A.D., was abandoned after a few years because of the superior numbers of the natives (called Skraelings by the Norse), whose enmity the Norse settlers had aroused. By the mid-16th century, however, the European rediscoverers of the coasts of northeastern North America were superior to the Indians and Eskimos in arms, means of transport, strategy, and social organization.

In eastern Canada, as everywhere in the Americas, the natives, whatever resistance they might offer, were ultimately obliged to submit to economic, political, and cultural domination by emigrants from the Old World and by the ever-increasing number of their descendants. However, the Indians of the northern forests and the Eskimos of the Arctic coasts were able to preserve longer than their southern neighbours their own cultures and ways of life. Until our own day, the single resource of value in their vast territories was the light, easily portable pelt of fur-bearing animals. To gather the harvest of pelts, the trader required the assistance of the wandering natives. But, for the trader's purposes, it

was not necessary for the natives to modify essentially their way of life. It was enough for the natives to turn their primary attention from the hunting of large mammals for meat to the trapping of small mammals for fur. Even this relatively modest adaptation of native life was difficult to introduce to the Indians of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula.

It was fortunate for the incorporators of the Hudson's Bay Company that the fur their servants first chiefly sought was beaver, and it was doubly fortunate that the Indians with whom they dealt from the first were those of the Rupert River district, inhabitants of lands rich in beaver. The beaver and the muskrat are the only fur-bearing animals in Canada that occur in large static populations and yield not only a saleable pelt but also a nourishing meat. And in the whole arc of the Hudson Bay coast, only the Indians of the southern Hudson Bay and James Bay lowlands could turn for even part of the year to hunting a fur-bearing animal, the beaver, almost to the exclusion of other animals, without fear of starvation.

The officers of the Hudson's Bay Company realized only slowly that in the interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula they had found a situation that was, in some important respects, new to them. Not only were the conditions imposed by the physical geography of the region more rigorous than they were, in general, used to, but the natives also, in their material and social cultures, differed from their distant relatives

south and west of Hudson Bay.

The Indians in question were members of Algonkian linguistic stock, a group that includes the Abnakis, Micmacs, Malecites, Algonquins, Ojibways, and Swampy Bay Crees and that occupied most of eastern Canada and parts of northern New England. This northernmost group of the Algonkians is known to history as the Naskapi Indians, a name variously spelled.* The first ethnological study of the Naskapi and of the Ungava Bay Eskimos was prepared by L.M. Turner (1894) of the Smithsonian Institution, work based on his residence in Fort Chimo between 1882 and 1884. Earlier published comment on these people, except for the remarks of John McLean (Wallace, ed. 1932), had been little more than passing acknowledgement of their existence. The archives of the Hudson's Bay Company remain a virtually unmined source of anthropological information about them.

Much has been written on whether or not the Naskapis, who occupied the central height of land and the forested upper reaches of northward-draining rivers, are a group distinct from their southern relatives, the Montagnais, who traditionally occupied the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River and the upper reaches of the rivers tributary to the St. Lawrence.

* Dyke (1967: 80) lists nineteen spellings of the name. The spelling used by F.G. Speck is preferred by most modern authors and is used here.

The consensus of anthropologists, as well as the opinion of anyone who is acquainted with both groups, is that, despite differences owing to geographical separation, the two groups are essentially indistinguishable (Harper, 1964: 3-13).

However these Indians may be categorized from an anthropological or linguistic point of view, for present purposes they may be considered as distinct but related groups, for it was in this manner that the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company regarded them. The Naskapis traded principally first at Fort Chimo, then at Fort Nascopeie, and at the satellite posts of these main depots. The Montagnais traded almost exclusively at North West River and at the King's Posts. The Eastmain Indians (whom anthropologists consider to be closely related to Montagnais and Naskapis, but distinctive in themselves) traded into posts of the Eastmain and Rupert River districts but sometimes visited the northern posts. The Indians of Lake Mistassini play no part in these pages nor, more surprisingly, do those trading into the outposts at Lake Nichicun and Lake Kaniapiskau.

When Fort Chimo was established, the Naskapi Indians numbered only 250 to 300 persons. Erlandson reported that about 50 Indians visited the post in 1833 (B38/e/1/2). In 1834, Finlayson compiled a list of 51 Indians (B38/z/1). These numbers must refer to hunters alone. In 1844, the Indians, who went "by the name of Nascopies", numbered

64 married men, 74 married women, 73 lads and boys, and 65 girls (B153/b/2/15), a total population of 276 persons or 4.3 times the number of married men. If all the married men reported in 1844 were hunters, there was a rather surprising increase of fourteen hunters over the figures given by Erlandson eleven years earlier. But perhaps a few, at least, of the married men listed in 1844 were too old or infirm to hunt, and it is possible also that a few families had not yet visited Fort Chimo by 1833.

Indians visited Fort Chimo for the first time on 11 September 1831. They were evidently used to trading: they had been at an outpost of Lake Mistassini and some of them had visited Okak that same summer. "They brought nothing but a few parchment deerskins, for which they demanded a high price" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 157). More Indians came in mid-November, and they also brought only deerskins (*ibid.*: 161). Finally, in May 1832, Indians traded their first furs, martens, otters, and deerskins. Finlayson, in his very first remarks on the Indians, wrote: "I really would venture more on the faith of an Esquimaux than on that of an Indian" (*ibid.*: 157), a feeling that his and his successors' later experiences confirmed.

At the end of Outfit 1832, Finlayson complained that they were "the most suspicious and faithless set of Indians I ever had to deal with" (B38/e/1/2). Worse still,

... they are abject slaves to rum and tobacco and are fond of finery. They are a suspicious, deceitful and thievish set of Indians, and no confidence is to be put in anything they say. They have always varied in their information respecting the Country when often questioned of the same subject. It will be very readily perceived by this account of the Indians, that they must be sharply dealt with before they are properly domesticated... (B38/e/1/2d).

"They are a lying overreaching thievish set and are a Stricking [sic] contrast to the poor unsuspecting honest character of their neighbours the Esquimaux" (B38/e/2/11).

Erlandson, who had spent the winter of 1832-1833 at South River House, a temporary outpost of Fort Chimo, agreed: "As to their character, I shall simply say they are the most deceitful, lying, thievish race of Indians I ever dealt with, proud, independent" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 23). Four years later, he added, "Without exception, the Ungava Indians are such habitual liars, that they cannot, on the most common occasions, and when their interests are not concerned, speak the truth" (B38/e/4/4d).

McLean reported his impression that "In common with most Indians they are filthy in their Persons and general Habits, but of all Indians, to these the palm of superlative filthiness must be yielded" (B38/e/5/8). He held them to be also "the most loquacious of all Indians ... the loudest speaker having always the best argument, requiring only to exercise the strength of his Lungs, not his reason, to gain his point

for they all chatter together at the same time" (B38/e/5/8d).

Differing from all other Indians in most respects, the difference invariably to their disadvantage, they also differ in the manner in which they receive a "white Chief" who may happen to enter their disgusting Lodges, every eye stares at him but not a Hand or Foot moves to offer him any accommodation, he sits or stands as he pleases, & after the first feeling of curiosity is over, he is no more noticed than one of their domestic Curs! (B38/e/5/8-8d).

"Were I to value each Marten a skin [i.e., one made beaver]," Finlayson reported in 1833, "they say they would hunt fur animals; but so long as they can supply their wants by trading leather and meat, they will be indifferent about hunting anything else besides deer..." (B38/e/1/2d). But, in fact, he was at that moment relying on them to supply Fort Chimo with meat because he had no post hunter, nor would any of the Indians consent to hunt regularly for the post. During the next outfit, he complained that "No persuasion could induce them ... to leave the Coast [where they were hunting caribou] for the Interior to hunt Furs" (B38/e/2/2). The Indians had "no zeal to make good hunts, as soon as they can procure a sufficient number of Martens or other Furs to buy a quantity of Ammunition enough to last them a certain period they rest satisfied. Their only talk is about Deer and Deer hunting" (B38/e/2/10).

In 1838, McLean substantially repeated Finlayson's complaints. Their "roving about" he considered,

... encourages a spirit of independence, which prevents the Gentlemen in this quarter from introducing regulations, that might tend to make them more industrious, a result which it is now sufficiently well known kind treatment alone can never produce. Fear and a thorough conviction of their dependence upon us, in conjunction with kind treatment judiciously applied might have some effect in producing a change for the better (B38/e/5/10).

Before the Ungava venture, the Naskapis had been in the habit of sending some of their elderly men down to the trading posts along the St. Lawrence River's north shore with the furs they had killed and "from this circumstance, a certain degree of consideration became attached to the Parties so entrusted, which ultimately obtained for them the designation of Chiefs, but the Title is not supported by the least authority" (B38/e/5/8).

Finlayson considered the Naskapis had been "spoiled" by the late opposition, that is, the North West Company, for they "demanded about 100 per cent above the H Bay standard [at Fort Chimo]" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 194). They had, in the past, generally visited the King's Posts or Esquimaux Bay in the winter and had "killed a sufficient number of Beaver otter and marten [on their way] to purchase a stock of necessary articles, such as guns, tobacco and ammunition; and, after their return hither in the following summer, never thought of hunting a skin until their necessities obliged them to start again for the above mentioned posts.

The consequence is these travellers alone know how to trap a beaver" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 232).

They were, McLean admitted, "extremely liberal towards each other" (B38/e/5/7d). A hunter brought whatever meat he had killed into camp to be equally shared by the community. "They are not Fur Hunters nor is the mode of Life they lead favorable to it, the Chace of the Deer leads them to the barren parts of the Country, while the Fur-bearing animals are only to be found in the Woods, moreover the favorite occupation furnishes them with all they require" (B38/e/5/7d). They did not require cloth, but wore caribou skin clothing. Their "extremely limited wants" extended only to guns, ammunition, tobacco, kettles, axes, and knives. "Nor do they appear anxious to obtain anything else we possess, unless by illicit means, for they are notorious thieves in addition to all their other good qualities" (B38/e/5/8).

The Naskapi Indians were, according to the united testimony of Finlayson, Erlandson, and McLean, suspicious, faithless, deceitful, lying, thievish, proud, independent, overreaching, filthy, and lazy. In support of the foregoing, many more observations, as unsympathetic and as unfavourable, might be added, both from the records of the Hudson's Bay Company and from the published literature.

What may be said in the Naskapis' favour? Elton's perceptive summary of the nature and scope of complaints

displeasure as they appear to have done nothing in the way of fur hunting." It appeared, however, when Alder returned, that one of the Indians had taken his debt at Fort Trial during the winter of 1839-1840, but he had imprudently traded his furs at Fort Chimo the following summer. "Such conduct as this made me his debtor for a threshing which he received accordingly as well as my hands and feet could give it" (B38/a/8/17d).

In the litany of human faults attributed to the Naskapis, one stands out as an anomaly, that is, the quality of independence. The traders were well used to Indians who were suspicious, to Indians who had, indeed, all of the vices claimed for the Naskapis, but they were not used to independent Indians. Although the Naskapis were said to be "abject slaves of rum and tobacco", that was a manner of speaking. They could do without rum and tobacco, just as they could do without or with very little of everything else the traders at Fort Chimo had to offer. Guns they already had and their only essential want was ammunition, which they could obtain elsewhere if they troubled to walk the distance. Fort Chimo was a convenience to them because it was near good caribou-hunting country, but its existence was by no means essential to them. The Indians could not, therefore, be persuaded, cajoled, bribed, or bullied into doing what they did not wish to do, so long as they had enough to eat.

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The material values of a subsistence hunter are all in terms of food, and to these Indians of the interior, food was caribou. If the traders had clearly understood the implications of this fact, they would perhaps have expected less and they might perhaps have learned how to obtain more. Mere liberality of payment, which Governor Simpson had insisted time and again was both the means of advancing trade and of civilizing the natives, was no comfort to an empty stomach. The relation of the Naskapi Indians to Fort Chimo is another example of Professor Rich's conclusion that "in trade with Indians the price mechanism did not work. They were hardened enough traders to exploit competition and an alternative market, but un-European in their reaction to better prices (Rich, 1960: 49).

What the Naskapis thought of the traders, although not beyond imagination, is certainly beyond the possibility of demonstration. Here were strangers come into their land who could not hunt and who, therefore, needed their help in getting meat. The strangers had goods to trade but, extraordinary to the Indian mind, they wanted, not meat only, but furs also, and, more extraordinary still, they wanted to pay less for the furs than the Indians knew they could get elsewhere. Finally, the traders expected the Indians to trade furs at times when the traders did not, in fact, have enough goods to trade for them. The absurdity of the

situation was not lost on Erlandson, but he found no humour in it.

Besides, being sometimes destitute of the most necessary articles of trading goods, being told at one time that a ship would arrive with necessary supplies, which did not arrive, at another time that men would arrive and a trading post be established in the interior, which proved equally fallacious, they began even at that early period to consider us a parcel of fools come hither to deceive them (B38/e/4/4).

The Naskapis were even less politically minded than their neighbours. They had no chiefs and no social organization larger than the family, which was, except in emergencies, self-sufficient. Sometimes a few families gathered together into small mobile bands. They had no enemies but Eskimos, and the Hudson's Bay Company had made peace between these ancient foes by arming the Eskimos. They had no formal alliances with other tribes and no social or ritual institutions to facilitate trade. Indeed, the only important element of their material culture lacking to them (before they began to depend upon ammunition for guns) was birchbark (Rousseau, 1964: 42). Because birchbark is too heavy and bulky to be transported raw in the way of trade, the Naskapis were accustomed to make, from time to time, a long journey southward to find it and bring it back in the form of a canoe. "If ever so liberally treated here", Finlayson wrote, "they will still visit the Posts on the Gulf unless I could furnish

them with Bark for their canoes" (B38/e/2/10).

In an attempt to gain some impression of emotional life among the northeastern Algonkians at the time of their first contacts with Europeans, Hallowell has analyzed the writings of early explorers and missionaries. Personality traits that emerge from his composite picture (Hallowell, 1946) are emotional restraint, inhibition, stoicism, desire to please, suppression of hostility, repression of anger, and independence of authority and of social pressure. These emotions found some release in such actions as slander, jeering, raillery, and laughter as substitutes for revenge and outlets of hostility and they led to forms of apparent deceitfulness in place of aggression or assertive behaviour.

The traders probably never suspected and certainly did not understand the essentially religious philosophy of these nomadic hunters, a world view described with much care by Speck, whose classic monograph, Naskapi, the savage hunters of the Labrador peninsula, represents a lifetime's work (Speck, 1935). Speck attempts to show how each Indian individually sought a harmony between the seen world and the unseen world and how his actions were influenced or governed by the presences of the unseen world, chiefly through dreams.

that the least exertion enables them to procure their very limited wants; and the skin of the rein-deer affords them the most comfortable clothing they could possess.

But McLean also saw their future, and he rightly prophesied that

As trading posts, however, are now established on their lands, I doubt not but artificial wants will, in time, be created, that may become as indispensable to their comfort as their present real wants. All the arts of the trader are exercised to produce such a result, and those arts never fail of ultimate success. Even during the last two years of my management, the demand for certain articles of European manufacture had greatly increased (Wallace, ed. 1932: 261-262).

It must have been these new-felt wants that brought the increase in martens during McLean's last years at Fort Chimo, culminating in the bumper crop in Outfit 1842.

The Eskimos

On 31 August 1830, when Eskimos learned for the first time of the existence of Fort Chimo and "the object of our visiting them, they expressed their joy by the most uncouth and frantic capers..." At the end of this jubilant introduction, Finlayson "told them to go and encamp a short distance from our camp, and they went off immediately, whooping and dancing as they went along" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 115). In his first annual report, Finlayson

recorded: "they are all the most honest and inoffensive Savages in the world, but great sensualists" (B38/e/1/3). Two years later, he added "It is really a pleasure to deal with the Esquimx. in comparison of the Indians whom no kindness can attach" (B38/b/2/38).

By 1833, about 50 hunters and their families, that is, about 200 Eskimos, had visited Fort Chimo (B38/e/1/3; B38/e/2/8). One of the first successes of Fort Chimo was the ending of the hostility that had existed from time out of mind between the Eskimos and the northern Indians. The two groups never became really friendly (and intermarriage, even in modern times, is a rare event), but they readily adapted to the truce.

Two families of Esquimeaux wintered alongside of us the last season [the winter of 1833-34]; they often visited the Indians while in our neighbourhood and been kindly treated, even the children visited alone and remained with them some nights; two of these were conveyed home and clothed in well dressed deerskins with a small present of smoke meat. This conduct was of course ascribed by the Esquimeaux to our influence over the Indians (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 229).

It was indeed a pity that the demand of the market in London was for marten from the interior and not for white fox from the coast of Ungava Bay, for the Eskimos took naturally to trade. Indeed, they always had traded among themselves and most of the first visitors had traded with the Moravians on the Labrador coast. The residents of

Tayocoyak Bay, about 20 miles west of Fort Chimo, used to take two years going to Okak and two years coming back. They also served as middlemen to Eskimos farther west, possibly to Eskimos as far west as those of the Richmond Gulf region (B38/e/1/3). By 1835, some of the Eskimos had themselves turned trader and "travel a long way to the Wd. along the Coast and out among the Islands for the sake of barter, by these means [Finlayson hoped] all the Esquimaux between this & Richmond [Gulf] will in a short time become fur hunters" (B38/b/2/24d). Three families had even said they intended to cross Hudson Strait "to see their friends and pass the news among them on that quarter" (*ibid.*).

When supplies were short at Fort Chimo during the winter of 1834-1835, the Eskimos paid in advance for the guns they wanted (B38/e/2/12). One of their number, commonly called Big Man in the post journal, attached himself to the post as a hunter from the beginning (B38/e/2/1). This "Esquemeaux homeguard" (as Finlayson described him) figured large in the fictionalized account of the establishment of Fort Chimo, a best-selling boys' book that Robert Ballantyne based on a narrative Finlayson, in his retirement, wrote for him on commission (Ballantyne, 1857: 111). Big Man became very useful to the traders as a messenger and handy man. In 1839, McLean sent him with a trading outfit to the west coast of Ungava Bay, but it proved a hard winter and the poor fellow

returned unsuccessful after having nearly starved during the course of the winter (B38/b/3/8d).

Finlayson early recognized that it would be difficult to the point of ^{IM}possibility for the Eskimos to bring to Fort Chimo more oil than they then did, for they lacked containers and the means of transporting any considerable volume of oil. It took all their time to gather enough oil and skins to live on, and they found very difficult the journey up the Koksoak River in their skin umiaks (B38/e/1/3). The regrettable fact was that the Eskimos had very little except white fox to offer, eager though they were to trade. Nor did the Hudson's Bay Company value highly the few items the Eskimos could bring them, a fact reflected in the traders supplying the Eskimos at a standard of trade lower by at least half than that they offered the Indians (B38/e/4/6).

IV

THE UNGAVA VENTURE, 1830-1843

"I beg to intimate that you are appointed to the charge of Ungava", began Governor Simpson in the letter of instruction he gave John McLean at Norway House on 30 June 1837. The Governor continued in the style typical of him,

The object of establishing Ungava was to open a Trade with the Esquimaux inhabiting the Coasts of Hudson Strait Ungava Bay & Labrador which in Articles of Oil, Ivory, Feathers, eider down, Foxes and other Furs was expected to become profitable, likewise with the view of hunting the inland Country situated between the upper parts of South River & Esquimaux Bay running parallel with the Labrador Coast behind the Moravian missions many parts of which we have ascertained to be rich in Beaver Martens Foxes, and other valuable Fur-bearing animals. As yet we have made little progress in the object for which the Establishment was formed owing to a variety of causes, the principal of which were its remote situation and the difficulty of providing it with supplies (B38/b/2/48; also D4/23/75-77).

The "little progress" was a sore disappointment to all concerned with the Ungava venture, especially to Governor Simpson, "the prime mover of the project" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 203). The first five years of Fort Chimo's existence, and the events leading to the post's establishment in 1830, are recounted in clear detail by Dr. Glyndwr Williams in his introduction to Northern Quebec and Labrador journals and correspondence, 1819-35 (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: xv-lxxix). It is here proposed to review the years 1830-1835

only briefly, for Dr. Williams has left little else to say on the course of events during those years.

From 1830 to 1836, the Ungava venture had been managed by Nicol Finlayson - or, rather, by an amiable partnership between Finlayson and his able assistant, Erland Erlandson. Inspection of Finlayson's reports and of his daily entries in the post journal shows that he took no active part in the exploration of the region nor in the heavy work around the post. He had, in fact, complained of ill health to Simpson and, in 1836, when he was about 41 years old, he was allowed to leave Ungava for that reason and, in the next year, to go on furlough (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 374-375).

Erlandson, on the other hand, could scarcely have been more energetic. At Finlayson's command, he made long and arduous exploratory journeys and he assumed without complaint the most difficult and onerous tasks connected with the establishment. Why Erlandson was not given permanent charge of the Ungava venture, on Finlayson's leaving, is puzzling.

In May 1834, Simpson had intended Thomas Corcoran to succeed Finlayson and he transferred Corcoran to Rupert House to be ready for the change (B38/b/2/11d). However, by December 1834, he had decided that Erlandson should succeed Finlayson (B38/b/2/24). But, in July 1836, he wrote to John Lee Lewes, "It has ... occurred to me that no one can be more fit for that charge [Fort Chimo] than you ... I have

therefore to beg that you proceed to Ungava direct from York this Fall ..." (D4/22/93). Lewes had nearly participated in the opening of Fort Chimo, having been ordered in 1828 to sail around to Ungava Bay from Moose Factory while Hendry led his party overland. But there had been no suitable ship at Moose Factory and that part of the plan had been given up (Williams, 1963: lii-liii). Now, in 1836, Lewes was thwarted a second time, for the Esquimaux, carrying supplies from York Factory to Fort Chimo, had to be abandoned in the ice of Hudson Bay (Williams, 1963: lxxii). Finally, for reasons that are not clear, the Governor settled on McLean, who had just returned from four years in New Caledonia and had, before that, served twelve years at posts in the Ottawa valley (Wallace, ed. 1932: xii-xiv).

When, in 1841, Erlandson wrote a discontented letter to the Governor, he included in his grievances his

...hurt at being superseded in the charge of the Ungava District, by a clerk, my junior in the service, tho' a gentleman of great abilities and zeal, more especially as you were a couple of years previously to intimate that in the event of Mr Finlayson leaving the district I should succeed him in the charge. But, suppressing my feelings I co-operated zealously, efficiently, and successfully as the result proved, with Mr McLean in every measure tending to promote the interest of the concern (D5/6/343d, quoted in Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 361).

Erlandson did himself, in this reasonable complaint, no more than justice. He had quietly yielded command of Fort Chimo,

of which he had been in temporary charge since Finlayson's departure on 7 July 1836, and he had served McLean loyally. There can be little doubt that the measure of success achieved in McLean's administration owed much to Erlandson's reliability and industry and to his special knowledge of the country and of the Indians and their language - which language McLean did not speak (B38/a/8/17d; B38/e/5/7d).

Governor Simpson had made plain in many letters that dealt with the Ungava venture his suspicion that "the little progress" was due not only to natural causes but also to a lack of zeal and enterprise in his men. He expressed this view with some vigour in one of his last letters to Finlayson at Fort Chimo.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of saying that I never knew the settling of a new Country go on so tardily and unsatisfactorily as that of the Interior of Ungava, notwithstanding the very heavy expense that has been incurred in endeavouring to possess ourselves of the trade of that District. I am aware that you have had more than ordinary difficulties to contend with...but when I consider that the Hon'ble Company have been incurring heavy expenses for seven years and upwards, in preparing & attempting to settle the Country, and that up to this time, we have but one miserable and solitary establishment, the trade of which, does not yet cover the interest of money laid out, I cannot help thinking that we have not done so much as ought to have been accomplished (A6/23/311).

Perhaps such a man as Simpson himself might have found ways and means of accomplishing more in the face of the evident difficulties, but it is not easy to imagine how.

Simpson himself did not make any concrete suggestions of new or different measures, except for experiments in supply that only he could initiate. Finlayson left Fort Chimo on 7 July 1836, resigning his charge to Erlandson "untill such time as there is a person sent hither to relieve you" and, he added,

from your knowledge of the country, the manners and habits of the Natives, and your experience in the fur trade, I have not the least doubt but you will conduct the business of Ungava satisfactorily to your employers (B38/a/5/1).

Finlayson's expression of confidence was largely rhetorical. Erlandson was in no position to conduct the business of Ungava either to his own or to his employers' satisfaction. Finlayson had faced two crippling problems in the business of trade and of establishing interior posts. During 1832, 1833, and part of 1834, he had lacked necessary trading goods, there having been no supply ship after Beaver in 1831 until Ganymede in 1834. When he had had goods, he had lacked canoes to carry goods into the interior. Erlandson faced yet another problem: lack of Indians. He could not trade with Indians until they visited Fort Chimo nor, without Indian assistance, could he find the interior lakes at which he wished, as Finlayson had wished before him, to establish outposts.

Erlandson was obliged to submit, at the end of Outfit 1836, a gloomy report of his year's activity. He had, at Fort Chimo, eleven men, who "in consequence of the non-arrival

of the Brig Esquimaux, could not be more advantageously employed than in procuring subsistence for themselves" (B38/e/4/1). After observations on the buildings of the post, fur returns, and the tariff, he undertook to review the history of the Ungava venture to that date to explain why "the prospect of a profitable trade in this District should be now more distant than it was even in 1832/33" (B38/e/4/3d).

The Indians had not learned of the existence of Fort Chimo until the autumn of 1831, when the post was already a year old. Some of their number, who had previously visited posts along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, then expressed themselves greatly dissatisfied with the system and standard of trade of Fort Chimo as compared with the King's Posts and the free traders. Finlayson had told the Indians that the Company now owned all the lands along the north shore of the St. Lawrence and that they would not find the standard of trade more liberal at any of the posts they had formerly visited. In consequence, during the winter of 1831-1832, the Indians had brought all their hunt to Fort Chimo.

The King's Posts, which Finlayson had informed his Indian visitors the Hudson's Bay Company now controlled had only recently returned to the Company's possession. Before the cession of Canada in 1763 to Great Britain, the King of France had held as a monopoly a large tract of land extending

from the Saguenay River to Sept-Isles and northward past the height of land of the rivers draining into that coast.* After the cession, the British continued the practice of leasing the King's Posts to bidders as a trade monopoly. In 1802, the North West Company had taken a twenty-year lease on the King's Posts, which lease, with other rights and claims, devolved, with the coalition of 1821, to the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Governor and Committee hesitated to renew the lease when it expired in 1822, partly because of the necessity for stringent economy in trading operations, partly because they considered the rent too high. They were prepared to pay £500-600 per year (Halifax currency) (D2/1/32d-33), but John Goudie, a merchant from Quebec agreed to pay an annual rent of £1,200 (Williams, 1963: 1). However, in 1823, Goudie sold two-thirds of his rights, which were acquired, after a second sale, by William Lampson in 1824. In 1828, Lampson bought the remaining third part from Goudie (Great Britain, Privy Council [1927]: vol. 7, pp.3129-3130).

Although the Hudson's Bay Company was not willing to pay the price of the King's Posts, they did lease the seignories

* See "Precis of history of King's Posts and of the concessions and seignories within the Labrador peninsula granted by the Government of Canada during the French and British regimes. King's Posts" (Great Britain, Privy Council [1927]: vol. 7, pt. 19, no. 1234, pp.3119-3131).

on either side of it, Mille Vaches on the west, in which they established a post at Portneuf, and Mingan on the east (Galbraith, 1957: 28). They imagined that from these smaller and cheaper seignories and from their posts inland from James Bay, they could persuade, without trespass, the Indians of the King's Post to bring furs to them. But that trick worked both ways, and it was not long before competition from the King's Posts began to be felt at the James Bay posts (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 351).

The new post at Portneuf was too successful. Lampson complained of the injury caused by the Company to his trade and, in 1831, the Committee on Grievances of the House of Assembly judged Portneuf to be within the King's Posts (Galbraith, 1957: 28). Galbraith does not hesitate to say that it had been a blunder on the part of the Governor and Committee not to renew the lease in 1822, and the Company paid dearly for it. When, in 1830, Lampson offered to sell the lease, the Company, tired of competition, high prices, and litigation, instructed James Keith, manager of the Montreal Department, to negotiate with him. Keith agreed to pay £25,000 sterling for two establishments on the St. Maurice River, the remainder of the lease, and the stock of goods and furs on hand. He agreed with Lampson, also, that Lampson would not interfere with the trade of the King's Posts and the Company would not interfere with the trade of Esquimaux

Bay, to which region he now directed a commercial interest (Great Britain. Privy Council [1927]: vol. 7, p.3130). The Governor and Committee, shocked by the price,

chastised Keith for having accepted the Lampson's demands, though later, on sober reconsideration, they decided that he had acted judiciously. In 1830 George Simpson estimated that the Company had lost £2,000 a year by its struggle with the Lampsons. The mistake of 1822 was not repeated (Galbraith, 1957: 29).

The King's Posts formed a frontier of Rupert's Land that the Company had to possess, even though possession was, for the Company, "a vexation rather than an asset" (Rich, 1959: 524).

As the visiting Indians had recently traded at Mingan and the King's Posts (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 194), they must have known what the standard of trade was there and that Finlayson was wrong in claiming Fort Chimo's was equal to it. It is not surprising therefore that Finlayson found them "dissatisfied with our manner of dealing with them, and were it not for the inconvenience of their taking their hunts to Mingan, we should not get a marten skin from them, but they are sensible of a change of system in that quarter" (B38/e/1/24). Not unreasonably, the Indians wished to know what was the standard of trade at Esquimaux Bay and, during the winter of 1832-1833, nine of them set out to visit the free traders there. They were camped at Lake Michikamau, about six days' travel from the Canadian post located at the head of that bay, "when they were one night disturbed by some imaginary spirit,

and the woods surrounding the lake happening at that moment to be on fire in several places, confirmed their superstitious fears" (B38/e/4/3d). Frightened, they turned back to Fort Chimo.

The Indians, still suspicious, decided to send another party to Esquimaux Bay and one to Sept-Isles. But, when they visited Fort Chimo during the early part of the winter of 1833-1834, they found caribou so plentiful nearby that they quickly gave up all idea of southward travel and stayed with the deer. Towards spring, some of them made a small hunt a short distance into the interior. Finally, in early summer 1834, one of the Naskapis visited Esquimaux Bay and returned to report the comparative liberality of the trade standard there. The Indians who had guided Erlandson on his journey to Esquimaux Bay and back confirmed this news. On Erlandson's return in July 1834, Finlayson raised his standard of trade

to be nearly on a par with that of Esqmx. Bay, but the Indians had sense enough to perceive that that alteration was extorted by necessity, and it had not the effect of giving satisfaction. Besides,... they began even at that early period to consider us a parcel of fools come hither to deceive them (B38/e/4/4).

Here is a fine illustration of Professor Rich's point that the Indians were "hardened enough traders to explicit competition and an alternative market, but un-European in their reaction to better prices" (Rich, 1960: 49). However, during the winter of 1834-1835, they made what Erlandson

considered a tolerable hunt, although the best hunters still took their skins to the rival traders in Esquimaux Bay.

During the early winter 1835-1836, some Naskapis, who had been at Esquimaux Bay in the summer, visited Fort Chimo but, still dissatisfied with the standard of trade, they did not come again. Two only of the Indians who abandoned Fort Chimo during the winter 1835-1836 visited again in 1836, and Erlandson thought they had come to persuade the few remaining Indians to leave. Erlandson's trade during Outfit 1836 was with a half-dozen old men, their families, and some dependent youths. One of the Indians who visited Fort Chimo during the winter 1835-1836 carried a letter from the Company trader at Sept-Isles, who recommended the adoption of measures to prevent the Ungava Indians' leaving their own territory. Surprisingly, in view of this fact, the Indian claimed he had received an advance at Sept-Isles. It was this episode that stirred Erlandson to exclaim that the Indians were "such habitual liars that they cannot, on the most common occasions, and when their interests are not concerned, speak the truth" (B38/e/4/4d).

Erlandson wanted to establish a post in the central interior near Lake Petitsikapau, even though he doubted that increased returns from it would overbalance the increased expense. To support even a small trade in the interior, he thought, would require a great quantity of goods, "exclusive

of Presents, of which these Indians expect abundance, particularly of Rum and Tobacco" (ibid.). And he realized better than anyone the enormous difficulty of carrying the goods inland from Fort Chimo, a task he thought must be done by Company servants, for the Indians would not help.

It would afford me great pleasure [Erlandson concluded] to hold out prospects of better success, but under existing circumstances it would be fallacious. I intended to have pushed 3 or 4 men to Pettasticopau lake this summer, for the purpose of erecting a house or two for the reception of Goods, and a person to conduct the trade, in event of a vessel arriving from England with supplies next Autumn, but although two several Indians promised me to act as guides, neither of them has been here since (B38/e/4/6d).

Despite nearly hopeless prospects, Erlandson and his men worked busily through the summer improving and repairing the buildings of the post, and they built a large ice vault in which to preserve frozen the fish and caribou they killed each autumn (B38/a/7/22).

On 31 July 1837 arrived a long-delayed packet of mail carried by Indians. George Keith at Moose Factory had written the previous January to outline Simpson's plans to relieve the post, but, he continued, "to a brief relation of the painful incidents which unfortunately completely baffled the measures, I now solicit your attention" (B38/a/7/23). During the autumn of 1836, all three Company ships in Hudson Bay had been delayed and damaged by unusually heavy ice. Since that time, nothing had been heard of Esquimaux, the vessel especially built to

supply Ungava Bay: "Hence she must either have gone to pot or returned to England" (ibid.). Finlayson and his party had arrived safely at Moose Factory on 7 October and Keith had learned that Erlandson was likely to be "scrimply provided next summer [1837] for Trade with Gunpowder, shot and tobacco" (ibid.). Keith had, therefore, ordered Robert Miles at Rupert House to send some Indians to Fort Chimo with those supplies. Miles added a letter of his own to the packet on 1 February 1837 to suggest that Erlandson improve the packet schedule by sending letters to reach the new post at Kaniapiskau Lake by late November. Thomas Corcoran at Eastmain added another letter to the packet, the tone of which reveals his poor opinion of the Ungava venture. His sending Indians meant his losing furs they might have hunted, he complained, but he had no choice but to forward those "supplies deemed so essentially necessary for the trade of Fort Chimo next summer". On 17 June Corcoran wrote a second letter to explain that the Indians he had sent in February with the packet had returned, one of them "spitting blood", and he had been unable to send other messengers until navigation opened in the spring (B38/a/7/25d-26d).

The next August, Erlandson replied politely to these letters, thanking Keith for his news, deploring the loss to shipping, and remarking that, if no ship reached him in 1837, he could not manage the trade "for want of most essential

articles, such as guns, balls, tobacco, and gunflints". He informed Miles that he had no Indians to carry messages and none to guide him to the Kaniapiskau post or to anywhere else, and he told Corcoran that he had refused to give advances to a few Eastmain Indians who had recently visited him, in the hope this treatment would effectively deter "these runabout fellows from visiting Fort Chimo again without permission...." He would have been glad to say something hopeful about Fort Chimo's future, "but unfortunately the prospect, at present, is superlatively gloomy" (B38/a/7/27-29).

Relief, however, was at hand. On 10 September 1837, the brig Eagle, Captain Humphreys, dropped anchor opposite the post, the first ship to call since the Esquimaux in 1835. She carried a double outfit of provisions from York Factory and the new officer in charge of the district, John McLean (B38/a/7/31). On 20 September, a week after Eagle had sailed with the fur returns for England, the schooner Aurora, Captain William Cooper, brought another double outfit from London. The Governor and Committee had learned from York Factory that Eagle, damaged in the ice in 1836, might not be able to supply Fort Chimo in 1837. In London they rightly feared that, without supplies, Erlandson might have to abandon Fort Chimo and that in any case trade would suffer (A6/24/177). There was no time to consult with Governor Simpson or with anyone else in Canada, so they decided to charter the 120-ton Aurora

and send on her a duplicate of the goods for which Finlayson had indented in 1835. But Eagle had proved seaworthy and she carried Finlayson's original indent of 1835, which Esquimaux had brought to York Factory from London in 1836. When Aurora arrived, Eagle had already sailed for London with the fur returns, so the charter of Aurora was terminated at Fort Chimo (A6/24/192-193).

In McLean's letter of instruction, Simpson had deplored the "little progress", together with the difficulty and expense of supplying a remote post. These difficulties, he informed McLean, would be "in a great measure removed by supplying [Fort Chimo] from Esquimaux Bay through inland navigation, the distance not exceeding 4 to 500 miles" (B38/b/2/48). The distance no doubt seemed short to Simpson, used as he was to the great rivers of southern and western Canada.

...at the opening of the navigation Summer 1839 [when Simpson supposed that McLean's supplies would be exhausted], you will have to proceed with your People by Boats or Cances as the navigation may answer to Esquimaux Bay with your Returns & for your supplies and this mode of transport must be continued until the trade of the District becomes sufficiently important to send a vessel there every second year (B38/b/2/48d).

He urged, as usual, the strictest economy in the use of imported provisions, for the Governor did not doubt that local resources of meat and fish were plentiful. He ordered

posts to be established along the overland route, in 1838 if possible, by 1839 certainly. Nailing down his main point, he concluded,

it must be understood, that you go with your People for the supplies that may be required to Esquimaux Bay at the same time taking your Returns thither, and not count on the transport being done for you (B38/b/2/49).

McLean's prospects, on arrival at Fort Chimo, were better than Finlayson's had ever been. The post was now well provisioned and the servants more experienced. (Finlayson had claimed, in 1833, that his expenditure of pork, an imported provision, would not be great if he had a post hunter, "but for want of this and a good fisherman, none of the people having any more idea of fishing than if they had been brought up on the summit of the Alps, have lived principally on European Provisions for these three years" (B38/e/1/2).) More important still, McLean had canoes. But his greatest resource lay in the seven years of experience and knowledge of the region that Erlandson possessed.

On first reflection, it may seem surprising that Governor Simpson was determined to continue with the project, when, as he had complained to Finlayson in 1835, "the heavy outlay of money on the Ungava Settlement is becoming a subject anything but popular throughout the Country" (B38/b/2/36). But there were many reasons why the venture should continue. In 1830, the Company had bought at a high price the lease on the King's

posts to secure the southern frontier from competition. In 1835, they had added to that security by the purchase of the Isles and Islet of Mingan (D4/22/10d). In 1836, Simpson had decided to set up a post at North West River in Esquimaux Bay in opposition to the Canadian traders there, who, he feared, might push inland

with a view of benefitting by an encroachment on our Trade with the Indians of the Kings Posts and Mingan Seignory, and of anticipating us in the occupation of the district of country situated between Ungava & Esquimaux Bay behind the Moravian Settlements on the Labrador coast... (D4/22/9).

When Erlandson crossed overland to Esquimaux Bay in 1834, he had found there two posts owned by Nathaniel Jones of Quebec, one of them at the mouth of the North West River, the other about 90 miles up that river (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 231). Jones had bought the establishment in 1832 from William Lampson (who had formerly held the lease of the King's Posts) and, in 1835, had sold it to another Quebec merchant, David Ramsay Stewart (Great Britain. Privy Council [1927]: 3142). It was in opposition to Stewart's men that Simpson, in April 1836, ordered Simon McGillivray to take from Quebec men and supplies enough to occupy two posts (D4/22/9-11). In the negotiation for the purchase of the lease of the King's Posts, James Keith, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Lampson had reciprocally agreed not to interfere with one another's trade, that is, Lampson with the King's Posts and

the Hudson's Bay Company with Esquimaux Bay, where Lampson was then trading. But the Company's legal adviser was of opinion that the agreement was not binding now that Lampson was no longer connected with the business and that Stewart could not claim protection from this agreement (A6/23/214-215; D4/22/12).

Stewart, however, insisted that this restrictive agreement ought to protect him as Lampson's successor, and he protested vigorously the Hudson's Bay Company's entry into Esquimaux Bay. It is unlikely the Company felt there was any justice in his claim, but they found his presence there an expensive nuisance, and, in 1837, after only a year's competition, they bought Stewart out, as they had bought out Lampson.

The Company's policies in opposition to the Lampsons illustrate its general principles of competition. With a petty trader there could be no bargaining, for others would be encouraged to enter the field in the hope of receiving similar treatment. Rather, the small company with no capital must be ruined. In competition with firms like the Lampsons, which could cause substantial damages to the Company's interests, the governor and committee were willing to bargain for a settlement under which the opposition would retire from the field at a price - the price being determined by the company's powers of resistance (Galbraith, 1957: 29).

McGillivray left Quebec in June 1836. Except for one clerk, George McKenzie, none of his dozen men had served in Indian country before and with "all raw hands" he thought

"this is as a complete forlorn hope as ever I have seen" (B153/a/1/9). His first wintering was miserable in the extreme. After being welcomed with shots across the bow, they built a house near Stewart's store and named it Fort Smith, in honour of the Hudson's Bay Company's secretary, William Smith (B153/a/1/30). In September, McGillivray sent men to build an outpost a short distance up the Grand River and another up the North West River (B153/a/1/19-19d). Caribou were plentiful in the neighbourhood, and the Indians hunted them rather than fur. Tension between the rivals was marked by insubordination, drunkenness, desertion from one to the other, and occasional exchanges of gunfire (B153/a/1/22, 34,40).

When Simpson, that autumn, received McGillivray's indent for the next year, which amounted to about £3,000, as much as the rest of the Montreal Department put together, he wrote firmly to say there was no intention of carrying on the business in Esquimaux Bay on a large scale. The main business there was interference with Stewart. For 1837 Simpson thought three posts near the coast and four posts inland would be enough. He expected McGillivray to manage these posts with 16 men. Simpson refused to send the fishermen, canoe builders, and Iroquois canoeemen McGillivray had asked for. "You must therefore get your Canoes made by Indians and get inland with them the best way you can" (D4/22/134-135).

During 1837, while buying out Stewart, Simpson formed plans for the re-organization of affairs. In April and again in September he wrote to W.H.A. Davies, who had been associated with Stewart, to offer him employment at Esquimaux Bay (D4/23/40,116). Davies accepted his offer. In March 1838, Simpson informed McGillivray that he was transferred to the King's Posts, which were now united with Mingan (B153/c/1/3). Esquimaux Bay was made a separate district and, with Ungava Bay, attached to the Montreal Department. Davies replaced McGillivray and William Kennedy was sent to replace Erlandson at Fort Chimo (D4/23/167-172).

Simpson's instructions to Davies were similar to those he had given the year before to McLean. He was ordered to extend the trade to

the back country between Esquimaux Bay and Ungava Bay and parallel to the Labrador coast where from its having been little wrought there must be a great many Fur bearing animals, and on the coast a valuable branch of business in the articles of oil, salmon & other Fish, likewise seal skins I think may be combined with the Fur Trade of that District... (D4/23/130).

After directions for management and supply, he turned to the familiar problem,

the prodigious expence of supplying [Fort Chimo] direct from England & the difficulty of communication with it either across land from Moose or through Hudsons Straits [which] have rendered our progress in that quarter exceedingly slow (D4/23/132).

Simpson planned to add about 50 pieces to Davies's outfit in 1839 to be forwarded to Fort Chimo because "it is intended that Esquimaux Bay shall be the Depôt for Unguava [sic], and that the Unguava Transport shall be performed by the people & Indians belonging to that District..." (*ibid.*). He urged Davies to co-operate with McLean in his affairs and in setting up "a chain of Posts on the inland communication as early as possible" (*ibid.*).

Why Simpson hired W.H.A. Davies is even more puzzling than why he sent John McLean to Fort Chimo. Simpson had mentioned in letters more than once that he intended sending a commissioned officer to Fort Chimo, but McLean was not commissioned when sent there in 1837. He appears to have been chosen by the accident of his being available and at hand when Simpson considered that someone must be sent to take over from Erlandson. Davies, it is evident from his letters and from two published articles (Davies, 1843 and 1854), was a man of intelligent curiosity, not unlike McLean, with whom he soon became friendly. But he was not a man of business in the tradition of the Hudson's Bay Company. Simpson soon regretted his choice and Davies's career with the Company was short. Once again, it is hard to imagine what could have prejudiced Simpson's mind against Erlandson, who, in retrospect, seemed obviously the best choice to manage either Fort Chimo or Fort Smith.

McLean's first discussions with Erlandson revealed the great improbability of his accomplishing Simpson's order to supply Fort Chimo from Esquimaux Bay. He wrote the Governor two days after arrival to say that it was certainly impossible to use the route Erlandson had explored in 1834 for supply, because it would take "the quarter part of our short Season to reach even the height of Land" (B38/b/2/49d). He hoped the Grand River would offer a route some distance into the interior, "but to transport the outfit from Fort Chimo across country appears almost impossible to accomplish...as far as I can judge from my present very imperfect knowledge of this country" (ibid.).

At this early moment, McLean already surmised what the future held for Fort Chimo. . "If the Interior were occupied", he suggested, "Ungava would in my humble opinion become altogether of secondary consideration when probably some other arrangement than this at present in contemplation could be made regarding it" (B38/b/2/50). He promised, of course, to spare no exertion to expand the trade, but added "we cannot work against impossibilities" (ibid.). Nor was he so confident as Simpson that the game resources of the region were plentiful. Erlandson said they were not, especially in summer, which fact made the use of imported provisions unavoidable.

McLean's arrival made little difference, at first, to the life of the post. Erlandson continued to keep the post journal and to direct daily labour about the post until the next summer, when he left to establish Fort Nascopie. Autumn 1837 passed as usual. The men fished in small lakes across the Koksoak River, west of Fort Chimo. The fisheries of past years had exhausted the nearer lakes and now they had to go further and to be content with smaller and often with fewer fish. The river caught fast near the post on 21 December, an early date, which enabled them to bring him their catch of about 4,100 pounds (B38/a/7/31-34).

McLean began the next year briskly by setting out, 2 January 1838, to examine the country between Ungava Bay and Esquimaux Bay. Only this one of his various journeys through the interior of the peninsula is described with any detail in his Notes (Wallace, ed. 1932: 204-219). He took with him Donald Henderson, Henry Hay, and two Indian guides. Two other Company men travelled with them part way to cache 700 pounds of pemmican against McLean's return.

On 11 January, McLean named a large lake after Erlandson, his precursor through the territory. They arrived at Whale River on the 16th and travelled along it four days. On the 24th, they reached a large lake, said by the Indians to be at

the height of land. This was probably not Lake Petitsikapau, for the Indians said that the lake where the Company intended to build an outpost lay four days' journey to the southwest. On the 25th, they touched on a large stream that McLean thought was the George River. They followed it a short distance, then cut across country to find Lake Michikamau, which they reached on 3 February. From that point to Fort Smith, which they reached on 16 February, McLean's route is obscure.

It is evident, both from the letter McLean wrote to Simpson soon after reaching Fort Smith and from his book, that he had intended to explore Grand River that season. However, it seems unlikely that he saw anything of Grand River during this journey. After leaving Lake Michikamau and following a river that ^{was probably} ~~may have been~~

Naskaupi River, he was obliged by short rations to follow, for the lower two-thirds of the distance from Lake Michikamau to Fort Smith, the same route Erlandson had taken in 1834. (For comments on Erlandson's route, which is by no means clear, see Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 247-259.) Of Grand River,

McLean wrote,

...altho I had not the means of learning from personal observation all I could wish to know regarding it I have learnt from others & seen enough myself [of other rivers, evidently] to convince me, that that river can never be availed of as a Channel of Communication with the Interior. It is in fact impassable for any kind of Craft being interrupted in many places by Falls of a great height surrounded by precipices that are

perfectly inaccessible and there are some Rapids that would baffle the skill of the most experienced Crews (B38/b/2/53).

But even were the river less formidable, McLean did not have two men in his charge "capable of performing the duty of Boutes, we are consequently reduced to Shifts that promise neither safety to Property nor a successful issue to our operations in the Interior" (B38/b/2/53-53d).

He found at Esquimaux Bay the Indians that had abandoned Fort Chimo during the winter of 1835-1836, despite Finlayson's having raised the standard of trade for them (B38/e/4/4-5). If there were a post at the height of land and equal standards at all posts, McLean thought these Indians would have "no inducement to wander about from their own lands" (B38/b/2/53d). Why he thought they would not wander, unless obliged to trade at only one post, is puzzling. The Indians had by this time shown that they did not regard the height of land as being uniquely "their own lands". They had, in fact, demonstrated that they could settle indifferently near Fort Chimo, near North West River, or, presumably, in any other region where they could find caribou and buy ammunition.

McLean had noticed what he thought were excellent hunting grounds within 70 miles of Fort Chimo, where, he thought, "a few industrious Indians could be employed to great advantage", and he urged that more Indians be persuaded to come over from the Eastmain coast to hunt in this region (*ibid.*).

The experiment of importing Eastmain Indians had been unsuccessfully tried once before, at Finlayson's suggestion. The Indians had arrived in August 1835 (B38/a/2/62) and had "passed the only Winter they remained at Ungava in a barren Country [near Fort Chimo] totally destitute of Fur bearing Animals" (B38/b/2/53d). It is possible, although the suggestion is not recorded by the traders, that the Naskapi Indians may have resented or feared the presence of the Eastmain Indians. On the face of it, resentment or fear at this occupation, temporary though it was, of "their lands" seems a better explanation for their having left the region than any fretting dissatisfaction with the standard of trade at Fort Chimo, which was, after all, "nearly on a par" with that of Esquimaux Bay (B38/e/4/4).

Surprisingly, McLean does not mention in his letter to the Governor what must be reckoned the great accomplishment of the trip as it is recorded in his Notes.

Two days after our arrival, all the Nascopie or Ungava Indians, at present residing in this part of the country, numbering seventy or eighty souls, came to the establishment, with the produce of their winter hunts. Mr. McGillivray and myself having come to an understanding regarding them, we both addressed them, representing to them the advantages they would derive from having posts so conveniently situated on their lands, &c. After some deliberation among themselves, they expressed their intention to be guided by our advice, and to return forthwith to their lands (Wallace, ed. 1932: 215).

Despite Simpson's strictures, McLean reported that there had been no reduction in the use of imported food. When he left Fort Chimo, they had killed only one deer, partridges were scarce and, until the river had frozen, they could not cross to the winter fishing lakes. In the remainder of his letter he outlined in an excited and hasty manner plans for the coming summer: an exploration of the trade prospects along the west coast of Ungava Bay and, at last, an expedition to establish a post at the height of land (B38/b/2/53d-54d). By coincidence, Simpson wrote to McLean from London under the same date (22 March 1838) to urge all the more keenly the establishment of the long-desired interior post because

The Ungava Furs are the best by far brought to the London market; the martins averaged 2 days ago 29/3d each you may therefore encrease the price as an encouragement to your Indians and people allowing the latter something for their private hunts without however letting them know the high price we obtain (D4/23/137).

McLean's return journey to Fort Chimo was marked by illness and hunger. His party left Fort Smith on 4 March, but influenza among the Indians obliged him to return to the post until his guide had recovered. He started again on the 23rd and followed the same route by which they had come. After various delays and hardships, McLean, with Hay and the guide, pushed on by forced marches, eating their last dog on the way, to reach Fort Chimo in time to send food and help back to their weakened companions (Wallace, ed. 1932: 216-219).

He found, on return, that the caribou hunt had been successful and they were not for the moment obliged to live on European provisions. "At this time", he added in his Notes, "I was visited by a very grievous affliction in the loss of my beloved wife, whose untimely death left me in a more wretched condition than words can express" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 220-221).

The following summer was an active one. On 18 June 1838, Erlandson with nine servants and two Indian guides set out with four small canoes (the largest carried only fourteen pieces) to establish a post on Lake Petitsikapau, the site he had recommended in 1834 "as the most eligible place for an inland post, principally because it is surrounded by a good fur country" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 257). McLean worried because "some of the men never had a paddle in their Hands, how Mr. E. is to get to his destination with such a motley Crew is a question not easily solved and the cause of intense anxiety to my mind" (B38/a/7/38).

McLean had ordered Henderson, who was with Erlandson, to return immediately with four of the servants by way of George River, which the natives said was "almost free of Portages or bad Rapids" (*ibid.*). In August, Henderson returned with news of the dangerous and difficult nature of the route they had taken on the way inland. Owing to the awkwardness of the crews and to some 30 portages, the four canoes were now "hors de service" (B38/a/7/39d). They had descended George

River, however, with only three portages, and agreed with the favourable report of it the natives had given.

A few days after returning from George River, Henderson with a party of four set out to survey the west coast of Ungava Bay, "to put the question at rest, whether it be practicable to establish Posts in that Quarter without Timber the thing is impossible" (B38/a/7/40). They were away a fortnight, going "some distance beyond the Bay of Hopes Advance", where they were stopped by ice that extended seaward as far as they could see. They ascended a large river entering Hope's Advance Bay about 20 miles and made "a short excursion into the interior where he [Henderson] could discover no appearance whatever of Vegetation nothing but Swamps or barren Hills to be seen. Rein Deer are very numerous and constitute the principal subsistence of the Esqx. who alone frequent that inhospitable Region" (B38/a/7/41). Henderson's report, McLean noted sardonically in his Notes, "was entirely unfavourable to the project of carrying our 'ameliorating system' so far" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 221).

While they were away, McLean was "agreeably surprised by the arrival of Mr. Kennedy from Canada via Esquimaux Bay and Fort Nascopie" (B38/a/7/40d). Kennedy had had great difficulty in finding the height of land, having been 'transferred' by his guides to a party of Indians they met by chance. They took him to Fort Nascopie, where Erlandson was obliged to send

two of his own men with him to Fort Chimo (B38/e/5/14).

Because of Simpson's orders "positively commanding me to proceed next Summer to Esquimaux Bay by inland Route..." (B38/a/7/41d), McLéan felt obliged to reorganize his plans. He had intended to deploy as many of his men as possible in winter camps, where they might both feed themselves on fish and game and trap marten, and he had intended, the next summer, to establish a post at the mouth of George River. Now, realizing he would need a strong crew to get overland during the summer, he decided to establish the post at George River immediately, with Henderson in charge of it. This post, named Fort Siveright, was necessary, McLéan thought, not only because George River was then his "Channel of communication with the Interior" but also because he wished to interfere with the Moravians' trade (B38/e/5/15). All this activity meant that the men could not hunt and fish for their living and there was, consequently, a heavy expenditure of European provisions (B38/b/2/59).

During December, many Indians brought in furs, especially marten, to trade, but early in the new year there were reports of starvation among them and they "fled for their Lives to the large lakes at the height of land where they expect to procure Fish - not a Deer to be seen in this Quarter" (B38/a/7/46). On 24 February 1839 occurred a remarkable event, a double marriage. McLéan wrote, "this day coupled Henry Bay and

Edwrd. Richards each to a Husky Lass according to the Country form of Marriage"* (B38/a/7/48a).

When the Koksak River opened in the spring, Kennedy went up to South River House to bring down two boats that had been built there during the winter. He was back on 15 June and McLean left on the 21st for George River. The boats were so crowded that he could carry only five packs of fur, the most valuable part of the returns of the previous two years (B38/a/7/56). On 29 June, with a party of 10, he started the ascent of George River, but even at this early date he found the water lower than it had been, later in the season, the year before. Of the first 130 miles, 80 or 90 were "one continuous rapid", and they had to track and portage long distances (B38/b/2/65).

On 21 July, they came to a particularly difficult rapid, beyond which were said to lie still more before the height of land could be reached. They therefore turned back some 20 miles to a spot "exceedingly well adapted" for a post, at the head of a lake about 70 miles long, on the border of wooded country, and about half way between Fort Siveright and the height of land (B38/b/2/65d).

Leaving most of the party to build the post, which he named Fort Trial, on present-day Indian House Lake, McLean and two others set off in an Indian canoe for Fort Nascopeie.

* McLean's Notes gives some details of the journey not contained in his letter to Simpson (Wallace, ed. 1932: 226-232; B38/b/2/64d-70).

They had to track and portage the greater part of a route that, the previous year, would have accommodated a loaded boat. They reached Fort Nascopeie on 4 August and found Kennedy had been there nearly a month. McLean had left Kennedy at Fort Chimo, awaiting guides who had been engaged to take him to Lake Kaniapiskau. But this journey the guides, once they had arrived, positively refused to do, although they consented to lead him to Fort Nascopeie. He had met the same difficulty in travelling "the Washquash [Swampy Bay River] being literally dry" (B38/b/2/66).

McLean's greatest disappointment lay ahead. During his visit to Fort Smith in 1838, he had learned from George Mackenzie* that Grand River, which enters Esquimaux Bay from a southwesterly direction, "has its rise at the height of land [roughly north~~east~~ of Esquimaux Bay], flowing close to the ^{West} Lake where the Out Post [Fort Nascopeie] is situated" (B38/b/2/59d). The Indians said it was navigable for boats and canoes. During the summer, McLean had received from McKenzie a map and details "in which he minutely described the River that there was a possibility of accomplishing our passage through the Interior in boats" (*ibid.*). Greatly

* Erlanson had met McKenzie in 1834, when he was employed by Nathaniel Jones to operate one of his two posts in Esquimaux Bay. McKenzie rejoined the Hudson's Bay Company after the Company had bought out D.R. Stewart's interest in Esquimaux Bay (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 231, n.4).

encouraged by this hope, he sent Erlandson in December orders to have an Indian guide ready at Fort Nascope to lead them to the head of Grand River.

No Indian guide was available, and Erlandson, on whom McLean now relied, was by no means certain he could again find his way overland to Fort Smith. Five years had passed since his crossing, which had, moreover, been in winter. Nevertheless, McLean, Erlandson, and two others, left Fort Nascope on 6 August, having decided to begin with the North West River, which they thought could be easily found. They reached Lake "Michegama" (Michikamau) on 9 August and immediately found its outlet.

...then pursuing our Route by one of the noblest Streams any of us had yet seen in this Country we reached the head of a strong Rapid on the 12th August which soon terminated our progress downward and the hopes we had formed of our being able to accomplish the trip so adventurously undertaken. Immediately on our arrival here I ascended a high hill whence I observed a column of Vapour about four miles distant rising evidently from a high Fall. A glimpse of the River at intervals from the same spot presented the appearances of a Rapid pursuing its Course throughout the whole intermediate space until as I expected it ended at the Chute. We therefore determined on carrying Canoe & Baggage to the foot of the Rapid where we arrived about noon the following Day passing on our way through a Country that presented every possible obstruction and difficulty, on our arrival at the Fall however we found that instead of ending, our troubles only commenced, the River here fell over a Precipice probably 200 [feet] in height into an abyss from which the column of Vapour above alluded to ascended then continued its maddened course in one continued stream of foam for a distance of 10 or 12 miles walled in between tremendous precipices varying from two to three hundred feet in perpendicular

height. it presented one of the grandest but at the same time one of the most awful scenes that possibly can be imagined (B38/b/2/66-66d).

He attempted to examine the river below the falls but "it appeared to flow smoothly for a short distance and again entered among high hills where no doubt the same difficulties as those now described would be met with" (B38/b/2/66d).

As greatly disappointed by their discovery of this magnificent sight as they had been encouraged by McKenzie's good report of the river that formed it, they retraced their route to Fort Nascopeie.* Because it was impossible to remove the fur returns and what was left of the trading goods, McLean left two men there to guard the property and to tell any Indians who might visit to go to Fort Siveright to trade. Then McLean, Erlandson and Henderson themselves went to Fort Siveright, where they found the men stationed there living well on country food.

It was with feelings of the most painful regret I found myself under the necessity of abandoning Fort Nascopeie convinced as I now am of the Treasures that that most valuable section of the Country contains nor do I see any prospect of being enabled to re-occupy it even next year (B38/b/2/68).

Despite the hardships and disappointments of the summer, the "vast increase in returns as compared with former years" (B38/b/2/69) was an encouragement, and McLean had formed a

* For some account of later visits to the Grand Falls and of its economic possibilities see Cooke (1958).

high opinion of the country around and south of Fort Nascope, where

a chain of large lakes connected together by Straits or smaller lakes so as in fact to be the vast Body of Water some hundreds of miles in extent combine so many advantages as could not fail to realise the best expectations that could be formed of it were the natives more numerous and more industrious of which there is at present some prospect could we but depend upon the means of following up the impetus already given (B38/b/2/69d).

The problems, however, that remained were great. The trade of the next outfit was expected to be less "as we are likely to be deficient in several of the most essential articles of Trade" (B38/b/2/70). For the supply of Fort Nascope, he needed Iroquois canoes and more canoes. "We have not an Inch of Bark at Ungava fit for making large Canoes..." (B38/b/2/68d).

Governor Simpson's acknowledgement of McLean's exertions during the summer of 1839 may be described as grudging. "I am sorry", the Governor began, "it is not in my power to congratulate you on any very successful result of your labours in the district under your charge" (D4/25/91). As it now appeared impossible to supply Fort Chimo overland from Esquimaux Bay, the Governor decided to send a vessel from Quebec to Fort Chimo in alternate years. He claimed that a vessel could not carry the three north canoes that McLean had specifically requested and that he considered

a small flat strongly timbered canoe such as that used between Chicoutimi...and Lake St. John's, carrying about ten pieces and navigated by two men, is decidedly the best craft for your navigation, where boats cannot be used (D4/25/91d).

Experienced canoeemen were, he said, not required for such canoes. When the navigation was bad, they made a portage. However, he consented to send bark for canoes and Columbia boats, which he also recommended, and "six or eight men, either Iroquois or Canadians accustomed to small canoe work" (D4/25/91d-92).

The Governor complained bitterly of the great expenses incurred in travelling between Esquimaux Bay and Fort Chimo and said the practice must be discontinued. He referred again to the value of marten from the interior and urged McLean to pay the Indians whatever would encourage them. Finally, he advised McLean of the "approbation of the Governor and Committee of your unwearied exertion under circumstances evidently of immense difficulty, and hoping to learn that they may be productive of more favourable results..." (D4/25/177). He did not add his own approbation to that of the Governor and Committee.

It was probably this letter that McLean had in mind when writing his Notes.

The Governor's letters conveyed the thanks of the Governor and Committee for my "laudable exertions"; while his Excellency intimated, in language not to be misunderstood, that my

promotion [Note: to the commissioned rank of chief trader] depended on my successful management of the affairs of Ungava, "which he regretted to find were still in an unpromising state".

What effect this announcement had on my feelings need not be mentioned - after a painful servitude of eighteen years thus to be compelled to make renewed, and even impossible exertions ere I obtained the reward of my toil, while many others had reached the goal in a much shorter time without experiencing either hardship or privation - the injustice I had suffered, or the deceit that had been practised on me. As a balm to my wounded feelings, my correspondents in the north informed me that seven clerks had been promoted since I left Norway House (Wallace, ed. 1932: 234-235).

McLean returned overland to Fort Chimo, where, on 18 September, he found George Alder alone. He sent some of his men to Fort Siveright and the rest off fishing, but they met with little success. On 17 December, Kennedy came in from Fort Siveright with news of the failure of the autumn fishery there and at Fort Trial. By mid-December, there was "neither Fish, Flesh, nor Fowl to be found anywhere", and without imported provisions they must have starved (B38/a/8/6).

When spring came, McLean had all available hands and some Eskimos watching for caribou during their eastward migration, but "not an ounce of meat was procured for the future" and barely enough fresh meat to last six weeks, whereas the previous year they had stored some 6,000 pounds of meat in the ice house by the end of the hunt.

The truth is no dependence whatever can be placed on the resources of the country anywhere along the Coast, even the natives both Esquimaux and Inland Indians are frequently reduced to the most distressing want during the endless winter of our polar regions (B38/b/2/78a).

Erlandson was so short of food during the winter that he sent his men down to Fort Siveright and on to Fort Chimo, where they arrived, hungry and frostbitten, on 4 February 1840. But the news of Erlandson's trade, nearly 500 martens, 50 foxes, and some other furs, was gratifying.

Mr. Erlandsons management of affairs proves him a man of tact & one who understands his business thoroughly. It is painful however to learn the privation he suffers in regard to Food & the distance is so great it is impossible to afford him any effectual aid but something must & shall be done to relieve his wants (B38/a/8/8).

In late February, McLean sent a party to Fort Siveright with provisions for that post and for Erlandson at Fort Trial (B38/b/2/71-72). The Indians, to McLean's dissatisfaction, wintered near Fort Chimo and followed their old habit of hunting caribou rather than furs. On 5 April he noted "the vermin [the wintering Indians] ... came in with a lot of grease to trade for Rum. I sent them back with a flea in their ears"(B38/a/8/10d). In early May, he sent Hay and Richards to Fort Siveright, where Erlandson had passed a winter of privation on his own. Hay was ordered to go with Erlandson in the spring to Esquimaux Bay so that, in future, he might serve as guide and courier (B38/b/2/74d) and Richards was ordered to bring down whatever property and returns might be left at Fort Trial when Erlandson left it, for "this Post must be abandoned this year in consequence of the non arrival

of a vessel with Supplies last Summer" (B38/a/8/12). The returns fell short of McLean's expectations. He had seen only about half of the Indians who had visited Fort Chimo the previous winter (B38/a/8/13). Kennedy reported a lean trade at Fort Siveright, and McLean wrote sympathetically that circumstances were beyond Kennedy's control, "the Natives being so very indolent, a habit which long custom has confirmed" (B38/b/2/75). Only time, he thought, would bring any improvement in them.

On 18 June 1840 McLean left Fort Chimo with two Indians for Esquimaux Bay. He may have travelled by way of Fort Nascopie, as he remarked he might take the George River route on return (B38/b/2/74d,75d). Erlandson, "having been ordered to the southern department, followed in another canoe" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 238). Although Erlandson had, in 1837, requested a transfer to another district, by 1839 he had changed his mind and wished to stay. He travelled with McLean to Esquimaux Bay to see what Simpson's orders might be and there received "a 'reiterated order' to go to the Lake Superior District" (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 360). McLean's purpose in making the journey to Fort Smith was to meet the supply vessel and to send a small outfit to the interior, "deeming it possible to accomplish that object by the Communication had as it is with sufficient time at command" (B38/b/2/78). But the vessel was so late that he had to

abandon that project, and he could do no more than send a small party, travelling light and fast, to Fort Nascope to carry the fur returns stored there down to Fort Chimo in time to meet the ship (B38/b/2/81d).

On 1 September, McLean returned to Fort Chimo on board Marten. He thought the quantity of provisions "altogether insufficient for the consumption of two (or nearly three years)" (B38/b/2/79d), so he took more from Davies at Fort Smith and more still from the ship when it was at Fort Chimo (B38/b/2/83d). McLean, in his Notes, blamed the Governor severely for the shortage.

On examining the quantity of provisions I had received, I was not a little alarmed to find it scarcely sufficient for the consumption of one year, his Excellency's communication having acquainted me that it was a supply for two years! Thus we were thrown on the precarious resources of the country for life or for death; for if those resources should fail us, we must either remain and starve on the spot, or, abandoning the settlement endeavour to escape to Esquimaux Bay and run the risk of starving by the way. Economy so ill-timed argued as little in favour of the Governor's judgment as of his humanity. Admitting our lives were of so trifling a value, the abandonment of the settlement, with all the goods and furs in it, would have subjected the Company to very serious loss (Wallace, ed. 1932: 242-243).

Among the new men McLean welcomed to Ungava were six Iroquois canoe men.* They had no sooner arrived than he had

* The presence of Iroquois Indians at Fort Chimo at this period appears to be unknown to anthropologists. These strangers may well have had important influence on the social and material culture of the northeastern Algonkians beyond the fear they had earlier inspired during the French and Indian wars (Rousseau, M. and J., 1948).

the "mortification" to learn that "not one of them will undertake to perform the duty without the wages of Boutes that is £22.10 p. An." (B38/b/2/84). He felt obliged to pay them the £2-10-0 extra they had, with some reason, demanded because "it is utterly impossible to convey property...in any kind of craft without the aid of efficient Boutes" (ibid.).

This wage dispute settled to the Iroquois's satisfaction, at least, Henderson left with them and three Canadians on 15 September to carry an outfit to "a situation whence we can depend on being able to transport it to the interior next Summer during the period of high water" (B38/a/8/15). McLean did not intend to be disappointed again by low water in the spring.

Early in October, Big Man, McLean's "Esquimau Agent to the Westward" (B38/a/8/16) returned starving from his attempt to promote trade among the Eskimos along the west coast of Ungava Bay. It was later learned that "many of the natives perished in that quarter from want the living being reduced to the horrible necessity of feeding on the dead" (B38/b/3/9). "... here then is the result of one scheme which I had hoped would have opened the resources of that section of the Country to us - but like all other Ungava schemes it ends in disappointment" (B38/a/8/16).

Hunger was soon felt at Fort Chimo also. In mid-October, McLean sent a party to Whale River to prepare timber for boat

building. They returned a month later complaining of the difficulty of finding food as well as suitable wood. In December, Kennedy and his men came in starving from Fort Siveright. McLean then sent some of his men on to a winter camp at False River, but they were soon back saying they could find nothing to eat there. Henry Hay "and consort" came in from the direction of George River, "being nearly seven days without food" (B38/a/8/19). By January 1841, McLean had reduced his staff to half rations, one pint of corn, one half pound of flour, and one half pound of pork for each man each day (B38/a/8/20). At the end of January, McLean was in despair for himself and his men, bewailing their wretched conditions, the hard work, and the climate. "... I think no situation in life could be more miserable than theirs [his men's]. Yet they are the Servants of the hon. HBCo!" (B38/a/8/20d).

In February he was obliged to reduce their rations still further, but on the 7th, when everyone had come in from the winter camps, where they had been unable to support themselves, he decided "we shall let them have their News [sic] Years treat which must be so liberal as to make them forget for at least one Day that they are banished to Ungava felix" (B38/a/8/21). In this attempt he was successful and the "treat" lasted four days. A week later, McLean noted that one meal a day was an "excellent cure for indigestion" (B38/a/8/22).

Their situation would have become gravely serious had not caribou appeared in the neighbourhood toward the end of February. Eskimo reports of the approach of large herds inspired McLean to send all hands to McKay's Island, below the Fort, to construct a barrière,* "a peculiar contrivance of our own, [by which] we succeeded in laying up such an ample stock for the consumption of the year" (B38/b/3/7d).

Branches are stuck in the Ice at short intervals extending from side to side so nearly to describe the figure of a right angle, the base opening on the West Side and about 3 miles in extent on the east side after the Deer ascend the bank, they rush into a pound formed of branches and are killed at will, upwards of about 200 were killed in about 2 hours (B38/a/8/22).

McLean's journal entries became relaxed, even jovial, as he dealt with feast instead of famine. When early in March, he learned from Kennedy that the device was successful, he was greatly relieved. It was "the most acceptable piece of intelligence I have heard this winter - the Slaughter of 200 Deer! Thanks to the bountiful goodness of Providence we are now perfectly secure of the score of Provisions" (B38/a/8/22a). The slaughter continued. On 19 March, they had on hand about 11,000 pounds of meat and by 16 April they had stored in their ice house some 20,000 pounds. The natives

* McLean's account of the caribou pound in his Notes differs in minor details from that given here and the event is described as occurring in March 1839 (Wallace, ed. 1932: 224).

instantly adopted McLean's innovation and, near the end of the month, he noted "this slaughter of the Animals must be checked if possible or it will lead to their extermination" (B38/a/8/24d). (McLean was right. For a discussion of the reduction of the caribou herds in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula see Elton (1942; 362-389).)

Having had the extremity of his hunger relieved by the providential appearance of the caribou, McLean wrote that year of the Naskapis with an unaccustomed charity.

I doubt we have given those Indians a character which they do not altogether deserve, we have now learnt from our own experience what they must sometimes suffer from want & their inability to hunt fur bearing animals in consequence. ... A few of the Nascopies are as industrious as any Indians I have yet been acquainted with (B38/b/3/8).

Trade that year, not surprisingly, showed a "very great deficiency as compared with the two preceding years", partly because of the failure of the caribou hunt the previous autumn and partly because the interior posts had been abandoned, "which has been a very serious disappointment to the Natives & created much discontent amongst them" (*ibid.*). But, against these hardships and disappointments, lay the bright promise of "the discovery of a S.E. passage to Esquimaux Bay" (B38/b/3/9).

During the autumn of 1840, when Henderson was hurrying to Fort Nascopie to carry the furs there down to Fort Chimo, he had followed the Northwest River to its source, which proved

to be, not Lake Michikamau, as Erlandson had thought, but a small lake near it (Davies and Johnson, eds. 1963: 358, n.1).

... this proves beyond any manner of doubt that the river which Mr. Davis and myself explored is the same - that is - the Grand River by which michigamin [Lake Michikamau] and all the other Lakes connected with it discharge themselves into Esquimaux Bay about 25 miles to the S.W. of the embouchure of N.W. River ... None of the Ungava Indians are acquainted with the grand River but we have been informed by other Indians that the Rapid from which I returned & it appears Mr. Davis also last spring can be avoided by following a chain of small lakes that run parallel with the River the portages between them being well traced thus we have at length laid open a road by which supplies for the trade (so long as there is occasion for them) can be conveyed to any extent (B38/b/3/9).

If the interior were supplied from Esquimaux Bay, McLean thought that Fort Chimo "would become of very little consequence" (*ibid.*) unless the furs from the Eskimos, which averaged about 450 fox a year were important to the Company. If that trade was important, then Fort Chimo might be supplied overland, perhaps with Eskimo help. He resolved to abandon Fort Siveright during the summer of 1842, for it had been established chiefly to assist transport. He intended to re-occupy Fort Trial, with Kennedy in charge, and he suggested the building of another post near Lake Michikamau.

It may be considered as presumptuous of me to make such arrangements as these without having previously consulted my superiors on the subject but it has ever been my way when I found myself so circumstanced that the companies interests can be promoted at the risk of my own to do that which duty requires (according as I understand it) let the consequence be what it will to myself (B38/b/3/10).

Davies's important role in exploring Grand River and opening a canoe route into the interior has not hitherto been recognized and, in his own description of Esquimaux Bay, he mentions the exploration only briefly (Davies, 1843: 78). He set out from Fort Smith with George McKenzie on 11 June 1840 and returned 15 days later, "greatly disappointed at not having been able to proceed to the end of [his] destination, not having been able to procure guides on the way" (B153/a/3/23d). He reported to Simpson that

As soon as the navigation opened this summer I proceeded up the Grand or Hamilton River & ascertained that a route by which goods can be transported to Fort Nascopie exists by that River, there are about 12 or 14 portages none of them very long and sufficient water for large canoes. The fact is however of comparatively little importance. It may be useful to know that such communication exists, in case that it should be found advisable hereafter to make use of it (B153/b/1/45).

It remained for McLean to connect his knowledge of the upper part of Grand River, gained during his trip to the Grand Falls in 1839, with the information supplied by Davies and McKenzie and supported by Indian report. This task he accomplished in the spring of 1841. He left Fort Chimo on 3 June, an early date, expecting to reach the height of land during the spring high water. Once again he was disappointed. He found the rivers so shoal that he was obliged to leave behind part of the small outfit he intended to transport to Fort Nascopie.

From the height of land I succeeded in exploring my way to the Grand or Hamilton River of Esquimaux Bay, finding a navigable route the whole distance with few interruptions from portages arrived at the Grand River I descended it to the Bay, and shortly after sent in a large Cance with a complete supply of goods for the height of land furnished by Mr. Davis (B38/b/3/4).

He reached Fort Smith with Henderson and nine men on 7 July (B153/a/4/20-20d). At Fort Smith, McLean found a long, cross, and rather incoherent letter written that spring by Governor Simpson. Simpson complained, as usual, of "the result of your exertions, as it was anticipated that the affairs of the District would by this time have been in a much more forward state than they are" (B38/b/3/2). He ordered McLean to cease "frequent intercourse" with Esquimaux Bay and wait for a ship to visit Fort Chimo every two years. After McLean's hungry winter, the Governor's renewed expression of surprise at McLean's "entertaining a doubt of the possibility of maintaining the Post upon fish, Veneson & other resources of the Country" (B38/b/3/2-2d), must have caused him some grim amusement.

Simpson repeated his desire for posts inland, for "it is evidently a good Martin Country, & the quality of those skins is superior almost to any others; and from the thinness of the Indian population there is little danger to be apprehended by having the Outposts on the lowest possible scale..." (B38/b/3/2d). Then, after a rambling lecture on the proper deployment of servants, based on his own mistaken

notion that McLean had 26 men in his charge, whereas in fact McLean had only 16 men, the Governor reached the first of his points that McLean can have welcomed, the news that McLean had finally been promoted to the rank of Chief Trader. Simpson closed with the advice that he was going to be absent about two years on a world tour* and that, in his absence, McLean should communicate direct with the Governor and Committee in London with a copy of each letter to James Keith in Montreal.

The turn of events initiated by McLean's reply to Simpson's letter, if not wholly unexpected, is, nevertheless, somewhat puzzling. McLean succeeded in persuading the Governor and Committee to close Fort Chimo, which, after more than a decade of struggle, was at last beginning to show a clear promise of success both for the fur trade and for country provisions.

McLean described to the Governor and Committee his overland journey that summer and the successful supply of Fort Nascopie from Fort Smith. "Having now visited the Country in every direction I confidently assure your Honors that the appearance it presents is very far from warranting the expectations formed of its 'riches'" (B38/b/3/4d).

* Simpson left London on 3 March 1841 and returned on or about 29 October 1842, "the whole [tour] being completed within the space of nineteen months and twenty-six days" (Simpson 1847, v.2, p.469).

He had found that "vast sections of it have been ravaged by fire to the entire destruction of the smaller animals" (*ibid.*). The condition of the business, he insisted, "in no degree arises from any want of exertion on my part, but has been the result of causes far out of my control" (*ibid.*). The difficulty of communication between Fort Chimo and Fort Nascope led him "most respectfully, to suggest to your Honors, the policy of abandoning that Establishment [Fort Chimo] altogether, confining the trade entirely to the interior" (*ibid.*). No rival, he believed, would settle on the region's forbidding coasts to compete for possession of the interior. He suggested, finally, that Ungava be joined to Esquimaux Bay "with which it has an easy communication by means of the newly discovered route; and in this case two inland Posts would be amply sufficient to command the trade of the interior" (B38/b/3/5).

McLean's letter and his recommendations struck a sympathetic response in London quite unlike any reaction McLean had ever provoked in Simpson. The Governor and Committee had written on 1 March 1841 to Simpson about the unprofitable state of the Montreal Department in general and of the Ungava and Esquimaux Bay districts in particular. "... it is quite evident from the repeated endeavours that have been made, that we cannot succeed in extending the trade of the interior country" and "...altho' the few furs taken there, are superior to those brought from any other part of

the country: the Trade of that District has not yet covered the outlay connected therewith" (A6/25/128d-129).

Simpson stopped at Lachine, his headquarters near Montreal, on the first stage of his tour, and there acted on the Governor and Committee's letter. It was then, on 14 April 1841, he wrote in obvious haste to McLean with the news that he had been promoted and with less welcome strictures on the state of the Ungava District. On the same day, he relieved Davies of the charge of Esquimaux Bay. Davies had, fortunately, applied for leave of absence, which Simpson "readily afforded him, being glad of an opportunity of putting the district under different management" (D4/108/5). The last outfit, he complained to Davies, had shown a "balance loss of about £1,700 the heaviest loss that has occurred on any District connected with the Fur Trade within the last twenty years" (D4/26/11). He remarked especially on the "most extravagant" consumption of imported provisions in Esquimaux Bay, "one might suppose from the quantity used, amounting to waste" (D4/26/14). Again on the same day, he appointed William Nourse to relieve Davies, explaining that the Hudson's Bay Company had occupied Esquimaux Bay to extend trade and to protect Mingan and the King's Posts from strangers. But the affairs of that district had grown so disorganized that he saw no good in keeping even experienced men there and he urged Nourse to institute a radical change and thorough

clearance of all the principal persons (D4/26/12-14d).

McLean returned overland to Fort Chimo, better content, probably, than at any time since he had come to the region. On arrival, 6 September 1841, he wrote in the post journal

...the object I had in view in visiting Esqx. Bay this Summer has been already explained and I am happy to say that all the advantages I had expected have been fully realised as the grand River affords every facility we could desire for supplying the Interior. ...thus Ungava shall at last have a fair opportunity of developing its resources whatever they may be (B38/a/8/32d-33).

During McLean's absence, William Kennedy had set out with an outfit of 33 pieces to re-occupy Fort Trial. The Columbia boat, which had been built especially for his trip, proved too small, and he used an "old batteau" which, by sinking twice on the way, caused a week's delay and the loss of 25 pounds of gunpowder. He had an Eskimo crew for the journey, which took him 38 days. Henry Hay and his Eskimo wife were part of the wintering party (B219/a/1/1-5).

McLean's last winter at Fort Chimo passed more quietly than any of his other winters there. Nevertheless, his journal entries show a mounting impatience with the confined conditions of life there. While wondering whether or not his request for furlough in the spring would be granted, his active mind and restless nature chafed at the "dreary winter" and "usual course of vegetative existence...[it is] unnecessary as it would be uninteresting to say anything further concerning

it than that this season [1841-1842] passed without our being subjected to such grievous privation as during the last" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 246). He was chiefly concerned for the welfare of a group of Eskimos, who, "having had a quarrel with some of their Countrymen to the Westward which ended in a Battle in which five or six lives were lost" (B38/a/8/33d), crowded about the post for protection. But in mid-January 1842, their distress was relieved by the appearance of caribou. By 6 April, McLean had some 1,400 pounds of meat in the ice house for future use (B38/a/8/38d).

In March he had learned that the "rascally Indians" around Fort Trial had "passed the Winter feasting on the product of the Fall Deer hunt ... & neglected the Fur hunt altogether" (B38/a/8/37d). When, in April, some Indians came in to Fort Chimo to beg, he exclaimed

...to pot with the whole crew. There is no comprehending these rascally Indians when they have food they pass their time feasting...and when they find nothing to eat which indeed happens sometimes they then tell us "we were starving & could not hunt without food. Crasse de Crasses (B38/a/8/39).

A month later, writing of Indians about the post, he mentioned about "100 Souls - or I ought rather to have said heads. Souls they have none" (B38/a/8/40). The Indians at this time were living on caribou meat they had traded from the Eskimos

...who seem to have forgotten already the dreadful sufferings of last Winter. These unfortunate Creatures bestow no consideration whatever on the future indeed they appear as destitute of the faculty of reflection as the Brutes they feed upon. Certain it is many animals take better precautions to provide for future want than these "Lords of the Creation" (*ibid.*).

When the snow began to melt, in May, he wrote of the change in "the uniform hibernal prospect that has charmed our eyes for these 8 months past... [with] a continuous surface of glaring snow...." The scene now began "to present some little variety the white is here and there relieved by a beautiful black streak, the crest of a moss covered bleak Rock" (*ibid.*). Soon after this event, he had "almost come to the determination of hanging myself this very evening if it [the weather] d'ont change" (*ibid.*).

On 25 May, he settled with the Naskapis, "who have had their advances here for the last time they now proceed to Fort Nascope to which Post they are to be attached in future" (B38/a/8/40d). On 11 June, he added, "The Indians after annoying us for this month past by their hateful presence have at length made a move" (B38/a/8/41). Five days later, McLean

commenced packing up dry Goods for shipment to Esquimaux Bay or Canada according as their honours may determine. This Post being now abandoned as a Depot there is no further call for Goods except such an assortment as may be required for Esqx. Trade & advances to the few men at the Place (*ibid.*).

His last entry in the Fort Chimo journal was on 20 June, two days after break-up.

Very cold for the season. I am now preparing to set off for Esquimaux Bay & perhaps for England having appealed for leave of absence last year to arrange some private affairs that require my presence. The charge of this Establishment devolves pro tempore on Mr. G. Anderson (*ibid.*).

McLean reached Fort Smith, in company with Kennedy and eight others from the interior, on 26 July (B153/a/5/27d).

There, according to his Notes, he found

letters from the Secretary [William Smith, secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company], conveying the welcome intelligence that my request for permission to visit Britain had been granted, and that the Directors, agreeably to my recommendation, had determined on abandoning Ungava, the ship being ordered round this season to convey the people and property to Esquimaux Bay (Wallace, ed. 1932: 246-247).

He left Labrador on 18 August, "on board a small schooner of sixty tons, deeply laden with fish and oil" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 288). The vessel belonged to Hunts, an English company engaged in fishing and trading along the coast (B153/b/1/71). He arrived in England on 3 September and, on the 20th, reached his mother's home on the Island of Mull, "the spot from which I had started twenty-three years before" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 289).

What, in fact, McLean received from Secretary Smith was a short note, dated 4 February 1842, stating that his application for leave had been left to the discretion of

James Keith, who, in Simpson's absence, was managing the affairs of the Southern Department (A6/25/316).

James Keith had forwarded to London the indent for the posts of the Montreal District for Outfit 1842 in November 1841. Fort Chimo's share amounted to £342-175, out of a total of £2,760-14-3. But, Keith noted, McLean, in his letter to the Governor and Committee in August 1841 and in the report that accompanied this letter, had

strongly recommended that Fort Chimo be abandoned next season and that the trade of the District be in consequence reduced to two Inland Posts, to be kept up and supplied from Esquimaux Bay it will not be necessary to provide Goods...[for Fort Chimo] in the event of their Honors approving of Mr. McLean's suggestion which if followed up I am of opinion will be attended with a considerable saving of Expense both in Men and goods without causing any corresponding Diminution of Returns.

It may also render unnecessary a trip to Fort Chimo next summer of the Brigantine Marten unless it should be deemed advisable to despatch her thither for to bring off the remaining Stock of Goods which cannot be great together with the few Returns that may have been then collected (A11/28/86d-87).

Smith replied to Keith in January 1842 to say that the Governor and Committee had directed him

to acquaint you that the whole of the goods indented for. will be forwarded,...with the exception of the outfit for Fort Chimo, as for the reasons assigned by you as well as by Mr C. Trader McLean in his report on the trade of the Ungava District and his letter of the 11th August from Esquimaux Bay, the Governor and Committee do not deem it advisable to keep up Fort Chimo as the principal station of the District. They consider however that it may be as well to allow two men to remain there till the goods are expended, to furnish the Esquimaux in the neighbourhood with what they may require, as

it will not be treating the people kindly to abandon the place at once. If it is deemed proper to send the Brigantine Marten she can bring any such stores and furs as may be there, but if the latter can be easily got to hand by way of Esquimaux Bay, it would save a trip of the Vessel, which may probably be more advantageously employed. The Governor and Committee leave these matters to your discretion... (A6/25/162).

And Keith was to allow McLean to have his furlough if he could be replaced.

When Marten left Quebec for Esquimaux Bay in June 1842, she carried a letter from Keith that granted McLean his request for a leave of absence and gave him

liberty to abandon forthwith the Post of Fort Chimo, and to reduce the Trade of Ungava to two Inland Posts to be supplied from Esquimaux Bay, provided the abandonment of Fort Chimo does not subject the Indians, who have heretofore resorted to that place to any unusual privation. Assuming that the changes can be introduced with equal advantage to the Indians as well as to the Company, steps will have to be taken to secure the property whether goods or returns on hand at Fort Chimo, to effect which object it is left optional with you and Mr Nourse should you see fit, to send the Marten to Fort Chimo; and if not sent thither, she can be retained and employed during the proper season at Esquimaux Bay, previous to her being loaded and despatched for Quebec with the Returns (A11/28/104-104d).

In October, Keith wrote again to Smith to say he had learned that McLean "anticipating the approval of their Honours in complying with his suggestions in 1841 for abandoning Ungava Dist. more particularly Fort Chimo had taken measures to that effect early in Summer & having left Mr. George Anderson in charge of that Post with instructions for following them up...

[had] crossed overland to Esquimaux Bay..." (A11/28/119).

McLean had, Nourse reported on 5 August,

agreeable to instructions...directed the Marten to go round to Fort Chimo to remove the Servants & property there to this place on which voyage she sailed yesterday morning. The instructions I received from Mr G.F. Jas. Keith were, that should Mr McLean avail himself of a leave of absence, the two interior posts at the height of land were to be considered as annexed to this District and to be supplied from this Bay (B153/b/1/73).

Nourse had, evidently, not known in 1841 of McLean's plans for the closing of Fort Chimo. Certainly he did not expect to supply the two inland posts from his own resources in 1842 as he had, at McLean's suggestion, in 1841 (B153/b/1/56-57). It must have been with some surprise, therefore, that he learned in August 1842 from McLean himself of the arrangement for Marten to evacuate Fort Chimo and of McLean's intention to go on furlough. Nourse refers, perhaps with a hint of reservation, to McLean's "opinion" that Keith's instructions authorized him to abandon Fort Chimo and Fort Siveright (B153/b/1/82).

It was clear from Keith's instructions to Nourse that, should McLean take his leave, responsibility for what was left of the Ungava venture devolved upon him. Nourse's indent for Esquimaux Bay for Outfit 1842 was only £177-3-4, as against McLean's indent (cancelled by the Governor and Committee) for £342-175 (A11/28/86d). Finding supplies

for Fort Nascopie cannot have been easy for him. Nourse was, moreover, uneasy about George Anderson at Fort Chimo. Marten, having got as far as the entrance of Hudson Strait, was driven back by contrary winds (B153/b/1/85,88). He knew from McLean's inventory that Fort Chimo was not short of provisions, but was short of gunpowder, and he feared that the Eskimos, now dependent on guns, might become a burden to the post. He therefore sent, at considerable trouble, a supply of ^dpower to Kennedy at Fort Nascopie to be forwarded during the winter to Fort Chimo (B153/b/1/84).

The Ungava venture, from its inception, had suffered from inadequacies of supply and communication. Some interruptions to plan were accidental or due to the post's remote situation. Others were due to insufficient attention to detail from those involved in forming plans and taking decisions. In the last year of Fort Chimo's existence, faulty communication resulted in a new problem. Instead of a lack of some essential material, such as birch bark or the staples of trade, there was a delivery that no one at Fort Chimo, Fort Nascopie, or Fort Smith expected, for which they were entirely unprepared, and of which no practical use could be made. This unexpected and, as it proved, unwanted surprise was the arrival on foot of a party of 18 immigrant hunters from the Eastmain coast.

Before their advent, Anderson and his men had spent a

quiet, if uneasy, summer waiting for Marten to evacuate the post. By late September, they had given up hope of seeing the ship that year. At the same time, Anderson noted that the caribou meat in the ice house was now unfit to eat (B38/a/8/47-47d). (This waste suggests that, anticipating the arrival of the ship, they had entered the ice house frequently during the summer, thereby allowing the temperature in it to rise above the critical level.) The Eastmain Indians began to appear on 2 October but it was the 7th before a messenger delivered Chief Trader Corcoran's note, written the previous July at Fort George, explaining the matter (B38/a/8/48d). Anderson wasted no time in forwarding them to Fort Nascopie, where their arrival on 8 January 1843 astonished Kennedy. His first news of their transfer was their appearance.

In 1835-1836, Eastmain Indians had been persuaded to hunt near Fort Chimo. They arrived when Finlayson had no goods to establish an interior post for them, they trapped almost nothing, and left for home the next summer (B38/a/2/67-68). Their return coincided with Finlayson's own departure.

In March 1838, when McLean reported on his overland journey to Esquimaux Bay, he mentioned an excellent hunting ground some seventy miles from Fort Chimo and urged that "imported Indians" be tried again with a view to hunting

this territory (B38/b/2/53d). By the time Simpson took up the matter, McLean appeared to have forgotten it. In March 1840, Simpson ordered Robert Miles at Rupert House to encourage "by every means in your power" Indians to migrate from his neighbourhood to Ungava (D4/25/128). Simpson had an additional reason for encouraging this emigration. The returns of beaver skins in Rupert River District had dropped substantially during the 1830's and the value of beaver on the market had also fallen (A6/26/60). Simpson resumed the subject in 1841 and told Miles to offer the Eastmain Indians "an advanced price, to the extent of 50 per Cent on the present prices given at the Post in Rupert River..." (D4/26/17), if they should move. By so doing, they would supply Ungava with hunters "while their own exhausted land would be allowed to recruit, a measure alike important to themselves as to the interest of the Fur Trade" (*ibid.*).

Miles and Corcoran were more successful than Simpson had anticipated, for Simpson had informed McLean, he did not think Miles could persuade the Indians to move (D4/25/93). By autumn 1842, McLean had left the region and Nourse, if he had heard of the plan, did not know it was being implemented. Kennedy was entirely unprepared for their arrival and expressed himself, in the post journal, with a restraint admirable in the circumstances.

[Corcoran's letter] gives intimations of 18 families of the Indians of that place having attached themselves to the Ungava part of the Esqx. Bay Dist. in accordance with Govr. Simpson's instructions... relative to the peopling of this part of the country more densely with a view of acquiring more of its riches by their means - a thing which at this early period I do not hesitate to say will prove to be one of the greatest disappointments to which this part of the country ever gave birth and these have neither been few nor small. How the opinion can still exist that there are Beaver in this Country is mysterious to me but the result will best test the matter & meanwhile the Indins who have come in do not give a very promising appearance to things as they have only brot 2 X Foxes & 7 martens! (B159/a/1/8).

When Nourse learned from Kennedy about the Eastmain Indians, he immediately decided to re-establish Fort Trial or a post between Fort Nascopeie and Fort Chimo. Such a post could use goods from Fort Chimo, it would ensure dispersal of the Indians, and it would keep the Eastmain and the Naskapi Indians apart, "until they become permanently attached to the District & get accustomed to the Standard of trade we follow in common with...Mingan & 7 Islands.... To have two different Tarrifs for Indians at the same post might lead to misunderstanding..." (B153/b/2/3).

Meantime, at Ungava Bay, the men from Fort Siveright had come in to Fort Chimo during January 1843 because they had no food (B38/a/8/52-52d). In April, Anderson received Nourse's letter relating to the establishment of a new post

between Fort Chimo and Fort Nascope, and he began to prepare goods for it (B38/a/8/56,57d). Finally, in June, four Indians in two canoes came down from Fort Nascope to carry this small outfit inland (B38/a/8/59) and Anderson turned his attention to bringing what few returns there were at Fort Siveright over to Fort Chimo. This task was accomplished in July, although the packs had to be opened and their contents dried, for "everything [was] in a shocking state" (B38/a/8/61).

Among Anderson's last entries in the Fort Chimo journal are comments on the Eskimos, "if all of them hunted as well as this fellow [who had just killed six whales] we would get a pretty fair quantity [of oil] in the course of the Season", and on the salmon, which were "exceedingly large and rich" (B38/a/8/61d,63). But these attractive possibilities were not to be realized in trade. On 21 August, Marten arrived and, by the 29th, everything that was to be removed had been shipped. They were delayed three days longer by contrary winds. "The wind still unfavourable it being now nearly calm however it is to be hoped we may be able to sail tomorrow" is the resigned sentiment that closes the Fort Chimo journal on 31 August 1843 (B38/a/8/64).

Kennedy was correct in thinking that the Eastmain Indians would return to the coast "as soon as they see Ungava is not a beaver country but is one vast rock of granite" (B139/a/1/11). Some had already left by March but others hung about until at least January 1844, but these stragglers did "little in the way of hunting Fur" (B139/a/2/8d).

The post between Fort Chimo and Fort Nascopeie proved difficult to establish. Kennedy decided he could not follow Nourse's orders to build it during the summer of 1843 because both canoes and men were lacking (B139/a/1/11). When, late that autumn, he returned to Fort Nascopeie from his trip to Esquimaux Bay, ice was already forming on the lakes and he could send no one then either. However, during the summer, George Alder had, with much trouble, brought a small outfit from Fort Chimo as far as Mainewan Lake and had then continued to Fort Nascopeie. He returned during November and again in January 1844 to secure the cache holding this outfit. On his second visit, he intended to stay two months and see something of the Eastmain Indians, but a wolverine destroyed his food and he had to return to Fort Nascopeie.

Finally, in 1845, a clerk newly arrived in the district, Henry Connolly*, built an outpost

* In old age, Henry Connolly (d. 1902?) wrote an autobiography that was evidently based, in part, on the journals he kept at Mainewan Post and at Fort Nascopeie, of which he had charge

at the Manawan lake (the Egg Lake) about fifteen miles below the Otayhinac [Oteluk Lake], when [where] two years ago Mr. George Alder had such trouble to keep soul and body together... On the 10th Sept. we have at last finished the grand Fort Otayhinac (Connolly n.d.: 137).

Connolly had charge of the post during its short existence. He visited Fort Chimo twice, in February and in April 1846, "to see if we could induce the Esquimaux to come up this far [to Mainewan Post] to trade which I very much doubt. Other means must be got for that, and this is to re-establish Fort Chimo, which they eventually did do" (*ibid.*: 144). By 1847, having failed either to attract the Eskimos or to keep the Eastmain Indians, there was no longer any reason for a northern outpost of Fort Nascope, and it, too, was closed.

Were John McLean, James Keith, and the Governor and Committee correct in their agreement that Fort Chimo should

* contd. for many years. (The Mainewan Post and Fort Chimo journals kept by Henry Connolly are not in the Hudson's Bay Company's archives. Presumably he kept the copies he should have submitted to his superiors.) Like McLean, Connolly emerges from the pages of his manuscript as a man of strong feelings: loyal and affectionate to his friends, vituperative and vindictive to his enemies. He wrote frankly of his family and of his sometimes unpleasant relations with colleagues, subjects that can only be guessed at in the official records of the Hudson's Bay Company. He especially disliked Donald Henderson, to whom he usually referred merely as "H" but often as "that cut-throat". Quite without literary pretension, the manuscript is nonetheless a valuable and interesting document. It lies unidentified by author and its intrinsic value unrecognized among the papers of Robert Bell, the geologist, in the Public Archives of Canada.

be abandoned? Would Governor Simpson have concurred in their decision? From this remove in time and space, these are difficult questions to debate, even with the evidence of a retrospective view. Before turning to discussion of this interesting example of decision-taking among the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, it is first necessary to say something more about the returns of Fort Chimo and the success these returns had at market.

The general practice and conduct of the fur trade have been well described many times, by traders themselves and by scholars (Rich, 1960: 43-47). However, certain aspects of the operations of the fur trade should be mentioned here, for they illustrate the interesting question of the Unga's venture's profitability and, more important still, the contemporary view of whether or not the venture was profitable.

A clear description of the Hudson's Bay Company's understanding of their principles and practice during the second quarter of the nineteenth century appears in 1838 in the published proceedings of the Select Committee appointed in 1837 by the House of Commons "to consider the State of these British Possessions in North America which are under the Administration of the Hudson's Bay Company, or over which they possess a License to Trade" (Great Britain, Parliament

V

THE ECONOMICS OF THE UNGAVA VENTURE

None of the documents from Fort Chimo and its satellite posts gives a detailed account of trading operations, but the process must have been carried on there as it was elsewhere in the Company's territories. Any differences from ordinary procedures would certainly have been the subject of instruction and comment by Governor Simpson.

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1857: 111). The investigating committee was not primarily interested in the principles and practice of the fur trade, but members of the Committee were intrigued by the subject and they returned to it more than once. Of the witnesses, Dr. John Rae, veteran of twenty-three years in Company service, ten of them at Moose Factory, gave the most extensive explanation of the system. Governor Simpson and other witnesses confirmed and amplified his statements, and further support can be found scattered through the contemporary literature, published and unpublished, of the subject.

Some of the Committee members were slow to understand the idea of trade based on the principle of a fixed tariff and using a currency called made beaver. Rae stated again and again the substance of his explanations of these concepts. The furs an Indian brought to trade were not valued in money but according to an agreed standard of valuation whereby any given fur was related in value to one made beaver, which was "A [beaver] skin of the average size; a good large skin killed in winter or in spring" (*ibid.*: 33). Two small beavers equalled or, as the traders said, "made" one beaver; ten muskrats made one beaver; one silver fox, an especially valuable fur, made four or five beaver. The Indians and traders were well used to the variations in quality and size of the skins they handled and they could, therefore, readily agree on the valuation in made beaver of a given skin. The

ratios of furs to one made beaver seldom changed.

Goods sold to the Indian were also valued in made beaver according to a fixed tariff. The price of goods in made beaver bore no necessary relation to their value in England. Members of the Committee found it difficult to believe that the price of goods, which rose and fell continually on the London market, could be supplied at fixed prices to Indians, and that furs, which fluctuated violently both in numbers and in market value, were bought from the Indians at prices fixed over long periods of time.

Rae was at pains to explain why he thought this system of trade was as fair as possible to the Indian. The Company paid the Indian relatively more, he explained, for inferior furs, such as muskrat, than they did for fine furs, such as silver fox and marten. At many post, muskrat made up as much as half the returns. If the Company paid for fine furs at a rate proportionally higher, according to their value, than muskrat, Rae thought the Indian would hunt fine furs to the virtual exclusion of inferior furs. In so doing, he would extinguish the fine-fur animals, which were much rarer than muskrat, and the short-term advantage of a high price for fine furs would quickly prove a long-term disadvantage to the Indian. Furthermore, the muskrat, unlike silver fox and marten, provided a nourishing meat for the hunter and his family. The Company's buying of inferior furs at relatively

high prices in relation to their market value tended, therefore, both to the well being of the Indians and to the conservation of animals bearing valuable fur.

As for the fixed tariff, Rae insisted that the Indians would never tolerate variations in the prices of goods: they had no notion of the value of goods in money. Finally, it was plain that because the Indian paid for goods in made beaver - his trade made up of whatever furs he happens to have to offer the trader - varying the made-beaver price of any given commodity would not necessarily have the effect of raising or lowering its price in money. As illustration, Rae and the Committee discussed the price of a gun, which cost 22/- in London and, in the Mackenzie River District, cost the Indian 20 made beaver. The example was from "many years ago" but evidently within Rae's own experience (*ibid.*: 36). It was, moreover, an extreme example, for the Mackenzie River District, being furthest from supply depots, had the highest tariff. Elsewhere the gun would have sold for half the price. Now, if the Indian paid five silver fox (one silver fox making four or five made beaver), the gun would have cost him in money about £50-0-0. If, on the other hand, he paid for the gun with 200 muskrat (ten muskrat going to one made beaver), it would have cost him only £2-10-0 to £3-0-0, depending on whether a muskrat got 3d. or 4d. on the market.

When driven to the point by the Committee, Rae admitted that, on average, the Indian paid at least 200 per cent above the London price and possibly as much as 300 or 500 per cent, although he had never computed an average (*ibid.*: 34). He did not know who had determined the ratio of furs to one made beaver and the cost of goods in made beaver, only that "It was determined long before [he] entered the service". Sir George Simpson, testifying after Rae, affirmed that it was a tariff of "very old standing", one that had been "settled originally by the original traders" (*ibid.*: 70).

Of the quantity of goods imported annually to the regions supplied through Hudson Bay, Simpson thought that about two-thirds were supplied to the Indians (*ibid.*: 81). The staple articles of trade were "British manufactures; blankets, cloths, arms, ammunition, iron works, axes and various things" (*ibid.*: 81). Of these goods,

Awls, gun flints, gun worms, hooks, needles, thread, beads, knives, gartering ribbons, &c., are given [to the Indians] as gratuities; about 20 per cent. of the outfit in those articles are given as gratuities (*ibid.*: 86).

Spirits were also given on occasion as a gift and were not, in the ordinary course, used in trade.

As well as distributing as gifts some 20 per cent of the goods supplied to the Indians, the Company stood to lose, also, on its method of anticipating fur returns by outfitting the Indian hunter on credit in the autumn. "We do not sell

a gun for skins", Simpson stated emphatically. "We give the gun to the Indian, as everything else, on credit, and he pays for those supplies in the spring of the year. ... We take in payment whatever he can give us" (*ibid.*: 81). If, for reason of illness or accident, the Indian so credited made no hunt, the loss was written off the books (*ibid.*: 64).

So much for the general method of trade. Now, how great was the "great expense" of the Ungava venture? The cost is revealed by entries in the Grand Ledger and the Grand Journal of the Hudson's Bay Company, where accounts for Fort Chimo were kept as those of a separate district from 1830 to 1843. The figures given below are condensed from these series (A14 and A15) and simplified for succinct presentation. Scrutiny of the balance sheets reveals - not surprisingly - inconsistencies, mistakes and, in a few instances, what looks like outright coercion by the bookkeeper of his figures. In the main, however, credits and debits are clearly identified and the financial history of the Ungava venture can be outlined in bold strokes. It appears, moreover, that the expense was by no means as great as Governor Simpson continually claimed it was.

During the period in question, the Hudson's Bay Company employed a form of double-entry bookkeeping in which the credits and the debits of a given outfit were balanced in the Grand Ledger. The Grand Journal carried in its pages

amplifications, entered chronologically, of the entries in the Grand Ledger. Debits of an outfit included the inventory of the goods on hand on 1 June of the year in which the outfit began, other inventories or merchandise received during the outfit, servants' wages, and such charges as insurance, duties, and sundry supplies from ships and from other departments. Credits included profits from fur sales, sundry supplies sold to ships and to other departments, servants' bills, and the inventory of stock on hand on 1 June at the end of the outfit. This inventory, credited to the end of one outfit, was carried forward as a debit to the next outfit. Profit or loss for a given outfit was calculated by finding the difference between the sums of its debits and credits.

The task of keeping these books was complicated and confused by the necessity of making charges towards or against an outfit over a period of several years and by the frequent discovery of mistakes in previous calculations. Essential documents, such as inventories, were often delayed, lost in transit, or simply not sent in by the trader. In June 1836 the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company complained to Finlayson that Outfit 1833 could not be closed until he had sent in his inventory for 1 June 1834 (A6/24/63). In 1841, James Keith complained to McLean that "in regard to the result of any single Outfit" he was unable to make anything

satisfactory of his accounts for Outfits 1837-38-39-40
(B38/b/3/5).

Because the books of an outfit had to be left open such a long time, it was impossible for anyone, bookkeeper, trader, or the governor himself, to have more than a vague, general, and possibly mistaken, impression of whether or not a given outfit's trade was profitable until years after the event. Indeed, it was only after Fort Chimo was closed that the true state of the post's financial history could be seen. When, in 1863, discussion of re-opening Fort Chimo was going forward, the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company wrote to Finlayson in his retirement. Although Fort Chimo had been difficult to supply, the secretary said, the returns "though not very large, were very valuable and were increasing" (A5/27/193). The figures given below amply demonstrate his point, but it was a point that emerged only gradually and became finally clear only in the fullness of a retrospective view.

As a preliminary to calculating the cost of the Ungava venture, the essential elements of each outfit, corrected where necessary and simplified where possible, are presented here in tabular form. These figures differ in many instances from the figures given in the Grand Ledger and to a lesser extent from those of the Grand Journal, both of which contain numerous inconsequential errors. Temporary balances were

frequently struck in the Grand Ledger, probably to obtain a current idea of relative profitability: these temporary balances have been omitted from the tables here. Some lump sums, such as shipping charges included in the value of an inventory, have been separated but, in other cases, small related sums have been lumped together under one heading. Figures found in documents other than the Grand Ledger and Grand Journal have been used where convenient. Because some of the original entries are ambiguous or in error and because interpretation or correction of these entries may be open to dispute, the sources of all figures in the table are listed. Reduction of these several outfits to their essential elements provides a clear indication of the profitability of the Ungava venture, a result that cannot be obtained by comparison of the somewhat haphazard balances arrived at in the Grand Ledger.

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 2 551-5-100

OUTFIT 1830 (A14/21/99)

Debits

Merchandise via <u>Montcalm</u> (A15/26/256; A24/40/20)	£2392- 8-4
Shipping charges, <u>Montcalm</u> (A24/40/20)	114- 7-1
Expenses of <u>Beaver</u> and of <u>Finlayson's</u> overland expedition (A15/26/263-264)	1619-16-7
Sundries from Northern Department (A15/26/239,324)	19-15-5 27- 3-0
Servants' wages (A15/26/324)	123- 0-0
	<hr/>
	£4296-10-5

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1831 (A14/22/247; A15/36/268; A15/27/193)	£3721- 0-5*
Supplies to Moose Factory (A15/26/247)	24- 4-8
	<hr/>
	£3745- 5-1

Profit and loss: £4296-10-5
-3745- 5-1

£ 551- 5-4 for loss

* Probably includes duplicate of Montcalm's invoice
and charges, £2506-18-5 (see A15/27/193).

OUTFITS 1831, 1832, and 1833 (A14/22/87; A14/23/45*)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1831 (A15/27/193)	£3721- 0-5
Servants' wages, 1831 (A15/26/268; A15/27/225)	337-10-2
Servants' wages, 1832 (A14/23/45; A15/28/113)	204- 9-2
Servants' wages, 1833 (A15/31/226)	111- 5-6
	<hr/>
	£4365- 5-3

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1834 (A15/31/226)	£1712-13-2
Servants' bills (A14/22/92; A15/27/193)	33-17-4
Sale of furs in London, Outfit 1832 (A51/13/13)	43-17-6
Sale of furs in London, Outfit 1833 (A51/13/92)	488- 5-1
	<hr/>
	£2278-13-1

Profit and loss: £4365- 5-3
-2278-13-1

£2086-12-2 for loss

* Outfit 1833 is not mentioned in the Grand Ledger (A14/24), although there are references to it in the complementary volume of the Grand Journal (A15/29).

OUTFIT 1834 (A14/26/122)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1834: £1712-13-2, less servants' wages of £111-5-6 (A15/31/226)	£1601- 7- 8
Merchandise via <u>Prince George</u> * (A15/31/12)	986- 2- 7*
Merchandise via <u>Ganymede</u> (A15/31/12,155)	505-18- 7
Insurance (A15/31/156)	22- 4- 9
Servants' wages (A15/31/227)	205-11- 4
	<hr/>
	£3321- 4-11

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1835 (A15/31/227)	£2012- 8-2
Invoice of <u>Prince George</u> , assumed by Northern Department (A15/31/144; A15/33/190)	986- 2-7*
Sale of furs in London (A15/31/186; A51/14/79-80; A51/15/8d)	2101- 6-3
Furs on hand in London (A15/31/188; A51/15/8d)	6-10-0
Deerskins shipped to Moose Factory (A51/14/98)	86-16-0
	<hr/>
	£5193- 3-0

Profit and loss: £5193- 3- 0
 -3321- 4-11

 £1871-18- 1 for gain

* This shipment did not reach Fort Chimo

OUTFIT 1835 (A14/27/128)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1835:	£1806-16-10
£2012-8-2, less servants' wages of	
£205-11-4 (A15/32/257)	
Merchandise via <u>Esquimaux</u> (A15/32/30)	776- 2- 1
Other supplies (A15/32/176)	108-15-10
Insurance (A15/32/253)	15- 6- 9
Servants' wages (A15/32/211)	234- 9- 5
	<hr/>
	£2941-10-11

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1836	£2199-15- 0
(A15/32/211)	
Sale of furs in London (A15/32/26;	825-10-11
A51/16/138)	
Skins shipped to Moose Factory	124-17- 0
(A15/32/26)	
	<hr/>
	£3150- 2-11

Profit and loss: £3150- 2-11

-2941-10-11

£ 208-12- 0 for gain

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OUTFIT 1837 (A14/29/85,115)

Debits

Inventory on hand and at York Factory, 1 June 1837: £2827-15-2 less servants' wages of £241-14-7 (A15/33/190; A15/34/149)	£2586- 0- 7
Merchandise via <u>Aurora</u> (A15/34/38)	757-11- 9
Supplies from Northern Department (A15/34/169)	689- 9- 8
Supplies from Southern Department (A15/34/175)	123- 3- 2
Servants' wages. (A15/34/143,209,245)	269-11- 2
Sundry amounts paid out (A15/34/245,246)	21- 2- 8
Insurance (A15/34/246)	9-19-11
	<hr/> £4456-18-11

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1838 (A15/34/245)	£3598-0- 8
Supplies to <u>Aurora</u> (A15/34/131)	3-1- 6
Servants' bills (A15/34/144)	4-5-10
Finlayson's bill (A15/34/146)	13-7- 1
Fur sales in London (A15/34/246)	343-2- 7
Deerskins sent to Quebec (A15/34/249)	124-4- 1
	<hr/> £4086-1- 9

Profit and loss: £4456-18-11
-4086- 1- 9

£ 370-17- 2 for loss

OUTFIT 1838 (A14/30/104)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1838: £3598-0-8, less servants' wages of £33-14-1 (A15/34/245)	£3564- 6- 7
Sundries with Montreal Department (A15/35/171,200)	46- 6- 1
Paid to Quebec cash account (A15/35/201)	3-10- 2
Insurance (A15/35/221)	45-16-11
Duty (A15/35/224)	3-11
Servants' wages (A15/35/200,222)	366- 1-10
	£4026- 5- 6

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1839 (A15/35/222)	£2866- 7- 4
Sales in Canada (A15/35/221; A15/37/205)	204- 2- 0
Sales in London (A15/35/223)	1605- 2- 7
	£4675-11-11

Profit and loss: £4675-11-11
 -4026- 5- 6

 £ 649- 6- 5 for gain

OUTFIT 1839 (A14/32/105)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1839:	£2500- 5-6
£2886-7-4, less servants' wages of	
£366-1-10 (A15/37/199)	457-12- 0
Sundries (A15/37/103, 151, 201, 211)	16-15-8
Insurance (A15/37/194)	60- 8-4
Supplies from Montreal Department (A15/37/197)	27- 8-7
Servants' wages (A15/37/186)	785- 6-0
	<hr/>
	£3390- 4-1

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1840	£1877- 9- 0
(A15/37/186)	
Sundries (A15/37/196)	4-18- 6
Furs on hand in Canada (A14/32/105;	109-12-11
A15/37/205)	
Fur sales in London (A15/37/209)	2066- 7-10
Furs on hand in London (A15/37/210)	5- 2- 0
	<hr/>
	£4063-10- 3

Profit and loss: £4063-10-3
 -3390- 4-1

 £ 673- 6-2 for gain

OUTFIT 1840 (A14/33/46)

Debits

Balance [inventory?] written back from Outfit 1841 (A15/38/236)	£1879-10- 6
Servants' wages (A15/38/236)	437-12- 0
	<hr/>
	£2317- 2- 6

Credits

Sales of furs formerly credited to Montreal Department (A15/38/237; B134/b/9/135)	£ 318-16-11
.....	

Debits

Balance of the debit and credit accounts given above (A15/38/244)	£1998- 5- 7
Duty (A15/38/252)	11- 7
Wages short credited (A15/38/252)	4- 2-10
Inventory on hand, 1 June 1840 (A15/38/252; A15/40/186)	1877- 9- 0
	<hr/>
	£3880- 9- 0

Credits

Servants' bills (A15/38/252)	£ 76-11- 1
Sales of tongues and deerskins (A15/38/253,259)	29-12- 6 6- 0- 0
Sales of furs (A15/38/253,254)	3- 0- 6 1123-11- 1
Inventory on hand, 1 June 1841, valued at London (A15/39/281)	3194-19- 0
	<hr/>
	£4433-14- 2

Profit and loss: £4433-14-2
-3880- 9-0

£ 553- 5-2 for gain

OUTFIT 1841 (A14/34/44) (A14/36/135)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1841, valued at London (A15/39/281)	£3194-19-0
Account [servants' wages?] with Montreal Department (A15/39/214)	495- 2-3
Gratuity to a servant (A15/39/274)	1- 7-0
Duty (A15/39/281)	7- 8-4
	£3698-16-7

Credits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1842 (A15/39/274)	£1586-12-8
Fur sales in London (A15/39/238)	1147-13-8
Fur sales in London (A15/39/278)	1437- 4-8
Deerskins sold in Canada (A15/39/275,277,290)	145-12-8
Wages over credited (A15/39/274)	31-14-9
	£4348-18-5

Profit and loss: £4348-18- 5
 -3698-16- 7

 £ 650- 1-10 for gain

OUTFIT 1842-1843 (A14/35/42; A14/36/135)

Debits

Inventory on hand, 1 June 1842 (A15/40/186)	£1586-12- 8
Servants' wages	?
Wages short credited Outfit 1839 (A14/35/183)	5- 0- 0
" " " " 1840 "	14- 2-10
" " " " 1841 "	36- 7- 0
Expenses of taking returns to England (A15/40/185; A15/41/135)	150- 0- 0
Sundries (A15/41/136)	6- 0- 0
	<hr/>
	£1798- 2- 6

Credits

Fur sales in London (A15/40/203)	£3759- 5-6
Furs on hand in London (A15/40/206)	11-0
Inventory on hand, 1 August 1843 (B153/e/1/68)	1299-17-0
	<hr/>
	£5059-13-6

Profit and loss: £5059-13-6

-1798- 2-6

£3261-11-0 for gain [less wages]

Outfit 1830

The accounts of the first outfit are not easy to follow. There were two inventories destined for Fort Chimo in 1830, but only that carried by Montcalm arrived. Beaver was obliged to turn back and reached Fort Chimo only in September 1831. However, the inventory on hand on 1 June 1831 is greater than the value of goods delivered by Montcalm in 1830, so it appears that, for the purposes of bookkeeping, Beaver's cargo was reckoned to form part of Fort Chimo's inventory in June 1831. The debit of £1619-16-7 in favour of the Southern Department looks, at first sight, as though it were Beaver's inventory. But this sum represents the value of Beaver herself, complete with "rigging, sails, blocks, etc." (A15/26/264); charges for the transport of the ship's master, Thomas Duncan, from LaChine to Moose Factory; and the expenses of Finlayson's overland expedition, including balances due at Moose Factory from servants who accompanied him.

To get a figure for the inventory on hand, 1 June 1831, the bookkeeper appears to have doubled the inventory carried by Montcalm. The sum £2506-15-5, the cost of goods and the charges of shipping them by Montcalm, appears as a debit in the Grand Ledger and it also appears as a part of the inventory on hand at the end of the outfit. There is no figure in the books for Beaver's outfit.

Outfits 1831, 1832, and 1833

Beaver, having delivered in 1831 the second part of Outfit 1830, spent the next two winters at Fort Chimo and, in 1833, carried out to York Factory the returns of Outfit 1831 and 1832. After Beaver arrived in September 1831, Finlayson received no further supplies until September 1834, when Ganymede arrived from London. The accounts in the Grand Ledger and Grand Journal for Outfits 1831-1833 are sketchy and confused: for that reason, they have been synthesized here. The accounts for the three outfits can be calculated in various ways, but the simplest way of reckoning expenses is by subtracting the inventory on hand, 1 June 1834, from the inventory of 1 June 1831, then adding the wages of the three outfits to find a total debit of £4365-5-3. Credits, according to the books, for Outfits 1831-1833 were few. They amounted to only £2278-13-1 and the greater part of that sum represents the stock of inventory on hand on 1 June 1834. Debits minus credits suggest a loss of £2086-12-2 on the three outfits. In the miscellaneous accounts of trade in the Northern Department, to which Fort Chimo was attached between 1831 and 1835, losses for these three outfits are stated to be £366-1-5 for Outfit 1831, £567-13-11 for Outfit 1832, and £2050-13-0 for Outfit 1833 (B239/z/25/391d-392, 395d, 399d). The very large loss of Outfit 1833 must include the losses of Outfits 1831 and 1832 as well, for Outfit 1833

was not conducted on a scale to lose so much by itself.

At this point, it must be said that this substantial loss of approximately £2,000 on Outfits 1831-1833, a loss that caused everyone involved in the Ungava venture deep concern, did not exist except on the books. The loss, if it was not an error, was at the least a misrepresentation of the facts. The returns of Outfit 1833 were not, in fact, the first furs Fort Chimo had sent to market.

Outfit 1832 has £43-17-6 credited to it: this amount was realized by one bundle of 33 beaver skins sold in January 1835 (A51/13/13), two months before the sale of furs from Outfit 1833 (A51/13/92). But these 33 skins were only the beaver from Outfit 1832's returns, which, in total value, were worth much more than the returns of Outfit 1833. The returns of Outfit 1831 were more valuable still. Indeed, during Outfit 1831, when Indians visited Fort Chimo for the first time, there was a better trade than in any outfit until 1838.

Finlayson tabulated the fur returns of Outfit 1831 and Outfit 1832 separately and added, as well, a list of furs on hand for Outfit 1833 (B38/z/1/1-4). But, although there are two lists, the numbers of furs Finlayson gave for Outfit 1832 certainly include the furs of Outfit 1831 as well. The returns of bear, mink, muskrat, wolf, deerskins, and pounds of ivory are identical in both lists, and the increases are

all on the side of Outfit 1832. The improbability of the returns of five different items of trade being identical in two consecutive years is too great to be considered seriously. Marten is the outstanding feature of the returns of both outfits: 871 in 1831 and, presumably, 187 in 1832 for a total of 1058. If the combined returns of Outfit 1831 and Outfit 1832 got, on average, the same prices as the returns of Outfit 1833, which reached market at about the same time, they were worth about £1800. (See the table "Summary of furs traded in the Ungava venture and their values".) The combined returns for the three outfits, 1831-1833, must have amounted, therefore, to at least £2,300, an amount in excess of the loss reckoned from the entries for these outfits in the Grand Journal and the Grand Ledger and stated to be a loss in the miscellaneous accounts of the Northern Department.

What became of these valuable returns and why were they not entered against the expenses of Outfits 1831 and 1832? The answer is simple. These returns were carried to York Factory by Beaver during the summer of 1833 and there mixed with other returns of the Northern Department. Evidence of this event is found in an analysis of "Fur returns by Districts" kept at York Factory (B239/h/1/42). Here Ungava is listed as a temporary district, and the numbers of furs listed for Outfits 1831 and 1832 are nearly identical with Finlayson's list. The beaver from Outfit 1832 and all

the returns from Outfit 1833 were, on the other hand, carried direct to London in the autumn of 1833, and the proceeds of their sale (the total in error by sixpence) were entered in the Grand Ledger to the credit of the Ungava District.

It is extraordinary that the furs from Outfits 1831 and 1832 failed to be credited to the Ungava venture in this manner. The fact is all the more extraordinary because the quality of the furs was immediately noticed. As early as December 1834, Simpson wrote to Finlayson to complain that "a heavy balance remains outstanding against the trade", but he added, more cheerfully,

The furs sent to York in 1833 were remarkably fine, particularly the otters and Martins; Pray let us have as many packs of the same or any other kind, as possible... (B38/b/2/24; D4/21/50).

Probably neither the bookkeeper in London nor the fur traders at Fort Chimo knew enough of the circumstances to realize that a substantial sum had been lost to the credit of a marginal operation. Probably only Simpson was in a position to notice the anomaly and to realize its importance, but it seems clear that he did not notice it. In December 1835, he was still complaining to Finlayson about

...the heavy expenses for seven years and upwards, in preparing & attempting to settle the Country, and that up to this time, we have but one miserable and solitary establishment, the trade, of which does not yet cover the interest on money laid out,... (A6/23/163).

Outfits 1834-1843

After Outfit 1833, interpretation of the entries in the Grand Ledger is, usually, more nearly straightforward but some comment is necessary to explain the major differences between the calculations given in these pages and the results given in the Grand Ledger.

Outfit 1834. The Grand Ledger gives a profit of £1870-18-1. This amount is in error by £1-10-0. Furs on hand, valued at £5-0-0, were eventually sold at £6-10-0, but the increase in price did not reach the Grand Ledger (A4/26/122; A51/15/8d).

Outfit 1835. The bookkeeper appears to have made a mistake of sixpence in his addition, for the Grand Ledger gives a profit of £208-18-1 (A14/27/128).

Outfit 1836. The calculations in the Grand Ledger appear to be correct, but one of the figures is in error. The total of the sale of furs in London, given as £1295-2-6, should be £1285-2-1 (A15/33/197). This alteration reduces the profit from £941/13/6 to £931-13-1.

Outfit 1837. Essentially correct, despite the confusion of the entries. The bookkeeper leaves the outfit with a loss of £495-1-3, which should have been reduced by £124-4-1, the result of a later sale of deerskins at Quebec (A14/29/85; A15/34/249).

Outfit 1838. All correct.

Outfit 1839. Essentially correct, although a later debit reduced the profit of £678-6-2 by £5-0-0 (A14/32/105; A15/37/265). (For the problems the bookkeeper met in accounting for this outfit, see A11/28/48-48d).

Outfit 1840. Essentially correct, except that a sale of deerskins was later discovered to have been overvalued by £6-0-0, which overvaluation was not deducted from the final balance of the Grand Ledger (A15/38/253,259). Also some feathers (£1-18-0) were not included in one of the sale totals (A15/38/254). The accounts for Outfit 1840 are confusing. The bookkeeper had, at one point, transferred the balance of the outfit to Outfit 1842. However, in January 1843, having received no accounts from Fort Chimo for Outfit 1841, he transferred the account back to Outfit 1840. The inventory for 1 June 1841 was missing as late as 1844 (A6/26/181) and, for that reason, a figure for the inventory "valued in London" was eventually supplied (A14/33/46). In the debits of the Grand Ledger, there is no entry under Outfit 1840 for new inventory, although Marten carried to Ungaya merchandise valued at £1051-10-2 (A6/25/156). McLean took passage from Esquimaux Bay to Fort Chimo on Marten and found the provisions intended for him "altogether insufficient". He therefore requisitioned more supplies from W.H. Davies at Fort Smith and took still more supplies from Marten, when they had reached Fort Chimo. His total

inventory, then, may well have added up to the mysterious "balance" of £1879-10-6, which was written back from Outfit 1841. Indeed, it is not easy to imagine any other explanation for this balance.

Outfit 1841. When reduced to simple figures and the errors in the Grand Ledger corrected, the result is clear and correct. The debit account with the Montreal Department (£495-2-3) must represent servants' wages, although no explanation of that amount is given in the Grand Journal. Once again an overvaluation of furs reduced the profit.

Outfit 1842-1843. Although both outfits are represented in the Grand Ledger, no balance is struck for either of them because the accounts remained incomplete. An attempt has been made here to strike a balance for the two outfits combined, for all the essential figures, except wages, are given. From the figures available, it is plain that returns in Outfit 1842 were better than in any other outfit. If the inventory on hand at the abandonment of Fort Chimo in August 1843 is added as a credit to the results of the fur sales, the balance is very profitable indeed. Credits amounted to about £5,000 and debits to about £2,000, giving a book profit of about £3,000.

If the Grand Ledger and Grand Journal were the only documents preserved in the Hudson's Bay Company archives, anyone attempting to follow the history of the Ungava venture would be puzzled by the Company's closing of a prosperous post

after having maintained it in a struggling state for some years.

The most casual inspection of the correspondence and journals of Fort Chimo must lead to the expectation that the greater part of the post's returns were marten. Analysis of the fur returns, given on the following pages, amply demonstrates that expectation, but certain other furs also formed an important part of profits.

Wolverine	115	119	3-11
Other	95	115	4-11-4
Beaver	15	15	1-3-3
Wolverine	52	52	2-3-7
Wolverine	277	277	
Wolverine	270 lb.	270 lb.	
Wolverine	5	5	52
Wolverine	2	2	12-1-10
Wolverine	12	12	
Wolverine			10-9
Wolverine			1-1-11

Abstract of the sale of returns from the Ungava venture

<u>Outfit</u>	<u>1831*</u>	<u>1832*</u>	<u>1833</u>
Bear	3	3	£ 1 9-9
Beaver	29	33 £ 43-17-6	2 19-0
Fox	440	624	154 117- 4-2
Marten	871	1058	288 302- 8-11
Mink	16	16	2 3-11
Muskrat	119	119	3 2-5
Otter	95	116	50 48-11-4
Wolf	15	15	6 1- 3-5
Wolverine	52	55	19 4- 9-7
Deerskins	577	577	
Ivory	270 lb.	270 lb.	
Oil	3 puncheons	6 puncheons	
Sealskins	2	4	62 12- 1-10
Whalebone	12 bundles	333 lb.	
Miscell- aneous			1 lynx 10-9
		£43-17-6	£488- 5-1

* Returns of Outfit 1832 include those of Outfit 1831.

Abstract of the sale of returns from the Ungava venture

Outfit	1834	1835	1836
Bear	1 £ 19-6	5 £ 11- 5-0	9 £ 20- 5-0
Beaver	6 8-15-6	2 1-19-0	8 9- 2-0
Fox	775 1206- 8-6	445 386- 2-11	928 805- 5-1
Marten	429 649-16-3	310 339-19-7	206 225-18-6
Mink	3 5-11	4 7-10	6 11-8
Muskrat	85 2-18-6	30 13-4	928 11-17-3
Otter	51 80- 5-7	42 61- 3-10	31 45- 3-4
Wolf	19 9- 5-3	13 9- 4-10	16 11- 7-6
Wolverine	26 8-17-8	30 14- 4-10	26 2- 9-9
Deerskins	449 93- 6-0	543 124-17-0	589 117-16-0
Ivory	144 lb. 6- 8-8		363 lb. 20-12-11
Oil	715 gal. 103-17-0		772 gal. 114- 9-9
Sealskins	124 16-12-6		215 13-19-6
Whalebone	46 lb. 5-12-1		
Feathers			27 lb. 2- 8-3
Miscellaneous	1 lynx 13-7 1 swan 9-9	1 lynx 9-9	1 lynx 9-9 515 tongues 21- 9-1
Total	£2194-12-3	£950-7-11	£1414- 3-4

Abstract of the sale of returns from the Ungava venture

Outfit	1837	1838	1839
Bear		1 £ 2- 5-6	6 £ 9- 2-0
Beaver	4 £ 6- 9-2	11 16-15-11	18 29-14-3
Fox	200 66-15-3	670 240-12-2	1001 469-15-0
Marten	260 220-17-7	1443 1225-16-6	1703 1450-19-2
Mink		1 1-3	35 2- 4-10
Otter	34 46- 6-4	87 118-10-5	54 73-11-2
Wolf		1 14-1	31 21-17-10
Wolverine	8 2-14-3	1 6-9	27 9- 3-7
Deerskins	595 124- 4-1		
Ivory			102 lb. 5- 2-0
Returns Sold in Canada		204- 2-0	109-12-11
Total	<u>£467- 6-8</u>	<u>£1809- 4-7</u>	<u>£2181- 2- 9</u>

Abstract of the sale of returns from the Ungava venture

<u>Outfit</u>	<u>1840</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1842-1843</u>
Bear	4 £ 16-7	8 £ 6-19-5	25 £ 12- 5-8
Beaver	c. 80 83- 1-5	c. 34 37-17-9	58 64-17-9
Fox	884 418-15-10	419 217- 4-9	612 422- 2-1
Marten	592 654-18-8	1659 1819- 7-1	2595 2803- 3-1
Mink	11 1- 0-6	23 4-14-11	42 5- 9-2
Muskrat	144 4- 7-9	482 12- 0-9	475 14- 9-6
Otter	86 158-19-8	110 193-19-10	137 251-12-9
Wolf	24 12-13-11	11 3- 4-5	11 5- 7-3
Wolverine	24 8- 3-7	22 6- 0-10	22 8- 0-10
Deerskins	194 9- 6-10	c. 900 145-13-2	88 1-17-4
Ivory		411 lb. 70- 7-3	168 lb. 26-12-4
Oil		688 gal. 91-19-6	709 gal. 83- 5-2
Sealskins	331 15- 7-3	370 15-18-11	390 14- 2-4
Whalebone		880 lb. 76-12-1	426 lb. 37- 1-9
Feathers	117 wings 1-18-0	195 lb. 25- 7-0	68 lb. 8-16-10
Miscellaneous	237 tongues 29-12-6	17 seal coats 3- 3-4	5 seal coats 12-8
Returns sold in Canada	81-18-6		
Total	£1481- 1-0	£2730-11-0	£3759- 5-6

Abstract of the sale of returns from the Ungava venture

Outfit	Returns sold in Canada and valued in Halifax currency ¹		
	1838	1839	1840
Bear		1 £ 3- 3-6 [2-17-2] ²	
Marten		30 29- 5-0 [26- 6-6]	
Mink		10 5-9 [5-2]	
Muskrat	10 £ 3-4 [3-0]	130 2- 3-4 [1-19-0]	
Deerskins	738 217-16-2 [196- 0-7]	222 61-18-0 [55-14-2]	76 £ 35-14-1 [32- 2-8]
Oil		110 gal. 8- 5-0 [7- 8-6]	214 gal. 42-16-0 [38-10-5]
Sealskins	88 8-16-0 [7-18-5]	168 16-16-0 [15- 2-5]	167 12-10-6 [11- 5-5]
Totals	£226-15-6 [204- 2-0]	£121-16-7 [109-12-11]	£91- 0-7 [81-18-6]

1. Halifax currency was "a standard of exchange which served as a system of account in colonial times, being officially adopted in Lower Canada and later in Upper Canada, where York Currency had long predominated" (Avis et al., eds. 1967: 322). "The sterling guinea was equivalent to one pound, three shillings and fourpence, Halifax..." (Rich, ed. 1938: 186, n.1), cited in Avis et al. Nine pence sterling equals ten pence Halifax. The totals given above are converted in the Grand Journal and Grand Ledger (A15/35/221 for 1838; A15/37/205 and A14/32/105 for 1839; A15/38/238 for 1840). The values of the trade returns have been converted by computer.

2. Numbers in brackets are conversions of Halifax currency into pounds sterling.

Summary of furs traded in the Ungava venture and their values

	Outfits 1833- 1834)	Total value 1833-1834	Average value per unit	Outfits 1831- 1832	Estimated value 1831-1832
(1) ¹ Marten	9490	£9719-11-10	20/-	1058	£1058- 0-0
(2) Fox	6083	4350- 5- 9	14/-	624	436-16-0
(6) Otter	682	1078- 4- 3	34/-	116	197-14-0
(3) Deer- skins	c.4394	900-17-10	1/-	577	28-17-0
Oil (gal.)	3208	439-10- 4	2/6	Some ²	?
(8) Beaver	c. 215	294- 7- 3	26/-	33 ³	
Ivory (lb.)	1188	129- 3- 2	2/-	270	27- 0-0
(5) Seal- skins	1915	122- 8- 7	1/-	4	4-0
Whale- bone(lb.)	1352	119- 5-11	2/-	333	33- 7-0
(9) Wolf	132	74-18- 6	12/-	15	9- 0-0
(11) Bear	61	67- 5- 7	20/-	3	3- 0-0
(7) Wolverine	205	64-11- 8	6/-	55	16-10-0
Miscellaneous		57-11- 2			
(4) Muskrat	2287	48-11- 6	5d.	119	2-10-0
Feathers		38-10- 1			
(10) Mink	137	15- 5- 2	2/-	16	1-12-0
		£17520- 8- 7			£1814-10-0

1. Numbers in parentheses indicate order by number of individual animals taken (so far as totals are individual animals).

2. Six puncheons of oil. As the number of gallons these large casks contained is not known, it is impossible to estimate a value with any confidence. If a puncheon held 75 gallons, the value of this oil would have been about £80-0-0.

3. The 33 beaver from Outfit 1832 are included in the valuation of Outfits 1833-1843.

The returns that reached market and were credited to the Ungava venture amounted, in money, to about £17,520. This sum does not include the returns of Outfits 1831 and 1832, except for the one bundle of 33 beaver that was credited to Outfit 1832 in the Grand Ledger. Of this amount, the sale of marten made rather more than half and fox a little less than a quarter. The two furs, between them, represented more than three-quarters (nearer, in fact, to seven-ninths) of the total money value of the fur trade at Fort Chimo.

No other fur earned any substantial amount. Otter, on average the most valuable pelt, was, despite the few skins taken, third in money value. But otter was only a distant third, down more than £3000 from second place. Deerskins, because of volume, were fourth. They represented not only a marketable hide, probably collected mainly by the traders themselves, but also a valuable supply of meat, a return not indicated in the accounts. The surprising rarity in the region of beaver, sixth in value, has been noted. The Company cannot have lost much by paying relatively more for an inferior fur-like muskrat, as Rae had explained to the Select Committee, for there were only about 2,300 of them traded and they formed one of the least valuable items among the returns.

Fifth, seventh, eighth, and ninth in money value were items in the Eskimo trade: oil, ivory, sealskin, and whalebone.

Presumably Eskimos had also traded some of the deerskins taken and they must have traded nearly all of the white fox, which made up the majority of the fox returns. From these facts, one may safely conclude that, after marten, the Eskimo trade formed the most valuable part of the returns, a point that neither the traders nor their superiors appear to have realized clearly.

Beaver, bear, muskrat and, especially, caribou provide a skin for market as well as an acceptable meat. Oil, ivory, sealskin, whalebone, and feathers also represent meat as well as a market product. But the three most valuable items, marten, fox, and otter, do not provide meat that, in the ordinary course of events, the natives would willingly eat. Even had they relished these animals as food, they are so small and thin that a hunter could not possibly feed himself and his family on their carcasses.

When hunger became extreme, the Indians ate skins - any kind of skins they had - for food. When the Naskapis were, by exception, hunting furs instead of caribou, they were often hungry and they sometimes starved after eating whatever skins they had in store. There is no means of estimating what influence these emergencies had on trade returns but, when there was starvation, as happened in the later 1840's near Fort Nascopie, the influence must have been considerable, quite apart from the loss of hunters.

In Conclusion

Although it is possible to work out in some detail the value of the trade returns, it proves impossible to say exactly how great a profit the Ungava venture made for the Hudson's Bay Company. The information in the Grand Journal is not detailed enough or complete enough for that purpose.

For example, the bookkeeper appears to have doubled the inventory of Montcalm to obtain a figure for the inventory on hand 1 June 1831. But that is a guess: we do not know exactly what he did, nor is the value of the inventory carried by Beaver given anywhere later in the accounts. In Outfit 1836, there suddenly appears in the inventory on hand, 1 June 1837, the value, £326-7-5, of an inventory landed at York Factory by Prince George. This sum must be related to the invoice of Prince George that was debited in the amount of £986-2-7 against Outfit 1834, then credited to it when the invoice was assumed at York Factory. Except through confusion by the bookkeeper, it is not easy to see why approximately the same sum should reappear, two outfits later, to the credit of the Ungava venture. Assumptions have been made about the nature of certain "balances" in the accounts, such as inventory in Outfit 1840 and wages in Outfit 1841. Although the nature of these balances may be assumed with confidence, the figures involved may not represent the whole sum of the costs in

question.

Summary of the debits of the Ungava venture, 1830-1843

<u>Outfit</u>	<u>New Inventory</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Sundry Expenses</u>
1830	£ 2392- 8- 4 <u> x 2</u> 6784-16- 8	£ 123- 0- 0	£1895- 9- 2
1831- 1833		653- 4-10	
1834	505-18- 7	205-11- 4	22- 4- 9
1835	776- 2- 1	234- 9- 5	124- 2- 7
1836	913-15-10	502-14- 2	22-11- 0
1837	1570- 4- 7	269-11- 2	31- 2- 7
1838		366- 1-10	95-17- 1
1839	27- 8- 7	785- 6-0	77- 4- 0
1840	1879-10- 6	441-14-10	11- 7
1841		496- 9- 3	7- 8- 4
1842- 1843		55- 9-10	156- 0- 0
Total	£12457-16-10	£4133-12-8	£2432-11-1
Total of all expenses		£19024-0-7	

Summary of the credits of the Ungava venture, 1830-1843

<u>Outfit</u>	<u>Fur sales</u>	<u>Other sales</u>	<u>Servants' bills</u>
1830	Nil	£ 24- 4-8	
1831-1832	£ 43-17- 6		£ 33-17- 4
1833	488- 5- 1		
1834	2194-12- 3		
1835	950- 7-11		
1836	1414- 3- 4	12- 6-9	81-15- 5
1837	467- 6- 8	3- 1-6	17-12-11
1838	1809- 4- 7		
1839	2181- 2- 9	4-18-6	
1840	1481- 1- 0		76-11- 1
1841	2730-11- 0		31-14- 9
1842-1843	3759-16- 6		
Total	£17520- 8- 7	£44-11-5	£241-11- 6

Total of all credits £17806-15-6

Comparison of the total of debits and the total of credits, as given in the preceding pages, seems to indicate that the Ungava venture lost money. But these tables must be interpreted and, to some extent, qualified to show the true lines of the picture.

In the first place, there is the massive charge against Outfit 1830 of Finlayson's overland expedition and the cost of Beaver. It was no doubt right that this expense, £1619-16-7, should be borne by the Ungava venture, but in any consideration of the profitability of the fur trade, as such, that expense should be set on one side. Indeed, from the point of view of operations, all the costs of Outfit 1830 ought to be set aside. These costs amount to £8,803-5-10 out of a total, for all the other outfits, of £12,457-16-10. To have a better view of the profitability of Fort Chimo, once established, one should start with the inventory on hand at the beginning of Outfit 1831. Total debits and credits of Outfits 1831-1843 then present a very different picture.

<u>Outfits 1831-1843: total debits</u>	
Inventory	£ 9294- 0- 7
Wages	4010-12- 4
Sundry expenses	537- 1-11
	<hr/>
	£13841-14-10

Outfits 1831-1843: total credits

Fur sales	£17520- 8- 7
Other sales	20- 6- 9
Servants' bills	241-11- 6
	<u>£17782- 6-10</u>

The differences between this set of total debits and credits shows a profit of £3940-12-0. To this sum should be added, not only the estimated valuation of the returns of Outfits 1831 and 1832, which were lost to the credit of the Ungava venture, but also the inventory on hand when Fort Chimo was closed in August 1843.

Profit, 1831-1843	£3940-12-0
Fur sales, 1831-1832 (estimated)	1814-10-0
Inventory on hand, August 1843	1299-17-0
	<u>£7054-19-0</u>

The value of the inventory landed at York Factory was probably wrongly credited to Outfit 1837 and ought, therefore, to be deducted. There is left, then, the amount of £6228-11-7, more or less, as profit over the expenses of Outfits 1831-1843.

Apart from the mechanical difficulties, which are considerable, of sorting out from the confusion of the Grand Journal the salient details of profit and loss, the main fact that the post was profitable is plain. Secretary

Smith was in no doubt about Fort Chimo's advantages when he wrote to Finlayson in 1863. Yet, when the Governor and Committee instructed their secretary to write, in March 1841, to express their dismay to Simpson that "the Trade of that [Ungava] District has not yet covered the outlay connected therewith" (A6/25/243), they had good reason to feel misgivings about the venture, even at that late date.

It was in March 1841 that the Fort Chimo accounts for Outfits 1837 and 1838 were closed to reveal a loss for Outfit 1837 of £495-1-3 and a gain on Outfit 1838 of only £649-6-5. Three months later a further sale reduced the loss on Outfit 1837 to £370-17-2 and showed a gain on Outfit 1839 of £678-6-2, but that news cannot have gone far to allay the Governor and Committee's concern. Outfits 1830-1833 had - on the books, although not in fact - lost about £2600. Outfits 1834-1836 had more or less recovered the losses of the earlier outfits, but now here was this new deficit for Outfit 1837 and only a small profit on the next two outfits. With these cheerless results and with McLean's graphic reports of impossible country, intractable Indians, and gloomy prospects before them, the Governor and Committee would have been blind not to notice the unhappy financial situation of the Ungava district.

However strongly they may have felt, they contented themselves with drawing the matter forcibly to Simpson's

attention. Simpson's action took the form of reiterated instructions to McLean and the replacement of Davies at Fort Smith. He gave no indication that he was contemplating the abandonment of Fort Chimo. Neither is there any suggestion that the Governor and Committee and Keith in Montreal, either independently or in collusion, were waiting for Simpson to leave on his world tour so that, once he was out of the way, the Ungava venture might more gracefully be ended. It was only after Simpson's departure that McLean's news of an easy supply route to the interior reached them. Simpson would certainly have welcomed this news with the same relief they did, and he would have adopted without hesitation McLean's scheme of supplying Fort Nascopie from Esquimaux Bay rather than from Ungava Bay. But, if only because he thought there might still be Indians emigrating from the Eastmain coast to that quarter, it seems extremely unlikely he would have closed Fort Chimo, despite McLean's conviction that the Governor should have done so long before.

From the evidence of McLean's finally quitting the Hudson's Bay Company and, especially, from remarks in his Notes, it is plain that he felt a considerable antipathy to Governor Simpson. It is tempting to give some weight to McLean's feelings toward "the prime mover of the project" (Wallace, ed. 1932: 203), in considering the closing of Fort Chimo, for McLean took a personal satisfaction in precipitating

the event. In his chapter on Simpson's personality and administration, he remarked that the Governor's ideas of economy were "not a little...of the 'penny-wise and pound-foolish' kind", and he criticized the Ungava venture.

Thus it has been already observed, that the lives of the Company's servants, and the property of an entire district, were placed in extreme jeopardy by his false economy; and a contingency, which no prudent man would have calculated upon, alone prevented a catastrophe which [would have] involved the destruction of the Company's property to a large amount, as well as of the lives of its servants. But independently of this, he has committed several errors of a most serious kind. Of these the chief is the Ungava adventure; an enterprise which was begun in opposition to the opinion of every gentleman in the country whose experience enabled him to form a correct judgment in the matter; and this undertaking was persisted in, year after year, at an enormous loss to the Company. Finally, he has not even the merit of correcting his own blunders. It was not till after a mass of evidence of the strongest kind was laid before the Committee, that they, in his absence, gave orders for the abandonment of the hopeless project (*ibid.*: 388-389).

Although it seems unlikely that Simpson would have closed Fort Chimo, even after discovery of a supply route to Fort Nascopic from Esquimaux Bay, we do not certainly know what he would have done. In the records examined, he refers only once, and then indirectly, to the subject. He wrote this passage in 1848, when replying to various allegations made by William Kennedy of the Hudson's Bay Company's misconduct toward the Indians and Eskimos in their domains and, in

particular, in the region of Ungava Bay.

Mr. Kennedy's next charge refers to the abandonment by the Company of...Fort Chimo, thus leaving, as he says "The Esquimaux who were attached to it the dreadful alternative of returning to their primitive mode of life" stating that "in his opinion it would have been less barbarous to have exterminated them at once". As Mr. Kennedy was not himself...an eyewitness of the suffering he so feelingly depicts, it may be well to quote the words of the Gentleman who was actually in charge of the post, and by whom it was abandoned, acting on his own responsibility and in opposition to the views of the Company ... (A12/4/327-327d).

McLean, he says, had insisted that

abandonment of the post could not by [any?] possibility affect the comfort or convenience of more than two or three individuals, and that those were provided by him 'with the means of conveying themselves and families either to the Moravian Missions in Labrador or to the Company's post of Kobokok' (*ibid.*: 327d).

In claiming that McLean had acted not only on his own responsibility (true in the sense that McLean had anticipated authority) but also (and less accurately) that McLean had acted "in opposition to the views of the Company", Simpson appears, by identifying himself with the Company, to be expressing his own view of the matter. Somewhat surprisingly, Simpson volunteered information on Fort Chimo's revenues.

Mr. Kennedy in speaking of the wealth of the Company might have added that that branch of their business in which he was engaged, was not only unproductive, but attended with heavy loss, our books shewing the following results:-

Ungava - Outfit 1840 - loss of	£2088-7-2
do 1841 "	550-2-6

£2638-9-8 (*ibid.*: 328)

These figures are either a mystery or they are an outright deception. Nothing like them can be deduced from the Grand Ledger and Grand Journal, which, on the contrary, show clearly and in detail a profit for the Ungava District on those two outfits of about £12000.

McLean was, in fact, wrong. It was quite unnecessary to close Fort Chimo. Of course, the Company did not lose the most valuable part of Fort Chimo's trade, for the Maskapi Indians were obliged, as McLean had indicated to them in 1842 (p.132), to trade their martens and other furs at Fort Nascopeie and its two or three outposts in the central interior. But the Company did lose the Eskimo trade, which, with virtually no encouragement, had proved profitable and, with greater attention, particularly to an item such as oil, would have yielded more handsomely still. Now there was no need to supply the interior from Fort Chimo, neither was there any longer reason to station a large complement of men there, and a reduction of staff would have led naturally to great economy in the expense of importing European provisions. It seems probable to the point of certainty that Governor Simpson would have continued the existence of Fort Chimo, supplied it every few years by sea, and held more frequent communication with its officer-in-charge overland through Fort Nascopeie. The Hudson's Bay Company did, in fact, re-establish Fort Chimo in the autumn of 1866 (B38/a/9/1). Because the Company's archives are not open to public

inspection for the period after 1870, it is impossible to say anything detailed about the post's productivity after it re-opened. However, the fact that it has continued in existence to the present day is testimony of a kind to its profitability.

The history of the Ungava venture is not a brilliant chapter in Sir George Simpson's administration of the Hudson's Bay Company territories. His management of the project was neither careful nor systematic; his comprehension of the region's physical and human problems was unsympathetic and dismissive, and his continued urgent complaints about Fort Chimo's unprofitable state created the climate of opinion in which the post was closed without other consultation than agreement between the London and Montreal offices.

To some extent, Simpson's opinion of the post's financial situation was formed and limited by the methods of bookkeeping the Company employed and by unavoidable delays in finding out whether or not a given outfit had made or lost money. However, it was mere carelessness that allowed the returns of Outfits 1831 and 1832 to be lost to the credit of the venture and that permitted the considerable expense of Finlayson's overland expedition and of Beaver to be weighed against the profits of sales as though they had been an operational expense.

Finally, the reason why Fort Chimo was not instantly and obviously profitable lay in the Company's relation with the natives, especially with the Naskapi Indians. The traders

never came to terms with the central problem they had to face in dealing with subsistence hunters. Practically speaking, an Indian will trap martens as willingly as he will hunt caribou. What he will not do willingly and cannot do long is to go hungry while trapping an animal that will not feed him. What to the Indian was a glaring fact of common sense and, sometimes, of life and death seemed always to remain something of a puzzle to the traders. In 1863, Finlayson replied to questions from the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company about the early years of the Ungava venture. In recollecting the events of more than 30 years before, he reviewed this essential problem in its stark outlines and, with an irony as splendid as it was unconscious, condemned his own and the Company's attitude with the words of the Indians themselves.

...a considerable number of Martens & foxes, could be procured could the Indians be got to stay for any time at their traps, they follow the rein deer like wolves & trap a few martens only to enable them to purchase ammunition enough for deer hunting, as soon as they procure that their traps are abandoned; I often tried to shame them into better habits, & their invariable reply was, that a Marten did not fill the Kettle like a good buck deer (A10/55/347).

LITERATURE CITED

The following short bibliography does not by any means represent all of the works, published and unpublished, consulted during the preparation of this thesis, but only those that have been cited in the preceding pages. For a comprehensive bibliography of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula and for a more general account of the exploration and development of the region, see the two publications that accompany this submission (Cooke, 1964; Cooke and Caron, 1968).

Documents in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company

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| A5/27 | London correspondence outward, General series, 1863. |
| A6/23-26 | London correspondence outward, H.B.C. official, 1833-1845. |
| A10/55 | London inward correspondence, General, 1863. |
| A11/28 | London inward correspondence from Montreal, 1823-1859. |
| A12/4 | London inward correspondence from governors of H.B.C. territories - Sir George Simpson, 1848-1849. |
| A14/22-36 | Grand Ledgers - Fur trade. Outfit 1831-1841. |
| A15/27-41 | Grand Journals - Fur trade. Outfit 1831-1843. |
| A51/13-16 | Account sales of furs, 1831-1833. |
| A54/111 | Auction catalogue of fur trade produce, March 8-9, 1836. Various skins. |

- B19/e/1 Big Lake. Annual report, 1818-1819.
- B38/a/2-9 Fort Chimo. Post journals, 1830-1868.
- B38/b/2-3 Fort Chimo. Correspondence books outwards, 1834-1842.
- B38/c/1 Fort Chimo. Correspondence inwards, 1838-1843.
- B38/e/1-5 Fort Chimo. Annual reports, [1833]-1838.
- B38/z/1 Fort Chimo. Miscellaneous items, 1831-1836.
- B77/e/8 Fort George [Big River]. Annual report, 1837-1838.
- B134/b/9 Montreal. Correspondence book outwards, 1842-1843.
- B139/a/1-4 Fort Nascopie. Post journals, 1842-1848.
- B153/a/1-5 North West River [Fort Smith]. Post journals, 1836-1843.
- B153/b/1-4 North West River. Correspondence books outwards, 1838-1851.
- B153/c/1 North West River. Correspondence books inwards, 1838-1859.
- B186/e/23 Rupert House. Annual report, 1839-1840.
- B219/a/1 Fort Trial [George River]. Post journals, 1841-1842.
- B239/h/1 York Factory. District fur returns, 1821-1842.
- B239/z/25 York Factory. Miscellaneous items, 1796-1870.
- D2/1 Governor William Williams, Correspondence inward, 1818-1826.
- D4/21-26 Governor George Simpson, Correspondence book outward, General, 1834-1841.
- D5/6 Governor George Simpson, Correspondence inward, 1841.

Between 1830-1843, there does not appear to have been any communication between either the Naskapi Indians or the Eskimos of Ungava Bay and the Moravian missionaries on the Labrador Coast. There has been no occasion, therefore, to refer in these pages to the archives of the Moravian Church.

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