Northwest Territories Sealing Industry
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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SEALING INDUSTRY

Background

- Historically, the Inuit were nomadic, moving with the seasons and the animals. They have always depended on seals for the purpose of using the skins for clothing, flesh for food and oil for heat.

- Before the arrival of the Europeans, whalers and the fur traders, the Inuit used spears, bows and clubs for hunting but this was later changed to rifles and muskets.

- The Inuit and Indians have always depended on hunting and trapping in part because the growth of small and large-scale farming is hampered by the harsh climate, scattered population, high transport and labour costs and low yield potential. It was not surprising therefore that the empasis on seal hunting shifted from subsistence use to the commercialization of pelts.

- Unemployment is generally high among Inuit, which calls for increased involvement based on hunting, trapping and fishing, in an effort to alleviate the high level of unemployment.

Economic Considerations

3,500 hunters and trappers are estimated in the Northwest Territories whose incomes are totally derived from, living off the land.

- This represents 30% of territorial adult male population of which Inuit hunters and trappers number 1,820 or 52%.
- Viewed from another perspective, the 45% of the Inuit Male population involved in hunting and trapping provides the majority if not sole support for 1/3 of the Inuit population.
- The annual average commercial seal harvest over the past 23 years is 33,000 ranging from a high of 68,300 during 1964-64 to a low of 7,689 in 1983-84.
- Canadian sealskin and seal products were banned from importation by the European Economic Community in 1982.

  The impact on the Northwest Territories sealing industry has been devastating.
- In 1982, the annual N.W.T. total number of sealskin products sold was 14,837 with total value of $220,590. The average price was $14.86
- In 1984 however, the annual N.W.T. total number of sealskin products sold dropped to 7,689, or 52% with a corresponding decline in total value of $76,555 or 34%. The average price decreased to $9.95 or 66%.

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- Recent scientific estimates suggest that there are between six and seven million seals in the circumpolar region. A large portion of that number is in the Canadian Arctic.
- Seals are not in danger of extinction.

2. Wastage

- Traditionally, the Inuit have made total use of seals harvested for subsistence use, but the larger numbers currently taken have resulted in some wastage. (estimated at 20%)
- Government initiative towards reducing this level of wastage is the promotion and support for an organized territorial wide intra and inter-settlement trade in indigenous foods, including provisions for subsidization of freight costs.

3. Humane Kill

- The N.W.T. hunters employ high speed, flat trajectory, small projectile bullets for killing seals. Death or stunning is instantaneous on impact.
- Majority of sealers are men who live close to the land, men who have a deep respect for nature because they depend on her resources.
- Inuit and Indian people are practicing professional conservationists, who support strongly the "Wise use" of the earth's natural resources.

4. Policy Implication

- From the foregoing, it is evident that reliant on the European market has made the sealing industry vulnerable to attack.
- Need for development and implementation strategies to revitalize the sealing industry through the expansion of the Canadian market and the building of a Canadian production infrastructure.
- Diversification through the expansion of the Canadian narket would not only protect the industry but would create additional employment opportunities in our country which were exported to Europe.
- Loss of European market has paved the way for a larger initiative to expand the local craft production industry.
- Examine the international market potential for tanned and raw seal skins and the infrastructure need for additional primary processing facilities.

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The annual average value of sealskin (over the 23year period) is 430,000.

For pelts of all types the corresponding values is 2.6 million. Seals, therefore, account for 17% of the annual average income derived from pelts.

During the 23 year period, Inuit hunters total annual earnings averaged $889,000 with sealskin accounting for $427,000 or 48%.

Commercial Sealing occurs primarily on the East coast of Baffin Island across the Davis Strait from Greenland, in Hudson Bay and Eastern Beaufort Sea.

The communities of Pangnirtung, Broughton Island and Holman Island together accounted for 61% of the annual seal harvest valued at $321,000 or 44% of the total annual incomes derived from hunting and trapping in 1982.

In 1984, the annual seal harvest decreased in value to $58,234 for these 3 communities reflecting a loss in income.

In these communities, combined, population 1,270, 97% of the adult male population is involved in hunting and depend on sealskin production as their main source of cash income.

The incomes of hunters and trappers derived from the seal hunting has already delined by 30% as a result of the decline in the seal market.

Given these statistics, a loss of the sealskin market in Europe is already causing economic suffering in many Inuit Communities where people have traditionally made their livelyhood by hunting seals.

Those mostly effected are Inuit hunters who have trapped all their lives and due to age, education or attitude many may not be able to acquire new skills.

A loss of the market, therefore, represents a significant loss in the earning capabilities of these people and resultant dependence on welfare, a position which they abhor.

Other Factors For Consideration

- The International Union for Conservation and Natural Resources in its February 26, 1982 position paper on the Canadian Seal hunt was not opposed to the hunting of seals providing,

  a) that total allowable catch does not endanger the stocks.

  b) that the entire seal be utilized as completely and non-wastefully as possible.

  c) that if seals are killed, they are killed as humanely and as quickly and as painlessly as possible by rifles.

1. Concern Over Population

   - Two species of seals are harvested in the N.W.T.; namely Ringed Seals" (Phoca Hispida) which comprises 80% of the annual take and Harp Seals (Phoca Pagophilus) the remaining 20%.

finished pelts - to craft production and other manufacturers.

completed craft items distributed for sale and promotion.

other ways - seal meat, canned seal meat, footwear.

if these are expaned, pelts and all the secondary jobs will remain in Canada since the European market is lost.

the sealing industry provides: pelts, snowmobiles, mitts, seal skin vests, hats and other seal skin items: caps boots and slippers.

need for N.W.T. to fight to preserve the market in sealskin by making the public aware of the truth about seal hunting and diffuse the adverse effect.

. - N.W.T. cultural backgrounds should bring the seal hunt into public focus as a historical cultural and economic necessity.

need for national and internation education strategy to shift public opinion.

represent sealing to the public as an industry which can be strengthened to provide more Canadian jobs.

Ted Ufoegbune,
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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SEALING INDUSTRY

BACKGROUND

Executive Committee's recommendations #82-30-5 were that:

(1) action be taken by the Government of the Northwest Territories to promote the Northwest Territories sealing Industry,

(2) approval was given to fund a minimum of three and a maximum of four people to travel to Brussels to encourage the European Parliament not to ban the importing of seal products from the Canadian Arctic,

(3) attempts be taken to obtain the support of various Federal Government Ministers to assist the GNWT in supporting the sealing Industry in the Northwest Territories, and

(4) immediate action to be taken to look at establishing new markets for seal products in such countries as Japan and South Korea.

The above recommendations were the result of efforts made by the Executive Committee to alleviate the adverse effects of the ban on the importation of sealskin into the European Economic Community and to shore-up the weakening sealskin market. Already, the incomes of hunters and trapers derived from seal hunting have declined by 30% as a result of the downturn of the seal skin markets.

There is an estimated 3,500 hunters and trappers in the Northwest Territories whose incomes are totally derived from living off the land. In demographic terms, this represents 30% of the territorial adult male population of which Inuit hunters and trapers number 1,820 or 16%. Viewed from another perspective, the 45% of the Inuit male population involved in hunting and traping provides the major, if not sole support, for 1/3 of the Inuit population.

The average annual commercial seal harvest over the past 23 years is 33,000 ranging from a high of 68,300 to a low of 7,689. During 1984 the take was 7,689. The annual average value of seal skins (over the same 23 year period) is **$430,000**; for all pelts of all types the corresponding value is 2.6 million. Seals, therefore, account for 17% of the annual average income derived from pelts. During the same 23 year period, Inuit hunters' total annual earnings averaged $889,000; with seal skins accounting $427,000 (see appended data on seal skin harvests and income).

FOLLOW-UP ACTION

In response to section four (4) of the fore-mentioned recommendations, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism undertook an exercise of assessing:

(1) current demand for raw seal products both within Canada and in the International market.

(2) the pre-reasibility of developing prototype sealskin products.

The results to date are as follows:

(1) with respect to (1) above the department contacted the four major Canadian fur retail salons namely, Robert Simpson Co., Creeds Ltd., Holt Renfrew and the Hudson Bay Company. Without exception, all . four company managers stated that they did not stock the hair seal but did stock the Alaske seal, however, they have realized very limited sales of this product, and because of this experience are not inclined to stock another line of seal garments. They all agreed that the current anti-seal hunt campaigns have been most effective in damaging the major European market as well as the smaller Canadian market and that something should be done by the Government to diffuse this adverse effect.

(2) on our behalf, an overture to the South Korea and Japanese market was made by the Federal Department of Industry Trade and commerce, however, to date Japan has not responded. The Canadian Embassy in South Korea replied as follows;

'regret to advise that subject product i.e., sealskins are restrictd (prohibited) Import under current annual trade plan - tariff rate on subject products is 60% CIF".

(3) Innovation - in light of the discouraging responses, the department proposes to develop and test market a number of products such as:

BODY DRESS - LADIES

(a) parka - with hood and in-lays
without hood and with in-iays
without hood and with out in-lays

(b) Jacket - (bomber) with hood with In-1ays

(c) skirt - zip in as parka extension to full length

(d) pants - ski dress with In-1ays "
ski dress without In-1ays

(e) cape - with in-lays
without in-lays

(f) vest

BODY DRESS - MENS

(a) parka	with hood	
	without hood	
(b) coat	full length	
	double-breasted	
(c) vest		
(d) cardigans - knitted sleeves with sealskin collar and back. and front panels; bone buttons.		

HEAD DRESS

Hats - men's and ladles'
caps - men's and ladles'
tams - men's and ladles'
earmuffs

HAND DRESS

Mitts - men's and ladles'
gauntlets - men's and ladles'
muff - ladles'

FOOT DRESS

Muk luks - men's and ladles'
slippers - men's and ladles'
leggings - boots

ACCESSORIES

Purse - with hair
- witout hair
dress belts
director's chair covers
bar stool covers
coasters

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DECORATIONS	Tapestries - with in-lays
	- without in-lays
	- sizes - small, medium and large
	cushions - with in-lays
	- without in-lays
	rugs - with in-lays
	- without in-lays ,
	table covers - with in-lays
	- without in-lays
	bed throws - with in-lays
	- without in-lays

NOVELTIES	SOUVENIRS	
OOKPIKS - various sizes	CHECKER BOARDS	RABBITS
LEMMINGS	MICE	DUCKS
WALRUS	SEALS	MUSK - OXEN .
MOSQUITOES	SMALL MATTS	BooKMARKs
POLAR BEARS	WHALES	EYE GLASS CASES
KUNUYAK DOLLS	ZIPPER PULLS	

These products would be Identifiable by a distinct Inuit "Arctic Seal" logo. The service of a designer of some repute would be contracted to design and produce prototypes of the various selected items.

The test marketing would also be carried out under contract by an experienced marketing consulting organization.

LONG TERM MARKETING OBJECTIVE

To maximize and increase financial returns to the aggregate of Northwest Territories seal hunters. This will require sales growth of 10 percent per annum coupled with a 5 percent price Increase average over a five year period.

Specific long term net sales and dollar objectives for the N.W.T.S.I. are:

	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86	1986/87	1987/88
Pelts #	20,000	22,000	24,200	26,600	29,200
Price $/per	20000	21.00	22.00	23.50	24.75

INCREMENTAL EFFECTS

Total Sales $	400,000	462,000	532,400	625,100	711,750
Percentage Annual Increase		15%	15%	17%	14%

Sales objectives can only be guestimated until such time as prototypes have been deveioped and test marketed and an appropriate promotional campaign carried out to diffuse the anti-seal sentiments and enhance public acceptance of sealskin products.

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COMPARISON

1972-1973 & 1983-1984 SEAL PRODUCTION & VALUES

YEAR		NO. OF PELTS	AVERAGE VALUE DOLLAR	TOTAL VALUE DOLLAR
1372-73		26,363	15.10	398,081.30
1983-84		7,689	9.95	76,555.00
DIFFERENCE	$	(18,307)	5.15	321,526.30
	%	69.44%	34.17%	80.77%
23 year average				
		33,020	13.02	430,283.64

Appendix I

1982-83

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INDIVIDUAL SEALSKIN SALES

RECORD SUMMARY

SETTLEMENT SUMMARY N.W.T. POSTAL CODE

Name	No. of Hunters	Harp		Ring		Other		Total Value
		Qty	Price	Qty	Price	Qty	Price	
Paulatuk	1					1	12	12. C
Arctic Bay	28	28	876	190	1,815	3	30	2,721. C
Broughton Island	80	63	1,461	1622	14,699			16,160.C
Cape Dorset	17	1	24	57	323	4	40	387. C
Clyde River	59			1238	12,577			12,577.C
Frobisher Bay	36	23	457	103	1,052	103	845	2,354.C
Grise Fiord	12	23	640	48	821			1,461.C
Hall Beach	10	4	95	26	388			483.C
Igloolik	43	3	90	112	1,058	49	457	1,605.C
Lake Harbour	27	1	18	334	2,652	6	112	2,782.C
Pangnirtung	158	4098	109,048	3644	34,155	5	133	143,336.C
Pond Inlet	16			80	697			697.C
Resolute Bay	1					3	31	31.C
Chesterfield Inlet	6			8	137	3	40	177.C
Coral Harbour	14	21	411	100	1,029			1,440.C
Repulse Bay	23	2	15	72	726	5	105	846.C
Cambridge Bay	26			86	1,115			1,115.0
Coppermine	84			901	7,472	69	420	7,892.5
Gjoa Haven	2	1	10	5	49			59*C
Holman Island	54			1497	21,680	8	77	21,757.5
Spence Bay	33			196	2,696			2,696.5
TOTAL	730	4268	113,145	10319	105,142	259	2302	220,589.5

APPENDIX I

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1983-84

INDIVIDUAL SEALSKIN SALES

RECORD 'SUMMARY

SETTLEMENT ______________________ N.W. T. POSTAL CODE ____________

Name	No.of Hunters	H rp		R ng		O her		Total Value
		Qty	Price	Qty	Price	Qty	Price	
Paulatuk	0							
Arctic Bay	16	13	246	98	727	1	3	976.0
Broughton Island	63	217	2667	1419.	9356	0		12,023.0
Cape Dorset	11	0		61	414	1	15	429.0
Clyde River	56	5	94	656	4682	2	14	4,790.0
Frobisher Bay	56	89	1225	412	2888	14	116	4,229.0
Grise Fiord	0							
Hall Beach	0							
Igloolik	7	0		2	18	17	101	119.0
Lake Harbour	28	2	25	384	2319	8	101	2,445.0
Pangnirtung	133	956	17084	1384	9786	0		26,870.0
Pond Inlet	8	0		23	159	2	17	176.0
Coral Harbour	0							
Repulse Bay	18	0		65	463			463.0
Cambridge Bay	12	1	10	22	213	16	151	374.0
Coppermine	60	0		354	3314	1	45	3,359.0
Gjoa Haven	6	0		15	149			149.0
Holman Island	58	0		1348	18998	15	343	19,341.0
Spence Bay	23			68	667			667.0'
Sanikiluaq	0							
Resolute Bay	0							
Chesterfield Inlet	0							
Fort McPherson	4					10	10"	10.0
Pelly Bay	1					1	25	25.0
Bathurst Inlet	2	4	55	3	55			110.0
Total	562	1287	21,406	6,314	54,208	88	941	76,555.0[

Food Group	Measure	Weight g	Food Energy Kcal	Protein g	Carbohydrate g	Fat g	Calcium mg	Iron mg	Vitamin A RE	Thiamin mg	Riboflavin mg	Niacin NE	Vitamin C mg
MILK, CHEESE, CREAM, RELATED PRODUCTS													
Ice Cream vanilla, Regular, (approx 10% fat)	25 ml		141	3	7	8	92	0.1	70	.03	.17	0.1	tr
MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, SHELLFISH, RELATED PRODUCTS													
Crab. canned		90	91	16	1	2	41	0.7	n/a	.07	.07	[illegible].2	n/a
Pike. broiled/baked		90	76	7	0	1.0	56	0.6	243	.05	.06	n/a	n/a
Pickerel, raw		100	84	18.7	0	.5	n/a	.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Smelts. broiled (1 15g)	6	90	88	17	n/a	2	n/a	0.4	n/a	.01	.11	4.1	n/a
Trout, broiled or baked		90	194	21	n/a	13	45	4.5	n/a	.10	.24	5.2	[illegible]
Whitefish, cooked		90	194	14	[illegible]	13	n/a	0.5	541	.10	.10	n/a	tr
Arctic Char, raw		[illegible]	131	21	n/a	5.0	36	[illegible]	n/a	.11	.46	0.6	[illegible]
Bear, Polar, raw		90	1 7	23	n/a	3	[illegible]	[illegible]	378	.02	.52	n/a	[illegible]
Beaver, cooked		90	223	26	n/a	12	23	5.2	n/a	.07	.34	11.0	[illegible]
Bear, black, raw		100	148	18.6	0	8.2	5	6.1	201 (I.U.)	.160	.660	5.2	n/a
Goose, cooked roast		100	426	23.7	0	36	11	2.1	n/a	.06	.24	8.1	n/a