

Royal visit, Arctic games highlight year for Rev. Ditttrich family

Of interest to many Acton friends is the annual Christmas letter from the Rev. Douglas Ditttrich, Mrs. Ditttrich and family at Inuvik, N.W.T. He's the son of Mrs. Laura Ditttrich of Acton.

CHRISTMAS 1970

Church of the Ascension
Box 1040
Inuvik, N.W.T.

Each year as we prepare to write our Christmas letter we always feel we have neglected many of you. As we look at the pile of unanswered letters we wish we had found time to write to more of you personally. On the other hand, we know from your comments that you appreciate receiving this annual newsletter.

From the description of the past year's activities you will realize that we manage to keep busy one way or another. We had even thought of writing a mid-year letter in 1970 but never managed to get it done! You are in our thoughts often and we

continue to value your interest in us and our work in the North. It is hard to believe that eight and a half years have past since we stepped in Frobisher Bay to embark on a type of life somewhat different from that of many of our friends in southern Canada.

Winter games
In mid-January Doug went to Yellowknife to make arrangements with Arctic Winter Games officials for a presentation of traditional games and dancing by some of the Mackenzie Delta people. He was asked to be one of the Eskimo games co-ordinators for the first Arctic Winter Games which brought together athletes from the Yukon and Alaska as well as the whole N.W.T.

On this trip to Yellowknife Doug was invited to the Commissioner's Centennial Ball although, because of aircraft delays, he arrived there just a little after midnight! He was also able to sit in on a few sessions of the territorial Council.

P.M. attends
During the first week of February the Mackenzie Area of the Diocese held a conference on family life in Yellowknife. Doug

took the long route there and on the way spent a few days visiting the Indian settlements of Fort Franklin on Great Bear Lake, Colville Lake, and Fort Good Hope.

In March Doug returned to Yellowknife with the Eskimo drummers and dancers and a team of Eskimo boys. They demonstrated some of the traditional games and dances of their people for the crowds on the first day of the Winter Games, opened by Prime Minister Trudeau. The usual Easter school holiday was held at this time to allow young people from all over the North to participate in the various sports.

Drop-in centre
As secretary of the Inuvik Committee of Concern on Alcohol Problems Doug devoted a lot of time to the supervising of a drop-in centre which the group operated from early December until the end of June. This centre was used by many of the local people, particularly the younger ones who often practised some of the traditional native games.

Admission was restricted to those 16 and over. The coffee was always hot, the pool table well used, and a tape recorder provided music. For Doug and the other supervisors, who included a doctor, an R. C. priest, a Pentecostal pastor, and an Eskimo social worker, it proved to be a good point of contact with many people.

It is hoped that this project can be reactivated shortly. In April the Committee sponsored a one-day community seminar on alcoholism.

Slower pace
At the end of March Doug had business to attend to at Aklavik and friends, Mr. and Mrs. Davis, kindly kept the children so Jean could go with him for a couple of days. Captain Frank Clarke again very graciously extended his hospitality, and it was an enjoyable trip.

We were very interested in the seismic lines criss-crossing the Delta, and in being able to see, from the air, the snowshoe tracks on the lakes where trappers were getting muskrat. The pace of life in Aklavik is still slower than Inuvik - more like most of us still expect the Arctic to be.

July weekend

Doug is the secretary of the Northern Games Association which organized Inuvik's major project for the Northwest Territories' Centennial. Operating with a grant to help with transportation and other expenses the committee planned a very successful weekend in July. People came from a dozen western Arctic settlements to participate - from Coppermine in the east to Point Barrow, Alaska in the west; from Sachs Harbour in the north to Fort Good Hope in the south (on the Arctic Circle). The Rev. Ken Sailer of Dawson City, who opened the Inuvik mission in 1957, brought participants from the Yukon. Traditional games, skills and crafts were demonstrated. Competitions in native sports were held. Indian and Eskimo traditional clothing and dancing made the Northern Games a colorful and unique spectacle.

Tea to Kayaks

About 175 officially participated in everything from tea boiling to muskrat skinning to kayak racing. Hundreds more joined in the festivities and dances. The local people had a wonderful time. There was a good atmosphere throughout the Games with the people obviously enjoying doing the things they like and are good at. Timing of events was quite flexible, in keeping with the ways of those involved. If a group of people felt like having a drum dance in the town square at 1.00 a.m. then this is what took place. Very gratifying was the absence of problems related to alcohol and excessive drinking which frequently mar social occasions organized by the "white man". The Games are now planned as an annual event.

Load of seals
Early in June Doug made another trip to Banks Island and spent eight days visiting the



Eskimo community of Sachs Harbour. This settlement has been much in the news lately because of proposed oil exploration this winter. He came back with a DC-3 planeload of freshly-caught seals which were put in cold storage in Inuvik until the Northern Games seal skinning contests.

Centennial celebrations in the N.W.T. included many different events such as snowmobile races, talent shows, the 1,100 mile Mackenzie River canoe race to Inuvik, and the re-enactment of historic dog sled mail runs. Many special visitors came to Inuvik. In July over sixty small aircraft from many parts of North America brought 200 visitors.

Fly-in

This fly-in was sponsored by the local aviation council. Some of the old-time bush pilots who originally opened up the North returned for a visit on a special charter in August. We have been entertained by groups such as the Canadian Mime Theatre and the R.C.M.P. Band. The Band gave a concert in Inuvik and also played at an ecumenical service here on Sunday, June 21st attended by the Commissioner of the N.W.T. and other public figures. Archbishop Jackson, who in January became senior bishop of Rupert's Land (which includes the N.W.T., Arctic Quebec and the prairie provinces), addressed the gathering. His impressions of his first northern tour are found in the September Canadian Churchman.

Understands problems

We found him to be very understanding and fair in his assessment of the Church's position in the North and the problems the northern people are facing. That same day Doug, Bishop Cook and the Archbishop flew to Aklavik to join in the annual Rat Sunday service at All Saints' Church. This is a special time of thanksgiving when the people make their offerings of fur. Just after midnight they returned to Inuvik. It was a beautiful, clear night with the sun shining brightly on the thousands of lakes and channels that make up the fifty mile-wide Delta - a sight long to be remembered.

Special visitors

After a trip with a friend to the west coast, Doug's mother came to Inuvik with Doug's ten year old nephew, Sandy. They were with us for most of July and shared in many of the interesting activities of that month, including an evening's visit by plane to Aklavik.

Shortly after they came, the Royal Family visited Inuvik. Doug and Jean had the opportunity to chat with the four members of the Family, the Queen, Prince Phillip, Prince Charles and Princess Anne. At a Town luncheon for the Royal Party Doug was asked to say Grace. It was a memorable experience to offer prayers for the Royal Family, and to toast Her Majesty, in their presence. In August the Governor General and Mrs. Michener came. Doug and Jean attended a reception and banquet in their honour.

Oil exploration

Oil exploration has brought much activity to our part of the country. Here in Inuvik there is a multi-million dollar research project testing the effects of transporting very warm oil through a 48 inch pipeline over permafrost. One cannot begin to name all the recent visitors to Inuvik because of the economic developments - ambassadors, diplomats, military personnel,

and several federal cabinet ministers - to name only a few. By the mid-seventies we expect the construction of a gas pipeline from northern Alaska, along the Mackenzie River valley, to southern Canada and the U.S. An oil pipeline will probably be built later. The government has now set 1974 as the target date for completion of the Dempster Highway which will link Inuvik by road to the south via the Yukon.

Projected expenditures of literally billions of dollars will have a tremendous effect on this area. The Science Council of Canada met here this summer, and Inuvik was visited by the C.B.C. Board of Directors. In April cross country skiers from several European countries and the U.S. came to Inuvik to compete in the "Top of the World" ski championships. Inuvik's team of Indian and Eskimo young people is now world famous and is expected to make a good showing for Canada in the 1972 Winter Olympics.

Liberals meet

Meetings of interest have been held in Inuvik this year, including the first Arctic Liberal Party policy conference in October, and in November the "Man in the North" conference on community development, sponsored by the Arctic Institute of North America. Inuvik continues to grow - a million dollar public housing project is nearing completion and a utility extension program is underway. Two hotels have built large additions and a third one was opened. This year the Town issued 99 business licences and registered 690 vehicles.

There are now seven jet flights a week from Edmonton and six flights a week to Whitehorse, Yukon, if you want to go to Vancouver. A new supermarket has opened giving some competition to the Hudson's Bay Company which celebrated its 300th anniversary on May 2nd. Television is also a part of our life now, with broadcasts for four hours each evening, taped by the C.B.C. in Calgary and seen here two weeks later.

Busy life

In the course of a year we have many interesting visitors. Some are fellow Christian workers such as the Rev. Don Webster of Fairbanks, Alaska, who works with Wycliffe Bible Translators; the Rev. Steve Collins of the Canadian Bible Society; and the

Rev. Ron Ferris of Old Crow, Yukon. One day it may be a reporter interviewing us for the New York Times or Le Monde of Paris; another day it may be an Indian chief and his family, or the Toronto lawyer Richard Rohmer, originator of the Mid-Canada Corridor development concept; another day a friend from Frobisher Bay, such as Bryan Pearson or Jonah Kelly; or an anthropologist from Oklahoma; or a Girl Guide trainer from Ontario.

Of course there are other kinds of visitors as well - those who call for help or advice on various problems. Life is not quite as exciting as a chronicle of events like this newsletter tends to make it. The daily routine for Jean, particularly during the long winter, is demanding. For Doug the regular work of the church, Sunday duties, radio broadcasting, hospital visiting, and so on, require most of his time.

At courses

On December 21 there is to be an election for the Territorial Council and it is hoped that some of the native candidates who can speak on matters of concern to their people will be elected. Winter came early this year with a cool September and much more snow than usual in October. December has started on the cool side too with a temperature of 42 degrees below zero greeting us on the first day. This fall Doug has been teaching a course in accounting at the community night school, and Jean is attending a course in needlecraft.

Home garden

With money received at Christmas last year we bought fluorescent light fixtures and were able to keep alive some house plants which, lacking sufficient light during the time the sun is gone, often do not survive the winter. We planted seeds late in February and in May had petunias, pansies and other flowers blooming in the house. Although there was snow on the ground until early June, it seemed much more like spring having flowers in bloom. We also started plants in the house under the lights - which were then transplanted to a garden along the front and side of the house and to window boxes Doug made. We have also enjoyed helping with some gardening in a greenhouse of one of the government departments. We now have quite a few plants

growing under the lights including geraniums, African violets, fuchsias, and begonias. On the whole, summer weather this year was very good, although we did not give the Queen the best treatment in this regard. For the two days of the Royal Tour it was generally cool, wet and foggy - which at least meant no mosquitoes or blackflies!

Lively children

Since Keith was a baby we had known that something was wrong with his right leg or foot, and the doctor here decided he should be seen by a specialist. Jean took him to Edmonton in September. The trouble was with the bones in his feet, the right being worse than the left, and he now has special supports built into his boots which seem to be helping. We are pleased to see him walking much better than he had done before.

Jean and Keith stayed for two weeks in Edmonton with Dr. and Mrs. Uygur, formerly of Inuvik, and enjoyed their visit very much. We are grateful to the Davis family for taking care of the girls while Jean was away. Keith, now 3, is quite a self-sufficient little boy with a good sense of humor. Christina, who was 5 in October, goes to kindergarten in the mornings and enjoys it very much.

Since last year kindergarten has been a part of the regular school system. Christina is still a lively and active little girl. Ruth, 7½ years old, is in Grade Two and does well in school. Her ability to read amazes us, and she often reads books to the other children. She is quite tall for her age and

seems to have grown up a lot in the past few months. She expects to take figure skating lessons this winter.

Struggle continues
Although this part of Canada is growing and developing rapidly the financial struggle to keep the work of the Church going continues. It is not easy here, as elsewhere, to pay all the expenses for a full-time minister and the costs of upkeep for the church and rectory by relying solely on the free-will offerings of the relatively small number of concerned people in the community. The witness to the Faith is vitally needed at a time when the northern people are going through a period of crisis and upheaval, and many need help and encouragement to find or keep a Christian perspective when so much in their lives is changing.

We pray that the need for the continuation of and increase in the Church's work and ministry will be recognized and that support will be forthcoming. Salaries for clergy are no longer realistic, particularly here where the cost of living is up to 45 per cent higher than in the south. With a growing family one has to be practical, but Doug does not want to have to seek other employment, and thus reduce the amount of time that can be given to working with people. Our hope is that the Church, on a national level, will see fit to subsidize the work in frontier areas to a greater extent, thereby allowing the Church in the field to meet the challenge of a changing North. We close with our prayer that this Christmas season will be a blessed one for you.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

To our many friends and patrons we've become acquainted with through

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- Acton Pharmacy
- Acton Free Press
- Bradley's Meat Market
- Blue Springs
- Flower Shop
- Simpsons-Sears

HERB'S DELIVERY

HERB DODDS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Glad holiday wishes by the stockingful are coming your way. May the season bring you love and joy in full measure.

NELLIS CONSTRUCTION LTD.

Christmas Greetings

Reflections of Christmas fill the air with Santa, children, gifts and smiles. Hope they're all part of your holiday.

Acton Home Furnishings

GREETINGS

To old friends and new go our wishes for a wonderful Christmas season.

Management and Staff
Toronto Dominion Bank

Greetings

It's the season of fun and laughter. We wish your family the best the Yuletide can offer. Merry Christmas.

Management & Staff
HINTON'S 5¢ TO \$1 STORE

Cheery Greetings

We hope your holiday is filled with fine friends, good times. Warm wishes.

DAVIS JEWELLERS
3 Elgin St. - Acton

MERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Everywhere, Christmas carols ring out telling the joys of the season... we add our best wishes.

DILLS STATIONERY

Christmas Peace

As we celebrate the Christmas season, may the symbols of peace and freedom enkindle a fraternal spirit in all.

Ken's Auto Service
No. 7 Hwy East End of Acton

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

As you worship with your family at Christmas, may the true spirit of the season greatly bless you. Sincerely, we extend our greetings.

FROM
Management and Staff
FOODLAND STORE