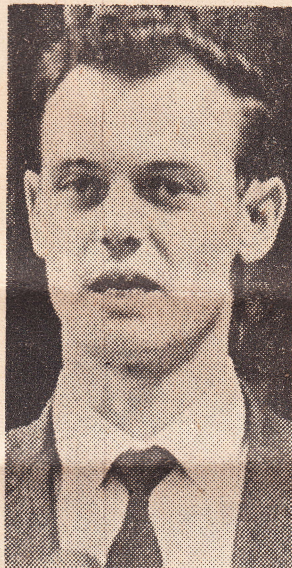




# JUNE SHEPPARD

## Development of the North

I suggested to Duncan Pryde, author, former member of the Northwest Territories Council and fur trader, that perhaps white people decry the passing of the traditional Eskimo customs and the adoption of many southern ways because they're aware of so much that's wrong in our society.



**DUNCAN PRYDE**

doesn't enjoy it any more. Sometimes they spend the time thinking up songs for their drum dances to take their minds off the misery of the cold."

Mr. Pryde, whose book *Nunaga* has just been published by Hurtig Publishers of Edmonton told me that people of the north laugh when Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jean Chretien talks of creating parks in the north.

## Favors commercial killing

"The Northwest Territories is a vast parkland now. For God's sake, what we need there is development. We have this export complex in this country. We export raw minerals out of the Territories rather than build a smelter — export oil instead of building a refinery — send out furs instead of building tanneries. Almost every white man in the north is employed. Unemployment among the native population is between 80 and 90 per cent. Time is going to widen the gap between native and white."

I wanted to know his suggestions for alleviation of this situation and the welfare state which it has created.

"I buy the idea of commercial killing of caribou on a strictly controlled basis. In 1965 at Bathurst Inlet there were 265,000 caribou. Annual increment is placed at 18 per cent. The Canadian Wildlife Service says you can kill 10 per cent of the herd every year without depletion of the main stock. That means in Bathurst you can kill 25,000 annually with great benefits to the Eskimo.

"But in a good year at Bathurst 18 adult hunters take 1,200. Fort Ray Indians take about 2,000. You're taking between 3,000 and 4,000 when you could harvest 25,000. If the Eskimo could get \$20 a carcass, he'd only need 10 or 12 monthly to make a good living. Also, caribou meat could be sent to Cambridge Bay to sell at around 10 cents a pound. The Eskimos are paying \$2 a pound to the Hudson's Bay there for meat, and they prefer caribou. It could go to Yellowknife and in Edmonton it could sell at 50 or 60 cents per pound. I just know this plan is feasible."

"I really don't think that comes into it too much. People just tend to look on the old days through those rose-colored glasses. Even younger Eskimos and Indians who haven't lived through those days tend to romanticize them. It's a little like the Scots looking back on the period of the clan battles.

"The reality was a brutal struggle for survival. Many died of starvation. In 1958 just 200 miles from Baker Lake 24 Eskimos died this way. Few heard about it. People in the south think of them as always self-sufficient. I've been out all day with Eskimos and their dog teams in 50 or 60 degree below zero temperatures. Believe me, the Eskimo freezes just as readily as we do and

## Adult education needed

Duncan Pryde also favors sports hunting of the polar bear and muskox. I questioned whether he really believed that killing animals strictly for trophies constituted sport.

"No. It's not a sport. But I buy this kind of hunting if the money goes directly to help native people. Only the native people must have the right to sell their polar bear quota. And it's been proven by the Territorial Game Branch and Canadian Wildlife Service that harvesting of the muskox is necessary for their conservation."

I asked for further suggestions about northern development from this 34-year-old native of Scotland who came to Canada at the age of 18 as a furtrader.

"Private enterprise wants to employ native people but I'm not naive enough to believe this is all altruism. They're very aware of public and government opinion. But I favor compensating them during the period it may take for the native person to adapt to a 9 to 5 daily job.

"And a massive adult education program is necessary in the Territories. The average Eskimo of 34 years hasn't spent one day in school. So an employer comes along asking for workers with a Grade 10 education and it rules out all of these people. As a matter of fact, it would rule me out."

When Chief Dan George went on a hunting trip in the Territories there was a native guide and outfitting manager who wanted the job. However, the federal government wanted a white manager. Mr. Pryde spearheaded an attack on the government attitude.

## Natives need chance

"Give the natives the chance. Some will fail and some won't — the same as whites. Some white managers of northern co-ops are successful — others aren't. We have to remember above everything else that the majority of people in the north are natives but the majority of those with jobs are white."

Mr. Pryde told me he'd challenged Pierre Trudeau to join him on a dog team trip to really see how the natives lived. However, the Prime Minister's office specified that there be so many dogs per team, and snowmobiles and television cameras that it all fell through.

Duncan Pryde is fluent in the Eskimo tongue. He claims no particular language fluency — "it was sheer determination. Unless you know their language, everything you learn about a people has to be secondhand."

What were his views on a subject uppermost in many minds today—pollution and the Arctic?

"I favor the gas pipeline because I can't see it creating pollution but only bringing in jobs. There's one important proviso — it has to be Canadian controlled. I have strong doubts about the oil pipeline but more from the standpoint of aboriginal rights in which I strongly believe. The voices of big business and politics are strong and they're in the south. Northern people may have little voice. My main pollution concern centres around tankers. If only one goes down, that may be enough."

Youthful-looking, soft-spoken Duncan Pryde and I had much more to discuss than I have room to tell here. But I ended our discussion with a question about Eskimo militancy:

"Too often these militant movements turn out to be not so much for your own people as against the whites. Then there's a danger of them doing more harm than good."

Duncan and his beautiful Indian wife Georgina were married in 1969. I hope Gina and I have more opportunity to talk at our next meeting.