

## **PERFORMANCE OF NATIVE TRAINEES IN AN APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

CHARLES W. HOBART  
Department of Sociology,  
University of Alberta

### **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

This paper reports on an evaluation study of a training program designed to prepare northerners, predominantly native northerners, as gas plant and gas pipeline operators. Specifically it describes the structure of the training program, the recruitment and orientation procedures for trainees and supervisors, and the response to the program of the trainees, as reflected in their performances and their interview responses, and in the interview responses of co-workers and supervisors. The reactions of the co-workers who were typically responsible for the actual training are reported as well.

Cet article rend compte d'une étude évaluant un programme de formation conçu pour préparer les gens du Nord, principalement les Indiens à être les opérateurs d'une usine à gaz et d'un gazoduc. Plus spécifiquement, il décrit la structure du programme de formation, les procédures de recrutement et d'orientation des stagiaires et de la maîtrise; il décrit également la réponse des stagiaires au programme, telle qu'elle se reflète dans leurs performances et leurs réponses aux entretiens ainsi que dans les réponses de leurs camarades de travail et de la maîtrise. Les réactions de leurs camarades de travail, qui ont été typiquement responsables de leur formation réelle, sont également rapportées.

There has been considerable controversy in recent years over the needs and interests of northern native people in Canada, particularly as these relate to employment. On the one hand it is apparent that the indigenous population of the Northwest Territories is growing rapidly, and that their educational attainments are increasing at a yet faster rate. For example, the native population of this area has increased from 13,233 in 1961, to 18,580 in 1971, (Dominion

Bureau of Statistics, 1963a, 1963b; Statistics Canada, 1976) and is projected to reach 24,935 in 1981, and 32,367 by 1991 (Statistics Section, 1979). Current figures on grade attainments for this population are not available. However the rapid increase in these attainments is reflected in school enrollments of native students in the Northwest Territories which numbered 2491 in 1959, 4924 in 1969, and 8557 in 1979.1

Critics opposed to large resource development projects in the North voice a number of concerns. One central issue relates to the prospects for employment involving exploitation of non-renewable versus renewable resources. Critics question how many people may be employed in industries based on non-renewable resources, how long these jobs will last, and what northern native people will do after these resources are exhausted. These short-term prospects for industries based on non-renewable resources are contrasted with the indefinite prospects for employment based on harvesting fur, fish, and timber resources. The discussion becomes complicated, however, when reference is made to the very rapid rate of population increase among native people, and the prospect that population size may in time exceed the carrying power of this resource base and the impacts of government education policies, procedures, and curricula which are generally similar to those in Southern Canada and thus have tended to prepare children not for the trap line but for urban commercial or industrial employment opportunities (Hobart, 1970; Hobart and Brant, 1966).

There is also the troubling question: Is there an element of racism in the assumption that northern native people should be oriented toward renewable resource harvesting, rather than toward industrial or commercial kinds of employment, given the very different kinds of life chances and opportunity ladders associated with each?

A second issue relates to the consequences which rapid rise in community incomes associated with industrial employment may bring; peaceful, "welfare" subsidized poverty, versus possibly more riotous prosperity. Some have argued that the substantial wage income that development projects may bring to communities has pernicious effects on community life and the continuity of native cultural traditions (Arch, 1977 Usher, 1976, Watkins, 1977). On the other hand, several empirical studies of Inuit communities involved

in resource development employment have failed to find any significant disruption of community life, but have demonstrated an essentially symbiotic relationship between rotation wage employment and hunting and trapping (Hobart and Kupfer, 1973; Hobart, Forthcoming; Roberts, 1977).

A third set of issues related to the kinds of employment that native people will be given if they do opt for industrial employment: do they have adequate educational background, will they have opportunities for needed technical training, will they have access to the same advancement ladders as other Canadians, or will they be relegated to part time, seasonal and unskilled employment?

All of these positions were taken, challenged, and cross-examined during the course of the Berger Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Hearings in Yellowknife during 1975 and 1976. Promonent's and intervenor's testimony and the cross-exandning discussions they provoked are recorded in the many volumes of the Proceedings of those Hearings. In addition some of the arguments are summarized and evaluated in the first volume of the report of those hearings (Berger, 1977), and many of the arguments against development have been collected in articles written by some who participated in the Berger Hearings and published in *The Colony Within* (Watkins, 1977).

The first two classes of issues are beyond the scope of this paper, but the third is directly addressed. There is an all too familiar pattern in Canada of hiring native people only for the hardest, dirtiest, most menial, and/or lowest-paid work. When the educational attainments of most adult natives in the Northwest Territories are yet at a very low level, what chance do they have of obtaining placements in positions with good opportunities for training and advancement? If such positions were given to them, in a high proportion of cases "hands on" training would be available only to them in the southern provinces. How well would Territorial Inuit or Indians be able to cope with relocation to a southern work and training site, away from family and home community for a lengthy period? How would southern co-workers and work supervisors respond to the intrusion of native trainees into their midst, given the derogatory stereotypes of native people which have wide currency and the threats that mechanically unsophisticated natives may pose to the safety of the whole work crew in some industries, to name but two possible sources of difficulty? How capable would native trainees prove to

be by comparison with white trainees who have the advantage of growing up with much more exposure to mechanical and industrial activity than native people in the Territories?

This paper suggests answers to some of these questions by providing information on the experience of Territorial native workers in an industrial training program. This program was designed to train them to operate drilling equipment, gas plants, and pipeline compressor stations and was in operation for several years prior to the demise of the proposal to build a gas pipeline down the Mackenzie River valley. Specifically, this paper briefly describes the training program, the recruitment and orientation procedures and the responses to the program of the northern trainees and their southern white co-workers.

## BACKGROUND

During the early 1970's several petroleum companies were conducting oil exploration programs in the Mackenzie Delta and the Canadian Arctic Gas consortium was planning for construction of a large pipeline down the Mackenzie River valley. Recognizing the value of a co-ordinated approach to training and employment of native workers in the North, early in 1973 these companies established a joint Northern Training Program .2 The program was designed to train Northerners, primarily natives, to operate the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and the gas plants that would feed gas to the pipeline and to work on drilling rigs and gas field crews in the Mackenzie Delta.

As organized, this "Nortran" program depended heavily on on-the-job apprenticeship training procedures, but also utilized formal training in community colleges and other institutions when it appeared that a trainee had good potential for continued advancement but lacked prerequisite skills. An indication of the companies' commitment to this program was that Nortran trainees were given the status of permanent, not casual or seasonal, company employees, with all the benefits appropriate to that status.

Following its inception in the Fall of 1973, the Nortran program took over a pre-existing Alberta Gas Trunk Line Company training program, assuming responsibility for 22 trainees who were enrolled in the program at that time. The other participating companies

each opened a number of permanent employment positions for Nortran Trainees so that when this study was conducted, in September of 1974, there were 96 training positions in the Nortran program, of which 77 were actually filled.

The staff of the Nortran program consisted of a manager, two Industry Training Co-ordinators, a Training Supervisor and four Supervisor Counselors. The Industry Training Co-ordinators were involved in the selection of trainees and, together with representatives from industry, they developed suitable entrance requirements, performance standards, and job specifications for particular positions. In addition they assessed the trainees' educational attainments and explained the training system to trainees and to their supervisory personnel.

The Training Supervisor was generally responsible for the well-being of the trainees and for the supervision of four Supervisor Counselors. The latter each worked with groups of 15 to 20 trainees. They assisted the trainees in finding suitable quarters in the southern industrial environment, and helped them adapt to a wage economy and living conditions in the South or in the Mackenzie Delta. They were all born and had lived most of their lives in Northern Canada and thus, were well experienced in dealing with Northerners. One was Inuit, one Indian, one Metis and one was white.

### THE TRAINING PROGRAM

As noted earlier most of the training was on-hands, apprenticeship training, which took place in four actual employment contexts: gas plants, pipeline operations, oil and gas well drilling, and clerical and office work. All of the trainees in the first two were posted to training locations in Southern Canada, all but two of these in Alberta. The drilling training sites were all in the Mackenzie Delta, and all but one of the office work trainees were located in Calgary, Alberta.

Because the goal of the program was to maximize the number of Northerners working on drilling rigs, pipeline and at the gas field and the gas plants, there was interest in developing the wide range of skills necessary in Nortran trainees as speedily as possible. To help in reaching this goal the decision was made to accelerate the training, and the promotion, of the Nortran trainees, as rapidly as their

progress and the achievements would warrant. Southern white supervisors and co-workers were informed of the nature and the goals of the program and of the "maximum-acceleration" feature as well. In consequence, the co-workers and supervisors who were involved in the training program knew that fast learning and competent trainees would be promoted over the heads of their trainers. Thus the program inevitably posed a threat to the advancement opportunities of the men who are asked to train the Nortran candidates. This threat was increased because there was no guarantee that the Mackenzie Valley pipeline would ever be built, and even if it were built there was no requirement that a Nortran trainee would have to transfer to a job in the North. It is a significant tribute to the broad mindedness and the altruism of these men that despite their awareness of these and of other special benefits that the trainees receive<sup>3</sup>, there is but little evidence of resentment or jealousy in the relationships of the co-workers with the trainees.

The participating companies initially created 73 training positions which were filled by Northern residents in October and November of 1973. By Fall of 1974 this number had increased to 96. These provided training for 22 different work positions, distributed as shown in the following chart.

Before assignment to their training location, trainees were enrolled in a three-week Basic Job Readiness Program, at the Adult Vocational Training Centre in Fort Smith. This program consisted of brief training in basic life skills, industry safety procedures, Northern survival, first aid and driver training. There was also an Industrial Supervisor Seminar to familiarize supervisors with the industry training program, to provide understanding and appreciation of potential problems that might arise and to encourage discussion of existing problems and formulation of possible solutions. In addition, it served as a feed-back mechanism to the training program, giving the supervisors an opportunity to voice their suggestions and reactions.

Because of the approach taken by the Northern Training Program it is not possible to indicate either the lengths of the individual training programs, or when a person's training could be said to be completed. The trainees were full time permanent employees of the companies which were training them, and the training took place on the job, as is common in the hydrocarbon and the pipeline

TRAINING POSITION	NO. OF POSITIONS
Accounting Clerk	16
Clerical	2
Clerk Expediter	4
Compressor Station Operator	16
Computer Maintenance	1
Controls Technician	3
Cost Analyst	1
Drilling Operations	14
Electrician	2
Equipment Operator	3
Gas Controller	1
Gas Plant Operator	9
Heavy Duty Mechanic	2
Instrument Mechanic	1
Materials Supervisor	2
Measurement Technician	1
Millwright	4
Pipeline Operation & Maintenance	5
Production Operator	4
Refueller	1
Surveyor	2
Welder	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>

industries. Training was frequently the responsibility of co-workers and proceeded as speedily as the trainee could assimilate it. When the trainee had mastered one set of skills he typically became a trainee for the next higher position, unless he expressed a wish to remain at his current level. There is no information available on the split between the formal institutional and on-the-job components of the training, but the former would only have been a fraction of the latter.

As full time employees, the Northern trainees earned the wage rate that was appropriate to their particular trainee position, the same rate paid to comparable Southern Canadian trainees. No information is available on these wage rates, which indeed could only be evaluated in the context of the rates paid to others in the

work situation, peers, inferiors and superiors, at that time. The salient point, however, is that given the inflation of Northwest Territorial wage scales, by an "isolation allowance" component for Southern white workers which Northerners received as well, as the policy was of course "equal pay for equal work", the wage scales paid to Northern trainees at Southern Canadian work sites seemed low to them, but not to Southern Canadians.

Surprisingly, in many cases the co-workers on the crew to which the trainee was assigned received little if any initial briefing. Partly this was due to poor planning and scheduling, since it often happened that a trainee was assigned to a supervisor before he had a chance to attend the Industrial Supervisor Seminar. Partly it was because Southern trainees were often assigned to these crews, so that it was relatively routine. However the result was that co-workers typically learned about the special benefits and opportunities accorded to trainees accidentally, rather than having the goals of the program and the reasons for the benefits explained to them.

#### SOURCES OF DATA

The data for this study were obtained from many sources, including the application forms of the trainees, their actual employment record which contained data on authorized and unauthorized work absences, etc., and from formal interviews with trainees, co-workers and supervisors. Seventy-one of the 77 trainees enrolled in the program during September 1974 were interviewed, by a Northern native interviewer in all but a few (5) cases so that the rapport problems to be expected when whites interview native Canadians were largely forestalled. Sixty-one co-workers and the same number of training supervisors of the trainees were also interviewed for their perceptions of the trainee, their assessments of his motivation, his rate of progress, their satisfaction with him as a co-worker, their judgment of the extent to which he posed a safety threat, etc. Interviews with trainees took about an hour and those with co-workers and supervisor took slightly less time.

Informal interviews were also conducted with the Supervisor Counselors. These men were in frequent contact with the trainees, seeking to facilitate the adjustment of the trainee to the situation in which he found himself and to spot incipient or developing

problems in order to precipitate appropriate corrective action. They provided information useful in understanding the subjective situations in which the trainees found themselves, the difficulties which they experienced and the kinds of resolutions which were achieved or which, on occasion, fell through.

We had planned to collect interview data from as many of the trainees who had terminated the program as possible. A native interviewer was hired, trained and sent north to accomplish this. Unfortunately, however, a number of difficulties developed and the consequence was that only three completed schedules were obtained from any of the terminees.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAINEES

As of the end of August 1974, a total of 111 Northerners had had experience with the Nortran program. Twelve had entered the program as early as 1971, when it was operated exclusively by the Alberta Gas Trunk Line Company and 10 entered it in 1972 or 1973 while it was still under these auspices. Thereafter 50 more enrolled in 1973 after it became the Nortran program and 39 joined it during the first nine months of 1974. A total of 39 dropped from the program, nine before 1974 and 25 during the first eight months of this year.

Most of the trainees were young: 15 percent were aged 20 years or less, 42 percent were aged 21 to 24, and 43 percent 25 years of age and over, with the oldest 43 years old. In terms of ethnic origin, 38 were treaty Indian, 34 were Inuit, 25 were non-treaty-status-Indian or Metis and 13 were white northerners. At the time that they joined the program, 11 were from various settlements on the Arctic coast, 37 were from the Mackenzie Delta, 12 were from lower Mackenzie River settlements, 33 were from the larger towns in the southern part of the Northwest Territories (Yellowknife, Hay River, Ft. Providence, Ft. Resolution, Ft. Smith, Ft. Simpson), 11 were from the Yukon and 6 were from northern Alberta or British Columbia. Thirty-seven were married, 69 were single and one was widowed. Seventy-three had no dependents and the remainder had between one and five dependents.

Most of those in the program, 66, had some high school training, and 23 of these had completed grade 12. Thirty-four had completed

grades six, seven, eight or nine and only three had less than gradesix. We were not able to obtain any information from eight trainees. Forty-one had had a variety of upgrading or specialized training experiences, ranging from low level ones such as "basic job readiness training" and upgrading for grade eight, to highly specialized courses such as tele-communication and electronics, accounting and business management. Six had taken their training in the Canadian provinces, while 31 had taken it in the Northwest Territories or in the Yukon. One had attended university in the U.S.A. for one year and another had taken a correspondence course. Only six had had apprenticeship training, one man for as long as 48 months, and two men had their journeyman's certificate.

Most of these men were in training for positions as gas plant operator (22), gas transmission operator (20) or as roughneck, motorman or derrickman on a drilling rig crew (16). Ten were in training for technician jobs and 12 for white collar jobs. Forty-six men were employed at six locations in the Northwest Territories, eight men in Saskatchewan and the remainder were in Alberta, the largest number (17) in Calgary.

Thirty-seven of the men had had no prior permanent employment, according to the available data. Of the remaining 74, the largest number had been employed by government agencies (46 percent), and by large corporations -mostly oil companies. Thirtyeight (53 percent) had been employed for no more than three months at their last previous job 22 (30 percent) for between four and eleven months and only 12 (17 percent) had been employed for more than a year. Twenty-eight were employed as laborers or helpers, 29 at other unskilled or semi-skilled work, two at skilled work and 14 at white collar work positions.

## THE FINDINGS

A great deal of data were collected and analyzed during the course of this study. The analysis typically took the form of tables cross tabulating indicators of the performance of the trainee, with information about the trainee drawn from his application form, his interview schedule or supplied by his co-workers or supervisor. Unfortunately it is not possible to present these tabulations in a paper of this size and so most of the relevant tables have not been

included. Instead, recourse has been taken to general statements which provide an accurate summary of the detailed statistical analyses which were performed. Those interested in seeing the detailed results of these analyses may consult Hobart (1975).

The findings of this study are organized in sections dealing with success of the trainees in the program, continuation in the training program, reactions to the training program and the economic and social consequences of the training program for the trainees.

The most critical issue in a program of this sort is how well did the trainees master the material that they were supposed to be learning; how fast did they acquire the skills they were being taught? Unfortunately there are no statistical measures of their learning attainments. However, several of the questions which were asked during the interviews with the trainees' work supervisors and co-workers dealt with these questions, and the answers, from men who were in daily contact with the trainees and who are affected by their work performances, generally reflect favorable assessments. We present information supplied by the work supervisors first, followed by parallel material from the co-workers.

Forty of the supervisors had earlier experience with on-the-job training programs and these people were asked if they found the northern trainees harder to train than other workers they had trained in Canada. About half, 19 of these men, said they were not harder; 13 said they were, 7 said it depended on the individual and one was unable to respond. Reasons given by those critical of the trainees included lack of ability, poor educational background, poor motivation and failure by the company to provide needed facilities. When they were asked how they would rate the quality or competence of the workers the program was turning out, 25 supervisors felt it was turning out "average" workers, 11 felt the trainees were "above average", and 12 felt they were "below average", while 2 men were unable to respond.

Several questions dealt with perceived effects on productivity and morale of the work crew. In response to the question "Do you think the productivity of your unit has suffered on account of this training program?" only 8 supervisors said "definitely" or "probably", 15 said "probably no", and 38 said "definitely no". Similarly to the question "Has the morale of the work crew suffered in some ways on account of the trainees?" 5 of the 58 responding

supervisors said "definitely yes", 15 "probably yes", while the remaining 38 said "definitely no", including 13 who reported that the morale of the crew had improved. Reasons given for negative effects on morale included resentment over the positions and special privileges enjoyed by trainees, reported 11 times, and "it adds to the work of others" reported 6 times.

The reactions of the co-workers were of particular interest, because they had distinctive grounds for mistrust, resentment and hostility. Theirs were the jobs that might be threatened by trainees; they would have to shoulder the increased work load resulting from incompetence of trainee fellow workers and it was their lives which were in jeopardy by dangerous carelessness on the part of trainees. Forty-nine of the 61 co-workers worked for companies which had regular training programs with which they were experienced. These men were asked "Are there any differences between Northern trainees and regular trainees in regard to ability, motivation, education, etc?" twenty-three men said there were no differences and four failed to respond. The remainder mentioned one or more differences including "Northerners have less education" (15 men), "Northerners have less motivation" (10) men, "Northerners have less ability" (8 men) and "Northerners have more motivation" (4).

To the question "Do you feel personally affected by the Program?", over 70 percent of the co-workers said they did not, 25 percent said they did and the remainder said they did not know. To the further question, "How do you feel affected?" 12 responded by reporting beneficial consequences including enjoyment of contact with Northerners (4) and enjoyment of teaching or opportunities which teaching gave to review their own knowledge (8). Ten men mentioned negative consequences including more work as a result of the program (8) and resentment at the preferential treatment Northerners receive.

The co-workers were also asked "Do you feel that having a Northern trainee in the group affects your work crew in any way?" sixty-percent said that it did not, 35 percent said that it did and the remainder failed to answer. Those who answered affirmatively were further asked how the crew was affected. Eighteen who responded mentioned detrimental effects, while six said they enriched or livened up the crew and five reported that the Northerners were good workers.

A further question inquired "If you had your choice, would you prefer to work in a group without Northern trainees?" forty-three percent said that they would not prefer that 7 percent said they would prefer to work without a Northern trainee, 21 percent said they would prefer a crew without any trainees (Northern or Southern), and 26 percent said they did not care. Thus only about one quarter reported preferring a group without trainees.

In summary, while it is unfortunate that we do not have concise, objective measures of the effectiveness of the trainees in meeting their training goals, it is apparent that most of the supervisors and co-workers interviewed found them satisfactory and a minority were relatively enthusiastic. The available information suggests that the Northern trainees were at least comparable with other non-northern trainees known to the people interviewed.

### Persistence in the Training Program

As of September 1974 of the 111 who had then joined the Nortran Program, 34 had terminated and 77 were yet enrolled. While we were unable to interview the terminees, a termination interview was conducted by a Nortran Supervisor Counselor with every man who dropped out of the program. Accordingly we have information on reasons for the man's quitting given by the trainee, and/or inferred by the Supervisor Counselor. These reasons are found listed in Table I along with the number of men to whom each applied. No information was available for five terminees.

These data show that what might be termed "character problems" --personality and drinking problems work habits - accounted for slightly more than one third of the reasons. Homesickness and family problems accounted for almost one third, and lack of suitability for this kind of work accounting for the remainder, of the 29 men for whom recorded "reasons" were available.

The data available on background characteristics of the trainees, found in Table II, shows that dropouts more frequently than those continuing in the program, were young, from the Mackenzie Delta or the Yukon, with less than Grade 10 education, with post secondary academic upgrading education, but no educational experience in the South of Canada. In terms of employment

REASON	NUMBER INVOLVED	%
Unreliable work habits	6	17.8
Drinking problem	4	11.8
Afraid of heights	1	2.9
Found better job	2	5.9
Lonesome, homesick	5	14.7
Family and/or financial problems	4	11.8
No interest in the occupation	5	14.7
Personality problems	2	5.9
No reason recorded for termination	5	14.7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE I: REASONS FOR TERMINATION DETERMINED FOR  
TRAINEES WHO DROPPED OUT OF NORTRAN  
PROGRAM

circumstances, the dropouts were more often in training for semiskilled occupational positions, at Northern work sites or sites in the Foothills region of Alberta.

The perceptions and ratings of the trainees' immediate supervisors, found in Table III, show that dropouts were less often rated as co-operative, friendly and clean, and were more often seen as hard to get to know or as "loners", than continuing trainees. They were less often rated as fitting well into the work group, as "easy" to communicate with, as "above average" in responsibility and they had more often been absent from work without a good excuse. There were no noteworthy differences between the two groups in their rated hard-workingness, motivation, speed of learning, punctuality in reporting to work or ease of supervision.

Although it seems probable that some "negative halo effect" may be reflected in the supervisors' ratings of the dropouts, we have good evidence that they are differentiating between kinds of dropouts, since those dropouts with personality or character problems were differently perceived by the supervisors compared with those who dropped out for other reasons. The former were more often seen by their Supervisors as more attractive persons, but less hard working, less speedy learners, less punctual and more frequently absent from work without excuse.

CHARACTERISTICS/CIRCUMSTANCES	CONTINUING	TERMINATED
Age-		
Under 22	23%	23%
22-24	36	29
25+	41	48
Ethnicity -		
Indian/Metis	61	48
Inuit	26	42
White	13	9
Home Region -		
Mackenzie Delta	26	50
Yellowknife	36	15
Yukon	8	15
B.C., Alberta	9	0
Marital Status -		
Single	64	61
Married	36	59
Dependents -		
None	65	72
One or more	35	28
Education Attainment -		
Less than 10 grade	49	74
Grade 10 and over	51	26
Post Secondary Education -		
None	65	59
Technical	17	18
Academic Upgrading	11	24
Post Secondary Education -		
In the North	68	100
In the South	52	0
Work Position -		
Semi-skilled	16	38
Skilled	62	50
White collar	22	12
Work Site -		
The N.W.T.	29	53
Cities	26	3
Eastern Alberta, Saskatchewan	17	12
Foothills and Western Alberta	29	32
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	73	34

TABLE II: CONTRASIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONTINUING AND TERMINATED TRAINEES BY PERCENTAGES

PERCEPTION/RATING	TOTAL		TOTAL	
	CONTINUING	N	TERMINATED	N
Crew found him co-operative	79%	75*	59%	27
Crew found him friendly	81	75	63	27
Crew found him clean	90	71	78	27
Crew found him hard working	64	75	54	26
Crew found him hard to get to know	17	75	33	27
Crew found him a loner	15	75	26	27
Trainee fits into work group very well	54	72	44	27
Trainee rated highly motivated	38	70	29	24
Trainee rated above average speed of learning	41	71	38	26
Trainee rated: no problems communicating with him	39	74	27	26
Trainee rated above average: Responsible/Reliable	11	73	27	26
Trainee rated: Always on time coming to work	68	75	70	27
Trainee has been absent from work during last 6 months without a good excuse	33	75	52	27
Trainee rated: easy to supervise	51	75	44	27

\*Ratings were available for several trainees whom we were not able to interview because they were absent from the work site when we tried to interview them.

TABLE III: COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF CONTINUING AND TERMINATED TRAINEES BY IMMEDIATE SUPERVISORS

#### Reactions of Trainees to the Northern Training Program

It is apparent during the course of the interviews that the trainees typically reacted very favorable to the training program. Thus three quarters said they liked the program, most reporting that it had

turned out better than they had expected or just as they had expected. A majority (55 percent) of the trainees felt that they had a better deal than did the regular workers on their crews. Few (11 percent) said they had much difficulty adjusting to life in the South or in exploration camps.

More specifically, most trainees reported liking their work situations. It is particularly significant that about 75 percent reported very friendly, co-operative receptions from their new fellow workers when they first joined the crew and almost all (97 percent) reported feeling they enjoyed relaxed, friendly relationships with their crew mates when interviewed. Similarly, 90 percent reported that they got along well with their foremen. Most felt that their foremen treated them "the same way" as he treated other workers, and only one felt discriminated against. Similar proportions felt that the foreman was patient in showing them things, (87 percent), and that they had no problems communicating with the foreman (85 percent). It is particularly noteworthy that a higher proportion of trainees reported talking about personal problems with foremen (47 percent) than with anyone else, including talking with their Supervisor Counsellors (25 percent). Most of the trainees reported having social contacts with work mates and with their foremen after work, on occasion. Our data further show that these relationships were a distinct source of satisfaction to the overwhelming proportion of those who were involved.

We asked a number of questions designed to probe possible sources of dissatisfaction--duties assigned, pay, special benefits, etc. No more than one quarter indicated dissatisfaction with any of these, the most common being the feeling that wages were too low. This was explained by the fact that, by contrast with the very high wages men paid in the Northwest Territories, the income of the trainees in fact was rather low.

We attempted to probe the morale of those trainees who were continuing during September 1974 by asking "How often have you felt like quitting and going home?" Most denied having such feelings very often: 45 percent of the 70 responding said "never", 27 percent said "rarely", 21 percent said "sometimes" and only 6 men said they often had such feelings. Among those who did, the most important reasons for these feelings were loneliness and homesickness, personal problems, boredom and problems on the job.

Nevertheless, about three quarters of the trainees said they had plenty to do during their spare time and two thirds said they never felt lonely.

Responses to the question "What do you do when you have the urge to go home?" provide additional indications, beyond those seen earlier, that relationships with co-workers and foremen are particularly important to the men in moments of frustration or homesickness. It is perhaps surprising that a majority of the trainees, (56 percent) said that they did not want to be transferred to a Northern site, for example, thus indicating contentment with the current work situation. Half of the remainder said they would like to be transferred to a Northern site.

At the end of the interview the trainees were asked to make suggestions as to how the program could be improved. No less than three quarters of the trainees did offer suggestions, which attests to the sense of involvement of these trainees in the program and in the interview process as well. The largest numbers of suggestions related to the training itself and to orientation procedures.

One question that this study sought to answer was whether there were certain patterns of trainee characteristics which were associated with favorable or successful reactions to aspects of the training program and other patterns which were associated with unfavorable or unsuccessful reactions. Cross-tabulation analysis of criterion trainee responses or ratings by trainee characteristics failed to reveal any consistent patterns. Thus, it is not possible to develop a compact summary of the characteristics of those trainees who simultaneously responded most successfully to the program and were most satisfied with it. It appears that we were looking at too many dependent variables; the trainees' perceptions of the reception that the crew he joined gave him, his relationships with crew members and foremen, his feelings of loneliness and of satisfaction, his fore-man's assessments of him as a hard worker, an effective learner, a responsible worker, a worker easy to communicate with and to supervise, etc. Our cross-tabulation analysis shows that there were no pattern or trainee characteristics which come near identifying a perfect trainee in all of these respects.

However, there were some lesser patterns that are worthy of note. Trainees who were younger, single and of Inuit ethnicity more often said they were lonely, they wanted to be transferred and they

felt like quitting, despite the fact that they had more informal associations with fellow workers off the job than older, married trainees. Younger trainees were less often satisfied with their pay and were rated as less co-operative, but they were also rated as hard workers who fitted into the crew well, and as apt learners, more often than the older trainees. Inuit trainees were more satisfied with their pay, were rated more apt learners and more responsible workers than are the Indians, but the latter were rated easier to supervise. Both groups were harder to supervise than Northern whites, according to supervisors' ratings.

Not surprisingly, trainees who were longest in the program, those entering in 1971 or 1972, said they found it easiest to talk to their foremen, had little need to see the supervisor counselor, little wish for transfer and experienced little loneliness or boredom during spare time. They were most often rated as fitting well into the work crew and easy to communicate with. Those with the least education and those in training for semi-skilled positions were best satisfied with their pay and special benefits and least often felt like quitting. Those with the least education and those with skilled and white collar jobs most often said they would like to be transferred.

Trainees in white collar positions and those assigned to large cities most often reported their work mates were friendly and co-operative and said they related easily to their foremen, but were rated as hard to communicate with by their supervisors. Trainees stationed in cities more often reported having much to do in their spare time, were rated highly in personality characteristics by their supervisors and were seen as fitting well into the work group, but were not seen as learning quickly, perhaps because the language and conceptual skills required of them were excessive.

#### Economic and Social Consequences of the Program for the Trainees

Because we do not have available the kind of "before and after" "hard" data that would be necessary for a precise assessment of the economic and social impact of the training program, we can only discuss this in general terms. However, many indications of the changes that trainees were experiencing and the consequences of these changes, were gleaned from the comments and reports of interview respondents, particularly the co-workers, the work

supervisors and the Supervisor Counselors. On the basis of this rich, though non-quantifiable evidence, we believe that the major economic consequences of the program are not to be seen in the size of the earnings of the trainees, since many of them have earned more in the past and could have earned more from other employment in the North at that time. Rather, the most significant consequences were the changes in economic attitudes and behavior and in the mobility aspirations of the trainees. These were the result of involvement in relationships with co-workers and foremen which had potent socialization significance for the trainee and confronted the trainees with attractive models of upward mobility for emulation.

In terms of the social impacts of the program, the structure of the program tended to socialize trainees at work sites in the South into a new life style. The trainees, particularly those who were single, were cut off from the facilities, supports and rewards for continued enactment of their Northern life style. At the same time they were confronted with attractive models, subjected to explicit expectations, and were under a sanctioning system which failed to reward behavior reflecting this Northern life style. It did reward, often promptly and explicitly, behavior which was in accord with the Southern life style and thus some resocialization was inevitable for those who stayed in the training program, in the long run.

There were some indications among some trainees of the maladjustment and disorganization which is inevitable where people must make sudden and drastic changes in their habitual life style. The really surprising fact, however, is that the disorganizing consequences of the training program were so rare. We attribute this to the resilience of the trainees, the effectiveness of the Supervisor Counselors and the personal interest and emotional support which work supervisions and work associates typically provided to the trainees.

## DISCUSSION

The most general finding of this study is the very considerable extent to which the training program was successful, in the face of very substantial odds to the contrary. These obstacles are worth reiterating. In the first place, for most trainees the program involved

uprooting them from the Northern communities in which they had lived and relocating them semi-permanently, without a clear cut-off date, in Southern Canada. This move was even more difficult for many since 70 percent of the trainees had no prior experience living in the South. Many single trainees were completely cut off from fellow Northerners at their training sites and the remainder were cut off from all but their wives and children, or the one or two other Northern trainees assigned to the same work site.

A second obstacle was that the benefit package the trainees received might arouse resentment in their white work associates. The trainees posed a direct threat to the upward mobility aspirations of the co-workers and supervisors,<sup>4</sup> and in addition they enjoyed fringe benefits such as subsidized housing, extra holiday travel time and travel allowances not available to non-trainee employees. In the face of these inequalities, the co-workers were not only expected to "put up with" novice Northern trainees who might at times pose a threat to the safety of the crew,<sup>5</sup> but they were supposed to take an active part in their training as well. The third obstacle lay in the fact that most of the co-workers and supervisors had no prior experience working with Northerners and many of the trainees had no experience working alongside of Southern whites.

In the face of these threats and irritations, the crews which the trainees joined might have been distant and unfriendly in their reception. Nor would it have been surprising if very high proportions of the trainees had found it more stressful or less rewarding than they had anticipated and had quit -- particularly since the wage rates were low by Northern standards. Given these circumstances, we believe that the 31 percent dropout rate during the period for which we have data, is surprisingly low. The 69 percent persistence rate must be seen as indicative of both the commitment of the trainees themselves and the generous welcome and the continuing support that work crew members typically gave to the trainees. Evidence of both of these is seen in the reports of the trainees of the reception that they experienced when they first joined their work group and of the people whom they sought out when they had problems. It seems apparent that very good results can be obtained from this kind of training program, even if there are substantial initial obstacles, when native trainees are carefully selected, and when they, and at least some of their eventual work crew members, are given appropriate orientation.

Native trainees adjusted well and showed that they were able to cope with the prospect of indefinite "exile" from the North. In addition, they proved that they were satisfactory trainees, comparable with Southern white trainees in the eyes of many of their co-workers. These ratings are particularly significant since it is obvious that the co-worker raters had good reason for negative feelings about the "unfair" benefits the trainees enjoyed which could easily have colored their ratings even with workers trying to judge fairly.

However, the new skills which the trainees mastered were only part of the significant learnings which they acquired during the Nortran training program. Virtually every feature of the program tended to enhance its broader socializational significance for the trainees: they were cut off from the role models, the reference groups and the significant others which sustain the distinctive patterns of motivation, interest and activity of Northerners. In their place, the trainees encountered Southern Canadian role models and significant others, and in time, for some, these tended to become their reference groups. Thus, it appears that a product of such training programs may be a somewhat new type of Northern work and there are already some interesting and impressive examples of this. Perhaps the most striking is the Inuit trainee for a very small hunting camp in Bathurst Inlet on the Arctic Coast. While on the program, he conceived the goal of saving money to take flying lessons and purchase an airplane so that he could establish himself in his own aircraft charter business. After several years and the accumulation of substantial capital, he dropped out of the program to pursue this goal.

With termination of the Canadian Arctic Gas Project, and with it the prospects for pipeline employment in the North, most of the Nortran trainees returned to the Territories, although they could have stayed on with their employer companies had they wanted to. Unfortunately, no follow-up study has been made of the subsequent employment choices and careers of these former trainees. While many of the socialization effects of their trainee experience no doubt dropped from them soon after they resigned, some consequences will be more persistent. To the extent that this is true, the former trainees may provide role models for other Northern workers in turn.

Industrial employment opportunities in the North are again on the increase. Currently active projects include Canmar Marine's offshore drilling program in the Beaufort Sea and the Nanisivik Mine on Northern Baffin Island and others are in the development phase including the Lupine Mine at Contwoyto Lake, the Cadillac Mine on the Yukon border and the Polaris Mine on Little Cornwallis Island. Yet in the planning stage are the Arctic Pilot Project to ship liquified natural gas from Melville Island, the Mactung Mine on the Yukon border and more distant yet, the proposed Polar Gas Project to build a gas pipeline from Melville Island to Western Ontario. The combined labour demands from these projects during the operations phase will approach 2,000. Much of this employment will be available to Northern native peoples, not only because of strong Territorial and Federal Governmental pressures to maximize such employment, but also because Northern people typically find the work settings and the climatic conditions much more congenial than do Southern whites.

For most native Northerners, as for non-industrialized people the world around, becoming adapted to industrial employment is a gradual and lengthy process. The Nortran program made a small but significant contribution by demonstrating that Northern natives are able to master technical and demanding skills while training in an alien environment and that white co-workers may co-operate wholeheartedly and effectively in the process.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Unfortunately it is not possible to convert these figures into proportions of native children attending school, because there are no satisfactory estimates of the number of Metis children. However, if we ignore this and divide these enrollment number by numbers of Treaty Indians and Inuit children aged six to sixteen years for 1959, 1969 and 1979, interpolating from Census data for the first two years, the proportions are .70, .92 and 1.20, respectively. Note that these should be seen as index numbers only, because the denominator in the fraction does not include Metis children, while the numerator does. The implication of the very large figure for 1979, 1.20 is not only that Metis are not included in the denominator, but perhaps also that larger numbers of young people are remaining in school past age 16, as well as enrolling in pre-school programs.

2. I am not able to report what led the individual companies to take this com-mom action, other than their common interest in developing the hydro-carbon resources of the Mackenzie River Delta. This happened at a time when the manpower barrel of exploration workers was being scraped clean. Turnover rates at Northern work sites among some classes of Southern Canadian workers were very high and it was this which led to very active programs to recruit native workers, not only in the Mackenzie Delta but as far east as Coppermine (Hobart and Kupfer, 1973). These conditions must have helped to influence this decision. It seems probable that political considerations played a role as well.
3. These benefits included extra holiday time to travel to and from the North, travel allowances, and subsidized housing. In addition, work rules and expectations were often relaxed, at least initially, for the Nortran trainees.
4. I have no data on the number of times that trainees were promoted over the head of their trainers. My information is that it did happen, but perhaps often in the context of transferring a trainee to a new crew in which he would receive further training.
5. Drilling rigs, compressor stations, and gas plants are all potentially dangerous situations, where a wrong move by a trainee could prove to be dangerous. Appropriate procedures for utilizing trainees have been devised to minimize the risk in these situations. However, the risk is probably heightened in the case of Native trainees because they do not have the "intuitive" understand-ing of machinery and mechanical equipment from boyhood experience found among southern whites and particularly among the "Saskatchewan farm boy" who is commonly identified as the ideal trainee. This increased risk of accidents was often verbalized by co-workers as a disadvantage of working with native trainees. Whether valid or not, this perception was the social reality.

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