Part VI. Human life.

Some general considerations.

The geographical distribution of the population.

It has been said that Labrador is a little world of its own, and there is some good reason for this idea.

According to the official census this little world comprised a population of 4716 in 1935 (222). The figure however is somewhat misleading, for during at least nine months of the year, Indian hunting nomads, the so-called *Canadian Indians* (p. 609), to the number of some 280 are at work in the southern parts of the forested areas. If this number is added to the population figure for the whole of Newfoundland-Labrador the density is 0.01 persons per 1 km². These figures are of course fictitious for it would never occur to anyone to settle down for instance in the Torngak Mountains. The inhabited area is mainly restricted to the more or less forested district and the total population figure distributed over these parts indicates an area of 46 km² for each individual; but even this figure lacks reality, for a considerable number of the people live outside the forested area.

In Fig. 210 is given the approximate geographical extension of the population mentioned in the statistical reports; a dot indicates five Eskimoes or whites, a cross indicates five Indians. As it is so difficult to localise the Indians and the Eskimoes the map must be regarded as merely schematic as regards the northern parts. The permanent habitations are always at the seashore and no dwellings have been set up out of sight of the high-tide boundary. More than half of the population are found to the south of lat. 54°; cf. the notes on the map.

The endemic groupings.

Still in our day Newfoundland-Labrador is a primeval wilderness. With the exception of the widely scattered camping-grounds of the interior and the few inhabited spots on the coast, there are very few indications that human beings live in the country. For seven or eight months of the year a belt of coastal ice

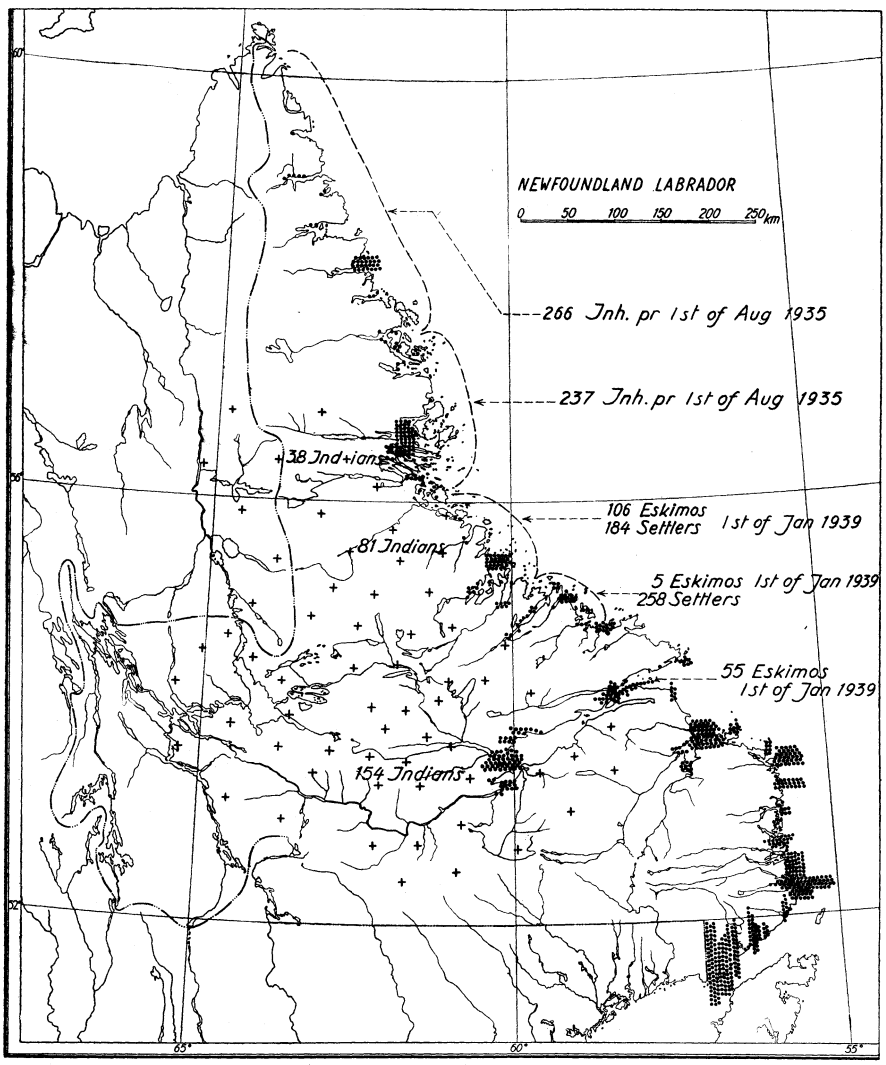

Fig. 210. Schematic sketch indicating the distribution of man in Newfoundland-Labrador according to the census of 1935 (cf. 222). A point indicates five white men or Eskimoes, a cross five Indians.

encloses the deserted land apparently almost completely separating it from the rest of the world. The people in this wilderness must then secure a livelihood from the resources of the country alone. But the land is barren and stingy; the people must strain their utmost even to exist, and this they can do only

if their way of living is in agreement with the resources of the country. But these vary from district to district. Moreover the annual rhythm of nature determines the possibilities of exploiting them. The result of this is that in time different types of population have become segregated, primitive societies all of which bear the marks of endemicity. Inversely these societies clearly show the natural presumptions for their rise and the conditions for their continued existence. They show us how small groups of people can manage to live in the world-wide, subarctic land-outskirts and therefore are of important ethnological interest. They really form a little world in themselves.

The transitional state of the population.

In the isolated milieu the life of these small societies has thus become set in forms determined by nature. For decades and centuries they have lived on the same lines. All fruitful impulses from the outer world have long been intuitively repulsed. The stock has also of late years remained unchanged in the main; the figures rising and falling slightly (141, 163—167, 222, 675 b, 676, 1122):

1857	1869	1874	1884	1891	1901	1911	1921	1935
1650	2150	2416	4211	4106	3947	3949	3774	4716

However, chiefly during the last hundred years stimulating impulses have found their way even to the most distant and most repulsive societies of the wilderness and contaminated them. The old societies in the country under consideration began to ferment and soon the traditional inhibitions to development were broken down one after the other; the development of the people entered upon new and unknown ways and it is still difficult to say whither they will lead if the people are left to themselves: deterioration? improvement? Labrador's people now stand at the cross-roads of good and evil.

It can be expected that the different groups will react differently to the new impulses because of the somewhat differently composed psychological structure and attitude to the tasks of life of the individuals. A considerable difference in this respect can be noticed between the three main ethnic groups of the population: the Eskimoes, the Indians and the White People. For this reason we will now consider these three elements separately. For historical reasons it is justifiable to study first the aboriginal inhabitants.

The aborigines.

The culture of primitive man is always rooted in natural conditions, and this is unusually clear in Labrador. We have for this purpose only to glance at the distribution of the ethnic groupings in the area under consideration in relation to the varying environments.

Farthest north lies a greatly cut up track of high mountains (cf. p. 330). From this mountain tundra area a small strip of forestless coastal tundra stretches southward along the coast towards Pinware Bay on the northern shore of the Straits of Belle Isle. Looked at from the sea this coastal tundra gives the peninsula such a poor appearance that one of the first men to sail these waters, the Frenchman JACQUES CARTIER in 1534, gave Labrador the opprobrious designation: 'the land that God gave to Cain'. With that was born the misleading conception — so difficult to eliminate — of the extreme barrenness of the whole of Labrador. The two tundra types occupy larger and larger areas of the country towards the north so that finally farthest away, beyond Ungava Bay, the forest only forms small strips on the valley bottoms of the great rivers and patches here and there in sheltered hollows.

Within the coastal tundra runs the endless taiga with its in parts nearly impenetrable, primeval woods of black spruce, its lakes, marshes, and heights with small bare summits. Cf. Fig. 156.

The two different habitats of Eskimoes and Indians.

The Eskimoes occupy their natural home in the bleak and rockbound coastal tundra and the neighbouring strips of wood, in the islands, the fiords, and the ocean shores with their thundering surf, their drift-ice and icebergs in the summer, and their fringe of ice where the seals sport in winter. From time immemorial the slanting-eyed 'huskies' have sat there in their igloos and gorged themselves upon seal flesh; see Fig. 211.

The Indians again harbour in the endless, soughing forest lands with their glittering labyrinths of lakes and network of rivers, their dim toned mountains and hills, the mirelands and the scattered patches of 'land without trees' as the tundra is called by the aborigines. In the great forests and on the bare crests in the woods the sharp-eyed Indian hunter is on the look-out for game; see Fig. 212.

The feud between Eskimoes and Indians.

It must not however be thought that the natural limits have been in any way respected as a fixed separation between the spheres of interests of the two races. The Indians have a tradition that when *Tcè mentu*, the Great Spirit, (a conception which the Indians probably incorporated in their spiritual ideas after the arrival of the Catholic Mission), wished to give people a clear sign of what is right in Labrador he created the two different natural areas: the forest and the coastal tundra. He decided then that all the forest land should belong to the Indians, while the Eskimoes should keep out on the barren tundra strips along the coast. But the great spirit of the Eskimoes, *tornarsuk*, did not speak the same language; he told the Eskimoes that they could take what they considered they needed. For this reason it has come about that also in these endless wildernesses the boundaries were regulated in accordance with the interests of the stronger. Every attempt made by the Eskimo to force their way into the Indians' hunting-ground in the taiga was considered a grave violation of a holy commandment which demanded restitution, started feelings of revenge in the Indians which had their natural consequences among members of the other race. This tradition is probably artificial and scarcely older than the last Eskimo invasion (see farther on), but in any case it throws light upon a condition which at first glance is astonishing, that even in these deserted places where mankind is a rarity, racial enmity to the death has prevailed for a long time between the Indian and the Eskimo, an animal, inherent hate, originating from a primitive instinct just as that between the wolf and the lynx in the same country; wherever an Indian met an Eskimo the Great Spirit bade the one kill the other.

The spear many a time decided where the boundary should be, and in the course of time streams of blood have flowed here. When ROGER CURTIS in 1772—73 travelled along the Atlantic coast he was struck by the irony of the fact that the comparatively few tribes living there should be so set upon exterminating each other (196); they were at perpetual war with each other. Between the Mountaineers and the Esquimaux there subsists an unconquerable aversion; the Esquimaux live always upon the sea-shores, from their dread of the Mountaineers. Conditions corresponded to those of our day in northern Canada where it is said that a redskin does not dare to enter the *huskies'*, i.e. the Eskimo's land. At the beginning of the 19th century the Indians and the Eskimoes south of Hopedale sometimes meet, reports KOHLMEISTER (532), but as the Hopedale Eskimo seek to cultivate their friendship, quarrels and bloodshed never occur. In Ungava, on the other hand, though they often exchange tokens of friendship they were apt to give way to their natural jealousies, and provocations being aggravated their meetings terminated in murder. The

Eskimoes were much afraid of the Indians, who are a more nimble and active race. When Hudson's Bay Company's factory Fort Chimo was set up in 1831 it was considered advisable to surround the post with a defensive palisade to prevent surprise if the clients who met there should begin to fight, as might be expected at any minute seeing that war had so recently ceased and the feelings of hate had not yet died away (963).

Pacification has proceeded very slowly. The open war between the Indians and the Eskimo ceased near the Atlantic coast for a reason which at first

Fig 211. The land of the Eskimoes. Looking over Paul Island in the Nain archipelago. In the background is the open ocean, in the foreground rocky islands are seen with some small patches of black spruce forest, mostly only brushwood, in valleys and sheltered clefts. Aerophoto the FORBES-GRENFELL EXPEDITION, 1931.

seems rather surprising. The practical British traders succeeded in gradually bringing about a kind of peace, at least on the business premises. As fighting was injurious to the commercial interests the managers at the Hudson's Bay Company's posts made the enemies understand that the posts would be withdrawn and the natives lose the advantages the trade gave them if they did not make peace. And this the latter soon grasped, finding it better to

catch fur-bearing animals and exchange their skins for all kinds of useful products than constantly to destroy their possessions and their families by continuing the blood feuds. Further the Indians probably realized that the Eskimo, if necessary, could now depend upon the moral support of the white trappers who had married Eskimo women; this was a handicap for the Indians.

The Moravian Mission also worked hard to create peace and have earned the thanks of many by modifying the racial hate of the Eskimoes for the Indians. The first most remarkable sign of appeasement between the rival parties

Fig. 212. The land of the Indians. Looking south-east over the wilderness of forest on the southern part of the Labrador Lake Plateau. Aerophoto the author, Aug. 2nd 1937.

occurred as far as is known in 1843 when a starving band of Montagnais appeared at Hopedale. Some decades earlier the Eskimoes had completely exterminated them, but now they received them with friendliness, took them into their huts and supplied them with food (325). In 1855—60 the Indians suffered terribly from lack of food. Many parties of them were brought by the Eskimoes to the Mission Stations where they were helped. On an other occasion Indians rescued a group of Eskimoes, who having been unsuccessful in their salmon-fishing, were dying of starvation (325).

However, still in our days certain reflexes from the old fighting period are visible in the distant parts. FLAHERTY for example says that *Adlit*, the

Indian, even to this day is dreaded by the Eskimo in the country north-west from Ungava Bay. HUTTON tells that Eskimoes still in his day, at the beginning of our century, were scared at the word 'Indian'; when he once travelled southward from Okkak his drivers asked him in awestruck voices: 'Shall we see the Allat (= Indians) (476)?

It should be specially remembered that the white men have also brought a blessing to these primitive peoples, for it was their common sense which stopped the meaningless feuds in Labrador.

At the present time the Eskimoes and the Indians live side by side in perfect peace. There is, however, no attraction between the both races and mostly no open intercourse. The Indians say that they cannot bear the smell of the Eskimo; on the other hand the Indians themselves are so impregnated with the smell of the camping fires that the Eskimoes cannot bear them! Yet, the Indians do sometimes take a steam bath, whereas an Eskimo never in his life time gets rid of his bodily dirt knowingly and willingly. Yet they do not love each other. It is said that they scarcely ever intermarry. The Rev. PAUL HETTASCH, the Moravian missionary, which lived in the country for fourty years told me that he knew of only one mixed marriage, namely the parents of EDWARD RICH whose father was a Naskaupee Indian and his mother an Eskimo; the Riches now form a kind of clan which usually lives apart from the others. On the other hand the aboriginal women are not unwilling to marry the white men.

Their very way of living, their thirst for battle and their dislike of each other show that the aborigenes have had a vague apprehension of their ethnological differences and behaved as civilized people are in the habit of doing in the present period of nationalism. Their somatic characters emphasize the differences.

Anthropometrical characteristics of Eskimoes and Indians

Thanks to different measurements dating back to 1880 and especially to HALLOWELL's pioneer study of 1929 and the measurements secured by W. D. STRONG during the Rawson-MacMillan Subarctic Expedition of Field Museum in 1927—28 among the Eskimo and a small group of Indians living on the north-east coast of Labrador, relatively reliable knowledge of the *living* aborigines is available (cf. especially 86 a, 823 a, 694 a, 152, 230, 231, 752, 897 a, 982, 963, 965, 80a, 906).

Anthropometric characteristics of the Newfoundland-Labrador Aborigines:

	Eskimoes male	Eskimoes female	Indians male	Indians female
Stature:				
	(58) 158.3 [St]	(78) 148.3 [St]	(10) 164.6 [St]	(7) 153.3 [St]
	(11) 157.7 [L, So, P, V]	(10) 149.7 [L, So, P, V]	(41) 166.2 [H]	(29) 154.6 [H]
	(37) 157.0 [D]	(22) 150.5 [D]		
Head Length in mm:				
	(58) 192.17 [St]	(79) 185.04 [St]	(11) 189.4 [St]	(7) 184.1 [St]
	(37) 192.89 [L, So, P, V]	(21) 189.48 [L, So, P, V]	(67) 194.5 [H]	(54) 187.3 [H]
	(11) 191.2 [D]	(10) 190.2 [D]		
Head Breadth mm:				
	(58) 148.31 [St]	(79) 142.26 [St]	(11) 144.1 [St]	(7) 144.0 [St]
	(37) 151.49 [L, So, P, V]	(21) 143.72 [L, So, P, V]	(67) 156.8 [H]	(54) 151.7 [H]
	(11) 147.6 [D]	(10) 141.8 [D]		
Cephalic Index:				
	(58) 77.28 [St]	(79) 76.94 [St]	(11) 76.1 [St]	(7) 78.2 [St]
	(37) 78.61 [L, So, P, V]	(21) 75.88 [L, So, P, V]	(74) 80.60 [H]	(58) 81.10 [H]
	(11) 77.0 [D]	(10) 74.5 [D]	(79) 81.43 [B]	
Cephalo-Facial Index:				
	(58) 95.66 [St]	(79) 93.78 [St]	(11) 98.6 [St]	(7) 93.2 [St]
	(37) 95.77 [L, So, P, V]	(21) 94.35 [L, So, P, V]	(67) 94.0 [H]	(54) 92.50 [H]
	(11) 96.3 [D]	(10) 96.3 [D]		
Nasal Index:				
	(58) 66.98 [St]	(79) 62.54 [St]	(10) 68.9 [St]	(7) 68.6 [St]
	(37) 73.81 [L, So, P, V]	(22) 72.77 [L, So, P, V]	(44) 73.0 [H]	(29) 74.8 [H]
	(10) 64.1 [D]	(4) 62.4 [D]		
Skin Color (v. LUSCHAN scale):				
	(52) 3—9 30.8 % [St]	(78) 3—9 2.6 % [St]		
	10—13 63.5 % »	10—13 92.3 % »		
	14—17 5.7 % »	14—17 5.1 % »		
Skin Color			(10) 3—9 0 % [St]	(7) 0 % [St]
			10—13 50 % »	57.1 % »
			14—17 50 % »	42.9 % »
			(53) 3—9 11.3 % [H]	(35) 2.8 % [H]
			10—13 62.3 % »	68.6 % »
			14—17 26.4 % »	28.6 % »

The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of measured individuals.

Abreviations: D = Duckworth (230, 231), H = Hallowell (394), L = Lee (see 152), P = Pittard (752), So = Sornberger (897 a), St = Strong (897 a), V = Virchow (982).

In v. Luschan's scale 1—2 signifies light; 3—9 medium, 10—13 dark, 14 and all thereafter still darker.

As these measurements were collected from only a few individuals they are not fully reliable scientifically, for a few large families may easily have a greater influence on the average values than they really should have. Yet the above figures and general experience go to show that the Eskimo are not so tall as the whites and the Indians. The Eskimoes are somewhat more dolicocephalic than the Indians. Both are coloured but the complexion of the Indian is always darker. In general it is not difficult to know at first glance whether one is dealing with an Eskimo, Fig. 213, or an Indian, Fig. 214. Cf. (230, 231, 262 a, 394, 651 a, 694 a, 752, 823 a, 829 a, 849, 897 a—897 c, 910, 982, 1050).

Fig. 213. The Labrador Eskimo type. Photo the author at Hebron, July 1937.

CHANGE OF THE ESKIMO TYPE.

It is an interesting fact that a change must have occurred in the Eskimo type (80 a). The bearers of the old Thule culture (see later on) at Naujan on Repulse Bay had a height of 161—162 cm and a cranial index of 72.5 (262 a), whereas this index at Southampton Island was found to be 74.2; evidently the material from this latter place is too slender either for reliable calculations or for chronological determinations (80 a). The average index of 21 skulls from old graves is put at 71.8, whereas of 12 skulls from more recent graves is 72.6 (978 a). This indicates that the old Eskimoes of the eastern area (including perhaps Labrador) were decidedly dolichocranic.

The cause of the differences between past and present indices is uncertain. Variations often come about with hygienic or economic variations. STEWART (897 a) attributes the change in head shape with a possible decrease in stature to a change in diet. There is a growing body of evidence from other racial groups showing that both these characteristics are rather easily changed when environment, and especially nutrition, is altered. KROGMAN (1938), who summarized the literature on this subject, says that attention must be paid to a factor or a set of factors that is as difficult to evaluate as it is to describe: the environment, whatever connotation this term may have. The combined effects of disease and under-nourishment may result in a stunting of the presumably 'racial' growth pattern. Here many important problems present themselves.