



## INDIAN VILLAGE

**A**CROSS Sandy Bay from Island Falls, lies the "Indian Village." Here dwell some 260 natives, embodying in their settlement a strange and fascinating mixture of the primitive and the modern. They have adopted many of the trappings of our 20th century civilization, yet they retain much of the character and philosophy of their ancient forbears—the philosophy that says, "Just live for today—don't

worry about tomorrow." This idea colors their mode of living and influences their character to a great extent, as we shall see later on.

Practically the only white men in the village are the Catholic priest, the school teacher, and the trader. It is these three men who exert the strongest influence on the inhabitants, for naturally enough the church, the school and the store are the



*The Indian Village.*



*The trading-post.*

main centres of the community. Let us take a quick glance at the store first.

From a cursory look about the trading post can be gleaned a good bit of information about the Indian. Noticeable is the preponderance of gayly colored prints, and a look at the women ambling along the village paths explains why. Their love of bright hues seems to be an integral part of their nature. Another interesting "clue" is the quantity of rubbers to be seen in the store, but no shoes. An Indian may be dressed "fit to kill" in a suit of modern clothes, yet almost invariably his feet will be shod in beaded moccasins, topped with rubbers. Each family in the village visits the store at least once daily, for they take literally their "live for the present" policy and buy only enough provisions for one meal or one day at a time. One of the most intelligent of the inhabitants, who is a steady worker at the Island Falls power

plant, claims that it would be useless for him to buy a week's supply of any commodity, for while he was away at work his wife would give it all away to friends and neighbors! If any one person has an abundance of food on hand, the rest take it for granted that it is to be shared among them.

The most imposing building in the village is the Catholic church, with its shining aluminum painted steeple. This is the domain of Father Landry, the progressive hard working young French Canadian priest from Montreal. As well as taking care of their spiritual needs, the Father co-operates with the teacher in organizing their social activities, and in doing much of the medical work. The Indians are proud of their church, attending services faithfully. Some sing in the choir, and no less than four can play the organ, quite a feat considering they do it all by ear. One of

*The little red school-house.*



*Paul Seboldski, the schoolmaster.*





Louis



The teacherage.



Sarah Jane.



The priest in his parka.



The little white church.

the main social activities organized by Father Landry is "Bingo," which is held in the school on Saturday nights and is a great favorite with the villagers.

In the school-house, 19-year-old Paul Sebolski molds the minds of nearly fifty Indian youngsters, ranging in age from 6 to 15. A conscientious lad, he is striving hard to adapt the irregularity of the Indian mode of life to the routine of school. Realizing that the first step is to secure co-operation in the homes, he has started night classes in adult education for the parents. He has found that while his young pupils may take longer to grasp an idea than white children, once they do learn something they forget less quickly. They have good memories and great imaginations. They can be taught sportsmanship easily, and are quite obedient, as is evidenced by the fact that he has strapped only one child in two years.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of young and old alike is their passionate love of music. At school, there is a short singing period each morning, to which the children look forward eagerly. There is great disappointment if, for disciplinary reasons, the teacher threatens to cancel it. He trains them annually for a Christmas concert and claims they sing our tradi-



The wedding of Angus Bear. In the centre are the happy bride and groom, flanked by their attendants

Father Landry with a visiting priest, and some members of his flock.

The cemetery. The fences around the graves are painted in various combinations of colors, and are made by the family of the bereaved.





Bill Morin and family in front of their two-story home.



Alex Morin and family.

tional carols beautifully. The Indians have their own native songs, but also like our hymns and lullabies. Some families have radios — their favorite programs feature cowboy music, "Wilf Carter" being their particular hero. A number of households have gramophones and they often order records that catch their fancy when they hear them on the air. Though they hold dances only half a dozen times a year, they are fond of "tripping the light fantastic," their specialty being the Red River Jig, and the square dance. Their peculiar rhythm, once seen and heard, is hard to forget. Their musicians are surprisingly good, specializing in the violin and guitar. Weddings are always occasions for big celebrations — then the music and dancing continues far on into the night and even the next day.

While on the subject of celebrations, it is an interesting fact that July 1st for the Indian village is as big a day as it is for the people of Flin Flon. They have a variety of sporting events — playing ball is their favorite sport — ending up with a big dance in the evening. And they eat ice cream — by the gallon!

All the villagers have forsaken the traditional tent and wigwam of their ancestors for log or clay houses. Furniture in the average home is sparse, consisting usually of a table, chairs, stove, and one bed or more. The two-story home of Bill Morin is perhaps the "mansion" of the village. Exceedingly neat and clean, it is furnished in modernistic style, with, for example, a new white enamel range, and a streamlined dinette suite. On the wall are pinned purchase certificates to show that Bill has bought bonds in every Victory Loan, something of which he can well be proud. The beds are covered with beautifully patterned quilts, made by Mrs. Morin, and the elaborately embroidered white pillow-cases are also her handiwork.



Mrs. Morin doing some of her exquisite needle-work.

The women of the village are traditionally clever with their hands. Many do skillful work on moccasins, gloves and parkas. They tan the skin themselves, and often use their own dyes. In the realm of needlework, the mixture of old and new is seen once again, for many have sewing machines to assist them in the age-old craft. However, it is their Indian patience that enables them to do the fine work they accomplish.

The village has a history of course — one that is linked up with the Company, for it wasn't until 1928 and 1929, when the Island Falls plant was under construction, that our Indians began to settle "across the bay." Some were hired for labor and construction work, and henceforth the set-



Mrs. Jean Marie Bear proudly displays her twins.



Mrs. Louis Morin, who has a long and interesting past.



Eli McDonald, one of the "oldest inhabitants."

tlement, like Topsy, "just grew." From Pelican Narrows and Cumberland House they came, and from Pukatawagan — the Bears, the Morins, the McDonalds and the McCallums. There were eight families of Bears alone, and ten of Morins, most of whom now have families of their own. Their origin and tongue is Cree, a language that only within the last few years has been put into written form. The hymn-books in their little church are now printed in Cree.

#### GOD SAVE THE KING

ENGLISH

God save our gracious King,  
Long live our noble King,  
God save the King.  
Send him victorious,  
Happy and glorious,

Long to reign over us,  
God save the King.

CREE

Natotamawatak  
Ka tipeyitchiket  
Tchi wi-miyat  
Kokomaminawa  
Tchi paskiyakeyit  
Pitane Kakike  
Miyo-payit!

We take an especial interest in this, the "Indian village," because it is the home of some 27 men who work for the Company at Island Falls. (The rest of the inhabitants gain their livelihood by hunting, trapping and fishing). Many Indians were used at the Falls during construction days, when they performed such essential tasks as mail running and canoe work. The first

Indian workmen levelling up dam at Rocky Falls.





*More of our Indian employees at work.*

Indian employed was Louis Morin, a very fine old man, whose uncle was a veteran of the Riel Rebellion. His widow, whose picture appears on these pages, still resides in the village. Quite a number of the men have fine service records with the Company, as witness Etienne McDonald's enviable claim to eight years' work without a day missed. Etienne, Bill Morin, and Moise Bear, Sr., can all qualify for our Old Timers' page. Eight chaps have worked long enough to have fourteen days' vacation with pay coming to them. Mr. Davis, the superintendent of the power plant, says that for the most part he finds his Indian labor very satisfactory, especially in regard to bull gang work. He has found that they respond particularly well to the

competitive idea. Several have become skilled painters and carpenters, while four can now climb as linemen.

The village has plans of expansion for the future. Next year a new, two-room school is to be built, as well as a small but well equipped hospital, and perhaps a new church, as the present one is overcrowded. As the youth become educated more and more in the ways of the modern world, other improvements will doubtless take place, and changes for the better occur. But even as things stand today, it may be that the Indians, with their happy-go-lucky philosophy of "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" are a good deal more content than we, the "enlightened" white man.

