

A REVIEW OF THE JAMES BAY CREE INCOME SECURITY AND  
TRAPPERS SUPPORT PROGRAMS UNDER THE JAMES BAY  
AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT

A Report for the Dene-Metis Negotiations Secretariat

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A REVIEW OF THE JAMES BAY CREE INCOME SECURITY AND  
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By Harvey A. Feit

MANDATE: To critically review all aspects of the James Bay Income Security Program and the Cree Trappers Association Programs, with respect to objectives, structure, implementation, control and funding, and with particular attention to shortcomings and possible improvements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMS

A variety of objectives were explicitly or implicitly sought by those involved in the negotiation and implementation of the Income Security (ISP) and Cree Trappers Association (CTA) Programs. The specific objectives and goals of other indigenous peoples would determine whether or not Cree-type programs, designed with these objectives in mind, would be appropriate, or would require substantial modification, or a fundamentally different development in other contexts. Among the Cree objectives are:

- To enhance Cree hunting culture and activities, and help assure their future continuance;
- To provide the cash incomes required by hunters, trappers and fishermen in order to pursue their present and future activities, incomes which were not otherwise available;
- To help insulate the hunting economy from changes in market conditions, (including the impacts of changes in prices paid for the commercial products of the hunters, the impact of the cost of inflation on the goods and services they must purchase on the cash market, and changes in the availability of alternative sources of cash incomes such as jobs and government assistance payments);
- To enhance hunters' confidence in the future of hunting by creating more stable conditions for the pursuit of hunting, particularly economic conditions;
- To provide the additional cash resources in a form which left recipients free to dispose of incomes as they determined, and thereby to enhance the ability of the hunters to modify and adapt their practices to changing opportunities and constraints;
- To encourage a continuing and substantial production of bush

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foods and other products;

- To maintain a relative balance between the hunting and cash sectors of the Cree community economies partially by maintaining and increasing the value and levels of bush production, so they parallel the growth in the employment, business, administration sector.

- To assure that the hunting economy continues to have its traditional potential to expand and absorb those who are unable to find employment, especially during periods of economic downturn;

- To reverse the negative social and environmental impacts of social aid and other transfer payments programs, and especially to reunite kin groups and to enhance the effectiveness of traditional territorial and conservation systems;

- To establish Cree control or joint Cree-government control over the programs to be established;

- To aid hunters to maintain activities in the face of those impacts of large-scale industrial developments which are occurring in the region;

- To provide a direct cash benefit to a key sector of beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA);

- To achieve the above in a form which would be relatively acceptable to governments, and particularly which would not add directly to the global cash sums which would be publicly announced at the conclusion of the JBNQA negotiations.

As the above list indicates, the ISP and CTA provisions were primarily concerned with the economic aspects of the maintenance of the hunting sector, although social, environmental and political considerations inevitably played a crucial role in the consideration of the programs. Nevertheless, it was primarily in the Hunting, Trapping and Fishing regime that considerations of the cultural, biological and political aspects of wildlife resource use and management were considered. And, it was primarily in the Environmental and Social Impact Review Regime that the environmental impacts of development activities were considered. And, it was primarily in the provisions for a Cree School Board that the educational and cultural aspects of Cree society were considered.

In this sense, ISP and CTA can only be thought of as part of a wider set of programs rights and provisions which the Cree sought in other aspects of the JBNQA. There would be no use having the economic means to hunt if the basic rights of access to the

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resources were not assured, or if the physical survival of wild-life resources was not possible, or if enculturation through an alien educational system were such that the next generation would not wish to share the values, the knowledge, and the spiritual experience created in the pursuit of hunting.

Thus while this review focuses on the ISP and CTA programs, and therefore necessarily devotes more attention to economic considerations than to others, it is emphasized that the wider environmental, cultural, religious and legal/political context for hunting must also be considered.

### OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE AND PROVISIONS FOR ISP

#### The Structure of ISP: Eligibility Criteria

At least six conditions were essential to the form ISP took during negotiations: the social fabric and contemporary Cree practice of hunting were intact and did not have to be rebuilt; these practices included means for the general management and conservation of wildlife; hunting involved extensive absences from settlements; the sector of the population which hunted intensively organized its annual cycle, including other activities, such as employment, around hunting; shifting back and forth between intensive hunting and employment was common but people tended to emphasize one or the other for several years at a time; and the people who hunted intensively required substantial cash incomes to hunt with security and efficiency. The significance of these conditions will be readily apparent from a description of the conditions for eligibility and the formula for calculation of benefits.

Eligibility to the ISP is based on a beneficiary unit, defined as being either an adult individual or a family of one adult with consort and/or one or more dependents. Consorts and dependents are defined according to Cree traditions. The age of adulthood is 18 years, but there is no age limit on retirement, which is self-defined. The beneficiary unit so defined coincides with the only social grouping in contemporary Cree society which generally stays together throughout the year and over the course of years. It is also the social unit which extensively shares all goods, including cash, purchased items, and subsistence produce. While sharing and coordination are also extensive in larger social units, the actual composition of larger units typically varies significantly from season to season and year to year. The small scale of this social unit reflects: a traditional emphasis on adult autonomy in Cree culture; long-term pressures toward individualization in the interaction with a capitalist economy and nation state; an administrative need to identify relatively stable social units.

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When the ISP was being designed, it was not only adapted to the then existing social units; the Cree also decided that it should provide incentives that would directly counteract the economic pressures toward families splitting and only men going to the bush. The eligibility and the payments structures were therefore designed to reflect this social objective as well.

There are two general criteria, and five exceptional and time limited criteria, for determining the eligibility of potential beneficiary units to the ISP. The first general criteria is based on the amount of time devoted to harvesting and related activities. Single individuals and families, the heads of which spend more days in a given year in harvesting and related activities than they spend in salaried wage employment are eligible to be ISP beneficiaries for the next year. However, they must spend at least 120 days in harvesting and related activities, of which at least 90 are spent away from the settlements. Harvesting activities are defined as all activities involved in the exercise of hunting, fishing and trapping rights as established by the JBNQA, and cover all traditional hunting, trapping and gathering activities. Related activities are defined as women's and men's activities associated with the former, including travel, travel preparations, camp and household maintenance, education of the young, food preparation, equipment construction and repair, pelt preparation, the making of clothing, handicrafts, etc. In the calculation of eligibility, days spent guiding, outfitting, or commercial fishing, and days spent in receipt of unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation for injuries, and of manpower training allowances are not counted as either harvesting and related activities, nor as salaried or wage employment. Almost all beneficiaries establish their regular eligibility under this criteria.

A second general criteria provides eligibility for those who derive the greater part of earnings from harvesting and related activities. Under the present economic conditions, the latter group is effectively a subset of those meeting the first criteria.

Five exceptional criteria provide continued eligibility for up to two future years for individuals, or heads of families and their families, who are already on the program but who, due to specified special circumstances, fail to meet either of the regular criteria for eligibility for a coming year. The failure may be due to: injuries resulting from accidents during harvesting, related activities or seasonal employment, or to other illness-induced disabilities; a voluntary decrease in harvesting activities in order to permit animal populations to increase to a harvestable level, i.e., Cree wildlife conservation practices;

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involvement in an upgrading, training, or other self-improvement program; or, temporary employment on a community improvement program or project. It should be noted that these exceptional provisions provide for continued eligibility to ISP, but they do not change the basis for calculating the actual benefits to be paid to the beneficiaries, to be described below. The key reason for these special provisions was to prevent beneficiaries from losing program eligibility due to any of these special circumstances.

ISP eligibility is established by the actual hunting and related activities of the potential beneficiaries, and not simply by stated intention. As a result, eligibility for one year is determined by activities in the previous year. The actual time that must be spent hunting is not unreasonable, given Cree hunting practices, but the fact that performance must be demonstrated to gain admission, is strict.

An exception was made for the first year of ISP operation because it was recognized that many Cree people had abandoned intensive hunting in the 1960s and early 1970s as a result of economic conditions and there was therefore a need for special admissions criteria to start up full participation in the first year. Potential beneficiaries were therefore given eligibility for the first year of ISP if their local band council declared they had practiced harvesting as a way of life, or if they declared an intention to do so during the first year of the program. After the initial enrollment, these criteria no longer applied.

### **The Structure of ISP: Calculation of Benefits**

The determination of the benefits payable to an eligible beneficiary is based on two calculations. The first is a per diem payment made to an individual or a head of family and to the consort of family head, for every day the greater part of the daylight hours of which is spent outside a permanent settlement in the pursuit of harvesting or related activities. The payment is made for single days spent outside the settlement even though the beneficiary returns in the evening, and it is made for each and every day during stays in isolated bush camps.

The actual amounts paid each year are indexed to the cost of living, and in 1982-83 they amounted to \$23.64 per adult individual, or per head and per consort. The minimum number of days that can be paid to an individual or head of the family is in effect 90, and the program establishes a limit of 240 paid days per recipient. An individual beneficiary would therefore receive between \$2127.60 and \$5673.60, and a family in which the consort accompanied the head would receive between \$4255.20 and \$11,347.20. In fact the average number of days payable per bene-

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ficiary unit was 301 during 1982-83, so the average per diem payment per beneficiary unit (including individuals and families) was \$8464.

The per diem payments are the largest portion of the total payments under ISP, accounting for over 75 percent of all payouts. This makes clear why ISP is not a classical guaranteed income scheme, its main payment is based on performance and not simply guaranteed on the basis of income and family size. In some ways it may be better described as a cash support for performance of harvesting and related activities. Such support is needed because the activities are highly productive, in terms of the production of food, education, housing, clothing, equipment, medicines, heating, etc., but they do not produce sufficient income in the form of cash to permit full participation by those who want to and can be fully employed in such activities.

The program is often justified in government literature because it has reduced welfare payments, and at the same time increased productive employment. It should be noted though that the employment it creates is effectively outside the labour market.

The second calculation of ISP benefits more closely approximates a guaranteed income program. A basic amount is calculated from which 40% of incomes are deducted, and the balance, if any, is paid to the beneficiary in addition to the per diem amount. The basic amount is based on the size of the family. It was, during 1982-83, the total of: \$2002 each for adult, a head or a consort; \$802 for each dependent child in a family; plus \$802 for each family. From these amounts, 40 percent of all income is deducted, except certain universal transfer payments, and except the first approximately \$502 of fur sales for each adult. Included in the income, and counting towards the 40 percent reduction of the basic amount is the per diem payment.

The guaranteed minimum amounts were intended to make substantial increases to the per diem payments received by the numerous large families (approximately ten percent of bi-parental beneficiary families had seven or more children), and to small families and individuals who spend near the minimum amounts of time in the bush, and who therefore have relatively low per diem payments. The guaranteed amounts therefore supplement the payments to families with high expenses, and they provide a supplement to those individuals and young, small families who may have recently entered the program by just meeting the minimum time criteria. For these new beneficiaries, it was intended to provide a bridge from part-time work or welfare to program benefits, on the assumption that once on the program they would have an incentive to increase participation in harvesting, and therefore their per diem payments.

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Once on the program the structure of the per diem benefits encourages beneficiaries to increase the number of days they spend in harvesting and related activities. It should be noted that payments are not directly linked to actual kills of animals, but to the pursuit of the whole range of bush activities. The program does not therefore directly require or encourage increases in wildlife harvests, although it does encourage more time be spent in the bush. The Cree system of wildlife management was taken into account in designing the program in the expectation that increased time would not be directly linked to increased harvest; that is, that regulation by the socially recognized hunting leaders would occur. It was also assumed that the bush time would be used in a wide range of productive activities in addition to food and fur production.

ISP payments are made four times a year, on or about September 1, January 2, April 1, and after the end of the program year, in July. There is a provision that beneficiaries planning to spend all winter in the bush may receive half the annual payment in September and no January payment.

ISP benefits are based on beneficiaries' estimates of their activities during the coming year. It was deemed essential that while eligibility was based on past performance, payments should not be based on activities of the previous year, but on current year activities, so they could respond to current needs. This requires that anticipated activities be reported in July each year, and that actual performance be monitored and benefits calculations updated during the year, as possible, to try to avoid over-payments. Over-payments in the first or second quarterly cheques result in reductions to subsequent payments in the current or the next year. While this system still seems the best available, it has been found in practice that over-payment and subsequent reductions are relatively frequent, given the contingencies of hunting patterns, and reduction of subsequent payments often causes further disruptions to hunters' plans.

The total benefits paid during 1982-83 amounted to \$9,496,399. It is difficult to compare this with welfare payments, but eligibility for welfare would probably amount to at most sixty percent of what beneficiaries receive from ISP for one year. However, because of the time spent in the bush, few hunting beneficiaries would get welfare all year, so ISP probably provides two or three times what beneficiaries would get from welfare. The relationship of ISP benefits to welfare benefits also varies with beneficiary unit composition, and with changes in welfare system payment structures. In general ISP is significantly more generous for all units except mature single adults, who may actually receive more cash on welfare than on ISP. There



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is a provision that ISP benefits structures can be revised if changes in welfare structures or levels make ISP benefits unattractive or insufficient to meet ISP objectives.

Beneficiaries cannot combine benefits from welfare programs and ISP, but they can receive certain other transfer payment program benefits of general application. In addition, the beneficiaries retain other earned income.

It was estimated that beneficiary units had total cash incomes of \$10,893 in 1982-83. To evaluate the standard of living this would provide, the value of domestic production in kind would have to be added, especially food, but also housing, equipment, clothing, medicine and heating. While no detailed evaluation of those items has been made, a rough estimate of their 1976-77 value made by the GCCQ in 1977 totalled some \$9978 in 1982-83 dollars, for a total annual income in cash and kind of roughly \$21,000.

Against the total income, however, one must deduct the costs of producing that income, especially the costs of hunting. These have been similarly estimated with data from the pre-1975 period at \$6982 per adult hunter per year in 1982-83 dollars. However, the mean number of days spent in hunting and related activities has increased since 1975, adding to expenses, and there have also been additional rises in the costs of the equipment and transportation used. ISP payments are therefore probably modest in relation to the actual cost of hunting.

Furthermore, it is not clear how this standard of living valuation in dollars and cents is related to the Cree's own standard of evaluation. These figures should therefore be interpreted with care.

### **The Structure of ISP: Legal and Administrative Framework**

The costs of ISP, both program benefits costs and administrative costs are paid for by Quebec under the terms of the JBNQA. With certain specific exceptions, changes to ISP require the approval and consent of both the Cree and the government. This is especially important because recent studies of general welfare systems have shown that program and policy changes tend to be systematically related over decades to the need to support unemployable labour during recessions, and to bring labour back into the market during boom cycles. A program designed to support subsistence producers working largely outside the market must, of course, be isolated from state control motivated by these and other considerations.

Unlike most welfare recipients, the beneficiaries of ISP have the

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right to benefits so long as they meet the fixed criteria for eligibility, and they have a right to specific amounts which are based on fixed criteria. And they can appeal or take legal action if these rights are violated.

ISP is not administered by the government that funds it, but by a separate corporate entity, the Cree Hunters and Trappers Income Security Board, comprised equally of Quebec and Cree appointees, with a rotating chairmanship. The board hires and employs its own staff, although those hired may be civil servants if the board so decides. The obligation of Quebec is to transfer the funds needed each year to the accounts of the ISP Board. In practice, the board members and the staff are either closely associated with the CRA or with the Quebec government. The board is not bound by the full range of government administrative norms, and it is given considerable authority to implement, and where necessary, interpret and review, the program and its operations, consistent with the legislation and the agreement.

The Board operates out of a head office in Quebec City, but it must also maintain staff and offices in each Cree community to assure access of the beneficiaries to the administrators of the program. Thus it is a program that, although funded by government, is significantly independent of government policy and politics, it is jointly controlled and administered by the government and the representatives of the beneficiary population; and it legally encodes the specific rights of the individual beneficiaries. ISP could be used to accomplish its objectives only because it was integrated in the JBNQA. The effectiveness of cash payment to hunters depended on them having a right to hunt that could not be removed at the initiative of governments.

The general effectiveness of ISP payments also depends on the availability of the goods, services and infrastructures necessary to make effective use of the funds available to hunters. This is the role of the CTA, and also of the LaGrande Remedial Works Corporation (SOTRAC), within the framework of the agreement. These organizations, individually and jointly can provide: infrastructures (including access routes, improved bush camps, and bush communication systems), and needed goods and services (including fur sales cooperatives, bulk purchasing and distribution facilities, bush pick-up and delivery facilities, airplane dispatching services, and wildlife and harvest monitoring services). SOTRAC is funded by the hydro-electric development corporation, the CTA is funded by joint contributions from the governments of Quebec and Canada and from the Cree themselves.

Without these other provisions of the JBNQA, ISP could not contribute effectively to reduce the dependency of the Cree hunter on world economic conditions and government welfare policies.

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Even with these other provisions, it clearly can only reduce and not eliminate such dependencies.

### SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF ISP AND CTA

A few notes may be in order before presenting a discussion of the impacts of the programs. Information on the impacts which the programs have had come from three types of sources: statements by Cree beneficiaries or by Cree community leaders; statistical data provided by the agencies administering the programs; and data collected in the communities by researchers. The summary of program impacts listed below is derived from a review of all the data available to me from each of these sources, and I have therefore drawn freely on the work of various Cree elders and leaders, of various program administrators, and of various researchers. As a result, not all would agree with everything reported here. And, I have chosen to emphasize those features which I think are important for those considering similar types of programs. Finally, I have generally not quoted to actual data which support each of these conclusions, although where it seemed useful to do so I have.

1. ISP has increased the the number of Cree people who make hunting their main activity by about one-third. As indicated above, for the first year of operation of ISP there was a provision that people who had not been hunting intensively during the previous years could still register for ISP, if they declared an intention to hunt intensively. For the first full year of ISP (1976-1977): 717 beneficiary units registered because they had been practicing hunting intensively and had met the regular criteria for admission to ISP; and 304 beneficiary units registered because they made a declaration. Of the total of 1021 units initially registered, 42 dropped out during the first year, and an additional 87 either did not register for the second year or did not hunt intensively enough to meet the regular eligibility requirements. For the next five years (until 1982-83, see below) ISP registrations remained relatively stable (varying between 838 and 929). Thus ISP initially, and almost immediately, increased the number of people hunting intensively from about 700 to about 900 on average, by about 29% or almost one-third. The program therefore initially met the goal of enhancing participation in hunting activities by Cree.

However, from the data available, it appears that the great majority of people who took up hunting intensively with the introduction of ISP were people who had previous hunting experience, and were not people who had only been casual hunters before. The program therefore also appears to have met the goal bringing back into intensive hunting activities a group of people who had been "driven out" of hunting by economic and other condi-

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tions.

The other side of this impact however is that ISP did not immediately draw into more intensive hunting activities any significant number of those Cree who had no extensive experience with hunting. While many of those who joined ISP in the first year because of their intention to hunt intensively were young men and women, many of those who dropped out during that first year were also young people. The limited data available suggests that those who dropped out included a particularly high percentage of people without extensive hunting experience. This may be a feature to expect in similar programs in the short run. They can draw people back into hunting, but they probably will be less effective at inducing adults who do not already have hunting experience from practicing intensive hunting. (Below I will note the possible longer-term impact of ISP on young people, where the program is more effective).

To put the overall level of ISP participation in perspective, in 1982-83, when 1122 beneficiary units were registered, they represented about 43% of the resident adult population of the Cree villages. However, variations between communities were considerable ranging from approximately one-quarter to over one-half of the community population in ISP.

2. ISP has enhanced traditional social forms and practices. In particular, there has been a modest increase in the numbers of families going to the bush as groups, and the practice of women staying behind in the settlement, which had been growing, is now relatively infrequent, except when motivated by medical or employment reasons. There has also been a continuation of the practice of multi-family hunting groups as the main residential units in the bush. In some communities there are clear indications that the numbers of women and of children in the bush have increased and that the number of bush camps established has risen with the increased number of hunters and families. In this respect the program has met another explicit Cree objective, the general maintenance of traditional social organization of hunting.

Similarly, the use of all year round camps is a direct extension of the traditional bush camp. Some families now live effectively all year in the bush, a practice which had become relatively uncommon prior to ISP, but which is now somewhat more frequent. These camps expand in summer to include many of the children in the family. In some respects they are a return to a more "traditional" social pattern.

It is also clear that the increase in the number of hunters and the presence of families in the bush have led to some modifica-

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tions and innovations in social organization. At least one relatively new form of bush camp has developed. It is an all year round camp along a roadside, from which hunters can pursue their activities, and from which access to reserve or towns is usually easy. These sites are generally larger, and I suspect more enduring, than bush camps formerly were. They also permit people to move back and forth between the bush and settlements more frequently, and in some cases to split their time between the two at all seasons of the year. These camps are in many respects an extension of traditional social practices. However, some people in the communities express concerns about the effects of such camps on the wildlife surrounding them, and about the effects of a reduction in the separation of bush and town activities on the social life of the camps and on the transmission of the traditional skills needed for more isolated bush living. Thus while traditional social organization has generally been enhanced and maintained, there are certain developments which cause concerns in the communities. These are not extensive, however, and communities are actively working to make the problems public and to develop solutions.

3. At the community level there have been several changes in social organization as well, most related to the emphasis which the growth of hunting activity has put on hunting territories. There has been, I believe, a new emphasis on the communities' interest in the territories which belong to the members of that community. Thus the community leaders now play a more active role in decisions on the transfer or granting of access to hunting territories, whereas in the recent past these issues were largely left to the individual "owners". There is for example a stronger feeling than there used to be about territories not being alienated from one community to another by the men who "own" them. There is also more conflict over competing use of lands which border two communities areas. These changes would probably occur whenever the hunting economy was strong and many people were seeking to use the land intensively. Nevertheless, ISP contributes to the problems by promoting more intensive participation in hunting.

The community level decisions concerning hunting land and wildlife have become more formalized, mostly as a result of local initiative. Community participation primarily takes place through the local community trappers' committees of the CTA. There have been no detailed accounts of these committees, but they represent an important development following the signing of the JBNQA. They have not been set up so much because the Agreement specifically requires them, but because they meet a need felt directly at the community level for a more formal means of reaching decisions. Run mainly by the hunters themselves, and/or by the local CTA employee, the committees reflect and develop consensuses

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among elders, "owners" and other hunters. In many respects these committees formalize the decisions of the informal consensusing processes by which decisions relating to hunting continue to be taken.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that knowledge of the Agreement, and therefore of English, and knowledge of the administrative structures set up after the Agreement, have become important resources in the decision-making process. As a result middle-aged, and some younger men probably have greater influence in the process than formerly, including CTA local employees. But it is significant that all of the active participants are intensively engaged in the hunting economy. Again, I think, it is not so much formal requirements of the Agreement that have caused this change as the successful intensification of participation in the hunting economy, which creates a need for more formal decisions within and between communities; plus the availability of funds for an employee who is formally responsible for aiding hunters.

4. The amount of time hunters spent in the bush increased significantly with the introduction of ISP, and has risen slowly since that initial increase. The first year of operation of the ISP program, the average amount of time beneficiaries spent in the bush increased about 25% over the time they had spent the previous years. In the six years since, there has been a further 10% increase in time spent in the bush.

To give some idea of the extent of participation in bush life which is typical of ISP beneficiaries, the average number of days spent in the bush by hunters in 1978-79 (the last year for which there are full data) was over 235, or almost eight months. Looked at another way, over 50% of ISP hunters spend more than 7.5 months in the bush, and more than 75% spend more than half the year. The intensity of participation in bush life is therefore quite high. It can be seen then that the substantial increases in average time spent in the bush came on top of an already very time intensive pattern of hunting which was common in the Cree communities. The overall increase occurred by extending the time spent in the bush during several different seasons, especially winter, spring hunts and summer fishing. The increases in the time spent in winter hunting and trapping indicate the commitment of the hunters.

5. The introduction of ISP has led to substantial increases in local bush production of housing, specialized equipment, clothing, heating, and other bush services, including bush education and probably some traditional medical practices. This increase has occurred in both total production and per hunter/family production. With more people spending more time in the bush, bush

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housing has been improved, and most people use the time available to upgrade living accommodations and produce more of the goods which they prefer manufacture domestically. The clothing and bush equipment produced not only is used by the ISP hunters, but is often exchanged widely within the settlements with non-ISP relatives and friends.

The rescheduling of the school year by each community, to arrange school breaks during appropriate hunting seasons - especially during the spring and fall goose hunts on the coast and the fall moose hunt inland - facilitates the contribution of families hunting in the bush to the overall educational process. It is difficult to judge the overall impact of this experience, but from comments by hunters I think we can conclude that this time in bush camps is not sufficient to make intensive hunters out of children who spend all their school age years in the formal education system. But I think it likely that the regular contribution of the hunters to the education of the young is helping to limit the social and cultural gaps that might otherwise occur in the more complex communities in which the Cree now live. It is also likely that the extended bush education for most children will help to maintain in future generations a high valuation by the community as a whole of the activities, food and other products the hunters provide. It may also encourage a steady number of children to continue to pursue careers as hunters, and to leave school in time to do that effectively (see below). Having the childrens' education in the bush extended is certainly a contribution the hunters families value in and of itself.

In summary, there is a certain cultural revival resulting from having more people, spending more time in the bush, engaged in bush activities.

6. There have also been substantial increases in the use of goods and services imported into the Cree communities from the industrial economy of Canada. The emphasis here has clearly been on goods and services which increase the efficiency or security of bush life, but consumer goods have also increased.

Items which aid transportation and communication have been especially heavily used. Information on expenditure patterns during the first couple of years of ISP operation indicated that the two major expenditures were on chartered airplane services and on the purchase of snowmobiles.

In addition better clothing is being purchased now, which is in part necessitated by the extensive use of snowmobiles which require that users be protected from extended exposure to high windchill. Materials for more substantial and more permanent bush camps have also been purchased. More permanent camps are now

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commonly possible since the use of snowmobiles to extend the range of travel possible in a day. Women's work has partly been aided by the changes in camp construction, and also by the use of chainsaws and snowmobiles for preparation of firewood. More food purchased in the settlement also appears to be taken into the bush now by some families. (This appears to be at least partially linked to changes in bush food production which will be discussed below.)

Increased cash incomes were also used by many families to use air charter services more often for travel to and from bush camps. This eased a labor intensive part of hunting activities, and made travel to the bush more secure, but it was also encouraged by the increased range of goods being taken into the bush camps. Fuel especially, needed for snowmobiles and other equipment was difficult to transport into camps isolated from the road and rail network. Furthermore as camps were better built and equipped the incidence of theft by the non-Native population increased in the areas frequented by construction, survey and exploration crews, and "sportsmen", and in some communities people found that they had to transport equipment such as snowmobiles, canoes and out-board motors out of the bush when they left for extended periods, in order to protect the goods from being stolen. Two to four times as much was spent on air charters in some Cree communities as had been spent before the introduction of ISP.

One overall effect has been to not only improve the conditions of hunting, but to raise the standard of living of the Cree in general. Clothing, housing, furnishings and leisure facilities have all be improved, but this has been accomplished in part through the increase in imports.

7. ISP not only created a new demand for goods and services, it created a new demand for community based organizations and programs to help cut the costs of such services to each individual. The high cost of air charters, and of snowmobiles, have resulted in considerable interest in other means of providing transportation and communication services at more modest costs. A key role has been played here by the CTA, which in conjunction with (SOTRAC), have undertaken to fund and run programs which provide the community-wide infrastructures needed to help hunters cut their costs. Among the projects developed here are the construction of long-distance snowmobile trails out from the settlements, to permit more hunters to travel out to their camps. In some communities there is also an air charter dispatching service run by the local CTA officer, which coordinates and schedules charters to cut the cost to each individual user. Bulk ordering of traps, canoes and basic equipment and supplies have been arranged to cut the purchase costs to individuals. And the collection, shipping and sale of fur pelts through the Ontario Trappers



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Association auctions in North Bay have been organized. Help with the construction and improvement of bush camps has also been discussed by hunters, although only a limited number of base camps designed to serve a cluster of hunting territories have been implemented to date.

Probably the most widely used service initiated by the CTA and SOTRAC has been the purchase and rental to hunters of portable two-way short-wave radios. The radios are widely sought and are available for most isolated camps or groups of closely located camps. The radios provide an important increase in security for families living longer periods in the bush with more children present, and a clear appreciation of the need for medical and other help in certain emergencies. The radio system has been credited with saving at least two lives since its inception. It has also transformed inter-camp bush communications because it is constantly in use for communications between hunters. Each morning and evening news on weather conditions, game movements and hunting success are circulated. This network has provided an extraordinary new source of information to individual hunters, as well as providing an opportunity for people to develop a new kind of overview of the hunting activities and returns of the communities as a whole. The consequences of this initiative are being commented on in the villages, but the long-term potentialities have not as yet been examined. In general the response has been highly favorable, and that appears likely to continue.

8. The long-term implications of the overall growth in the use of imported goods and services are not yet clear. The growth in the use of imports was not started by ISP, but it was accelerated by the program. It is likely that certain of the goods and services now being used are coming to be seen not only as welcome additions to a hunting way of life, but as indispensable necessities. In this respect, any situation that would result in cutting off access to these could threaten present levels of participation in hunting. This is precisely what was happening before ISP was introduced: shortages in cash incomes were resulting in declines in participation rates and intensity of hunting activities.

Hunting has not been completely separable from inputs of industrial goods and services in the James Bay area since at least the 1940's. It is clear that ISP could not undo this situation. The question is whether it will moderate the threats or accentuate them. ISP was intended to stabilize the trend and insulate it from cycles in the industrial economy and from manipulation of the markets and incomes on which the Cree depend. It seems likely to have done this, but at the same time it has led to additional use of industrial imports. The threat is that if the latter increases led to a cycle of consumerism within the Cree

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

society, this could work against any stabilization and buffering effects. The long term outcome is not yet clear. There are processes in both directions: more imported goods; a desire that ISP incomes should be raised significantly (see below); and increased use of Cree produced bush goods and services. The balance between security and autonomy, both of which are valued in Cree culture, will probably have to be decided more in day to day affairs than as a result of any abstract analysis.

9. To date there have been relatively few economic spin-offs from the increase in hunting expenditures for the Cree cash economy of the region. Some temporary employment has been created in bush improvement projects. More important, taxi services have sprung up and expanded, as well as a few Cree owned shops, and one small bush airplane charter service has been started and seems likely to expand. Nevertheless, linkages between economic sectors have been developing only slowly, and there is still potential for expanded linkages, and greater stimulus to the local cash economies of the Cree communities.

10. There has been no reduced level of participation in the wage economy by the majority of ISP beneficiaries. In communities with little access to employment the number of people employed, the duration of employment, and employment incomes rose in the first two years of ISP. In communities with the most access to employment opportunities outside the Cree communities, there was a significant reduction during the first two years of ISP in the number of beneficiaries with employment, the duration of their employment and their incomes from employment. In intermediate communities the pattern was mixed. There has been no new data on these patterns in succeeding years. One plausible interpretation of this variable response is that ISP beneficiaries have become more selective in the types of employment they will take. They are still willing to take employment related to improving their communities or which permits living in the community and working in Cree work groups, but they are less willing to take employment outside or away from their communities. It is however difficult to confirm this interpretation.

11. ISP has permitted and aided the hunting sector of the Cree regional economy to expand during periods of recession in the employment/enterprise/administrative sector, and to engage a larger number of Cree in intensive hunting activities. In 1982-83, the number of ISP beneficiary units rose from 929 the previous year to 1122, an increase of 21%. I understand that this number rose again somewhat in 1983-84, the year just ended. Part of the increase in 1982-83 appears to have been due to the completion of several community development and rebuilding projects. Many of the men employed in these were regular hunters who had left ISP temporarily to participate in the special projects.

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

About half of those who joined ISP in this year were in this category, that is they were hunters returning to the program. However, the other half were men joining ISP for probably the first time, and many were young. In several communities, people feel that the recent rapid increase in the number of young people entering the program is related to the declines in alternative economic opportunities in the present recession. How many of these young people will stay on after practicing intensive hunting, and if employment is again more readily available cannot be predicted now.

What is important now is that the structure of ISP has worked through this period so as to permit a rapid increase in the levels of participation. (ISP is now again at the legal limit of the number of paid man-days and the legal limit is now being reconsidered again. Its revision is essential for the continued expansion of ISP, see below). This repeats the role the hunting economy has played in the recent history of the Cree, being the stable and secure economic sector, and one able to absorb some of the under-employment created by cycles in the job markets, although ISP clearly cannot absorb all, or even most of that under-employment. But the relative stability of the hunting economy is perceived by some hunters as another indicator of its continuing long-term importance to the Cree, as they have pointed out.

12. ISP has created an increased confidence in the viability of the hunting way of life, and this is reflected in an increased encouragement to young people to pursue that way of life. Statistical data on the number of children being taken out of school to spend one or more years in the bush have been extremely limited. The existing data indicate that pre-school children are now more frequently in the bush, whereas those of school age are at least as frequently in the bush as before ISP. The long-term effects of this pattern cannot be precisely predicted, but it is a good indicator for a potentially positive future for recruitment to intensive hunting.

The actual recruitment of young adults to ISP, up until 1982-83 was relatively stable in number, and sufficient to create a relatively stable group of intensive hunters. The number of young adults entering ISP was however a smaller percentage of all young adults, because there are a growing number of young adults each year. And this will be the case for many years to come given the numbers of young children in the population. Up until 1982-83, therefore, the best prediction one could have made was that the intensive hunters might remain relatively stable in numbers, but be a declining proportion of the total adult population of the communities. The increases in ISP participation in 1982-83 and 1983-84 could actually result in increases in the long-term

**Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential**

numbers of intensive hunters, but for now they are probably best treated as indicators of the difficulty of predicting even the short-term trends.

13. ISP has not resulted in any general or widespread over-utilization or depletion of game resources, and the Cree system of hunting territory management by territory "owners" has generally continued to work to regulate harvests and conserve wildlife. Despite the immediate increase in the number of intensive hunters by some 29 percent (see 1 above), and the increase in the amount of time hunters spend in the bush by some 35%, there has been no pattern of substantial increases in wildlife harvests in general. The first year after the introduction of ISP there were very high harvests of big game, but this pattern did not extend to future years.

Over all communities, big game harvests were stable over the four years before and the three years after introduction of ISP, while waterfowl, fur-bearer and seal harvests declined somewhat. Small game harvests rose during the same period, while fish harvests declined dramatically due in major part to the warnings of danger from methylmercury. On a statistical basis the only significant increases were the harvests of hare, grouse, muskrat and marten. The first two are species whose populations were increasing, whereas the latter two were species which had been probably under-utilized in the James Bay region in recent years. Statistically significant decreases occurred in harvests of porcupine, two fur-bearers whose population cycles were in decline (red fox and arctic fox), and in some waterfowl which appear to be altering their migration patterns.

The overall result was that total bush food harvests were relatively stable, but the per capita harvest was declining slowly as the Cree population was increasing. Thus despite the fact that more hunters were spending more time in the bush, this did not translate into general increases in harvests. Those species which were most intensively used prior to ISP appear not to have been harvested at higher levels, whereas those species which were under-utilized, or which had cyclical population growth, are the ones which were harvested more intensively.

The species which were taken in greater numbers are ones which take a lot of work to harvest, and it appears that hunters used the additional time in the bush to intensify their use of these species. This pattern is like that which appears to have prevailed in earlier generations when people lived most of the year in the bush and had higher harvests of small game and smaller fur-bearers.

Some localized depletion of wildlife resources continues to

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

occur, around the settlements and nearby roads, and adjacent to the new permanent camp sites established along the roads. This is a pattern which has been occurring since people moved into larger settlements. And despite the fact that ISP appears to have increased the number of bush camps, and to have decreased the number of hunters conducting hunting from the settlements, it has not solved the problem. The number of people hunting, and the continued concentration of hunters around the settlements and roads keep these areas in very intensive use (see below).

14. General levels of bush food harvests have also been maintained in communities which have experienced the impacts of the LaGrande hydro complex. ISP in combination with remedial works funds and new roads have aided a dispersion of hunting effort, and a reorganization of harvesting patterns.

15. ISP has resulted in a more regular and intensive use of more distant hunting territories, which distributes harvesting pressure more widely, but it has not equalized access to all lands. More distant hunting territories are being used more frequently and by more people than they were before ISP. The shortages of cash restricted access to these lands. This permits a better distribution of the harvest and a better management of wildlife. Nevertheless, the costs of outfitting and especially of air charter costs to use more distant territories are still too great for many hunters, and the cash returns are better by having fewer hunters using these lands or by using them only once every few years.

### ASPECTS OF ISP AND CTA WHICH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PROBLEMS

Extensive consultations have been conducted by the Cree Regional Authority and various researchers with beneficiaries to determine their reactions to the programs and to ascertain the problems they find with the operation of ISP and CTA. The consultations which have been conducted have repeatedly identified similar sets of perceived problems. These may be grouped together into five general categories: benefits levels, benefits structures, eligibility criteria, administrative features, and funding.

#### Benefits Levels

1. It is widely stated in the communities now that ISP benefits levels are insufficient for many, and probably most, beneficiaries. Beneficiaries cite a number of points when discussing this issue. First they cite the high costs of imported technologies and foods, and the expenses they have to incur in the course of their hunting as a result. Second they cite the increased costs of living in the settlements, including particularly the costs of house ownership. The post-JBNQA rebuilding of the Cree

## **Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential**

communities, coupled with the INA and CMHC housing programs which now assume residents will pay towards the cost of housing, have created new financial demands. Although many hunters use such housing only several months a year, the long delays for new housing have convinced many that they must take new housing when it is available, either for their own use later, or for the use of their children. Many hunters also point out that transportation costs in particular are a heavy burden (we will return to this issue below). Finally some hunters report that the costs of the goods and services they depend on have risen more quickly than the rises in ISP benefits (we will discuss the ISP cost of living indexation below as well). These and other factors have all contributed to general recognition that ISP benefits are insufficient at present levels.

One lesson to be learned from this is the value of having detailed information on hunters' costs and household budgets before beginning negotiations on support levels. But, the issues are even more complex than that, because the levels must not only reflect existing expenditure patterns, they should be sufficient to meet as yet unfulfilled aspirations, and the consequences thereof. This is a difficult assessment. Indeed, when ISP was discussed extensively with leaders from all the Cree communities during the latter stages of negotiations there was no strong expression of the view that benefits levels would not be sufficient. Yet within two years of the start up of ISP this was apparent to many beneficiaries and community leaders. There are no accurate or adequate data available today on how large this shortfall in benefits levels is, but it should be noted that it is substantial. Ballpark guesses by hunters range from about one-third more being needed to twice as much, with a 50% increase being most frequently cited. But such numbers must be treated with extreme caution because detailed consideration and discussions of new levels have not been possible to date. Furthermore, the range of responses reflects the range of costs different hunters have and any revision would have to take this into account (see below).

Thus it is difficult to judge appropriate benefits levels before a program is running because it must not only meet present levels of need it should meet future aspirations; and also because it should take account of the impacts the introduction of the program itself will have on levels of aspiration and needs. Furthermore, changes in the local economy completely unrelated to the benefits structure, such as the expanded housing program, can affect cash income requirements. There are therefore two focuses of this problem, establishing initial benefits levels, and providing for future revisions of those levels. I will discuss the former here and the latter below under the question of indexation.

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

I will consider the circumstance in which funding will in one form or another depend on direct government inputs, whether as annual grants or as capitalization. In either case, I would assume that the involvement of senior governments in funding implies that certain levels would have to be fixed and that revisions would have to be subject to some form of joint revision process. That is, a certain rationalization of benefits and structures will be required, as well as a formal monitoring and review of operations.

On the basis of ISP I would suggest that an agreement on preliminary benefits levels should be initially established for a period, possibly two or three years. Then there should be a mandatory revision of that level based on experience to date and on the then perceived needs and aspirations; with a clear understanding that such revision can result in a significant increase in the basic benefits levels. Further regular review could then be incorporated into a cost of living type of revision procedure.

In addition, there would also be a distinct advantage to having a special revision procedure available as well, to cover changes not readily dealt with by the regular process. ISP provides (Section 30.7) for a review of the program from time to time as conditions warrant. The provisions go on to specify certain conditions under which such review is mandatory and it is necessary that benefits and program features should be improved. The particular conditions cited in the JBNQA all relate to changes in the social benefits provided to other residents of Quebec. I think it is now clear that it would have been advisable to expand and detail a wider range of conditions under which the program would be subject to mandatory review and upgrading, including changes in other types of government programs or assistance (such as housing), and possibly certain types of changes in market conditions, and technology.

In summary then, it would appear that ISP type programs could be improved by: having extensive data on which to base initial benefits levels; having an agreed upgrading take place after a program had been running and monitored for several years, and after beneficiaries had decided on appropriate levels; having a general provision for revision and upgrading from time to time; and having a specified set of circumstances under which such revision was mandatory.

2. A second problem with benefits levels now identified by Cree beneficiaries is that the indexation of ISP may not be working to fully protect the benefits levels from annual changes in the cost of goods and services they purchase. There are two issues here, the standard index which has been the basis for the annual

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

adjustments made to date, and the possibility of developing an index specific to the hunters themselves.

ISP is not tied directly to the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index, but to the cost of living in Quebec, which it was thought could vary from the changes in the cost of living elsewhere in Canada. This has been legally implemented in legislation by making the ISP adjustment equal to the indexation applied each year to payments from the Quebec Pension Plan. The pension plan index was chosen because while all government controlled programs are subject to political decisions respecting the amount of indexing to be applied each year, the pension payments were thought to be least likely to fall behind actual cost of living increases. In recent years this decision has proved correct as the indexing of other social benefits has been adjusted upward well below rises in the cost of living. Compared to the Consumer Price Index the pension index has fared much better, however, some erosion has occurred compared to the Canada-wide CPI. The precise difference is not yet clear but up to the end of the 1981-82 year ISP benefits had been indexed upwards by about 80%, whereas the C.P.I. had risen by about 90%. Indexing has thus fallen behind the Canadian average by about 10%.

However, the major decline in Cree spending power has not been due to the choice of index, but to the unresponsiveness of all official indexes to the especially rapid rises in costs the Cree have experienced because a relatively high percentage of their income goes to transportation and fuel costs. The C.P.I. is based on a typical Canadian family's budget allocations, and it therefore under represents the cost increases to the Cree. Thus, during the period when the overall cost of living rose by 90%, the costs of transportation throughout Canada rose by 110% and the costs of energy by 180%. In the north they presumably rose even more rapidly because these costs are compounded by the increased costs of transporting fuel and energy to the north. A calculation of cost increases based on the budget expenditures of a Cree hunter would therefore show a much higher rise than the rise in any standard index.

In the JBNQA this problem was anticipated and a provision was included that ISP benefits could be indexed according to a cost of living index for the James Bay Territory when one was available. It provides that such an index should be computed on a basis similar to others available for Quebec. This provides an opportunity for developing an index more responsive to Cree expenditures, but it has not been done to date, although the issue has recently been discussed. The phrasing in the JBNQA is not good however and it hides a range of detailed problems, for example: the wording talks about the region, not just the Cree hunters; the CPI procedures cannot be easily copied in the Cree



## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

case and instead a whole new procedure must be developed, consistent with the principles which underlie the Statistics Canada approach; and finally, any new procedure would have to involve extensive data collection and research.

The ISP case demonstrates the need for indexing, as well as the need for the level of indexing to reflect the real changes in the cost increases experienced by hunters. The simplest procedure would probably be to do enough research to establish hunters' budgets, and then base annual revisions on rises in the regional costs of goods and services, weighting the contribution of the rise in each good or service to the overall increase on the basis of its proportion in the budgets. The budgets would then have to be revised every few years with a survey procedure which was statistically appropriate to the small and diverse nature of the population.

3. The highly variable costs of transportation are not equalized by ISP payments, and therefore some hunters experience more adequate funding levels while others experience very serious cash shortages. One consequence, mentioned above, is that hunters are not as widely distributed over the territory as would be possible or desirable from the point of view of resource utilization, as the hunters themselves report. Transportation costs are the biggest single category of expenditure for about half of the hunters, and annual expenditures can go as high as \$9,000.

The Cree are seeking to resolve this problem by developing a transportation subsidy program outside of the ISP and through the CTA. Several structures for subsidizing the costs of hunters proportionally in relation to their costs have been considered. Each has involved access to additional sources of funding. Sources considered have included funds for remedial programs in response to the impacts of present and future hydro-electric development projects, and economic development funds for support of the trapping industry. Funding has been hard to arrange and introduction of special programs has been delayed for several years. In the last year an initial program has been introduced under the CTA, which pays for up to two trips per hunter to and from his hunting area per year. Results and responses to this program are not yet clear.

ISP experience demonstrates the need to build some provisions for payments which are responsive to transportation costs into an economic benefits package for hunters. Informal discussion of ISP have considered doing this primarily through a separate subsidy program, but some suggestions have occasionally been made that ISP benefits should be structured so as to better equalize the benefits received by hunters. The advantage of having a travel equalization as part of ISP is that it could be indexed

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

and revised in a single process, whereas specialized transportation subsidy programs are more easily outmoded by changes in technology and regional infrastructures, as well as by general market conditions.

One proposal has been to include in the amounts subject to the 40% deduction, from the basic amount, only the net incomes from per diem payments, that is total minus hunting expenses. The problems which have been anticipated for such a proposal are that it would require a more extensive and detailed accounting by hunters, and might not be acceptable to them. It should also be noted that the Cree have argued, and established, that ISP payments are not taxable earned incomes, and any treatment that might imply it was a business income would have to be considered carefully. It is not clear if such a problem could arise from such a provision.

An alternative that has been discussed has been to have two or three different per diem rates, which would vary with the hunting territory a hunter was using in a given year. For example, hunters using territories not accessible by a road or short canoe/snowmobile trip would receive a higher subsidy than those using the latter locations. Some hunters who live and travel out from settlements and spend more than those who hunt at moderate distances because they make more frequent trips, might also get an intermediate rate. It should be noted however that such a system could only work where hunters can relatively accurately predict the locations at which they will be hunting, as the Cree can because of their hunting territory system.

Were it considered desirable to have a separate subsidy program, it may be worth noting that although travel expenses are very high for some hunters, and are a burden on all, some recent estimates suggest that the total costs of reducing all hunters travel costs to below a fixed level, such as \$1500, would be modest in relation to the total costs of ISP. One estimate suggests about \$500,000 would be needed, or less than one-twentieth of present annual ISP pay-outs.

### Benefits Structure

Several specific features of the design of the benefits structure of ISP have proved problematic in operation.

4. The benefits structure provides inadequate benefits to single parent families, and to mature single adults. The provision of per diem payments to each adult in a beneficiary unit results in single parent families receiving nearly half the per diem payments of bi-parental families, a difference which the guaranteed amount only partially corrects. This difference makes sense for

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

young single adults with few responsibilities who live in their parents household. But, the lower rate creates a definite shortage of income for single parent families with children and family responsibilities. It also creates similar problems, although not so severe, for mature single individuals who often take on wider family responsibilities in kin groups. For such individuals the annual costs of living and of hunting are very close to those of a bi-parental family. There has been some consideration to the idea that ISP should be revised so that such individuals and single-parent family heads receive a per diem equal to that available to bi-parental families, or two times what they presently receive.

It should be noted that ISP does not and cannot equalize the incomes of all hunters. The way beneficiary units group into commensal and multi-family hunting groups means, for example, that some groups are comprised of more young hunters and have larger incomes relative to the number of dependents; while others may have more mature adults receiving old age pensions than do other family groups, and therefore higher incomes. All an income program can help to do is put people on a relatively secure and similar footing. The demographic history of families will inevitably affect what is needed and available to any individual group.

5. Cree hunters almost universally consider the deduction of part of their fur incomes from their ISP benefits to be inappropriate. Hunters explain that the income they earn from furs is a result of the self support which ISP was designed to encourage, and that reducing ISP as fur incomes increase creates the opposite effect. Given the modest incomes usually earned from trapping, and the considerable work and costs involved, this view is understandable. In the first years of ISP operation, it was widely perceived in some communities that this provision of ISP had reduced the harvests of some fur-bearers below the levels which would otherwise have been taken. As time goes on this response is less clear, but the feeling that this provision simply does not make sense remains strong.

This is the one provision of ISP which appears to have also led to a widespread form of non-cooperation with ISP. There is evidence that some hunters simply do not fully report their total fur incomes. For the Cree this is not however a matter of falsification, but rather a moral statement about a provision perceived to be unjust and contrary to good sense. In fact, in some Cree communities this provision has encouraged hunters to sell furs to itinerant fur buyers, who are less accurate in reporting to authorities the precise source of the furs they collect. In this sense then the Cree see that some of them choose to suffer lower prices for their furs because of this provision. However

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

the main objection is not monetary. Because of the exemption from the deduction of the first \$502 of fur income for each adult in a beneficiary unit many, possibly most, do not in fact have deductions made. Furthermore, the balance is deducted only from the guaranteed amount, and not from the per diem, and possibly half the beneficiary units receive no guaranteed amounts, only per diem payments, so for these people as well there is no deduction in practice.

The Cree widely feel this deduction should be dropped as a matter of principle and of logic.

6. There have also been occasional statements that the 40% offset against guaranteed amounts for earned incomes and for some other government payments, as well as the 100% deduction of Old Age Pension incomes are inappropriate. These statements appear to have declined as familiarity with the program has improved. It is now perceived that opposition to the reductions is probably as much an effect of the felt inadequacy of ISP benefits in general as it is a strong opposition to such deductions in principle.

7. Sickness, pregnancy, deaths and disasters can result in serious declines in family incomes just at times when additional funds may be required. Sickness, pregnancy, and deaths in a family, as well as disasters that destroy camps or equipment may force families to return to the settlements on short notice, and may prevent return to bush camps for weeks or months. These could drastically reduce total incomes by dropping the number of paid man-days, only part of which may be recovered by higher guaranteed amounts. These crises may also result in over-payments when families do not spend as many days in the bush as had been anticipated when benefits were calculated. Often it is not the head of a beneficiary unit but a spouse or child who is ill, but the activities of the entire family are affected. A death in the bush reduces a family to one per diem payment at a time of family crisis even if the family does return to the bush.

The loss of incomes at times of crises are normally aided in Canadian society by the application of various insurance programs, both governmental and private. The Cree find that they are not eligible for workmen's compensation. And it is not clear if a private income guarantee program would be provided at reasonable rates by a private insurer. Building such protection into an ISP-type program therefore seems desirable. At times of crisis, a program could either guarantee and pay the income which the beneficiary unit had expected to receive, or an income equal to that received in the previous year. Such a provision could come into effect where the illness or emergency causes a disruption in excess of a minimum number of days (20 to 30 has been considered). Some beneficiaries have suggested that they be able to

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

"bank" they days they spend in the bush over 240, that is the days they are not paid for, so these can be paid for when emergencies drop the number of days they can spend in the bush below their average. But, a guarantee would also be needed for people who were not covered by a bank.

Informal discussions among hunters have also indicated that incomes are not the sole problem at such crises, equipment must be replaced and transportation paid for. A general program of insurance for the loss of equipment and costs incurred transporting replacements to the bush therefore been discussed as a needed addition to an income protection provision in ISP.

### Eligibility Criteria

8. The inflexibility of eligibility criteria has created problems in individual cases, and has sometimes worked against the goals of ISP. The requirement that potential beneficiaries must hunt one year before being eligible for ISP payments is said to discourage some young adults, who have worked for a year or two, from trying to establish eligibility. During the first year of full-time hunting a person has especially high costs, for new equipment and supplies. Yet it is this year when ISP benefits are not paid while eligibility is being established. The present criteria works well for those who just turn eighteen after being in the bush the previous year, but not for those who are older. This impediment to recruitment into intensive hunting works against the aims of ISP.

It is also felt that the eligibility criteria makes it unnecessarily difficult for people to shift from work to hunting, and possibly back again when economic conditions change. The idea that ISP would serve people whose primary activity is hunting is supported in the Cree communities. But it is also felt that many individuals can and do hunt for some years and then work for other years and then return to hunting again. And the structure of ISP eligibility criteria do not facilitate this pattern of work and hunting.

The general provisions for maintaining eligibility during periods when hunting activity declines due to illness, work on community development projects, and for reasons of conservation have been very broadly interpreted by the ISP Board, and have therefore worked well. However the need of the Board to use its administrative discretion to make these provisions work fairly indicates a need for a less narrow specification of special conditions under which eligibility can be maintained.

A possible alternative to the restrictive eligibility criteria would be to allow first time applicants to ISP to enter on the

## Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential

basis of a declaration of intention to hunt, much as was permitted during the first year of ISP operation. Beneficiaries who have voluntarily left the program would also be allowed to re-enter at any future time on the basis of a declaration. Only those who were in ISP but who were unable to maintain their eligibility would have to spend a year hunting to establish their eligibility for re-admission.

9. The number of people who claim eligibility for ISP but who are thought by people in the communities not to be meeting the formal or informal eligibility criteria is very small but their existence nevertheless constitutes a source of discontent in the villages. ISP depends extensively on self-reporting by beneficiaries, although the ISP Board has broad powers to examine official records where they exist (for example, for employment or incomes from other government programs). The Board and its local employees cannot however easily verify all the claims for days spent in the bush, nor can they check that people are actually active while living in the bush and not just being "hangers on". The actual number of cases in which intentional over-reporting or "hanging around" in the bush are thought in the communities to be occurring is very small, possibly amounting to only one or two percent of cases. This is very low relative to the levels of abuse estimated to occur in other government social programs, and it is a noteworthy indicator of Cree commitment.

From the point of view of the Board it would cost significantly more to try and police these cases than would be recovered by the process. Nevertheless, people in the villages do not see why such abuse should be allowed to occur. Community elders think it would be easy to eliminate such cases by requiring the community leaders to prepare lists of people each year who could be eligible for ISP, if they met other criteria. They feel this would solve the problem. Their suggestion also reflects a desire for greater local participation in ISP administration (which will be discussed below).

### Administrative Features

10. There is a substantial need for an ISP-type program to either incorporate or be associated with an educational service of fairly broad scope. From the very beginning of the Cree ISP program, beneficiaries have been desirous of more information on the program itself and related matters. There is no specific mention made of information and educational services in the ISP mandate, but it has been strongly and successfully argued by the Cree that such services are an implicit component of ISP operations. And the Board and staff are keenly aware of the needs and desire to meet them. Nevertheless, the shortages of time and staff, and the fact that some of the needed services do not fall

## **Feit - Review of ISP/CTA Programs, Confidential**

within the ISP mandate indicate the problem of expecting the Board alone to meet these needs. Provisions for a comprehensive educational service need to be included in the design of future ISP program packages, however it may not be possible for an ISP Board to full-fill this need by itself.

Education and information services are difficult to organize because of ISP-type programs themselves. Hunters tend to all be in the communities only at very limited times of the year, and especially when ISP checks are due, and these are the times when beneficiaries are anxious to receive checks and depart. Therefore despite having local full-time staff in each village, it may be found that staff are completely occupied at precisely the times when information programs would be most effective. The other information services the hunters need suggest that the mandate may best be split.

In addition to information on the programs, hunters may require general financial advice and services. For example, while some families were perfectly able to manage the quarterly check payments, others found receiving checks every three or four months created new budgeting and planning problems for which they were not prepared. There was a clear need to offer family budgeting advice to these beneficiaries. One means of accomplishing this has been to seek to open Caisses Populaires (something like credit unions) in the Cree communities, to provide the financial advice needed by members.

This provision provides access to educational programs and personal advice as well as meeting the growing need in the communities for banking services, a need partly created by ISP. For example, in some communities people do not have access to savings type accounts into which funds may be temporarily deposited, nor to credit which they can use completely as they see fit. ISP did result in an increase in the credit available to the people in some communities. Once merchants learned how ISP operated, they increased the level of credit they would issue. In one region the debt of the Cree rose from the equivalent of two to three months of welfare payments, to the equivalent of one quarterly ISP payment to the entire community, an increase of between two and three fold. But this credit was of course only for use in the merchants' stores, and completely disposable credit was not generally available because banking services were only available in a few communities.

The types of information, advice and services required will probably vary from region to region, as will the effectiveness of different means of providing those services. It may therefore not be possible to generalize about appropriate solutions, but only to note the nature of the needs.

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11. Another educational need in some regions may be for more formal apprenticeship programs for young adults exploring a commitment to intensive hunting. The Cree ISP program simply assumes that traditional socialization and apprenticeship to hunting will occur through the family networks which have always provided for such needs. There is no doubt that this will remain the major source of apprenticeship, and indeed if it did not then serious questions could be raised about the future of Cree hunting, because no other means could effectively train hunters. And there are good indications that this system continues to work well in the Cree area.

Nevertheless, there has been some need to supplement the traditional forms with some additional measures. The problems here do not arise from ISP per se, although the program may contribute to them indirectly by encouraging more young men to explore hunting as an option. For example, the educational system has created a new emphasis on peer groupings, and many young men now conduct some of their hunting with their age mates rather than with their families. This is especially the case when families are away for long periods. In these age mate groups learning of the more subtle aspects of hunting practice may not be well accomplished, including both basic hunting skills, and also hunting group decision-making structures and conservation practices. In some communities with particularly intensive and short hunts, such as the spring and fall waterfowl periods, the activities of the groups of young hunters have been disruptive of the hunt of the community as a whole. As a result, some communities have begun to seek ways to institute a more universally available training in Cree hunting practices. The one program which I am aware has been tried to date has used funds for manpower training courses to run a course on goose hunting in one of the communities. Many of these problems are not with intensive hunters but rather with young part-time or casual hunters. Nevertheless, an ISP program might be designed to help alleviate this problem.

A training component could be built into future ISP type programs, by having young people participate in ISP for an initial year or two as apprentices. Such a status could involve a requirement that certain hunting time at each season be spent either in the camp of a parent or relative, or participating in a camp especially run by an elder for young men who cannot hunt with families. These might include young people whose families do not hunt, or who are not hunting in a given season, or who are located too far distant to be accessible for a given season. Definition of the apprenticeship system, identification of those who should be enrolled in it, and recognition of those who "graduate" would have to be in the hands of community elders. This again emphasizes the need for additional forms of community



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participation in administration. An ISP program would not however oblige young adults who do not seek eligibility to participate in ISP to partake in an apprenticeship program. Nevertheless the existence of such a program might encourage wider participation.

12. ISP is a program for which the participation of the beneficiary population has been uniquely high in both the planning and implementation stages, but it is also a formal program run by an administrative bureaucracy, and at times beneficiaries express the view that they should have a yet more active role in running the program. Several instances of specific roles elders think could be taken locally are indicated above. In general people appreciate the way the program has been specifically designed for their needs, and they appreciate access to local employees of the ISP Board.

But, some of the legalistic and bureaucratic features of the program appear to local beneficiaries to be too inflexible, and to result in decisions being taken that are not in the best interest of a specific beneficiary or the intention of the program. Similarly, the final decision-making power of the Board, whose head offices are in Quebec City seems far away from day-to-day concerns of people, and at times there is a feeling that there is a lack of communication and participation. This is so despite the considerable emphasis by ISP Board members, Cree and Quebec appointees, on being open and responsive to community level concerns and to problems of individual cases.

This condition might be ameliorated in future ISP type programs by more direct local consultation, possibly involving a formal process. The trappers' association is intended to provide a political and organizational framework for hunters, and this should extend to representation in ISP operations. This could take the form, for example, of having the local trappers' committees play a formal role in establishing eligibility for ISP benefits; and having regular consultations with ISP board members. It is also possible that representation on an ISP-type board should involve such community consultation as well, although I have not heard this suggestion specifically in Cree communities. In short it may be advisable to have a popular and relatively direct forum for local participation in any future program modeled on ISP.

13. There have been numerous administrative adjustments which have had to be made to facilitate a clear and effective operation of the program, most of which have worked very well, and some of which are undergoing continuing readjustment. It is not worth discussing each of these here, but I will just note some of the problems that have or are being resolved:

-cases where the head of the beneficiary unit does not have

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regular employment but the spouse does have led to a reinterpretation of some eligibility requirements;

- cases where welfare payments, or other incompatible social aid benefits, have been received by beneficiaries have led to a provision for reducing ISP payments, which was found to be less financially burdensome for beneficiaries than the alternative of having beneficiaries reimburse the governments;
- problems of recovering over-payments when people drop out of the program have resulted in a provision that eligibility cannot be re-established until repayment is made;
- problems with the timing of payments in relation to annual variations in weather conditions which affect hunting or travel have required a more flexible statement of payments schedules;
- the need to spread out recovery of over-payments so that the amounts received each quarter do not vary dramatically has been accepted; and
- affirmation of the rights of husbands and wives to ISP benefits checks has been necessary.

Each of these issues has required a modification or a reinterpretation of the original text of the JBNQA, and they have demonstrated the value of giving the ISP Board considerable discretionary power to review and interpret the program.

### Funding Issues

14. The single greatest problem with ISP since its implementation has been the upper limit on the number of paid man-days, and therefore on the growth of total costs, and also possibly on the growth of the number of beneficiaries. This limit has created an element of uncertainty among beneficiaries about the future of ISP. About how the program may have to be changed in the future, and how access may have to be restricted. This uncertainty works directly against the aims of the program. It reduces hunters confidence in the potential stability and future of the hunting way of life which ISP was intended to enhance.

The limitation on the number of man-days was inserted into the JBNQA late in the negotiation process to provide a general upper limit to the possible costs of ISP to the governments. It was insisted on by governments because estimates of the likely initial enrollments to ISP varied considerably, ranging from 700 to nearly 1200, and because of the innovative nature of the program which made predictions of its success difficult. When there was a shift in the negotiations to a separate per diem paid for days spent hunting by both the beneficiary unit head and the spouse it should have resulted in an upward revision to the paid man-day limit, but it was not done in the heat of the moment. The 150,000 paid man-day limit was exceeded in the first year of ISP operation, but the existence of a settling-in period before

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it applied allowed time for the Cree to argue that the program was running well and that the limit should be revised. This was done, and a new limit was fixed at 286,000 paid man-days. This limit is still in effect, but it too was exceeded, in 1982-83, when the number of ISP beneficiaries increased significantly. The ISP Board has this time proposed to Quebec and the Cree that the limit be raised. The program is in fact so structured legally that application of a limit would result in a complex legal situation, because each individual beneficiary who meets the eligibility criteria has a legal right to receive the benefits provided for, and the ISP Board has a legal responsibility to pay them; whereas Quebec may or may not be legally obliged to transfer funds needed to pay over the man-day limit. In fact, there has been a general spirit of support from Quebec for the program since it has been clear that it is running well and is a success, at it is probably only the general economic conditions at this time that cause concern for the levels of program costs.

The lesson for design of any ISP-type programs in the future however is that such limits should be avoided. They work against the main goals of the program, they can create complex legal and administrative problems and they consume considerable resources. The success of the Cree ISP should provide a basis for others to argue that such programs can work, and that there is good grounds for expecting participation levels to be plausible, if substantial and variable.

It should be commented on here that the existence of a limit in the ISP has led some observers to comment that whether a legal limit exists or not, the land and the biological resources themselves set an upper limit on the number of people who can actively pursue hunting. While factually true, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is possible to specify, even at any one time, what the carrying capacity of a territory is. For example, while some resources such as big game and waterfowl are intensively utilized today, that does not mean their populations may not increase in the future. At the present time both caribou and moose populations seem to be increasing in the area. More important, while these animals are heavily utilized today, the small game of the Cree region are probably about three times more biologically productive than the big game, and they presently provide one-third to one-half the food of the big game. That is, small game are under-utilized. While it is unlikely that anyone would be prepared to live predominantly on small game today, as some Cree had to do a few generations ago, it is significant that the harvests of small game appear to have increased following the introduction of ISP. With more time and a different technology many hunters now find it desirable to harvest more smaller game. This changes any calculations of the potential carrying capacity of the land. This indicates that programs like ISP change the

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potential carrying capacity rather than being simply limited by it. There is a limit, but it is a function of what resources hunters find it possible and worthwhile to harvest, and this is a function in part of the economic resources, the time and the technology at their disposal. It is important to avoid assuming that hunting will always remain as it is today. History shows that at times people have survived on big game, fur-bearers, fish, waterfowl and small game, in various combinations. And historical evidence also suggests that at no time are all available game resources ever fully utilized. In addition, it is important to avoid the tendency of some observers to think of big game and fur-bearer hunting as "real hunting", and to devalue small gaming. As hunters themselves say, they respect and use all wildlife, and their parents or grandparents survived off of the small game. This discussion may be a bit too long but questions such as these constantly recur in discussions of subsistence hunting, and they need to be evaluated very critically. These arguments may be used to try to justify limits, where flexibility and an ability to expand are needed.

15. While funding for the ISP has been received steadily and with relative security, funding for the CTA has been erratic and sometimes difficult to arrange. Up to June 30, 1984 the ISP Board will have distributed an estimated \$55 million to Cree beneficiaries, as well as receiving over \$1 million for administrative expenses. This contrasts dramatically with the CTA which has received significantly less than \$1 million total for both programs and administration from government sources. In addition the CRA has had to contribute substantially from its general compensation funds to support the CTA.

As several commentators on the JBNQA have noted, where the obligations for payments have been for specific amounts and on specified schedules, provisions have been implemented effectively, and where the provisions have not been as specific implementation has been more mixed. The provisions in the JBNQA for the CTA were open-ended. The founding of the CTA was made conditional on the results of a feasibility study. The agreement stated that various types of CTA programs should be considered by the study, but none were specifically committed; and funding was left with a general statement that if CTA was established the governments and the CRA would assist with funding to the extent possible. Given the general nature of the commitment the development of CTA has been a substantial success. And, this indicates that general commitments are important.

Nevertheless, the considerable time and effort it now takes to justify and fund the CTA suggest that in future provisions for the kind of programs and services it supplies, see above, should be negotiated to the extent that they can be foreseen and the

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required budgets estimated. It would probably take considerable discussion among hunters to define an initial set of services appropriate for a given population, but the list of projects tried elsewhere could provide a starting point. As well as specifying particular services open-ended provisions would be needed as well.

6. The Cree Regional Authority has had to expend substantial sums to aid and push implementation of the provisions of the ISP, and to help support CTA programs where government funding as been inadequate. Again, as many commentators on the JBNQA have noted, the costs to the Cree of aiding and pushing forward the legislation, implementation, monitoring, and revision needed after signing the JBNQA were considerably under-estimated, and few specific provisions were made to assure recovery of these costs. Some recovery was made, varying from case to case, but future programs should provide for the reimbursement of such costs.

### COMPARISON OF ISP WITH OTHER MEANS OF IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SUBSISTENCE HUNTERS

The possibility of seeking development of new ISP-type programs in other parts of Canada raises several basic choices among different types of programs, and among several fundamentally different means of funding and running such programs. The Cree experience may be one useful perspective from which to briefly consider some of these choices.

A program like ISP can meet the needs of families of hunters for cash incomes, but it cannot by itself provide access to or control of the goods and services hunters require. As indicated previously, it is therefore only one part of the range of provisions needed to strengthen the economic basis of a hunting economy. Programs are also needed to provide the basic infrastructure for hunters, such as those available through CTA. In other parts of Canada various other hunters assistance programs have also been established. In general, these programs provide access to basic goods and services, either on an individual or a community basis. In general, these programs are more like those run by the CTA than they are like ISP.

The most distinctive features of ISP in comparison to these other programs are:

that ISP provides funds which the recipients are able to dispose of completely at their own discretion;

that ISP is intended not only to meet the direct costs of hunting, but also to provide an better and adequate standard of

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living and economic security for hunters, and it assumes hunting is a cultural and social way of life, not only an economic activity; and

-that ISP provides substantially more funding than has ever been available through hunters and trappers assistance programs.

However, it needs to be emphasized again that ISP must not only be combined with other types of hunter assistance programs to be effective, general rights to the wildlife, priority access to wildlife resources, and protection of wildlife from the impacts of development are equally essential to the continuation of hunting.

The choice of funding options is a difficult one, and it involves several trade-offs. Funding on an annual basis from government funds has worked well for ISP in several respects.

-Given the present benefits budget of over \$10 million a year, it would take a capitalization of possibly \$100+ million in 1984 just to provide sufficient income. It seems unlikely this could have been successfully negotiated in addition to the other funds the Cree and Inuit received in the context of the JBNQA, because of the extreme attention given at the political level in the government to the total publicly announced "cost" of the Agreement. (The annual ISP budget now is of roughly similar size to the annual income and budget available to the Cree Board of Compensation, which manages the capitalization from the JBNQA).

-ISP has demonstrated an ability to expand rapidly and on short notice during a period of declining economic conditions when participation and costs jumped by approximately 20% in a single year. This was possible because the annual program funding depends primarily on what potential beneficiaries do. It is difficult to expect that capital funds invested in the market place would have that rapid a potential for growth, over and above inflation. While capitalization should be arranged so that it could be added to as economic circumstances changed, it seems less likely that a process of review for additional capitalization could respond as quickly to increased demand on program funds.

-Similarly, the program has been running relatively well in a period of rapidly changing investment markets which could cause at least short-term difficulties for the income available to a capitalized program.

Of course, ISP's weakness has been the threat of the application of the man-day limit, which should be avoided by future programs.

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Looking at ISP funding in relation to a program funded through capitalization, whether from governments or from participation in the value of resource developments, annual government grants look as if they have some short-comings that also need to be noted.

-It is likely that had funding been by means of capitalization, then it might have been possible to negotiate a program in which the beneficiary population had a clear majority on all decision-making bodies. That is, that by taking a greater risk and tying themselves to a more fixed level of funding, they would be able to claim greater control of the funds and program. The Cree Board of Compensation, for example, has a minority of government representatives, and only a few fixed rules restricting its investments and expenditures. So long as funding comes annually from government accounts, and is relatively open-ended and expandable, governments are likely to insist on stronger representation in decision-making.

-It also seems likely that with capitalized funding a more flexible and less formal and bureaucratic program might be established in which the beneficiary population, because it has accepted a relatively more fixed form of funding, could make a stronger case that it should be able to modify the program in almost whatever way was needed to meet the agreed upon objectives.

-It also seems like that capital funding would be more difficult for a government to tie up than would annual disbursements, should a government decide to disrupt the local economy.

It may be worth repeating that the Cree did not face the choices set out above, and that they have not suffered in practice many of the short-comings just cited, but nevertheless the possibilities exist and must be considered.

This discussion of funding options might be summarized by the contrasting the choices on the dimensions of security, flexibility, and control.

Yearly government payments:

-are more secure in the face of long-run market cycles, although possibly subject to government disruption in the short-term;

-have greater potential for rapid expansion of beneficiaries and benefits;

-tend to involve a greater sharing of control between beneficiaries and governments in the structure and operation of the program.

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The strengths and weaknesses of capitalization are in many respects the opposites of the above:

- it is less secure in the face of market cycles, but more secure from government disruption;

- it has more potential for modifying the disbursement and operation of the program, but would be less able to rapidly respond to changing need for additional funds;

- it should provide a greater role in decision-making by the beneficiaries.

The choice is a complex one, and the encouraging point is that it seems likely that both kinds of funding can work well in practice. Both seem capable of providing a secure economic environment for hunters, and of providing the basis for a program that can continue to operate over many years so as to contribute to confidence in the future of hunting. And, both seem compatible with the revisions that will surely be needed in the long-term as the programs and conditions change. Both, in short, seem capable of combining reasonable levels of control, security with flexibility. Indeed, my sense is that providing the economic base for hunters may in the long run be easier than protecting the resources.