

The Maximum of Mishap: Adventurous Tourists and the State in the Northwest Territories, 1926-1948

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Directly after the Second World War, at a time when most North American governments were clamouring for tourist dollars, the Northwest Territories Council sought to discourage pleasure-seeking visitors from heading north of 60. A small but troublesome group of travellers who straddled the boundary between exploration and tourism, whom the author terms “adventurous” tourists, may help to explain northern officials’ unusual antipathy toward tourism. This article details territorial administrators’ evolving (and, in the end, not entirely successful) attempts to classify these travellers, monitor their movements, and mitigate the potential threats they posed to northern peoples and landscapes.

Tout juste après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, à un moment où la plupart des gouvernements d’Amérique du Nord réclamaient à grands cris la venue de touristes, le Conseil des Territoires du Nord-Ouest tenta de dissuader les visiteurs en quête de plaisir de mettre le cap sur le nord du 60° parallèle. Un groupe de voyageurs, peu nombreux mais difficiles, qui chevauchaient la frontière entre exploration et tourisme et que l’auteure qualifie de touristes « aventureux », contribue sans doute à expliquer l’antipathie inhabituelle des autorités du Nord à l’égard du tourisme. Le présent article expose en détail l’évolution des tentatives des administrateurs pour catégoriser ces voyageurs, suivre leurs déplacements et atténuer les menaces possibles qu’ils faisaient peser sur les populations et les paysages nordiques, tentatives qui, en fin de compte, n’ont pas été entièrement couronnées de succès.

“DON’T WANT Tourists in Northwest Territories,” proclaimed the *Lethbridge Herald* on May 22, 1948. The article beneath this startling headline summarized a discussion held at a recent meeting of the Northwest Territories Council in Ottawa. Roy A. Gibson, the deputy commissioner of the Territories, lamented the increasing numbers of people wishing to travel north “with little conception of the

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difficulties they face.” Driven by a spirit of adventure and a desire to see the fabled Northland for themselves, tourists lacking appropriate backcountry experience or equipment often wound up being rescued or cared for by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Council resolved to investigate strategies to discourage pleasure-seeking visitors to the Territories.¹

In viewing tourists as pests rather than desired guests, the Northwest Territories Council may well have been unique among North American governments in the 1940s.² Certainly the Council diverged dramatically from usual attitudes toward tourism in postwar Canada and the United States. Keenly aware of the trade’s rapidly growing economic importance, southern politicians, business owners, and tourism promoters clamoured for tourist dollars. After 1945, the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, the organization responsible for leading and coordinating the promotion of tourism across the country, expanded its print and radio advertising campaigns south of the border and organized ever more tourism-themed events and conferences. The Canadian Travel Bureau enjoined citizens to act as good hosts to foreign visitors, believing that all Canadians, not merely those employed in tourism-related positions, should support this sector of the economy.³

The discordant note struck by northern administrators within this positive milieu deserves both attention and explanation. This essay traces their antipathy to tourism to its origins between the wars. It centres on a small, but troublesome group of visitors who straddled the indistinct boundary between exploration and

- 1 Library and Archives Canada [hereafter LAC], RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, “Don’t Want Tourists in Northwest Territories,” *Lethbridge Herald*, May 22, 1948. This paper does not discuss tourism in the Yukon, which diverged early and substantially from tourism elsewhere in the Canadian North. Although terms like “northern” and “Arctic” appear throughout this essay for the sake of variety, here they refer only to the Northwest Territories, which before April 1, 1999, included present-day Nunavut.
- 2 Scholars have noted subsequent manifestations of anti-tourist rhetoric elsewhere on the continent. In 1967, Florida’s state attorney branded university students visiting communities such as Fort Lauderdale for Spring Break “a despicable class of tourists.” Ashley Doiron, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney argue that these students posed an “invasive, administrative challenge” for municipal and state authorities throughout that decade and beyond. See Doiron, Dawson, and Gidney, “The Students Swarm to these Peaceful Shores in Doves’: An Historical Overview of the Postwar Spring Break Phenomenon,” *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d’histoire de l’éducation*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2012), p. 2. North of the border, the National Film Board’s *Tourist Go Home* (1959) constructed a plot around the fictitious Anti-Tourist League, which lamented tourism’s consumption of Canadian resources and attempted to spread anti-tourist propaganda throughout Canadian society. See Alisa Apostle, “The Display of a Tourist Nation: Canada in Government Film, 1945-1959,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2001), pp. 194-196, and “Canada, Vacations Unlimited: The Canadian Government Tourism Industry, 1934-1959” (PhD dissertation, Queen’s University, 2003), pp. 305-313. That such a film could be made, and its parodic nature understood by viewers, suggests that by the end of the 1950s, some Canadians were beginning to feel uneasy about tourism’s effects. *Tourist Go Home* simultaneously acknowledged and attempted to disarm their concerns.
- 3 Michael Dawson, “A ‘Civilizing’ Industry: Leo Dolan, Canadian Tourism Promotion, and the Celebration of Mass Culture,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 4 (2011), p. 440; Karen Dubinsky, “‘Everybody Likes Canadians’: Canadians, Americans, and the Post-World War II Travel Boom” in Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), pp. 340-342; Apostle, “The Display of a Tourist Nation” and “Canada, Vacations Unlimited.” On postwar tourism in Canada, see also Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), chap. 4-5; Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999), chap. 6-8.

tourism, and whom we might today call “adventure” or “extreme” tourists. Intent on making ambitious trips outside normal transportation corridors, such travellers framed their trips as quasi-scientific expeditions, situating themselves explicitly within traditions of strenuous performance in the wilderness. Yet they placed strain on northern peoples and landscapes as well, by endangering their rescuers, depleting valuable stores of game, food, and fuel, disturbing archaeological sites, and contravening social mores at Euro-Canadian settlements. Far from contributing money to government coffers, these “adventurous” tourists cost civil servants in Ottawa and the Territories disproportionate amounts of time, energy, and material resources.

No small part of that time and energy was devoted to locating the precise place that adventurous tourists occupied relative to other southern sojourners in the North. At first, bureaucrats placed them in the same category as scientists and explorers, believing optimistically that they, too, might be capable of obtaining novel and useful information in the course of their travels off the beaten track. As these initial hopes proved false, officials began to distinguish more rigorously between scientists and explorers, whose specialized training enabled them to serve the public good by producing new knowledge about the North, and tourists and “special writers,” who were capable of achieving only personal profit and pleasure from their journeys. While this distinction freed the government from any special responsibility to assist tourists during their time in the North, it simultaneously freed tourists from the obligations to which scientists and explorers were formally bound through permits. Lacking any effective means by which to control the movements or actions of adventurous tourists, bureaucrats could only offer advice when asked and pray that such tourists did not do too much damage to themselves, other humans or non-humans, or northern landscapes.

Janice Cavell and Jeff Noakes have written of the Northwest Territories after 1925 that every act of scientific or geographical research was a manifestation of state power and thus of Canadian sovereignty.⁴ If so, then every act of adventurous tourism exposed the state’s fragile hold upon its northernmost lands. Historians studying the relationship between tourism and the state have tended to focus on the role of tourism in discourses of nation-building. Yet, as John K. Walton has noted, tourists can also subvert attempts at political, economic, and moral control emanating from centres of power.⁵ Despite the territorial administration’s increasingly reactionary attempts to prevent adventurous tourists from reaching the hinterland, many still slipped through the bureaucratic nets meant to catch them. The inability of Arctic states to regulate adventure and wilderness tourism effectively remains a key problem in the region’s management of this industry even today.⁶ Such issues are hardly new, but rather date back to the beginnings of tourism in northern Canada.

4 Janice Cavell and Jeff Noakes, *Acts of Occupation: Canada and Arctic Sovereignty, 1918-25* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), p. 249.

5 John K. Walton, “Prospects in Tourism History: Evolution, State of Play and Future Developments,” *Tourism Management*, vol. 30 (2009), p. 789.

6 Bernard Stonehouse and John M. Snyder, *Polar Tourism: An Environmental Perspective* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2010), pp. 40-41.

As in other frontier settings, those beginnings are difficult to pinpoint precisely. In the case of northern Canada, the task is complicated by a perspectival gulf between southerners and northerners concerning the issue of mobility. Well into the twentieth century, North Americans and Europeans living outside the North continued to view all Subarctic and Arctic travel, including that of tourists, through the lens of environmental exceptionality. In fictional and non-fictional narratives, they coded the movement of all white, male bodies north of the fifty-fifth parallel as at least somewhat adventurous.⁷ By contrast, northerners viewed tourists as relatively unexceptional for several reasons. Northern society in the first half of the twentieth century was highly mobile; frequent travel was the norm for Dene, Metis, Inuit, and Euro-Canadian residents.⁸ Moreover, tourists used the same modes of transportation as everyone else: ships, canoes, or small boats, often with outboard motors, and later float or ski planes. Tourists were hardly inconspicuous—old-timers liked to test their credulity with tall tales of the North—but were accepted as fellow travellers even so.⁹ Travel that seemed extraordinary to southerners appeared ordinary, even banal, to northern residents.

Although few people travelled for enjoyment in the nineteenth-century Arctic, the first pleasure-seeking visitors to the Northwest Territories arrived late in that century.¹⁰ In 1885, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) supply ship *Wrigley* began regular service on the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers, transporting freight and a few passengers from Fort Smith to the shores of the Arctic Ocean. By the early 1920s, would-be travellers to Canada's Western Arctic could choose among different routes, ships, and transportation companies, and the vessels that traversed northern rivers had been refurbished with passenger comfort in mind. Each June after 1919, the HBC magazine *The Beaver* recorded tourists' presence on the first steamship heading north from Waterways, the new southern point of departure on the Slave River, which enjoyed weekly rail service from Edmonton. "The tourist travel will ... rapidly increase, when the fact that one can comfortably

7 Both historical commentators and present-day scholars have usually regarded early twentieth-century female visitors to the North as travellers or tourists, rather than scientists or explorers. The literature on women and northern travel is therefore of great relevance to historians of northern tourism. See, for example, Gwyneth Hoyle, "Women of Determination: Northern Journeys by Women Before 1940" in Bruce W. Hodgins and Margaret Hobbs, eds., *Nastawgan: The Canadian North by Canoe and Snowshoe* (Weston, ON: Betelgeuse Books, 1985), pp. 117-140; Lisa N. LaFramboise, "Travellers in Skirts: Women and English-Language Travel Writing in Canada, 1820-1926" (PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, 1997), chap. 3; Barbara E. Kelcey, *Alone in Silence: European Women in the Canadian North before 1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), chap. 3-4; Joan Sangster, "Constructing the 'Eskimo' Wife: White Women's Travel Writing, Colonialism, and the Canadian North, 1940-60" in Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, eds., *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity and Dissent, 1945-75* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), pp. 23-44.

8 As late as 1930, officials classed all Euro-Canadian residents of the North as transient, knowing that most would return "outside" after several years. See F. H. Kitto, *The Northwest Territories 1930* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1930), p. 27. On the theme of transiency in northern history, see Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, "Introduction: The North and the Nation" in Abel and Coates, eds., *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), p. 16.

9 Richard Finnie, *Canada Moves North* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), p. 179.

10 I. S. MacLaren and Lisa N. LaFramboise, introduction to Clara Vyvyan, *The Ladies, the Gwich'in, and the Rat: Travels on the Athabasca, Mackenzie, Rat, Porcupine, and Yukon Rivers in 1926*, eds. MacLaren and LaFramboise (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1998), p. xlvii.

and speedily travel to the ‘land of the midnight sun’ is given the publicity it deserves,” predicted F. C. Jackson, an HBC clerk stationed at Fort Simpson, in 1921.¹¹ After the First World War, the HBC began to offer complete outfits and travel information for tourists. It provided letters of credit to present at trading posts, secured experienced guides and canoeemen for those wishing to depart from standard itineraries of travel, and helped tourists book tickets on company steamships plying northern river routes.



Figure 1: Freight being unloaded from the *S. S. Distributor* at Fort Good Hope (Rádeyílkóé) on the Mackenzie River, 1937. The *Distributor* was one among many steamboats that facilitated tourist travel in the Northwest Territories between the wars. Photographer: M. Meikle.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, accession number 1973-357 NPC, item 1973-11-580f, PA-101616.

Most pleasure-seeking visitors to the Northwest Territories between the wars were content with the month-long round trip by steamship between Waterways and Aklavik, which cost \$325 with meals and berth included.¹² By the late twenties and early thirties, tourists could also fly to the Northwest Territories from Edmonton, Prince Albert, or Winnipeg. Northern Canada was precocious in this respect, as North American tourists did not generally travel by air before the Second World War.¹³ Yet almost no tourists seem to have taken advantage of this rare opportunity, likely for financial reasons. A four-day round-trip flight between Edmonton and Aklavik cost \$477, exclusive of meals and accommodation.¹⁴ In 1937, C. W.

11 F. C. Jackson, “First Trip of 1921 Season of H.B.S.S. MacKenzie River: Company’s River Boat Which Plies to Arctic Ocean Carried Large Number of Important Men,” *The Beaver*, vol. 1, nos. 11-12 (August-September 1921), p. 14.

12 LAC, RG 85, vol. 784, file 5979, Alberta and Arctic Transportation Department, “The Midnight Route, Through Canada’s Northwestern Waterways,” n.d.

13 John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p. 171.

14 Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, p. 177. By way of comparison, in 1938, the average teacher in English Canada

Godefroy, an American entrepreneur from St. Louis, arranged with the help of the Canadian Travel Bureau to fly along the Athabasca, Slave, and Mackenzie rivers up to Aklavik and Herschel Island. The staff at Canadian Airways told him that he was “the first honest-to-goodness tourist” to have flown this route.¹⁵

Tourists were less reticent when the opportunity to visit the Eastern Arctic arose. In 1933, the HBC began to accept tourist bookings on the *R. M. S. Nascope*, the vessel that supplied Eastern Arctic posts and carried the annual government inspection party north and back again. For \$650, tourists could enjoy a three-month round-trip cruise departing from Montreal—or, for half that price, a six-week trip between Montreal and Churchill—including variable points of call in Labrador, Hudson Bay, the Arctic archipelago, and Greenland. Far more tourists applied than there were spaces available; between 5 and 25 tourists seem to have sailed on the *Nascope* in any given year.¹⁶ Before his retirement in 1940, Ralph Parsons, the HBC Fur Trade Commissioner, chose the passengers carefully in order to maintain the “right” atmosphere aboard ship.¹⁷

Tourism in the Northwest Territories did not approach anything resembling critical mass until the last quarter of the twentieth century. In 1959, the Yukon welcomed nearly 90,000 tourists; the Northwest Territories, a mere 600.¹⁸ As Bernard Stonehouse wryly observes, the masses’ tolerance for travel “stopped short of the unknown (and reputedly uncomfortable) ends of the earth.”¹⁹ Tourists who travelled north in the early twentieth century tended to be upper-class or upper-middle-class North Americans or Europeans able to take leisurely and expensive trips to distant regions. Having already visited standard tourist destinations, they sought unusual experiences in lesser-known places. The journalist Agnes Deans Cameron, who travelled on the Mackenzie steamer in 1908, wanted a “route

earned an annual salary of \$939. If, following R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, we take teachers’ salaries as commensurate with those earned by other lower middle-class or middle-class urban workers, then it is clear that interwar leisure travel to the Northwest Territories remained the preserve of the privileged few. See Gidney and Millar, “The Salaries of Teachers in English Canada, 1900-1940: A Reappraisal,” *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d’histoire de l’éducation*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2010), pp. 24, 26.

15 LAC, RG 85, vol. 931, file 12126. C. W. Godefroy, “North of North America,” n.d.

16 The price is quoted in LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, D. L. McKeand to R. A. Gibson, November 23, 1940. Finnie (*Canada Moves North*, p. 171) writes anecdotally that the *Nascope* carried a “half-dozen or more” tourists each year. According to Jan O. Lundgren, 15 per cent of the *Nascope*’s 150 passengers in 1937 were “official tourists.” See Lundgren, “The Tourism Space Penetration Processes in Northern Canada and Scandinavia: A Comparison” in C. Michael Hall and Margaret E. Johnston, eds., *Polar Tourism: Tourism in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), p. 43.

17 On the Hudson’s Bay Company’s policy of exclusivity, see LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, D. L. McKeand to R. A. Gibson, October 29, 1940. McKeand comments that under Parsons’ direction “the passenger list was well chosen but there was a marked difference in the class of passenger this season [1940] over that of previous voyages.”

18 C. Michael Hall and Margaret E. Johnston, “Introduction: Pole to Pole: Tourism Issues, Impacts and the Search for a Management Regime in Polar Regions” in Hall and Johnston, eds., *Polar Tourism*, p. 12; Robert M. Bone, “The Canadian Northland: A Study of its Economic Development with Observations on the Comparative Development of the Siberian Northland” (PhD dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1962), p. 191.

19 Bernard Stonehouse, “Tourism and the Polar Environment: Introduction” in J. M. Snyder and B. Stonehouse, eds., *Prospects for Polar Tourism* (Wallingford: CAB International, 2007), p. 1.



Figure 2: The *R. M. S. Nascopie* anchored in Pangnirtung Fjord off the coast of Baffin Island, Nunavut, August 1946. After 1932, the *Nascopie* carried a handful of tourists to the Eastern Canadian Arctic and Greenland each summer. Photographer: George Hunter.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, National Film Board of Canada, accession number 1971-271, item 26566, e010692596.

unspoiled by Cook's"—one that eschewed the beaten path and its stale attractions and itineraries.²⁰

The Northwest Territories also presented American tourists with a therapeutic wilderness frontier unlike anything else then available in the lower forty-eight. Urban dwellers were drawn north for rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation through intimate contact with the natural world in exotic and often spectacular surrounds. Those wishing gentle activities could go hiking, bird-watching, or flower-picking whenever their ships put into port; those enamoured of the strenuous life could camp, canoe, hunt, or fish on the shores of, or a little way inland from major rivers and lakes. As a scenic outdoor playground *par excellence*, the Territories perfectly fulfilled stereotypical early twentieth-century perceptions of Canada

²⁰ Kelcey, *Alone in Silence*, p. 58.

promulgated through promotional films and glossy booklets aimed at American audiences.²¹ Between the wars, many of the Territories' major institutions, including the Department of the Interior's Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch (NWTYB), the Anglican Church, and the HBC, also produced photographic and cinematographic records of their northern activities for dissemination throughout the North Atlantic world.²² Although these visual materials were not primarily intended to encourage tourist travel to the Northwest Territories, their romantic and rugged depictions of northern life may have drawn adventurous travellers to Canada's high latitudes nonetheless.

Early northern tourism was not without its discomforts or risks. The first tourists travelled aboard vessels designed to carry fur trade cargo. They endured cramped dining rooms and unorthodox sleeping quarters aboard the *Wrigley* in the 1890s, and snail-paced voyages aboard old-fashioned, wood-burning paddle-wheelers in the 1920s, which tarried at each settlement as cargo was offloaded. Before the late 1930s, most settlements had no designated accommodation for casual visitors. Local residents kindly offered unannounced travellers a makeshift bed in their homes or some ground in their yards to pitch a tent.²³ Depending on the region visited, the summer climate was usually more salubrious than tourists expected. But unexpected squalls, storms, rocks, or ice encountered en route could turn a pleasurable journey into something more serious.

As mentioned above, northerners routinely downplayed the risks of northern travel through familiarity with prevailing conditions, and southerners routinely inflated them through familiarity with prevailing heroic narratives. The truth lay somewhere in between. Travelling to the Northwest Territories before the Second World War was a difficult, expensive, and occasionally dangerous undertaking. "Unless you have sufficient funds, time, and good reason for it," the journalist Richard Finnie wrote in 1942, "you simply do not go in or out." Writing nearly 25 years later, the economist Kenneth Rea concurred: "While there are always a few tourists who thrive on hardship encountered in travel, partly because this increases the scarcity value possessed by a remote place of interest, it is difficult to think of an 'industry' developing under such circumstances."²⁴ Tourists in the interwar Territories assumed a greater amount of personal risk than they would have done while holidaying elsewhere. Reflecting on Daniel Boorstin's comment that "when the traveler's risks are insurable, he becomes a tourist," one is tempted to place these tourists in the traveller column.²⁵

Partly because of the risks involved, the Northwest Territories administration was not keen to encourage tourism in the region. In practice, however, the

21 Dominique Brégent-Heald, "Vacationland: Film, Tourism, and Selling Canada, 1934-1948," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Fall 2012), pp. 28, 34-35.

22 See Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-45* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004) for details of these institutional activities and records.

23 Kelcey, *Alone in Silence*, pp. 55, 62; Morris Zaslow, *The Northward Expansion of Canada, 1914-1967* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988), p. 138.

24 Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, p. 112; Kenneth J. Rea, *The Political Economy of the Canadian North* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 93.

25 Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), p. 91.

transportation companies that provided tourists with carriage, meals, and lodging assumed enough of that risk to pacify officials. Tourists effectively became temporary wards of these companies. This was an important consideration for Euro-Canadians in the early twentieth-century North, where one's occupational affiliation determined who was ultimately responsible for one's care and behaviour. Like other economic activities in the interwar North, tourism depended upon the investment and infrastructure of private companies that retained close ties with the administration in Ottawa. Following regular routes of travel aboard vessels operated by standard commercial concerns, most tourists remained safely under a blended colonial and corporate gaze while in the Territories.

Because tourists were few at first and endured somewhat rough conditions, a firm distinction between tourists and explorers developed slowly. This was partly an accident of chronology. The eras of exploration and tourism overlapped in the early twentieth-century North, making it difficult to distinguish some of the later explorers from the earliest tourists.²⁶ Many interwar travellers on the Mackenzie River also preferred to cultivate adventurous identities, according to Richard Finnie: "[O]nce having reached Eskimo country they almost automatically acquired the status of explorers, and many of them wrote magazine articles and even books about their experience."²⁷ Before the northern administration could fully comprehend the ramifications of tourist travel, it had to learn to see tourists as distinct entities. By the mid-1930s, the activities of adventurous tourists had finally prompted administrators to calibrate travelling identities more precisely.

At first, civil servants placed adventurous tourists in the same category as other visitors who wished to travel in the hinterland, namely field scientists and explorers. This semantic move becomes clearer with the passage of the Scientists and Explorers Ordinance in 1925. An amendment to section 8 of the Northwest Territories Act, it stipulated that those intending to pursue scientific or exploratory activities in the Territories had to apply for a permit to do so. The ordinance was aimed at the recent activities of foreign explorers such as Donald MacMillan and Richard Byrd in the Arctic archipelago.²⁸ These men had violated Canadian sovereignty by neglecting to inform the government of their excursions into national space. They had also depleted scarce herds of game animals to supplement their diets, and carried away biological and archaeological specimens for the coffers of American museums.²⁹ This last offence might not have mattered so greatly had the federal civil service possessed an active corps of northern scientists and explorers to perform similar tasks for Canadian institutions. Throughout the twenties and thirties, however, the Geological Survey of Canada had neither the funds nor the

26 John S. Marsh, "Tourism and Conservation: Case Studies in the Canadian North" in J. G. Nelson *et al.*, eds., *Arctic Heritage: Proceedings of a Symposium, August 24-28, 1985, Banff, Alberta, Canada* (Ottawa: ACUNS, 1987), p. 303.

27 Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, p. 170.

28 See D. H. Dinwoodie, "Arctic Controversy: The 1925 Byrd-MacMillan Expedition Example," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 53, no. 1 (March 1972), pp. 51-65; Cavell and Noakes, *Acts of Occupation*.

29 See, for example, LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, O. S. Finnie to J. D. Craig, March 13, 1924; Craig to Finnie, March 14, 1924.

personnel to undertake expeditions to remote and economically “unproductive” regions like the Arctic.³⁰

The Scientists and Explorers Ordinance enabled the government to solve the problems posed above. By requiring field workers to apply for permits before entering the Northwest Territories, government officials could track the movements and motives of foreign researchers. Clause 4a specified that the objects of scientific or exploratory work could not be “commercial or political in any way,” thereby neutralizing any threat that these visitors might pose to Canadian sovereignty.³¹ The ordinance also enabled officials to gather more information about the territories they administered without the effort or expense that fieldwork demanded. In exchange for access to northern Canadian biological resources, investigators had to submit a report of their scientific findings, a list of specimens taken, and a record of their travels in the Northwest Territories.³²

Because the Scientists and Explorers Ordinance offered the administration control over the movements of visitors to the Territories and access to any information they might glean, officials defined “scientific” and “exploratory” activities quite broadly at first. O. S. Finnie, the director of the NWTYB, granted several permits to travellers whose aims were not quite scientific or exploratory, but whose alien status made it desirable for officials to monitor their peregrinations. The German citizen Georg Leichner was a self-described author and explorer who wished to travel to Alaska by way of the Mackenzie River to make “a study of the country for literary purposes.” He applied for a permit in the spring of 1929. As Finnie wrote to W. W. Cory, the Deputy Minister of the Interior,

Mr. Leichner is a writer and merely wishes to go down the Mackenzie River for the purpose of securing information for articles for a German publishing firm. It might not be necessary to issue a permit to anyone taking the trip for this purpose but since the applicant is a foreigner ... it has been considered just as well to issue the permit.³³

Finnie granted a licence on similar grounds that same year to Earl Hanson, an American explorer and journalist writing a series of articles for the magazine *World's Work* about industrial and commercial activities in northern Canada.³⁴ Two years later, he did the same for Elwood Glassford, a New Yorker wishing to travel to Hudson Bay in order to visit an old friend stationed in Chesterfield Inlet and to make “a photographic study of the country and its people.”³⁵

30 Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: The Story of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842-1972* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 338, 341.

31 *An Ordinance Respecting Scientists and Explorers Passed by the North West Territories Council in the Year 1926* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1926).

32 Complementary pieces of legislation governed the removal of archaeological material (the Eskimo Ruins Ordinance) and of migratory birds (the Migratory Birds Act). Scientists and explorers applied for separate permits to collect such specimens, if desired, when they applied for a permit to conduct fieldwork in the Territories.

33 LAC, RG 85, vol. 794, file 6412, G. A. Muller to O. S. Finnie, April 17, 1929; O. S. Finnie to Cortlandt Starnes, April 19, 1929.

34 LAC, RG 85, vol. 794, file 6415, O. S. Finnie to R. A. Gibson, April 8, 1929.

35 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, Elwood L. Glassford to Commissioner of the NWT, May 23, 1931; O. S. Finnie to P. T. Coolican, June 8, 1931.

By this time, other applications had exposed the shortcomings of this generous approach toward dispensing scientist's and explorer's permits. The administration's first substantive encounter with adventurous tourists occurred in 1927. The case of John D. Fuller is worth describing in some detail. It forced officials both to specify what counted as scientific and exploratory activity and to develop a system to investigate rather than assume the legitimacy of applicants' scientific and exploratory credentials. Fuller, a temporary instructor at the Culver Summer Schools in Culver, Indiana, proposed an extensive journey from The Pas, Manitoba, to Repulse Bay via the central Arctic barrens. The expedition, which included a biologist/naturalist, intended to collect data on and photograph the fauna, flora, and physical characteristics of the country, and to supplement current maps by taking positions with a sextant as they travelled. Fuller also struck a less scientific note, admitting that "the adventure which the trip has in it was one of the things that formed the basis for my desire to go."³⁶

Finnie forwarded the application to R. M. Anderson, chief of the Biology Division at the National Museum of Canada, for his comments. He noted as he did so that the expedition's non-scientific personnel seemed "to be going merely for the trip and experience." Anderson suggested that Fuller be asked to provide two endorsements from scientists or scientific institutions. "I realize that all naturalists and explorers must make a start some time," he wrote, "but if they have done anything at all, they will have made some connections with societies and workers in similar lines."³⁷ Fuller subsequently clarified that the expedition was not under the auspices of any scientific organization, but he promised to secure letters vouching for his "sincerity of purpose and good faith." He added, "We are all aware of the many hazards and hardships which such a trip has in store for us ... but it makes our determination to win out that much stronger."³⁸

Reviewing the letters of recommendation, which attested only that two of the men had a basic education and good characters, Finnie had "grave doubts as to the official recognition" of the expedition and its members' qualifications. Anderson agreed. "From the letters and enclosures I have not been able to figure out the exact purpose of this expedition outside of being an adventure 'trip'," he observed. "They plan to go a little farther off the beaten track than the ordinary tourists." Anderson reaffirmed his support for legitimate scientists and explorers willing to work in remote districts, but insisted that those applying for a scientist's and explorer's permit should produce evidence of suitable qualifications. He reminded Finnie that "a certain class of sportsmen and tourists" sometimes posed as scientists or explorers in order to enter closed territories or hunt in closed seasons.³⁹ Finnie pronounced it "doubtful whether Mr. Fuller's expedition will add much value to

36 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, John D. Fuller to O. S. Finnie, August 5, 1927; Fuller to Finnie, August 19, 1927.

37 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, O. S. Finnie to R. M. Anderson, August 11, 1927; Anderson to Finnie, August 13, 1927.

38 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, John D. Fuller to O. S. Finnie, September 14, 1927.

39 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, O. S. Finnie to R. M. Anderson, September 28, 1927; Anderson to Finnie, November 29, 1927.

what we already know of the country.”⁴⁰ Despite his and Anderson’s qualms, the benefits of a formal contract with the party, including the ability to keep watch over their movements and to lay claim to any information they might accrue, may have led Finnie to view Fuller’s application favourably. Whatever the reason, permits were granted Fuller and his companions in the spring of 1928.

By early July, troubling reports about the expedition had begun to reach Ottawa. Corporal J. J. Molloy of the Pelican Narrows RCMP detachment considered the travellers’ equipment too lightweight, their food supply and line of credit inadequate, and their travelling speed too slow for the distance they proposed to travel.⁴¹ The assessment of J. M. Cumines, the HBC post manager at Brochet, was even bleaker, wrote Corporal James Wood of the Prince Albert RCMP detachment:

[Mr. Cumines] is satisfied that the Fuller Party can only end in disaster if allowed to proceed north into the barren land. The country from Brochet to Chesterfield Inlet is most difficult to travel through, and would entail hardships and dangers even for natives, let alone an inexperienced Party of greenhorns, with no provisions or guide, and travelling very slowly.... None of them are experienced canoemen, being the joke of the country in this regard, and the only reason they were successful in getting as far as Reindeer Lake was because of assistance and help they received from the Posts and Camps they passed through. Once north of Lac Du Brochet Post, they will be entirely on their own, and ... will undoubtedly get lost and starve to death.⁴²

Upon receiving these reports, Finnie reiterated that he had warned Fuller of the hazards and risks of his undertaking and that the government could not be held responsible for its conduct.⁴³

The party eventually turned back about 35 kilometres shy of the Manitoba-Northwest Territories border, after capsizing in Kasmere Lake and losing some of their equipment.⁴⁴ Upon their return south, they played the role of intrepid explorers to the hilt. Gordon Armstrong of Britt, Iowa, represented their trip to one reporter as “an expedition in far northern Canada which spent the summer penetrating little known and unexplored country for a geological survey and to collect specimens of plant and animal life.”⁴⁵ A more sanguine Fuller admitted that the trip had been primarily taken as a holiday, although the participants had recorded observations of flora and fauna.⁴⁶ Despite encountering dangerously fierce rapids, they regretted that they had not met with snow: “To be caught in one of your famous Canadian blizzards and to have to fight our way through it to home and beauty, well, that is the kind of thing we apparently just missed.”⁴⁷

40 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, O. S. Finnie to W. W. Cory, January 11, 1928.

41 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, J. J. Molloy to O/C Prince Albert detachment, July 5, 1928.

42 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, memorandum by James Wood, July 19, 1928.

43 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, O. S. Finnie to Cortlandt Starnes, July 28, 1928.

44 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, J. J. Molloy to O/C Prince Albert detachment, August 30, 1928.

45 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, “Returning Explorers Are Startled to Find They Had Been Reported Lost and Starving in Far North,” *Ottawa Citizen*, September 11, 1928.

46 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, “Deny Tales of Being Lost in North Manitoba,” n.d.

47 LAC, RG 85, vol. 778, file 5733, “Iowa Students Take Back Many Trophies,” *Winnipeg Free Press*,

The desire for such a holiday was not uncommon among early twentieth-century North American tourists in theory, if less often in practice. John Jakle writes of tourists' eagerness to see the "back regions" of the places to which they travelled in order to verify and amplify their experiences on well-trodden paths.⁴⁸ Playing tourist also enabled one to experiment with new identities and to act out dreams and fantasies, such as that of being a heroic explorer on a wild, uncharted frontier. There was more than a touch of antimodernism in some tourists' yearnings for challenging physical activities, seemingly authentic experiences in far-from-ordinary landscapes, and the spiritual renewal and self-realization that could ensue.⁴⁹ All these desires are mirrored in definitions of modern adventure tourism: the material and mental stresses upon participants, the sense of risk, the pursuit of exhilaration through intense experience, and, at its most extreme, the tangible danger to bodily integrity.⁵⁰ It would be anachronistic to call Fuller and his companions adventure or extreme tourists, but it seems reasonable to designate their style of tourism "adventurous."

Much scholarly ink has been spilt examining the distinction between the traveller and tourist, two identities rhetorically, if not always practically cloven by the early nineteenth century. The adventurous tourists discussed herein straddle this divide, being eager to experience the travail that lies at the etymological heart of travel, but not always sufficiently equipped or experienced enough to travel safely and independently through the backcountry to their ultimate destination.⁵¹ The northern administration wanted those eschewing standard transportation networks to prepare properly, such that "the chance of mishap may be reduced to the minimum."⁵² By contrast, adventurous tourists hoped for and sometimes sought out the maximum of mishap. Confronting the physical and psychological challenges of travel in hinterland spaces produced thrills of a kind increasingly rare elsewhere in the modern world, as quotidian risk became ever more carefully managed through the use of expert knowledge and rational planning. In eschewing this "culture of control" and succumbing to the "allure of accident," adventurous tourists deviated not only from the wishes of officials, but also from the standard practices of professional northern fieldworkers.⁵³ Most people in this latter category would have agreed with the explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson that "an adventure is a

September 10, 1928.

48 Jakle, *The Tourist*, pp. 27-29.

49 Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), p. 249.

50 Carol Southall and Linda Phillips, "Adventure Tourism" in Peter Robinson, ed., *Tourism: The Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 7-9.

51 Classic discussions of this divide appear in Boorstin, *The Image*, pp. 77-117; Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 37-64; James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). The much-repeated observation regarding travel/travail is Boorstin's.

52 LAC, RG 85, vol. 872, file 8729, R. A. Gibson to O. D. Skelton, August 6, 1936.

53 Christopher Dummitt explores the relationship between modernity and risk in *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). Though cited by Dummitt (p. 14), "culture of control" and "allure of accident" are Jackson Lears' phrases. See Lears, *Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (New York: Viking, 2003), especially chap. 7.

sign of incompetence.”⁵⁴ For adventurous tourists, however, mishaps heightened the perceived authenticity and value of their wilderness experiences. They held out the possibility of personal growth, social prestige, and monetary advantage, as detailed below. Adventurous tourists’ predilection for mishap posed a serious problem for northern administrators between the wars. Whether consciously or subconsciously, such tourists went looking for trouble, and they were generally incapable of producing useful data or specimens that might recompense civil servants for their pains.

Following their experience with the Fuller expedition, Finnie and his colleagues in the NWTYB developed a process to verify the *bona fides* of applicants for scientist’s and explorer’s licences. Prospective travellers now had to give the name of the institution or organization on whose behalf the expedition was being undertaken, as well as the scientific qualifications of those members who would be doing such work. By 1932, applicants were also asked to provide an outline of their proposed travel plans, including their routes, modes of travel, and equipment; a list of the number and kinds of specimens they intended to collect; and evidence of their financial ability to carry out their plans successfully and to fund a relief expedition if necessary.⁵⁵

Faced with this expanding list of requirements, some would-be travellers balked. One such person was Werner von Grunau, a German exchange student who had sought permission to collect specimens for the Provincial Museum of Ontario during a planned visit to northern Canada. When pressed, he admitted that his expedition was not *technically* under that institution’s auspices, although staff there had offered to give him some training and to accept any specimens he collected. H. E. Hume, chairman of the Dominion Lands Board and one of Finnie’s successors, regarded this confession as an administrative victory: “The data asked for in the Departmental letter has apparently acted as a deterrent, and similar letters to subsequent enthusiasts would prevent inequipped [*sic*] or inadequately financed individuals or parties embarking on such expeditions.”⁵⁶

Not all such individuals were deterred. In the autumn of 1934, northern administrators dealt with a pair of applications that precipitated another watershed moment in the ordinance’s history. These cases forced officials to differentiate between the multiplying and increasingly specialized categories of southerners wishing to travel in the Arctic and to determine appropriate procedures for handling each type of traveller. The Irishman Francis Kennedy Pease, accompanied by his fox terrier, was determined to locate the log books of the ill-fated expedition led by Sir John Franklin in 1845. Pease had been unable to gain the support of the Royal Geographical Society for an earlier expedition; the *Daily Mirror* and the International and Holiday Club of Gardine House, London sponsored his journey in 1934.⁵⁷ John S. (“Jack”) O’Brien, a somewhat less colourful figure, simply

54 Vilhjalmur Stefánsson, *My Life with the Eskimo*, rev. ed. (London: George G. Harrap, 1924), p. 18.

55 See, for example, LAC, RG 85, vol. 833, file 7347, H. E. Hume to W. von Grunau, April 4, 1932.

56 LAC, RG 85, vol. 833, file 7347, W. von Grunau to H. E. Hume, April 8, 1932; H. E. Hume to H. H. Rowatt, April 15, 1932.

57 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7951, F. K. Pease to R. A. Gibson, September 11, 1934.

outlined what was by then a very familiar proposal: he wished to travel through the Northwest Territories for the purpose of “scientific study” and to gather material for a publication.⁵⁸ While Pease made it no farther north or west than Winnipeg, O’Brien was able to reach Churchill. There, he met David Irwin, an American adventurer who had travelled from Alaska to the west coast of Hudson Bay during the winter of 1934-1935. O’Brien found more than enough material in Irwin’s journey for the two to co-author a book about the latter’s escapades.⁵⁹

Neither application was particularly unusual or troublesome. Arriving nearly simultaneously, however, they galvanized northern officials into action. At a meeting of the Northwest Territories Council held on October 17, 1934, R. A. Gibson argued that these expeditions demonstrated the need for further regulations to govern such applications, which could no longer be adjudicated under the Scientists and Explorers Ordinance. “Frequently individuals cannot get the backing of scientific societies,” he said, “and really propose visiting the Territories for publicity rather than for scientific purposes.” Harold W. McGill, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, elaborated upon this distinction. He noted that while the latter kind of expedition was undertaken in the public interest, the former was largely done in the interest of the individual.⁶⁰ The identification of pecuniary interest became the grounds on which similar applications were subsequently denied. Travellers who intended to profit from their experiences were ineligible for a scientist’s and explorer’s licence under clause 4a of the ordinance, which prohibited commercial activities.

Some months later, Major D. L. McKeand, the superintendent of the Western Arctic, composed a memorandum that reveals just how complex understandings of Euro-Canadian mobility in the Northwest Territories had become by the mid-thirties. McKeand attempted to classify and define different kinds of northern travellers, an exercise that had seemed unnecessary a mere decade before. Both scientists and explorers were now firmly identified as representatives of universities, museums, or other institutions of recognized standing and national importance.⁶¹ This criterion both reflected the changes in the application process noted above and reaffirmed the administration’s newfound commitment to avoid granting a licence to “a writer or other unqualified person whose contributions to science would be of little value.”⁶² At the other end of the spectrum, McKeand’s definition of a tourist was lengthy but precise:

Passengers in private or public conveyances owned or operated by regular transportation concerns soliciting traffic in and for the Territories; persons using

58 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7944, J. S. O’Brien to R. A. Gibson, August 31, 1934. The significance of these two cases is reflected in their file names: Pease’s is subtitled “problems and policy re: issue of scientists’ and explorers’ permit,” and O’Brien’s is subtitled “policy re: issue of explorers’ permits.”

59 LAC, RG 85, vol. 861, file 8209, D. L. McKeand to J. Lorne Turner, June 12, 1935; John S. O’Brien and David Irwin, *Alone Across the Top of the World: The Authorized Story of the Arctic Journey of David Irwin as Told to Jack O’Brien* (Chicago and Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1935).

60 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7951, Minutes of the 53rd Session of the Northwest Territories Council, October 17, 1934.

61 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, D. L. McKeand to J. Lorne Turner, June 28, 1935.

62 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7940, D. L. McKeand to J. Lorne Turner, January 17, 1935.

privately owned canoes, aircraft or other methods of transportation and following the more or less regular routes of travel, and others employing white or native owned boats, dog sleds, etc. and depending on the owner's knowledge of the country to reach a given destination.⁶³

His focus on the means rather than the motives of touristic travel reflects the government's principal concern with regard to tourists: that some individual or company experienced in northern travel would assume responsibility for their safety during their time in the Territories.

After 1934, officials considered most non-scientific travellers in the North to be tourists. Corresponding with Sue Thorne, a Californian who wished to study Inuktitut in Aklavik, the Minister of the Interior, Thomas Murphy, explained why she did not require a permit:

We do not issue Scientists and Explorers Permits to individual travellers following the usual lines of travel and availing themselves of the regular organized means of accommodation and sustenance for it is not considered necessary to specially authorize such persons ... nor do we desire to put such travellers to the inconvenience of furnishing preliminary information that is always required before a Scientists and Explorers Permit can be issued.⁶⁴

So long as travellers satisfied the immigration and customs requirements at the Canadian border, they were free to enter and journey through the Northwest Territories.

McKeand also identified two classes of traveller poised midway between the scientist/explorer and the tourist: the investigator, "representing a newspaper, magazine or other publications and collecting material on native welfare, development of natural resources and other matters of public interest," and the special writer, "seeking material for articles to be published in newspapers, magazines, etc."⁶⁵ Adventurous tourists fit best into the latter category; nearly all who left the beaten track either wrote or lectured subsequently about their northern experiences. Many were part of the first generation of professional writers to travel through the Canadian North. While most such writers kept to standard transportation systems during their time in the Northwest Territories, some insisted on a stint in the hinterland, claiming a quasi- or semi-scientific interest in the country. As territorial officials had noted, this claim often masked their real intent: the pursuit of personal profit. Popular demand for tales of adventure skyrocketed in North America and Europe between the wars.⁶⁶ Material gleaned in the course of adventurous travel was eminently saleable. It fit nicely within a literary sub-genre that emphasized the travail of travel.⁶⁷ In braving peril for pecuniary ends,

63 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, D. L. McKeand to J. Lorne Turner, June 28, 1935.

64 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7940, Thomas G. Murphy to Sue Thorne, January 21, 1935.

65 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, D. L. McKeand to J. Lorne Turner, June 28, 1935.

66 Paul Zweig, *The Adventurer* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 229; Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 171.

67 Susan Bassnett, introduction to Jennifer Speake, ed., *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*,

these special writers were participating in longstanding commercial cultures of adventure found on colonial frontiers the world over. As Peter Hulme reminds us, early modern understandings of the term “adventure” firmly wedded heroic action to economic acquisition.⁶⁸ Adventurous tourists in the North may have used kindred lines of thought to justify their selection of northern byways, despite the risks attendant upon travelling these routes.

In stumbling off the beaten track, these adventurous tourists posed threats to themselves, to northern residents, and to natural and cultural landscapes. Under-equipped and under-prepared travellers troubled the government’s primary northern agents, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Writing about the Swiss journalist and amateur scientist Jean Gabus, who spent the winter of 1938-1939 at Eskimo Point (now Arviat) collecting biological and ethnological materials, Constable E. E. Robinson noted that Gabus travelled with “inadequate supplies and clothing,” that he disliked taking advice from anyone while travelling, and that he would therefore be in “constant danger” if he met severe weather on the trail.⁶⁹ Superintendent T. B. Caulkin commented that “individuals such as Mr. Gabus who are totally inexperienced in northern conditions and methods of travel are a continual worry and it is a relief when they leave the north as our Detachments naturally feel responsible for their well being.”⁷⁰ Such travellers failed to, or chose not to recognize that endangering themselves—sometimes intentionally, in pursuit of better copy—often meant endangering those charged with rescuing them.

This task occupied increasing amounts of police officers’ time and energy as more adventurous tourists came north. By 1936, the police commissioner J. H. MacBrien made it clear that non-scientific travellers could not expect detachments to assist them with subsistence, accommodation, transportation, or preparation for backcountry travel.⁷¹ MacBrien was even reluctant to authorize patrols into little-travelled territory to check on overdue expeditions. In one case, he specified that this should only be done if no considerable sums would be spent.⁷² His successor, S. T. Wood, demonstrated similar fiscal prudence. In the autumn of 1939, he sent the northern administration a bill for \$171, representing the meals that the French anthropologist-explorer Viscount G. J. P. de Poncins had consumed while staying aboard the police schooner *St. Roch* earlier that year. Sergeant Henry Larsen had furnished the Viscount with food and accommodation “in the interests of humanity,” as Poncins could not have proceeded further without assistance. “I do not see why the R.C.M. Police should always be the department that is called upon to bear any loss sustained when these Scientists and Explorers get into financial difficulty,” Wood grumbled.⁷³

vol. 1 (New York and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003), p. xii.

68 Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 26; Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 183.

69 LAC, RG 85, vol. 888, file 9287, E. E. Robinson to T. B. Caulkin, November 3, 1938.

70 LAC, RG 85, vol. 888, file 9287, T. B. Caulkin to Commissioner, RCMP Police, May 5, 1939.

71 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7940, J. H. MacBrien to R. A. Gibson, January 25, 1935.

72 LAC, RG 85, vol. 784, file 5958, J. H. MacBrien to R. A. Gibson, August 8, 1936.

73 LAC, RG 85, vol. 893, file 9471, S. T. Wood to R. A. Gibson, November 8, 1939; Wood to Gibson, November 20, 1939.

Injudicious travellers might endanger their Indigenous guides in similar ways, but they also posed less immanent threats to the North's Dene, Inuit, and Metis people. Before the late 1950s, northern officials believed that unregulated travel or tourism might have harmful effects on Native welfare, especially with regard to Indigenous people's diets.⁷⁴ Wanting to reserve the region's declining wildlife populations for the sole use of residents, the administration ceased to grant hunting and trapping licences to visitors after 1932. Would-be hinterland travellers were warned that they could no longer live partially or wholly off the land. Even so, administrators feared that improvident expeditions would run out of food and be forced to hunt for their survival, or that the ever-present temptation to smuggle an illicit big-game souvenir home would, over time, lead to herds' decimation.

Adventurous tourists, particularly those stopping over in settlements for any length of time, could also cause social problems—at least in the authorities' eyes—by setting a “poor” moral example for Aboriginal peoples. Between 1938 and 1940, two sets of tourists from New York City caused a stir among the Euro-Canadian population at Fort McPherson. The graduate student Richard Slobodin and artist Robert Fuller canoed down the Mackenzie River in 1938 and overwintered in the settlement. In the summer of 1940, Elkan and Anne Morris, a married couple who were outdoor enthusiasts, spent several days there while canoeing to Alaska. Euro-Canadian residents dressed down both sets of visitors for their dirty and unkempt attire.⁷⁵ Slobodin and Fuller were also reprimanded for their slovenly housekeeping, their erratic sleeping habits, the nude pictures of women hung on their cabin walls, and the games of poker they played with the trappers.⁷⁶ Such criticisms reflected deeper schisms among non-Indigenous travellers and residents concerning the replication of southern mores in northern climes. The institutions that brought many Euro-Canadian residents to northern settlements often expected them to model “civilized” behaviours and values for the perceived benefit of Indigenous peoples. Sojourners or visitors with no institutional ties were freer to reject southern codes of conduct and to behave and dress as they wished. Out in the bush, Slobodin's and Fuller's actions might not have occasioned comment, but no person of European descent living or staying in a settlement for any length of time was permitted to lower the prevailing tone quite so brazenly.

⁷⁴ Zaslow, *The Northward Expansion of Canada*, p. 344.

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 85, vol. 914, file 10965, M. A. Harrington to J. M. Tupper, August 8, 1940. Anne Morris's transgression would have been least forgivable in the eyes of Euro-Canadian residents. Cleanliness was a key vector for white women's assertion of racial and social power in early twentieth-century northern society, as in colonial settings elsewhere. See Kelcey, *Alone in Silence*, pp. 41, 154; Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), pp. 30-35. But see also the delight with which Clara Vyvyan and Gwendolyn Dorrien Smith, Morris' near-contemporaries in northern travel, flouted conventions regarding feminine attire and grooming while travelling on the Rat River. Heather Smyth, “‘Lords of the World’: Writing Gender and Imperialism on Northern Space in C. C. Vyvyan's *Arctic Adventure*,” *Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne*, vol. 23, no. 1 (1998), pp. 39-40.

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 85, vol. 901, file 10130, S. Bullard, “Re: Richard Slobodin and Robert Fuller, Enquiries Concerning,” January 16, 1939; G. T. Wareham, “Messrs. Slobodin and Fuller, Fort McPherson, N.W.T.,” January 11, 1939.

Finally, officials expressed concern that enthusiastic amateur scientists could damage the North's scarce and therefore precious cultural heritage. R. M. Anderson and Diamond Jenness, chief of the National Museum of Canada's Anthropology Division, made their fears plain:

As far as archaeology is concerned, work carried on by an untrained man will do more harm than good by unscientific excavations and by encouraging the indiscriminate disturbance of the old ruins. These ancient ruins are of value to science and to the country as historical relics ... and ill-advised meddling with them by incompetent persons only confuses the problems for future investigators.⁷⁷

Nor were material sites pertaining to European occupation of the North necessarily any safer. In 1933, H. E. Hume had to hastily send a telegram denying an Ottawa schoolteacher's request to examine the tombs of Captain Thomas James' men, which lay on Charlton Island in James Bay.⁷⁸

By restricting scientist's and explorer's licences to *bona fide* members of those professions after 1934, the government intended several things: to limit its liability in the case of inexperienced travellers, to signal its disapproval of the damage they could wreak, and to reduce the number of officially sanctioned expeditions entitled to government assistance while in the North.⁷⁹ Ironically, narrowing the licence's scope left officials without any means to control the movements or actions of adventurous tourists. Recognizing this loophole, administrators began to investigate how other countries administered the movements of foreigners other than scientists, particularly those "desirous of travelling through uninhabited territory where ordinary means of transport and communication are difficult and costly."⁸⁰ Officials toyed with the idea of stretching the existing game laws to cover such persons through a new kind of licence. Ultimately, however, the departmental solicitor judged that the use of extant legislation in this unintended way would not hold up to scrutiny if appealed.⁸¹

After 1934, northern administrators could only influence adventurous tourists and travellers by reference to existing laws and through persuasive argumentation. They attempted to dissuade those who proposed trips down difficult and dangerous routes by pointing out flaws in their reasoning or geographical knowledge and by suggesting less perilous routes or modes of travel. They were reasonably successful; very few travellers actually wished to wager their lives for the sake of pleasure or uncertain profit. To take just one example, Sue Thorne accepted

77 LAC, RG 85, vol. 750, file 4421, Diamond Jenness and R. M. Anderson, "Memorandum re: proposed North Magnetic Pole Expedition 1927," January 4, 1927.

78 LAC, RG 85, vol. 846, file 7761, Roy F. Fleming to Chief, NWT Branch, August 24, 1933; H. E. Hume to Fleming, August 25, 1933.

79 The archival evidence decisively refutes Barbara Kelcey's claim (*Alone in Silence*, p. 194) that "male adventurers and explorers were usually allowed free rein across the region, often at taxpayer's expense. All they had to do was convince the government they were worthy." Even in the cases of scientists and explorers granted licences, to receive government assistance was decidedly the exception rather than the rule.

80 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, J. Lorne Turner to R. A. Gibson, November 17, 1934.

81 LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, J. B. Harkin to J. Lorne Turner, March 9, 1935.

the strongly worded advice of bureaucrats and police officers that her planned solo dog-sled trip across the Canadian Arctic to Greenland would be akin to suicide. She decided instead to fly to Aklavik and pursue her proposed linguistic investigations there.⁸²

Officials also introduced aspiring but inexperienced Arctic travellers to the commonsense rules governing northern travel among non-Indigenous residents. R. A. Gibson warned the English explorer David Haig-Thomas that “all government officials, fur traders, and missionaries have strict instructions against attempting any extensive trip in the far north, during summer or winter, without experienced guides. There have been instances where these instructions were disregarded and loss of life was the result.”⁸³ Such interventions were only of use if prospective travellers contacted the administration prior to journeying north. Some simply made their way to the Territories unassisted.⁸⁴ Others did not bother to wait for their application for a scientist’s and explorer’s permit to be approved—or declined, in some cases—before heading north.⁸⁵

The Territories were not officially advertised as a tourist destination in the 1930s and early 1940s, but the numbers of pleasure-seeking visitors waxed throughout this period nonetheless. The region received a surfeit of free advertising through the publications of special writers and investigators. A series of mineral rushes also kept the Northwest Territories in the public eye during and after the Depression. By the fall of 1940, some members of the northern administration were keen to discuss the possibility of postwar tourist cruises in the Eastern Arctic, following the *Nascopie’s* notable success in that vein.⁸⁶ R. A. Gibson, however, remained unconvinced of the desirability of tourism. Writing to L. E. Drummond of the Alberta and Northwest Chamber of Mines, he affirmed that he was “not enthusiastic about promoting tourist travel in the Northwest Territories except when such travel is handled by properly equipped transportation agencies which can assume full responsibility.”⁸⁷

82 LAC, RG 85, vol. 854, file 7940, H. M. Newson to J. H. MacBrien, February 5, 1935. The gendered dimensions of risk assessment should not be overlooked. Throughout the twenties and thirties, Canadian officials strongly discouraged Euro-Canadian women from travelling beyond normal transportation corridors, and came very close to prohibiting women from making such excursions alone (cf. Kelcey, *Alone in Silence*, pp. 91-92). The case of Isobel Hutchison, who successfully defied these strictures while travelling through Canada and Alaska in 1933-1934, is instructive. See Gwyneth Hoyle, *Flowers in the Snow: The Life of Isobel Wylie Hutchison* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

83 LAC, RG 85, vol. 872, file 8729, R. A. Gibson to O. D. Skelton, January 11, 1938.

84 The New England schoolteacher Prentice Downes made a solo expedition to Nueltin Lake on the Manitoba-Northwest Territories border in 1939. He published a narrative about this journey, entitled *Sleeping Island*, in 1943. Of this book, the government biologist C. H. D. Clarke wrote, “Apparently the author was able to visit this remote region without getting an explorer’s license and without any record of his activity reaching this office” (LAC, RG 85, vol. 85, file 202-2-1, Clarke to Austin L. Cumming, November 30, 1943).

85 Isobel Hutchison, a Scottish traveller collecting Arctic botanical and ethnographic specimens for English institutions, applied for a permit just before departing by ship from Vancouver in 1933. Assuming that it would be granted (and so it was), she requested that it be sent directly to the HBC post at Aklavik or Herschel Island (Kelcey, *Alone in Silence*, pp. 92-95).

86 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, D. L. McKeand to R. A. Gibson, October 29, 1940; Minutes of the 118th Session of the Northwest Territories Council, November 1, 1940; McKeand to Gibson, November 23, 1940.

87 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, R. A. Gibson to A. L. Cumming, November 7, 1941.

Outside Ottawa, promoters were already looking past the war's end to a dawning age of Arctic tourism. In response to numerous queries for information, the Department of Mines and Resources composed a press release entitled "Tourist Traffic to the Arctic." A flurry of newspaper articles touted the ways in which tourists could easily and efficiently access the Western Arctic, as well as the new accommodations available in Fort Smith and Yellowknife.⁸⁸ In the summer of 1941, the On-to-the-Bay Association organized a railway excursion from Winnipeg to Churchill, on which 188 of the 206 passengers were Americans.⁸⁹ As the war intensified in the North American Arctic, however, northern officials began telling prospective tourists in 1943 that no one was allowed to enter the Territories except on official business.⁹⁰ This practice held off the tide of travellers until the war's conclusion. Judging by northern administrators' ill-tempered response to tourism just five years later, the respite was all too brief.

When R. A. Gibson addressed the Dominion-Provincial Tourist Conference in the fall of 1948, some months after the Council meeting described at the beginning of this article, he deplored the way in which American publications depicted Canada so as to "awaken the spirit of the explorer and pioneer" in visitors. "We find that so much publicity is given to the Canadian hinterland that people want to travel beyond the lines of communication," he said. When those tourists got lost, he continued, they received all the glory in newspaper headlines, leaving governmental rescue squads with all the hassle—not to mention the bill.⁹¹ Gibson's frustration, it appears, had long historical roots. Northern bureaucrats had never had many tools to corral adventurous tourists determined to venture beyond the usual land and water routes of the Northwest Territories. Between 1926 and 1934, they often grouped such travellers with scientists and explorers, although they soon recognized that little information of use would issue from their trips.

After 1934, the government wished neither to condone nor to support pseudo-scientific expeditions any longer. It judged such outings ineligible for consideration under the Scientists and Explorers Ordinance due to their non-scientific and commercial nature. Not only did this decision then leave officials unable to exert any control whatsoever over such expeditions, but it also did nothing to counter the risks that these endeavours continued to pose, quite unfairly, to the safety of northern residents and the integrity of northern landscapes. While workaday tourists travelling aboard steamships were at less risk during their northern "expeditions" than they perhaps liked to pretend, adventurous tourists placed themselves and others at far greater risk than they could ever comprehend, due to their ignorance of and inexperience in northern conditions. This complex landscape of touristic

88 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, "Tourist Traffic to the Arctic," n.d.; "North Tourist Traffic Rises," *Edmonton Journal*, March 22, 1941; "Holiday Among Eskimos New Lure to Tourists," *Toronto Star*, April 19, 1941; "Far North Now Open to Tourists," *Sydney Post-Record*, May 3, 1941.

89 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, "On-to-Bay Official Visualizes Tourist Possibilities in North," *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 17, 1942.

90 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, D. L. McKeand to R. A. Gibson, June 18, 1943.

91 LAC, RG 85, vol. 857, file 8135, "Fed Up With Americans Getting Lost in Canada," *Halifax Mail*, October 19, 1948.

risk was predicated on gaps in environmental perception and knowledge between southerners and northerners. The historical relationship between tourism and risk remains understudied. As scholars continue to examine how changing perceptions of risk affected tourist practices and destinations, the evidence presented by this study reminds us to pay attention to what hosts, as well as their guests, perceived as risky.⁹² Future research on the Northwest Territories should investigate how Inuit, Metis, and Dene hosts perceived the antics of adventurous tourists. Such voices are largely absent from the federal records considered here, but may be accessible through other means.

In so avidly seeking out the maximum rather than the minimum of mishap, adventurous tourists to the Northwest Territories sometimes hazarded their lives in ways that caused territorial administrators much frustration, but which administrators could not very well ignore. Despite one Council member's suggestion that, having given such tourists fair warning, "we could let them go in and forget about them," there never seemed much question that rescue parties would be sent, no matter the ensuing risks and costs.⁹³ One of those costs, it seems, was to sour the northern administration on all tourists, not just the adventurous ones.

92 Walton, "Prospects in Tourism History," p. 790.

93 "Don't Want Tourists in Northwest Territories."