



**In Yellowknife
for dining pleasure ...**

Mackenzie Lounge

**Finest prime rib roast
Famous for its "Bloody Caesars"**

MINERS' MESS

Where the action is
Where you can hear the news
before it's printed
Great place for children
Located in the YK Inn

THE REC HALL

**The finest imported
bands in Yellowknife**

POLAR BEAR DINING LOUNGE

**Fine Dining
Non-restrictive menu
Custom-made menu if called in advance**

Featured in
"Where to Eat in Canada"

Yellowknife, NWT
(403) 873-2601

**THE
inn**

for them a lavish dinner in the mess hut with the construction workers, or even the steaks and salad brought over by Elijah, or the goodies left in the refrigerator.

Susie opened a green plastic bag full of leather-like dried meat, hung it on the upside-down legs of one of the piled-up chairs and then, with her ulu, cut off chunks of meat and handed them around.

"My mum eats mostly dried meat. Just once in a while she eats white man's grub like bread, fresh fruit, sardines . . . stuff like that," Edith informed me.

In all honesty I can't say I liked dried, black seal meat better than fresh sirloin steaks but it was beginning to look as though eating was the only thing I was doing Eskimo style.

After we had chewed to repletion Susie took from one of her cardboard boxes a pile of sewing material — pieces of sealskin, fox fur, buttons, thread, scissors, half completed ookpiks, mukluks and igloo ornaments.

Equipment for a hunting trip? Yes. Susie had learned that a trip to Johnson Point was lucrative. She could sell her artifacts to the isolated men at the base. I was relieved, however, that our trek across the tundra had not been entirely forgotten when she started sewing canvas packsacks for the dogs. We might just go caribou hunting yet!

None of the pilots at Johnson Point had seen caribou within 60 miles of the base so Mac suggested that he drive us a few miles out of camp on a rolligon, so that we could hunt while making our way back. Since caribou are always on the move, he figured perhaps by the time we got out there, they may have moved in.

The weight of a rolligon is borne by rollers which rest on top of air bags and transmit the driving power. The smooth air bags take the place of wheels, exerting a gentle pressure over a large area. On the dashboard of the large cab are controls with which the driver can adjust pressure in each of the vehicle's air bags to match the changes in the terrain and thus protect the fragile tundra.

Obviously worried about our welfare, Mac ran the rolligon up an 800-foot incline en route to set up a surveyor's tripod as a handy landmark and lent us his watch to note the days. Later, when several planes a day buzzed overhead, I realized he'd radioed pilots hauling fuel between Johnson Point and Prince Patrick Island to check our progress.

It rather dampened my romantic notions about four women alone on the remote tundra. Even Eskimos have difficulty getting away from it all! Yet it is easy to feel lost in this type of terrain. For hundreds of miles in any direction the tundra stretches flat to the horizon — treeless, empty, silent. You discover infinity in such a land and you realize afresh how small and vulnerable is Man.

After a long slow crawl of about four hours, Susie picked a camp spot on a point beside a lake, protected by a knoll from both the wind and oncoming caribou. After several cups of warming tea and more expression of concern, Mac, with Elijah who had come along to keep Mac company on the way back, started back to Johnson Point. My long awaited caribou hunt had finally begun.

The camp was primitive but adequate. Our tent was a piece of old canvas stretched on the ground and then raised on a ridge pole scrounged from the lumber pile at Johnson Point. In case of rain I'd brought a plastic tarp to double as my mattress but it proved a cold substitute for the Eskimo women's mattress of caribou hide and I was to find myself snuggling into theirs at night for warmth.

Next morning I opened my eyes to see Susie huddled

Northwest Explorer