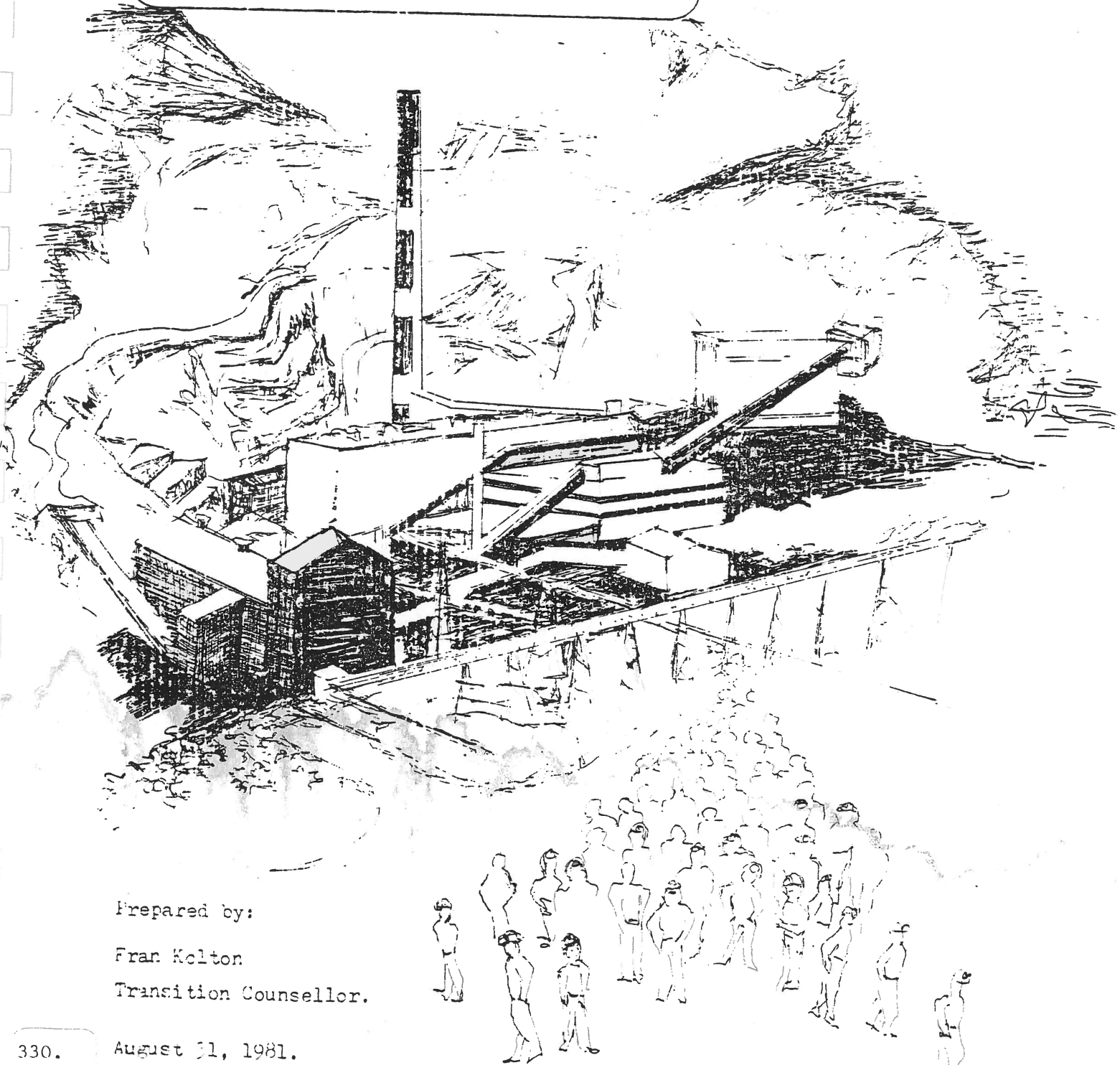


ATIKOKAN  
THEN & NOW

TRANSITION COUNSELLOR  
FINAL REPORT



Prepared by:

Fran Kelton

Transition Counsellor.

August 31, 1981.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

A brief note about the author will be beneficial to the reader in gaining an understanding of the author's position.

Fran Kolton and her husband Richard arrived in Atikokan in September, 1955 as a newly married couple. Richard began working as a first class welder at Steep Rock Iron Mines and was continually employed by the mine until it closed August 31, 1979. The Koltons established their home here and raised five children. They consider Atikokan their home and have for many years.

On September 1, 1979 Fran was hired as Transition Counsellor; the contract expired August 31, 1981. Her husband was employed as a Co-ordinator-Instructor for The Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology from March, 1980, and completed his contract early in October, 1981. They were once again faced with a decision regarding their future; would Atikokan continue to provide a livelihood or would they have to leave as so many others before them?

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## INTRODUCTION:

This report has been prepared as part of the job description and requirement for a Transition Counsellor as indicated in the advertisement for this position. It was felt that a Transition Counsellor was a requirement in the community in the event of an occurrence such as both mines ceasing operations within a short span of time of one another. Atikokan's economy had been stable for many years, and people employed by the mine gave little thought to many important functions and aspects of their daily lives. They had had their O.H.I.P., drugs, dental needs covered by the mines, and other than drug bills, these items were handled through the payroll deduction system. They were often unaware of the services that Northern Affairs provided, the Canada Employment Centre, the Public Health Nurse, because they had little need for involvement with these agencies. However, once the mine closed there was a need for someone to provide direction to the people for the assistance they required.

The position of Transition Counsellor expanded over the months, very extensively from its inception to its conclusion. Initially the job was one of making people aware that the office existed, and the services it could provide to the people affected by the mine shutdown. A considerable amount of time was spent circulating in the community observing the reaction of the people to this new aspect to their lives.

People were receptive to the idea of a Transition Counsellor; even people who were not directly involved with the mine, approached this office. The position was very non threatening in that it held no authoritative position where pressure could be applied to individuals.

The first goal was to assist people in whatever area help could be given. Many needed someone to sound off to, someone that could help them look objectively at their alternatives and what would suit particular individuals or families best. To ensure that this service could be

provided whenever it was required, an extension of the office phone was installed in the Counsellor's home; this worked well as there were calls at all hours of the day or night.

The Transition Counsellor became involved in many other projects in the community that were established to assist the laid off workers. Retraining became one of the first issues for the unskilled, and it took several months before some of the courses became reality. Another area that came to the forefront shortly after the mine closure was the possibility of setting up an air shuttle service. This shuttle service was a way of transporting workers between Atikokan and Umex Mines at Pickle Lake.

As time elapsed many problems surfaced amongst the unemployed workers and their families, and for many months efforts were concentrated in this area. Counselling services were frequently called for, and where problems could be handled more ably by other services in the community, referrals were made to these agencies. There were times when clients did not wish to be referred elsewhere; in such cases, the problems were handled through this office. At times direction was provided to the Transition Counsellor by other community workers who had the expertise.

A year after the Steep Rock closure it became evident that the older segment of the population had by and large decided to remain within the community. There seemed a definite need for some type of activity for these older people, and to this end an application was made for a New Horizons grant from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The grant was received and the Atikokan Fix It Club became a reality; this club is open to men and women fifty-five years of age and over and has certainly fulfilled its intended purpose.

The concluding endeavour of the Transition Counsellor was to put together a comprehensive report of what really happens to a community when an industry ceases operation. The following report aims to provide an overview of events that took place in Atikokan since the closing of the mines.

### EARLY HISTORY

Mining exploration in the Atikokan area began in the 1870's and continued through the 1880's and 1890's. Early exploration was in the area of gold mining, but by 1900 iron locations were also being explored. A professor of mineralogy began searching in 1930-31 for iron ore. In 1938 drilling took place in the area of the Hogarth open pit and a year later (1939) Steep Rock Iron Mines were incorporated.

Combined efforts of many saw the mine come to full production in 1945. This timing of mine production coincided well with the end of World War II; men returning from overseas, eager to settle down, readily found employment with the mine.

In 1953 Caland Ore Company signed a ninety-nine year lease with Steep Rock Iron Mines which would permit Caland to develop and mine the C ore body at the Falls Bay area of Steep Rock Lake. Caland Ore, a wholly owned subsidiary of Inland Steel of Chicago was formed in 1949.

In May of 1960 the first ore shipment was made from the Lime Point area at the north end of the ore zone.

### PREAMBLE TO THE CLOSING OF S.R.I.M. AND CALAND ORE CO.

In 1967 S.R.I.M. signed a twenty year agreement with Algoma Steel for 1.1 million tons of pellets annually. This ensured the stability of the mine and the future of Atikokan residents. However in two short years S.R.I.M. became aware that their ore reserves were perhaps not what they had anticipated, and they began to plan how to meet their commitment. Their obvious alternatives appeared to be, developing their Lake St. Joe property; mining and stripping at a higher and more costly rate than anticipated, and the possible underground development in the Errington, south Roberts and Hogarth pits.



By 1970 the underground mining idea had to be abandoned because of economics and this endeavour terminated in 1973. The open pit increased stripping programme led to a substantial increase in their production. Even the increased production did not ensure that the mine would be able to supply the amount of pellets they were committed to with Algoma Steel.

In 1972 Caland announced that pit operations would cease in 1976. S.R.I.M. then announced that they would move into Caland's pit as soon as Caland moved out; that way S.R.I.M. would ensure that mining continued in Atikokan until the late 1980's. Plans for the Lake St. Joe development fell through when Steep Rock failed to secure markets for four million tons of iron ore.

In 1974 Caland made an announcement that they were extending their pit operation from 1976 to 1980. Caland planned to do minimum stripping thus S.R.I.M. would be ensured of future use of the pit. This somewhat disrupted Steep Rock's plans as far as moving into the Caland pit in 1976 to begin stripping were concerned.

Plans to take over of the Caland pit fell through for S.R.I.M. in 1975. Steep Rock could not be sure of enough ore to carry it through while it stripped Caland's pit for future production. Deepening Hogarth pit did not work out for lack of wall stability, economic conditions and the fact that sufficient ore had not been found were also issues forcing Steep Rock to be wary of its future.

The lack of ore at Steep Rock was forcing the Company to view other alternatives. Some of their choices were stripping the Caland pit while Caland was still in operation or bringing ore from elsewhere to keep the pellet plant in operation for long range supply commitments; unfortunately neither of these options worked out.

In 1976 Canadian Pacific Investments purchased controlling interests of Steep Rock's outstanding shares. As

well a new possibility arose of a mining development at Bending Lake, situated approximately 30 miles northwest of Atikokan. When S.R.I.M. announced in September, 1976 that mining would cease in their mine in 1978, employees were hopeful of continued work at the Bending Lake operation.

Jointly S.R.I.M. and Algoma Steel investigated the potential of Bending Lake; for the amount of investment required to make this mine a reality, it promised only a limited return. The announcement early in 1978 that Bending Lake would not proceed was brought about by and large by lack of assurance for sale of their product. At the same time Steep Rock announced their mining would cease early in 1979 and by the end of 1979 all other operations would come to a halt.

In December 1978 S.R.I.M. sent lay-off notices to one hundred and seventy-three employees - they would be laid off near the end of January, 1979. The final lay-off took place August 31, 1979. Beyond that date only a handful of men remained to take part in the clean up and storage operations at Steep Rock.

The first lay-off at Caland occurred November 16, 1979 and involved one hundred and seventy-four hourly rated employees. Subsequent lay-offs took place February 28 and May 31, 1980. It had first been announced that the final lay-off would not take place until October, 1980 but early in 1980 the final lay-off date was moved up by six months. A limited number of men continued on till October, 1980 in a clean up, dismantling operation at Caland after it closed.

#### REACTION TO THE SHUTDOWNS

#### FORMATION OF COMMITTEES TO DEAL WITH UPCOMING MINE CLOSURES

##### 1) ATIKOKAN INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE(A.I.D.)

Town Council in 1973 formed as AID committee in order that they would be able to prepare the community for the

forthcoming impact of the mine closures. The committee members initially were headed by town councillor Murray Goodwin. The groups purpose was to advise Council on policy and action regarding industrial development as well as spurring development of secondary industry. They hoped to revitalize the community economic base and protect the community from fluctuations affecting resource based single industry towns.

\*Terms of reference for AID are described in Appendix A 1.

2) ATIKOKAN JOINT MANPOWER ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
(AJMAPC)

In May, 1978 a group of individuals representing various community bodies met with the intention of establishing a resource that would assess what was happening in the community as a result of the mine closures. The original members of the group represented the Corporation of the Township of Atikokan, Steep Rock Iron Mines, Caland Ore Company, United Steelworkers of America, Locals 3466 and 5855, Domtar Forest Products, Quetico Centre, Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association. Governmental advisors were N. S. Allison, O. H. Leonard, W. W. Bouvier for Employment and Immigration Canada and Canada Manpower Consultative Services; Ministry of Northern Affairs representatives were W. H. Charlton, A. J. Moon, B. Duncan, B. Parks, B. Lees, C. Catalano. The Ministry of Labour representative was H. N. Shardlow, and A. J. Johanson for the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

This group met on a monthly basis, and continued their efforts for the people of Atikokan for the duration of this worker's contract.

\*Terms of reference for AJMAPC are found in Appendix A2.

Preliminary Report and Appendix to the Preliminary Report are available at the Township of Atikokan office.

### 3) STEEP ROCK IRON MINES ADJUSTMENT COMMITTEE

An official agreement between S.R.I.M., Ministry of Employment and Immigration, Minister of Labour for Ontario and the United Steelworkers of America, Local 3466 was signed on August 31, 1978. The group set out to attract employers from other areas of Canada in the workers that would become available when the mine began its lay-off process. They also set about establishing skill upgrading courses to enhance workers opportunities in the labour market.

\*Steep Rock Iron Mines Hourly Rated Manpower Adjustment Committee described in Appendix A 6.

### 4) CALAND JOINT MANPOWER COMMITTEE

In April 1979 an agreement was signed between the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Minister of Labour for Ontario, Caland Ore Company and the United Steelworkers of America, Local 5855. This group anticipated offering assistance to the individuals being affected by the closure of the mine. They would use their influence wherever possible to alleviate problems for the displaced workers.

\* Caland Joint Manpower Committee described in Appendix A 4.

### 5) TRANSITION COUNSELLOR

Dean Ralph Scarf of Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology in Thunder Bay suggested that a Transition Counsellor be located in Atikokan for at least two years to assist the citizens of Atikokan through the period after the closing of the mines. It was felt that a local person, familiar with the people and locality would be best suited for the position. The Transition Counsellor's office opened September 1, 1979 in the Don Park Service Centre.

UPGRADING, TRAINING OF FORMER EMPLOYEES

Both Manpower Adjustment committees of the mines, as well as the Atikokan Joint Manpower Assessment and Planning committee set about actively pursuing the possibilities of establishing upgrading and skill courses for men and women laid off by the mines.

S.R.I.M. Manpower committee initiated the establishment of a welding course(Tungsten Inert Gas) course at Steep Rock and Caland. The courses were taught at the mines using mine employees as instructors. The instructors were sent to Confederation College in Thunder Bay to get their training and they in turn taught fellow employees.

An electrical course and precision instrument course were also offered through Confederation College for men who were to be laid off by the mines. Instruction took place at the Confederation College Learning Centre located in Atikokan. As well a hydraulic course was taught at the Caland guest house prior to the lay-off for employees seeking to improve their employment opportunities.

Canada Manpower successfully negotiated and purchased four programmes from Confederation College. In October, 1979 Confederation College announced courses to be offered in Atikokan, the courses were: Basic Job Readiness Training(BJRT); Basic Training for Skill Development(BTSD); Basic Carpentry and Welding.

The first BJRT course began April 16, 1979 for a period of eleven weeks. There were six students with one instructor, and three students completed the course.

In October of 1979 the BTSD course began; it ran for fourteen weeks. There were twelve students and two instructors, and ten people completed the course. On October 20, 1980 the second BTSD course commenced and ran for a period of thirty-two weeks. There were ten students with two instructors; eight students completed the course.

Basic carpentry began December 10, 1979; it ran for a period of twenty weeks with fourteen students enrolled and completing the course. The second basic carpentry course began November 24, 1980 for a period of twenty weeks. Again there were fourteen students with one instructor, ten students completed the course. An advanced carpentry course began January 5, 1981 for a period of twenty weeks; there were eight students, one instructor, and seven students completed the course. The BJRT, BTSD and carpentry courses were taught in the Confederation College Learning Centre located on Clark Street.

The welding course took place in the Confederation College section of the \*Firestone Building on Mackenzie Avenue. The first course began March 3, 1980 for a period of forty weeks. There were thirty-six students with three instructors and one technician. Twenty-nine of the students completed the course. The second welding course began January 5, 1981, again for forty weeks, with thirty-six students. Five of the students in this group came from the Fort Frances area. This course was completed in October of 1981.

\* Late in 1978 the Township of Atikokan began to negotiate to purchase the Firestone Building for Industrial purposes. The building was purchased in March, 1979, and was included as part of the package of the Industrial Mall and Park

SHUTTLE SERVICE TO PICKLE LAKE

Almost immediately after the closing of Steep Rock, men began to scout the immediate area of northwestern Ontario for employment. The experience of the men made them likely candidates for employment with Mattabi Mines at Ignace, and Umex Mines at Pickle Lake, but one of the drawbacks was the travelling distance to these places. A suggestion of having an air shuttle service to these areas was voiced by a local miner and the idea appealed to many Atikokan residents.

A committee was formed in Atikokan to explore the feasibility of this idea. Two of the committee members travelled to various points such as Ignace, Savant Lake, a Great Lakes camp and Pickle Lake. Only Umex mine at Pickle Lake responded positively; to further explore this idea, Umex sent their personnel supervisor and his assistant in to Atikokan to make a presentation on Umex mine and Pickle Lake.

For quite a number of men in Atikokan this sounded like an alternative that held real promise - they could work at Pickle Lake and still retain their homes in Atikokan. As a result of the Umex mine overtures to the Atikokan residents, the idea was developed and became reality in January, 1980.

The first twenty weeks of air shuttle service were financed by Umex, the Federal government, the Provincial government and each employee paying a nominal amount.

Plans were for a Twin Otter to carry eighteen passengers but a larger aircraft was necessary for all but two of the flights. The men were working ten days at a stretch and coming out for four days. One of the biggest drawbacks to this arrangement was that the aircraft was filled coming to Atikokan, but returning empty.

Once the initial fund was depleted an alternative method had to be found to transport the men. The alternative

became flights on Nor-Ontar which were still at a cost of \$35. per Atikokan passenger, the remainder being subsidized by Umex. The special fare was available only when men booked their flights two weeks in advance. This plan was not as satisfactory to the men as they were obliged to fly from Pickle Lake to Atikokan via Thunder Bay, and vice versa for the return flight; it was still preferred by some of the men rather than driving that distance.

In June of 1981 Nor-Ontar ran two experimental, so to speak, flights on Friday evenings, and directly to Atikokan. This proved to be more acceptable as far as the flight was concerned, but not in the respect that the special rate no longer applied. This meant if the men worked the four extra hours until 4:00 p.m. on Friday afternoons, they would be obliged to spend the additional money on the fare. Possible alternatives were to be explored with the flights in the future to find a suitable solution to the flight patterns.

In mid summer 1981 thirty previous Steep Rock and Caland people were still employed by Umex. Fifteen still retained their homes in Atikokan and used the air shuttle service. When the shuttle service first began there were between thirty-five to forty men at Umex, and the flights would usually carry between twenty to twenty-five Atikokan men home for the weekends. This dwindled quite drastically when the flights switched to the Nor-Ontar schedule.

The air shuttle service was an alternate method for ensuring the livelihood of these Atikokan residents. There are still those in the community who would like to see other areas of northwestern Ontario serviced by an air shuttle service.



MOBILITY - RECRUITING PROGRAMMES BY WESTERN MINING COMPANIES

The Steep Rock Manpower Adjustment Committee spent considerable time and effort to attract other companies in the immediate and distant areas to become interested in Atikokan workmen. Active correspondence took place by the committee; in reply to the correspondence, the committee received between forty to fifty calls from employers. This resulted in approximately thrity-five firms coming to Atikokan to actively recruit individuals; without doubt it ensured employment for many of the former miners.

Caland's Manpower Adjustment Committee drew up letters that were sent to seventy-three prospective employers. They sent an initial letter alerting the employer that in approximately one month they would submit an inventory of skills available. The Committee offered assistance to prospective employers in the recruitment process. The response to the seventy-three letters sent out broke down as follows: thirty-five responded by telephone, nine by letter, four made personal contact and forty-eight responded by placing ads in the local paper seeking employees. In some cases employers responded in more than one way, e.g. telephone call plus newspaper ad.

Credit must be given to the committees for the assistance they provided to the men being laid off. In each case the committees met at least once a month for a period of eighteen months, at which time they actively discussed and pursued avenues of possibility for the men.

## CASE HISTORIES

### THOSE WHO REMAINED IN ATIKOKAN

There were many varied reactions to the mine closures; the area where the greatest impact was felt was right in each breadwinner's home. The family was the victim of the shock wave that reverberated throughout each home. It was like a death - death of a way of life and with it there was an eerie, ominous feeling of some impending, forboding gloom. Even children reacted to the event; they suddenly became restless, insecure and very anxious about what this was to mean to their security. Mothers told of children becoming very hyper; several teachers as well expressed concern about the anxiety the children were obviously displaying. The behaviour of the children was a reflection of what families were experiencing at home - uncertainty! Father's presence in the home on a daily basis had sort of a holiday atmosphere and yet there was an uneasiness associated with it that did not reflect a holiday mood, an apprehension of what lay ahead.

The closure was now a reality and yet there were people firmly convinced that somehow they would continue on in Atikokan. Many hoped that somehow mysteriously or otherwise the mines would reopen. They longed for life to return to the pattern so familiar for so many years. Prior to the mine closing there were a substantial number of people who stated flatly and unequivocally that they were not leaving, without any assurance of any type of employment to ensure their livelihood.

Men scattered in different directions, some to bush work, to Great Lakes Paper, mines at Ignace, Pickle Lake and Shebandowan. In these endeavours, one fact kept repeating itself; the men worked either long hours (10-12 hrs/day) or were away for extended periods of time. (A week, 10 days, or two weeks) Immediately a new problem reared its head; now mothers were single parent families for a good

part of the time. The responsibility fell upon their shoulders, they were the ones who had to keep a sense of balance at home. Without the support of a husband to share the responsibility of rearing the children, paying bills, taking care of everyday needs, they found the load overwhelming. Children missed their fathers, and mothers missed their husband's assistance in disciplining the children. These very problems finally forced quite a number of men to relinquish their jobs away from home, the stress was more than the families could cope with.

When the men relinquished their away from home jobs, new problems arose, mostly unemployment problems. It became a matter of exchanging one type of anxiety for another.

There were a good number of men who viewed these away from home jobs as a "stop gap" measure and for the period of this office men still continued to use places such as Umex and Mattabi in this way. Men who quit Mattabi or Umex were replaced by others viewing the employment again as a temporary measure, until "something better comes along" or "something develops in our immediate area". It was a cycle that many followed.

Approximately 8% of the laid off workers turned to bushwork; for some this was an excellent move as many had previous bush experience from years back.

There were men who purchased their own skidders and other woodland operation equipment and began working locally for woodland contractors. Other men purchased huge tandem trucks to haul the wood. Several others became contractors who hired the various operators, truckers and cutters.

Many in the bush operation business openly admitted their limited knowledge of business management. The expense of repairing machinery and often the lack of experience in operating these machines made this a very risky business. Contractors were situated in areas far back in

the forest - roads were poor and maintained little, which added to the frustrations of the truckers, mechanics and operators. Machines and vehicles broke down frequently from excessive wear and tear, these delays were costly in terms of time and money. For many the attempt at making a living in the bush operation was an unprofitable experience. Men went deeply into debt to finance these operations.

There are still several contractors around Atikokan providing wood for Atikokan Forest Products, Pluswood and the mill in Fort Frances. However, the men who were cutters, skidder operators, and truckers have changed many times over the past two years.

Tradesmen who remained in Atikokan attempted to find suitable employment with contractors, bush operators, small industries and other places where suitable employment could be found. One of the biggest drawbacks with employment for any of the above, was the lack of permanence. Contractors were governed by conditions such as weather, availability of contracts for work, lack of repairs for machinery breakdowns to name a few. Bush operators faced similiar situations.

Tradesmen on the whole, did fare better than unskilled. There seemed to be opportunities for skillful, ambitious mechanics, electricians, plumbers, welders and carpenters. Though jobs may have lacked permanence, there were opportunities more frequently for skilled tradesmen. Since the vast majority of tradespeople left, the demand for the limited number that remained was quite keen.

The middle aged men who had ten working years left, encountered other problems. Many had arrived at the mines when men were readily hired. There were few preliminaries to securing work; applications were simple, and if the man sincerely desired employment his only prerequisite for a job would be a medical. He then only had to prove that he

was eager to do his job well and his future was quite secure with the company. These very men twenty to thirty years later found themselves in a position where they once more had to actively seek employment; they knew little about how to fill out complicated applications and most of all they lacked self confidence. There were instances when this worker encountered very qualified, skillful people who could not assert themselves to the point of actively seeking employment. Perhaps in some sense the companies that had employed these men were responsible to a degree for the men's lack of assertiveness. The companies had a paternalistic effect on their workers; the men had little need to plan or execute plans on their own regarding their employment.

Intervention by this office or CEC for individuals often produced very positive results. When an opportunity was offered by an employer these chaps responded very readily. It must also be noted that this group of people were usually very reliable in an employment situation; they were punctual, efficient, and brought many years of experience with them in their skill areas. They provided stability to the work area and were highly motivated workers.

The 15% group<sup>1</sup> of workers fifty-five years and older also went through very significant problem areas. Several months prior to the shutdown became a time of crisis for these men. The threat of the mine no longer being there seemed like a totally preposterous notion, yet it loomed on the horizon and drew nearer day by day. Many reacted to the impending closure in strange ways. The pressure apparently blinded good sound judgement. Homes that had experienced only minimal tension previously suddenly had open conflict over issues that were not even remotely connected with the job or the mine. There were incidents<sup>2</sup>

1. figure derived from stats in Appendix B, table 1
2. stats from Appendix B indicate 3% with irrational behaviour

of irrational behaviour and they occurred mostly in this age group. There were those who began to hoard supplies, such as groceries, cigarettes, liquor, perhaps justifying this as preparation for the future. Others turned to purchasing lottery tickets, seeking an easy solution to their financial problems, though in reality out doing themselves of necessities.

The victims of the men's pent up frustrations were usually wives; they bore the brunt of their husbands bewildered feelings, and solutions were difficult to find. There were even a few cases of men getting physically violent with their wives.

Once the shutdown was a reality the lack of social interaction of being together at work was suddenly and harshly disrupted. Men became disoriented, depressed, lost in their own homes in a sense; they groped for normalcy in their lives, yet little seemed to remain.

During the first year the partial pension was supplemented by U.I. benefits, this was a fairly adequate income, but once the U.I. benefits were exhausted, the partial pension was totally inadequate. For those who lived on a pay to pay basis, life became a struggle. Each family had its own unique circumstances and for some it was a time of just existing. Because the men were older and often had minor handicaps, finding employment became difficult, if not impossible.

One of the phrases repeated most frequently when asking breadwinners how they were faring was "no one wants an old man". Because they were nearing retirement age did not mean that they did not need to work. Issues such as OHIP, drug and dental coverage were areas of vital concern; medication for older people is often an absolute necessity. There were families that had to do without other necessities in order to be able to purchase drugs for either husband or wife or both.

Two other major reasons this segment of the population was bound to Atikokan was the fact that most of them owned their own homes<sup>1</sup>; they could realize little profit in a tumbling housing market locally. They also could not face the exorbitant interest rates and housing prices elsewhere. The second reason was that many of the older men had been employed by the mine as drillers, pumpmen, and various other pit skilled jobs. These skills were an asset in a mine setting, but almost useless anywhere else. Their roots were here, yet their skills unsaleable, the problem this posed was of a magnitude beyond description.

It is evident that those who prepared for the future long before the closing, are today relaxing and enjoying life. They have funds to fall back on, therefore for them life is good. From the 15% retired and semi-retired, approximately 50% of these individuals<sup>2</sup> belong to the Atikokan Fix It Club. They are eager to have something to occupy their time, enjoy a place to socialize, yet they are not necessarily concerned about the amount of money they are able to earn.

1. Appendix B Table 1 stats indicate 34% of those remaining own their own home
2. The figures of 50% was derived from going through the Fix It Club membership list and tabulated against the number of former mine retired and semi-retired employees

LACK OF JOB SATISFACTION

LOWER WAGES, CONDITIONS

A large percentage of the men in the mines had worked there for extended periods<sup>1</sup> of time. They became accustomed to the methods, routine, equipment that was part of the mining operation. Leaving the mine meant adapting to the conditions and atmosphere of new work areas.

One of the first most significant changes the men were to encounter was the difference in wages once they were no longer mine employees. There seemed to be several different reactions by different groups that chose to remain in Atikokan. There were men, who regardless of how long they had been mine employees, were quite willing to take lower paying jobs as long as it ensured their future in Atikokan. On the other hand there were those who steadfastly refused to work for less than the mines had paid. This no doubt was being unrealistic on the part of the people who chose this approach, but cold hard reality had not set in and they would need time to face the issue.

As well many former mine employees did not get the same kind of job satisfaction as they had at the mine - perhaps they were hard to please or slow to adapt. Most frequent complaints were working conditions less satisfactory, and equipment out dated in comparison to the mine; most of all the atmosphere wherever they worked did not compare with the former mine setting.

1. Extended period would qualify for individuals working there for ten years or more up to over 30 years for some of the Steep Rock men



THOSE WHO MIGRATED FROM THE COMMUNITY

WHERE MOST PEOPLE WENT, WHAT TYPE OF INDUSTRY

The vast majority by and large of former mine employees, approximately three hundred families<sup>1</sup> or 37% of the mine work force, migrated to the Western Provinces of Canada. Approximately 39% went to other mining communities<sup>2</sup>, few took employment in other fields. There are two possible reasons for this - first, mining jobs beside being familiar ground for these people, also were the jobs most readily available in the Western part of Canada. Secondly, many of the men had skills readily saleable in the mining industry, so instead of switching roles, possibly upgrading or retraining in other skill areas, the men continued in skills they knew best.

It might also be noted that many of the staff people from both mines went into positions in the mining field in other areas of Canada.

The major portion of Atikokan mine employees went to Lornex at Logan Lake B.C.; Fording Coal, Fernie B.C.; Kiasar Coal, Sparwood B.C.; McIntyre Mine, Grand Cache Alberta; Luscar Sterco, Edson Alberta; Cardinal River Coal, Hinton Alberta. Others scattered across the width and breadth of this land from Newfoundland to the Northwest Territories to the American border in the South.

MIGRANTS, HOW THEY REACTED TO JOBS AND LOCATIONS

A survey by mail was conducted in February and March of 1980 to former Steep Rock employees. Half of the survey sheets<sup>3</sup> mailed, were replied to. From this survey it was determined that 55% of the breadwinners enjoyed wages and

1. Transition Counsellor statistics indicate 300 families
2. Appendix B Table 1 indicates 39% went into a mining situation
3. Survey statistics indicate 49 out of a 100 replied

benefits as good as those at the mine. From the survey sheet it was also determined that 42% found adjusting to their new community relatively easy, 20% adjusted fairly easily and 28% were experiencing some problems. The remaining 10% did not comment on the adjustment.

There were some who made very positive statements regarding their move even at that early stage. Descriptions such as "the best thing that ever happened to us" "finally I am in a position where there is an opportunity for advancement" indicated that for some it was a new beginning elsewhere.

On the other hand there were those who left Atikokan, made hasty, unwise decisions and found themselves locked into situations that offered little peace of mind and absolutely no way to get out of. Some families tended to panic; they literally gave their homes away in Atikokan and hurried off for supposedly greener pastures. Unfortunately men did not give themselves ample time to first try their new job to see how it suited them before plunging into buying a new home and bringing their family into this new setting. Suddenly being in debt far beyond their means meant they could do little but continue to exist until such time as their financial situation was stable and they could see their way clear to make changes. In several cases, wives went to work with the intent of accumulating savings more rapidly in order to be able to free themselves from unhappy situations.

#### DIFFERENCE IN LIFE STYLE - LOWER WAGES OR NO WAGES

In many ways it was difficult to see a difference in the lifestyles of the Atikokan residents in the months that followed after the closing of the mines. It depended entirely on who one observed and in reality an observer had to be pretty close to an individual to really discover their difference in lifestyle.

To the outsider, or casual observer, one would fail to detect the difference in the habits of Atikokanites. Many have commented on how well the town has responded to a difficult situation; the ability to bounce back and to continue to thrive. That is true, especially in the noticeable sectors such as population, recreation and business. Tourism has taken on a new dimension since Atikokan has acquired a full time Tourism Co-ordinator<sup>1</sup> who indeed has made Atikokan much more prominent in tourism circles through his dedication and effort.

Particular events sponsored locally were well responded to especially such events as Atikokan Sports Days, the winter carnival, the Lions carnival and the Kiwanis Fall fair.

There was another side to the story, though seldom revealed. Observation at functions in the community, if one carefully noted who was present, revealed that those living on compensation benefits, disability pensions, unemployed families, semi retired on partial pensions, retired, widows and widowers were not too frequently present at these events. Previous mine employees who worked at Mattabi, Great Lakes or Umex indulged little in these occasions because additional travelling expenses prevented their having sufficient funds to enjoy such luxuries. For many families there were far fewer activities and social events than there had been in the past when the breadwinners were employed by the mines. Lower wages meant less purchasing power and fewer costly leisure activities.

Families with younger children cut corners as well; it meant that children participated in sports where the equipment was less expensive. This lack of funds actually encouraged families to do more activities together in a less costly way.

1. Tourism Co-ordinator - the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development officer spearheaded the hiring of a full time Tourism Co-ordinator to promote the Atikokan area

Older couples had their lifestyle changed as well, some quite drastically. Those living on partial pensions and some little else, did away with a good deal of their previous social life. Any reserve they had, they watched very carefully in order to provide the basic necessities for themselves. Many of the members of the Atikokan Fix It Club come to mind in this area, many abide by a strict budget. The club provided a social outlet in a sense, for a nominal fee of \$2.00 these people were able to belong to the club. For a quarter they could purchase a cup of coffee and socialize with their friends. Few places offered this kind of opportunity.

#### BREADWINNER ABSENCE AND ITS AFFECT ON THE COMMUNITY

A substantial number<sup>1</sup> of Atikokan breadwinners were employed in the Northwestern Ontario area, but maintained Atikokan as their home base leaving their wives and family here while they worked away from home. Men employed by Great Lakes Paper in camps around Northwestern Ontario, Mattabi Mines, Umex Mine, Inco Mine, even a few working in the Fort Frances area, were home only on weekends or every two weeks. These breadwinners were restricted in their participation of community projects and events. Activities such as curling, golf, hockey, service clubs, church organizations, volunteer coaches for children's activities were all areas affected by the absence of these men. This had a profound effect on their families as well as the entire community. Many expressed frustration with their situation and yet it appeared to be a more suitable alternative for them than moving entirely.

1. See Appendix B Table 1

## SERVICES CHANGING IN THE COMMUNITY

The local economy has suffered as well by the mines closing. For many years the mines provided a very substantial tax contribution for Atikokan and the town enjoyed a sound, stable economy. In the past four years this situation has changed considerably, and many services have been reduced to some extent.

One of the first areas to feel the economic cutback was the Recreation budget; recreation is not listed as a number one priority. Facilities have reverted to volunteer assistance in order to economize. Staff full time and part time have also been cut back considerably. The Library and Museum boards have not had their budgets increased this year, they are operating on the 1980 budget levels. The Alternatives to Institutional Care(ATIC) programme is also operating on a 1980 budget level; it has cost them their handy man service, and permits less time for their seniors taxi service.

It must also be pointed out that even though budgets have been cut, Atikokan still enjoys many fine programmes. Even where volunteers have been enlisted, the response has been good, so that in reality the community has not been hurt as much as one would presume - we still have as fine recreational programmes as almost any other community of comparable size, and usually for far more reasonable fees.

As usual people resent increased taxes<sup>1</sup>, though they are aware that industrial contributions to the community are much less; at the same time they are opposed to service cut backs. Our tax structure also compares well with other Northwestern Ontario communities.<sup>2</sup>

1. See Appendix B Table 5A

2. See Appendix B Table 5B - tax structure reviewed,  
Atikokan vs other communities

PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

A) HOUSING PRICE COMPARISONS: See Appendix B Table 3

It is illustrated clearly that in 1979 and 1980 the average housing sale prices slumped considerably.

\* Source of information: Land Title Office, District of Rainy River, Fort Frances as taken from the Community Impact Monitoring 3rd Annual report.

B) HOMES RECLAIMED BY C.M.H.C., BANKS, HOMES VOLUNTARILY  
SUBMITTED

It has been difficult to determine how many foreclosures there have been in Atikokan in the past two years since the closing of the mines.

Questionnaires sent to the local banks were not replied to, they indicated information regarding such topics as foreclosures, lending values are of a confidential nature and could not be released.

Only one local lending institution indicated their their position. In that particular case only one foreclosure occurred in the first quarter of 1981.

C.M.H.C. indicated they have not foreclosed on any units on which they held mortgages. They state however "we have however, settled mortgage insurance claims with lenders who have completed foreclosure actions or taken properties back on Quit Claims". They also state they have not had any voluntary surrenders of properties directly to C.M.H.C..

In reply to a question of whether information is passed between C.M.H.C. offices from area to area regarding information about borrowers, C.M.H.C. replied, "C.M.H.C. does not maintain a list of borrowers between office areas. In addition, it is not our policy to advise other offices of claims. I would therefore doubt there have been any refusals to provide mortgage financing to applicants who have been foreclosed on unless such information was provided to the lenders by way of credit bureau reports."

The Atikokan Citizens Housing Committee were a group of individuals who grouped together after the mines closed primarily to explore what options were open to the people who had homes and could not sell them. The homes had also been devalued; at that stage they could not sell their homes in a depressed market, nor could they afford to continue making mortgage payments while they relocated elsewhere. A spokesman for the group indicated there were at least nine to twelve homes that were voluntarily submitted, people simply turned their keys in to the bank or lending institution and walked away from them.

One individual who gave up his home related his story to this worker. Early in 1979 when he wished to sell his home he discovered the home he had paid \$34,000. for had been lowered in value to approximately \$20,000..(See Appendix B Table 3) The owner of the home found himself in a position where he had little alternative but to voluntarily give up his home. He then relocated to B.C.; there he made arrangements to purchase a home through the Bank of Montreal. He was unsuccessful in his bid for a loan as the bank had information that indicated he had a quit claim against him. This information had followed him across three provinces. This individual relocated a second time to another area of B.C., and has since purchased a home through a private mortgage transaction.

C) BUILDING PERMIT COMPARISONS: See Appendix B Table 4

\* Source of information: Building Inspector F. Warren  
Township of Atikokan

D) TAX BASE IMPACT AND COMPARISONS: See Appendix B Table 5

Table 5 gives a detailed picture of the tax structure for Atikokan for the years 1974 - 1980. It is to be noted that the burden of taxes in 1980 fell into the residential sector. A rise from 29.81% to 45.36% is a considerable increase to community residents. One must also note the decrease of revenue from the commercial, industrial and

business taxes. The mine closures very noticeably affected the local tax structure.

\*Source of information: Township of Atikokan

E) UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE COMPARISONS: See Appendix B Table 6

The table indicates that unemployment figures peaked in 1980, unfortunately 1979 figures are not available other than for April, 1979.

\* Source of information: M. J. Hawryluk, Canada Employment Centre, Fort Frances, Ontario

F) MOBILITY, RELOCATION GRANTS: See Appendix B Table 7

Mobility grants assisted many people in relocating to other areas of Canada. The figure of 281 supports the fact that over 300 families have relocated; many staff people were relocated by the companies they were hired by.

The total number of mobility grants includes exploratory as well as relocation grants.

It must be pointed out that when the government assistance regarding relocations changed, it affected most of the former Caland employees. As of April 1, 1980 relocation funding was substantially reduced, therefore families received less than those moving prior to that date. This change appeared to be almost a discriminatory action against Caland employees, even though it was a federal regulation enacted across the entire country.

\* Source of information: M. J. Hawryluk, C.E.C., Fort Frances  
Ontario

G) WELFARE STATISTICS(LOCAL): See Appendix B Table 8

The table indicates welfare costs have increased considerably from 1977 to 1980. Atikokan's share of costs has risen almost \$20,000. from 1977; more than \$10,000. of that figure rose from 1979 to 1980, an indication of a rise in numbers receiving welfare during that period.

\*Source of information: District of Rainy River Welfare Board, 1978. Township of Atikokan, 1979 and 1980



H) CHURCHES OF ATIKOKAN:

Survey results indicated that all but one church had a decrease in membership. Overall in the replies received, a total of 278 parishioners were lost; indications were that losses were due primarily to people leaving the community.

Most churches still had the same groups in type and number, only three indicated fewer groups.

Counselling services are available by all but one church; six indicated an increased need for counselling for years 1979 through 1981; three indicated no increased need, one stayed at the same level.

\*Source of Information: Questionnaires sent to local churches.(10 of 11 replied)

I) CHILDREN'S RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES:

Overall children's recreational programmes have seen a decrease in the past four years. Noticeably lower are Minor Hockey participant figures where they have lost a hundred since 1978. There can be several reasons for this decline - 1) fewer children in the age groups of the Minor Hockey programme 2) increased fees 3) parents less able to provide expensive equipment required by participants

The swimming pool numbers have decreased quite considerably since 1978. Their programme is consistent with what they offered four years ago, and their fees have not increased. A possible reason for the declining numbers is that there are fewer children in the community.

The soccer programme is the only one to show an increased membership. The increasingly popular sport has kept fees consistent with fees of four years ago.

Figure skating has lost seventy-seven people in the past four years. Their most significant loss is in the area of smaller children who have moved away from Atikokan. The

club increased their fees in 1980, very marginally for the younger group, substantially for the older programme participants.

\*Source of Information: Questionnaire sent to local children's recreation programmes.(5 out of 7 replied)

J) ADULT RECREATION PROGRAMMES:

Adult recreation has seen a substantial decline in sports such as hockey, fastball and bowling. Fastball has two teams less, bowling twelve teams fewer, hockey down by approximately thirty men. The Intermediate and Liniment Hockey leagues amalgamated for the 1980-81 season in order to have enough teams to maintain a competitive league.

Golfers have enjoyed an increased membership over the past four years, peaking in 1981. In their estimation the additional participation can be attributed to better course conditions, people having more leisure time and the sport rapidly becoming a family sport.

Lob ball has also caught on in the past two years. The increased participation in Lob ball has to some extent undermined the numbers of Fastball participants.

\*Source of Information: Questionnaires sent to local adult recreation groups.(5 out of 6 replied)

K) SERVICE CLUBS OF ATIKOKAN:

Service clubs are all feeling the effect of people leaving the community; each organization lost members. The Kinsmen group disbanded early in 1980 because they only had three or four members left in the group. The Knights of Columbus have curtailed their activities quite drastically. All clubs have fewer people sharing the work load.

\*Source of Information: Questionnaire sent to local Service Clubs.(4 out of 7 replied)

L) ATIKOKAN RECREATION AND PARKS COMMUNITY CENTRE BOARD:

Actual budget figures have decreased from 1978 to 1980 by \$10,881.. The proposed budget for 1981 has seen a further decrease of \$58,574. which is very substantial.

The full time staff has been cut in half(from eight to four) over the past four years. The Municipal pool staff has been cut from thirteen to ten. Other areas have had part time staff cut from thirty to twenty.

Cutbacks began in 1978 in the outdoor rinks and ski hill, further cutbacks occurred in 1979 and the outdoor rinks were turned back to the people in various sections of the community to be handled on a volunteer basis.

Summer programmes had to be curtailed quite extensively because the Provincial government did not provide grant money to the same extent as in previous years.

\* Source of Information: Questionnaire sent to the Recreation Department

TRANSITION COUNSELLOR STATISTICS

Statistics were kept and tabulated at the end of each month to give a rough estimate of how many people were being seen and where they were referred, if they were. As of May, 1981, statistics were discontinued; by that time the worker was immersed in the preparation of this report. There were still contacts with people but they were minimal.

Over the course of twenty months the worker had contact with approximately four hundred and six individuals and one hundred and nineteen families. It is to be remembered, especially with families, the same family can show up on the statistics for several months.

Referrals for contacts were made to the following offices: Public Health Nurse; Northern Affairs; Manpower Counsellor; Church ministers; Alternatives to Institutional Care programme; Community Counselling; Youth Counsellor; Umex Thierry Mine; aptitude tests at the Atikokan High School; Family and Children's Services and the Ontario Home Renewal Programme.

There were approximately forty individuals who went through this worker to get on the air shuttle list. Individuals were also referred to Ontario Hydro for employment. Referrals were made for Manpower sponsored courses, as well as getting individuals interested in these courses. In addition volunteer work was sought for several people who wished to become involved in that type of activity; credit counselling was arranged for an individual through the local credit union. There were a substantial number of other referrals for a variety of different activities or work situations.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is difficult to measure accomplishments unless they result in dollars and cents; in this position accomplishments do not surface in that manner. Verbal feedback and letters with survey sheets indicated people were grateful to have someone who could listen and assist them in objectively assessing their problems.

One of the accomplishments through this office that has had far reaching results, is the establishment of the New Horizons grant group, the Atikokan Fix It Club. In mid 1980 it became apparent that the older segment of people(55 plus) were lacking in a sense of purpose and direction, they had more free time on their hands than ever before, combined with a sense of loss.

A grant was applied for and received after the initial task of getting people together and establishing a board of directors had been done. A location was selected for the groups activities and a lease negotiated with the owner of the building. The group opened its doors on February 4, 1981; its numbers have been growing steadily since then, and their membership presently is in the area of the seventy-five mark.

The purpose of the group is primarily to provide an opportunity for men and women to come together in a setting where they can do odd jobs, crafts, hobbies, besides congregating for coffee, a game of cards, or shuffleboard. They also provide a valuable service in the community for people on pensions, compensation, widows, widowers, single parents and seniors. They do odd jobs at a minimal cost to their clients, thus enabling people to be able to have work done that would otherwise be unable to afford.

Results and satisfaction in the group are very visible. Men who felt isolated by the mine closure because they no longer enjoyed the social interaction with their friends, are once again finding a common congregating place - at

the Fix It Club headquarters! Wives tell of seeing a very noticeable difference in their husbands, they are once again enthusiastic about living. The women too are meeting upstairs in the headquarters and doing meaningful work in an air of congeniality. At this stage the club is less than a year old but the overall benefits derived are clearly evident and the people involved are grateful for the opportunities it has afforded them.

#### POSITION OF TRANSITION COUNSELLOR DEFINED

The definition of a Transition Counsellor at the onset of this job was broadly defined; the committee responsible for hiring this worker had very few definite guidelines as to what the duties of a Transition Counsellor would be. They saw it as someone offering assistance and easing people through an adaptation period in the months following the mine closures, and this is clearly what it became. The Committee felt that in two years the Transition Counsellor would be able to define the position.

The two years have elapsed and it is still difficult to define a Transition Counsellors role as there are so many aspects to cover. However, I feel confident that a Transition Counsellor was an asset to people in need; as stated in the introduction the position is very nonthreatening, therefore people easily approached this office.

A Transition Counsellor in another community at another point in time will develop a format of their own - it can never be a standard position with rigid guidelines; it must be flexible, suited to the needs of the people it is designed to serve.

Point form descriptions of the tasks performed by this worker are listed:

- Counselling to unemployed men, women and youth regarding their opportunities in Atikokan, elsewhere; their skill levels or lack of them.

- Counselling families regarding their alternatives, exploring areas they needed to consider before leaving the community.
- Assisting people in adjusting to their state of unemployment, the period of transition between jobs, how to cope with lower incomes, learning to budget more carefully, setting priorities in order.
- Providing information for those needing O.H.I.P. assistance, referring them to the proper agency, writing letters when the situation warranted such action.
- Taking and listing names of those interested in the air shuttle service for points in Northwestern Ontario.
- Taking and listing names of individuals interested in upgrading courses such as carpentry and welding.
- Counselling families where pressures of unemployment, insecurity caused tension and family problems in the home.
- Actively seeking employment opportunities for clients that were having difficulty finding work, or asserting themselves into a position of seeking employment. In this area, calls were placed to various mining company personnel supervisors.
- Assisting individuals in writing up resumes for their employment applications.
- Counselling families of the men that became part of the group being air shuttled between here and Pickle Lake.
- Making contact and active efforts to improve conditions for men away from home, helping them adjust to their new work and lifestyle.
- Setting up the New Horizons group, making the applications for the grant, helping to organize the group and being in an advisory position to the group.
- Being affiliated with the Inter-agency group<sup>\*</sup> in the

\* Interagency group - dinner meetings held on a monthly basis with representatives from the Police, Family & Children's Services, Community Counselling, Youth Counsellor, Public Health Nurse, Clergy, Clinic staff, High School representative, Probation, Recreation, Home Care Nurse and usually a guest speaker

community, this contact with other agencies kept the worker aware of services offered and to whom the services would apply.

- Keeping in close contact with the Canada Employment Centre, zeroing in on job areas, and directing likely candidates from my clientiel towards these positions.
- Clientiel with special problems were referred to other assistance agencies in the community.
- Assisting individuals with compensation claims and problems related to this area.

#### DO EXISTING SERVICES NEED TO BE EXPANDED

##### GAPS IN SERVICES; EXISTING SERVICES

In the opinion of this worker, services are more than adequate in Atikokan. There are many excellent help resources in the community, covering the population from early childhood right through to seniors. It is quite apparent that Atikokan has more services available to its citizens than other communities of comparable size and even some larger centres.

In reviewing services offered, the area that needs possible expansion is the delivery system of information for our community. Regardless of how well sponsors advertise their service or programmes there are always those that fail to receive the information. The local T.V. channel possibly could be used more extensively to provide more information regarding existing and new programmes in Atikokan. It means taking the time to do short information programmes and airing them periodically after the initial airing for our citizens. A recent survey by T.V. Atikokan Productions indicates that many people watch the local channel and find programming of this type useful and informational.

For those in the community who do not have cable connections this delivery system is useless. However, as long



as the assistance agencies continue to meet on a monthly basis at Interagency Meetings, then each person attending walks away from the meeting a potential information centre. These people in turn in their various capacities in the community can readily pass on the information to those in need of it as they circulate throughout the community.

Possible gaps in the service are perhaps in the area of needing more for parents with very young handicapped children. My information is that the Infant Stimulation Programme is possibly going to be a reality in the near future, which should be excellent and very useful.

Another area that possibly needs more emphasis is a group for parents that would deal with pre teen and teenage problems. I see it more of a group therapy situation, where parents could help one another cope and offer moral support to each other. There are many excellent resources available to these people but very often parents are reluctant to admit they have a problem or that they cannot cope. A group for these people would at best bring them together where they could explore their alternatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### A) TO INDUSTRIES

1. It is imperative that Industry adopt a National Skills level programme so that employees can readily transport their skills to any part of the country.
2. Training programmes should also be portable; companies would be wise to become a part of a National programme where an employee being trained by a company can take his apprenticeship elsewhere in the event of an industry shutdown. Looking at the other end of the issue, a company seeking employees is at an advantage to pick up an apprentice who already has two years training instead of the Company being responsible for the entire period of training from the beginning.
3. Whenever possible, employees should be accurately informed of the future plans of the company.
4. In the event of a shutdown, a complete inventory skills list should be done for each employee. It is important for a company to have this information regarding employees if they wish to assist them in finding employment elsewhere. All the employees skills should be listed, not just the skill that the person uses in his present job, versatility enhances an individuals employment opportunities; the information must not infringe on an individuals personal human rights.
5. Short courses should be conducted at a company level in resume writing, this is usually an area that employees are not too familiar with, especially if many are long time employees.

### B) TO BARGAINING UNITS

1. As often as possible, time should be taken by the Union Education committee to educate their members of the benefits of long range planning regarding their contracts and negotiations.

2. A report like this may be used to illustrate the importance of making plans for the future, the importance of pensions and severance pay.
3. When negotiating teams are established, unions should include women on the team. If the company has hourly rated female employees they would be very likely candidates; if there aren't any female employees, then wives of several union members should be included. Women display good sound judgement when planning for the future, they also tend to communicate more realistic feelings than men do. Men will be silent if they fear being put down by other men, but women will ask questions or challenge statements that do not appeal to them. Women need to be included on negotiating teams, the lives of their families are affected by contracts, so they should have a part in making their interests known. Women should especially be included in bargaining when a termination of an industry is expected. They should attend union meetings so that they may be correctly and adequately informed.
4. Wages are important, but unions and their members should emphasize to the company they work for, the need for training programmes so individuals can acquire skills. Once more, emphasis should be placed on working toward National skill levels which ensure portability; it is the duty of all working people to make this need known so federal action is taken in this regard.
5. Training programmes and their portability are points unions need to emphasize to companies.
6. Unions should also do an inventory skills level of their people in the event of a plant closure; this task should not be left up to the company alone. There are occasions when these lists can be an asset in helping to place some of your membership in other work areas.
7. It is important to point out to your members the benefits of being able to write up resumes. Unions can urge companies to run courses in resume writing prior to a plant shutdown.

8. The Union is urged to take a realistic and sensible approach in communicating with their people. When a shutdown is imminent, by all means encourage your people to prepare for it. The impression of this worker is that unions often take the approach of saying "we won't let the company away with this, we'll make them stay open". That is all the membership hears, or they choose to hear, and they ignore preparing for the shutdown. Unions are right in pursuing with the company the possibility of remaining open, but the general membership gets the notion that the union will take care of matters completely - it seldom works out that way. It may not be feasible for an industry to remain open, so the working individuals are the ones who are the losers in the end if they are not prepared. The union has an obligation to teach, lead and prepare their people to the very best of their ability for this type of situation.

C) TO ORGANIZATIONS FORMED TO DEAL WITH INDUSTRY SHUTDOWNS

1. It would appear that it is absolutely essential that the town fathers establish strong lines of communication with the people in the community. Town councillors tend to be very busy people, therefore they tend to discuss, plan and set up ideas and schemes among themselves in council. It is imperative that they get input from citizens of the community; council can only meet the needs of its citizens by listening to the community as a whole.
2. Several committees, such as AID, AJMAPC, Manpower Adjustment Committees, Housing Committee were formed in order to see the community through the crisis after the mines closed. These committees were all successful in various aspects, but one of the observations that has been made regarding these committees is the lack of inclusion of ordinary working people. Membership tends to be comprised of business, administrative, professional and government people, yet these committees were designed to assist everyone in the community. The ordinary working

individual views these committees with a great deal of skepticism because of the very people who form the groups; they are beyond approach, so to speak, by a working class individual. Mechanics, carpenters, labourers must be encouraged to become part of groups such as those mentioned in order to relate and identify the needs of the citizens readily. One example where hourly rated were involved was the air shuttle service and it was one scheme that took off and worked relatively successfully.

The arguments that can be used regarding this situation are that working people just will not become involved, though it must be pointed out that the working segment of the population could just as easily have been a part of these committees as anyone else. Perhaps a different approach could be used to draw people into these committees; newspaper ads are almost totally ignored, but a town councillor perhaps approaching an individual on a one to one basis, explaining the purpose of a committee and their idea, might receive a totally different response from the person in question. This area in municipal government needs to be more extensively explored.

D) TO EMPLOYEES ORGANIZED AND UNORGANIZED

1. If you are to ensure your security for the future, it is essential(if you are organized) that you become involved in the union that represents your interests. Being a paying member who contributes little to the organization is of no value what so ever, the organization is as good as you make it. It cannot represent your interests unless you openly express them. Too often we have seen relatively few members make decisions for the entire membership, that is not fair, but thats the way it turns out if all members are not totally active.
2. For young employees, pensions and severence pay seem like items far in the future. Perhaps they are, but the time to begin planning for the future is now! They are a

couple of issues that should rate at the top of your priority list. Be certain that benefits such as medical, dental and drug plans are the type that will assure you and your family full coverage.

3. Women, wives, mothers, do not just sit back and let your men be employees of industry and leave the responsibilities of what they seek in a contract up to them. Women often see the benefits of long range planning, they know the necessities of life well, and most often they are the ones who handle the financial end of affairs at home. Voice your opinions, point out the things that are important, attend meetings that are designed to provide information and direction, especially in the case of industry shutdowns. An example would be where men work four days a week, ten hours a day to make up a forty hour week. This is a suitable arrangement for the man, but what happens to the rest of the family on the days off? Does the man instead of taking his family out for a two day camping trip opt for a three day weekend of fishing with the guys because the wife has to stay home with school age children? How about shift work - is it conducive to family life? Wives are often driven to their wits end because of shift work and the problems it presents for the family. These aspects should and must be considered in order to ensure that family life is as good as it can possibly be.
4. When a shutdown or lay-off situation occurs, carefully consider your next move. Decisions made in haste or panic are often unwise, and very often not reversible. Breadwinners should carefully explore work situations, be sure that this is the right job opportunity, as living in a situation where your work is unbearable makes the rest of life unbearable. If possible, husband and wife should look over a community specifically seeking out services that they will require, check costs of housing, utilities, food and educational facilities; these are

extremely important to you and your family. If at all possible, a breadwinner should give a new job a trial period before taking his family to a new community.

5. Once you move into a new community do not expect to feel like a part of it the day after you arrive, that takes time! Survey results from this shutdown have indicated that it takes a long time, probably in the neighborhood of a year to two years. Give yourself and the new community a chance! Don't wait for people to make the first move, if you want to be involved and be a part of things, then get going instead of waiting for invitations. The more effort you put into the adjustment task, the more successful you will be and in all likelihood, in a shorter length of time.

## SUMMARY

It has been two years since Steep Rock closed its operation, and a year and a half since Caland's operation came to a standstill. The community has changed considerably since that time; over three hundred families have left Atikokan and there are a fair number who are still faced with that possibility. Why? Jobs are lacking, those that are available have little promise of permanence unless they are at Pluswood or Atikokan Forest Products.

Seasonal work is available in the area; if it is good paying, a reasonably well established family without excessive expenses can function fairly well. For younger families with growing children it is hardly sufficient. There are O.H.I.P. premiums to cover, dental and drug bills, these are costly items.

As well the Hydro Generating Station\* has not provided the kind of steady, secure employment that people led themselves to believe would occur. Hydro contractors provide seasonal work but few have year round steady employment with Hydro itself. My final survey among local people(not completed because of the postal strike) indicates bitterness and resentment by many local people because of the situation.

The older segment of the population is still faced with the same dilemma now as they were experiencing shortly after the mine closure. They are too old to find work elsewhere, their homes are here, retirement and old age pensions are a few years off - how do they continue to exist? The cost of living continues to increase and plays no favorites because of age distinctions.

When this office first opened there seemed to be a steady stream of people coming to talk about their frustrations. In the last recent months people have expressed

\* The Hydro Generating Station began construction of its thermal generating plant in 1978; Atikokan's council in 1973 made a bid to persuade Ontario Hydro to locate their plant in the Atikokan area



fewer and fewer of their anxieties; they are at a stage of acceptance of their situation, they have adapted however hectic it has been. When asked how they are faring, a standard reply is "what's the use of complaining, even if others care, no one can do anything about it". For those who feel this dilemma is over exaggerated, it is to be pointed out that there are families in this community (some single parent families) living on \$258. per month, \$271. per month, individuals existing on \$126. per month and how about \$60. a month! These are isolated cases, but they are a result of the closing of the mines.

There are those in the community who prefer their new lifestyle and even feel that the mines closing spurred them on to bigger and better things. Some have ventured off into small business projects that they find satisfying because they are working for themselves. Men who have gone into bush work have remarked on how nice it is to work in a clean environment, even if they must endure the cold of winter and the flies and mosquitoes of summer. I've yet to meet a man who says he misses shift work, or the red dust or the noise! They were all happy to get away from that, though many preferred the work they actually performed in the mine to what they are presently doing. Those that have remained in the community, have all but for a few, gone into work other than mining, so that is a definite change.

Men began working in the mines and stayed locked into that way of life though they were not always totally satisfied. Unless a man was either very strong and determined or very frustrated and unhappy, he usually did not find the strength to quit the mine and make a new beginning.

It has been a time of putting other talents and skills to use for men that previously performed one type of job from day to day for years on end. Individuals express enthusiasm about their learning experiences away from the mine.

Umex Mine, Mattabi Mine, I.N.C.O. Mine at Shebandowen, Great Lakes camps and Fort Frances area were some of the alternatives men chose. The costs incurred by these individuals were phenomenal in these endeavours. In speaking to several individuals that were employed in some of these areas or still are, I discovered just how much these men really paid for the privilege of retaining Atikokan as their home. It is a price not too many would be prepared to pay.

Former employees of Umex and Mattabi cited the list of expenses for their time there. Poor road conditions took their toll on every car that made those trips, and the expense of travelling back and forth finally became the straw that broke the camel's back. The men continued to travel back and forth on a weekly basis or two week basis because they found it difficult to make the transition to being away from home for long periods of time.

It would appear that the Federal government would indeed be wise to review this matter. These people are not eligible for any type of tax break though they more than certainly deserve it. It is impossible to comprehend why business and salesmen can claim their travelling expenses, yet tradesmen are not given that consideration.

One of the first requests from this office to the two mines was for a complete list of employees being laid off. The lists were kept updated as to what each individual on the list was doing, if they relocated, or if they were unemployed; it was all recorded whenever the information was received. In the final analysis the lists were broken down to arrive at the figures in Appendix B Table 1.

The breakdown is a story in itself, there are interesting, yet very distressing factors to be noted. Tallying up the percentage figures of the retired, semi-retired, unemployed locally, compensation, disability cases and unknowns, we arrive at 28.5%. This represents more than one quarter of the total of employees of the two mines.

Many of the 6% retired took retirement because of the mine closing. Most of the semi-retired are still in Atikokan because of age and physical limitations; they are picking up casual work whenever possible, but there is little security in temporary work. It does not permit them to prepare themselves for retirement financially, they are fortunate to be able to continue to make ends meet.

Some of the people on disability pensions were still employed at the mines despite their handicaps; this was an incentive to be active, once the job was no longer available their motivation dwindled as well. It might be noted that most of the workmen's compensation board and disability cases are the result of men working for extended periods of time for the mines.

The figures of the table speak volumes about what really happens to a community when an industry ceases operation, and the after effects on the people who were the heart of the industry.

## APPENDIX A

### HISTORY OF ASSISTANCE RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THE MINE CLOSURE IMPACT

#### A. 1. ATIKOKAN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE(A.I.D.)

Early in 1973 the Atikokan Industrial Development Committee was formed with Councillor Murray Goodwin the chairman of the group. The purpose of the AID committee was as follows:

- a) Take on responsibility for advising Council on policy and action steps regarding industrial development promotion
- b) Spur the development of secondary industry
- c) Revitalize the community economic base
- d) Protect the community from fluctuations affecting resource based, single industry towns

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## APPENDIX A

### A. 2. ATIKOKAN JOINT MANPOWER ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

On May 4, 1978 the AJMAPC committee was formed with the following terms of reference:

- a) To assess the impact of the phase-out of mining operations on the community
- b) To draw together all available data on demographic factors, employment, serviced land, commercial floor space, tourism and other aspects of the community's economy
- c) To identify any information gaps or deficiencies, which would preclude the development of an adequate economic strategy for the community and undertake remedial action where required
- d) To evaluate the present and future economic base, workforce, local resources, and the potential for locating new enterprises
- e) To explore all options for the efficient administration of the economic development function
- f) To recommend to their principals and appropriate government authorities a basic economic development strategy, the means whereby the planning, development and management of the strategy may be enhanced, and a suitable worker adjustment programme
- g) With the assistance of the Manpower Consultative Service, the Employment Adjustment Service, and the Ministry of Northern Affairs to bring to bear and make the most effective use of all public measures and services available from the federal and provincial governments

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## APPENDIX A

### A. 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER

In June, 1978 the Ontario Government agreed to assist Atikokan in a number of ways, including a five year commitment of financial assistance for a full time Economic Development Commissioner.

The Economic Development Commissioner in the person of Brian W. Ross was hired on October 1, 1978. The approach being followed by the Economic Development office is one of information gathering, marketting, detailed analyses and implementation. The objective of Atikokan's development strategy is to develop a diversified industrial base, adequate to support a population of about 6,000 people.

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## APPENDIX A

### A. 4. CALAND JOINT MANPOWER COMMITTEE

The Caland Joint Manpower Committee was formed and an assessment agreement was signed on April 5, 1979. The four parties involved in the agreement were the Minister of Employment and Immigration for Canada, the Minister of Labour for Ontario, Caland Ore Company Limited, and the United Steelworkers of America, Local 5855.

The responsibilities and objectives of the Committee were:

- a) To develop an orderly programme of manpower adjustment which will alleviate to the extent possible the problems which will result from the phasing out of the mine
- b) To recommend to the Company and the Union joint courses of action which the Committee deems to be essential in the development of an effective manpower adjustment programme.
- c) With the assistance of the Manpower Consultative Services and the Employment Adjustment Service of Ontario to bring to bear and make the most effective use of all public manpower measures and services available from the federal and provincial governments

\*\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIX A

### A. 5. CALAND STAFF ADJUSTMENT COMMITTEE

The Caland Staff Adjustment Committee signed a Manpower Incentive agreement on August 31, 1979. The four parties involved in the agreement were: the Minister of Employment and Immigration for Canada, the Minister of Labour for Ontario, Caland Ore Company Limited and agents for the salaried employees.

The responsibilities and objectives of the Committee were:

- a) To develop an orderly programme of manpower adjustment which will alleviate to the extent possible the problems which will result from the phasing out of the mine
- b) To recommend to the Company any courses of action which the Committee deems to be essential in the development of an effective manpower adjustment programme
- c) With the assistance of the Manpower Consultative Service and the Employment Adjustment Service of Ontario to bring to bear and make the most effective use of all public manpower measures and services available from the federal and provincial governments

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## APPENDIX A

### A. 6. STEEP ROCK IRON MINES HOURLY MANPOWER ADJUSTMENT COMMITTEE

The Steep Rock Iron Mines Hourly Manpower Adjustment Committee was formed officially August 31, 1978. The signatories of the agreement were Steep Rock Iron Mines Limited, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Minister of Labour for Ontario and the United Steelworkers of America, Local 3466.

The goals of the Committee were as follows:

- a) Attract the interest of other employers in the immediate area and across Canada
- b) Attempt to establish skill upgrading courses in order to make unemployed workers more attractive in the labour market

\*\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIX A

### A. 7. ATIKOKAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Early in 1979 Brian W. Ross, Economic Development Commissioner approached the Kiwanis, Lions and Kinsmen service clubs seeking support to establish a small business development corporation. The Lions committed \$5,000. and three members to the Corporation, the Kiwanis and Kinsmen followed suit.

The A.D.C. was incorporated in February, 1980. Their purpose primarily is to provide financial assistance to small business entrepreneurs experiencing equity shortage.

Seven members serve as a Board of Directors, with approximately forty individual shareholders involved in the corporation. The A.D.C. stipulates that an entrepreneur seeking their assistance can only qualify by establishing his business venture in Atikokan.

\*\*\*\*\*

# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 1

Locally employed	33%
Relocated mine employees	37%
Own their own homes(locally)	34%
Retired	6%
Semi-retired	9%
Unemployed locally	7%
Compensation, disability pensions	3%
Unknown	3.5%
Deceased	1.1%
Working at Mattabi, Umex, Inco, Great Lakes camps, Fort Frances	5%
Bushworkers	8%
Mining jobs	39%
Other than mining jobs	35.5%
People who left Atikokan & returned	2.5%
Irrational Behaviour	.6%
* Miscellaneous	1%
* Includes unemployed elsewhere, welfare locally, presently taking courses	

Breakdown figures are based on a total of 807 employees submitted on lists from Steep Rock Iron Mines and Caland Ore Company

Steep Rock Iron Mines - 472

Caland Ore Company - 335

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APPENDIX B

TABLE 2

BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY SHEETS TAKEN BY MAIL FROM FORMER  
STEEP ROCK EMPLOYEES DURING FEBRUARY, MARCH, 1979.

49% return of survey sheets(49 out of 100 replied)

Age range of people leaving the community:

18% in the 20 - 30 year bracket

28.5% in the 30 - 40 year bracket

33% in the 40 - 50 year bracket

2% in the 60+ bracket

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Wages equivalent to what they earned at Steep Rock

55% replied "Yes"

34% replied "No"

Benefits equivalent to those at Steep Rock

65% replied "Yes"

24% replied "No"

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From the 49 replies - all were classified as tradesmen,  
heavy equipment operators, staff positions, truck drivers.  
Two were on U.I. Benefits, and 1 classified as a labourer.

---

63% bought home or mobile homes

30% rented accommodations

---

42% adjusted easily to their new location

20% had difficulty adjusting to a new location

28% adjusted fairly well, but were encountering some  
problems

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# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 3

HOUSE AND PROPERTY SALES - TOWNSHIP OF ATIKOKAN, 1976 - 80.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
AVERAGE HOUSE SALE	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
January	5,338	17,917	23,667	21,452	25,233
February	12,667	20,800	25,063	30,650	18,602
March	8,470	24,813	29,578	11,700	21,789
April	14,486	23,882	20,314	16,012	25,641
May	24,543	21,461	28,333	16,500	15,572
June	14,750	22,478	33,225	19,954	19,772
July	28,143	22,321	31,532	20,667	20,300
August	20,563	24,383	52,050	14,398	16,277
September	18,236	55,054	35,250	20,630	22,755
October	21,681	20,500	26,092	26,261	22,669
November	20,057	29,004	23,136	19,943	14,940
December	16,425	-	34,000	25,386	19,477

Source: Land Title Office, District of Rainy River, Fort Frances

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# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 4

	1978		1979		1980		1981	
	no. of permits	values	no. of permits	values	no. of permits	values	no. of permits	values
* Residential		\$658,300	21	\$124,900	23	\$57,400	3	\$70,000
Commercial		\$160,500	6	\$154,500	6	\$169,483	1	\$18,000
Industrial	-	-	-	-	2	\$950,000	-	-
Institutional	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures for 1981  
are to mid May.

\* Residential permits are for garages, additions, new residences

Source: Building Inspector, F. Warren  
Township of Atikokan

\*\*\*\*\*

# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 5

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Mill Rate							
- Residential	69.23	74.06	73.47	90.85	101.59	103.79	108.78
- Commercial & Industrial	85.12	85.56	84.22	104.32	116.48	119.11	127.98
Assessment	\$11,516,791	\$14,425,000	\$14,428,000	\$15,412,000	\$15,627,466	\$15,787,884	\$12,651,076
Debenture Debt		\$ 229,645	\$ 217,047	\$ 147,848	\$ 102,000	\$ 128,114	\$ 94,958
Commercial/Industrial Taxes	\$366,392	\$ 532,430	\$ 557,259	\$ 710,244	\$ 798,180	\$ 881,332	\$ 590,436
% of Total	40.67	45.17	45.38	45.75	45.94	47.42	38.15
Business Taxes	\$ 176,847	\$ 275,138	\$ 291,434	\$ 369,555	\$ 412,946	\$ 423,225	\$ 255,265
% of Total	19.63	23.34	23.73	23.80	23.77	22.77	16.49
Residential & Farm Taxes	\$ 357,761	\$ 371,099	\$ 379,311	\$ 472,777	\$ 526,258	\$ 554,097	\$ 702,004
% of Total	39.71	31.48	30.89	30.45	30.29	29.81	45.36
TOTAL TAXES	\$ 901,000	\$ 1,178,667	\$ 1,228,004	\$ 1,552,576	\$ 1,737,384	\$ 1,858,654	\$ 1,547,705

Source: Township of Atikokan

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# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 6

C.E.C. Active File in Atikokan:

	January			February			March			April		
	male	female	Total	male	female	Total	male	female	Total	male	female	Total
1978										166	205	371
1979												
1980	271	157	428	291	157	448	278	152	430	312	157	469
1981	234	144	378	223	147	370	213	136	349	205	132	337

\*\*\*\*\*

Source: M. J. Hawrylak,

Canada Manpower Centre,  
Fort Frances, Ontario.



# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 7

### MOBILITY GRANTS (Includes Exploratory & Relocation)

<u>Fiscal Year Ending</u>	<u>Number of Grants</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>
March 1978	32	\$ 4,543.00
March 1979	95	17,296.00
March 1980	612	336,098.00
March 1981	220	141,912.00
Total	959	\$499,849.00

\*\*\*\*\*

### RELOCATION GRANTS:

<u>Fiscal Year Ending</u>	<u>Number of Grants</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>
March 1978	11	\$ 2,562.00
March 1979	18	3,379.00
March 1980	142	268,380.00
March 1981	110	117,520.00
Total	281	\$391,841.00

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Source: M. J. Hawrylak,  
Canada Manpower Centre,  
Fort Frances, Ontario.

# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 8

General Welfare Assistance  
 Fort Frances, Ontario  
 (District of Rainy River Welfare  
 Administration Board)

	1977	1978	1979	1980
Township of Atikokan Costs	\$29,012.	\$30,571	\$38,071	\$48,479

Source: District of Rainy River Welfare Board, 1978  
 Township of Atikokan, 1979 & 1980

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## APPENDIX C

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- 1) Steep Rock Iron Mines Ltd., printed by A. Wilson  
Publications, Dryden, Ontario
- 2) A History of Atikokan - Published in 1974
- 3) The Atikokan Story - Robert E. Michels, Associate  
Director Quetico Centre, 1980
- 4) Chairman's Report - Pickle Lake Manpower Planning Assoc.  
by E. Bottenfield, December, 1980
- 5) Central Mortgage Housing Corporation representative,  
Bert Fenlon
- 6) Atikokan Building Inspector, F. Warren
- 7) Fort Frances Community Credit Union, Atikokan Branch
- 8) M. J. Hawrylak, Canada Manpower Centre, Fort Frances,  
Ontario
- 9) E. Morrisette, Recreation Director for Atikokan
- 10) Adult Recreation Groups through questionnaires
- 11) Schools through questionnaires
- 12) Service Clubs of Atikokan through questionnaires
- 13) Children's Recreational Groups through questionnaires
- 14) Churches of Atikokan through questionnaires
- 15) Social Service Organizations through questionnaires
- 16) Atikokan Citizens Housing Committee members
- 17) H. E. Jackson, Steep Rock Iron Mines Limited
- 18) Confederation College of Applied Arts & Technology,  
Fort Frances, Ontario
- 19) Atikokan Township Office
- 20) Land Title Office, District of Rainy River, Fort Frances,  
Ontario

## APPENDIX D

### RESOURCE INFORMATION REGARDING ATIKOKAN

1. COMMUNITY IMPACT MONITORING PROGRAM, 3rd ANNUAL REPORT, 1980  
Prepared by S. G. Hancock, D. Falconer
2. PRELIMINARY REPORT - Atikokan Joint Manpower Assessment & Planning Committee(AJMAPC) at Atikokan, Ontario.  
May, 1980 - S. G. Hancock
3. APPENDIX PRELIMINARY REPORT(AJMAPC) - Prepared by B. W. Ross,  
May, 1980
4. SCENARIO V, AN ECONOMIC PLANNING STUDY FOR ATIKOKAN  
Prepared by B. W. Ross, April 10, 1981
5. REPORT - CALAND JOINT MANPOWER COMMITTEE - Prepared by  
G. K. Eoll, October, 1980
6. REPORT - CALAND STAFF ADJUSTMENT COMMITTEE - Prepared by  
G. K. Eoll, October, 1980
7. REPORT - STEEP ROCK IRON MINES HOURLY MANPOWER ADJUSTMENT COMMITTEE - Prepared by J. McTaggart, 1980
8. THE ATIKOKAN STORY - Robert E. Michels, August, 1980
9. ATIKOKAN COMMUNITY PROFILE - Prepared by Economic Development Office, August, 1980

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