In this paper I will examine Attawapiskat Cree land use both historically and as it exists today. The intent is not to give an in-depth historical account, nor is it to be an exhaustive quantitative analysis. Rather, the objective is to look at the shifts in extent and nature of land use and how they may be related to Euro-Canadian incursion. This overview is offered as background to proposed field and archival work requested by the band.

There are some underlying assumptions in this paper. First, it is taken as a given that the relationship that the Cree people have with the land is an essential part of their culture. As documented and explored by a number of researchers (Tanner 1979; Feit 1986), land use activities serve to integrate a complex web of economic, social, political and religious practices. It follows that to deny Cree (and other subarctic hunters) their relationship to the land is to deny them a fundamental right to their Cree-ness.

From this assumption follows a second: that the Cree continue to have a considerable vested interest in the land. This is not an interest rooted solely in subsistence or in monetary economics, but also a cultural and ideological investment. Cree identity is still very much attuned to their land. While one may perceive land as a concrete entity for analytical purposes (“Fred was out on his land last week”), land or territory is fundamentally a part of greater social and cultural systems (as discussed in the paragraph above).

In this paper, the state refers not only to the legal and political institutions one normally associates with governments but other forms of Euro-Canadian intrusions as well. Further, the assumption is not going to be made a priori that such intrusions were or are inherently detrimental or that the intent was to deny the Cree people their culture or lifestyle. Rather, the argument is made that over time the various Euro-Canadian forms of incursion served to initiate a form of encapsulation upon the Cree people of Attawapiskat.
Bailey (1969:147-149) articulates the concept of encapsulation, in which the dominant or encapsulating society or culture, through greater political resources, larger size and more specialized political roles, subsumes the subordinate group or society. In addition to these prerequisites for encapsulation is an essential difference in values and ideas about human nature and the natural condition of human communities and the relation between man and nature. These centre upon such notions as accumulation of wealth, personal prestige and honour, the common good, control of nature, etc. In Canada, these and other normative patterns are at the crux of Indian/state relations. The state has sought the encapsulation of native people in this country through such measures as the Indian Act, the various treaties, a complex bureaucracy to deal with Indian people, and various and sundry forms of legislation. A number of criteria will determine the nature of encapsulation: resources, economic interest in the subordinate society, tolerance of the subordinate’s cultural practices, distance from the encapsulator’s core, etc. These need to be borne in mind as we examine Attawapiskat land use and the incursion of the state.

The village of Attawapiskat is located on the western shore of James Bay, to the immediate west of Akimiski Island. The name *Attawapiskat* translates as ‘there is room to pass between the rocks’ or ‘deep water between the rocks’ (Vezina 1978). According to the chief and council (personal communication 1989) the original hunting territories extended from the Hudson Bay area to the north, to the Kapuskau River to the south, from Akimiski Island in James Bay to the east and to the Mississa Lake area to the west. The Attawapiskat Post Journals of the Hudson Bay Company (HBC Archives B.243/1/1-5) confirm this assertion of the band’s territory. Today the population is approximately 1100 people, and the predominant language of daily conversation remains Cree.

As with other West Main or Mushkegowuk Cree, the traditional subsistence base focussed on a mixed diet of large and small mammals, birds and fish. While moose, caribou, rabbit, beaver, bear, Canada geese, Blue geese, partridge, ptarmigan and fish were all secured through a rich variety of traditional technologies and skills, only waterfowl, fish and muskrat could be counted on to occur in large numbers (Honigmann 1961:1). The technology by necessity had to be extensive in that much of the country is chronically poor in large game animals. Thus, smaller game, waterfowl and fish compensated for lack of larger species.

There has been relatively little research done in the Attawpiskat region, with the exception of the work of Honigmann who published extensively between 1945 and 1975. I will refer to much of his work throughout this paper. In addition, Hoffman (1957), Nonas (1963), and Cooper (1933) have conducted more limited fieldwork in Attawapiskat.
The period of acculturation on James Bay’s west coast goes back to 1685 when Fort Albany succeeded the establishment of Rupert’s House and Moose Factory farther south. However, for the people of the Attawapiskat region, intense contact did not occur until two centuries later, although during the 1700s, their material culture had been altered by European goods received through Fort Albany (Honigmann 1958:59). The degree to which material culture was altered, however, is in dispute. Father Rodrigue Vezina (1978) of the Oblates contends that older people in Attawapiskat in 1978 still remembered using bows and arrows to kill partridges and small animals, while Honigmann (1981:219) contends that informants in 1947 scarcely knew that the region’s Indians formerly made stone axes and knives. Thus, the nature and extent of material culture change is debatable.

In other realms of social and cultural life, Honigmann has suggested that initially the Attawapiskat Cree remained largely unaffected by the fur trade being conducted at Fort Albany. Those Indians who did trade were largely those from south of the Attawapiskat River, and in terms of the Attawapiskat Cree, were relatively few in number. Those from the more northerly areas, he suggests, remained only briefly at the fort during the summer trading period. Thus, the Attawapiskat Indians probably traded little fur for food until the 19th century and even then the prices paid for fur were an important factor assuring that European foodstuffs did not upset dependance upon fish and meat procured by the people themselves (Honigmann 1956:14).

However, over time the changes in material culture, in conjunction with the available biotic base, did render some changes. The increasing use of firearms as well as the well travelled coastal migratory route of geese served to bring an increasingly large population to the coastal areas as opposed to the interior. Waterfowl, as noted above, were a staple, and with the arrival of firearms were considerably easier to procure. In addition to the adaptation to firearms, food items such as sugar, flour and tea were quickly integrated into the cultural order.

A number of factors were at work in the Attawapiskat region in the early 19th century. Being some distance removed from the trading post at Fort Albany, the Attawapiskat people were not immediately immersed into the furs for food cycle. However, they did quickly integrate those items of material culture which served them well in subsistence activities. But while the technology affecting subsistence might have been altered, by and large, traditional patterns of behaviour and social organization persisted until the mid-19th century.

In the 1850s missionaries from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate began travelling to the Attawapiskat region (Vezina 1978). Missionary activity
had been going on since 1848 when Laverlochere, also from the Oblates, visited Moose Factory and Fort Albany. The Oblates contend that the visits to the Attawapiskat region were in part encouraged by the impressive turnouts of 200 to 300 people at their services. Probably of equal importance for the missionization on the part of the Oblates was the fact that in 1852 the Anglican minister from Moosonee was visiting Fort Albany and was able to convert former Catholics as well as non-Christians to his faith (Honigmann 1961:14). The rush to convert Cree souls was in force. Permanent Roman Catholic and Anglican missions were established in Fort Albany in 1892 followed by a Roman Catholic mission in Attawapiskat in 1893-1894. In 1912 the Roman Catholics established their first permanent church and residence.

The arrival of the Oblates was a mixed blessing for the Cree people in the early years. A residential school run by the Brothers in Fort Albany had begun accepting Attawapiskat children in 1902 and it is to their credit, argues Honigmann (1961:15), that we can speak of a Cree literature, and the fact that almost every adult in Attawapiskat is literate in his or her mother tongue. But with the missions and literacy came numerous shifts in traditional social structures and demographics, as the missions and the newly arrived fur trading companies in the region drew more and more people from the interior to the coast (Honigmann 1966:205).

With the establishment of a mission in Attawapiskat it is not surprising that the fur traders would quickly follow. Alexander Milne, in an inspection of the Company's posts in the Albany district during the summer of 1901, had suggested an outpost in Attawapiskat for winter trade only (HBCA B.3/e/29). C.C. Chipman in his Annual Report on the Fur Trade for 1900-1901, had remarked in his section on the Albany River Trade that:

... The country to the North of the Albany will be be better hunted by the establishment of an Outpost at Athawapiscat, which, with the reduction in expenses which is to be looked for, ought to bring about better results. (HBCA Chipman to Ware, February 7, 1902)

Thus, on October 22 1901, George Linklater left Albany on foot to take charge of the trade in Attawapiskat. He had been instructed to trade "nothing but Furs & Feather, and a little food for Dogs ..." (HBCA B.3/a/205; B.3/b/100, fos. 378, 379). The 1902 Annual Report of Junior Chief Trader David Armit of Albany noted that:

... the Winter Post at Attawapiskit [sic] has answered the purpose well and has been of good use, most of the Indians paid in their furs at this place to meet their Albany accounts. No advances are given at Attawapiskit simply straight trade & collecting Albany accounts: ... (HBCA B.3/b/100, fo. 481)
The relationship between the fur trade companies and the Church is noted in comments by Chipman in the Annual Report on the Fur trade for 1901–1902:

The section of country between Albany and Severn for many years, until quite recently, had not been much hunted, but the establishment by the Roman Catholic Church of Mission Stations at the mouth of the Weenusk and Athawapiskat has drawn Indians to the Coast at those points and necessitated the Company also establishing there. (HBCA dated February 3, 1903)

In 1906 Revillon Frères (referred to by the locals as the “French Store”) also established a post in Attawapiskat. The combined influence of the Missions and the fur companies were to have profound effects upon the people and the ecology of the area.

We can speculate that the residential school in Fort Albany had, to some degree, altered the basic family and hunting group structure. With the children in school for several months a year the traditional patterns of social organization would have been altered, and it might be suggested that this had ramifications for the perpetuation of traditional bush skills. Undoubtedly, the demographics of the region were altered as people moved in greater numbers to the proximity of the posts and missions.

With the increased population density there followed a decimation of what little large game existed in the region. Honigmann (1981:224) suggests that for the west coast generally, this decimation obliged large winter bands to break up into one, two or three family units. Also, greater numbers of people facilitated the spread of disease, many of them fatal to Cree. Thus, we find in the initial years of the Attawapiskat trade that periods of starvation and disease abounded. The years of 1902–1903 saw some of the best hunters die from disease. The spring of 1903 saw starvation (HBCA B.3/b/102, fo. 79). This pattern was followed again in the winter of 1903–1904. A letter from David Armit to George MacKenzie, officer in charge of the James Bay district noted that:

Last word from Attawapiskat very few Indians in fact none of the good hunters had been in but report has it that there are a great deal of sickness amongst them some of the best hunters were so bad that they could not travel to reach their grounds this will throw back the winter trade very much. (HBCA B.3/b/102, fo. 113)

The pattern of starvation and disease would occur sporadically over the next several decades, most notably in 1909, 1928, 1930–1931, 1934–1936, and 1946–1948. In spite of the initial optimism of the traders it also became apparent that the region was not an unlimited source of furs. As the decline in large game animals was occurring (a product of the introduction of the
new technology like firearms, increased population, and possibly natural game cycles), the fur trade companies were spurring trappers on to produce more furs.

An intensive rivalry between companies was in effect and incentives were offered to produce more furs. Liquor, large trapping outfits offered on credit, and even houses to exceptional trappers were all part of the incentive packages (Honigmann 1961:15). The seriousness of this rivalry is noted in the 1921 and 1922 Annual Reports from the James Bay District. In 1921 it was noted that:

Reillon Frères are adopting what they intend to be an aggressive policy . . . Reillon Frères have secured a hold on the trade of Attawapiskat from which it will be difficult to shake them . . . . They have always paid great attention to this Post, considering it their most profitable Post, they have given it of their best in men and supplies . . . (HBCA Annual Reports from District Officers, 1921:186)

The following year the Annual Report observed that:

Only at Attawapiskat Post . . . have Reillon Frères been at all aggressive . . . . they very early in the Season adopted a policy of ‘unlimited debt’. . . . Attawapiskat is considered as the stronghold of the Opposition . . . (HBCA Annual Reports from District Officers, 1922:159)

With the emphasis placed on the hunting of furs as opposed to hunting for subsistence, it was inevitable that there would be a reduction of furbearers in the region, an area that was never particularly rich. Simultaneously, both the missions and the fur traders were providing the Cree with European foodstuffs, thereby hopefully reducing the possibility of starvation while concomitantly intensifying the shift in a hunting for food to a hunting for trade attitude. Thus, a number of factors came into a play which influenced the resource base: an increasing population in the region, easy accessibility to guns and steel traps, high prices for furs as a result of competition, and intensive pressure on the part of the companies to produce (Honigmann 1962:15, 16). What must also be considered, however, is the possibility of an underlying shift in ideological perceptions of man’s place in the environment and his relationship to it. From the earliest days of the fur industry (going back to Radisson and Groseilliers), the Cree of James Bay had been acknowledged as conscientious conservationists who always left breeding stock for the following seasons. This practice and attitude is fundamental and a part of the larger religious, economic, social make-up that is part of Cree relationship to the land. The goals and objectives of the missionaries and the fur traders in James Bay were at odds with the fundamental cultural values and beliefs of the Cree. The missionaries sought
to recreate the Cree in their image. This by necessity meant changing their social, economic, political, and religious beliefs, all of which were inextricably part of their relationship to the land. The fur traders, for their part, did their best to keep the Indians on the land, rewarding them with European trade goods and, at times, liquor. Traditional beliefs and attitudes were inconsequential in comparison with the need to produce.

The missions sought to civilize and Christianize the Indians by introducing sedentary European economic pursuits and activities. Honigmann (1962:7) noted in 1948 that "the priests encouraged the Indians to idealize white customs and urged the people to show 'proper' respect for whites." For all intents and purposes the missionization has been effective. Today, all but five residents are Roman Catholics, while four of the non-Catholics are Anglicans. The fifth is a Pentecostal who attends the Catholic Church (Vezina 1978:3). Today, the aboriginal past is reinterpreted as a time of sorcery and evil, when the devil allied himself with shamans (Honigmann 1958:60 1966:205). With the help of denominational boarding schools the missionaries succeeded in implementing a new belief system while almost completely eradicating the old one. Thus, in some respects, the Cree in Attawapiskat have embraced Christianity's notion of what pre-contact life was like. This adoption of Christian attitudes is in contrast with the East Main Cree of Quebec where much of the traditional belief system and rituals still exist (Honigmann 1981:224). While it seems that traditionally there was always uncertainty associated with travel and the quest for food there also existed a relatively elaborate set of agents or powers that worked for the benefit of man and which functioned to restore order in an unpredictable world (Honigmann 1956:65). These, it seems, were abandoned by the West Main or Mushkegowuk Cree. The degree to which this shift in religious and ideological practice affected resource harvest is hard to measure, but must be borne in mind in any examination of land use historically. The fur companies' insistence on fur production, and the availability of foodstuffs from the mission and fur companies' stores, must have affected traditional notions of conservation and reverence for the land.

After introducing the Cree children to Euro-Canadian education (largely religious) the Oblates established a garden and farm in 1912 and a sawmill in 1927, further encouraging a Euro-Canadian lifestyle. These endeavours also had a more pragmatic side as Indians were recruited into the Euro-Canadian workday lifestyle and were recruited to work for the missionaries. Indians who used the sawmill for their own purposes were required to haul and cut one log for the Church for every log they cut and hauled for their own use. The sawmill remained in service until 1960 (Vezina 1978:10). The mission at this time was still operating its store, and recruited the local people for various jobs. The workers were paid off in tokens used
to buy goods from the store, some of which were produced in the garden and farm (Honigmann 1958:61). Today, these tokens may still be found in Attawapiskat and have become symbolic of this era.

Two other major incursions by the state at the turn of the century served to further the encapsulation process upon the Cree of Attawapiskat and alter their traditional relationships with the land. The Attawapiskat First Nation was included in the signing of Treaty 9. They allege that at this time a government representative guaranteed that under the conditions of the treaty no Indian would again starve. At the time of the signing furs were still relatively plentiful (although subject to fluctuation) and prices were good, but this would not continue. As noted above, starvation was an ever present concern. The second major incident was the recruitment of half a dozen men to work in a British sawmill during the war. The effect this had on the men and the community is hard to assess. According to Honigmann there was little effort to retrain the men in other skills or in the learning of English, and their return to Attawapiskat was marked by a brief period of illicit brewing which was countered by the missionaries (Honigmann 1962:17).

Following the war came a decline in both furbearers and the prices they brought. Between the end of the first World War and the beginning of the second there were several periods of hunger and starvation. The year 1928 was particularly harsh, and many of the Cree were sustained by potatoes from the mission’s garden. Appeals to the government’s representatives allegedly were met with admonitions to “go out and trap” when there was nothing left to trap. Similarly, the period from December 1929 to May 1931 was marked by starvation and deaths from flu and tuberculosis. Beginning with an entry on the 27th of December 1929 and continuing to the 30th of May 1931 (the final entry in extant post journals), the records are replete with references to deaths by starvation and disease (HBCA B.243/a/5):

Country food is scarce (27/12/29).
Issued rations to . . . destitute Natives (1/2/30).
. . . scarcity of Furs and Country food 8/2/30).
David Ookitigoo’s wife arrived at the post and reported that her husband was sick and that they were entirely out of “grub” (13/3/30).
. . . country food is very scarce (April 1/30).
Issued rations to sick and destitute Natives. . (July 26/30).
. . . poor signs of furbearing animals on [Akimiski] Island (January 15/31).
. . . a number of inland Natives are sick and unable to hunt (February 18/31).
Robert Linklater’s wife died . . . she had been ailing for the past two weeks with ‘Flu which developed into Pneumonia. . Others at post still sick and unable to be about (5/4/31).

The response of the fur companies to the starvation and disease was am-
biguous. While there are weekly references in the journals to the issuing of rations (and at time, clothing) to the sick and destitute, it is also apparent that the profits of the stores were a priority:

... most of their time is occupied hunting country food, now that they receive very small amounts of advance before leaving for their hunting grounds. (March 1, 1931)

In 1934 a major spring flood devastated the community and area for miles around, destroying what little small game there was. Starvation again was rampant from 1934 to 1936. The government responded by providing lard and flour (Vezina 1978:10). The years 1946 to 1948 were likewise harsh. It is on the basis of incidents like these that the Attawapiskat people contend that the government has failed to meet their obligations to them. And, despite all best intentions, attempts at talks with Indian representatives often met with failure:

A number of inland hunters returned ... to await the arrival of Indian Department commissioners who [arrive] tomorrow. (HBCA B.243/a/5, Attawapiskat Post Journal, July 24, 1930) All inland hunters now preparing to leave for their hunting grounds, ... unable to await the arrival of Indian Department commissioners any longer. (HBCA B.243/a/5, Attawapiskat Post Journal, July 31, 1930) Indian commissioners arrived ... (HBCA B.243/a/5, Attawapiskat Post Journal, August 1, 1930)

In the lifetimes of living informants cases of starvation and near starvation have occurred with little assistance from the federal government. A Hudson Bay Company plan to maintain trapping and harvesting by stocking a large beaver preserve met with only minimal success during the 1940s and 1950s. Disheartened and disillusioned, many people sought other means of adapting economically.

It was clear to many of the people of the Attawapiskat First Nation that specialized trapping for fur, and the near lack of game species, was not going to sustain them indefinitely. After decades of insistence that they produce furs, and after coercion from the Churches to remain sedentary and give up their "pagan" beliefs, they realized that nobody would provide for them. Many started to leave the region for work in more southerly areas. Honigmann (1981:225) notes that in 1952, 262 members of the band had left. Allan, a Superintendent of the James Bay Agency, wrote in 1955 that in the few years previous there had been a steady migration of people out of the community, and he feared that if the trend continued there would be very few residents left in Attawapiskat. He noted that out of a band population of 716 people representing 216 families, there were only 92 families totalling 304 people in the settlement. Moosonee and other locations to the
south, in contrast, had 116 families or 309 people from the Attawapiskat band. He noted a tendency for the Attawapiskat people to migrate southward for a better standard of living, often working in lumber camps and on the railroad where a steady income was available (Indian and Northern Affairs, Treaty and Historical Research Centre, Allan to Citizenship and Immigration, January 24, 1955). However, the people of Attawapiskat — those who stayed — persevered. In the January 31, 1963 Quarterly Report of the James Bay Agency the following observations were made:

... we were very pleased with the results of the trapping in the settlement and the fact that most of the families are earning a fairly decent living from fur this winter. A check was made on all relief recipients at this post and three quarters or better of those on dollar value assistance were old persons, widows, and those who were not able to earn their own living due to physical handicaps. (RG10 Vol. 6963 486/20-2 pt. 9)

Since the 1950s there have been numerous and rapid changes in Attawapiskat which have become benchmarks in time for the people. In 1951 the Oblates opened St. Mary’s Hospital, which was turned over to the Ontario Government in 1972 and renamed James Bay General Hospital, Attawapiskat Wing. In 1955 the government sent in all the building material for the first four houses in the community. Snowmobiles first arrived in 1962 with the sale of two machines to village residents. Later the Hudson Bay Company was selling an average of 50 machines a year, as well as all-terrain vehicles (Vezina 1978:13).

Perhaps the most important changes to affect Attawapiskat in recent years were the building of the airstrip in 1974 which allowed daily air service, and the construction of John R. Nakogee School in 1976. The former event greatly facilitated the movement of people in and out of the community (to seek jobs) while the latter greatly accelerated the settlement of Cree families in the village on a year round basis. Also, it should be noted that television arrived in 1979. In addition to regular commercial television the Oblates began a new programme of religious education in which videotapes are broadcast via closed-circuit TV to homes in the community.

Throughout the period of rapid changes there have been efforts to maintain a lifestyle that is rooted in traditional land use activities, circumscribed though they may have been by the exigencies of Euro-Canadian commercialism. From the earliest times geese and fish have been a mainstay for the West Main Cree in times of hunger. During the 1960s the Attawapiskat Cree, along with other James Bay peoples, initiated a commercial fisheries enterprise, harvesting sturgeon and other species for sale to the south. As well, fish continued to be taken for subsistence purposes. Allan, Superintendent of the James Bay agency in 1955, noted that whitefish were plentiful
and formed a good part of Attawapiskat diet during the early part of the winter (THRC, Allan to Citizenship and Immigration, January 24th, 1955). Similarly, during this period a number of James Bay Cree set up goose hunting camps which catered to sports hunters. In Attawapiskat, attempts at tourism development based upon hunting and fishing were embarked upon during the 1960s.

Geese have always been of fundamental importance for the Cree and throughout the modern era this importance has not diminished. Studies done in the 1970s indicate that in Attawapiskat (and to the same degree in other coastal Cree communities) well over 80% of potential hunters (defined as males over 15 and under 65 years of age not disabled or absent) actively hunt geese. In Attawapiskat, hunters bagged an average of over 61 Snow Geese and nearly 40 Large Canada Geese per man per year (Prevett et al 1983:189). Ironically, a decade earlier, this reliance upon a traditional food source brought criticism from the American media (Minneapolis Morning Tribune, July 7, 1964) wherein it was alleged that the James Bay Cree were killing “hundreds of thousands” of geese with shot provided by the Canadian government (THRC: Conn to Chief, Economic Development Division, September 16, 1964). Subsequent study revealed that the total James Bay Indian kill for the year 1963 was 8,109 Canada geese, 19,862 Blue and Snow Geese and 5,254 ducks (THRC, Conn to Dr. Munro, November 3, 1964).

In a similar manner, for a brief period in 1962 Akimiski Island, a traditional hunting and trapping area of the Attawapiskat people, was in jeopardy as talks circulated suggesting that Northern Affairs was seeking possession of the island for relocation of Eskimo people. While nothing materialized out of these discussions it suggested the vulnerability of the Cree people in terms of their rights to traditional lands. At this time the fur resources of Akimiski Island were under a fur management programme and trapping was being done by Attawapiskat residents. Records indicate nine trappers working on the island in 1961, six in 1962 (THRC, Gran to Chief, Economic Development Division, July 25, 1962).

Government and other Euro-Canadian forms of incursion have brought new job opportunities to Attawapiskat. The hospital, school, band office, HBC store, and airport provide employment for a number of people. But it has come at a price. The man widely acknowledged as the best trapper in the community gave up full time trapping and hunting to work in the hospital. His wife also works there. He still makes occasional trips to his hunting and trapping territory but it is now a secondary activity. He works in the community, he says, to make sure that his children are going to school, and because work in the hospital is guaranteed. He hopes his children will pursue post-secondary education. Thus, one may argue that with recent incursions there have also arisen more opportunities for
remunerative employment, in contrast to 40 years ago when there was little trapping and only a few jobs with the mission and HBC. Conversely, there may also be fewer hunters and trappers.

Today people in Attawapiskat contend that perhaps 10% of the adult males still hunt and trap. Some residents suggest that this figure is probably high. In reality, it is undoubtedly low if we broaden the definition of land use. Wood is used to heat stoves so land is still used in that way. People still fish and the goose hunts are still important. Nobody has determined the amount of berry picking or rabbit snaring that is done. In the minds of the people the land is still crucial in that it holds the ancestors. People speak with emotion as they note that their ancestors are buried on traditional lands. Elders in the community are very aware that traditional curing techniques are to be found in the proper use of what the land provides. Talks with community members stress the importance of getting in print this traditional knowledge. Also, as in the more traditional times, hunting is important in terms of status and prestige. A good hunter or trapper who works industriously and produces meat for the table has the respect of his peers. People in the village can identify these men and accord them respect.

In conclusion, it is submitted that the larger Euro-Canadian society, represented at first by the Church and fur companies, and later by the government, initiated a process of encapsulation. Both the Church and the fur companies utilized the Crees’ relationship to the land to their respective advantages; the former by exploiting an anxiety rooted in fear of starvation (and shamanism), the latter by shifting the emphasis from hunting for subsistence to trapping for exchange. The government, with its complex political and legal machinery furthered the encapsulation process. But have they succeeded?

Today in Attawapiskat the people are very much aware of traditional family hunting and trapping territories. They are also very much aware that these lands do not produce as much as they once did. Further, they are cognizant of the fact that large scale Euro-Canadian development is an ever present possibility and that what is left of their lands might be developed by outsiders. It would seem that they are reluctant to let this happen. For the Attawapiskat First Nation, encapsulation is not a fait accompli.

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