

Hunting

In most parts of the Canadian Arctic, hunting seals at breathing holes was the chief winter occupation. Seals become entrapped by ice during the autumn but manage to keep a number of breathing places gnawed clear throughout the winter. These holes (*aglu*) were located under the snow by specially trained dogs. The hunter stationed himself by the hole for a wait that might last several hours before a seal appeared, or might be entirely unrewarded. Since each seal might have a large number of holes it was decidedly important that several hunters be available to cover as many holes as possible.

In some areas fish were caught during the spring through holes in the lake ice. Elsewhere, especially in the east, the spring period was devoted to stalking seals sleeping on the surface of the ice.

Summer was a period of more nomadic life with caribou being the important land quarry. The animals were secured at crossing places in lakes and streams with the help of kayaks. At times drives were organized with women and children directing caribou between converging rows of man-like piles of rocks (*inuksuit*) toward waiting hunters. At the end of August, when Arctic char returned to inland streams and lakes after a brief period in the sea, they were intercepted by natives armed with three-pronged spears who waited at stone weirs.

In the eastern Canadian Arctic, part of the summer was also spent hunting sea mammals from kayaks: seals, walrus, narwhal, and beluga were the chief game taken during that period.

Everywhere caribou hunting was the chief pursuit in the early autumn, for that is the period when hides are most suitable for clothing. Later in the autumn the



Plate 5. Eskimo hauling seal from a breathing hole.