

On July 1 the curator started on a year's leave of absence to undertake a special project at the National Museum of Canada. This was made possible by the grant of a Canada Council Senior Fellowship. The trip to Ottawa was made by car, and a large number of museums, both in Canada and the United States, were visited. In Ottawa, facilities have been generously provided by the National Museum, and work on the project has been carried on as planned.

The project is a study of the social organization and traditional history of the Tsimshian Indians of the Skeena and Nass rivers. It is based on voluminous materials on file, assembled over many years by Dr. Marius Barbeau. These include original field notes made by Dr. Barbeau during several seasons of work with the Tsimshian between 1915 and 1939, and also a large volume of information and traditional narratives collected by Dr. Barbeau's Tsimshian assistant William Beynon between 1915 and his death in 1957. Because of Dr. Barbeau's advanced age, it was important that another scholar should become familiar with these data and help prepare them for publication.

The immediate objective of producing a definitive report on Tsimshian social organization involves two steps. First, the information must be extracted from the original handwritten field notes (which are partly in Dr. Barbeau's unique shorthand) and compiled in an orderly system. Second, it must be analysed and rewritten for publication. By the end of the year the first step had been completed, and a start made on the second, for 15 of the 26 tribes of the Tsimshian nation. These are the ten lower

Skeena tribes of "Tsimshian proper", the Kitkatla, Kitkahta, and Kitisoo of the seacoast, and the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum of the Skeena canyon. The material on the upper Skeena (Gitksan) tribes and the Nass River tribes has not yet been studied.

The information has been arranged in a number of categories, which include:

1. Tribal structure. The basic kinship units are the "houses" (lineages), and each tribe consists of from 12 to 45 houses arranged in order of rank. The houses fall into four phratries and two marked social classes.
2. Names. Each house owns hereditary personal names, more than 2500 of which have been translated and analysed. Abstracts have been made of the traditional origins of many names, and progress has been made on the analysis of the complex naming system.
3. Crests. Each house also owns a number of crests which it displays on totem poles and in a great variety of other forms. These have been listed and described, and the crest system has been analysed for the information it yields on the historical relationships among the houses.
4. Territories. The hunting territories and village sites of the tribes and houses have been listed and mapped.
5. Traditions. The traditions owned by each house explain its history, the origin of its names and crests, and its rights to territories. They also reveal most clearly the structure and growth of the tribes. Most of these historical narratives will

be published in separate works under preparation by Dr. Barbeau, but abstracts have been made of a large number which bear directly on social organization, for use in the present study.

Some time has been spent collaborating with Dr. Barbeau in the preparation of these related publications.

Quite apart from the Tsimshian study, the curator has been privileged to participate in staff discussions on all phases of museum policy and in the planning of new exhibit halls. The result has been an improved knowledge and appreciation of general museum problems.