



Nunavut Tungavikhalikinikku Katimayikyoak ᐃᓇ᜵ ላ᜵᜵᜵ ን᜵᜵᜵ Nunavut Constitutional Forum

BRIEF OF THE  
NUNAVUT CONSTITUTIONAL FORUM

TO THE

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC UNION  
AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR CANADA

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON M.L.A.  
CHAIRMAN

YELLOWKNIFE  
SEPTEMBER 13, 1983

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Tongavilirinikmu Katimiyuan Nunattiam ᐃ᜵᜵᜵ ን᜵᜵᜵ ላ᜵᜵᜵ Constitutional Alliance of the N.W.T.



Brief of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum to the Royal  
Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects  
for Canada (the Macdonald Commission)

The Nunavut Constitutional Forum is an institution unique in Canadian history. We bring together members of the Legislative Assembly elected in our part of the world with the elected leaders of the principal population group, the Inuit. The Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly; Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (including its land claims affiliate, the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut); and COPE, the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, each contribute two members to our Forum of six. We have a close working relationship with Nunatsiaq Member of Parliament Peter Ittinuar. This body of elected leaders represents a social and political consensus in the area we know as Nunavut: that is, the area of the eastern Canadian arctic Keewatin and Baffin regions, the central arctic coast, islands in Hudson Bay and the high arctic islands, together with the western arctic areas in the Mackenzie Delta and beyond the tree-line traditionally comprising the homeland of the Inuit.

Our Forum, or the NCF as we call it for short, has been meeting since August, 1982. At that time we adopted a work plan and today we are, if anything, a little ahead of schedule. We have held numerous meetings at various points in the arctic, and these have all been open to the press and public, as well as to federal note-takers who, of course, do not reciprocate and open their meetings to us! But we are glad to have our federal friends with us because it helps prevent those misunderstandings which are so easily veiled

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and perpetuated in the closed information world of Ottawa. We also have conducted a considerable research program, publishing booklets on the history of Nunavut, the question of a division of powers between Nunavut and federal governments, fiscal relations between Nunavut and Ottawa, and questions relating to a future land regime and voter eligibility. Other work underway deals with the management of the arctic offshore, a Nunavut constitution's entrenched bill of rights, protection of the Inuit language, the division of powers between Nunavut and local and regional government, the place of Inuit customary law in the future administration of justice and a suitable preamble to a Nunavut constitution. We expect that we will need some few further studies as well.

However, our main comprehensive proposal for the shape and principles of a Nunavut constitutional act - that is, an act of the federal Parliament respecting Nunavut - was made public on May 17, 1983. That publication, Building Nunavut, was made available to your Commission by our Ottawa staff, as was the booklet called Nunavut which will give you a sense of the history and development of the arctic in modern times. We would urge you and your staff to use these materials in developing your ideas and proposals because we think they are significant and original contributions to the understanding of northern Canada. We will also be glad to make available to you any other materials which may be of interest.

We said that our Forum is unique in Canadian history. For instance, we have two Forum members who are cabinet ministers in the present Northwest Territories government -

two ministers who are working actively to replace that government with a new Nunavut government. And what is more, we are doing it with the blessing of the NWT Legislative Assembly which voted 19-0 last year to move forward with work to break up the present Northwest Territories and create new and more manageable, more responsive governments. The north poses many problems of unfinished business for Canada, and we hope that you will lend your support to those of us who are trying to sort that out and give northern Canadians, be they white or Inuit, Dene or Metis, full rights as Canadian citizens in this country.

Time was when political consensus like we see today was thought impossible in the north. That was a very few years ago. It is worth noting that all that has changed. The present Legislative Assembly and the native organisations in the north have forged new approaches to political development based on a new understanding. The multi-racial society which some people dreamed of has begun to take shape. In our case, in Nunavut, we are proud of the fact that white support for our political project is not less than Inuit support.

We are tired of hearing some southern Canadians wondering if we northerners are trying to separate or are setting up ethnic societies, or otherwise doing things that which are somehow un-Canadian. These voices are especially grating when those of Ottawa officials - a minority in Ottawa, happily - most often heard when they are denying us some or other right which most Canadians can take for granted.

The NWT is not a natural region. It is what was left over after governments had chopped up the acquired lands of Canada and made provinces here or a territory there. In 1898 the Yukon was carved out so that better administration could be provided during the tremendous expansion of the Gold Rush era. Later Alberta and Saskatchewan were created, and Manitoba given more lands. The Northwest Territories has shrunk steadily as Canada has been built. Now what remains are two main geographic and cultural regions. To the south and west there is the forested Mackenzie Valley with its great lakes and tributary rivers, peopled by the Dene for many thousands of years. To the north and east lie the barren tundra lands and seacoasts of the arctic, the traditional homeland of the successive waves of Inuit migration which have spread across the North American arctic from the Bering Sea and Bering Strait.

The character of these two regions is very different, quite apart from the fact that when joined together as they are at present they form the largest jurisdiction in the Western world, fully one third of Canada's land area! Canadian federalism is a system of government designed to accommodate the regions and cultures of a great and diverse country. Surely there can be no place more logical than the north in which to apply the concept. In the early 1960's, both the Diefenbaker and Pearson governments saw the point and brought in legislation to divide the NWT into an eastern Nunatsiaq territory and a western territory. This division was lost in the minority government politics of the period. Also, at that time, there was concern that since the people in the eastern arctic were not represented by elected spokesmen, their views were inadequately represented. Now

all that has changed. Last year, in April, 1982, the people of the eastern half of the NWT voted 4-1 in a government-sponsored plebiscite for creation of an eastern, or Nunavut, territory. What is more, the voter turnout was higher than we have had for local, territorial or national elections! Ottawa understood the message. On November 26, 1982, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, speaking for the government, announced that Ottawa accepted in principle the creation of Nunavut, subject to various conditions. Those conditions were agreement on boundaries for the new territory; an acceptable division of powers between Ottawa and Nunavut, and within Nunavut; settlement of outstanding land claims in the area; and continued consensus on dividing the NWT as agreed by an overall majority in the 1982 plebiscite.

It is worth taking a moment to consider these points because what we are talking about here is the central theme of your Commission - nation-building, both in terms of political structures and for the well-being of Canadians in the future. You have shortened your long formal title to "A Commission on Canada's Future", and it is very much in that context that we are addressing you today.

The eastern half of the NWT is less populous than the west, and it is the west where population is increasing most rapidly as a resources and related construction boom occurs there. In short, any demand for continuing consensus puts a gun to the head of the eastern arctic. The western population increase is largely attributable to new and usually transient southern Canadians with no stake whatever

in recognising the character of the north. Yet Ottawa would load the dice so that this one group can effectively determine the future of the peoples who are permanently resident in the north. We think that is quite unfair. We doubt that the present federal government, made up as it is so largely by party members from the Province of Quebec, would agree that Ontario and Quebec in union in the past should have given the Ontarions with their population edge the right to over-ride the culture and character of the French-Canadian people. Yet that is exactly the parallel we are talking about in the north if one would lump the culture and people of the eastern arctic with the people of the west whose languages, cultures and ways of life overlap in no way.

As for the settlement of land claims, there is confusion here too. Land claim settlements are essential to the people of the north. When Canada was organised as a country, the people making the laws were settler peoples from Europe. They made the laws in their own image, according to their own customs brought from Europe, and they made them to facilitate exactly the type of settlement patterns in which they were then themselves engaged. From coast to coast they did this and they did not bother to take note that the people already here, the people who had always used and lived in these lands, the aboriginal Inuit and Indian peoples, had rights too. Those laws simply ignored the aboriginal peoples, and now, when aboriginal peoples seek redress, we take them to our courts where, by definition, they cannot win because the legal system for the most part does not acknowledge the existence of their collectivities or title! This incredible injustice has at last been acknowledged and discussions through the national

constitutional revision process and First Ministers Conferences have begun. But the problem is a keen one here in the north. Here the lands and resources are in Ottawa's hands, with few bits alienated to other interests as yet. The majority aboriginal population is negotiating claims. By means of these claims the Inuit and other native peoples are not seeking to enrich themselves, as many observers seem to think: they are merely seeking to have recognised some small part of what has always been theirs. Their economy for thousands of years has been based on lands and waters which, now, governments are making them come and plead for. We will return to this issue later because it is central to economic development in the north, but the point for now is: Ottawa which is negotiating land claims is tying Nunavut to settlement on Ottawa's terms of those claims. Since land claims and Nunavut resources are the twin pillars of any Nunavut economy, and since Ottawa controls both but has made no concession on either to date, you might say we are people hoping for an economy to happen.

In fact, in June the head of the federal Office of Native Claims told a special panel talk and public meeting on land claims in Yellowknife that Inuit simply were not going to get a land claims settlement which would go very far in providing them an economic base. He also said that the whole federal land claims policy was under review and would be revised. Every speaker on the panel and from the floor at that large meeting was opposed to the federal land claims policy and process. Later in the summer the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, in speeches in Inuvik and in Frobisher Bay, urged native groups to settle as quickly as possible, while the Prime Minister the same

week said that they should take all the time they wanted so that they would get a good outcome. The fact is that the political development of Nunavut and the rest of the north is being tied to another process which is itself unclear and with a rather confusing future. We are sure that your Commission will hear much else on the subject of land claims and we urge you to remember that even if aboriginal peoples are a small minority in Canada, the lands affected and where those peoples make up a large part of the population represent a very large part of Canada, especially in the west and north. Until claims are understood in their full economic and political context, as the fundamental matter they are for aboriginal peoples, there can be no equitable general development in the north.

As for a boundary, one would think that went without saying. It would be hard to have a governed territory if we didn't know where it was! Once again the north provides a first. We have not agreed on a boundary. We in the Nunavut Forum are anxious to work matters out with our friends in the Mackenzie Valley. It seems that to date we have not even agreed on a set of principles with them for the resolution of the issue. We argue that the communities which would be affected, notably the communities of the western arctic coast and Mackenzie Delta, should have the right to choose where their future lies. We strongly resist the notion of some, for instance The Globe and Mail writing in an editorial of August 26, that the people of the western arctic should be held hostage to negotiations between the eastern arctic and Mackenzie Valley peoples and should be simply checked into a western territory as a matter of convenience and cartographic symmetry.

But we do not wish to beggar our neighbours. Our Dene, white and Metis friends, and all other residents from whatever part of the world, share a common struggle here in the north for political citizenship in Canada. We should cooperate because we understand each other and our predicaments better than anyone else can. We are prepared to look at any option for resolution of the boundary question provided that it is a serious option. We think that outsiders who are too ready to divide our people and our land should think a little further. As far as we are concerned, our most natural and logical boundary would be that of the federal electoral district of Nunatsiaq which follows the tree-line in the western half of the NWT, including western arctic Inuit communities along with those of the eastern arctic.

On the division of powers, we were happy to hear on May 11 last the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs agree that the federal government would accept some role for territorial governments in some aspects of resources management. Nevertheless, we know that there are many powerful interests in Ottawa and elsewhere which do not agree. The issue is fundamental. If a Nunavut government does not have adequate powers, it is a charade. Anyone can draw a line and colour in an area on a map. Think of the old districts of Keewatin, Franklin and Mackenzie, they meant nothing in practice; they were legal and administrative fictions. They corresponded to no unit of administration. A Nunavut government must have adequate powers. If there are insufficient powers in relation to the management of resources, development and environmental

protection, not only will Nunavut have no incentive to bear the many costs of developments in its territory, but will have no real self-government.

At a June, 1983, conference sponsored by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee in Yellowknife on resources issues, and particularly the issue of national vs. northern interests in those issues, native, government, industry, academic, northern and southern specialists on these questions gathered. It was quite a meeting, and as you can imagine, there were many fundamental clashes of viewpoint. The hundreds of participants were broken up into specialised work areas much of the time, but joined together in general sessions as well. One may characterise their two main and inter-related conclusions as follows:

sound resources and environmental management in the north requires greater input by northern peoples, and

northern political development is meaningless without greater resources jurisdiction for northerners.

Such a consensus emerged painfully, slowly, sometimes grudgingly on the part of the southern participants. But it did emerge.

We have taken some time to acquaint you with the main issues in the present evolution of Nunavut, and the nature of that process. We think it is an exciting one, and a novel one. We ask for your understanding and support. As a Commission on Canada's future we remind you that we are 34% of Canada's land area, and though few in numbers, we are the keys to

unlocking that area. What is more, the vast sea and offshore areas are no less part of our patrimony than the land; we have used them down the ages for travel, for hunting, for placing our settlements much of the year. Indeed, the first European economy in North America was based on our arctic seas, being the fishing, especially the whale fishery, of the eastern arctic, preceded by the sporadic visits of the vikings in Greenland from the 10th century in search of walrus, polar bear and narwhal.

What about our potential, our future? Our Inuit people do not like to dwell on the past, on mistakes made or former griefs, but rather what can be done to build a better future.

Nunavut is very distinctive. It is a land of seacoasts, where nearly all communities are on the seashore. It is a land without roads, where airplane and telecommunications through the air are the essential infrastructure of modern living. It is a land of great distances, of violent and changing weather and of the most beautiful summers anywhere on earth. It is the land of Inuit, one of the first peoples of North America who have plied their livelihoods for centuries with or without the help of northern policies, northern visions and northern development which, in any case, come and go less predictably than the clouds of summer birds.

Of course, every region of Canada is distinctive, whether the lower mainland of British Columbia or Prince Edward Island. That is part of the genius, the success and the beauty of Canada. It should be no less celebrated in the

north than in the south. It should be no less taken into account in our nation-building. So let us tell you how we see our land and our future.

Nunavut is a huge land of seacoasts and islands, straits and gulfs, where the modern industrial society has penetrated only sparingly to date. The traditional economy of Nunavut has been based on renewable resources of land and sea - the fish and wildlife, primarily. This economy is not quaint, nor antiquated. It has been the basis of social and cultural stability, and has been what has kept people here down the ages. If Canada wants to have its territory populated and with a stable society in place, the continuation of that economy is vital.

Everywhere in the lands around the North Pole we see the same situation. There are small populations with distinctive languages and cultures living in difficult climates. Some of these populations are European - as with the Faroese, Icelanders and Shetlanders - and some are aboriginal peoples like the Inuit and Dene, Greenlanders (themselves an Inuit-descended people) and Sami (or Lapps). They have all built their lives on the use of renewable resources, but in recent times they have all found themselves in conflict with more southerly political centres which dispute their ownership and management rights to lands and seas, and which dispute their rights to the political status which they claim.

It seems to us that there are some important implications here, and not only for Canada. If the countries of the Western world, countries which for purposes of mutual

defense of their democratic values are grouped in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), take those democratic principles seriously and wish for stable and peaceful growth in the north circumpolar region, then we must strengthen those institutions which tend to stability and peace in the region. Some of those are economic and some are political. We are reminded of the international security importance of the area by the renewed interest in rebuilding the Distant Early Warning defense line (DEW Line), and by the sensitivity of even such activities as civil aviation as witnessed in the shooting down of the Korean jetliner by Soviet northern defense forces. The fact that northern peoples find themselves in a region of renewed interest for the defense, energy and navigation plans of southern economic and political power centres only reinforces the need of those centres to acknowledge the rights of the residents of the north. As Canadians and members of the Western community of liberal democracies we cannot allow the peoples of large areas of our northern countries to be second-class citizens.

In Canada we often think of these problems as being embodied in the land claims movement, but it is important to realise that the general phenomenon is by no means confined to Canada.. As a Commission mindful of the international context of Canada's future, we urge you to think about these matters. Arctic development in the international context has been almost totally ignored in Canada. We have thought much about it, and will be happy to make our Forum and its staff available to you to pursue such questions.

Economic and political well-being go together, as the terms of reference of your Commission reflect. The economy of the

north is in many ways more simple than that of the south. For the sake of illustration, it is not too much of an oversimplification to describe the northern economy under three headings:

- there is the local economy, that is, the economy managed and initiated by local people, whether in the hunting by a family in one of our villages, or a local taxi service or small hotel run by an entrepreneur, or the community co-op;
- there is the government economy which may range from that plethora of services which in the north involves government in far more activities than in the south, plus the more usual range of government administrative, teaching and health services, and
- there is the southern-based industrial economy such as mining which is dominated by outsiders and determined by decisions and market forces remote from the control, actual or potential, of northerners and northern authorities.

Of course, nothing is simple. Many local enterprises were set up with government help; southern mining or oil and gas interests rely on government assistance and regulation to function; and the government sector in a given region or locale may tailor its operations to the utilisation of local employees, resources and facilities.

Let us briefly outline for you the history of the Nunavut economy. Ancestors of the Inuit hunted throughout the arctic and the far northern arctic islands which, in some

cases, are not at present used because of harsher climate today. The last wave of migration from the west, approximately 800 AD, saw the Inuit follow great herds of bowhead whales through the arctic waters, and establish permanent settlements. Typically their houses had whale ribs arching up and covered with skins, while the floor was sunk somewhat in the earth. With deterioriating climate later, however, the Inuit communities broke up into local and regional groups maximising the use of other wildlife resources to replace the whales driven away by cold. Each region had its own unique adaptations. It was during this era that the Europeans made their first fully documented contacts and concluded that Inuit were nomadic which, in some cases, they were.

The people were then scattered over wide areas, coming together at regular times of year to talk, trade and marry. In some areas, later European whalers established shore facilities, even year-round ones, and certain communities in the Baffin area and later in the Beaufort Sea early established patterns of economic life oriented to servicing these fleets of ships with food, clothing and implements and, indeed, taking wage employment on board. Also, the push northwards of traders and the beginnings of the fur trade made an impact, generally rather later.

However, the main impact came with the Second World War. Suddenly at various locations across the arctic, airstrips and communities of southern workers with all the latest gear and gimmicks aroused the interest of Inuit. Equally, the presence of southerners in the arctic led to the south hearing more about conditions in the north. Trading posts

became the nuclei of communities, and when government took up the work of providing facilities like schools and nursing stations, the pattern for the future was set. The Inuit, previously scattered across the land, were moved into the new settlements. Despite the humanitarian intentions of government, this not only shattered the old ways of life but effectively reduced the practicable hunting radii of families, leading to overhunting in some areas and leaving others underutilised.

In the new communities a welfare sort of life became all to common, leavened by the development of the arts and crafts industry, community co-ops and some, usually menial, wage employment connected with the government and other services located in the community. More recently various local enterprises have sprung up, often with government assistance, and large enterprises and distant governments have taken away trainees for new kinds of jobs. Given the very high birth rate, however, the extremely youthful population is highly underemployed. Over 63% of the Nunavut Inuit are under 25 years of age. It is uncertain, also, whether the traditional renewable resources economy could support these numbers even if, as is not now the case, significant government investment in developing the renewable economy and value-added spin-offs was undertaken.

Imagination and expenditure on economic and employment development have been lacking, or at least have fallen far behind the current needs. There is a considerable danger of a large, young and growing population of disaffected northerners finding insufficient opportunities, even while skilled, experienced and educated southerners are brought in

at great expense to run normal local services and administration. And the resources of the Nunavut region remain so rich that Ottawa has refused to date even to consider allowing people of Nunavut a percentage share in them for fear of creating a new class of millionaires from windfall profits! Nunavut today well deserves one of its old Inuit epithets, "the land of feast and famine".

In the north, the government sector has been, for many years, and will be, for many years, a major determinant of development. This is nowhere more obvious than in the matter of employment. While many young people in our Nunavut communities lack training and jobs commensurate with their ambitions and abilities, governments still import workers and their families from the south and pay them various forms of hardship benefits to live here. Something is clearly askew. What is clearly needed is an educational facility in Nunavut suited to the conditions and opportunities in the region. Any plans for a Nunavut government or for the advance of the Nunavut economy must include significant expenditures for such a facility so that northerners can participate fully in their own future.

If the Nunavut economy is to expand, through the provision of services to developers and general infrastructure, as well as things like housing for a rapidly growing population, then the financing of a Nunavut government requires attention. Once again, let us remember that in Nunavut the government sector will remain extremely important for a very long time. If the Nunavut government is to make intelligent choices, and have a basis for

planning, as well as to cope with the impacts of development sponsored by southern government and industry, then it must have access to revenues from resources development in its region. It is interesting to note that this very same problem was a major concern of the people of what are now Alberta and Saskatchewan before those areas became provinces: the local authorities did not have the capacity to deal with the impacts of developments thrust upon them from elsewhere, e.g. Ottawa's national development policy.

The southern-based industrial economy was for many years assumed to be the engine of northern development. This idea has faded as world markets and the high costs of northern transportation have taken their toll. But many assumptions were built around this hope and planning for the north focussed on the idea. As the problems of the single-industry community became more and more apparent throughout Canada, with the hardship of communities like Sudbury, Uranium City and Elliot Lake, or the Yukon today, planners began to rethink the question. Unfortunately that thinking has not yet translated itself into new policies.

Many parts of Canada, especially northern areas, are caught between this failed hope and a lack of attention to the more stable and continuing local opportunities. Many of the problems of northern and arctic development related to industrialisation were outlined usefully in the report of the Berger inquiry into gas development in the Mackenzie Valley and Delta in 1977. These include the lack of local and stable employment opportunities, the social impact on traditional communities and the dangers posed to the renewable resource economy.

A particular challenge for Nunavut will be the establishment of resources projects with their influxes of transient populations. Elsewhere in the circumpolar world these have been handled as jurisdictional anomalies, and special arrangements have been made to minimise their adverse impact on local economic, social, cultural and political conditions. In Canada, too, the federal government experimented with various forms of control, notably in the case of military installations during and following the Second World War and through the Cold War period. Today we are more aware of environmental dangers posed by development, as well. It is essential that northern territorial governments participate in the planning and decisions relating to such projects if they are to be accepted by the northern people. It is also essential that some of the revenues and other benefits from such projects accrue to northerners.

The people of Nunavut are not greedy. They are not "anti" development. Nor do they naively believe in vast, or grand, or magical solutions to longstanding economic difficulties. What we need is a political framework in which economic development can take place with the full involvement of our people. Then, and only then, can wise decisions be taken which benefit Canadians, both those in Nunavut and those elsewhere. Decisions will have to be made on a case by case basis, and made by duly constituted public authorities.

What sort of political structure are we thinking about? It is essentially very simple. We are asking that the present Northwest Territories be divided to create Nunavut, and that within that area a territorial government be established,

one essentially similar to that in the NWT today. We would want the greatest possible degree of responsible government, as befits our publicly aware and dynamic population - and as befits Canadian citizens of whatever ethnic background. We do not think that Canada can be very proud to have so much of its territory in constitutional limbo simply because it wants to keep a firm hold on northern resources; that sounds very much like the old colonialist policies of European peoples towards the non-white world, policies which Canada, second to none, has effectively and persistently opposed with feeling on the world stage. We think that Canada must offer equal political citizenship to Inuit-Canadians in the north as well as to the English-Canadians and French-Canadians and any other kind of Canadians who live there.

In our constitutional booklet, Building Nunavut, we have outlined what we seek. Our guiding principle is that government in Nunavut should be consistent with Canadian political norms. We are not seeking special political rights for one or other ethnic group, and indeed we wish to entrench a bill of rights in our Nunavut constitution to guarantee the rights of members of all ethnic groups. We seek to have an elected Nunavut legislative assembly with the usual cabinet style of government. We would expect to take over the sorts of functions now performed by the NWT government. In addition, we seek a share in the management and revenues of resources, surface and sub-surface, on- and off-shore.

As a first order of business we support and encourage the fair and full settlement of Inuit claims, not only as a



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matter of justice, but also as a sine qua non of any economic development in our region. Our people now are doubly dispossessed. They have neither acknowledged rights to their longstanding use and occupation of lands and economic resources, nor any means for acquiring these except through the essentially political negotiations which are now going on with the federal Office of Native Claims. And they have no provincial-type government to represent or protect their interests with respect to land and resources.

We have been deliberately general in this brief. We could, of course, discuss endlessly the specific problems of our many communities, or go into the successes and failures in this or that sort of economic venture. Indeed, we have some very detailed research work going on at this moment in our Forum and in our member organisations on these matters. It has been one of our consistent principles, however, and one we are sure you will endorse, that as much as possible the first elected Nunavut legislative assembly should take the decisions on specific matters. Our job is to prepare the way for that assembly and the administration which will support it. Our main problems start at the highest level - in the realm of constitutional development, economic philosophy and the status in Canada of our very lands and waters. Until we can resolve some of these larger issues, we can have little future except fighting for crumbs from this or that project, or trying to win a bit more control over minor matters. We need your support and we ask for it.

These principles are worth thinking about because they are Canada in microcosm. It is as if we were rebuilding our nation, and doing it with all the benefit of our history and ideals as brought up to date, in 1983. Here in the north we



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discuss these things endlessly. We have television and radio reports of our work. We have no doubt that never before in Canadian history has such a self-conscious process of political change happened. It is here in the north that we are living out the lessons of Canadian history, and with determination showing the rest of Canadians that races and peoples, different viewpoints and cultures, language groups and political tendencies can live and work together. We think all Canadians should be aware of what we are doing. But we need their help too. Polls have shown that they support our political ambitions, but we need that support translated into political action in Ottawa.

You may consider that our ambitions are modest. Our people are modest. We have no interest in shouting or exaggerating, and we are suspicious of grandiose ideas about northern development because we have heard it all before. On the other hand, what we do want is to have the tools to run our own lives and to participate as equals in the greater life of Canada as a whole. The principal tools are, simply, reasonable Inuit land claims settlements and a Nunavut territorial government.

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