

BRIEF TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE
ECONOMIC UNION AND DEVELOPMENT
PROSPECTS FOR CANADA

COMMENTS ON "CHALLENGES AND CHOICES":

A NORTHERN RESPONSE

Submitted by
Makivik Corporation
on behalf of Inuit
of Northern Québec

July 31, 1984

"Canada is of course much more than an economic union. But Canada's political integrity, cultural development and social progress would be grievously compromised if its governments failed to secure its future economic prosperity."

(quote from Government of Canada discussion paper, Securing th Canadian Economic Union in the Constitution, 1980)

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COMMENTS ON "CHALLENGES AND CHOICES":
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INTRODUCTION

On November 2, 1983, Makivik Corporation appeared before the Royal Commission at its hearings in Montreal. For that occasion, we submitted a comprehensive brief entitled, The Future of Inuit in Canada's Economic Union: Northern Partnership or Neglect?

In April 1984, based on these and other public hearings throughout Canada, the Commission issued its interim report - Choices and Challenges. As part of the second round of consultations, the Commission has invited individuals and organizations to indicate to the Commission their reactions to the Report through written submissions.

Makivik would like to thank the members of the Royal Commission for this opportunity to respond to its interim report. We would like to convey our views on the various aspects of Choices and Challenges in relation to Inuit interests and our northern region. In this way, we hope to contribute to the essential work of the Commission.

More specifically, the purpose of responding to the interim report may be summarized as follows:

- 1) to emphasize again that if the north is to contribute to strengthening Canada's economic union, the needs and concerns of Canada's northern peoples must be specifically addressed;

2) to comment on the national "aspirations", "challenges" and "choices" identified in the Commission's interim report, indicating where necessary how they may be made more pertinent to Inuit and Canada's northern regions;

3) to reiterate the need for a comprehensive and detailed economic strategy for the north, based on northern considerations (which may well differ from those in southern areas). Such a strategy must be based on the participation of Inuit as full and active partners; and

4) to ensure that the extensive research program, undertaken by the Commission, includes more in-depth study of issues related to Inuit, our interests and our region.

I GENERAL NATURE OF INTERIM REPORT

As indicated in your interim report, the purpose of Choices and Challenges is not to make recommendations. It is to set out an agenda of the issues and concerns that Canadians hold to be central.

The Report recounts what the Commission has heard in the first set of hearings, describes the priority issues and provides a set of choices for further reaction by the public. If there are other choices, the Commission would like to be informed of them.

In the Report, the national aspirations of Canadians have already been determined. To achieve these

aspirations in the long-term, eight (8) sets of challenges are outlined. These challenges are further subdivided into more specific challenges or objectives. Finally, sixty (60) different choices are set out in relation to the specific objectives.

In reviewing Choices and Challenges, it would appear that the Commission made a conscious choice to keep the issues fairly general. To some extent, this approach may have been dictated by the large number of subjects to be assessed by the Commission. However, Makivik feels that the interim report should have contained a lot more relevant detail on a region-by-region basis so as to provide more substance for discussion.

In any event, the Report does suggest that the next and final stage will outline the steps for concrete action. The title page of the Report describes the nature of this work to be completed:

"We must now transform this agenda, marked as it is by a a sense of present preoccupations, into an agenda for action marked by a sense of Canada's future possibilities."

Therefore, it is on these preoccupations and actions that we now wish to focus our attention.

II CANADA'S NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

The national aspirations selected by the Commission with a view to building a stronger economic union are the following:

- self-reliance
- working together
- equality of opportunity
- predictability
- excellence.

Makivik strongly supports these aspirations. They are worthy principles which should benefit all Canadians. At the same time, it seems evident that the process of reinforcing Canada's economic union must take into account another fundamental aspiration within Canada as a federation.

We believe that the "preservation and enhancement of Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity"¹ must form an intrinsic part of Canada's national aspirations. Otherwise, economic initiatives alone could serve to detract from our broader aspirations as Canadians.

In our view, the terms of reference of the Royal Commission specifically address this issue by instructing the Commissioners to refer to the following principle, among others, in preparing their report:

"Canadian economic policy must be assessed in the context of its relationships to Canadian political and economic independence and to the broader aspirations of Canadians as must be reflected in the responsibilities of governments".
(emphasis added)

As a result, we indicated in our Brief to the Commission last November our economic and social, political and cultural aspirations as Inuit. These included the fundamental right to ensure our survival as a distinct people.²

The importance of integrating socio-cultural considerations with economic goals has been emphasized by

1. Alternative wording might be "preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians" - see section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
2. See Makivik's Brief, The Future of Inuit in Canada's Economic Union: Northern Partnership or Neglect?, November 1983, pp.13-14.

others. In Securing the Canadian Economic Union in the Constitution,¹ the federal government consciously highlighted this point at page 1 as follows:

"....new constitutional provisions to safeguard and strengthen the Canadian market must take into account other goals of the federation, such as the preservation of its linguistic and cultural diversity, and the sharing of income and wealth among citizens and regions."
(emphasis added)

At page 30, the federal government added that economic efficiency is not the only goal pursued by governments. Maximization of economic integration (i.e. by means of mobility rights) does not necessarily lead to a social optimum:

"The constitutional securing of absolute economic mobility within Canada would obviously be incompatible with the maintenance of a federal system. The recognition of distinct political entities within the federation is predicated upon the existence, and continued existence of distinct economic, social and cultural aspirations among the various populations they serve." (emphasis added)

Aside from the above recommendation, Makivik feels that the national aspirations identified in Challenges and Choices are particularly well-suited to Inuit as a northern people. "Self-reliance" is a primary theme emphasized throughout our earlier Brief to the Commission. In this regard, we rejected a welfare economy for our people. Rather, we encouraged a fresh approach which would contribute to our growth and not perpetuate our dependency.

"Working together" is an element we also stressed, but in a relationship which would include Inuit as full and active partners. An essential part of joint cooperation on economic matters is mutual respect and accomodation for different values and cultures.

1. Government of Canada discussion paper, August 1980.

With respect to "equality of opportunity", Canada's Constitution enshrines this principle in both its spirit (reduction of regional disparities) and its letter (affirmative action programs). As a northern aboriginal people, we view equal opportunity as necessarily encompassing different types of opportunities for different regions and peoples.

In relation to "predictability", the Commission concluded that:

"....Canadians were prepared to deal with change, but were also seeking ways to anticipate it, adjust to it and exploit the opportunities it offers while minimizing the damage it might cause."¹ (emphasis added)

We support this perspective and find it applicable to the north and its development. The short and long-term impacts on native economies, communities and cultures must be given full consideration when proceeding with large-scale development. In this context, the pace of new development and the nature and degree of Inuit participation must be seen as vital factors.²

"Excellence" is the fifth and last aspiration dealt with by the Commission. It is a fundamental pursuit of all nations and peoples concerned with their continued

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1. Choices and Challenges, page 28.
 2. Large-scale development is discussed later in this Brief. See also our earlier Brief to the Commission at pp. 35-40.

development. In this regard, we view high quality education and training as being vital to the future of Inuit and to the pursuit of excellence.

III RELEVANCE OF INTERIM REPORT TO INUIT AND OUR NORTHERN REGION

As indicated above, Makivik endorses the national aspirations identified by the Commission (subject to our one recommendation)¹.

While we anticipate that the final report of the Commission will outline an agenda for future action in Canada, it is far from evident that Inuit or other aboriginal interests in the north will be adequately considered.

The Report does refer to a large number of issues which we raised in the Makivik Brief. However, references in the Report to aboriginal peoples and the north tend to be factual in nature and are often not made an integral part of the "challenges" and "choices" identified for Canada's future.

For example, the Report acknowledges in passing that new claims to social and economic equity have been advanced in Canada with new direction and force.² Yet the Report does not adequately integrate aboriginal issues or concerns with the central elements or themes being considered for the Canadian economic union.

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1. See section II of this Brief where we recommend adding a further national aspiration namely, the "preservation and enhancement of Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity".
 2. See page 7 of the Commission's interim report.

When northern issues are expressly considered, the Report appears to view the north as only the Yukon and Northwest Territories.¹ Other areas where Inuit live, such as northern Québec and Labrador, are not specifically included. While the Report recognizes that "space" is required to sustain the traditional economy,² the key to northern development is seen in frontier terms of transportation of minerals.³

If Canada is to have a viable and healthy economic union with no weak links, we would submit that the issues and concerns of each region must be directly addressed. In order to take into account the multitude of interrelated and complex factors affecting the north, we have proposed in our previous Brief⁴ the elaboration of a comprehensive economic development strategy for the north. Such a policy must not be restricted to the Territories but must also include such arctic and sub-arctic areas as northern Québec. To encourage the involvement of local populations in the formulation of such strategy, we would propose that a series of regional economic conferences be held throughout the north.

The importance of directly addressing the needs and concerns of northern regions was demonstrated the day after Makivik appeared before the Commission last November. In an article in Montreal's La Presse,⁵ it was reported that based on representations made before the Commission, government intervention (i.e. increased

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1. Pages 26 and 61 of the Commission's interim report.
 2. Page 16
 3. Page 59
 4. Pages 84-86 of Makivik Brief.
 5. See Canadian Press article entitled, "L'interventionisme de l'État compte autant de partisans que d'adversaires", in La Presse, November 3, 1983.

financial assistance) has as many supporters as opponents. No distinction was made of the different contexts of those who responded to the issue before the Commission. While Makivik was limiting its response to the north, the Conseil du Patronat du Québec focussed its comments on the south. This clearly illustrated to us that certain policies which may not be favoured in more developed areas of Canada, may still have particular relevance in northern regions where circumstances differ.

To secure an appropriate role for northern regions and their peoples within Canada's economic union, we had proposed the following in the Makivik Brief:¹

-formulation of a comprehensive national northern policy which, unlike other policies in the past, must include adequate mechanisms for coordination among government departments and compliance by both federal and provincial governments;

-changes which may be required to Canada's economic and political systems in order to provide for greater Inuit participation (with particular emphasis on self-government), so that economic decision-making may be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the north and its peoples; and

-effective implementation of the spirit of Canada's Constitution, through national policies which recognize aboriginal (Inuit) rights and interests, reduce regional disparities in the north and ensure a more equitable sharing of the responsibilities and benefits of northern economic development.

1. See Summary page (at front) of our earlier Brief.

IV SPECIFIC ISSUES

While it would be difficult to comment on all "challenges" and "choices" outlined by the Commission in its interim report, we would like to highlight briefly certain issues. In discussing the issues below, we have attempted to follow as closely as possible the titles in the Commission's Report. (Further detailed recommendations may be found in our earlier Brief.)

4.1 Full and Meaningful Employment¹

Full and meaningful employment is a suitable challenge for Inuit territory. However, to meet this challenge, government assistance through the implementation of programs relevant to the north will be required.

Short-term job-creation programs alone, while helpful, will not permanently meet our employment needs. The high rate of unemployment currently found in our region will only be reduced or eliminated if a comprehensive economic development strategy designed for the north is carried out in full collaboration with the local population. High quality education and training are also key factors if we are to address this essential challenge and achieve full and meaningful employment.

4.2 Northern Costs and Prices

The challenge posed by the Commission is to create and sustain a "stable" cost and price environment. As indicated in our November Brief², the problems in the north concerning this aspect are more appropriately described as the need to "reduce" the exorbitant living and operating costs. With the support of appropriate fiscal

1. See, in particular, Choices 1 (expansionary policies) and 2 (direct government intervention) in the Commission's Report.
2. See Makivik Brief, pp. 44-48.

measures, subsidies and other means, the impact of excessive costs and prices in our northern region can be significantly alleviated. Inuit are prepared to work together with federal and provincial governments so that innovative and effective measures may be introduced to counter high northern costs and prices.

4.3 Balanced Northern Economic Development¹

In the north, balanced economic development requires a much broader vision than the initiation of large-scale development of non-renewable resources.² The viability of native subsistence economies must also be ensured, as must be community-based economic activities.

By means of regional land-use and development plans, a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines for land-use planning and socio-economic development can be established which would incorporate regional values and priorities. For such purposes, government development policies should be suitably altered to enable our northern territory to play a more dynamic role, consistent with our regional aspirations.

4.4 Northern Productivity

Communications and other modern technologies³, if appropriate, can be vital factors in promoting northern economic and social development. As indicated in our Brief⁴ last November, the introduction of such modern technologies in the north must also involve training northern peoples to apply and maintain these new systems.

1. See in particular Choice 7 in the Commission's Report.

2. See earlier Makivik Brief, pp. 31-44.

3. See Choices 11 (development fueled by innovation), 13 (diffusion of technology) and 14 (centres of excellence) in the Commission's Report.

4. Makivik Brief, pp. 52-55.

Another aspect which affects productivity is labour-management relations.¹ We believe the north provides a unique opportunity for developing conflict-resolution mechanisms through which labour (men and women) and management can both emerge winners. In light of the urgent need for essential services and regional development, northerners cannot afford to import the adversary relationship currently plaguing unions and management in southern Canada.

A third factor relating to productivity is the availability of adequate capital for northern economic development.² Inuit and other aboriginal peoples require sufficient start-up capital or "seed money" to establish northern businesses. This need is especially acute in our area where the costs of operating a business are often double those incurred in southern parts of Canada.³

4.5 Education and Training⁴

As we have already indicated,⁵ education and training are crucial factors for the future development of

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1. See, in particular, Choices 15 (participation), 16 (right to organize) and 19 (government intervention) in the Commission's Report.
 2. See, in particular, Choices 20 (adequate supply of capital and its allocation), and 23 (entrepreneurship and risk-taking) in the Commission's Report. See also earlier Makivik Brief at pp. 20-25
 3. In our earlier Brief to the Commission (p.47), we indicated that the construction industry, for example, uses a multiple of 2.2 in comparing northern and southern construction costs.
 4. See Choices 24 (national perspective on education), 25 (life-long learning), 26 (upgrading skills), 27 (responding to pressures for adjustment), 28 (technology in education) and 29 (education and equality of opportunity) which are all relevant to the north.
 5. See section II of this Brief and pages 25-28 of our earlier Brief.

Inuit and our territory. The challenges in the Commission's Report relating to high quality education, systematic life-long learning, training and re-training are all of central interest to the north. Whether or not Canadians agree on the need for a "national" perspective on education, it is abundantly clear that a perspective consistent with northern values, priorities and ways of life is essential to us and our region.

4.6 Resources and the Environment¹

Government policies and programs must clearly establish the right of Inuit to derive early, visible and lasting benefits from large-scale economic development projects affecting our region.² The benefits should be worked out with the local populations affected.

The range of benefits should not be limited to employment and training opportunities, but must also include such possibilities as equity participation and revenue-sharing on a regional basis. Makivik does not share the view outlined in Choice 35 of the Commission's interim report that the sharing of revenues must be settled between two levels of government (i.e. federal and provincial). In the future, we expect resource revenue-sharing and other financial arrangements to provide the necessary financial base for regional self-government. Further, a Special Committee of the House of Commons made a similar recommendation last October in regard to Indian First Nation governments:

"It is the Committee's hope and expectation that claims settlements, Indian control and development of their land base, new arrangements for resource revenue-sharing and other long-term entrenched financial arrangements would in due course provide Indian First Nation

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1. See, in particular, Choices 30 (primary sector), 32 (self-sufficiency), 33 (exploitation or stewardship?), 34 (sharing the costs), and 35 (sharing the revenues) in the Commission's Report.
 2. See earlier Makivik Brief, pp. 35-40.

governments with assured funding."¹
(emphasis added)

To sustain our renewable northern resources for present and future generations, we proposed that a comprehensive and mandatory process for environmental and social impact assessment for Canada's north be ensured by means of national legislation.²

4.7 Social Support and Encouraging Self-Reliance³

Government programs in regard to unemployment and social welfare are used to meet basic financial needs of those in hardship. Until adequate alternatives which provide economic opportunities are created, the reliance on unemployment and social welfare programs will necessarily continue. Unfortunately these programs often contribute significantly to perpetuating chronic dependency in the north. Therefore, Makivik advocates a fresh approach for our northern region where economic and social programs would be designed to promote Inuit self-reliance and growth. We are convinced that governments can save significant amounts in welfare, unemployment and rehabilitative social programs by investing in our economic future through activity-oriented programs. In order to achieve full employment and self-reliance, additional opportunities and financial resources are required in the north where regional disparities continue to hamper our growth.

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1. See Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons, Indian Self-Government in Canada, 1983, at page 97.
 2. See earlier Makivik Brief, pp. 35-40. Obviously, areas under provincial jurisdiction would require provincial legislation.
 3. See Choices 36 (maintaining adequate incomes), 37 (encouraging self-reliance), 38 (improving the delivery of services), 39 (fiscal limits) and 41 (creating more equal opportunity) in the Commission's Report.

Moreover, on account of adverse socio-economic and cultural impacts resulting from inadequate infrastructure, proper facilities must be ensured in northern communities through accelerated programs. Such programs should be devised in a manner consistent with Inuit aspirations of self-reliance and self-government.¹

4.8 The Emerging Reality of Self-Government²

Since self-government is a central concern of aboriginal peoples, we would like to address the Commission's reluctance to include this consideration in its recommendations on Canada's future.³ While we appreciate that the Commission does not wish to interfere in the ongoing constitutional negotiations involving aboriginal peoples, it is imperative that our current aspirations towards adequate self-government not continue to be bypassed by the Commission.

As the Commission is well aware, future self-government arrangements concerning aboriginal peoples may have important implications concerning the division of powers in Canada's Constitution, resource management and development, revenue-sharing, federal-provincial equalization payments and economic and social programs and services, among other matters. In terms of the north alone

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1. See also Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons, Indian Self-Government in Canada, 1983, at page 76 where it is recommended that "in determining the fiscal arrangements with Indian First Nations...., sufficient funds be included to correct any serious deficiencies in community infrastructure and to begin economic development".
 2. See Choices 42 (approaches to change), 43 (role of local governments), 44 (future of the north) and 45 (claims of aboriginal peoples) in Commission's Report.
 3. See Choice 45 in the Commission's Report.

(i.e. N.W.T., Labrador and northern Québec), self-government will affect an area involving one-third the size of Canada.

We firmly believe that the Commission can include aboriginal rights of self-government in its deliberations without prejudicing ongoing negotiations. Positive support by the Commission for the principles of self-government and self-reliance would still allow the various aboriginal nations and groups involved to negotiate the details of self-government for their particular regions.

Makivik urges the Commission to fully consider in its final report the emerging reality of self-government in regard to aboriginal peoples and their regions. We base our request on the following reasons:

- a) the terms of reference of the Commission call for a report on Canada's future possibilities, including an assessment of Canadian economic policy in the context of the broader aspirations of all Canadians;
- b) it would be inconsistent for the Commission to consider the future role of local governments in non-aboriginal communities (Choice 43) and not also include the future role of governments in aboriginal communities and regions;
- c) it would be difficult to deny the reality of self-government in terms of Canada's future, in light of current self-government initiatives of aboriginal peoples throughout Canada, as well as the Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Self-Government and the Indian Self-Government Act (Bill C-52) recently tabled in the House of Commons; and

d) the final Report of the Commission would likely be viewed as obsolete in regard to aboriginal peoples and their regions, if rights of self-government do not receive fair consideration by the Commission.

4.9 Intergovernmental Relations and a Stronger Economic Union

In our November Brief, we described how federal-Québec relations have seriously affected economic opportunities and development in our territory.² It is evident to us that greater powers and resources in connection with self-government would make Inuit significantly less vulnerable to the effects of federal-Québec disputes.

Earlier in this Brief³, we cautioned against adopting a policy of absolute economic integration in order to build a stonger economic union within Canada. The effects of mobility rights in northern Québec have been specifically discussed in our previous Brief.⁴ Therefore, we would just like to add the comments of the Pepin-Roberts Commission as to the effects of mobility rights which are not tempered by regional and political considerations:

"(The regional unit) becomes less able to manage its own economy since it is no longer allowed to restrict the movement of its people, capital or goods, and it must bear the costs of this increased labour mobility. Moreover, the priorities of the regional

1. See Choices 46 (entrenchment of mobility rights), 47 (codes of conduct), 48 (a contractual arrangement), 49 (new means for resolving conflicts), 50 (First Ministers Conference on the economy), 51 (ongoing economic cooperation) and 52 (accountability of inter-governmental organizations) in the Commission's Report.
2. Makivik Brief, pp. 20-25.
3. See above Section I - National Aspirations
4. Makivik Brief, pp. 69-71.

unit may be distorted by the existence of common policies which do not sufficiently take into account the distinct regional circumstances."¹

We believe these comments are particularly applicable to northern areas of Canada.

With respect to intergovernmental coordination on economic policies, we would support the idea of a series of First Ministers Conferences on the economy, among other processes. However, Makivik would strongly urge that Inuit participation be recognized at such conferences, in similar fashion as in the 1983 and 1984 constitutional conferences. This would be especially appropriate and timely in view of the current progress of aboriginal peoples towards greater self-government in Canada.

4.10 Reform of National Institutions²

In the earlier Makivik Brief,³ we indicated that Inuit, like other aboriginal peoples, do not enjoy adequate political representation in Canada. In this regard, Makivik would propose that:

a) adequate systems of self-government be established pertaining to Inuit and our region. Moreover, processes to consider reforms for Canada's national institutions must not serve to diminish the need to

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1. Task Force on Canadian Unity, A Future Together, January 1979, p. 70.
 2. See, in particular, Choices 53 (electoral system reform), 56 (Senate reform), 57 (regional representation in other institutions), 58 (representation of other special groups), 59 (improved consultation and accountability) and 60 (direct participation for citizens) in the Commission's Report.
 3. See Makivik Brief, pp. 78-84, which discuss electoral boundaries, self-government, and reform of the Senate and House of Commons.

provide greater self-government to Canada's aboriginal peoples;

b) a new and distinct federal electoral district be created for the area in Québec north of the 55th parallel; and

c) further study to reform the Senate and House of Commons be undertaken to ensure increased representation of Inuit in political decision-making in Canada's national institutions.

Further, given the far-ranging interests of Inuit on the international level, Inuit should have representation on relevant administrative bodies or committees of the government of Canada. We are referring here to those federal entities involved in formulating or implementing policies and agreements, of an international nature, which directly affect Inuit interests.

In relation to reform of the Supreme Court and other federal judicial institutions, we are initiating work on a regional system of justice consistent with Inuit values, customs and way of life. This system of justice, which is an integral part of self-government, will eventually need to be linked in an appropriate manner with federal (and provincial) justice systems.

V ADDITIONAL AREAS OF RESEARCH

In the Royal Commission's recent publication, Research for the Commission on Canada's Future: A Progress Report, it is indicated that over 200 research projects are being undertaken.

At the same time, it appears that aboriginal issues, or issues from an aboriginal perspective, are not being extensively researched. Aside from studies on the economic, political and constitutional development of Yukon and the Northwest Territories, the only research which refers expressly to aboriginal peoples is a study entitled, "Canada's aboriginal peoples and the political community".

Although "intergovernmental fiscal arrangements", "economic perspective on the division of powers" and "municipalities and Canadian federalism" are being examined by the Commission's researchers, it is unlikely that revenue-sharing, equalization payments or self-government are being considered as well from an aboriginal perspective. If this is not being done, how can we expect Inuit issues to be adequately taken into account in the final Report of the Commission?

Other relevant subject matters being researched by the Commission include: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; affirmative action; regional economic disparities; evaluation of federal government regional economic development strategies and policies; welfare system; unemployment insurance; income security; training and skill development; role of government in promoting a national cultural identity; regional representation in central institutions; multiculturalism; politics of resource policy; politics of social policy; transportation and telecommunications policy; fisheries policy; energy and natural resource policy; and desire of provinces to participate in international activities. We would request that such matters be also examined from an Inuit and northern perspective.

A further issue which bears in-depth examination relates to economic development and federal comprehensive claims policy. It is the policy of federal (and provincial governments) to insist upon the surrender or extinguishment of aboriginal rights as a pre-condition to entering into aboriginal claims agreements. While recent amendments to section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 do make clear that the rights of aboriginal peoples under such agreements are treaty rights protected by the Constitution, Inuit and other aboriginal peoples fail to see why it is necessary to surrender or extinguish aboriginal rights when settling their claims.

First, the letter and spirit of section 35 of the Constitutional Act, 1982 recognize and protect aboriginal rights. Second, the primary purpose of federal and provincial governments in entering into claims agreements is to ensure that development, in areas of Canada subject to aboriginal title, may proceed according to mutually agreed upon rules. Such rules are generally set out in both the claims agreements and legislation incorporating these agreements.

Aboriginal rights encompass economic, political and cultural rights. These rights are unique rights of indigenous peoples and should not be subject to surrender or extinguishment. In reference to the federal extinguishment policy, the Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Self-Government in Canada concluded as follows:

"The Committee recommends that the doctrine of extinguishment be eliminated from the settlement of claims; settlement agreements should be limited to those matters specifically negotiated."¹

1. Page 116 of the Special Committee Report.

Therefore, we would propose that the Commission include within its research program a detailed study, with a view to determining suitable alternatives to surrender and extinguishment when entering into aboriginal claims agreements.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations may be summarized as follows:

1. The Commission's interim report, Choices and Challenges, is too general. It should have contained a lot more relevant detail on a region-by-region basis so as to provide more substance for discussion.
2. In identifying Canada's national aspirations, the Commission has chosen worthy principles which should benefit all Canadians. However, "preservation and enhancement of Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity" should be added as an essential aspect of Canada's national aspirations.
3. References in the interim report to aboriginal peoples and the north tend to be factual in nature and are often not made an integral part of the "challenges" and "choices" identified for Canada's future. Therefore, it is far from certain that Inuit or other aboriginal interests in the north will be adequately considered in the final report of the Commission.
4. If Canada is to have a viable and healthy economic union with no weak links, the issues and concerns of each region should be specifically addressed.

5. In light of the multitude of interrelated and complex factors affecting the north, a comprehensive economic development strategy should be elaborated. To involve local populations in such strategy, a series of regional economic conferences should be held throughout the north.
 6. Future self-government arrangements concerning aboriginal peoples may have important implications in regard to the division of powers in Canada's Constitution, resource management and development, revenue-sharing, economic and social programs, among other matters. Therefore, current aspirations of aboriginal peoples towards adequate self-government must not continue to be by-passed by the Commission.
 7. Despite the Commission's elaborate research program, it would appear that aboriginal issues or issues from an aboriginal perspective are not being extensively researched. In particular, the Commission should examine the federal government's comprehensive claims policy which requires surrender or extinguishment of aboriginal rights as a pre-condition to entering into agreements on aboriginal claims.
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