



# HUMAN FLAGPOLES OR HUMANITARIAN ACTION?

*Discerning Government Motives behind the  
Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic, 1953-1960*



Edited by  
**P. WHITNEY LACKENBAUER**

# Human Flagpoles or Humanitarian Action?



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Discerning Government Motives behind  
the Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic,  
1953-1960

Introduced and Compiled by

P. Whitney Lackenbauer



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## Acknowledgements

“This story needs to be told,” Inuit Tapirisat of Canada President and High Arctic exile John Amagoalik told a parliamentary committee hearing into the High Arctic relocations in 1990. “It is a Canadian story; it needs to be explained in Canadian history.”<sup>1</sup>

This volume is intended as a companion piece to Shelagh Grant’s *Errors Exposed* (DCASS no. 8) published in 2016. In her foreword, she wrote that “for present day scholars, the most important items are the documents—some are still missing, but they are sufficient to provide inspiration and the basis for further research [— which] ... offer critical insight into relationships between Ottawa-based administrators and those in the field, and into how accuracy becomes lost or distorted in written reports and memos.” In the interests of encouraging academic debate and making previous research on the High Arctic Relocations more readily available, and inspired by many wonderful and illuminating conversations with Shelagh, I initiated work on this volume immediately after *Errors Exposed* was released. I have had many students over the years who had selected this topic for research papers, and who have arrived at very different assessments based upon the oral histories, films, books, and reports that they have read. By bringing together various perspectives, I hope that these volumes will encourage more work on and ongoing discussion about this important subject.

I have discussed and debated the question of government motives behind the High Arctic relocations with many students, colleagues and friends over the years, and thank all of them for their insights and shared commitment to knowledge and justice. I have been fortunate to visit Inukjuak, Pond Inlet, and Resolute Bay over the last fifteen years pursuant to my research with the Canadian Rangers, and these trips have continuously rekindled my interest in the relocations and the implications they had, and continue to have, on Inuit in these communities. My most recent travel to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in February 2020 was facilitated by 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and the Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North at Trent University, which further enrichment my understanding of these events and their implications.

A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Insight Grant on Canada-US Relations in the Cold War Arctic funded research travel to Ottawa and Gatineau, as well as transcription assistance, as did Canada Research Chair funding. Research assistants Jessica Heidt, Corah Hodgson, and Heather Robinson assisted with transcribing the various reports contained herein. University of Calgary doctoral candidate Ryan Dean lent his usual eagle-eye in helping to copy edit the final draft, and Jennifer Arthur-Lackenbauer designed the covers. Colleagues Peter Kikkert and Mark Stoller offered valuable feedback on the introduction and on the research project more broadly. To all of them I offer my deepest gratitude.

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HCSCAA), *Proceedings*, 19 March 1990, 22:16.



## Acronym List

Acc.	Accession	Cst.	Constable
A/Chief	Acting Chief	CWS	Canadian Wildlife Service
ACND	Advisory Committee on Northern Development	Dept. / Dep't	Department
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister	DEW Line	Distant Early Warning Line
AFHQ	Air Force Headquarters	diam.	diameter
AGM	Annual General Meeting	DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
a.i.	ad interim	Div.	Division
AS-C	Administration Sub-Committee (ACND)	DLR	Dominion Law Reports
Asst.	Assistant	DM / D/M	Deputy Minister
Asstd. / asst'd.	Assorted	DNANR	Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources
ATC	Air Transport Command	DND	Department of National Defence
Ave.	Average	DOT	Department of Transport
BC	British Columbia	doz.	dozen
BNA	British North America	Dr.	Doctor
BRIA	Baffin Region Inuit Association	EAP	Eastern Arctic Patrol
ca	circa	esp.	especially
Can. B. Rev.	Canadian Bar Review	Esq.	Esquire
CANOL	Canadian Oil	F	Fahrenheit
CARC	Canadian Arctic Resources Committee	fn.	footnote
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	FOB	Freight on Board
c.c.	carbon copy	ft.	feet
CCS-C	Co-ordination of Construction Sub-Committee (ACND)	GCI	Ground-controlled interception
CGS	Canadian Government Ship	Gen.	General
CHRC	Canadian Human Rights Commission	GLOBECOM	Global Communications
CJ	Chief Justice	HB	Hudson Bay
Col.	Colonel	HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
Const.	Constable	HCSCAA	House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs
Cpl.	Corporal	Hon.	Honourable
		hp	horsepower
		IAND	Indian Affairs and Northern Development

ICNI	Inuit Committee on National Issues	No.	Number
Incl.	Including	NQIA	Northern Quebec Inuit Association
Info.	Information	NSO	Northern Service Officer
Insp.	Inspector	NWT	Northwest Territories
Inst.	Instant	OC / O/C	Officer Commanding
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada	OIC	Officer in Charge
J.	Justice	Ont.	Ontario
JBNQA	James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement	oz.	ounce
KC	King's Counsel	PC	Privy Councillor
KRG	Kativik Regional Government	PCO	Privy Council Office
Lat.	Latitude	PFR	Prairie Farm Rehabilitation
lb(s)	pound(s)	PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Long.	Longitude	PJBD	Permanent Joint Board on Defence
Loran	Long range navigation	pkgs	packages
M. Phil	Master of Philosophy	pop.	population
MA	Master of Arts	PQ	Province of Québec
Maj.	Major	prs.	pairs
Max.	Maximum	Pt.	Part
MG	Manuscript Group	Qty.	Quantity
Min.	Minimum	Que.	Quebec
MP	Member of Parliament	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
n.a.	not available	RCCS	Royal Canadian Corps of Signals
NA&NR	Northern Affairs and National Resources	RCM Police	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
NAC	National Archives of Canada	RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Nat.	National	re	regarding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	RG	Record Group
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer	RMS	Royal Mail Ship
NCP	Northern Careers Information	RSC	Revised Statutes of Canada
nd	no date	RSQ	Revised Statutes of Québec
NDNR	Northern Development and National Resources	Rt. Hon.	Right Honourable
NE	Northeast	s.	section
Nfld	Newfoundland	SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
		Sask.	Saskatchewan
		S/C	Special Constable

SCR	Supreme Court Reports	UBC	University of British Columbia
sec.	section	UK	United Kingdom
Sgt.	Sergeant	UN	United Nations
S/L	Squadron Leader	US	United States
Supp.	Supplement	USA	United States of America
Supt. / Sup't	Superintendent	USAF	United States Air Force
TB	Tuberculosis	USNA	US National Archives
TS-C	Transportation Sub-Committee (ACND)	VHF	Very High Frequency
TV	television	Vol.	Volume
U of T	University of Toronto	W/C	Wing Commander
		yds.	yards



Monument in Grise Fiord sculpted by Looty Pijamini “in memory of Inuit landed here in 1953 & 1955, and those who came after.” The accompany plaque notes: “They came to these desolate shores to pursue the Government’s promise of a more prosperous life. They endured and overcame great hardship, and dedicated their lives to Canada’s sovereignty in these lands and waters.” *Photo by P. Whitney Lackenbauer.*





Inuit children observe the proper method of removing an Arctic fox from a trap at Resolute Bay [Qausuittuq], N.W.T., 1956. *Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada.*  
*Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / e002265667*

# Introduction

## “Human Flagpoles” or Humanitarian Concern? Government of Canada Motives for the High Arctic Relocations

**P. Whitney Lackenbauer**

On 18 August 2010 in Inukjuak, Nunavik, the Honourable John Duncan, PC, MP, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic:

Over half a century has gone by since the relocation of Inuit from this community to the High Arctic. ... On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, we would like to offer a full and sincere apology to Inuit for the relocation of families from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay during the 1950s.

We would like to express our deepest sorrow for the extreme hardship and suffering caused by the relocation. The families were separated from their home communities and extended families by more than a thousand kilometres. They were not provided with adequate shelter and supplies. They were not properly informed of how far away and how different from Inukjuak their new homes would be, and they were not aware that they would be separated into two communities once they arrived in the High Arctic. Moreover, the Government failed to act on its promise to return anyone that did not wish to stay in the High Arctic to their old homes.

The Government of Canada deeply regrets the mistakes and broken promises of this dark chapter of our history and apologizes for the High Arctic relocation having taken place. We would like to pay tribute to the relocatees for their perseverance and courage. Despite the suffering and hardship, the relocatees and their descendants were successful in building vibrant communities in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. *The Government of Canada recognizes that these communities have contributed to a strong Canadian presence in the High Arctic.* [emphasis added]

The relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic is a tragic chapter in Canada's history that we should not forget, but that we must acknowledge, learn from and teach our children. Acknowledging our shared history allows us to move forward in partnership and in a spirit of reconciliation. The Government of Canada and Inuit have accomplished many great things together, and all Canadians have benefitted from the contributions of Inuit to our culture and history. We must continue to strengthen our connections and deepen our understanding and respect. We must jointly build a stronger, healthier and more vibrant Inuit Nunangat and, in turn, build a stronger, healthier and more vibrant Canada.

The Government of Canada hopes that this apology will help heal the wounds caused by events that began nearly 60 years ago and turn the page on this sad chapter in Canada's history. May it strengthen the foundation upon which the Government of Canada and Inuit can build and help keep the True North Strong and Free.

Duncan's apology recognizes the trauma associated with the relocation of Inuit from northern Quebec and Baffin Island to the High Arctic. This tragic story, which has attracted significant national attention over the last three decades, has become a touchstone of Canada's approach to addressing Arctic sovereignty and the state's relationship with Inuit. The 2010 apology, however, is strikingly silent on the common accusation that the Canadian government's primary motivation for the relocations was sovereignty, instead offering simple recognition that the communities of Resolute and Grise Fiord "have contributed to a strong Canadian presence in the High Arctic." The plaques on the memorials in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay adopt more direct language:

IN MEMORY OF INUIT LANDED HERE IN 1953 & 1955,  
AND THOSE WHO CAME AFTER.

They came to these desolate shores to pursue the Government's promise of a more prosperous life. They endured and overcame great hardship, and dedicated their lives to Canada's sovereignty in these lands and waters.

Although the issuance of an official apology acknowledges that the Government of Canada erred in its failures to prevent or alleviate hardship and suffering, it does not mean that all aspects of the historical debate about the High Arctic relocations are settled. Vigorous debates about the motivations behind the relocation are concealed in the government's apology. Was sovereignty the driving force behind their relocation to the High Arctic in the 1950s? Was there a government conspiracy to use Inuit from northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Baffin Island (Pond Inlet/Mittimatalik) as "human flagpoles"<sup>1</sup> to demonstrate Canadian occupation and thus sovereignty over the High Arctic?

A recent textbook on Canada since 1945 exemplifies what has become the entrenched narrative on the High Arctic relocations, highlighting state coercion, hidden agendas, and duplicity designed to advance Canadian government interests at the expense of Indigenous peoples. Historian Dimitry Anastakis, citing the Dussault-Erasmus Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) report (but taking his interpretation much further), paints a picture of the forcible transplanting of Inuit to address anxieties about Canadian sovereignty in a Cold War context. Having discussed the government of Canada's poor treatment of First Nations, Anastakis suggests that:

Just as bad was the federal government's treatment of the Inuit in the North during the Cold War. Whole communities were torn apart as Inuit families were tricked into being moved to more strategically important locales as Ottawa used Inuit populations and their relocation to shore up claims of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic during the Cold War chess match between the Americans and Russians. The relocation of these families was devastating, forcing Inuit from Arctic Quebec and Baffin Island who had built up generations of local, intimate knowledge of their environments to relocate to completely foreign landscapes, sometimes thousands of kilometres from their original home. The forced relocations, done ostensibly in the name of national security and sovereignty and to support Canada's Cold War commitment, reflected a callous indifference to these people and their way of life, and led to severe deprivation and loss.<sup>2</sup>

This straightforward narrative serves as an apt summary of recent secondary literature on government motivations for the relocations and much of the historiography on Canadian Arctic sovereignty practices during the Cold War. A recent article by political scientist Mark Salter (a newcomer to Arctic studies) also exemplifies the proclivity to use



the High Arctic relocations as a “case [that] demonstrates clearly that the Canadian state messily uses whatever governmental tools are in its grasp to manage the Inuit and claim territorial sovereignty over the High North.” Salter quotes only those sources which support his argument (particularly Grant) and ignores any voices that do not, concluding that “the sovereign modality of territorial occupation, the security logic of legitimating certain circuits of mobility and avoiding governing too much, and the biopolitical management of populations are all evident in the relocations.”<sup>3</sup>

As the assessments in this DCASS volume make clear, a careful reading of the archival record yields nothing as tidy or certain as the historical summaries by Anastakis or Salter might suggest. The part of the history with which this volume deals is the question of *government motives*. It is intended as a companion piece to Shelagh Grant’s *Errors Exposed: Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic, 1953-1960* (DCASS no. 8), a compendium of her arguments and archival research on the subject published in 2016. In her work, Grant makes a strenuous case for sovereignty as the primary motive for the High Arctic relocations, insisting that the relocations represented a deliberate attempt by officials in Ottawa to create the “illusion” of Canadian occupancy in the High Arctic which, she asserts, they believed was necessary to protect Canadian sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, several of the researchers’ whose reports appear in this volume argue that Grant’s case is based on circumstantial evidence and highly selective or distortive readings of the archival record. These competing arguments, generated in the contentious context of Inuit representatives seeking an official apology and compensation for alleged government wrongdoing, are grounded in in-depth readings of the archival record and differing interpretations of historical context.

The studies and reports reproduced in this volume serve as a reminder that historical arguments are rooted in interpretation – that different people can read the same documents in different ways. While some readers may consider the RCAP Final Report on the relocations to be the “definitive” word on the subject (although they seldom acknowledge that the authors of that report did not identify sovereignty as the primary motive for the relocations),<sup>5</sup> historians usually eschew such certainty, seeing representations of the past as something that benefits from ongoing reappraisal and debate. Through processes of selection, prioritization, and interpretation, historians bring inevitable bias (with varying degrees of intentionality) when crafting their narratives. In jargonary terms, historians are “sophisticated constructionists” who “work from the balance of evidence reflecting the intersubjectivity of truth and they acknowledge the problematic nature of inferring agent intentionality and the difficulties in equating this with ‘what it means.’”<sup>6</sup> If so-called “objective knowledge arises,” historian Mark Bevir suggests, it is “from a human practice in which we criticise and compare rival webs of theories in terms of agreed facts.”<sup>7</sup> Despite history’s narrative and imaginative constraints, historians do not claim to be “making it up.” They use evidence to seek to discern human actions/agent intentionality and then equate it with meaning. Consistent with this practice, the participants in the historical (and political) debate about government motives to relocate Inuit from Northern Quebec and Baffin Island to the High Arctic point to (or at least suggest the existence of) verifiable and falsifiable evidence, rather than offering assertions of “beliefs” about government intentionality, in building their respective cases.

Whatever evidence and arguments that readers find most compelling in terms of government intentions behind the relocations, however, should not be misconstrued as making them any more or less “pro-Inuit” in their assessment. The question is one of *government motives*, and the question of whether Canadian Arctic sovereignty considerations were a primary driver should be considered distinct from the debate about what Inuit were promised

and actually *experienced* during and after the relocations themselves. Few readers in the twenty-first century will contest that the experiences of Inuit relocated to the High Arctic are best understood through their own voices. Inuit oral histories reveal how the High Arctic relocations became a source of trauma for relocatees and their descendants. The “voluntary” nature of the relocations is highly contested, given power asymmetries between Inuit and government representatives (including police) at the time. Furthermore, Inuit oral histories contradict the archival record and suggest that the first years in the High Arctic were difficult for the relocatees. The stories of plenty that convinced families to relocate were not easily reconciled with the poor variety of game and other foods in the High Arctic, where Inuit faced extreme environmental conditions, colder temperatures, lack of wood, and three months of complete darkness.<sup>8</sup>

These oral histories contrast with the testimonies of government officials, including the RCMP constables who accompanied both the Resolute and Craig Harbour groups to supervise their welfare and to report back to Ottawa on progress, challenges, and general developments. Reports from field officials at the time suggested that Inuit obtained both sufficient food through hunting and income from trapping, “and were so happy in their new surroundings that they were already talking of having some of the relatives from Port Harrison” join them in February 1954.<sup>9</sup> Based on highly encouraging field reports, the Committee on Eskimo Affairs Committee considered the Resolute experiment a success,<sup>10</sup> prompting the second phase of relocations in which another 34 people moved from Inukjuak to Resolute in 1955.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, civil servants touted Resolute as a model for Inuit relocation programs – in contrast to the Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord experiment, which they decided should not be replicated.<sup>12</sup>

Discerning and debating the motives, rationales, and actions of government officials, alongside efforts to share the stories of those Canadians actually displaced by state action, remain important. In her recent book *Moved by the State*, historian Tina Loo explained her decision to “focus much more on the people who did the moving than those who were moved,” so that she could “attach faces and names ‘to the state,’ to render a picture of its agents that is as textured and emphatic as the one we have of the victims or relocation.” Loo identifies the postwar period as a “time of hope ... when people believed governments could and, more importantly, should intervene to improve the lives of citizens.” During this era, “social scientists and planners ‘rendered society technical’ through resource surveys, isolation indices, ethnographies, and estimates of overcrowding.” When their studies yielded “an apparent mismatch of resources and population, an obsolete settlement pattern, or blight,” government officials sought innovative “development” solutions.<sup>13</sup> “Listening to the Inuit talk about [the Department of Northern Affairs] you also get the sense that it was a massive, faceless, impenetrable and malevolent bureaucracy,” an Ottawa magazine article observed during the 1993 RCAP hearings. “The bureaucrats were, for the most part, well educated, they were honest (there isn’t a hint of corruption), they were dedicated and they really did believe that they were acting in the public interest.... But some of them were also jealous little empire builders, ... insensitive to the concerns of the Inuit and inexcusably slow in responding to the demonstrable needs of the families that had been moved.”<sup>14</sup> Even if readers decide that humanitarian and economic motives, rather than Arctic sovereignty, served as the Government of Canada’s primary motives for the High Arctic relocations, the broader history of these relocations shows the unintended consequences of modern projects and the ensuing human trauma that resulted.

The absence of Inuit voices in the relocation decision, and thus in the debate about government motives, is both revealing and telling. Inuit were not involved in the high-level government deliberations that led to the relocations – which is arguably the key reason why poor decisions were made and the government found it necessary

to apologize for “mistakes and broken promises.” During the 1940s and 1950s, Inuit were objects of government policy, not co-creators of it. Not until 1959 were Inuit invited to attend meetings of Eskimo Affairs Committee, and decision-making remained firmly in the hands of federal officials. The spirit that animates the Inuit–Crown Partnership today– captured in the Inuit insistence that there should be “nothing about us without us” – was conspicuously absent from policy-making in the early postwar period.

Some readers may feel that this volume focuses on the wrong question; that we should focus on the human impacts that High Arctic relocations had on Inuit families, and that a debate over government motives encourages arcane academic arguments that perpetuate a fixation on the colonizers’ history. While I am sensitive to these arguments, the simple fact that this issue is so central to political narratives makes it important to analyze seriously. Peter Kulchyski and Frank Tester noted in 1994 that:

The question is a critical one. The claim that sovereignty was the central and perhaps the sole reason for the move was the basis upon which the relocated Inuit and their descendants developed their claim against the federal government in the 1980s. They argued that ‘there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the central, if not the sole, reasons for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic was the desire by Canada to assert its sovereignty over the Arctic islands and surrounding area.’<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Inuit political leaders, the Government of Canada, and scholars continue to place deliberate emphasis on the government’s alleged use of Inuit as “human flagpoles” to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty – either as a primary or secondary motive – in building the case for a renewed Inuit–Crown partnership in the twenty-first century. In short, the linkage between the High Arctic relocations and sovereignty has taken on significant political salience for more than three decades. Ongoing efforts by the High Arctic “exiles” (as many relocatees self-identify) and their families to record and share their experiences and their many contributions as Inuit to Canadian sovereignty are vitally important. They do not, however, provide verifiable insight into *what officials in Ottawa were thinking* when they planned the High Arctic relocations in the 1950s.

The question of what *the federal government* intended when conceiving the relocations is best addressed through the archival record and the statements of civil servants involved in decision making at the time. The reports reproduced herein seek to understand and explain the logic of government actors who grappled with complex dilemmas and developed “experiments” based on limited experience in delivering government services into remote regions in a state of major socio-cultural and economic flux.<sup>16</sup> While Grant suggests that senior officials deliberately conspired to conceal their “real” sovereignty motives and therefore cast the relocations in humanitarian and economic terms,<sup>17</sup> other DCASS volumes – particularly those reproducing key documents on Arctic sovereignty, the minutes of the federal Advisory Committee on Northern Development (DCASS no. 4), and the Eskimo Affairs Committee (DCASS no. 14) – suggest that officials regularly highlighted sovereignty considerations when deliberating behind closed doors in Ottawa and with the security afforded by “secret” stamps on correspondence, reports, and meeting minutes.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, non-evidence cannot serve as a credible basis upon which to build historical arguments about government motives. Canadian public servants’ ongoing debate about what Ottawa should do to safeguard or bolster Arctic sovereignty, which often differed along departmental lines, has left ample archival material to interpret and debate government rationales without resorting to unsubstantiated and inherently speculative conspiracy theories.



## Response to Humanitarian Crisis or Government Conspiracy?

The federal government's decision to relocate starving Inuit populations to areas where resources apparently existed in abundance represented the most direct intrusion of the increasingly interventionist state in the lives of Northern Indigenous peoples in the early Cold War period. "A hunter's life is always precarious and sometimes disaster strikes his family as well," Minister of Northern Affairs and National Development Jean Lesage noted in a landmark 1955 article laying out the Liberal government's Eskimo policy. "As a rule, even other Eskimos are without knowledge of such tragedies until after the event."<sup>19</sup> By the early 1950s, Canadians had more access to information, and reports that hundreds of Inuit were starving in the Keewatin Barrens and Ungava sparked a popular and political reaction. "In another time, the plight of the aboriginals might have gone unnoticed, but this was the right period for humanitarian action," author John David Hamilton later noted.<sup>20</sup> Canadians would not tolerate having their government stand back and allow fellow citizens to starve to death. Was the solution to make people, in desperate situations where local resources could no longer sustain, dependents on the state, or to create opportunities to move them to other areas where they might enjoy a better quality of life?

In the early 1950s officials faced this dilemma when confronted with reports of Caribou Inuit in the Keewatin District facing starvation after the caribou migration failed to arrive, and a growing Inuit population facing starvation around Inukjuak (Port Harrison) along the eastern coast of Hudson Bay. Farley Mowat's publication of *The People of the Deer* (1952), whose account of famine and epidemics plaguing the Ihalmiut and strong denunciation of government neglect and inaction, raised this as an unavoidable political question.<sup>21</sup> Decisions to relocate Inuit to other locations have since generated intense criticism and debate. Historian Alan Marcus posed the basic question: were Inuit relocatees "pawns of history," moved by officials for state sovereignty reasons or "social reformist ideologies," or "did they become victims of a humanitarian effort gone wrong"?<sup>22</sup>

The answer to this question of government motivations is hardly uniform, and different interpretations represent a significant – if often overlooked – debate in modern Canadian Arctic history.<sup>23</sup> The basic narrative on the High Arctic relocations is well covered in Grant's volume, various books and previously published reports, and the reports in this volume. In 1953, the Government of Canada announced plans to resettle Inuit from areas of dwindling food resources in northern Quebec to the High Arctic where game and fur animals were reported in abundant supply. Aware the conditions in the High Arctic were different than in Quebec, planners recruited three Inuit families from Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), a more northerly settlement, to help the Inukjuammiut adjust to life in their new communities. In August of that year, seven families (32 people) from the Inukjuak area and three families from Baffin Island were resettled in communities at Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island and at Grise Fiord near the Craig Harbour police post on Ellesmere Island. Ten more families from Inukjuak joined the settlements over the next three years.<sup>24</sup>

The overwhelming preponderance of archival records from the time suggest that the government's primary intent for the relocations was to relieve the pressures on Northern Quebec game and provide Inuit with a means to continue their hunting and trapping lifestyle. The plan was also partly "an experiment to determine how well Eskimos from southern areas could adapt themselves to conditions in the High Arctic."<sup>25</sup> In theory, this logic seemed appropriate to the complex context that federal officials grappled with at the time. If Inuit faced the prospect of starvation around Inukjuak because local resources could not sustain a growing population, the government could

not simply let them die or move them to adjacent areas in Quebec where they would simply overwhelm the resources of their neighbours. “Game resources do not adequately and reliably support the present population in many places,” Lesage observed in 1955. “Game tends to decrease in abundance while population is increasing, and under the health and welfare programs which are being extended every year, the rate of increase may become greater.” This was one of the ironies that confronted policymakers: Inuit populations would no longer be allowed to fluctuate according to cycles of prosperity and famine, with “the responsibility of the modern state” precluding it from leaving Inuit to succumb to the “balance of nature” as had traditionally been the case. Consequently, a growing population would increasingly stress wildlife resources, forcing even more government involvement.<sup>26</sup> There was no simple answer that would allow these Inuit to remain in their traditional homeland without giving up their traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle. Facing complexity, “known unknowns,” and “unknown unknowns,” the federal government embraced the realm of experimentation.

The whole notion that Canadian federal officials looked at the relocations as “experiments” has generated intense scrutiny and even vilification. As the reports in this volume note, several commentators have cited the very language of “experimentation” as clear evidence of government malfeasance, even drawing analogies with “human experimentation” by the Nazis during the Second World War. Such irresponsible hyperbole should not overwhelm reasonable debate over how far governments should go in placing citizens in experimental conditions to test potential opportunities. Grant conceded that “for the most part, the term ‘experiment’ was employed in the context of a ‘pilot study’” to see if Inuit from Northern Quebec would thrive in the High Arctic, in which case the relocations might be “considered relatively benign if the Inuit had fully understood the terms, if there had been no undue risk of injury or death, if they were free to return whenever they wished, and if the project was planned for the benefit of the Inuit.” In her assessment, however, humanitarian concerns did not drive the scheme. “The concern for maintaining sovereignty determined the time and place,” she insists. “Without that motive, there would be no perceived benefit to relocate southern Inuit to such a distant and alien environment. There would have been no experiment, no hardship, and no expensive costs in returning the Inuit to their traditional homelands.”<sup>27</sup>

By contrast, Magnus Gunther’s assessment of the government archival record (**document 4**) concluded that the St. Laurent government’s resettlement policy was primarily driven by welfare and economic concerns. The minutes of the ACND and Committee on Eskimo Affairs,<sup>28</sup> internal policy-shaping bodies where participants had no incentive to conceal a substantive motivation like sovereignty, seem to confirm the absence of a primary sovereignty motive. Gunther observed that the only two accounts mentioning the relocations in the 1953 ACND documents justify the sole reason for the moves as taking people from “areas where conditions are difficult to places where they can find employment or good hunting.” Furthermore, the existing Canadian presence at the weather station and airfield in Resolute Bay did not require Inuit to bolster sovereignty in that particular area.<sup>29</sup> In the end, Gunther chastised historians who cast government officials as architects of a grand conspiracy designed to bolster Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic at Inuit expense, violate human rights, and relocate people against their will:

The people writing at the time had no idea they would be the subjects of such intense examination forty years later. They had no idea they would be accused forty years later of human rights violations, sexual and financial misdemeanours, bad faith, incompetence and a conspiracy to conceal their true motives from the Canadian public. In fact, they would probably have been astonished at the very thought that this might happen in the future. The documents show that the public servants involved believed they were doing the best they could and, in the case of the two settlements, had achieved a success story well

beyond their initial expectations. From the perspectives of the 1990s, these successes were modest, from the perspectives of the 1950s they seemed very considerable. All this reminds us that the situation of the Eastern Arctic Inuit in the 1950s was quite appalling and even modest “successes” could assume, at least in the short term, considerable significance. Given the conviction by the officials of the day that they were ameliorating, even if only in a small way, a rapidly deteriorating situation, there was little or no impulse to distort documents.<sup>30</sup>

## **This Volume**

The intent of this volume is to facilitate access to research reports that frame various sides of the debate on government intentions leading to the relocation of Inuit from Inukjuak (Port Harrison) and Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik) to the High Arctic communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. The perspectives in this volume, which are intended to both complement and serve as counterpoints to Grant’s interpretation, offer different interpretations, often on the basis of the same archival evidence.

The chronology of developments in the 1980s and 1990s related to the claim of government malfeasance is laid out in various documents reproduced in this volume, and in the RCAP report on the relocations. Initial discussions focused on the Inuit claim that relocatees had been promised that they could return to their original communities, which the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) denied. In response, the Makivik Research Department published a paper by consultant William B. Kemp on the relocations which suggested that “certain aspects of relocation imply that sovereignty was considered but not as a central issue.” Subsequent federal papers released in 1983 and 1985, however, suggested that the High Arctic relocations were designed “to further entrench [Canada’s] sovereignty claim” and that “the federal government strengthened Canadian sovereignty by moving several hundred Inuit from northern Quebec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis islands” (see **documents 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3**).

On 19 March 1990, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HCSCAA) heard from seven Inuit relocatees and representatives of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC, now Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami), the Canadian Inuit national advocacy organization, and Makivik Corporation, which legally represents Quebec’s Inuit, about Inuit perspectives on the relocation issue.<sup>31</sup> “It is an issue we have been pursuing for 36 years and we have been pursuing it at different levels of government,” ITC President and Resolute Bay resident John Amagoalik told the committee. “Every government agency and department has of course denied responsibility. It is only in the last couple of years that we have started to make progress, because we have finally been able to convince some political leaders that this is a story that needs to be told.”<sup>32</sup> Their testimonies suggested that they had not consented to the relocations, faced undue hardships and exploitation, and suffered from broken promises. This trauma was compounded by research indicating that the government had sent Inuit north under false pretences, Markoosie Patsauq explained:

We have since found out in the following years that plentiful wildlife was not the only reason we were shipped up there. We have since discerned that Canada needed to hold title to those islands in the High Arctic, and that is why we were sent up there. We have found this out only after having spent our time there. ... [O]ur freedom was violated by the Government, who lied in part to get us to move. Canada’s

need to have title to those particular islands was the biggest reason for moving us up there, we have found out since reading various papers related to this.

... It is all the more infuriating for us to find out since our time there that the reason why we were sent there was for us to make sovereignty over the land there possible. We were sent there to hold the land. We only found this out much later and it makes us angry.<sup>33</sup>

At the meeting, ITC and Makivik submitted a position paper (reproduced as **document 1-4**) that outlined their claim against the federal government. It stated that “there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the central, if not the sole, reason for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic was the desire by Canada to assert its sovereignty over the Arctic islands and surrounding area.”<sup>34</sup>

DIAND responded on 15 May 1990, submitting a ten-page paper insisting that government officials had displayed no malice or wrongdoing in relocating Inuit to the High Arctic and insisted that the core motive was humanitarian (ensuring that Inuit had access to a stable food supply as was not the case in Inukjuak) and to provide new employment opportunities to the relocatees. “It is 37 years since the first people moved from Inukjuak to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord,” the deputy minister’s statement suggested. “With the passage of time, the facts surrounding the project have become altered in the memories of the people concerned. It is important to examine the beliefs of the present, which are undoubtedly sincere, in the light of observations made at the time.” The letter also emphasized that “feelings are not facts, no matter how fervently held. They should not be allowed to obscure the historical record.”<sup>35</sup>

The House of Commons Standing Committee remained unconvinced of the government’s position. On 19 June 1990, it recommended to Parliament:

That the Government acknowledge the role played by the Inuit people who were relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the protection of Canadian sovereignty in the North;

That the Government issue an apology for the wrongdoings carried out against the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay;

That the said apology be carried out in an official ceremony of due solemnity and respect;

That the said apology be accompanied by some form of official recognition of the contribution of the Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Canadian sovereignty—for example by the erection of an historic monument or marker and by the issuing of certificates recognizing this important and valuable contribution, to those relocatees still living or[,] if deceased, their surviving family;

That the Government consider compensation to the Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay for their service to Canada and for the wrongdoings that have been inflicted upon them.<sup>36</sup>

The Committee called upon the Government of Canada to produce a comprehensive response to these recommendations, and DIAND contracted the Hickling Corporation, a research firm in Ottawa, to conduct an “Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations Made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inuit Families to the High Arctic in the 1950s.”

The Hickling Report (reproduced as **document 2**), submitted in September 1990, suggested that the federal government had not done anything wrong with respect to the High Arctic relocations. The consulting firm had undertaken a detailed survey of “official government files, documents, published and unpublished reports, and

learned papers in the possession of the National Archives of Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, various libraries in other Government departments, public libraries and sources within Makivik Corporation,” as well as interviews with various “key informants, including some members of the Inuit groups that were involved in the relocations that are the subject of our study.” Based on this research, it concluded:

We found that the decision by the Government to actively encourage the relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic in 1953, and in the two or three years subsequent to that, was not motivated by a concern to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands at that time.

... The evidence that we examined does not support the allegation that the Government committed wrongdoing in the planning and conduct of this project. The material we examined leads us to a different conclusion, namely that the project was conscientiously planned, was carried out in a reasonably effective manner and that the Inuit participated in it voluntarily, in their own search for a better life, and benefited from the experience.

We do not see the grounds for an apology by the Government for the manner in which the relocation project was conceived, planned and carried out. In our view, to apologize for a wrongdoing it did not commit would constitute deception on the part of the Government. It would also imply that the project had not been reasonably successful whereas this is not the case.<sup>37</sup>

Given the sensitivity of the subject, emotions ran high. While the records of ITC (now Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) and Makivik Corporation are not public, the records of the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC),<sup>38</sup> housed at Wilfrid Laurier University Archives, provide some insight into the strong reactions that the conflicting DIAND and ITC/Makivik/HCSCAA reports inspired. Shelagh Grant and CARC executive director Stephen Hazell published a damning indictment of the Government of Canada’s role in conceiving and implementing the High Arctic relocation plans in the Spring 1991 edition of *Northern Perspectives*, making a fervent case for why the government should apologize to the relocatees. A 25 June 1991 CARC press release asserted:

“Concern for sovereignty was a major influence and the primary motive in determining when and where,” writes Grant of the resettlement scheme. “The failure of the current government to recognize that fact seems inconceivable—an attempt to rewrite history.”

“Grant says a 1990 consultant’s report used to support the government’s decision not to recognize Inuit claims for compensation contains numerous errors and is highly selective in its use of archival records.

“When considered separately, the problems related to methodology, limited research, misrepresentations,<sup>39</sup> and errors in interpretation may not appear serious, but in total they support conclusions which are grievously inaccurate,” says Grant. “Any injustice caused by apparent misadventures in 1953 should not be multiplied by a greater injustice in 1990.”

CARC Executive Director Stephen Hazell said the serious questions raised by the *Northern Perspectives* article call into question the government’s reluctance to officially acknowledge the Inuit contribution to Canadian sovereignty in the North.

“Mr. Siddon should disown the report and accept the unanimous recommendations of a parliamentary committee last year to apologize to the resettled Inuit and their families,” he said. “As for the consultants involved, they should be ashamed of themselves.”<sup>40</sup>

In response, the Hickling Corporation solicited a lawyer who demanded that CARC retract the “defamatory” statements made in its press release, which accused the research consultants of misrepresenting the



historical record – an accusation to which they fundamentally disagreed.<sup>41</sup> In a letter to his organization's lawyer, Hazell refused to offer any apology, suggesting that he and Grant had articulated a strong "factual basis for our criticism of the Hickling Report." Justifications for their harsh verdict included:

"Problems related to methodology" – ... Two obvious problems are the failure to consult the Inuit who were relocated, except in a single group interview, and the failure to interview acknowledged scholars. The methodological problems likely stemmed from the fact that the consultants had less than six weeks to complete the report following execution of the contract

"...limited research" - Numerous categories of government records containing material important for arctic sovereignty were not referred to. ...

" ... misrepresentations" - One misrepresentation referred to is that the Hickling Report incorrectly refers to an ad hoc interdepartmental meeting as a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND).

" ... and errors in interpretation" - Such errors include the mischaracterization of sovereignty as a land ownership issue ... and the mistaken emphasis placed by Hickling on the 1930 exchange of notes between Norway and Canada. ...

"contains numerous errors" - Factual errors include the misidentification of the department that initiated the relocation project, and the ad hoc interdepartmental committee as ACND.

"... is highly selective in its use of archival records" - This is related to the similar concerns relating to limited research. One example is that the Hickling Report reproduces minutes of a meeting that it falsely identified as an ACND meeting, but fails to refer to a crucial ACND meeting earlier in 1953 that indicates strong government concern about arctic sovereignty.<sup>42</sup>

Hickling Corp. declined an offer from CARC to reply to the latter's statements in *Northern Perspectives*, instead communicating through their lawyer that they would drop any legal action "in return for a statement which withdrew any implied criticism of the motives of our client or its good faith in the matter."<sup>43</sup> CARC did not do so, believing (correctly) that Hickling would not proceed and that, if it did, nominal damages awarded would be small given the publication's limited circulation. "The issue involved a fundamental question of public policy in which free and open debate should be encouraged and not stifled," CARC's lawyer noted; "and consequently, it would be contrary to public policy to throttle or gag people from speaking out as vigorously as possible."<sup>44</sup>

The research in the Hickling Report proved persuasive in official circles, and the Government of Canada's response to the House of Commons Standing Committee recommendations largely echoed its findings. Inuit were not relocated to the High Arctic "in order to protect or affirm Canadian sovereignty in the north," the response insisted. "The motive was to assist them in continuing to follow their traditional livelihood through greater access to game resources." While Inuit moved to Grise Fiord helped the RCMP in enforcing territorial game regulations, the government suggested that "this type of activity cannot be interpreted as the protection of Arctic sovereignty." While refusing to concede that officials had failed in their obligations to Inuit when designing and implementing the relocation project, the government accepted that it had a "moral obligation" to honour its promise to relocatees that they could return to Inukjuak or Pond Inlet if they were unhappy.<sup>45</sup>

The debate continued. In November 1990, Makivik Corporation and ITC asked Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to intervene on the basis of their previous claims. The following March, the Minister of Indian Affairs and

Northern Development replied that “there still is no evidence to indicate that the sovereignty factor was any more significant than the conclusion reached in [Makivik’s] own 1982 Position Paper (i.e., that sovereignty concerns played at best a secondary role and that there was no linkage of sovereignty concerns to the project prior to 1960, long after the last of the Inukjuak people had been relocated).” The archival record did not, in the government’s assessment, support the accusations made before the Standing Committee, and “no responsible government would or should make public apologies and compensation based solely on memories or recollection of events which had occurred so long ago.” Makivik was furious, accusing the government of “a systematic cover up or ignoring of facts relevant to a fair resolution of the issue.” Inuit spokespersons found the Hickling Report particularly offensive in its avoidance of key allegations which had been made before the Standing Committee about the relocation, such as “inadequate and negligent medical services; use of slave labour; illegal interference with and theft of Inuit mail; sexual abuse of Inuit women by the RCMP; hunger and inadequate diets; lack of government services including education and health services; physical, emotional and psychological suffering and abuse; lack of basic shelter.” The Makivik letter suggested that whether sovereignty “was a primary reason or a secondary reason for relocating Inuit to the High Arctic in the 1950s, evidence of Inuit suffering and serious lack of planning... are ignored or seriously minimised.”<sup>46</sup>

Similarly unsatisfied with the Government of Canada’s responses, the ITC appealed its case to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC). In January 1991, the Commission noted that its statutory procedures for investigating complaints did not apply to the case, given that the events occurred long before the Canadian Human Rights Act was enacted, but it entered into an informal arrangement with the ITC and DIAND to review the complaints. Queen’s University law professor Daniel Soberman was contracted as a Special Reporter to the CHRC to investigate the allegations, provide an opinion on the Inuit claims, and “determine, if feasible, to explore the possibility of arriving at a conclusion mutually acceptable to the Inuit and DIAND.” He began his work in August 1991, supplementing archival research with travel to Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet, and Inukjuak to interview Inuit involved in the relocations during the 1950s, as well as civil servants and RCMP.<sup>47</sup> On the sovereignty issue, his report (reproduced as **document 3**) concluded that “in the early 1950s, the Government of Canada had concerns about effective occupation of the Canadian Arctic,” which likely “influenced the planned location of two settlements on Ellesmere Island.” Nevertheless, he noted that the decision to quickly abandon plans to settle Inuit at the location where Greenlanders crossed over to Ellesmere Island “suggests that sovereignty was not a primary concern. Nevertheless, the establishment of two permanent Inuit settlements in the High Arctic was viewed by the Government of Canada as reinforcing and contributing in a material way to Canada’s claims of sovereignty over its Arctic territories.” His other conclusions found that the Government of Canada had “failed to meet its fiduciary duties of care and diligence in planning and carrying out the relocation, and in not taking steps in the first few years to honour its promise of return,” and that inadequate planning and implementation of the project brought “unnecessary hardship” to Inuit. Accordingly, he recommended an apology for its shortcomings, noting that:

Based on the documentary evidence between 1953 and 1960, the Government of Canada should accept that its predecessor Government of those years considered the presence of new Inuit communities in the High Arctic to be helpful in supporting Canadian claims to territorial sovereignty in the region. I recommend that the Government formally acknowledge the contribution of the Inuit relocatees at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic and publicly thank them.<sup>48</sup>

Grant, who had authored a damning indictment of the Hickling report and the High Arctic relocations,<sup>49</sup> was elated with the Soberman report released in December 1991. “I did not realize how completely it vindicated the conclusions of my report” (which asserted that sovereignty was the primary reason for government action), she wrote on 30 January 1992.<sup>50</sup>

Although DIAND was generally satisfied with Soberman’s report,<sup>51</sup> it had contracted Magnus Gunther, a Professor of Political Science at Trent University (the same university with which Grant was affiliated), to conduct more extensive research in the official archives about claims that the government had relocated Inuit to the High Arctic for sovereignty reasons and had acted irresponsibly in planning and executing the moves. After reading nearly ten thousand official documents related to the relocations, Gunther observed that only a miniscule number mentioned sovereignty. “The origins of the settlement policy of the early 1950s is to be found not in a concern about effective occupation of the High Arctic but in the collapse of the ‘Eskimo Economy,’” he concluded in his report submitted in June 1992 (reproduced as **document 4**). His main conclusions suggested that:

The main reason for the relocation projects to the High Arctic was a concern to improve the living conditions of the overpopulated and over-concentrated Inuit population of Northern Quebec.

There was no *de facto* or *de jure* threat to Canadian sovereignty on Ellesmere Island. There was a concern about controlling illegal hunting which the two police detachments established in 1951 and 1953 were quite easily able to control. They did not need the assistance of the Inuit from Northern Quebec to do this. The relocation projects were added to the establishment of these posts as a way of easing population and game pressures around Inukjuak. Nor was fear of a U.S. radar station at Resolute the reason for moving people there.

The Canadian government put considerable resources, in terms of RCMP personnel, into these projects, especially given the scanty resources available for activities in the Arctic at that time.

The documentary evidence suggests that a great deal of concern and dedicated, responsible action by government officials was undertaken to ensure the projects survived and prospered. This is not to say that some of the planning and implementation could not have been better, nor that mistakes were not made. But the care and diligence used in carrying out the projects was reasonable given the public philosophy of the importance of self-sufficiency and thrift which pervaded government at the time, and given the resources available to the Department.<sup>52</sup>

Overall, Gunther’s report offered as strong an exoneration of the government’s overall motives and actions as Grant’s had been an indemnification.

The lines were deeply drawn. In February 1994, Grant wrote to Terry Fenge, the executive director of the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, explaining her view that:

The problems with the Gunther report were so serious and so many, that I believed that the best route would be to give my report [to the RCAP] as a scholarly evaluation, but include the documents cited there and in other reports.<sup>53</sup> This would avoid a ‘critique’ yet at the same time let the documents themselves show the serious flaws in the governments reports. ... Hopefully we can put this one to bed (the Gunther Report), and get on with finding an appropriate solution. Frankly, I admit initially being quite intimidated by the magnitude of the problems in the Gunther report – large and small – all of which supported inaccurate conclusions and many unfounded assumptions. ... “Critiques” do not allow for objective scholarly analysis or help in finding appropriate solutions.<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, the allegation of a selective reading of the archival record, unfounded assumptions, and inaccurate conclusions shaped more by bias than a solid evidentiary base are exactly what Gunther had levelled at Grant in his critique of her 1992 study.

Inuit organizations also dismissed Gunther's report as offensive, owing to the weighting that it gave to government officials' perspectives on the "success" of the relocations rather than on Inuit recollections of direct and indirect coercion, hardship, and trauma.<sup>55</sup> For example, ITC considered Gunther's report "an insult" given his apparent dismissal of Inuit oral histories describing hardships experienced by Inuit relocatees after they arrived in the High Arctic. In its submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1994, ITC recommended fervently that:

- The important contribution made by the High Arctic Exiles to Canada's assertion of sovereignty in the High Arctic must be acknowledged by the Government of Canada.
- The Government of Canada should make an immediate and sincere apology to the High Arctic Exiles acknowledging the hardships, pain and suffering they endured as a result of the relocation, and for the delay and reluctance in honouring the government's commitment to return the relocatees to their homelands if so desired.
- The federal government should compensate the High Arctic Exiles for the hardships, pain and suffering they endured, for the personal possessions which were lost, and for their contribution to the assertion of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. All possible support should be provided to the families and communities involved in the relocation as they continue their healing process.

ITC also lamented the way that "the federal government has dealt with the High Arctic Exiles issue over the past decade," citing "its refusal to accept the High Arctic Exiles' stories of their experiences as accurate; the commissioning of a high-profile political apologia from an individual with no appreciable background in the issues requiring investigation; and, the statements of the former minister which were grounded in denial and justified by fundamentally flawed research."<sup>56</sup>

The purpose of this volume is not to question or undermine the High Arctic exiles' stories of hardship or to suggest that government records represent an appropriate way to study *Inuit* experiences. Inuit are best positioned to explain what they lived through, promises made and broken, and hardships endured on the ground. Instead, this volume adopts a narrower lens, limiting its coverage to those sections of Gunther's report dealing with *government motivations* for conceiving and executing the High Arctic relocations in the first place – a topic that is naturally rooted in government archives and testimonies. Grant and other researchers who accuse the Government of Canada of deliberate perfidy in moving Inuit on the hidden pretext of bolstering Canadian sovereignty do not build their case on Inuit oral histories but from government archival records, circumstantial evidence, and comments made by civil servants (both at the time of the relocations and after their retirement).

In their detailed study *Tammarniit (Mistakes)*, Kulchyski and Tester note that "by late 1992, the historical records on the Arctic relocations had been thoroughly combed by a number of researchers. No edicts or directives from Privy Council, the Prime Minister's Office, or from the Department of External Affairs, supporting the notion that the Inuit were relocated as part of a deliberate, high-level scheme to strengthen Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic had been found."<sup>57</sup> With no "smoking gun" of clear evidence, proponents of the "human flagpoles" argument

resort to circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, the various reports on the relocations devote significant attention to Canadian officials' perceptions of Arctic sovereignty and "effective occupation" in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This intersects with a vigorous debate about whether Canada faced existential Arctic sovereignty challenges from its American allies during this period (and ultimately sacrificed sovereignty in the interests of continental defence),<sup>58</sup> or whether bilateral cooperation, diplomacy, and sufficient displays of "effective occupation" managed to balance (and even strengthen) Canada's sovereignty and security interests.<sup>59</sup> Although most government officials acknowledged that neither the United States nor any other foreign country questioned Canada's *de jure* (legal) sovereignty by the early 1950s, concerns persisted about *de facto* sovereignty – a key theme in both Grant's volume and this one. Accordingly, reports on the High Arctic relocations offer different, even competing, perspectives on historical context, offering important insights into perceptions of sovereignty and "effective occupation" at the time. Debates about the perceived imperative, in some government circles, to bolster Canadian presence – and whether an Inuit presence in the High Arctic even registered in official minds as a means to enhance "effective occupation" in the 1950s – point to the contentious and inherently contested nature of this topic.

Recognizing the longstanding and ongoing contribution of Inuit in Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord to Canada's sovereignty in the High Arctic – a theme that I, and many others, have developed in previous books and articles<sup>60</sup> – does not require a government conspiracy that Inuit were used as "human flagpoles" in the 1950s. Instead, it is rooted in an acknowledgement – overlooked in the 1950s but embraced today – that Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic rests most firmly on ongoing Inuit use and occupancy and the shared sovereignty embodied in land claim agreements.<sup>61</sup> In response to former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's declaration that Arctic sovereignty was a matter of "use it or lose it," John Amagoalik – who had been relocated to the High Arctic as a young boy – explained that "the relocation was and remains very painful," and that Harper's statements did "little to acknowledge the contribution Inuit have made and continue to make in the High Arctic."<sup>62</sup> Mary Simon was more damning:

Luckily for Canada, the Inuit are always here. Without the Inuit, could we really claim to be masters of the Arctic house? Probably not. Ultimately, the Arctic sovereignty issue will depend on people, not ports or training facilities or military exercises. If Canada is to secure a long-standing and unimpeachable claim to the Arctic, it must be grounded in the daily realities of the Inuit and other Canadians who make this region their home. Why does Canada seem to forget that we are there each time a crisis looms?

Canada's mistreatment of the Inuit in using them as human flagpoles to assert sovereignty was laid out with excruciating honesty during hearings convened by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in the early 1990s. A settlement was finally achieved and a semi-apology delivered. How ironic now for Canada to brandish the fact that Canadian citizens — Inuit — live in the Arctic in order to add legitimacy to its sovereignty claims.<sup>63</sup>

The ironic frame that Simon adopts only fits if one accepts the narrative that the government *intended* to use Inuit as "human flagpoles" – an assertion that, while politically mainstream today, is not beyond meaningful historical debate. Looking back over the research assessments conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s about the High Arctic relocations, author Gerard Kenney observed: "five researchers, five reports. Conclusions ranged from one extreme of sovereignty, yes; hardship and wrongdoing, yes, to the other extreme of sovereignty, no; hardship and wrongdoing, no – and various combinations in between."<sup>64</sup> When historian Gordon W. Smith – who devoted his



professional life to assessing the Government of Canada's positions on Arctic sovereignty<sup>65</sup> – undertook his own research assessment in the mid-1990s (reproduced as **document 5**), he observed that the various reports and books on the relocations “contain factual information of verifiable authenticity and undoubted value; but all of them are to some degree subjective and reveal attitudes and opinions that reflect personal views. It thus becomes necessary to try to distinguish between fact and opinion, and in the case of opinion, to make some judgment about its reliability.” In categorizing the various schools of thought, Smith notes that “Gunther and [Gerard] Kenney tend to downgrade the validity of the native case; [Frank] Tester and [Peter] Kulchyski, [Alan] Marcus, and Grant tend to uphold it; and Soberman, although clearly anxious to present an impartial view and to give the whites who were involved credit where this is due, nevertheless leans strongly in favour of the Inuit case. The Royal Commission *Report* and *Summaries* also tend to favour the Inuit case.”<sup>66</sup> Subsequent scholarship and commentary has fallen along similar lines, with most scholars adopting the latter “case.”

Although scholars may continue to debate the successes and shortcomings of the High Arctic “experiments,” the federal government's 2010 apology for the High Arctic relocations and unfulfilled promises associated therewith has officially embedded this history as one of government failure. “The Government of Canada deeply regrets the mistakes and broken promises of this dark chapter of our history and apologizes for the High Arctic relocation having taken place,” Minister Duncan offered.<sup>67</sup> This did not go as far as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which saw the relocation experiment as “a scheme that was inherently coercive in its objective and coercive in the means chosen to achieve that objective,” with failed planning, implementation, and broken promises to return the relocatees to their original communities when requested compounding the hardships that Inuit endured.<sup>68</sup>

While the Government's apology was silent about sovereignty as a catalyst for the relocations, the idea that Inuit were dispatched to the far north as “human flagpoles” has become firmly entrenched.<sup>69</sup> Publishing research which offers dissenting opinions on what has become a canonical narrative of postwar government perfidy in the High Arctic in the name of Canadian sovereignty is not intended to dilute or detract from Inuit perspectives on what they experienced or their longstanding efforts to secure an apology from the Government of Canada. Instead, it is animated by the belief that a plurality of voices and perspectives are important to understanding *histories* of the North from various viewpoints, on different levels, and in different places.

Written in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, Nunavut

February 2020

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Peter Jull notes that the phrase “human flagpoles” was “probably coined by Mark R. Gordon, the late Quebec Inuit leader who waged a battle using the legal and other resources of the powerful Makivik Corporation to seek compensation and other redress for those affected.” Peter Jull, “A Personal Response to Frank J. Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit* (*Mistakes*),” *Northern Review* #12/13 (Summer/Winter 1994): 197.

<sup>2</sup> Dimitry Anastakis, *Re-Creation, Fragmentation, and Resilience: A Brief History of Canada since 1945* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2018), 204.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Salter, “Arctic Security, Territory, Population: Canadian Sovereignty and the International,” *International Political Sociology* (2019): 9.

<sup>4</sup> Shelagh Grant, "A Case of Compounded Error," in Shelagh Grant, *Errors Exposed: Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic, 1953-1960*, Documents on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security (DCASS) no.6 (Calgary: Arctic Institute of North America, 2016), 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) specifically excluded the High Arctic relocations from its work, citing that these events had already been examined by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). QTC, *Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950-1975*, 14. The RCAP Final Report concluded that "The goal of the relocation was to restore the Inuit to what was considered to be their proper state. It was a rehabilitation project," and that "relocation to the uninhabited High Arctic Islands was reinforced in a material way by concern for Canada's sovereignty." RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1994), 162.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Munslow, "Objectivity and the writing of history," *History of European Ideas* 28/1-2 (2002): 43-50.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 98.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, John Amagoalik, *Changing the Face of Canada*, ed. Louis McComber (Iqaluit: Life Stories of Northern Leaders, vol. 2, Nunavut Arctic College, 2007); Amarualik, Simeonie, Walter Audla, and Peter Paniloo, "Resolute Protests." *Inuit Monthly* 3/4 (April 1974): 22-25, 70-71; testimonies to the HCSCAA, 19 March 1990; RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation: Summary of Supporting Information, Vols. 1-2* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994); "Broken Promises: The High Arctic Relocation," dir. Patricia Tassinari (National Film Board of Canada, 1995, 52 mins.); "Martha of the North," dir. Marquise Lepage (National Film Board of Canada, 2008, 83 mins.); and "Exile," dir. Zacharias Kunuk (Isuma Productions, 2009, 47 mins.); and the short films and interviews available at Iqqaumavara, <http://www.iqqaumavara.com/>.

<sup>9</sup> R.G. Robertson to C.M. Drury, 18 February 1954, LAC, RG 22, A-1-a, vol. 298, file 40-8-1, pt. 4. For another example, see "Conditions Amongst Eskimos Resolute Bay," 14 November 1956, LAC, RG 18, vol. 55, file TA 500-8-1-14, as well as Gunther, "1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit," and Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors*.

<sup>10</sup> Report re: Economic Development and Actions taken in 1953 and proposed for 1954, no date, LAC, RG 22, A-1-a, vol. 298, file 40-8-1, pt. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Only one family of six people were sent to Grise Fiord, perhaps indicating the government's evolving preference for Resolute Bay because of its mixed economy.

<sup>12</sup> C.M. Bolger, "Relocation of Eskimo Groups in the High Arctic," c.1960, NWT Archives, 263, N-1992-023, Box 24, file 10, Relocations – Movement of Inuit 1953-1968.

<sup>13</sup> Tina Loo, *Moved by the State: Forced Relocation and Making a Good Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 6, 7, 198.

<sup>14</sup> "Ice, Beer and Bureaucrats: A Chilling Tale of Mandarins, the Inuit and the High Arctic," *Ottawa* [magazine] 13, no.5 (September 1993): 23-24.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 134.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "St. Laurent and the North: Laying the Foundations for Canada's Modern Northern Strategy" in *St. Laurent's Canada*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming 2020); R.A.J. Phillips, *Canada's North* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967); and R. Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> See Grant, *Errors Exposed*. For another perspective likening the relocations to the John F. Kennedy assassination conspiracy theory, see Larry Audlaluk, <http://www.iqqaumavara.com/en/larry-audlaluk/>. On Audlaluk, see Herb Mathisen, "High Arctic Lobbyist," *Up Here* (2 March 2017), <https://uphere.ca/articles/high-arctic-lobbyist>.

<sup>18</sup> As Gordon Robertson, who became deputy minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources shortly after the 1953 relocations) noted in a letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1994, "It is absurd to suggest that government departments or officials would act on an important matter of policy like sovereignty without the action being raised in cabinet and without government approval." Quoted in Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors*, 56. My reading of tens of thousands of pages of archival material related to Canadian Arctic sovereignty in the twentieth century confirms Robertson's comment.

<sup>19</sup> Lesage, "Enter the European," 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> John David Hamilton, *Arctic Revolution: Social Change in the Northwest Territories, 1935-1994* (St. Catharines: Dundurn Press, 1994), 58.

<sup>21</sup> Farley Mowat, *People of the Deer* (Boston: Little Brown, 1952). During a debate in parliament over the book's veracity, Minister Lesage dismissed Mowat as a liar and denied the existence of the Ihalmiut. House of Commons, *Debates*, 19 January 1953: 1243. Although the factual basis of much of Mowat's narrative remains open to debate, Margaret Atwood observed that *People of the Deer* generated support for Indigenous people akin to what Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* later did for the environmental movement, serving as "a wake-up call, the spark that struck the tinder that ignited the fire from which many subsequent generations of writers and activists have lit their torches, often ignorant of where that spark came from in the first place." Greg Quill, "Farley Mowat's legacy: Our supreme storyteller," *Toronto Star*, 11 May 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Alan R. Marcus, "Inuit relocation policies in Canada and other circumpolar countries, 1925-60," report for the RCAP (December 1995).

<sup>23</sup> The High Arctic relocations have been well documented in previous studies, most of which were written to encourage the federal government to apologize to and compensate the relocated Inuit. See, for example, Zebedee Nungak, "Exiles in the High Arctic," *Arctic Circle* (September/October 1990): 36-43; Alan R. Marcus, "Out in the cold: Canada's experimental Inuit relocation to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay," *Polar Record* 27/163 (1991): 285-96; "'Their Garden of Eden': Sovereignty and Suffering in Canada's High Arctic," issue of *Northern Perspectives* (Canadian Arctic Resources Committee) 19/1 (Spring 1991); Alan R. Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic* (Copenhagen: International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs, 1992); Tester and Kulchyski, *Tammarniit*; RCAP, *High Arctic Relocation*; Alan R. Marcus, *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995); and Melanie McGrath, *The Long Exile: A True Story of Deception and Survival amongst the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic* (London: Fourth Estate, 2006). For critical responses, see F. Ross Gibson, "No reason to apologize to the natives," *Arctic Circle* (September/October 1991), 8; Doug Wilkinson, "The paradox of the Inuit relocatees," *Arctic Circle* (Summer 1993): 32-3; and Gerard Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors* (Prescott, ON: Voyageur Publishing, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> Although overall responsibility for "Eskimo" affairs rested with the Department of Resources and Development, the RCMP officers were charged with overseeing Inuit physical and economic welfare. The Craig Harbour relocatees would eventually form the community of Grise Fiord. Plans for a third settlement at the Alexandra Fiord RCMP post in the Bache Peninsula area were delayed due to ice conditions, and later cancelled.

<sup>25</sup> R.G. Robertson to C.M. Drury, Deputy Minister of National Defence, re: relocation of Inuit families at Resolute Bay, LAC, RG 22, A-1-a, vol. 298, file 40-8-1, pt. 4.

<sup>26</sup> QTC, *Official Mind of Canadian Colonialism*, 53.

<sup>27</sup> Grant, *Errors Exposed*, 12. Somewhat contradictorily, she also noted that "as participants in the experiment, the Inuit probably faced less risk to their physical health than would have been the case had they remained in Inukjuak." Grant, *Errors Exposed*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Daniel Heide, eds., *The Advisory Committee on Northern Development: Context and Meeting Minutes, 1948-67*, DCASS No. 4 (Calgary and Waterloo: Centre for Military and Strategic Studies/Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, 2015); and Peter Clancy and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, eds., *Shaping Arctic Policy: The Minutes of the Eskimo Affairs Committee, 1952-62*, DCASS No. 14 (Calgary and Waterloo: Centre for Military, Strategic and Security Studies /Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism /Arctic Institute of North America, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> In 1947, a joint Canada-US weather station was established at Resolute. Two years later, the RCAF established a base there, which became the jumping off point for researchers, explorers, and government agents travelling in the High Arctic. By 1952, Resolute had a population of approximately 200, making it the second largest settlement in the Qikiqtani region. There were, however, no Inuit living in the immediate area.

<sup>30</sup> Magnus Gunther, *The 1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit to the High Arctic: A Documentary Analysis and Evaluation* (August 1993), 121-22 (this volume).

- <sup>31</sup> Witnesses were from Inuit Tapirisat of Canada: John Amagoalik, President. From Makivik Corporation: Zebedee Nungak, Vice-President; Sam Silverstone, Legal Counsel. From the Inukjuak Community: Markoosie Patsauq, Representative; Andrew Iqaluk, Representative; Samwillie Eliasialuk, Representative. From Resolute Bay: Allie Salluviniq, Representative; Sara Amagoalik, Representative; Martha Flaherty, Representative. House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HCSCAA), *Proceedings*, 19 March 1990, 22:3-22:37.
- <sup>32</sup> John Amagoalik, testimony to HCSCAA, *Proceedings*, 19 March 1990, 22:4.
- <sup>33</sup> Markoosie Patsauq, testimony to HCSCAA, *Proceedings*, 19 March 1990, 22:5.
- <sup>34</sup> Makivik Corporation and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, *Submission Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit Relocation Issue to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs* (March 1990), 10 (this volume).
- <sup>35</sup> RCAP, *High Arctic Relocation*, 180.
- <sup>36</sup> HCSCAA *Proceedings*, 19 June 1990, 40:3.
- <sup>37</sup> Hickling Corp., *Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations Made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inuit Families to the High Arctic in the 1950s* (September 1990), 31, 33 (this volume).
- <sup>38</sup> CARC is an independent, non-profit organization involved in public policy research and education. (Lackenbauer currently sits on CARC's board of directors.)
- <sup>39</sup> In later correspondence, Grant noted: "The word 'misrepresentations' ... referred specifically to the misrepresentation of an official document as explained fully in the section immediately preceded the quote." Grant to Stephen Hazell, 30 January 1992, Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>40</sup> CARC Press Release, "CARC Calls on Federal Government to Apologize to Resettled Inuit," 25 June 1991, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>41</sup> K.L.W. Boland, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt Barristers & Solicitors, to CARC and Shelagh Grant, 9 September 1991, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>42</sup> Hazell to David Potts, 24 September 1991, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>43</sup> Terry Fenge to Board of Directors, CARC, 17 July 1992, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>44</sup> David A. Potts, Blaney, McMurtry, Stapells law firm, to Hazell, 29 June 1992, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>45</sup> Government of Canada, *A Response to the Recommendations of the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on the Relocation of the Inukjuak Inuit to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay* (19 November 1990), summarized in RCAP, *High Arctic Relocation*, 181.
- <sup>46</sup> See summary in Gunther, *1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit*, 302-3 (this volume).
- <sup>47</sup> In the intervening months, Alan Marcus completed a thesis at Cambridge University titled "Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic, 1953-1990" which differed sharply from the Hickling report, concluding that the government acted out of moral (humanitarian), economic, and sovereignty reasons, and that Inuit had faced deprivations and hardship.
- <sup>48</sup> D. Soberman, *Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the Complaints of the Inuit People Relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and 1955* (December 1991), 111-12 (this volume).
- <sup>49</sup> See Grant, *Errors Exposed*.
- <sup>50</sup> Grant to Stephen Hazell, 30 January 1992, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>51</sup> Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors*, 44.
- <sup>52</sup> Gunther, *1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit*, 296 (this volume).
- <sup>53</sup> Published in *Errors Exposed*.
- <sup>54</sup> Grant to Terry Fenge, 5 February 1994, WLU Archives, CARC fonds, file 3.1.6.11.
- <sup>55</sup> As Kenney noted, Gunther's terms of reference did not involve interviewing Inuit but involved an archive-based methodology. Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors*, 45.
- <sup>56</sup> ITC submission to RCAP, 31 March 1994, 96-104, <http://data2.archives.ca/rcap/pdf/rcap-552.pdf>.
- <sup>57</sup> Tester and Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes)*, 134.
- <sup>58</sup> See, for example, Grant, *Sovereignty or Security?*; Shelagh Grant, "Northern Nationalists: Visions of 'A New North,' 1940-1950, in *For The Purposes of Dominion: Essays in Honour of Morris Zaslow*, ed. K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison,

(Toronto: Captus Press, 1989): 42-70; Bernd Horn, "Gateway to Invasion or the Curse of Geography? The Canadian Arctic and the Question of Security, 1939-1999," in *Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience*, ed. Bernd Horn (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2002), 307-32; Adam Lajeunesse, "The True North As Long As It's Free: The Canadian Policy Deficit 1945-1985" (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 2007), 42, 59-60; Shelagh Grant, *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> K.C. Eyre, *Custos Borealis: The Military in the Canadian North*, ed. P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Peterborough: North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network, 2020); Eyre, "Forty Years of Military Activity in the Canadian North, 1947-87," *Arctic* 40/4 (December 1987): 292-99; Joseph Jockel, *No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States, and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1987); Elizabeth Elliot-Meisel, *Arctic Diplomacy: Canada and the United States in the Northwest Passage* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998); David Bercuson, "Continental Defence and Arctic Sovereignty, 1945-1950: Solving the Canadian Dilemma," in *The Cold War and Defence*, ed. Keith Neilson and Ronald Haycock (New York: Praeger Press, 1990), 153-70; Lackenbauer, "Right and Honourable"; Ken Coates et al, *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 2008); Kikkert, "Pragmatism and Cooperation: Canadian-American Defence Activities in the Arctic, 1945-1951" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Waterloo, 2009); Lackenbauer and Kikkert, "Sovereignty and Security"; Kikkert and Lackenbauer, "The Dog in the Manger – and Letting Sleeping Dogs Lie: The United States, Canada and the Sector Principle, 1924-1955," in *The Arctic Ocean: Essays in Honour of Donat Pharand*, ed. Suzanne Lalonde and Ted McDorman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 216-39; and Adam Lajeunesse, *Lock, Stock and Iceberg: A History of Canada's Arctic Maritime Sovereignty* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> On Inuit presence and sovereignty, see for example Mary Simon, "Inuit and the Canadian Arctic: Sovereignty begins at home," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43/2 (2009): 250-260; P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, *Nilliajut: Inuit Perspectives on Security, Patriotism and Sovereignty* (Ottawa: ITK, 2013).

<sup>61</sup> Terry Fenge, "Inuit and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement: Supporting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty," *Policy Options* (1 December 2007), <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-mood-of-canada/inuit-and-the-nunavut-land-claims-agreement-supporting-canadas-arctic-sovereignty/>; ICC (Canada) Press Release, "Inuit and Canada Share Northwest Passage Sovereignty – ICC Canada President," <https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/press-releases/inuit-and-canada-share-northwest-passage-sovereignty-icc-canada-president/>.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Whit Fraser, "Inuit View on Canada's Arctic Sovereignty," *Above & Beyond: Canada's Arctic Journal* (3 May 2012), <http://arcticjournal.ca/featured/inuit-view-on-canadas-arctic-sovereignty/>.

<sup>63</sup> Mary Simon, "Sovereignty from the North," *The Walrus*, 12 November 2007, <https://thewalrus.ca/sovereignty-from-the-north/>.

<sup>64</sup> Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Tom W. Smith and Nell Smith, Foreword" to Gordon W. Smith, *A Historical and Legal Study of Sovereignty in the Canadian North, 1870-1942*, ed. P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2014), vii-x; and Jeannette Tramhel, "Gordon W. Smith: A Historical and Legal Study of Sovereignty in the Canadian North and Related Law of the Sea Problems," *Canadian Yearbook of International Law* 39 (2002): 435-440.

<sup>66</sup> Gordon W. Smith, *The Relocation of Inuit from Hudson Bay and Baffin Island to the High Arctic in 1953, and Subsequent Events, including Disputed Sovereignty Issues*, 341-42 fn.49 (this volume).

<sup>67</sup> "Apology for the High Arctic Relocation: Speaking Notes for the Honourable John Duncan," Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Government of Canada Apologizes for Relocation of Inuit Families to the High Arctic," News Release 2-3389, 18 August 2010.

<sup>68</sup> RCAP, *High Arctic Relocation*, 146.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Bruce Campion-Smith, "Ottawa apologizes to Inuit for using them as 'human flagpoles,'" *Toronto Star*, 18 August 2010; Canadian Museum of History, "High Arctic Resettlement Experiment," 20 June 2017, <https://www.historymuseum.ca/blog/high-arctic-resettlement-experiment/>.



# 1

## Inuit Organizations' Resolutions and Reports, 1985-1990

### 1-1. Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), "Resolution on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Inuit Interests," October 1985<sup>1</sup>

INUIT TAPIRISAT OF CANADA

#### Resolution on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Inuit Interests

Whereas, this past summer, the American ship the Polar Sea, went through the North West Passage without seeking permission from the Canadian government,

Whereas, in 1953, some Inuit were moved to Resolute Bay and Grise Fjord by the Canadian government and the presence of these Inuit have been used to support the claim of the Canadian government of the High Arctic Islands,

Whereas, the Inuit lands and the Inuit living there should not be ignored by any government,

Whereas, the statement made by the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Minister for External Affairs in the House of Commons, as to what Canada will do with regard to protecting Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic includes legislation, military activity, marine transport and cooperation with the Americans; but does not include cooperation with Inuit, settlement of Inuit claims including the offshore; or the recognition that Inuit rights and environmental concerns are the root of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic;

Therefore be it resolved that, ITC call on the Canadian government to recognize the relationship between Inuit and Canadian Sovereignty; to fully disclose to Inuit the nature and scope of Canadian and American military activity; and to enter into a working relationship with Canadian Inuit with respect to the development of comprehensive Arctic policy which will take into account Inuit concerns for survival and for the protection of the Arctic environment.

Moved by: Amos Maggo

Seconded by: Jonny Peter

Carried

ITC Board meeting - Oct. 7 - 11, 1985  
OTTAWA, ONT.

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<sup>1</sup> Annex "1" to HCSCAA, 19 March 1990, 22A: 82.

## **1-2. Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Resolution 86-5, “Relocation of Inuit from Inukjuak, Northern Quebec and Pond Inlet, N.W.T. to the High Arctic,” April 1986<sup>2</sup>**

### **86-5 RELOCATION OF INUIT FROM INUKJUAK,**

#### **NORTHERN QUEBEC AND POND INLET, N.W.T. TO THE HIGH ARCTIC**

Whereas, Inuit from the Inukjuak area of Northern Quebec were relocated to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord areas of the High Arctic in 1953 and 1955, under the sponsorship of the Government of Canada, supposedly to improve the living conditions of the people involved.

The original move in 1953 also involved the recruitment of three Inuit families from the Pond Inlet, N.W.T. area to assist the Inukjuak Inuit adjust to the High Arctic climate and conditions.

Whereas, the relocated families accepted the move on the basis of being assured by the Government of Canada that they could return to their homeland after two years, if they so wished,

Whereas, these people have suffered and endured many injustices as a consequence of this relocation, specifically; among others

- social suffering resulting from separation of families and lack of communication with relatives.
- lack of material support in the initial years (food, clothing, shelter)
- loss of property and equipment by returnees, accompanied by readjustment problems
- absence of Government of Canada funding and assistance for exiles who wish to return to their homeland, including transportation costs
- non-payment for services by the exiles to the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)] and other agencies who engaged the Inuit exiles to work for them

Whereas, fulfillment of commitments and support by the Government of Canada to the Inuit exiles has been dismal and non-existent in most instances.

The Government of Canada has abandoned or ignored the circumstances and problems caused by the relocation.

The Government of Canada has failed to live up to its original assurances to provide returning families with the means to return, including appropriate facilities and infrastructure individually and at the community level.

Whereas, this issue has been outstanding for 33 years and deserves urgent attention, action and practical solutions by the Government of Canada,

Therefore be it hereby resolved that the delegates and representatives of the ITC Annual General Assembly support the efforts of the Inuit exiles, Makivik Corporation, ITC, and [Inuit Committee on National Issues (ICNI)] in pursuing appropriate Government action and remedies to this issue, specifically among other:

- formal request to DIAND Standing Committee for the Inuit exiles to appear to give testimony
- provision of financial and other resources to conduct negotiations on the issue with the Government of Canada

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<sup>2</sup> Annex "1" to HCSCAA, 19 March 1990, 22A: 81.

- Pursuit of remedies and compensation for individual and collective claims for inconveniences, pain and suffering and loss of property and transportation provision related to returning exiles as well as to those still situated in the High Arctic
- pursuit of a formal acknowledgement by the Government of Canada of the Inuit exiles' contribution to Canada's sovereignty in the High Arctic
- provision of housing and all related infrastructure in the communities where Inuit exiles are situated.

Moved by: Zebedee Nungak

Seconded by: Samwillie Elyasialuk

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

ITC - AGM, April 14 - 18, 1986 - INUKJUAK, QUEBEC

### **1.3. Zebedee Nungak, Makivik Corporation, to Pierre Cadieux, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 23 March 1989<sup>3</sup>**

VIA PUROLATOR COURRIER

March 23, 1989

The Honourable Pierre Cadieux

Minister of Indian Affairs and

Northern Development

D.I.A.N.D.

Les Terrasses de la Chaudière

10 Wellington Street

Hull (Québec)

K1A 0H4

Re: Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit relocation

issue: Remedial and Compensatory Measures

Dear Mr. Minister:

The present letter is in regard to Inuit families of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay who were relocated by the federal government from Inukjuak, Québec in the 1950s.

Makivik Corporation, as the body in northern Quebec representing Inuit beneficiaries under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, represents Inuit families of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay in these matters. Moreover, Makivik acts on behalf of the coalition of regional and national organizations responsible for resolving this long-standing injustice, namely, the Kativik Regional Government, the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak, the Inuit Committee on National Issues (I.C.N.I.) and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (I.T.C.).

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<sup>3</sup> HCSCAA, 19 March 1990, 22A: 111-18.

It is now well documented that in July 1953, a number of Inuit residents of Inukjuak (Port Harrison) were moved out of northern Québec by the federal government to communities of Resolute Bay (Cornwallis Island) and Grise Fiord (Ellesmere Island) in the High Arctic. This first relocation of Inuit from Québec by Canada was followed by subsequent relocations in 1953, 1955 and 1957. ***Such relocations were primarily effected by the Government of Canada at that time in order to assist Canada in asserting Canadian sovereignty and not to promote the well-being of Québec Inuit.*** [emphasis added]

Northern Québec Inuit went along with the federal relocation “experiment” since they had been told that the hunting and quality of life would be better in the far North. These Inuit were assured that if conditions were not to their liking, the federal government would return them to Inukjuak.

Since 1956, Québec Inuit in Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord have repeatedly made requests to both the federal and N.W.T. governments to be moved back to Inukjuak, as promised. Much of this situation is confirmed by the findings of the study dated August 3, 1984 commissioned by the federal government. The few Inuit who have managed to make their own way back to their home in northern Québec did so at great expense and were forced to abandon substantial personal property in the Northwest Territories in so doing.

Over the last six years, Makivik, I.T.C. and I.C.N.I. have met with several federal [Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (D.I.A.N.D.)] Ministers in an effort to secure a federal commitment to a fully financed relocation back to Inukjuak, without further delays, as well as a series of compensatory measures for all damages and expenses suffered by the people to date. All of these former Ministers have over the years acknowledged the manifest injustice suffered by these Inuit, but, until 1988, none have taken any concrete action to rectify the situation.

Makivik, the Kativik Regional Government and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada submitted to the D.I.A.N.D. Minister in January 1987 a document entitled “Position Paper Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue”. This “Position Paper” detailed a set of remedial and compensatory measures seen as necessary to fully address the past and current situation of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit.

On September 20, 1987, former D.I.A.N.D. Minister William McKnight, agreed by letter to fund construction of ten housing units in the summer of 1988 in Inukjuak for Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay desiring to relocate. In addition, the former Minister agreed to provide a small amount of funds to defray removal costs incurred in the past as well as the 1988 relocation moves back to Inukjuak. The monies provided for by D.I.A.N.D. in this regard totaled \$200,000 for the period 1988-89 and were the subject of a Contribution Agreement dated March 4, 1988, between D.I.A.N.D. and Makivik Corporation.

The ten housing units were constructed during the summer of 1988 and Inuit families from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay wishing to return to Inukjuak were relocated by Charter aircraft during the summer and fall of 1988, the whole pursuant to the Contribution Agreement.

The January 1987 “Position Paper” called for a series of eleven (11) remedial and compensatory measures. The housing units provided and the relocation monies allocated by D.I.A.N.D. during 1988 fulfill only two (2) of these eleven (11) measures called for. A fair and comprehensive settlement of this long-standing issue requires that the remaining nine (9) measures requested be fully addressed by your Department.

More particularly, the compensatory and remedial measures outstanding include the following:

- 1- Compensation for personal property losses incurred by those Inuit from Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay who relocated back to Inukjuak at their own expense since 1970:

Total personal property losses associated with Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit who have already relocated on their own back to Inukjuak in the 1970s and early 1980s amounts to a total in current dollars of \$245,584.50. This amount represents replacement costs of various items F.O.B. Inukjuak in 1988 prices. This personal property was lost or left behind in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay when the six (6) families moved back to Inukjuak during the 1970s and early 1980s. Some of this amount represents personal property abandoned in Inukjuak in 1953 when some families were moved to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay by the federal government. Detailed lists of specific items with associated current replacement cost values and affidavits are available to support the above amount.

- 2- Heritage Trust Fund:

The request remains unfulfilled for a Heritage Trust Fund of \$10 Million as compensation to the original nineteen (19) families relocated by the Government of Canada to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay from Inukjuak (and Pond Inlet). This Fund is intended to compensate Inuit of Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay (and Pond Inlet, where relevant), in addition to the other measures referred to in the present letter on a once and for all basis, for the suffering and injustice which they were compelled to undergo. As already proposed in the January 1987 "Position Paper" referred to above, this Fund would be administered by a Board of Trustees made up of representatives drawn from the original nineteen (19) families as well as Makivik representatives. The terms and conditions of the administration of the Fund would include restrictions limiting withdrawals from the Fund to only income. The \$10 Million would be payable into the Fund by Canada in one lump sum upon signature of an agreement providing for all the remedial and compensatory measures mentioned herein. Such a Fund would be in the nature similar to the symbolic redress payments presently being made by the Government of Canada to Japanese Canadians who were subjected to internment, relocation, deportation, loss of property or otherwise deprived of the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms based solely on the fact that they were of Japanese ancestry, the whole during the period of World War II and thereafter.

Makivik, in conjunction with Inuit of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay, have prepared detailed lists of the original families relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953, 1955 and 1957 by the Government of Canada.

- 3- Housing and transportation costs for future moves:

Though the Government of Canada has, pursuant to the Contribution Agreement of March 4, 1988, arranged for the construction of ten housing units in Inukjuak for Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit returning as well as related transportation costs of these people, there remains the question of other Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay or their children or descendants who may, in future, decide to move back to Inukjuak. We are requesting that Canada undertake to build housing units and defray all transportation costs of any such future moves.

Moreover, we are prepared to consider a limited time period during which such an offer of housing and transportation costs by Canada would be available to those Inuit entitled. Presently, we would consider a



three (3) year period following the date of the final comprehensive remedial and compensatory agreement with Canada concerning this issue as being an appropriate time delay.

4- Travel costs for yearly visits:

Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit presently living in Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay or Inukjuak want to be able to visit their families and relatives at regular intervals annually. Current scheduled air flights from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak and vice-versa are extremely limited in number and high in cost, making such visits virtually impossible. A request has been made for Canada to create a compensation fund for travel in the amount of \$2 Million to cover all current and future travel needs as above-described of the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit, namely, the original families, their children and descendants wishing to make such visits. This would be a one-time payment for such purposes and the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit would be free to spend either capital or interest for such travel visit purposes. With respect to the amount, it should be noted that our experience with chartering aircraft for round-trips (Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay return) during 1988 has demonstrated that such aircraft charters cost between \$60,000 and 75,000.

5- Official recognition of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit:

Some form of special and formal recognition must be undertaken by the Government of Canada for the original Inuit families relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay and for their special contribution to Canada in assisting in establishing Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. The former D.I.A.N.D. Minister William McKnight confirmed in his letter of September 30, 1987 to Makivik that D.I.A.N.D. is prepared to support some form of special recognition in this regard. Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit have already indicated that such special recognition would only be acceptable if it formed part of a comprehensive remedial and compensatory agreement and that, in itself, would be inadequate.

6- Economic and social assistance support:

Many of those who have relocated during 1988 from Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay to Inukjuak are presently without employment in Inukjuak. This situation was predictable and this is precisely why the January 1987 "Position Paper" to your Department requested special economic and social support systems be provided to the community of Inukjuak in order to facilitate the adjustment and incorporation of families relocating from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak during 1988. It was suggested that additional social support systems should including provision of additional social workers and psychologists to work with individual families within the community to provide for a smoother integration of the relocating families to Inukjuak. With respect to economic support programs, these we requested because of the additional burden that Inuit relocating to Inukjuak would place upon the already high unemployment situation there. It was suggested that such economic assistance take the form of additional funds and job stimulation programs for Inukjuak not only in the year in which the individuals and families actually moved back to Inukjuak, but for an extended period of perhaps 3 to 5 years thereafter.

This special economic and social assistance has not been provided and we again request that Canada devise such special programs and bear the cost of same.

7- Municipal and Educational Infrastructure support:

A review is currently in progress with the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak and the Kativik Regional Government to determine whether measures are necessary to augment municipal and educational infrastructure of Inukjuak in order to accommodate the additional population and housing created by the relocation of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit back to Inukjuak.

8- Funding for future meetings:

To date, Makivik Corporation has been bearing the full costs of any discussions, consultations and negotiations undertaken in regard to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue. As far back as 1986, Makivik submitted a detailed funding request to the former D.I.A.N.D. Minister, William McKnight, in the amount of \$91,162.00. Such monies were intended for use by Makivik and Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit for travel, consultation and negotiation purposes. Because no response had been made to that request, this request for funding was again repeated in the January 20, 1987 "Position Paper" which was submitted to the same Minister. We have received no specific response to either of these requests for funding. Consequently, we are again requesting that such funding be made available to Makivik so that we can effectively carry out our work with respect to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit relocation issue.

9- Reimbursement of negotiation costs:

There has still been no response to our request in the Position Paper for reimbursement by Canada to Makivik of all expenses and costs incurred by Makivik since 1980 to date with respect to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue. Total amounts of money spent to date remain to be tabulated but are estimated minimally to be \$100,000. Such amounts are in addition to the funding requested for continued work above.

We would appreciate a timely response to the request contained in the present letter. For this purpose, we are suggesting a meeting between yourself and your officials and Makivik and representatives of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit as soon as possible. Please advise us as to your availability in this regard.

Yours truly,

<signed>

Zebedee Nungak

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

c.c.:

- Markoosie Patsuaq, representative of Inukjuak
- Larry Audlaluk, representative of Grise Fiord
- Simeonie Amagoalik, representative of Resolute Bay
- John Amagoalik, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
- Tikile Kleist, Chairman, Kativik Regional Government
- Jobie Epoo, Mayor, Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak

**1-4. Makivik Corporation and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Submission Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit Relocation Issue to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, March 1990<sup>4</sup>**

**SUBMISSION REGARDING**  
**GRISE FIORD/RESOLUTE BAY INUIT RELOCATION ISSUE**  
**TO**  
**THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON**  
**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

March 1990

MAKIVIK CORPORATION

INUIT TAPIRISAT OF CANADA

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix "ABOR-9," HCSCAA, 18 June 1990, 40A: 1-45.

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## ANNEXES

## Map

**A. BACKGROUND TO ISSUE**

During the 1950's, in particular, in the years 1953, 1955 and 1957, a number of Inuit of Inukjuak (Port Harrison), Québec were relocated by the federal government to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in the High Arctic. The primary stated purpose by the Government of Canada for this relocation was to reduce the hunting pressure on the resource base of Inukjuak. The High Arctic was said by government to be rich in resources. Additional stated justifications for the relocation were the potential for employment, especially at Resolute Bay as well as the need for a Canadian "presence", especially in Grise Fiord. It should be noted that prior to the 1950's, R.C.M.P. detachments on Ellesmere Island were supported not by Canadian Inuit but by Inuit from Greenland. Canada attempted to facilitate the adaptation of northern Québec Inuit from Inukjuak to the High Arctic by a concurrent relocation of Inuit families from Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953.

Inukjuak is characteristic of many Arctic communities in that it was originally used by Inuit as a large seasonal village. Later, it became the site of a Hudson[s] Bay Company post that served the outlying villages. Activity slowly increased and new agencies began to establish themselves in Inukjuak. By the early 1960's, it had become a central community site and represented a consolidation of the previously disbursed regional population. Throughout the 1970's, the growth of Inukjuak continued and by the 1980's, this community had become a major centre of the region and of all of northern Québec.

Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, on the other hand, were not the creations of Inuit community life but instead were artificially created by government. Although the areas which these two communities serve and even the sites themselves have been used by Inuit for centuries, there was not the same development sequence related to Inuit population as there was in Inukjuak and other northern Québec villages. Resolute Bay was formed in 1947 as a meteorological station for a joint Canadian-American expedition known as Arctops. In fact, a different site was intended for this base but bad ice conditions and a late arrival of ships made Resolute Bay the only alternative site.

With respect to Grise Fiord, it was selected as the site of a new community by the federal government and was created in 1953. It was located close to an R.C.M.P. post that served as a source of trade goods. The relocation of northern Québec Inuit families to Grise Fiord enabled the R.C.M.P. detachment to use Canadian Inuit as guides and hunters rather than to have to hire Inuit families from Greenland.

At the time of the relocations in the 1950's, Inuit involved had been told by federal officials that the moves were "experimental" and that Inuit would be moved back to Inukjuak if they did not like the new conditions in the High Arctic. The relocation process began in July 1953. Seven families were moved to Grise Fiord and four families were moved to Resolute Bay. In 1955, six more families were transported to Resolute Bay by ship and one family was moved to Grise Fiord.

However, as early as 1954, many of the relocated Inuit were asking the federal government to be moved back to Inukjuak. In 1966, several of the original families that had been relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay requested permission to the federal government to return to Inukjuak but this request, like many others, was ignored and even actively discouraged by Canada. In the late 1970's, two families returned to Inukjuak and another family to the Hudson Bay area, all at their own initiative and at their own expense without any cooperation, understanding or assistance from the federal government. Indeed, until very recently, the federal government has virtually ignored all requests of Inuit in Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord to move back to Inukjuak.

The relocation of Inuit from Inukjuak to the High Arctic was ostensibly based on three primary considerations: the first involved an assumption about the need to move people from areas considered as "resource poor" to those areas thought to be "resource rich" in exploitable natural food resources; second, was the assumption about the need to improve economic conditions by shifting Inuit from areas that did not have a potential for wage labour to those areas which appeared to have such a potential; third, was Canada's post World War II concern with an increased Canadian presence in the High Arctic. The first and second of the above reasons were those used by government to encourage Inuit to relocate.

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the central, if not the sole, reason for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic was the desire by Canada to assert its sovereignty over the Arctic islands and surrounding area. Indeed, there is little factual evidence to explain why some areas of the Arctic were determined by the government to be "resource poor" and other areas to be "resource rich". In fact, none of the archival data is specific on this point, but it does appear from this material as though the assessment by the government of resource potential in the Arctic was based primarily upon observations set out in the reports submitted to the Federal Department of Resources and Development (Northern Administration and Lands Branch) during the late 1940's and early 1950's. Moreover, there is no evidence to support the federal government's assumption in the early 1950's of the severe depletion of game resources in the Inukjuak region of Québec. However, it should be noted that in the early 1950's economic and health conditions in the north were bad almost everywhere due mainly to the failure of the government to establish policies or programs to significantly improve either the economic system of the north (fur trading) or the health delivery system. The Inukjuak region was certainly subjected to poor economic and health conditions at the time, but probably no more so than any other areas in the Arctic. Consequently, justification for the relocation to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay based upon poor economic conditions or a poor natural resource base did not hold up under closer scrutiny.

Archival material from the 1950's supports the view that the primary reason of the Government of Canada for moving Inuit from Inukjuak to the High Arctic was to establish Canadian occupation there and confirm Canadian sovereignty. Further, in 1983 Canada confirmed that this relocation of Inuit was undertaken in order to entrench Canadian sovereignty claims to the High Arctic. The former Honourable John Munro, Minister of D.I.A.N.D., presented a discussion paper prepared by Environment Canada entitled "Environment Canada and the North" at the third General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference held in Frobisher Bay in July, 1983 (see [Annex 1](#) to the present submission). This federal paper, in discussing the evolution of resource-use policy in Canada's north, provides as follows (page 59):

"It is worth noting that before World War II, priority was given to traditional forms of northern occupancy in large areas of the North. However, the prime reasons for this were not entirely due to concern for Native welfare and northern environmental quality. Issues of Canadian sovereignty were the principal concerns.

Both the Native people and the environment were used as important elements in formulating strategies to advance Canada's jurisdictional claims in the Arctic.

For example, at the turn of the century Otto Sverdrup discovered Axel Heiberg and Ellef Ringnes Islands and claimed them for Norway. In response, Canada reasserted her claim to the islands of the High Arctic. To confirm this claim, Canada created a game preserve in the Arctic Islands in 1926, and stated that the hunting grounds of the Arctic should be preserved for the Native Eskimos (Inuit). Various additions were made to the preserve up until 1945, at which time over 1.3 million square kilometres (over one-half a million square miles) were set aside covering all the Arctic Islands and a large part of the rest of the Northwest Territories. To further entrench the sovereignty claim, the government relocated Inuit people from northern Quebec to the Arctic Islands in the mid-1950's.

Again, in December 1985, D.I.A.N.D. confirmed that Canadian sovereignty was the basis of the Inuit relocation in its Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy entitled "Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements". This Report provides at page 60 as follows in this regard: (see Annex 2 to present submission)

"For a number of years Canada has been concerned about possible challenges to its sovereignty in the waters of the Arctic archipelago. The voyage of the American icebreaker Polar Sea last summer drew attention to the issue once again. Thirty years ago, the federal government strengthened Canadian sovereignty by moving several hundred Inuit from northern Quebec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis islands in the High Arctic, where they established the communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute."

Similarly, in 1985 the Research Branch of D.I.A.N.D. published a report entitled "The Government of Canada and the Inuit, 1900-1967" in which the following statement appears at pages 119-120 in regard to relocations of Inuit in the North during the 1950s.

"The police in particular had been proposing some type of relocation since at least 1950, and believed the High Arctic Islands would have sufficient resources to support one or two communities.<sup>21</sup> It should be noted, too, that the police were anxious to relocate their Craig Harbour post to Cape Sabine and to employ Canadian Inuit as hunters and guides instead of Greenland Eskimos, who had heretofore been used by Ellesmere Island detachments.<sup>21</sup> Government officials admitted they were taking a risk, as no proper resource survey had been done in the Resolute area, but plans and preparations went ahead because all thought it a worthy and noble experiment. Fundamental, also, was the issue of Arctic sovereignty. "The Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared in many cases the Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this."<sup>22</sup>

(The last footnote in the above quotation is an excerpt from minutes of a meeting held on August 10, 1953 in Ottawa by the then federal Department of Resources and Development concerning the relocation of Inuit families from northern Quebec to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands in the High Arctic).

Further, as recent as September 30, 1987 and February 5, 1988, former D.I.A.N.D. Minister, Bill McKnight confirmed in letters to Makivik Corporation (see Annex 3 of this submission) that Canadian sovereignty was the basis for the Inuit relocation of the 1950s.

Since the 1950's, the Inuit involved have made repeated requests to the Government of Canada to be returned to their homes in Inukjuak. Since 1978, Makivik Corporation as well as Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (I.T.C.), at the insistence of their respective memberships as expressed through Annual General Assembly meetings (See Annex 1), have made representations to various D.I.A.N.D. Ministers and Deputy-Ministers concerning the plight of Grise

Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit and the need for the Government of Canada to act to rectify its negligent and inhuman treatment of those Inuit it relocated in the 1950's. The more Makivik and I.T.C. called for action by the federal government on this issue, the more D.I.A.N.D. made promises of housing and other remedial and compensatory measures for Inuit of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay but never followed through on any of such commitments. Makivik and I.T.C. repeatedly referred the federal government to the fact that it had made promises to Inuit who had been relocated that if they did not like Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay that they could be returned to their homes of origin in Inukjuak. Because of Makivik and I.T.C. repeated demands for action from D.I.A.N.D., D.I.A.N.D. finally gave a contract to an independent consultant (Mark M. Hammond) and commissioned this consultant to determine whether there had in fact been a promise by the Government of Canada to the relocated Inuit to finance their return to their original homes in Inukjuak and Pond Inlet.

This Report, entitled "Report of Findings on an Alleged Promise of Government to Finance the Return of Inuit at Resolute and Grise Fiord to their Original Homes at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet" (D.I.A.N.D. Contract No: 84-099) was submitted to D.I.A.N.D. on August 3, 1984 (see Annex 4 to the present submission). The Report indicated that Inuit who were moved to the High Arctic in the 1950's "quite likely received a promise from government that they could return after two years, if they so desired". The Report emphasized that if such Inuit did not receive a specific promise in this regard, it is clear that they were not discouraged from thinking that they did.

The Report also raises serious doubts as to the "resource richness" of the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay area in that documents from the 1950's suggest that the Canadian Wildlife Service advised against adding to the number of hunters in the Resolute Bay area and also in the High Arctic until it could conduct systematic faunal surveys to determine what hunting pressure the land and water could in fact sustain.

The Report (at page 1) concludes as follows:

"Briefly my findings are:

- 1) Pond Inlet Inuit moving in 1953 received such a promise in no uncertain terms;
- 2) Port Harrison Inuit moving in 1953 quite likely received such a promise, but if they did not, it is clear that they were not discouraged from thinking that they did; and
- (3) Pond Inlet and Port Harrison Inuit moving in 1955 probably moved with the same understanding as Inuit moving in 1953... Inuit at both Resolute and Grise Fiord were asking government as early as 1956 to facilitate reunion with relatives and friends left behind at Port Harrison and Pond Inlet."

Several meetings took place between Makivik, I.T.C. and D.I.A.N.D Deputy-Ministers since 1982, but until 1988 none of these resulted in any actions by D.I.A.N.D. to rectify the situation of Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

In particular, on February 26, 1985 and again on April 3, 1985, Inuit representatives from Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord along with the Inuit Committee on National Issues (I.C.N.I.) and Makivik, as well as the Mayor of Inukjuak, met with D.I.A.N.D. Minister [David] Crombie to discuss a proposed relocation of Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay back to Inukjuak. At that time, Inuit concerns were described to the Minister as encompassing three main areas: (1) matters relating to carrying out a complete relocation to Inukjuak financed by the federal government; (2) social disruption which families involved have suffered and continue to suffer and the compensation which Inuit seek as a result; and (3) the contribution the relocated families have made in assisting



Canada to assert its sovereignty in the High Arctic and the recognition which should be bestowed by the government to those Inuit involved.

At the April 3, 1985 meeting the then Honourable Minister Crombie confirmed that he was taking action to secure additional housing for Inukjuak in connection with the proposed relocation and that it might be possible to obtain a letter from the Prime Minister giving appropriate recognition to the contribution of Inuit to Canadian sovereignty. Unfortunately no concrete action by the federal government resulted from either of these meetings and consequently, on May 7, 1984, a telex drafted in clear terms calling for federal government to act on the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay issue was sent to the then D.I.A.N.D. Minister, John Munro; the then Minister of Justice, Mark MacGuigan; the then Commissioner of N.W.T., John H. Parker and the then Minister of Justice for N.W.T., Richard Nerysoo.

On February 12-15, 1986, many of the complaints and demands of Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay were reviewed in a major meeting in Frobisher Bay between I.T.C., I.C.N.I., Makivik Corporation, the Kativik Regional Government, the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak and Inuit representatives of the families affected by the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay relocations of the 1950's. Aside from the twenty representatives of the concerned communities, present also were Mark R. Gordon, President of Makivik Corporation; Rhoda Inuksuk, President of I.T.C.; Zebedee Nungak, Co-Chairperson of I.C.N.I.; John Amagoalik, Co-Chairperson of I.C.N.I.; Sam Omik, Vice-President of B.R.I.A., and Simeonie Nalaturuk, Chairman of the Kativik Regional Government. This meeting resulted in a telex being sent on February 14, 1986, to the then D.I.A.N.D. Minister, David E. Crombie, the then Minister of Labour, Bill McKnight and the then Québec Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Andre Bourbeau, calling for a minimum of ten (10) new housing units to be built in Inukjuak in the summer of 1986 to alleviate housing shortages caused by those Inuit who have already moved from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay back to Inukjuak and also for those Inuit currently in the process of relocating. Secondly, the telex indicated that a detailed list of compensatory and other measures all directly related to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue would be submitted to the Minister of D.I.A.N.D. in the near future for attention and action.

This telex was signed by the leadership of I.C.N.I., I.T.C., the Kativik Regional Government, Makivik Corporation, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit, as well as the Vice-President of the Baffin Region Inuit Association (B.R.I.A.) and the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak. No immediate action by either government resulted from this telex and no housing units were constructed for Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit in Inukjuak in either the 1986 or 1987 construction seasons.

As a result, several field trips to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay and meetings with community representatives were undertaken by Makivik during 1986 and 1987 to determine with more precision the concerns and demands of the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit in light of the obvious reticence of Canada to act. The results of these trips and meetings resulted in preparation by Makivik, I.T.C., and the Kativik Regional Government (K.R.G.) of a Position Paper dated January 20, 1987 and entitled "Position Paper Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue". This Position Paper (see Annex 5 of this Submission) was submitted to the then D.I.A.N.D. Minister Bill McKnight along with a formal request for structured discussions and negotiations between Makivik, I.T.C., K.R.G. and D.I.A.N.D. on all matters raised by the Position Paper.

Briefly, the Position Paper set forth the following minimum remedial and compensatory measures requested at that time by Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay:

- 1- Thirteen (13) housing units to be built in Inukjuak;

- 2- Moving expenses reimbursement for families already relocated to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1985;
- 3- Personal property losses for families already relocated to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1985 (approximately \$80,000);
- 4- Heritage Trust Fund of \$10 Million for original families relocated to the High Arctic;
- 5- Municipal and education infrastructure supplements for Inukjuak;
- 6- Economic and social assistance supplementary support for Inukjuak;
- 7- Housing and transportation costs for future moves of Inuit to Inukjuak;
- 8- Travel costs for yearly visits by aircraft;
- 9- Official recognition of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit contribution to Canadian history;
- 10- Consultation budget request from Makivik (approximately \$100,000);
- 11- Reimbursement to Makivik of negotiation costs (approximately \$100,000).

## **B. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1987 CONCERNING GRISE FIORD/RESOLUTE BAY INUIT**

Since submission of the above-mentioned January 20, 1987 Position Paper, D.I.A.N.D. undertook by letter dated September 30, 1987 to Makivik (see Annex 6 of the present Submission) to fund construction of ten (10) new housing units in Inukjuak and to reimburse and cover all moving costs of past and current relocations of Inuit from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak. Makivik accepted the above D.I.A.N.D. offer by letter to D.I.A.N.D. dated November 11, 1987 (see Annex 7 of the present Submission) but only subject to certain reservations, namely, that the D.I.A.N.D. offer was only “a step forward towards remedying the current situation of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit” and that the D.I.A.N.D. offer addresses “only some of the requests made” in the January 20, 1987 Position Paper. More specifically, Makivik clearly stated in its November 11, 1987 letter to D.I.A.N.D.:

“Since the measures you outline in your September 30 letter address only some of the requests made to you on January 20, 1987 in the Makivik - I.T.C. - K.R.G. “Position Paper regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue, we intend to continue discussions with your Department concerning other remedial and compensatory measures outlined in our Position Paper.”

Following from the above D.I.A.N.D. offer, D.I.A.N.D. and Makivik executed a Contribution Agreement on March 4, 1988 in the amount of \$200,000: \$50,000 of this amount to reimburse moving expenses of Inuit who relocated at their own expense to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1985; \$150,000 of this amount to defray moving costs of Inuit relocating to Inukjuak during 1988-89. Further, Canada funded construction of ten (10) housing units in Inukjuak in the summer of 1988. As a result, during the summer and fall of 1988, six (6) families (approximately thirty-five persons) relocated to Inukjuak from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

More recently, Makivik communicated by letter dated March 23, 1989 with the D.I.A.N.D. Minister Pierre Cadieux concerning the remaining and outstanding remedial and compensatory measures necessary to fairly resolve this issue (see Annex 7 of this Submission). The Makivik letter also specifically requested a meeting with the D.I.A.N.D. Minister in this regard. The D.I.A.N.D. Minister Pierre Cadieux responded to this Makivik request by letter dated May 12, 1989 (see Annex 8 of this Submission) indicating that Canada had fulfilled all its commitments in this regard and that a meeting was not necessary.

Consequently, given the above negative response of the D.I.A.N.D. Minister to what we feel are reasonable requests, Makivik felt it had no alternative but to come before the present Standing Committee to set forth our concerns, our requests and the overall history of this issue.

**C. NATURE OF SUFFERING, INCONVENIENCE, SOCIAL DISRUPTION AND PREJUDICE**

The August 3, 1984 Report (Hammond Report) discussed above, contains a number of archival extracts from R.C.M.P. reports and material of the then Federal Department of Resources and Development (Northern Administration and Lands Branch) which only begin to shed some light on the motivations and actions of the federal government at the time of these relocations in the 1950's. This documentation also tends to confirm the complete lack of consultation and information with the Inuit concerned at the time and the purposeful refusal by the federal government to comprehend the fundamental social, economic, physical and psychological changes Inuit from Inukjuak had to undergo in these relocations. Some of the R.C.M.P. reports drawn from the archival material of the 1950's even raises certain social and environmental concerns which might result from the relocations and affect the Inuit but fails to address them in any meaningful way.

For example, concerns were expressed with regard to insufficiency of land-based wildlife in the Resolute Bay area and Grise Fiord area. In addition, some concern was expressed with respect to the unfamiliarity of the environment, in particular, the long periods of darkness on Ellesmere Island, in contrast to the Inukjuak area and that this might cause some "discontentment" amongst Inuit being relocated and might even [affect] their "morale". Some concern was mentioned in this documentation of the lack of availability of a sufficient pool of potential spouses for those who had relocated to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord and the inability of Inuit relocating to be able to find suitable candidates for marriage in order to maintain the productive and reproductive potential of their population.

The archival material merely touches upon the possibility of individual family and community life disruption. However, a fuller description and impact of the suffering and abuse encountered by the original relocated families and many of their descendants is more fully appreciated from descriptions provided by the people themselves during our meetings during 1986, most of which have been recorded for historical and other purposes.

From these discussions the following types of suffering, social disruption and damage generated by the initial relocations in the 1950's have become apparent. These sources and types of suffering, disruption and damage are by no means exhaustive.

**(1) Climate:**

Unlike Inukjuak where the summer is approximately three and one-half (3 1/2) months in duration, summer in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay is no more than a period of six (6) weeks. Unlike Inukjuak, in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay there is no daylight from the month of October through to the month of February inclusive. As well, there is no darkness there from April to October. Unlike Inukjuak, there is no snow on the ground with which to build igloos until January whereas in Inukjuak such snow is available for construction by November. Temperatures and weather conditions generally are much colder and more severe in Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord and are of greater duration than in Inukjuak.

In regard to ice conditions, ice formations remain throughout the spring and summer in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay whereas in Inukjuak the ice disappears in late spring. This has serious consequences for the

use of boats and canoes in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay because use of water craft is only possible in the months of August and September whereas in Inukjuak, such activities can take place for at least five or six months. The people also expressed great concern over the fact that there is very little rain in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in comparison to Inukjuak.

Overall, Inuit described the difference in climatic conditions between Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay and Inukjuak as “very different”.

(2) Hunting Strategy, Availability of Renewable Resources and Dietary Changes:

The relocation from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay represented a fundamental change in the diet of Inuit involved. Representatives of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay continually remark on the balanced diet they enjoyed in Inukjuak (i.e., a balance of land, game and marine game) whereas in Grise Fiord and Resolute, the diet consisted mainly of sea mammals. This represented a major change in diet and in hunting patterns for these Inuit. More particularly, in Inukjuak there was an abundance of berries, birds, eggs, fish, caribou, seal, walrus and whale. In contrast, in Grise Fiord and Resolute, there were no berries, few birds, no mussels, very rarely caribou and for the most part, the food sources were derived from whales, seals, walrus (i.e., sea mammals). Representatives remarked repeatedly on the limited selection of birds in the High Arctic in contrast to the great abundance and variety of birds in Inukjuak. There appeared to only be eider ducks but no geese in the High Arctic. Not only was there a major change in diet for those relocated, but the season available for using the water for hunting and fishing was also extremely limited, as above-described. Consequently, Inuit who had been relocated had to adjust to a different diet with limited means and seasons in which to obtain food. Long periods of darkness also complicated the search for food in Grise Fiord and Resolute.

In addition, the new residents of Grise Fiord and Resolute were required to completely relearn a hunting strategy suitable to the environment and resources of the region. While game was present, it was inaccessible until the hunters developed knowledge of the land required to hunt effectively. This caused a great degree of stress both personally for the hunters involved and affected the level of food availability for the group.

(3) Employment and cash income:

Employment was easier to find in Inukjuak than it was in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay during the 1950's to the 1970's. This made cash much less available which in turn meant that Inuit in Grise Fiord and Resolute were much more dependent on the R.C.M.P. detachment and military activities in Resolute Bay. In Inukjuak cash could also be obtained through the sale by Inuit of country food to non-Natives. This was not possible in either Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay. In fact, most Inuit who did perform services for the R.C.M.P. detachment in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, such as hunting or acting as guides, received no payment whatsoever for their work over several years despite the fact that federal minimum government wage policy as of 1948 for Inuit was Sixty Dollars (\$60.00) per month. One example that many Inuit remember in particular is the dismantling and removal of the RCMP buildings in Craig Harbour. These dismantled buildings were moved over forty miles with Inuit assistance by dog teams and these Inuit were paid absolutely nothing for their efforts. Even though it was often the government policy at that time for such minimum salary to be paid as a credit note at the local Hudson[s] Bay store in addition to food supplies and segregated housing, these wages were not paid in whatsoever form to Inuit relocated to Grise

Fiord and Resolute Bay. Indeed, no Hudson[s] Bay store even existed at Grise Fiord. Many Inuit have asked for an investigation into what they refer to as “forced labour” or “slave labour” during that period.

(4) Population size:

The difference in population size also generated severe stress and anxiety for those Inuit relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute. Whereas there was a larger population of individuals in Inukjuak (several hundreds), in Grise Fiord and Resolute there was only a very small population of Inuit (less than 100 persons in both Resolute and Grise Fiord). Even the population today suggests strong differences between Grise Fiord (180 persons, including Inuit and non-Inuit) and Resolute Bay (225 persons, including Inuit and non-Inuit) and Inukjuak (850 persons, including Inuit and non-Inuit). As discussed earlier, the population size greatly affected the ability of young Inuit in Grise Fiord and Resolute to find spouses since the biological pool was extremely small.

Indeed, there are accounts of Inuit in Grise Fiord having to go forth many years in search of a spouse in other communities such as Resolute and Frobisher Bay before finding someone to marry. Such severe social deprivation did not exist in southern Inuit communities such as Inukjuak.

(5) Religious practices:

The spiritual needs of the people were also negatively affected by the relocations. In Inukjuak in the 1950's there was a church and a permanent Minister to serve the spiritual needs of the population. In Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay there were no such religious facilities or Ministers until the beginning of the 1960's. Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute who had been relocated from Inukjuak received no spiritual guidance for several years and thus were lacking in a basic support system at a time of extreme change and stress in their lives.

(6) Community and family life:

The relocation to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay disrupted both the community and the “sense of community” that existed in Inukjuak: it separated and divided families. From a cohesive community with intense family ties in Inukjuak, Inuit were moved to an uncertain new existence in an alien environment without the availability and proximity and support of family relatives and friends. Many of the Inuit involved in relating their experiences to fieldworkers have likened these relocations of the 1950's to the plight of refugees in Europe during and after World War II: people without a land, without a home and without a family.

Like the lack of spiritual support in the early years in Grise Fiord and Resolute, there was also lack of yet other important support systems (community, family ties and friends) to help these people during the most traumatic changes in their lives.

From a cohesive community in Inukjuak these people were moved to a place of no community. From many friends and family ties in Inukjuak, these people were moved to an area of no family ties and no friends. Such was the lack of complete community in Grise Fiord and Resolute that an individual could not even find a spouse: he or she had to travel to other communities where there existed cultural differences and language differences in order to try and make contact with another human being to marry and to create a family and to hence carry on life.

Children and other descendants of the original families relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute have lost their social and cultural roots and ties. They also have foregone much of the knowledge, teachings and customs that they would have gained in Inukjuak had their families never been relocated to the High Arctic (for example, hunting skills; carving skills; and general knowledge of the lay of the country). Many of the children of the families originally relocated now feel homeless: they do not feel they belong in Grise Fiord or Resolute and they do not feel they belong in Inukjuak.

So profound are the impacts of these relocations of the 1950's that the social and cultural consequences are felt, and will be felt, by many generations of descendants of the original relocated families.

(7) Government, Medical and other services:

Unlike Inukjuak in the 1950's, Grise Fiord and Resolute had no Hudson[s] Bay store or other supply store and no governmental services. Governmental services did not appear in Grise Fiord and Resolute until 1962. Instead of a Hudson Bay store, there was simply a government trading store in Grise Fiord. This lack of a store was highly significant for the Inuit because such a store back in Inukjuak and other Inuit communities further south provided credit to Inuit which enabled them to purchase the staples they needed to hunt and fish and generally carry on their traditional activities. There was no credit provided to Inuit in either Grise Fiord or Resolute. This made traditional life extremely difficult and stressful. Moreover, instead of the presence of various government services as existed in Inukjuak, in Grise Fiord there was only the R.C.M.P. detachment which was also responsible for dispensing all services normally handled by other government departments including medical services, welfare, postal services and so on.

There are documented cases of relocated Inuit having received welfare-type payments in Inukjuak and such payments abruptly coming to an end when these individuals were relocated to Grise Fiord. Numerous potential retroactive claims exist amongst Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit involved in these relocations. More particularly, in the early 1950s in Inukjuak, Inuit who were entitled, were receiving up to Forty Dollars (\$40.00) per month as federal Old Age Pension, Family Allowance payments of approximately Six to Eight Dollars (\$6.00 - \$8.00) per month, often paid in the form of food and clothing by missionaries or medical officers; federal disability allowances for individuals aged 18-69 up to a maximum of Forty Dollars (\$40.00) per month.

In regard to medical services, though there was a medical nursing station in Inukjuak in the 1950's, there were no permanent medical facilities in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay except for a R.C.A.F. nurse in Resolute Bay. Even this nurse had no authority to send Inuit south for treatment. Many original family members of the original families relocated who are deceased would still be living today if there had been medical facilities available to them in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950's.

With respect to education facilities and services, though these existed in Inukjuak, there were no schools in Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay until 1962.

(8) Food Staples, Fuel, Clothing and Basic Supplies

A special note is required in regard to staple foods such as tea, sugar and flour as well as clothing material and simple utensils, fuel and supplies. Strong evidence has been collected from Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay that while Inuit men were being used for various jobs by non-Natives, the Inuit women were forced to forage for scraps of food, wood, clothing scraps and broken utensils in the garbage dump of those

communities; in the garbage of the R.C.M.P. detachment. Accounts exist of Inuit huts in Grise Fiord being heated by sparse scraps of wood from old crates found in the garbage dump. This resulted in Inuit huts frequently having no heat during the period of extreme cold. The R.C.M.P. detachment houses, on the other hand, were heated with coal-fired furnaces with ample coal supplies brought yearly by sea-lift and unloaded by unpaid Inuit labour.

In addition, there is evidence that many government supplies from the south destined for Inuit in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay (rifles, duffle cloth) never arrived. F.J.G. Cunningham, Director of the Department of Resources and Development, in a letter dated December 15, 1953 to the Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, stated as follows in this regard:

“It seems particularly unfortunate that all the shortage should be made up of those items which are the most necessary for the Eskimo, and I understand that the lack of such items such as rifles and duffle cloth will make their life more difficult than it need have been this winter. What happened to the \$1,124.00 worth of goods no one appears to know, but the fact remains that the Eskimos, during the most difficult period of the year, will have to do without some of the necessities of life.”

Recorded discussions with Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute who had been relocated in the 1950's reveal extreme suffering, depression, anxiety and physical and mental deprivation both during the initial relocations and in the 30-35 years subsequent thereto. In discussions with the original families and their descendants, the picture becomes clear that these Inuit were plummeted into a hostile, unfamiliar environment with little consultation or explanation concerning the reason for what was transpiring; inadequate equipment; a violent break with family and friends; an elimination of all spiritual support; a radical change in diet and availability of food: all for the purpose of enabling the federal government to assert and establish its claims of sovereignty in the High Arctic.

More recently (since 1975), these individuals have also been deprived of enjoyment of their rights and benefits under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement executed in 1975 of which these Inuit are acknowledged beneficiaries. They have been prevented from using their traditional hunting and fishing areas and from taking part in the various governmental and other entities provided for in the Agreement. The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement is an aboriginal treaty recognized and protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. It does not appear, however, that they were ever considered in the original computation of the overall compensation monies provided to northern Québec Inuit under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. It is significant, however, that despite the relocation to N.W.T. in the 1950s, the Government of Québec has formally recognized that these Inuit have never ceased being Québec citizens and beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreements (see Annex 9 of this submission).

**D. GRISE FIORD/RESOLUTE BAY RELOCATIONS AS VIOLATION OF CIVIL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

The history of the Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay relocated from Inukjuak in the 1950's and federal government inaction to rectify such tragedy constitute violations of almost every relevant provincial, national and international Convention, Charter, Covenant, Resolution or law dealing with human rights and freedoms.

More particularly, and by way of example only, the following provisions of human rights documents may have particular relevance to this issue:



1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides in part as follows:

“Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

“Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondents, nor to a tax upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”

“Article 17

- 1) Everyone has the right to own property alone or as well as in association with others.
- 2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”

“Article 23

- 1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- 2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- 3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- 4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.”

“Article 25

- 1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control ...”

“Article 27

- 1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in the scientific advancement and its benefits ...-

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been accepted by Canada.

2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides in part as follows:

“Article 10

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognized that:

- 1) The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependant children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses ...”

"Article 11

- 1) The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions ..."

"Article 12

- 1) The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health ..."

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1966 and entered into force in January 1976. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has been accepted by Canada.

3. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides in part as follows:

"Article 7

No one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation."

"Article 12

- 1) Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence ...
- 4) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country."

"Article 17

- 1) No one shall be subject to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.
- 2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1966 and entered into force in March 1976. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been accepted by Canada.

4. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms contained in the Constitution Act, 1982 provides in part as follows:

"Life, liberty and security of the person

- 7) Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

"Treatment or punishment

- 12) Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment."

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has become part of the Constitution of Canada by virtue of the enactment of the Canada Act, 1982 by the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

5. The Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (R.S.Q., c.C-12) provides in part as follows:

- “5. Every person has a right to respect for his private life.”
- “6. Every person has a right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of his property, except to the extent provided by law.”
- “7. A person’s home is inviolable.”
- “8. No one may enter upon the property of another or take anything therefrom without his express or implied consent.”
- “43. Persons belonging to ethnic minorities have a right to maintain and develop their own cultural interests with the other members of their group.”

Application of these provincial, national and international statements of human rights and freedoms to the facts relating to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocations of the 1950’s set forth earlier in this Statement demonstrate a clear division between what the Government of Canada promises to do and what in fact it has done and continues to do to some of its citizens. Indeed, Canada’s treatment of Inuit relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay constitute violations of human rights guarantees at every level of government and jurisdiction.

Though the Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay have not to date chosen to pursue their claims through the established human rights bodies either within the United Nations or under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms itself, they clearly have justification for so doing should federal inaction continue with respect to their demands for remedial and compensatory measures to assist in alleviating some of the hardship they have suffered and continue to suffer.

## **E. COMPENSATORY AND REMEDIAL MEASURES**

The following constitute compensatory and remedial measures necessary to equitably and effectively attempt to redress their losses, inconvenience, pain and suffering as a result of the relocations of the 1950’s effected by the Government of Canada. These measures are intended to apply to the original seventeen (17) families relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet during the 1950’s as well as to their children and other descendants.

In demanding these measures Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay recognize that no amount of compensatory and remedial measures can possibly ever fully rectify the suffering and loss brought about by these relocations. However, these Inuit feel that the following measures are the minimum ones that the Government of Canada must now carry out in order to compensate them and recognize their significant contribution to Canadian sovereignty and Canadian history.

### **1. Housing:**

Thirteen (13) housing units are required to be built in Inukjuak in order to accommodate families wishing to move from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay and some families which have already undertaken such a move at their own initiative. Canada funded construction of ten (10) housing units in the summer of 1988 but three (3) housing units remain to be built to meet the needs of Inuit relocating to Inukjuak both during and since 1988.

2. Moving expenses:

Moving expenses relate to those individuals and families who have already relocated to Inukjuak from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay over the last fifteen (15) years (six (6) families) and those moving expenses related to individuals and families who still intend to move back to Inukjuak.

These moving expenses must include airfare from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak for all family members as well as cargo and freight expenses for the movement off all their household and other property and equipment. With respect to the former of these costs, Canada has reimbursed approximately \$50,000 in moving expenses to the six (6) families who relocated to Inukjuak at their own expense between 1970 and 1987. However, with respect to moving costs incurred between March 1988 and October 1989, these costs amounted to approximately \$204,000, and Canada to date has reimbursed to Makivik \$150,000 of this amount.

3. Personal Property Losses for those Inuit already moved back to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1987

Total personal property losses and moving costs associated with Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit who have already relocated back to Inukjuak since 1970 amounts to a total of \$94,485.00.

This amount represents replacement costs of various items F.O.B. Inukjuak in 1989 prices. This personal property was lost or left behind in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay when the six (6) families moved back to Inukjuak. Annex 10 of this Submission contains a detailed break-down of personal property losses by family with a list of specific items lost and their current replacement cost values. All such losses can be substantiated by duly executed affidavits.

4. Property Losses of Inuit relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1950s

Aside from the personal property lost when Inuit moved back on their own to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1987, some property was lost or destroyed in the relocation to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950s. Those property losses amount to approximately \$150,000 in present dollars and relate to a Peterhead boat belonging to Mr. Simeonie Amagoalik and used by the community of Inukjuak at that time. A photograph of this boat is contained in Annex 11 of the present Submission.

5. Heritage Trust Fund

Canada should establish and fund a Heritage Trust Fund of \$10 Million as compensation to the original seventeen (17) families relocated by Canada to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay from Inukjuak (and Pond Inlet). This Fund would be administered by a Board of Trustees made up of representatives drawn from the original seventeen (17) families as well as Makivik representatives. Terms and conditions of administration of the Fund would include restrictions on use of capital and income of the Fund. The capital of the Fund could be conserved so as to provide a perpetual fund producing revenues for the seventeen (17) original families and their descendants. These specific terms and conditions would be discussed with and established by the original seventeen (17) families in consultation with Makivik and I.T.C.

The \$10 Million would be payable into the Fund by Canada in one sum upon the signature of an agreement providing for all the remedial and compensatory measures set out in the present Submission.

The Heritage Trust Fund would compensate Inuit of Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay (and Pond Inlet where relevant) on a once and for all basis, in addition to the other measures provided for here, for the suffering and injustice which they underwent due to Canada's "experiment" of the 1950's.

Annex 12 of the present Submission contains a list of the original families relocated by Canada to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953, 1955 and 1957. This list does not enumerate all descendants of these original families but merely the original families and immediate family members thereof. An asterisk next to a name indicates that the individual is deceased.

6. Municipal and Education Infrastructure Support:

A review will have to be made with the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak in conjunction with the Kativik Regional Government to determine the precise measures which must be taken to augment the municipal and educational infrastructure of Inukjuak so as to accommodate the ten (10) additional housing units built in 1988 and the remaining three (3) housing units to be built and the additional population represented by same.

For example, Inukjuak may require an additional water truck and sewage truck as a result of these additional housing units and the Kativik School Board facilities Inukjuak may require additional space and facilities as a result thereof.

Precise determination of actual needs will have to be done by the Northern Village Corporation of Inukjuak and the Kativik Regional Government themselves.

7. Economic and Social Assistance:

Special economic and social support systems have to be provided to the community of Inukjuak in order to facilitate the adjustment and incorporation of families relocating from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak in the coming summer and following.

More particularly, numerous social problems exist because of the differences between Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit and those in Inukjuak. Social integration into the community has been difficult for those six (6) families that have already moved and similar problems are anticipated for the other families currently relocating and those still intending to relocate.

Such additional social support systems should include provision of additional social workers and psychologists to work with individual families within the community and with the community itself in order to provide for a smoother integration of the relocating families to Inukjuak. A specific program must be developed in this regard and such program should extend beyond simply the year in which the actual return of these people takes place. Canada should defray all costs associated with such special social programs and assistance.

With respect to economic support programs, these will be necessary because of the additional burden that Inuit relocating to Inukjuak will place upon the already high unemployment situation in Inukjuak. Such economic assistance should take the form of additional funds and job stimulation programs for Inukjuak not only in the year in which the individuals and families actually move back to Inukjuak but for an extended period of perhaps three to five years. Canada should bear the cost of such a program.

8. Housing and Transportation Costs for Future Moves

Canada must engage in an undertaking to build housing units and defray all transportation costs (persons and freight) of any Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit (the original families) or their children or descendants) who decide to move back in future to Inukjuak, namely, within the three (3) years following the date of an agreement with Canada being signed including the remedial and compensatory measures contained in the present Submission.

9. Travel Costs for Yearly Visits

Some Inuit originally relocated from Inukjuak but choosing to remain in Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay want to be able to visit their family and relatives in Inukjuak and then return to Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay at regular intervals during each year. Similarly, Inuit relocated back to Inukjuak may wish to regularly visit relatives in Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay. Current air flights from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay are extremely limited in number and high in cost, making such visits virtually impossible for the concerned Inuit. Consequently, Canada should create a compensation fund in the amount of \$2 [million] to cover all current and future travel needs as above-described of the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit, namely, members of the original families, their children and descendants wishing to make such visits.

With respect to the amount of the above requested Fund, two points are to be noted. First, our experience with chartering aircraft for round-trips (Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay return) during 1988 has demonstrated that such aircraft charters costs an average of \$68,000 for each trip. Second, Canada's actions in the 1950s with respect to these Inuit has been a direct cause of the original community being split into the several geographic locales which now necessitate expensive travel in order to re-establish or continue basic family and communal ties.

10. Official Recognition of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit:

Some form of special and formal recognition must be undertaken for Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit and for their special contribution to assisting Canada in establishing its sovereignty in the High Arctic. It is suggested that such special recognition take the form of a specially minted silver or gold medal to be given to each of the original families and each of their descendants in the context of a special ceremony to be conducted by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Additional forms of recognition could involve installation of special bronze plaques in Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet and Inukjuak to commemorate the contribution of these people to Canadian history. An appropriate inscription for such plaques could easily be worked out between Canada and these Inuit.

One other possible additional form of recognition in this regard could be the printing of a special Canadian stamp or coin recognizing the importance and contribution historically of these Inuit.

11. Funding of Current and Future Meetings

To date, Makivik Corporation has been bearing the full costs of any discussions, consultations and negotiations undertaken in regard to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue. As far back as 1986, Makivik submitted a detailed funding request to the former D.I.A.N.D. Minister, William McKnight, in the amount of \$91,162.00. Such monies were intended for use by Makivik and Grise

Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit for travel, consultation and negotiation purposes. Because no response had been made to that request, this request for funding was again repeated in the January 20, 1987 “Position Paper” which was submitted to the same Minister. We have received no specific response to either of these requests for funding. Consequently, we are again requesting that such funding be made available to Makivik so that we can effectively carry out our work with respect to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit relocation issue.

12. Reimbursement of Negotiation Costs

Canada must reimburse to Makivik all expenses and costs incurred by Makivik since 1980 to date with respect to the Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue. Total amounts of monies spent to date for meetings, travel, discussions, negotiations, research and consultations with community representatives remain to be fully tabulated but are minimally estimated to be \$175,000.

ANNEXES \*

1. Discussion Paper prepared by Environment Canada entitled “Environment Canada and the North”, dated July 1983.
2. Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy entitled “Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements”, dated December 1985.
3. Letters addressed to Makivik Corporation from former D.I.A.N.D. Minister Bill McKnight, dated September 30, 1987 and February 5, 1988.
4. Report entitled “Report of Findings on an Alleged Promise of Government to Finance the Return of Inuit at Resolute and Grise Fiord to their Original Homes at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet” (D.I.A.N.D. Contract No. 84-099) submitted to D.I.A.N.D. on August 3, 1984.
5. Position Paper submitted by Makivik, I.T.C. and the Kativik Regional Government entitled “Position Paper Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue”, dated January 2, 1987.
6. Letter addressed to Makivik Corporation from former D.I.A.N.D. Minister Bill McKnight, dated September 30, 1987.
7. Letter addressed to D.I.A.N.D. Minister, Pierre Cadieux from Makivik Corporation, dated March 23, 1989.
8. Letter addressed to Makivik Corporation from D.I.A.N.D. Minister, Pierre Cadieux, dated May 12, 1989.
9. Letter addressed to Makivik Corporation from former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Andre Bourbeau, dated March 6, 1986.
10. List of Personal Property Losses for Inuit already moved back to Inukjuak between 1970 and 1987.
11. Photograph of Peterhead boat belonging to Simeonie Amagoalik.
12. List of original families relocated by Canada to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953, 1955 and 1959.

\*NOTE: These Annexes can be found under separate cover.



# 2

## *Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations Made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inuit Families to the High Arctic in the 1950s (“Hickling Report”)*

ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTUAL BASIS OF CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS MADE  
BEFORE THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS CONCERNING  
THE RELOCATION OF INUKJUAK INUIT FAMILIES IN THE 1950s

REPORT

Submitted to:

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

NORTHERN PROGRAM

Prepared by:

HICKLING CORPORATION

SEPTEMBER, 1990

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on March 19, 1990, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs heard Inuit witnesses and received written evidence from them, alleging that the federal government actively promoted the relocation of Inuit families from the community of Port Harrison, now called Inukjuak, in Arctic Quebec, to Craig Harbour, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the Northwest Territories, in the 1950s, primarily out of concern for the protection of Canadian sovereignty.

The Inuit claim that the Government kept this concern hidden from those who were relocated and lead [*sic*] them to believe, instead, that they were being moved from the depressed conditions existing in Arctic Quebec at that time, to areas further north, offering better hunting, trapping and wage employment opportunities. The Inuit assert that these predictions of abundance did not materialize in the High Arctic. They say, in fact, game was in short supply and they were often hungry.

They also allege that the Federal Government lead [*sic*] them to understand that they would be moved back to Port Harrison, if they were unhappy in their new environment, and that this promise was not kept.

On June 19, 1990, the Committee also heard an oral presentation on this subject by Mr. Robert Pilot, a former member of the R.C.M.P. and later Assistant Commissioner of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Pilot, now retired from public service, initiated his own appearance before the Standing Committee because of his personal wish to respond to certain allegations made by the Inuit concerning the conduct of the police in the relocation project.

After reviewing the information presented to it on this matter, the Standing Committee, in its Third Report to Parliament, made five recommendations which would require the Government to:

- acknowledge the role played by the Inuit relocated to the High Arctic in the protection of Canadian sovereignty in the North;
- make an apology for the wrongdoing which the government inflicted on the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, at that time, a result of these concerns about northern sovereignty;
- carry out such an apology with due solemnity;
- accompany the apology with some form of recognition of the contribution to Canadian sovereignty made by the Inuit people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay; and
- consider compensation to the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay for their service to Canada and the wrongdoing inflicted upon them.

In preparing its report, the Standing Committee took into account the oral and written evidence presented to it at the meeting of March 19, 1990, by some Inuit members of the original groups who had been relocated from Inukjuak in Arctic Quebec, to Craig Harbour, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the Northwest Territories, in the 1950s. The written evidence included a joint submission, prepared by Makivik Corporation of Quebec and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, dated March, 1990, containing various reports, correspondence, a position paper and other documents dealing with the claim; and, an interim response to the Committee, submitted by the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, dated May 15, 1990.

Pursuant to the Standing Committee's request, the Government of Canada is required to table a formal, comprehensive response to the Committee's report within 150 days (i.e., by November 16, 1990), in accordance with Standing Order 109.

The HICKLING report, which follows, responds to a request by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for a study by an independent, outside consultant, mutually acceptable to Makivik Corporation of Quebec and the Department, to assess the factual basis of the allegations mentioned above, as they relate to the Department. It was understood that the contractor would not be expected to deal with allegations that might be considered to fall under the Criminal Code.

Our assessment of the factual basis of the allegations included in our study is based on an extensive survey of official government files, documents, published and unpublished reports, and learned papers in the possession of the National Archives of Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, various libraries in other Government departments, public libraries and sources within Makivik Corporation. We also interviewed a number of key informants, including some members of the Inuit groups that were involved in the relocations that are the subject of our study.

We found that the decision by the Government to actively encourage the relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic in 1953, and in the two or three years subsequent to that, was not motivated by a concern to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands at that time. Canada felt secure in her claim of ownership of the Islands at that time, as a result of an exchange of Notes between Canada and Norway in 1930, and because the Canadian Government had consistently displayed its sovereignty in that area for so long and in so many ways as to firmly establish its title to all of the Arctic Islands in a manner consistent with International Law.

The R.C.M.P. participated in the exercise of Canadian sovereignty in the North by their very presence in those areas and in the various roles they were called upon to carry out on their own, and on behalf of other federal departments. They were required from time to time to deal with the illegal hunting of polar bear and muskoxen by Greenlanders, which was prohibited under the NWT Game Ordinance. In carrying out this function, they did indeed assist in asserting Canadian sovereignty.

The Inuit families in question were not relocated to the High Arctic to assist the RCMP in the administration of the NWT Game Ordinance, although, in fact, they did so on occasion.

They also asserted Canadian Arctic sovereignty by the very fact of living there but that was not the purpose of their relocation.

Our study reveals that the main reason for the decision by the Government to encourage some Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic at that time was a concern to improve the living conditions of Inuit, particularly in the Hudson Bay region. Relocation from those depressed areas was seen, by both Government officials and the Inuit themselves, as a way of breaking out of a growing pattern of welfare dependency, and as a means of providing the Inuit with new and better economic opportunities through improved hunting, trapping and wage employment.

Reasonable steps were taken by the Government officials to establish and apply suitable criteria for the selection of families, so as to ensure the success of the project and the security of the participants. These criteria were developed over a period of several years, with input from a number of sources. Those who were transported to the new location by the "C.D. Howe" were x-rayed before their departure and appear to have been found to be free of serious infectious diseases. Some of the participants who were included were quite aged and at least one was physically disabled, but their participation in the relocation project was not out of line with Inuit cultural values nor with the realities of life in the Arctic in those years. The difficulties of life in the High Arctic were recognized and explored beforehand by the officials and a reasonable plan was articulated to ensure that those who were relocated were well supported by experienced R.C.M.P. officers who knew the families personally and who were knowledgeable of Inuit

ways and language. Experienced Inuit families from the most northern settlements at the time were approached to assist with the project. They agreed to do so and to transfer their hunting and trapping skills to the Inuit participants from Arctic Quebec. The first group of Inuit relocated were not as well equipped as they might have been, but apparently this was dealt with after their arrival.

Reasonable efforts seem to have been made to explain the project to both of the Inuit groups involved before their departure, and to communicate the fact that participation in it was voluntary. It is more than likely that some of the Inuit could not completely envisage what conditions in the High Arctic would be like because these things were outside the range of personal experience at the time. While this is truly regrettable, it should not imply a deliberate attempt by the Government officials to deceive or mislead the Inuit participants.

A number of the Inuit families in the project stated in letters written to the Department in the period 1956 to 1963 that game and fur were plentiful in the vicinity of both Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, and that hunger was not a problem. The frequency of letter-writing from Inuit at Resolute Bay dropped off considerably after 1963 and nearly completely, after 1966, with the transfer of responsibility for most aspects of Inuit affairs to the Government of the NWT. It is not possible, therefore, to say whether game and fur continued to be plentiful after the letters stopped coming but on the other hand, there is no reason to believe otherwise.

We believe that the Department gave the Inuit an understanding that they would be returned to their original communities after one, two, or three years, if this was requested. There is no evidence to suggest that the Department intended this undertaking to remain in force indefinitely.

The files show that some of the Inuit families living in Resolute Bay wrote to Ottawa, asking to return to Port Harrison for a visit. The earliest example of such a request, that we could find, occurred around 1960. The determination of the length of the proposed visits quite often required several exchanges of letters. On one known occasion, in 1961, Ottawa responded to such proposals by seeming to suggest that those wishing to visit Port Harrison should collaborate in chartering an aircraft for this purpose, at their own expense. The files would indicate that one group did this in 1962, but no further details are provided. It is uncertain if there was an official policy on the matter at that time. Our speculation is that the Department took this position because it considered the individuals involved to be economically self-sufficient. This was the practice followed with respect to Fort Chimo Inuit working at Churchill and wishing to visit their home community.

Early in the 1970s, however, the Government of the Northwest Territories arranged and paid for the transportation of several groups of Inuit, from both Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, to Port Harrison, to visit relatives and to assess whether they wished to be returned to that community on a permanent basis. Several families subsequently requested relocation and this was done. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development reimbursed the Territorial Government for the costs of both the visits and relocation.

On one occasion, the R.C.M.P. used their own aircraft to permit several families living at Grise Fiord to visit relatives in Port Harrison and subsequently relocated them. The R.C.M.P. apparently absorbed these costs.

An additional number of Inuit families living at Resolute Bay were relocated to Port Harrison in 1988, initially at their own expense or with assistance from the Makivik Corporation of Quebec. The Department agreed to reimburse the transportation costs for those families who had already moved back to Inukjuak. This offer was subsequently extended to include the costs of transporting a number of other families who had not yet moved but who had indicated that they intended to do so. These re-imbursements, totalling approximately \$ 250,000.00, were paid out of the Department's 1988-1989 appropriations. In 1988, the Department also undertook to provide the

Government of Quebec with funds, amounting to approximately \$700,000, to permit Quebec to add ten houses to the pool of housing identified for Port Harrison, in recognition of the impact that this inflow of people would have on the 1989 housing plans for that community.

The evidence that we examined does not support the allegation that the Government committed wrongdoing in the planning and conduct of this project. The material we examined leads us to a different conclusion, namely that the project was conscientiously planned, was carried out in a reasonably effective manner and that the Inuit participated in it voluntarily, in their own search for a better life, and benefited from the experience.

We do not see the grounds for an apology by the Government for the manner in which the relocation project was conceived, planned and carried out. In our view, to apologize for a wrongdoing it did not commit would constitute deception on the part of the Government. It would also imply that the project had not been reasonably successful whereas this is not the case.

In our opinion, the delay in settling the matter of the return of the remaining original families still at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord is the only real basis for criticism of the Department, as far as this project is concerned. The circumstances that caused this delay, however, have already been explained by several Deputy Ministers and Ministers since the claim was first formally raised with the Department in 1982. At this point, therefore, a concrete and definitive statement on what action the Department now intends to take on this matter would be most meaningful.

We would suggest that the Department consider extending for a further one or so years the offer previously made to the Inuit families who have already returned to Inukjuak and Pond Inlet from Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. This would permit any of the remaining families at Resolute and Grise Fiord to undertake an exploratory visit to their original communities and to relocate on a permanent basis if they so choose.

Also, we suggest that the Department agree to support any proposal to note the contribution which Inuit throughout the Arctic have made over the years to the social, political and economic development of the High Arctic.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the study conducted to assess the factual basis of allegations made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on March 19, 1990, concerning the motivation behind, and the conduct of, a project initiated by the then Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources to relocate Inuit families to the High Arctic in the 1950s. The results of our study are required to permit the current Department to table a comprehensive and official government response to the allegations in question and to the Committee's recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

At its meeting on March 19, 1990, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs heard Inuit witnesses and received written evidence from them, alleging that the federal government actively promoted the relocation of Inuit families from the community of Port Harrison, now called Inukjuak, in Arctic Quebec, to Craig Harbour, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the Northwest Territories, in the 1950s, primarily out of concern for the protection of Canadian sovereignty.

The Inuit claim that the Government kept this concern hidden from those who were relocated and lead [*sic*] them to believe, instead, that they were being moved from the depressed conditions existing in Arctic Quebec at that time, to areas further north, offering better hunting, trapping and wage employment opportunities. The Inuit assert that these predictions of abundance did not materialize in the High Arctic. They say, in fact, game was in short supply and they were often hungry.

They also allege that the Federal Government lead [*sic*] them to understand that they would be moved back to Port Harrison if they were unhappy in their new environment, and that this promise was not kept.

On June 19, 1990, the Committee also heard an oral presentation on this subject by Mr. Robert Pilot, a former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) and later Assistant Commissioner of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Pilot, now retired from public service, initiated his own appearance before the Standing Committee because of his personal wish to respond to certain allegations made by the Inuit concerning the conduct of the Police in the relocation project.

After reviewing the information presented to it on this matter, the Standing Committee, in its Third Report to Parliament, made five recommendations which would require the Government to:

- acknowledge the role played by the Inuit relocated to the High Arctic in the protection of Canadian sovereignty in the North;
- make an apology for the wrongdoing which the government inflicted on the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, at that time, as a result of these concerns about northern sovereignty;
- carry out such an apology with due solemnity;
- accompany the apology with some form of recognition of the contribution to Canadian sovereignty made by the Inuit people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay; and
- consider compensation to the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay for their service to Canada and the wrongdoing inflicted upon them.

In preparing its report, the Standing Committee took into account oral and written evidence presented to it at the meeting of March 19, 1990, by Inuit members of the original groups who had been relocated from Inukjuak. The written evidence included a joint submission, prepared by Makivik Corporation of Quebec and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, dated March, 1990 containing various reports, correspondence, a position paper and other documents dealing with the claim; and, an interim response to the Committee, submitted by the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, dated May 15, 1990.

Pursuant to the Standing Committee's request, the Government of Canada is required to table a formal, comprehensive response to the Committee's report within 150 days (i.e., by November 16, 1990), in accordance with Standing Order 109.

Our report, which follows, responds to a request by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for a study, by an independent, outside consultant, mutually acceptable to Makivik Corporation of Quebec and the Department, to assess the factual basis of the allegations made by the witnesses before the Standing Committee on March 19, 1990, as they relate to the Department.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1.1 Scope

The study is confined to an examination of allegations made by Inuit witnesses before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, and later repeated to us by some of the witnesses in a meeting held at Inukjuak on August 29,



1990, and which concern only the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in its several earlier manifestations. To expand on this later point, certain of these allegations relate to the conduct of members of the R.C.M.P., while acting on behalf of the then Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in the administration of Inuit affairs and in the planning and implementation of the relocation project. Since the R.C.M.P. have indicated to the Department that they also intend to review those allegations that touch upon the conduct of their members at that time, we endeavoured, as much as possible, to scope out the latter from our study. In spite of our best efforts, we may not have been entirely successful in this endeavour, because of the overlapping nature of the roles carried out by the police in these circumstances.

### *3.1.2 Methodology*

#### *a) Launching the Study*

To initiate the study, the HICKLING Project Manager met first with Departmental officials to review the history of this claim, including, in particular, previous approaches to the Department by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and by Makivik Corporation, requesting settlement of the claim and the responses by the Department on those occasions. The events leading up to the appearance of the Inuit before the Standing Committee on March 19 of this year to discuss the claim, the published proceedings of the Committee meeting of that date and the ensuing interim response by the Department, were also examined.

The initial meeting was also used to identify the specific allegations that the study would address and the means by which information on these issues would be gathered and assessed. We also dealt with a range of practical research considerations, including the identification of information sources and confirmation of the level of security clearance required to permit HICKLING team members to access files and documents in the possession of the Department and the National Archives of Canada.

#### *b) Grouping and Prioritizing of Allegations*

Members of the HICKLING team then met together to determine the best way of grouping and prioritizing the allegations that would be examined, many of which overlap one another, to ensure that they would be dealt with thoroughly and within the tight time frame set for completion of the study. These discussions resulted in a decision to group the allegations under three broad headings:

- The Sovereignty Issue
- Planning and Implementation of the Project
- Promises made by the Department to the Inuit participants

The following is a summary of the various allegations under each of these headings:

**THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE** - to include all allegations to the effect that Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands was the main reason behind the Government's plan to relocate Inuit families to Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950s; the purported withholding of this information by the Department from Inuit project participants; and, the reasons given by the Government for the project;

**PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT** - to include all allegations to the effect that the project was poorly conceived and executed; that it was based on faulty assumptions about economic conditions in Arctic Quebec and game resources in the High Arctic, with the result that the Inuit families involved suffered unnecessarily; and that the Inuit agreed to participate in the project because they feared the Government representatives and did not believe themselves to be free to refuse;

PROMISES MADE TO THE INUIT PARTICIPANTS - to include all allegations to the effect that the government promised to return these families to their original communities, at its expense, if they were not satisfied with life in the High Arctic, but did not honour this commitment.

Excluded from the study were a number of allegations relating to problems encountered by Inuit wives, husbands or children while they were patients in hospitals in southern Canada in the period under review. These exclusions were made, not because the problems involved were considered to be of any less importance, but because they were common to all Inuit patients or relatives of patients in those years and not just to the particular groups who were the subject of our study.

We also excluded from our study, allegations involving non-payment of wages for work done by Inuit residents of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay communities, theft of the contents of mail and other acts purportedly committed by government representatives during the life of the relocation project, that might be considered as offences under the Criminal Code.

### *c) Identification of Information Sources*

The Project Team subsequently drew up and requisitioned an initial list of files and other documents for review. These were in the possession of both the Department and the National Archives of Canada. It was decided, in this connection, that in exploring the issue of sovereignty, we would focus on those files most likely to contain official policy statements on the development of the North and its people in the years immediately prior to 1953 and running through to 1963. Files of Meetings of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND), held during those years, were considered to be the most likely and authoritative source of this information. More recent files on this subject were also identified and searched for ministerial and senior official-level speeches containing historical references to the sovereignty question and to the relocation project in general.

Staff of the Constitutional Development and Aboriginal Affairs Directorate in the Department's Northern Affairs Program, the Departmental Library and the Circumpolar and Scientific Affairs Directorate were also contacted and their assistance sought in identifying relevant documents, publications and unpublished articles that might provide further insights into our subject. We also sought the assistance of the Government of the Northwest Territories in searching out possible references to the relocation project in the files that had been sent to them in the course of the transfer of federal responsibilities to the Government of the NWT in the years 1966 to 1970.

A complete bibliography for the study can be found in Appendix One of this report.

### *d) Weighting of Evidence*

One of the problems presented by a study of this nature, is to decide what validity is to be assigned to the various types of evidence that one must deal with in establishing the factual validity of the allegations in question. Are oral statements made today by those who participated in the project 35 years ago, whether Inuit or Government official, to be assigned the same, or greater or less validity than recorded statements made by these same people at the time the project was actually taking place? Is the recorded information on the files to be taken as objective truth? Are the files and other materials to be examined likely to contain highly confidential concerns and confessions of wrongdoings by public servants, or admissions of non-truths by Inuit or officials who participated in the project? Can the researcher be sure that he or she has seen all of the relevant evidence? There are no simple answers to most of these questions. In circumstances such as these, the researchers can only resolve to bring as much common sense and professional objectivity as possible to the manner in which the material is handled and conclusions are reached. These are limitations to the study, and we draw the readers' attention to them.

In keeping with sound acceptable practice, we attributed the highest validity to recorded statements made, in situ, by the project participants themselves-both Inuit and Government officials, that is, at the very point in time when the project was taking place. We felt that this type of evidence should be assigned higher marks, if one can put it that way, than that based on the recollection of events, thirty or more years later. We were very fortunate in this regard. The Department was able to make available to us exchanges of correspondence between some of the Inuit project participants and Inuit-speaking welfare workers in Ottawa, during the years 1953 through to about 1963, which bear directly upon some of the allegations under the claim.

To insure that this latter material was handled with the utmost confidentiality and objectivity, a panel of four persons was established to sort through approximately 400 such letters in search of those relevant to one or another of the allegations in question. The panel was composed of four persons, namely, Mr. G. W. Rowley, an internationally known expert on northern affairs, whose personal and professional credibility is acknowledged by both the Inuit community and the Government, two members of the Constitutional Development and Aboriginal Affairs Directorate in the Department and the HICKLING Project Leader. The panel convened on August 23, 1990, and selected approximately 40 pieces of correspondence for use in the assessment exercise. Some of these letters contain confidential information, not directly related to the subject of the study. This material was excised from the letters that are quoted in our report and their authors are referred to only by the disc numbers that were used to identify them at that time.

#### *e) Interviews*

After reviewing the 1984 report by Mr. Marc Hammond, which was one of several documents included in the published proceedings of the March 19, 1990 Meeting of the Standing Committee, we decided that there would be no need to re-interview all of the informants whose names appear in that document. However, we thought it would be instructive to interview a number of other officials or former officials whose knowledge of the major northern development policies of the period were widely recognized and respected or who had actually participated in the Eastern Arctic Patrol in the 1950s. A list of the names of such persons was drawn up and arrangements made to interview them. Their names appear as part of Appendix II of this report.

Our review of the oral and written evidence presented to the Standing Committee by the Inuit on March 19, and by Mr. Robert Pilot three months later, left unanswered, at least for us, a number of important questions concerning the matter of the alleged promise made by the Government to the Inuit participants in the project. We decided, therefore, to request interviews with Mr. Pilot and with as many of the Inuit participants as time would permit. Mr. Pilot was interviewed twice, once by telephone from Ottawa and, on the second occasion, in his home in Pembroke. The interviews with the Inuit participants, whose names also appear as part of Appendix II, took place in Inukjuak, Arctic Quebec, in August. The interview guide used on that occasion can be found in Appendix III of this report.

#### *f) Assessment Criteria*

From the outset of the study, it was evident that while the Inuit claimants considered all of the allegations to be important, they attached particular significance to the sovereignty issue. Indeed, it seemed to us that the Department would be of the same view, since the charge involved is a most serious one – implying, as it does, that the Government had deliberately misled and manipulated the Inuit people in its trust. The Team decided, therefore, to pay particular attention to this issue and to establish a set of criteria that would ensure that the evidence gathered would be assessed with as much objectivity as possible.

This is standard practice in the field of evaluation and is the procedure routinely followed by HICKLING in such circumstances. The details of the criteria that were applied in this instance can be found under the section dealing with the sovereignty issue, later in this report.

#### *g) Analytic Framework*

An analytic framework was developed, based essentially on the grouping of allegations shown in b), above, and on the weighting and assessment criteria described in d) and f), above.

#### *h) Conclusions*

It was not possible for us to reach conclusions as to the factual basis of each and every one of the allegations raised by the Inuit, because of a lack of hard information in some of these areas. An example in point, was the problem of establishing the factual basis of the purported fear which the Inuit felt towards the Government officials in the 1950s, and which is given by them as the reason for agreeing to participate in the relocation project. We uncovered no direct evidence that would support this assertion. Where we encountered an assertion of this order, and where it was thought to be important enough, we resorted to logical argument in reaching a conclusion. Where we adopted this approach, we were careful to identify it as such.

#### *j) Government Response to the Claim to Date*

We reviewed all of the official correspondence on the claim between officials of the Department and between the Department and representatives of the Inuit, since it was first raised formally with the Department, in 1982. This was done to gain as thorough an appreciation as possible of the evolution of the claim over time, the developments that impacted on its resolution and the positions of the parties with respect to the various elements of the claim. In the span of the study, we also assessed the significance of the actions taken by the Department to date towards settlement of the claim.

#### *j) Suggestions for Responding to the Standing Committee*

We searched for information on other aboriginal claims of a similar nature, involving the Department, to assist in formulating suggestions which the Department might wish to consider in responding to the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.1 THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE**

The essence of the allegation on this subject is:

- The Government was primarily motivated by a concern to strengthen its claim of sovereignty over the Arctic Islands when it actively encouraged Inuit families to relocate to Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord in the years 1953 to 1957.
- The Government deliberately withheld this motivation from the Inuit families who were contacted and encouraged to move to these northern areas. Inuit families at Port Harrison were told that the reasons for relocation were the depressed economic conditions in Arctic Quebec and the prospect of finding better hunting, trapping and wage employment opportunities in the High Arctic.

- The Inuit families did not freely agree to relocation but consented to it out of fear of Government officials.

In support of this allegation before the Standing Committee on March 19, 1990, the claimants cited an impressive number of references in files in the possession of the R.C.M.P. and the National Archives of Canada, including correspondence between Makivik Corporation of Quebec and the Department; a report prepared by Marc M. Hammond in 1984 for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; and a number of other documents. Subsequently, Mr. Robert Pilot, who appeared before the Standing Committee at his own request on June 19, 1990, also indicated that he believed that sovereignty was a consideration in the relocations, although not the primary one.

We applied what is normally termed “the reasonable person’s argument” in establishing the factual basis of the sovereignty question. This involved the creation of a set of hypothetical conditions that would have had to exist before Arctic sovereignty could be said to be the primary motivation for the launching of the relocation project. These conditions were:

- The Government was seriously concerned about its claim of ownership of the Arctic Islands at that time, as revealed in Cabinet and other official documents and pronouncements made by persons mandated to articulate the Government’s official views on this matter.
- The Government adopted a policy in 1953 of actively encouraging Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic, believing that this would strengthen its claim of sovereignty over the Islands. The concern about sovereignty outweighed all other considerations in the decision to relocate Inuit people to the High Arctic at that time.
- The Government purposefully hid this motivation from the Inuit families concerned, believing that it might deter them from relocating or because of some other identifiable reason.

We reviewed a number of historical documents and learned papers, written by recognized authorities, dealing with Canadian Arctic sovereignty in those years, for possible references to this purported concern. We also examined the Minutes of the Meetings of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND) covering the period 1949 to 1963 in search of definitive policy statements and other similar pronouncements that would satisfy our criteria. The ACND files were thought to be the most likely repository of information on any major federal government policy pronouncements affecting the North and its people in those years, because of the immensely important role that had been assigned to the Committee by Cabinet for coordinating the efforts of the ten or more constituent departments with major responsibilities in that part of Canada.

Our search failed to turn up any hard evidence that would satisfy all our conditions. There was, of course, R.C.M.P. Commissioner Nicholson’s letter, dated February 11, 1952, to General Young, Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Resources and Development, to be considered. This piece of correspondence includes a quotation from an earlier letter which the Commissioner had received from Inspector Larson referring to the maintenance of sovereignty on Ellesmere Island. This reference was cited by the Inuit claimants in their statement to the Standing Committee, on March 19, 1990, as proof of the R.C.M.P.’s concern about the maintenance of sovereignty over the Islands at that time. The particular passage referred to by the Inuit runs as follows:

“The advantages of placing our Detachment directly across from Greenland would be that we then would have full control and supervision of Greenland Eskimos and others travelling back and forth and over hunting activities they may engage in. As you know we had a detachment established at Bache Peninsula in 1926, primarily for the maintenance of sovereignty. This detachment was closed in 1933, owing to the difficulties of supplying same.”

This passage is also cited by Marc Hammond in his report in 1984. It would appear, however, that Mr. Hammond did not offer this reference as proof of government concern about Arctic sovereignty, but rather as proof that the Government gave the relocated families an undertaking to return them to Inukjuak, if they were unhappy with life in their new surroundings.

There is no doubt in our minds that the R.C.M.P. considered the exercise of sovereignty to be a reason for the police presence on Ellesmere Island, opposite Greenland, in those years. As Pilot said in his statement before the Committee on June 19, the members of "G" Division felt that they were there, in the High Arctic, "to show the flag and to establish sovereignty". Pilot goes on to add that he believed that the Inuit who were living and hunting there on a permanent basis were also helping to maintain and establish sovereignty but that this was a secondary motive for their relocation to those areas.

The R.C.M.P.'s concern about sovereignty over the Arctic Islands, however, can hardly be accepted as proof that this was the primary reason for the decision by the federal government to encourage the relocation of Inuit families to Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour/ Grise Fiord in 1953-57. Under ACND, the responsibility for initiating a policy of this nature rested squarely with the then Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Responsibility for international relations and sovereignty matters in the North was assigned to the Department of External Affairs. Defence matters were the responsibility of the Department of National Defence. The R.C.M.P. were responsible for the police function on the ground, including the administration of N.W.T. Game Ordinances, although, as the records show, their members spent most of their time representing other departments and administering federal and territorial welfare programs until the arrival on the scene of the Northern Service Officers and Social Workers of NA&NR in the mid 1950s.

We found several documents and references in the ACND files that show quite conclusively that Canadian Arctic sovereignty was not a serious concern and, therefore, could not likely have been the primary motive for the relocations that took place in the 1950s. The first of these is an "Exchange of Notes" between Canada and Norway in 1930, which formally and officially recognized Canada's ownership of the Sverdrup Islands. This document can be read in its entirety in Appendix Four of this report.

Mr. R.G. Robertson who was Deputy Minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources from 1953 to 1963, and whose legal expertise and experience in international and northern affairs is widely known and respected, was consulted on this matter. We asked him specifically for his assessment of the significance of the 1930 Exchange of Notes with Norway for Canadian sovereignty in the North. According to Robertson, this statement effectively put to rest the earlier concern, (referred to by the Hon. John Monro in the latter's address to the Third Circumpolar Conference in July 1983) about Canada's ownership of and sovereignty over the lands of the Arctic Islands. The Note also served notice that it was the established policy of the Government of Canada to protect Arctic areas as hunting and trapping preserves for the sole use of the aboriginal population of the Northwest Territories.

It is true that this Note did not remove concerns about Canadian sovereignty over the waters and ice between the Arctic Islands. On the other hand, it seems highly improbable that the Government would have resorted to a very modest sized relocation of about twelve Inuit families over three years as a means of solving that problem. In any event, a second reference on this subject, uncovered in our review of the ACND files, indicates, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the Government felt quite secure about its sovereignty over the North. The reference in question is part of an ACND Annual Report, drafted by G. W. Rowley, in November, 1960, and destined for the information of Cabinet. The operative section states:

“Canada has asserted its claim to sovereignty over the Arctic Islands since the 1860s and published the limits of its claim as early as 1895. No protest by other nations has been received apart from that of Norway in 1930 and that was settled. Apart from such formal assertions of sovereignty, Canada has made so many displays of effective sovereignty in so many respects and for so long a period as to establish its title to all of the islands in the Archipelago upon the doctrine of effective occupation in conformity with International Law.”

If Arctic sovereignty was thought to be a serious issue at that time, this report would have been the logical occasion to raise it with Cabinet.

Finally, we considered the hypothetical question as to why the government would have felt that by disclosing its concern about Arctic sovereignty, the Inuit would be less inclined to participate in the project, assuming that the latter knew that they would still receive the material benefits envisaged in the relocation project. The files did not answer this question and we could think of no logical reason why the Government would not have mentioned the sovereignty aspect in those circumstances, if it were a concern.

These various references lead us to conclude that sovereignty could not have been the primary concern that motivated the government to encourage Inuit families to move to the High Arctic in the early 1950s. But if that is so, what was the concern or concerns that would have prompted this project?

An article written in 1988 by P.G. Nixon, entitled “Early Administrative Developments in the Fighting of Tuberculosis among Canadian Inuit: Bringing State Institutions Back In”, which appeared in the *Northern Review, A Multidisciplinary Journal of the Arts and Social Sciences of the North* (Yukon College), would seem to provide a partial answer to this question. Referring to views expressed by General H. A. Young, then Director of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Resources and Development, in the latter’s opening statement to the 1952 Conference on Northern Affairs, Nixon states:

“The position that Young and the pre-Lesage/Robertson northern administration in general were expounding was one of minimal intervention into Inuit lives ... encourage them to continue in their aboriginal ways of hunting in widely scattered small groups.”

We found many references in the NA&NR files that substantiate Nixon’s contention that the period immediately after the Second World War through to the first years of the 1950s was a transitional one in terms of northern development philosophy and policy. The North and the Inuit were at a cross-roads. The documents and file entries of the period, including in particular, the Minutes of the Eskimo Affairs Advisory Committee, speak of the fact that fur prices had plummeted, forcing greater numbers of Inuit to depend more and more on government hand-outs, of one kind or another, and less and less on themselves. Inuit in the Hudson Bay area were particularly hard hit. Large-scale economic development of the non-renewable resources of the North was still a distant dream. The Cold War held promise of generating considerable joint Canada/U.S. defence activity in the Arctic and Sub Arctic, which might provide wage employment opportunities for some Inuit. But these opportunities had not yet materialized to any great extent in 1951 and 1952. Furthermore, the Churches in the North had mixed feelings about the impact that wage employment would have on traditional Inuit lifestyle. The Department was clearly searching, at that time, for a policy or set of policies that would allow Inuit to retain their economic and cultural independence as much as possible, and at the same time, to participate in northern development in their own way and at their own pace.

The following excerpt from the Minutes of the August 10, 1953 ACND Meeting, which can also be read in full in Appendix Five of this report, provides further insights into the set of policies that emerged from these ruminations and which are perhaps the best explanation of the genesis of the relocation project:

- “1. In areas where the natural resources will support the Eskimo inhabitants it has been decided that their basic way of life is to be maintained as far as possible.
2. In areas where permanent white settlements have grown up, the Eskimo will be educated to adapt them to this new situation.
3. In areas of the north which cannot continue to support the present Eskimo population, attempts will be made to move the Eskimos to areas with greater natural resources.”

The same document also contains a comment by B.G. Sivertz, who was, at the time, a member of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Resources and Development in which he is quoted by the Secretary of the Committee as saying:

“The Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the North as possible and it appeared that, in many cases, the Eskimos were the only people capable of doing this.”

We interpret this comment as being a reference to Canada’s interest in exercising its sovereignty in the North. For the reasons mentioned earlier however, we can only speculate that Sivertz was expressing a personal view on the subject, perhaps to the effect that where ownership is in dispute, occupation is nine-tenths of the law.

A further reference to this evolving northern development policy is found in the report of the Arctic Division of the then Department of Northern Affairs and National Development which formed part of the Annual Report to Cabinet by the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, for the year 1954. In describing its responsibilities and long term plans, the document states:

“Where primitive Eskimos in remote areas are relatively free from contact with the white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible. In those areas where there is already permanent contact, integration with the white economy will be encouraged. Between these two extremes, employment of Eskimos will be encouraged provided it does not interfere unduly with their normal life. It is also planned to diversify the Eskimo economy and to transfer families from unproductive areas to regions where game is more abundant or employment is available.”

This report later goes on to summarize for Cabinet the extent and relative success of the various relocations that had been carried out up to that time under this policy. The relevant portions of that summary is as follows:

“The fifteen families transferred from Port Harrison and Pond Inlet to Craig Harbour, Resolute Bay and Alexandra Fiord were very successful in hunting and trapping and seemed very happy in their surroundings. Advances of \$15,000 under the Eskimo Loan Fund...were met satisfactorily.”

“Fifteen families wintered on Banks Island during the year...They should be able to pay off their indebtedness ...and

“Seventeen Eskimo men were employed on the civilian maintenance staff at Fort Churchill during the year; fifteen from Fort Chimo and two from the Keewatin District.”

In our opinion, these passages are convincing evidence of the mindset of the Government of the day and of the importance it attached to personal industry and self-sufficiency on the part of the Inuit, regardless of which of these divergent paths were chosen by them.



## Conclusion

The Government was not primarily motivated by concern about Canadian ownership of and sovereignty over the Arctic Islands when it actively encouraged about seventeen Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic in the 1950s. The R.C.M.P. participated in the exercise of sovereignty in the North through the various roles they were called upon to carry out in their own name and on behalf of other federal departments. They certainly exercised sovereignty when they were called upon, from time to time, to deal with the illegal hunting of polar bear and muskoxen by Greenlanders which was prohibited under the NWT Game Ordinance. The Inuit families who were relocated to Craig Harbour, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950s helped the RCMP with this work, on occasion, and in that sense aided in the exercise of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. These families however were not encouraged to move there for that purpose. Concern about pressure on limited game resources, a desire to improve the poor living conditions of the Inuit of the Hudson Bay area and to break the growing pattern of welfare dependency by offering them better opportunities for hunting, trapping and wage employment further north, were the primary considerations behind this project.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

The statements made by the Inuit before the Standing Committee contain a number of references to the effect that the project was poorly conceived and executed and that, as a result, they suffered needlessly. The allegations involved may be expressed in more specific terms as follows:

- a) The criteria used to select families for relocation were faulty; many among the group were unhealthy and unfit for the life they were subsequently exposed to.
- b) The project was not well explained to the prospective participants and consequently they did not understand what they were accepting to. The Inuit agreed to the move because they both trusted and feared Government officials and did not believe that they had any real choice in the matter.
- c) The families were poorly equipped to contend with the harsh conditions that confronted them at the end of their journey and they suffered needlessly as a result.
- d) The Government's assumptions about economic conditions in Arctic Quebec and about the abundance of game in the High Arctic were not founded on sound studies and, as a result, the Inuit who were relocated were frequently hungry and without food in their new environment.

In reaching conclusions about the factual basis of these allegations, we examined a series of files in the possession of the National Archives of Canada, reviewed several relevant published articles and personally interviewed a number of the Inuit who participated in the relocation project. We discovered no single document that could be called the master blueprint of the relocation project, which could be used to address all of these concerns in their proper chronological order. Our findings, therefore, may not always reflect the order in which things happened.

*a) Selection Criteria*

Scattered through the files are many references that indicate that criteria for the selection of Inuit families to participate in the relocation project were developed, with input from a number of sources, over a period of about 24 months prior to the departure of the first group in the summer of 1953. The earliest identified and the most elementary of the criterion was frequently described as:

- Inuit families living in the most economically repressed and resource-poor areas.

Another criterion, which was perhaps simply a further elaboration of the first, was generally expressed in the terminology of the day as being:

- demonstrated interest in the project and ability to follow the traditional Eskimo way of life, involving little contact with or dependency on the whiteman.

Sometime towards the end of 1952, officials within the Department seem to have come to focus on still another requirement of those who would participate in the project:

- ability to adjust to conditions in the High Arctic.

These three very broad criteria appear to capture all the characteristics which the Department and the Police felt were necessary for the success of the project and were the ones that were applied when considering potential Inuit candidates in the Eastern Arctic.

At one point, Inuit living in the Keewatin District were considered for the project, as mentioned in the following excerpt from a letter (NAC, File 251-4, Part 1, Vol 1070) to J. J. Atherton, R.C.M.P., written by F.J.G. Cunningham, NA&NR, on May 7, 1953:

“Our original intention had been to take only Eskimos who had been accustomed to living in snow houses in the Barren Lands.”

We were unable to find the reason as to why Inuit from that area were finally not chosen for the project, except that there seemed to be a consensus that conditions in Arctic Quebec were worse.

The same letter also mentions that the names of some Inuit families from Fort Chimo, who had heard about the project through the R.C.M.P. detachment there and had expressed interest, had been sent to Ottawa for consideration. These families were considered to meet the first of these criteria, but not the second. They had become used to living in wooden houses and using wood for fuel, and it was recognized that they would expect to have these things if they were to participate in the project. Their names therefore, were taken off this list and added to another list of Inuit seeking wage employment at Churchill or elsewhere.

The Inuit of the Port Harrison area seem to have been identified as potential candidates for relocation, early in the planning of the project. At one point in the planning phase some officials in the Department including, in particular, Alex Stevenson, expressed misgivings as to whether these people could satisfy the last criterion. The group's ability to adjust to conditions in the High Arctic could make or break the project. Stevenson was obviously aware of and concerned about this and felt that he should not only raise the issue, but actively propose a solution to it. In a memorandum he wrote to James Cantley, Head of Arctic Services, (both of NA&NR), dated December 1952, Stevenson states:

“I understand that you are considering the transfer of about ten families from the Port Harrison area of Northern Quebec to Ellesmere Island where they can be looked after by the present R.C.M.P. Detachment at Craig Harbour and by the proposed detachment near Cape Hershel. As you are well aware, the Port Harrison natives will have to contend with the dark period which they are not familiar with and although the terrain is similar to the Quebec Coast, I know from past experience with the Dorset natives that the dark period causes some discontentment. In connection with the above, I would suggest that one or two families from Northern Baffin Island be moved with the Port Harrison group. These natives would be familiar with conditions and could greatly assist the Port Harrison people and would help sustain the morale.”

The families finally selected from Arctic Quebec for the project were apparently all “camp” Inuit, living within a radius of about thirty miles of Port Harrison. The criteria used in selecting families from the Pond Inlet area were rather different, since their circumstances and the role envisaged for them in the project were different. The criteria applied to them could be fairly described, in our own words, as:

“demonstrated industry as hunters and trappers”; and

“willingness to participate in the project and to play a supporting and leadership role in transferring hunting and trapping skills to the less experienced Port Harrison people”.

There is one further aspect of the issue around selection criteria that deserves comment. This concerns the allegations made by the Inuit to the effect that the Government did not have any criteria at that time that would have assured that only the healthy and able-bodied were selected for relocation. In support of this criticism, they cite the fact that among the group sent to the High Arctic were aged and disabled persons, as well as those suffering from infectious diseases. Tuberculosis was not specifically identified as the infectious disease in question, but it seems clear that this was the illness they were referring to. They assert that, as a consequence, the entire group eventually contracted the infectious disease, the disabled and elderly were subjected to greater risk and suffering and that the life of the entire group was made more difficult.

We regarded these accusations also to be especially serious, and we therefore spent considerable time searching the files and talking to sources whom we felt were most able to shed light onto them. We simply did not have time, however, to engage National Health and Welfare in a search for the medical files of the members of these groups that would have quickly settled the question as to whether one of their number was infected with tuberculosis on leaving Port Harrison. We have no reason to doubt, however, that the X-Ray survey carried out at Port Harrison in the summer of 1953 would have included all of those who were being selected for the project. Lack of time would not have been a factor in that instance, since the entire group was aboard the “C. D. Howe”, which housed the X-Ray team for the many weeks it took to reach Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay.

The Minutes of the August 10, 1953 Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, cited earlier, has this to say on the subject:

“A discussion of medical facilities available at Resolute followed. Mr. Cantley stated that all of the families taking part in the experiment had been examined beforehand by a doctor and given a clean bill of health.”

There is, however, some evidence on the files to support the Inuit claim that many of these people were subsequently treated in sanatoriums in the south, within a year or two of their relocation. This is not surprising however, considering that an alarming number of Inuit from all parts of the North were under treatment in southern Canadian medical institutions for tuberculosis, as a result of inadequate housing and poor living conditions

throughout the Arctic in those years. We consider it impossible to draw any firm conclusions as to whether these people were put to particular risk by being relocated to the High Arctic or whether they would have contracted tuberculosis in any event had they continued to live in the depressed conditions that were said to exist in their camps, thirty or more miles from Port Harrison.

The issue of the inclusion of some very elderly and disabled persons in the groups relocated was also examined. While we did not go to the extent of determining the age and able-bodiedness of each of the persons selected for the project in the various groups that were moved, we did make some enquiries along these lines during our personal interviews with some of the participants at Port Harrison. This questioning yielded the following information:

- at least one of the persons among those relocated to Craig Harbour was severely disabled, a victim of poliomyelitis, who had not had the use of her legs since the age of two. This woman, Annie, was about 35 years of age when she was relocated to Craig Harbour as a member of one of the families.
- at least two of the participants were over 70 years of age when relocated in 1953.

Our first reaction to this discovery was to conclude that the criteria established for selecting the participants for the project were not as refined as it should have been, or else, they were not applied with sufficient rigour in this instance. On second thought, however, this seemed too superficial an explanation. It did not account for the fact that the families involved also had a role, and without doubt the greater one, in deciding whether their old and disabled members would accompany them, or be left behind, or, indeed whether the entire family would opt out of the project altogether, giving this problem as a reason. The answer we arrived at in this regard, was not derived from the files, but from a discussion on the subject with Robert Pilot, and from our own lengthy experience in the Arctic in those years. Inuit families did not regard aged and disabled members as burdens to be dumped on any pretext. Family ties were strong and all members, particularly the aged, were revered and consulted on all important matters. These members were certainly not economic burdens. In fact, as recipients of federal or provincial assistance programs, they were often the only truly reliable source of income in many households, particularly when game was scarce. Nor did families see these members as obstacles that would prevent them from moving from one place to another. Life everywhere in the Arctic, including the camps in the Port Harrison area, was always a challenge. Perhaps the most chilling proof of this is the fact that the average age at death for Inuit as a group in that period was still only about 39 years of age. There was no housing as we understand it to-day in most communities; there were still no institutions to care for the aged and the disabled in the North: there were no ramps or sturdy paths to ease the way for the disabled. Paraplegics could be found living in isolated camps in many parts of the North. Life was difficult at any time and was accepted on those terms. In our opinion, therefore, the inclusion of the aged and disabled in the groups who were relocated, is not proof of Government ineptness in the planning of the relocation program, but rather, a reflection of the harsh realities of Inuit life in the Arctic at that time. This is not to say, of course, that removal of the aged and the disabled from other relatives, friends and generally from things familiar and the need to adjust to quite a different set of circumstances in the High Arctic, did not add stress and discomfort to an already demanding way of life. Indeed, the relocation experience must have been a difficult experience for them at least in the initial months.

### *Conclusion*

The Department developed and applied what appears to have been appropriate criteria in selecting Inuit families for relocation to the High Arctic. Reasonable care seems to have been taken to ensure that those chosen were free of tuberculosis and other serious infectious diseases, on leaving Port Harrison. Some of the members of the group moved in 1953 were quite elderly, by any standards, and at least one of these people was paraplegic. However their

families did not consider this to be a reason for leaving them behind, nor was it unusual to find disabled and very elderly people living in isolated camp conditions throughout the Arctic in those days.

## **b) Explaining the Project**

The Inuit have also alleged that those families who were approached about the project did not fully understand what they were being asked to do, nor what life would be like in the High Arctic, but agreed to go along because they both trusted and feared Government officials and did not believe they were free to refuse. We view these also as serious allegations, implying, as they do, deliberate deception and possibly coercion on the part of the representatives of the Government.

We found considerable evidence on the files that would suggest that significant efforts were made by the two R.C.M.P. Officers, most directly involved in selecting the people for the project, to explain what it was about and to convey to them that participation was voluntary. A number of the Police dispatches from both the Pond Inlet and Port Harrison Detachments, (reporting progress, asking for further instructions, and reporting results), confirm this point of view.

In addition, we came across several references in the NA&NR files that indicate that a number of other people, including the Welfare Teacher and the Hudson's Bay Company Post Manager at Port Harrison, made an effort to explain the project to the group and to ensure that the perspective candidates understood that participation was voluntary.

We found nothing on the files that could be regarded as direct confirmation by the Inuit themselves that they were being told everything and understood everything about the project. Our evidence is limited, in large part, to statements made by seemingly reliable persons who participated in the interpretation exercise at that time and by the recollections of some Inuit participants, thirty years after the fact.

In his report on an interpretative session, held with two of the Port Harrison families before they boarded the "C. D. Howe" en route to Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay in July 1953, Alex Stevenson, states:

"As the majority of the natives to be moved were camped some distance from Port Harrison, I only had the opportunity to interview two of the men who happened to be at the post trading some handicrafts. I discussed the whole project with them and they fully understood the plan for their movement."

All of the major reports on the project, originating with NA&NR and destined for the information of Cabinet, always referred to the project as being one that was agreed to voluntarily by the participants.

We also accept as deductive evidence of Inuit understanding and real interest in the project, the fact that those who were relocated in 1953 communicated their experience to their relatives back at Port Harrison, by radio and letter, and that as a result of this, the project continued to attract more families from that community, at least for the next several years. In fact, the number of families seeking to relocate to the two new communities finally had to be restricted, in about 1957, for fear of over-taxing the resources of those areas.

Alex Stevenson, in the report he prepared on January 13, 1983, for John Parker, Commissioner of the N.W.T, on the history of the relocation, also states:

"The people involved in the whole operation were experienced northerners with a good knowledge of the Inuit and their language and that included me."

At another point in his report, however, Stevenson utters a realistic qualifier to the question of how completely the Inuit understood the project, when he says: “That is not to say however that misunderstandings were not possible, regardless of the precautions.”

We support this latter point of view, not only for its practical logic, but because of several statements made by the Inuit in their presentation before the Standing Committee on March 19, 1990 and in the interviews we had with some of them on August 29 in Inukjuak. In response to our question as to whether they knew if they would be going to Craig Harbour or Resolute Bay on leaving Port Harrison, one of their members, Annie, probably summed it up best, when she replied:

“We did not really know where we were going until we got there.”

We have no trouble accepting that statement as being descriptive of the level of understanding of where they were going at that time, particularly when one considers that the Port Harrison people had no names in their dialect for either of these new places, since they were both new communities, nor could they have had any idea of how far each of them was from Port Harrison or how difficult it was going to be to return to their original community and their friends once they were relocated. In our opinion, these things could not have been fully comprehensible because they were beyond the range of their experience at that time. This was not as big a problem for the Pond Inlet people, however, because they were quite accustomed to life in the High Arctic and could make their way back to their original community, if they really wanted to do so.

As mentioned in the Methodology section of our report, we did not attempt to deal with the assertion that the Inuit agreed to participate in the project because they both trusted and feared the whiteman and did not think they could choose otherwise.

## *Conclusion*

Reasonable steps appear to have been taken to explain the project to the prospective Inuit participants by the representatives of the Government in 1953. The latter seem to have believed that the Inuit understood what was being explained to them and that they volunteered to participate. More Inuit families from Port Harrison and Pond Inlet requested to be relocated to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in several subsequent years, after 1953, as a result of feedback from their relatives, friends and Government representatives. It is reasonable to conclude from this, that they understood and were interested in participating in the project. Nevertheless, it is very likely that some of the original Inuit participants could not completely envisage what conditions in the High Arctic would be like nor the distances that would separate them from their relatives and friends back in Port Harrison because these things were outside the range of their personal experience. While this is indeed unfortunate, it should not imply a deliberate attempt by the Government officials to deceive or mislead the Inuit participants.

### **c) Conditions on Arrival**

The Inuit claimants dwelt at some length on the hardships that awaited them on their arrival at their respective destinations, because of lack of adequate equipment.

We found several references in the files that confirm the assertion that those relocated were not as well equipped as they might have been and that until new canvas could be unpacked from the supplies brought ashore with them and new tents had been sewn or old ones patched, the group must have suffered considerable discomfort. The Police, themselves, refer to this in some of their correspondence with their headquarters and with the Department. Marc

Hammond also cites a comment made by Inspector Larsen of the R.C.M.P., on visiting the Grise Fiord community in 1956, which would indicate that the Inuit were not well equipped when they arrived there in 1953:

“All told, thanks to the assistance and effort made by our men, the native settlement has prospered and it was hard for me to realize that they were the same people that I saw landed there in 1953, all in rags and with little or no equipment of any kind.”

With respect to the group that were landed at Resolute Bay, in the summer of 1953 a report made shortly thereafter by C. Marshall, who, at the time, was Secretary to the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, is particularly critical of the conditions facing this group on their arrival at their destination. He mentions that the group arrived with tents and canoes in poor condition and lists shortages of various kinds of supplies for the small cooperative store that was to be set up at Resolute Bay for the benefit of the group. Marshall's criticisms were largely turned aside by some officials in Ottawa, who argued that he lacked Arctic experience and did not realize that the supplies in the store were simply supplemental to the equipment they brought with them.

We are unable to come down on one side or other of this argument but, considering the amount of time allowed for the final planning stage of the project, we are inclined to conclude that there may well have been some oversights which caused this group some discomfort at the end of their journey. This criticism has to be off-set, to some extent, however, by the frequent references in the files to the interminable problems associated with Arctic shipping in those years, which seemed to plague all northern projects.

### *Conclusions*

The Inuit participants were not as well equipped as they should have been to embark on a journey as difficult as this. The reasons for this are not clear but it would appear that more time should have been provided to look after such matters before the Inuit embarked. This criticism has to be off-set, to some extent, by the interminable problems associated with all Arctic shipping and which continue to plague all northern projects down to the present day.

### **d) Assumptions about Economic Conditions in Arctic Quebec and Game Resources in the High Arctic**

The Inuit have queried the basis for the Government's assumption that Arctic Quebec was economically worse off than other communities in the Arctic. In our examination of this issue we came across several references and articles referring to the depressed economic conditions among Inuit trappers throughout the entire Hudson's Bay area. Writing on this subject in his authoritative work "Eskimo Administration, Vol.2-Canada," (Chapter 9), in 1966, Diamond Jenness notes:

“Hardest hit, perhaps, were the Eskimos of the Hudson's Bay region ... when furs plummeted in 1948/9 to only half of their earlier value, the situation of the natives became desperate. Trapping now brought in virtually no return and even the most energetic hunter could rarely avoid depending on relief. In 1950, an official investigator estimated that from their own earnings the Hudson Bay Eskimos were defraying only about 40% of their purchases at the trading stores and that the federal government was contributing up to 60% through various hand-outs.”

While this reference conveys something of the Government's concern about the poverty of the Inuit of the Hudson Bay region, it does not explain why Arctic Quebec was singled out for special attention, over communities in the Keewatin District on the other side of the Bay.

We checked with Statistics Canada for statistical data that might permit us to compare living conditions among Inuit living in communities on the east and west sides of Hudson Bay in the early 1950s, as reflected in infant mortality



rates, incidence of hospital admissions for tuberculosis and other indicators. Statistics Canada was most helpful with this part of the work, but unfortunately the data available did not break down to that level and hence we could not pursue this line of enquiry.

The prevailing view on this subject within the Department at that time was that Arctic Quebec's increasing Inuit and Indian populations were putting severe stress on the region's already limited game resources, more so than in other areas. It seemed to be this concern that tipped the balance in favour of Arctic Quebec.

The files also confirmed the related Inuit allegation that no large-scale and truly scientific studies of game resources preceded the choice of Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay as the two sites for the project. The desirability of conducting such studies was recognized early in the planning of these projects, but not acted upon. Definite plans to proceed with a full scale study of terrestrial and marine resources in the entire area, between Dundas Harbour and Pond Inlet, as part of the information required in planning new communities in the High Arctic, were discussed as early as 1954, but this study also never got off the ground due, primarily, to a decision by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in 1956, to suspend plans for the development of additional new communities in the High Arctic.

It is evident from a reading of the files for that period, that this decision was not the result of any assessment of the success or failure of the Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord relocation projects. One receives very much the impression that both projects were regarded by the Department, the Police and the Inuit participants, as being quite successful. In fact, Resolute Bay, in particular, was often viewed in those years, as a kind of "model community" in that it provided a balanced mix of wage employment, hunting and trapping to the participants. It was one of the few communities in the North where wage employed Inuit could still enjoy a diet of traditional country food and retain their hunting and trapping skills.

The explanation for the suspension of plans for the development of new communities in the High Arctic was made by the Department in order to respond effectively to new, rapidly emerging and relatively large-scale wage employment opportunities for Inuit, generated by increased defence and resource exploration activity throughout the North. The Mid Canada and Early Warning Defence Systems, the start-up of a mine at Rankin Inlet, and resource exploration in many areas of the Arctic all burst upon the scene almost simultaneously, in 1956, dictating a dramatic shift in Departmental priorities and resource allocations.

The absence of such studies, however, does not appear to us to mean that the Department and the Police did not have a reasonable sense of the relative abundance of game resources in the areas chosen for relocation, before the decision to develop those communities was taken. The historical records of extensive police patrols over large sections of Ellesmere Island, dating as far back as the 1920s, and more recent visits by Canadian wildlife scientists, albeit periodic, to Cornwallis and other of the Arctic Islands, would certainly seem to have established at least baseline data on the relative abundance of terrestrial and marine wildlife in those areas. What was not yet known in 1953 was the rate at which wildlife in those areas could replenish themselves and exactly how many families could safely be introduced to harvest these resources on a sustainable yield basis. This absence of knowledge, however, seemed to have been taken into account in planning the relocation project, in that it was decided to introduce only a few families each year.

The information sources we consulted tend to lead us to the conclusion that these assumptions about game in those areas were basically sound and that the participants in the project fared quite well in the hunt. In his presentation to the Standing Committee on March 19, one of the Inuit, Samwillie Eliasialuk, who was among those relocated to



Craig Harbour in 1953, quotes a Greenland hunter whom he encountered on a hunting trip at that time, as saying to him:

“Why do you carry so much dog food when animals are plentiful over here.”

This would suggest that game was plentiful enough in that area, at that time. The following excerpts from an article in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly, dated October 1954, contributed by Constable A. C. Fryer, who was stationed at Craig Harbour when the Port Harrison group arrived the previous year, would also seem to support this point of view:

“After the natives were temporarily encamped close to the detachment, the men were taken on a hunting trip.... For the majority of the natives, it was the first time they had ever shot a walrus.... Three walruses were killed and at least 50 others were counted. We returned to Craig Harbour with a spirited group of natives, who were enthusiastic about the abundance of game.”

“Following the walrus hunt, the younger Eskimos were taken on a caribou hunting trip in Fram Fiord. Ten caribou were taken, mainly for the purpose of supplying natives with skins with which to make clothing.”

Later, in the same article, the author, in referring to the relocation of the Craig Harbour Detachment and the Inuit encampment to Grise Fiord, states:

“The new site is on the south-eastern tip of Linstrom Peninsula, approximately 40 miles from the Craig Harbour Detachment. This location was chosen because of the known abundance of sea game, especially the harp seal.... In three trips with the Police power boat, all the natives and their belongings were transported to Grise Fiord. During these trips, six walruses, two bearded seals and several common seals were contributed to the natives caches of meat.... All the Eskimos, except one old character from Port Harrison, were delighted with their camp location.”

There were many more references to the abundance of game and the general satisfaction with living conditions in the Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay areas in that and other sources we reviewed. Perhaps the strongest evidence of this, however, is not to be found in published articles and government documents, but in letters written by the Inuit residents, themselves, to the Social Workers in Ottawa during the years 1953 to 1963, a sampling of which follows:

E9-1635 Resolute Bay, N.W.T. 11 March 21, 1960.

J. is writing to Bobby. I want you to tell me what you think. Esa, E9-706 wrote to me and saying that he wants to come here to live in the High Arctic. If it is possible for him to come I would like to have him and he also wants to come. He also said in his letter that he was not happy last winter at Port Harrison, because he finds it very difficult to get the dog food. He has been hunting and trapping (but) there is nothing. At this place (there are) lots of walrus and plenty of seals and it has more foxes than Port Harrison and lots of square flipper seals, lots of whales. He can get more dog food here than at Port Harrison. It is a good place to live. No wonder Isa is wanting to come.”

Translator – Mary Panegoosho

E9-1762 Resolute Bay, N.W.T. October 26, 1959

L. is writing to Bobby. I hail from Port Harrison but now, at present, I am living where there is no daylight. Resolute Bay is my new land. It was in 1955 when I came to this land. I want my mother-in-law and my brother who are at Port Harrison to come...to stay with us by next year. Maggie's disc number is E9-709. Kilopak's number is E9-711.

I want them to come here next year. This is why I am writing to Ottawa; also do write to Port Harrison and if they say yes, please write to me and let me know. I do need them in the worse way. Maggie and Kilopak with his children. I want them to come and stay with me if this could be done. I really do need someone to help me because this place of darkness has white foxes. It is a good place. Also people never go hungry here, because there is plenty of animals to hunt. Write to me.

Translator – Abraham Okpik

E5-766

Resolute Bay, N.W.T.

March 20, 1957

I. writes to Leo. Thanks very much for your letter. It was understandable. No, Leo, I do not want to live any other place than here. I only wish to visit Spence Bay someday on account of my son P, to try to get him to live with us here. I do not think I can make it this spring though.

I want you to know that I do not intend to go back to Pond Inlet because I think Resolute Bay is a better place for game. There are many more seals here than at Pond Inlet and also caribou close by at Bathurst Island which is at the point of Bedford. There are still some remaining caribou at Resolute itself too.

I am happy to tell you that the ex-Port Harrison men are more keen in hunting seals by seal holes now. Better than they were last year. There is good food for more than a hundred people if there were that many here.

I think I may go to Spence Bay in the spring to trade my fox skins. If you do not think it's a good idea, let me know by letter. I will be happy to hear from you.

Within a few years of their arrival at Resolute Bay, employment opportunities opened up for at least some of the men, as the following excerpt from a letter written by one of them indicates:

E9-1635

Resolute Bay, N.W.T.

July 4, 1960

J. writes to Bobby, in Ottawa. "I am going to write a short letter to Bobby because I don't have much to say. All of us been kept well. We are working for the whiteman at the airbase; we probably work for six months. All of us men started to work during spring, on June 16. If the airforce people are telling the truth, we will be working during June, July, August, September, October and November. We are getting a lot of help making money because the white people are very kind to us. We are happy to work and all of us are well look after. And the Police is very kind and he is alright but sometimes we do not obey what he asks us to do."

As with all communities, however, things did not always go smoothly and all needs were not always met:

E9-1765

Resolute Bay, NWT.

March 14, 1962.

S. writes to the Social Workers in Ottawa.

“This is S. from Resolute Bay, who used to live in Port Harrison, writing. I am now working for the Air Force, as a sweeper and earning money for it.

I came here in 1953 and I have been here for 9 years now. I was the first one here before the Eskimos came. I am grateful to the Government for they are helping us and we are helped also by “Inuktitut “ magazine.

I would like to find out something from the Welfare Workers. Many Eskimos now have houses from the Government but here we have only houses made out of boxes and pieces of wood and its much colder here than any other place. I think its about time we should get houses too from the Government, if its possible. Please answer and let me know what you think about this. Even if you don’t answer me right away, I’ll still keep writing to you what I have in mind. That’s all for now.”

Translator – E. Erkloo

## *Conclusions*

Economic conditions were considered by experts in the field to be worse in Arctic Quebec than elsewhere in the North, because the aboriginal population was increasing, game resources were under pressure, and increasing numbers of Inuit were becoming dependent on government welfare programs in that area. No large scale scientific surveys of renewable resources was carried out in the Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay areas before these sites were chosen for new settlements. However, considerable information had nevertheless been gathered on game resources in those areas. Published articles by the R.C.M.P. and Inuit letters in the possession of the Department indicate that game was plentiful around both the new communities. The Inuit state in their letters during this period that they were not hungry and generally liked their new environment.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **6.1 PROMISES MADE BUT NOT KEPT**

We understand this allegation to be that when the government spokesmen discussed relocation to the High Arctic with the Inukjuak families, the latter were promised that if they were not satisfied with life at their new location they would be returned to Inukjuak, at government expense. The Inuit claim that they were unhappy at Resolute and Grise Fiord and asked the government representatives to return them to Port Harrison, beginning in 1954 and for a number of years subsequently, but their request was not acted upon until their formal claim was presented to the government in 1982.

We reviewed all of the statements and written evidence presented to the Standing Committee on March 19 and June 19, 1990, touching on these grievances. We also searched a large number of files in the possession of both the National Archives of Canada and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, for information that would throw further light onto these claims. In addition, we personally interviewed eight Inuit, now living at Inukjuak, who were part of the original group relocated to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in the 1950s, to gather additional insights into their understanding and recollection of the events of those days. Our findings and conclusions are presented below, on an issue-by-issue basis.

*a) Promise to return them to their original communities, if requested.*

Our findings on this point accord with those mentioned in Marc Hammond's 1984 report to the Department. The evidence he presents, and the hypotheses he articulates where he could find no direct evidence, lead us also to the conclusion that such a promise was definitely made to the Pond Inlet group. We conclude, as well, that a similar undertaking was given by the Department to the Port Harrison group in 1953, and that it continued to apply to groups subsequently moved through to 1957. Our conclusions on this matter are based on comments found in a number of documents which deal specifically with this issue.

The first of these is an excerpt from a report of Alex Stevenson's visit to Port Harrison in the summer of 1953, prior to the embarkation of the first group. The excerpt in question can be found on File 201-1-8 pt 3, which is in the possession of the National Archives of Canada. It states:

"...One final item regarding the movement is that the Eskimos agreed that they would go north for a period of two years at least. Then, if they were dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment, they could return to Port Harrison."

The second reference to such an undertaking is contained in a memorandum from Mr. B. G. Sivenz, to the Director, Northern Administration Branch, dated November 8, 1956, the relevant portion of which reads: "It should be remembered that we are feeling our way in these projects. So far things have gone well...better than we probably have hoped. After two years the people seem content to stay on, whereas they only agreed to go in the first place on condition that we promise to return them to their former homes after two or three years."

We interpret these comments to mean that the promise in question was made to all Inuit families relocated from both Port Harrison and Pond Inlet and in all of the years in which relocations occurred.

We also agree with Hammond's view that inherent in the Government's undertaking to return the relocated families to their original communities after two or three years, should they request to do so, was the undertaking to absorb the costs involved.

The question of how long this promise was good for, is, of course, much more difficult to answer. The substantive reference on the subject by Stevenson, says: "at least two years"; the comment by Sivertz mentions: "two or three years". One is left to surmise from this that the Department reasoned that, after two or three years experience at these new locations, the Inuit would have made up their minds as to whether they wished to stay on there or return to their original communities. We question whether the Department intended to leave this offer on the table indefinitely considering the tendencies of governments generally to want to place time limits on their financial obligations and, as in this case, to avoid the problem of determining eligible antecedents years down the road.

Statements by the Inuit before the Standing Committee indicate that at least some of the relocated families (e.g., the father of Markussie Patsauq and M. Amagoalik) asked to be returned to their home communities after the first year

and in subsequent years, but were refused. The government representatives purportedly responded by proposing instead that they write and encourage their relatives in Port Harrison to relocate to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. This accusation was repeated to us by all of the Inuit whom we personally interviewed at Inukjuak during the week of August 19, 1990. When questioned further on this matter, a number of them stated that once they sensed that the government representatives did not want to agree to return them to their original communities, they stopped asking because they did not want to anger these people who had so much control over their lives.

We also sorted through something in the order of 400 letters written during the years 1953 to 1963, by the Inuit residents at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord and their relatives in those communities and in sanatoria in the south, to the Inuit-speaking social workers in the Eskimology Section (later the Welfare Division) in Ottawa, for possible further references to this issue. These sources yielded several examples of requests made by the Inuit in question to be returned to, or to visit on an extended basis (e.g., a year or more), their original communities, or to have their relatives join them in the High Arctic, and the replies sent by Ottawa in response. The following sample is typical of this correspondence.

E9-1523, a former resident of Port Harrison and now at Resolute Bay writes to the social workers in Ottawa on January 30, 1961, stating:

“I would like to go back to Port Harrison this coming summer. Here at Resolute they helped me a great deal and I am happy here but someone who lives at Port Harrison wants me to return there this summer and I would like to go back if it’s possible, if the social workers agree. If they don’t agree with me I think I will find it difficult. The white people help me a great deal and I am happy about it I would like you to write to me and let me know if they agree with me.... Also my mother, Elizabeth and my sisters Minnie and Annie, they are all in hospital. It’s up to them what they want to do. Elizabeth will do what she wants; it’s up to her. I am writing only for myself.”

Quite often such requests did not contain sufficient information to permit the recipient to respond in a simple “yes” or “no” fashion. Many factors had to be considered in preparing the reply, not the least of which were the questions of whether the writer was requesting only a brief or a protracted visit back to Port Harrison, or whether permanent repatriation with family, dogs, canoes and other property was contemplated. The availability of housing back in Port Harrison, to receive the visitors, was always a question that needed to be explored, because wooden houses in all communities in those years, if they existed at all, were virtually always overcrowded. These questions and concerns were raised with the author and additional information sought, sometimes involving two or three exchanges of letters, as shown in the reply in this instance:

February 3, 1961

B. writes to P., translated by Elijah Erklou.

“I do remember you from the summer of 1957. Thank you for your letters which you wrote on October 5 and January 19. We would like some more information as to why you would like to go back to Pon Harrison. Please contact the R.C.M.P. (at Resolute) about this information; it is always best to give the report to the R.C.M.P. so that we have something on paper. Also tell the R.C.M.P. how you are doing at Resolute and whether or not you are enjoying it.

You wrote in your letter that you wanted to return to Port Harrison, but you also mentioned that you were asked by William to return. If you decide to return to William, you must also consider your wife’s and your children’s feelings on the matter. Also, if you go back to Port Harrison, would you be able to live like you do at

Resolute Bay? Would you be comfortable living at Port Harrison? Would it be better if William were sent to Resolute Bay instead?

I do not want to dictate to you what you should do, but you must take time to think things over before you make any real decisions. I can offer you advice as to what you should do or as to what is the best way to handle things, but you must discuss the situation with the R.C.M.P. there. Where do your wife and children stand in this situation? Please go and speak to the R.C.M.P. about this.

We have a new social worker at Port Harrison and we have asked that person to contact William and to see how he is doing. We will keep you informed.

The next piece of correspondence in the files on this case, many months later, indicate that he had returned to Port Harrison although the correspondence does not say whether this was for a visit or on a permanent basis.

Several letters were received in Ottawa from residents of Resolute Bay in 1961, proposing visits back to Port Harrison. The following reply to one such letter, by the social workers in Ottawa, sheds some light onto the thinking of the Department, by that time, in responding to this type of request:

To: E9-1635  
Resolute Bay, NWT.  
November 28, 1961

Dear J:

This is Leah writing to you from the office in Ottawa. The Director of the Social Services Department has requested that we send you a letter in reply to your letter of September. At this time we are unable to entertain your request to travel from Resolute Bay to Port Harrison until we receive more information. We would like to know your reasons for wanting to return to Port Harrison.

Many people have asked to return to Port Harrison for a visit, so what we are suggesting is that maybe if a group travelled to Port Harrison, perhaps on the Air Force plane to Churchill, Manitoba and then from there the group would switch planes and travel to Port Harrison and the cost would be about \$ 2000.00. This can all be arranged through the R.C.M.P. in your community.

We cannot determine from this correspondence what the official position or policy of the Department was, in 1961, seven years after the launching of the project, with respect to requests by the Inuit of these two communities to be returned to Port Harrison, on a permanent basis. In fact, we hesitate to draw too many conclusions from this material as to what the official response might have been on the question of paid visits back to Port Harrison at that time. The letter quoted above is not clear on this point. Our speculation on the latter, however, would be that the Department considered that because the Resolute Bay people had been wage employed, by that time for a number of years, they should be quite capable of financing their own visits. This position was not inconsistent with that applied in the case of the Fort Chimo Inuit who moved to Churchill to take wage employment at the Military Base, under the Department's auspices, and who wished to return to their home community for a visit from time to time. We don't think, however, that the same reasoning could be applied to the group at Grise Fiord.

The records indicate that early in the 1970s Inuit families living at both Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay approached the Government of the Northwest Territories requesting assistance to travel to Inukjuak to visit relatives and assess whether they wished to be relocated to that community on a permanent basis. The Territorial Government, which

had by that time assumed responsibility for the administration of Inuit Affairs from the Federal Government, acceded to this request and paid the costs of both the exploratory visits and the permanent relocation. These costs were later recovered from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The R.C.M.P. used their own aircraft on at least one occasion for this purpose during the same period and appear to have absorbed the costs involved. During the 1980s, additional families from both Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay returned to Inukjuak, initially at their own expense or with help from Makivik Corporation.

These transportation costs were also re-imbursed by the Department in 1988-89. In the same year, the Department also contributed approximately \$ 700,000.00 to the Government of Quebec to offset the impact of this influx of people on the province's housing plan for Inukjuak. An offer to transport any of the original families, still at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, who might wish to return to Inukjuak or Pond Inlet, at Departmental expense, would be consistent with these precedents and would appear to satisfy any remaining obligations in this regard. To ensure, however, that the claim can be definitively concluded, we would suggest that a time limit of one or so years should be attached to this offer.

### *Conclusions*

The Inuit living at Resolute Bay wrote to the Government officials from time to time requesting assistance to visit relatives in Inukjuak. It was frequently difficult to ascertain if the request was for a short visit, a protracted visit or for permanent resettlement back to their original community. No such requests were discovered from Inuit living at Grise Fiord. Some families did visit Inukjuak in 1962, but it is unclear as to whether the Government or the Inuit covered the costs involved. We did not discover a definitive Departmental policy that would have answered this question. Fort Chimo Inuit who were relocated to Churchill during this same period to take wage employment were expected to pay for visits back to their home community. The Government of the NWT paid for both visits and permanent resettlement of a number of Inuit families from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Inukjuak in 1973/74 and were subsequently reimbursed by the Federal Government. The R.C.M.P. apparently also used their own aircraft to return families to Inukjuak in the same period. More families returned in the 1980s, initially at their own expense or with help from Makivik Corporation. The Department also reimbursed these costs and contributed funds to off-set the impact of this inflow of people on Quebec housing plans for the Inukjuak community in 1988-89. An offer to return any of the original families still remaining families at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, who would like to be returned to Inukjuak or Pond Inlet, would be consistent with these precedents.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS**

#### *7.1.1 Findings and Conclusions*

The decision by the Government to actively encourage the relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic in 1953, and in the two or three years subsequent to that, was not motivated primarily by a concern to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands. Canada felt secure in her claim of ownership of the Islands as a result of an exchange of Notes between Canada and Norway in 1930 and because the Canadian Government had consistently displayed its sovereignty in that area for so long and in so many ways as to firmly establish its title to all of the Arctic Islands in a manner consistent with International Law.

The R.C.M.P. participated in the exercise of Canadian sovereignty in the north by their very presence in those areas and in the various roles they were called upon to carry out on their own behalf and on behalf of other federal departments. They were required, from time to time, to deal with the illegal hunting of polar bear and muskoxen by Greenlanders. In carrying out this function, they did indeed assist in asserting Canadian sovereignty.

The Inuit people were not relocated to the High Arctic to assist the R.C.M.P. in the administration of the NWT Game Ordinances, although, in fact, they did so on occasion. They exercised Canadian Arctic sovereignty in their own right by the very fact of living there but that was not the purpose of their relocation. The main reason for the decision by the Government to encourage some Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic at that time was a concern to improve the living conditions of the Inuit, particularly in the Hudson Bay region. Relocation from these depressed areas was seen as a means of breaking a growing pattern of welfare dependency, which becomes the heritage of poverty, by providing the Inuit with new and better economic opportunities through improved hunting, trapping and possible wage employment.

Reasonable steps were taken to establish and apply suitable criteria for the selection of Inuit families that would ensure the success of the project and the security of the participants.

These criteria were developed over a period of several years, with input from a number of sources. Those who were transported to the project by the "C. D. Howe" were X-rayed and appear to have passed this examination. A few of the participants who were included were quite aged and one was physically disabled, but this was not out of line with Inuit cultural values nor with the realities of life in the Arctic in those years.

The difficulties of life in the High Arctic were recognized and explored and a reasonable plan was articulated to ensure that those who were relocated were also supported by R.C.M.P. officers who knew them personally and who were knowledgeable of Inuit ways and language. Experienced Inuit families from the most northern settlements at the time were approached to assist with the project. They agreed to do so and to transfer their hunting and trapping skills to the Inuit participants from Arctic Quebec. The first group from Port Harrison were not as well equipped upon arrival at their destination as they might have been.

Reasonable efforts seem to have been made to explain the project to both of the Inuit groups involved before their departure, and to communicate the fact that participation in it was voluntary. It is more than likely that some of the Inuit could not completely envisage what conditions in the High Arctic would be like because these things were outside the range of personal experience at the time. While this is truly regrettable, it should not imply a deliberate attempt by the Government officials to deceive or mislead the Inuit participants.

A number of the Inuit participants in the project indicated in letters written to the Department in the period 1956 to 1963 that game and fur were plentiful in the vicinity of both Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, and that hunger was not a problem.

The Department gave the Inuit an understanding that they would be returned to their original communities after one, two, or three years, if this was requested. There is no evidence to suggest that the Department intended this undertaking to remain in force indefinitely. The files show that some of the Inuit families living in Resolute Bay wrote to Ottawa, asking to return to Port Harrison for a visit. The earliest example of such a request, that we could find, occurred around 1960. The determination of the length of the proposed visits quite often required several exchanges of letters. On one known occasion, in 1961, Ottawa responded to such proposals by seeming to suggest that those wishing to visit Port Harrison should collaborate in chartering an aircraft for this purpose, at their own expense. The files would indicate that one group did this in 1962, but no further details are provided. It is uncertain



if there was an official policy on the matter at that time. Our speculation is that the Department took this position because it considered the individuals involved to be economically self-sufficient. This was certainly the practice followed with respect to Fort Chimo Inuit working at Churchill and wishing to visit their home community.

In 1973-74, after the transfer of federal responsibility for the administration of Inuit affairs to the Government of the Northwest Territories, the latter received requests from and assisted a number of Inuit families living at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord to visit and return permanently to live at Inukjuak. The Territorial Government was reimbursed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for these expenses. The R.C.M.P. used their own aircraft to return several families from Grise Fiord to Inukjuak, also about 1974, and absorbed the costs involved.

During the 1980s, more of the Inuit families returned to Port Harrison at their own expense or with assistance from the Makivik Corporation of Quebec.

When this issue was first raised in a formal claim against the Department, in 1982, the Deputy Minister of the day expressed understanding and sympathy for the concerns raised by the Inuit. In 1987, he also undertook to reimburse the Inuit involved and the Makivik Corporation of Quebec for the relocation expenses incurred in moving families back to Port Harrison, amounting to approximately \$250,000. In 1988, the Department also undertook to provide the Government of Quebec with funds amounting to approximately \$700,000 to permit the Province to add ten houses to the pool of housing identified for Port Harrison.

### *7.1.2 Observations*

We do not claim to have found and unerringly assessed all of the material that would reveal the truth in this complex maze of events. There may well be much more evidence out there than we were able to discover and that could indeed provide quite a different view of what actually took place. Based on the evidence we were able to find, however, we do not see in these events a willful intent on the part of the Government to manipulate, mislead and put at risk a group of people in its charge, in order to achieve some other national purpose.

Nor do we see the Inuit in this piece as gullible and ineffectual participants in some kind of ill conceived endeavour. Quite the opposite, the evidence points to conscientious, caring and reasonably intelligent Government officials and equally intelligent, and enterprising Inuit people, both of whom collaborated in an undertaking intended to provide the Inuit with new opportunities for a much better way of life.

Inevitably, some aspects of the planning and implementation of the project could have been improved upon, although we did not uncover any deficiencies that could be said to be life-threatening. It would appear to us that the relocation project achieved its objectives in that the Inuit participants were exposed to and took advantage of the new opportunities that it presented to them. The fact that the project did not last forever does not mean that it was not successful, any more than the closure of the mine at Rankin Inlet, in the NWT, after six years of operation, meant that that endeavour was a disaster.

The material we poured over in the study does not reveal the reasons why, after so many years, the High Arctic ceased to hold the attention of the Inuit from Inukjuak or to satisfy their needs. We are left to speculate on these reasons.

By the early 1970s, the Inuit of Arctic Quebec had begun to organize themselves for the ensuing and totally absorbing land claim negotiations that culminated in the signing of the James Bay and Nouveau Quebec Agreement in 1975. The Inuit of Arctic Quebec [fared] well in these negotiations. Understandably, the Inuit of our study who

were covered under the Agreement may well have felt that their interests in this matter could best be protected and their rights exercised by being on the spot, as it were.

As mentioned to us by Samwillie Eliasialuk, during our visit to Inukjuak in August of this year, the death of their elders over the years deprived the communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay of the wisdom, direction and sense of security which they traditionally derive from these sources, and left them feeling that the only remaining links with their past were back in their ancestral community. It is difficult for southern non-aboriginal Canadians to appreciate this sentiment but the loss of the elders obviously had considerable influence on their wish to return to Inukjuak.

Another dimension of this same concern is described by Milton M. R. Freeman, a well-known Canadian sociologist who spent considerable time at Grise Fiord in the 1970s. In an article written for "Arctic," a publication of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, in 1984, Freeman describes at length the strained relationships between the Pond Inlet and the Port Harrison groups. The Pond Inlet group appears to have exercised considerably more influence over the direction the community was taking in a number of areas. This may also have caused the Inukjuak group to feel that control over their own affairs had slipped away.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the exposure of the younger people in the community to T.V. and to formal education through a now mature elementary school system, must inevitably have produced a different paradigm with which to interpret the past, a new way of looking at life and new expectations, that the High Arctic, with its isolation, harsh climate and lengthy periods of darkness, could no longer satisfy. This is not, of course, something to be regretted but is rather the inevitable destiny of all dynamic human societies.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 8.1 RESPONSE TO THE CLAIM TO DATE BY THE DEPARTMENT

Two aspects of the claim are dealt with in this chapter. The first of these concerns the official response by the government, to date, with respect to the various allegations that make up the Claim. The second, which, in a sense, is a corollary of the first, are the actions the Government has taken to date or has indicated that it is prepared to take by way of response to the claim. The information on both of these aspects is derived from the proceedings of the June 19, 1990 Meeting of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and its attachments and from a number of internal Departmental memoranda on this subject, through the years 1982 to 1989.

#### *8.1.1 The Sovereignty Issue*

The earliest departmental reaction to the assertion that Arctic sovereignty was the primary motivation behind the relocation project of the 1950s is contained in a letter written by M.A.F. Lafontaine, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to Mr. John Amagoalik, President of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, on December 4, 1982. In this letter, Mr. Lafontaine is replying on behalf of his predecessor, Mr. Paul Tellier, to a request by Mr. Amagoalik on October 7, 1982, for assistance with the purchase and construction of sixteen houses and for marine transport to permit sixteen families to be returned to Port Harrison from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. The Deputy Minister's reply does not mention sovereignty as such, but considering the context, it would be difficult to imagine that he meant anything else:

“I believe these requests should be given every consideration since the original impetus for relocation came from the Federal Government, motivated at least in part by concerns of national interest.”

The Hon. John Monro, former Minister of DIAND, is also quoted by Makivik Corporation of Quebec in their several submissions to the Department and in the evidence they presented to the Standing Committee on March 19, 1990, as conceding, in a speech he made in 1983, that Inuit were co-partners with the Government, even before the Second World War, in helping to establish Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. This acknowledgement is quite specific when Mr. Monro states: “To further entrench the sovereignty claim, the government relocated Inuit people from northern Quebec to the Arctic Islands in the mid 1950s.”

A comment made by Mr. B.G. Sivertz in a meeting of the Eskimo Affairs Committee in 1956, and by Mr. Robert Pilot, in his appearance before the Standing Committee on June 19, 1990, both of which are cited by us elsewhere in this report, are interpreted by Makivik Corporation as further evidence of the Government’s acknowledgement of the tie-in between sovereignty and the relocation project. In both of these latter cases, however, sovereignty is not claimed to be more than a secondary consideration.

At least two former Ministers of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are on public record as indicating that they would be prepared to support a proposal that would acknowledge the contribution made by the Inuit towards Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic Islands, by designating one of these communities as a historic site or by erecting a historic plaque to mark these past events. The Ministers apparently did not undertake to initiate such a proposal, but simply indicated that they would offer their support if it were made. We contacted officials of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to determine where this suggestion stood. They were unable to discover any correspondence on this subject in their files.

The public announcements by Ministers on this question can be expected to be taken as at least a degree of acknowledgement that sovereignty played some kind of role in the Inuit relocations of the 1950s.

The Department’s interim, written response of May 15, 1990 to the Standing Committee, following its appearance before the Committee on March 19, states quite categorically that sovereignty was not the motivation behind the Government’s decision to actively encourage the relocation of some Inuit families in the 1950s. The Government’s reply cited depressed conditions in Arctic Quebec, the growing dependence of Inuit from that region on welfare assistance, the prospects of better hunting and trapping and the possibilities of wage employment as reasons involved.

In summary, some of the statements that have been made on this issue to date will be interpreted by the Inuit claimants as public acknowledgement by the Government that concern over sovereignty prompted it to encourage Inuit people to relocate to the Arctic Islands, in the 1950s, regardless of Departmental assertions to the contrary. In our opinion, however, it would be difficult to argue that this concern was ever referred to as being more than a secondary consideration.

### *8.1.2 Wrongdoing and Failure to Effectively Plan and Carry Out the Project*

The Department has consistently rejected all allegations to the effect that it is guilty of willfully perpetrating wrongdoings of one kind or another in the conduct of the relocations. Our findings do not support the Inuit allegations and the Department would, therefore, appear to be justified in maintaining its stance on these matters.

### 8.1.3 *Promise to Return Families*

Many statements have been made by government officials on this issue since the claim was first raised in 1982. These statements effectively acknowledge that some kind of promise or undertaking was given to the Inuit families involved by the government to return them to their original communities, at government expense, if they were dissatisfied with life in their new environment. The acknowledgement has usually been accompanied by a qualification running to the effect that the assumed promise also probably had a time limit attached to it. This position has been defended by references to a promise in several documents that mention periods of two or three years.

Acknowledgement by government of a promise associated with the relocation project can also be claimed as a result of the action taken by the Department to cover certain relocation costs for those who have already returned to Port Harrison, along with a \$700,000 contribution to the Government of Quebec to offset the costs of constructing ten additional houses for returnees and a number of other associated costs. On the other hand, the Department has stated publicly on a number of occasions that the decision to cover these costs now is based on moral or humanitarian considerations rather than on legal grounds.

It has maintained that it can find no reasonable basis for believing that the original intention was to let this promise run in perpetuity.

The response of the Department to the Makivik Corporation on the matter of housing has been carefully worded to avoid giving the mistaken impression that the houses in question, as a consequence, become the property of the relocated families. Appendix Eight of this report will provide the reader with a visual appreciation of the quality of housing currently being built at Inukjuak.

## CHAPTER NINE

### 9.1 SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

We would suggest that the Department consider the following findings, conclusions and observations emanating from our study, in preparing its response to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in compliance with Standing Order 109.

- The evidence does not support the allegation by the Inuit that the Government was motivated primarily by concern about its ownership of and sovereignty over the Arctic Islands when it actively encouraged Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic in the early 1950s. The Government felt secure in its claim of ownership of the Islands at that time as a result of an Exchange of Notes between Canada and Norway in 1930, which recognized this claim. In addition, the Canadian Government had consistently displayed its sovereignty in that area for so long and in so many ways as to have firmly established its title to all of the Arctic Islands in a manner consistent with International Law.
- The R.C.M.P. participated in the exercise of Canadian sovereignty in the North through the various roles it was called upon to carry out on its own, and on behalf of other federal departments. In this case, the R.C.M.P. exercised sovereignty principally when they were called upon, from time to time, to prevent or deal with the illegal hunting of polar bear and muskoxen by Greenlanders, which was prohibited under the NWT Game Ordinance.

- The Inuit families, who were relocated to Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay as part of the Government's relocation program in the 1950s helped the R.C.M.P. in this type of police work on occasion, and in that sense, aided in the exercise Canadian Arctic sovereignty. These Inuit families, however, were not relocated to assist the R.C.M.P. in these matters.
- The official files and documents from that period leave no doubt that the main reason for the decision by the Government to encourage families, on a selective basis, to relocate to the High Arctic at that time, was a concern to improve the living conditions of Inuit, particularly in the Hudson Bay region. Relocation was seen by both Government officials and the Inuit themselves, as a way of breaking out of a growing pattern of welfare dependency, and as a means of providing the Inuit with new and better economic opportunities for hunting, trapping and wage employment further north.
- Reasonable steps were taken by the Government officials to establish and apply suitable criteria for the selection of families, so as to ensure the success of the project and the security of the participants. These criteria were developed over a period of several years, with input from a number of sources. Those who were transported to the new location were x-rayed and medically examined beforehand and appeared to have been found free of serious infectious diseases. Some of the participants who were included were quite aged and at least one was physically disabled, but their participation in the relocation project was not out of line with Inuit cultural values nor with the realities of life in the Arctic in those years. The difficulties of life in the High Arctic were recognized and explored beforehand by the officials and a plan was articulated to ensure that those who were relocated were well supported by experienced R.C.M.P. officers who knew the families personally and who were knowledgeable of Inuit ways and language. Experienced Inuit families from the most northern settlements at the time were approached to assist with the project. They agreed to do so and to transfer their hunting and trapping skills to the Inuit participants from Arctic Quebec.
- Reasonable efforts were made to explain the project to both of the Inuit groups involved before their departure, and to communicate the fact that participation in it was voluntary. It is more than likely that some of the Inuit could not completely envisage what conditions in the High Arctic would be like because these things were outside the range of personal experience at the time. While this is truly regrettable, this lack of knowledge should not imply a deliberate attempt by the Government officials to deceive or mislead the Inuit participants.
- A number of the Inuit families in the project stated in letters written to the Department in the period 1956 to 1963 that game and fur were plentiful in the vicinity of both Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, and that hunger was not a problem. The frequency of letter-writing from Inuit at Resolute Bay dropped off considerably after 1963 and nearly completely, after 1966, with the transfer of responsibility for most aspects of Inuit affairs to the Government of the NWT. It is not possible, therefore, to say whether game and fur continued to be plentiful after the letters stopped coming but on the other hand, there is no reason to believe otherwise.
- The Department gave the Inuit an understanding that they would be returned to their original communities after one, two, or three years, if this was requested. There is no evidence to suggest that the Department intended this undertaking to remain in force indefinitely.
- The files show that some of the Inuit families living in Resolute Bay wrote to Ottawa, asking to return to Port Harrison for a visit. The earliest example of such a request, that we could find, occurred around 1960. The determination of the length of the proposed visits quite often required several exchanges of letters. On one known occasion, in 1961, Ottawa responded to such proposals by seeming to suggest that those wishing to

visit Port Harrison should collaborate in chartering an aircraft for this purpose, at their own expense. The files would indicate that one group did this in 1962, but no further details are provided. It is uncertain if there was an official policy on the matter at that time but it would appear that the Department took this position because it considered the individuals involved to be economically self-sufficient and therefore capable of arranging their own visits to any destination they wished. This was the practice followed with respect to Fort Chimo Inuit working at Churchill and wishing to visit their home community. We found no references to requests from families living at Grise Fiord for visits or for permanent relocation to Inukjuak.

- Early in the 1970s, the Government of the Northwest Territories arranged and paid for the transportation of several Inuit families, from both Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, to Port Harrison, to visit relatives and to assess whether they wished to be returned to that community on a permanent basis. A number of these families subsequently requested relocation and this was done. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development reimbursed the Territorial Government for the costs of both visits and relocation.
- On one occasion, the R.C.M.P. used their own aircraft to permit several families living at Grise Fiord to visit relatives in Port Harrison and later relocated them. The R.C.M.P. apparently absorbed these costs.
- Additional families from both communities returned to Port Harrison in the period 1982 to 1988, at their own expense or with assistance from the Makivik Corporation of Quebec.
- When this issue was first raised in a formal claim against the Department, in 1982, the Deputy Minister of the day expressed understanding and sympathy for the concerns raised by the Inuit and undertook to reimburse the transportation costs incurred by the families who had moved back at their own expense, up to that time. Several changes in Ministers occurred subsequently, which resulted in a delay in carrying through on this commitment. Additional families returned in 1988, with the help of the Makivik Corporation. In the same year, the Department allocated an amount of approximately \$ 250,000.00 to reimburse all individual families, as well as Makivik Corporation, for the transportation costs of these several relocations. In 1988, the Department also undertook to provide the Government of Quebec with funds, amounting to approximately \$700,000, to permit Quebec to add ten more houses to the pool of housing already identified for Port Harrison for 1989. Both these accounts have since been paid.
- In the circumstances, we do not see the grounds for an apology by the government for the manner in which the relocation project was conceived, planned and carried out. To apologize for a wrongdoing it did not commit would constitute deception on the part of the Government and would imply that the project was a failure, when, in fact, it was a reasonably successful endeavour.
- The Department might consider extending for a further year or so, the offer previously made to the Inuit families who have since returned to Inukjuak from Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. This would permit any of the remaining families at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord to undertake an exploratory visit to their original communities and to relocate on a permanent basis if they so choose.
- The Department might also indicate once again that it is prepared to support any proposal that would recognize the contribution made by the Inuit to the social, political and economic development of the High Arctic over the years. We do not think, however, that this recognition should single out the Inukjuak Inuit or that it should be tied specifically to this particular relocation project, since the Inuit contribution over the years has been much more extensive than that.

## APPENDIX ONE

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## Appendix Two: Persons Interviewed

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
1. C. Baker	Director, Constitutional Development and Aboriginal Affairs	D.I.A.N.D.
2. R. Bill	Director, Circumpolar and Scientific Directorate	D.I.A.N.D.
3. C. Bolger	Former Administrator of the Arctic D.I.A.N.D.	Retired
4. A. Brancker	Senior Analyst, Mortality Canadian Centre for Health Info.	Statistics Canada
5. P. Burden	Historical Research Branch	National Archives of Canada
6. W. Clevette	Director Self Government, Implementation Directorate	D.I.A.N.D.
7. M. E. Gillan	Research Officer B.C. Regional Office	D.I.A.N.D.
8. D. Evaluarjuak	Translator/Communicator Inuit Cultural and Linguistic Centre	D.I.A.N.D.
9. R. Glass	Former Director General Constitutional Development and Aboriginal Affairs Directorate D.I.A.N.D.	National Energy Board
10. P. Greygier	Author	
11. B. Gunn	Manager	Avataque Corporation, Inukjuak, Quebec
12. M. Kline	Acting Director Specific Claims Branch	D.I.A.N.D.
13. S. Meldrum	Liaison Officer Native Claims Division Northern Program	D.I.A.N.D.
14. Z. Nungak	Vice President	Makivik Corporation of Quebec
15. Dr. D. Penman	Medical Care Consultant, Director's Office, Community Health, Medical Services Branch	Health and Welfare Canada
16. R. A. J. Phillips	Former Director, Northern Administration Branch, D.I.A.N.D.	Retired
17. I. Potter	Director General Comprehensive Claims Branch Northern Program	D.I.A.N.D.

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
18. R. G. Robertson	Former Deputy Minister D.I.A.N.D.	Retired
19. G. Rowley	Former Science Advisor to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources	Retired
20. B. Sander	Manager Information Development Section	Statistics Canada
21. S. Silverstone	Legal Advisor	Makivik Corporation of Quebec
22. D. Webster	Manager, Inuit Culture and Linguistic Centre	D.I.A.N.D.

### GROUP INTERVIEW

Inukjuak, Quebec

August 29, 1990

1. M. Patsauq former resident--Resolute Bay, NWT.
- 2 E. Samwillie former resident--Grise Fiord, NWT.
3. A. Iqaluq former resident--Resolute Bay, NWT.
4. E. Nutarak former resident--Grise Fiord, NWT
5. J. Amagoalik former resident--Resolute Bay, NWT.
6. L. Amagoalik former resident--Resolute Bay, NWT.
7. A. Nungak former resident--Grise Fiord, NWT ( at home )

## Appendix Three: Interview Guide

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following questions were asked of returnees from Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour, when interviewed at Inukjuak, on August 28 and 29, 1990:

1. Who interviewed you/your father/mother when the move to Resolute Bay/Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord was discussed?

2. Did you/they know that you/they were going specifically to Resolute Bay/Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord when relocation was being discussed?

Did you/they have a preference as to which community you/they would be going to?

Why did you/they prefer one community over another?

3. What year did you go there?

How long did you stay there?

When did you return to Inukjuak?

4. Did you ask to return to Inukjuak after your resettlement at Resolute/Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord?

When did you first ask?

How did you/they ask?

Who did you/they ask?

What did those you asked say to your/their request?

5. How did you come back to Inukjuak? --i.e. by boat/plane

Did you pay your own way back?

6. Did you/they get a house right away?

If not, where did you live while you/they were waiting for a house?

**Appendix Four: Exchange of Notes between the Dominion of Canada and Norway**

DOMINION OF CANADA  
TREATY SERIES, 1930  
No. 17  
EXCHANGE OF NOTES.  
(August 8, 1930, and November 5, 1930)  
regarding the  
RECOGNITION BY THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT  
of the  
SOVEREIGNTY OF HIS MAJESTY  
over the  
SVERDRUP ISLANDS

OTTAWA: F.A. Acland, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1931

Exchange of Notes August 8, 1930, and November 5, 1930 regarding the recognition by the Norwegian Government of the Sovereignty' of His Majesty over the Sverdrup Islands.

*From the Norwegian Chargé d'affaires, London,  
To the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London*

Royal Norwegian Legation  
No. 95/1930.

LONDON, August 8th, 1930.

SIR,—Acting on instructions from my Government I have the honour to request you to be good enough to inform His Majesty's Government in Canada that the Norwegian Government, who do not as far as they are concerned claim sovereignty over the Sverdrup Islands, formally recognise the sovereignty of His Britannic Majesty over these islands.

At the same time my Government is anxious to emphasize that their recognizance of the sovereignty of His Britannic Majesty over these islands is in no way based on any sanction whatever of what is named "the sector principle".

I have the honour to be, etc.,  
DANIEL STEEN,  
*Chargé d'Affaires a.i.*

The Right Honourable  
ARTHUR HENDERSON, P.C., M.P.,  
etc. etc. etc.

*From the Norwegian Chargé d'affaires, London,*

*To the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London*

Royal Norwegian Legation

No. 96/1930.

LONDON, August 8th, 1930.

SIR,—With reference to my note of to-day in regard to my Government's recognition of the sovereignty of His Britannic Majesty over the Sverdrup Islands, I have the honour, under instructions from my Government, to inform you that the said note has been despatched on the assumption on the part of the Norwegian Government that His Britannic Majesty's Government in Canada will declare themselves willing not to interpose any obstacles to Norwegian fishing, hunting or industrial and trading activities in the areas which the recognition comprises.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

DANIEL STEEN,

*Chargé d'Affaires a.i.*

The Right Honourable

ARTHUR HENDERSON, P.C., M.P.,

etc. etc. etc.

---

*From the British Chargé d'affaires, Oslo,*

*To the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Oslo.*

No. 122.

BRITISH LEGATION,

OSLO, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1930.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE D'ETAT,—At the instance of His Majesty's Government in Canada and under the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have the honour to invite reference to the two notes addressed to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the Norwegian Chargé d'Affaires in London on August 8th last, in regard to the recognition by the Norwegian Government of the sovereignty of His Britannic Majesty over the Otto Sverdrup Islands, and to inform you that His Majesty's Government in Canada has noted the desire on the part of the Norwegian Government that no obstacles should be interposed to Norwegian fishing, hunting, or industrial and trading activities in the area which the recognition comprises, and wishes to assure the Norwegian Government that it would have pleasure in according any possible facilities. It wishes, however, to draw attention to the fact that it is the established policy of the Government of Canada, as set forth in an Order in Council of July 19, 1926, and subsequent Orders, to protect the Arctic areas as hunting and trapping preserves for the sole use of the aboriginal population of the Northwest Territories, in order to avert the danger of want and starvation through the exploitation of the wild life by white hunters and traders. Except with the permission of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, no person other than native Indians or Eskimos is allowed to hunt, trap, trade, or traffic for any purpose whatsoever in a large area of the mainland and in the whole Arctic island area, with the exception of the southern portion of Baffin Island. It is further provided that no person may hunt or kill or traffic in the skins of the musk-ox, buffalo, wapiti, or elk. These prohibitions apply to all persons, including Canadian nationals. Should, however, the regulations be altered at any time in the future, His Majesty's Government in Canada



would treat with the most friendly consideration any application by Norwegians to share in any fishing, hunting, industrial, or trading activities in the areas which the recognition comprises.

I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you, Monsieur le Ministre d'Etat, of my highest consideration.

KENNETH JOHNSTONE.

Son Excellence,

Monsieur J.L. Mowinckel,  
etc., etc., etc.

---

*From the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Oslo.*

*To the British Chargé d'affaires, Oslo,*

DET KGL. UTENRIKSDEPARTEMENT

Oslo, 5. november 1930.

HR. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES,—Jeg har den ære å erkjenne mottagelsen av Deres note av 5.ds., avgitt i svar på de to noter fra den norske chargé d'affaires i London til den britiske utenriksminister av 8.august d.å. angående Norges anerkjennelse av Hans Britanniske Majestets suverenitet over Otto Sverdrups öyene.

Den norske regjering har bemerket sig, at den kanadiske Regjering gjerne vilde ha innrømmet norsk fangst-og næringsdrift innen disse områder enhver mulig lettelse, men at det er et ledende prinsipp i den Kanadiske Regjering's politikk å søke bevare de arktiske områder til utelukkende bruk som jakt-og fangstområder for Nordvestterritorienes urbefolkning for å hindre, at den kommer i nød som følge av hvite jegeres og fangstfolks utnyttelse av vildtbestanden, og at den ved en flerhet av forordninger har utferdiget nærmere forskrifter i det öiemed.

Den norske regjering har videre bemerket sig, at den Kanadiske Regjering, om disse forskrifter fremtidig skulde bli endret, vil behandle på den velvilligste måte enhver henvendelse fra nordmenn om adgang til å drive fiske, fangst, industriell eller handelsvirksomhet innen de områder, den norske regjering's anerkjennelse omfatter.

Jeg tillater mig å meddele, at den norske regjering finder efter omstendighetene å kunne akviesere ved det således avgivne svar på för nevnte noter av 8.august d.å.

Motta, Hr. Chargé d'Affaires, forsikringen om min særlige höiaktelse.

For Utenriksministeren

AUG. ESMARCH

HR. KENNETH JOHNSTONE,

Det Britiske Rikes Chargé d'Affaires,  
etc., etc.

(Translation)

ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Oslo, 5th November, 1930.

MONSIEUR LE CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 5th instant in reply to the two notes from the Norwegian Chargé d’Affaires in London to the British Foreign Minister of the 8th August last regarding Norway’s recognition of His Britannic Majesty’s sovereignty over the Otto Sverdrup Islands.

The Norwegian Government has noted that the Canadian Government would willingly have granted every possible facility to Norwegian fishing, hunting or industrial and trading activities in these regions, but that it is a leading principle in the policy of the Canadian Government to preserve the Arctic regions as hunting and trapping preserves for the sole use of the aboriginal population of the Northwest Territories, in order to prevent their being in want as a consequence of the exploitation of the wild life by white hunters and trappers, and that they have drawn up more definite regulations to this end by means of several Orders in Council.

The Norwegian Government has further noted that should these regulations be altered in the future, the Canadian Government will treat in the most friendly manner any application from Norwegians for facilities to carry on fishing, hunting, industrial or trading activities in the areas which the Norwegian Government’s recognition comprises.

I beg to inform you that in these circumstances the Norwegian Government find themselves able to concur in this reply to the above-mentioned notes of 8th August last.

I avail myself etc.

(For the Minister for Foreign Affairs)

AUG. ESMARCH

KENNETH JOHNSTONE, ESQ.,

The British Government’s Chargé d’Affaires,  
etc., etc.

## Appendix Five: Minutes of A.C.N.D. Meeting, August 10, 1953

Minutes of a Meeting Held at 10:00 A.M.  
 August 10, 1953, in Room 304, Langevin  
 Block, to Discuss the Transfer of Certain  
 Eskimo Families from Northern Quebec to  
Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands

### Chairman –

Col. F.J.G. Cunningham – Resources and Development.

### Those Present -

W/C W. D. Brodribb – A.F.H.Q., R.C.A.F.  
 Mr. L. T. Campbell – Meteorological Division, Transport.  
 Mr. Jas. Cantley – Resources and Development.  
 Mr. Fred Fraser – Resources and Development.  
 Mr. C. J. Marshall – Secretariat of the ACND.  
 S/L P. S. O’Neil – A.T.C., R.C.A.F.  
 Supt. J. A. Peacock – R.C.M.P.  
 Dr. H. A. Prooter – Indian Health Services, National Health and Welfare.  
 Mr. B. G. Sivertz – Resources and Development.  
 Mr. W. B. Smith – Telecommunications Division, Transport.

---

Col. Cunningham, Director of the Northern Administration and Land Branch, Department of resources and Development, opened the meeting with a resume of the duties and responsibilities of the Department towards the Eskimo of northern Canada and the policy of the Department in providing for their health and welfare. He pointed out that three different types of situations now have to be dealt with,

1. In areas where the natural resources will support the Eskimo inhabitants it has been decided that their basic way of life is to be maintained as far as possible.
2. In areas where permanent white settlements have grown up, the Eskimos will be educated to adapt to this new situations.
3. In areas of the north which cannot continue to support the present Eskimo population, attempts will be made to move the Eskimo to areas with greater natural resources.

The Administration has found that the eastern coast of Hudson Bay cannot continue to supply the Eskimo there with a reasonable standard of living and, therefore, efforts will be made to re-settle some of the inhabitants in more prosperous areas. This year the Administration is carrying out an experiment in which it will transplant a small number of Eskimo families from the eastern shore of Hudson Bay to certain settlements in the High North to see if they can find a better living there.

Mr. Fraser, Chief of the Northern Administration Division, then took the chair and asked Mr. Cantley, head of the Arctic Services Section of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, to explain the details of the Administration experiment.

Mr. Cantley said that eleven Eskimo families in all were involved in this year's experiment. Most of these were taken from Port Harrison, Que. Three families were from Pond Inlet and would be used to help adjust the other families to conditions in the High North. All of the people involved were volunteers and each had been told of the type of environment and conditions which would be found where he was going. Families are to be settled at Resolute, Craig Harbour, and Cape Herschel. At each of these points the local R.C.M.P. constable will supervise the experiment. Each group will be provided with sufficient supplies to last a year. Of the three points where the families will be settled, Resolute is the only one where there may be the possibility of the Eskimo finding employment. However, the possibility of securing employment was not an important factor in deciding where the Eskimo should be settled. The men of the group are primarily hunters and the main purpose of the experiment is to see if it is possible for the people to adapt themselves to the conditions of the High North and secure a living from the land.

Mr. Fraser asked the R.C.A.F. representatives if they were afraid that the Eskimos taking part in the experiment might become dependent on the R.C.A.F. for food and clothing if the experiment was not successful. S/L O'Neil stated that this was the case and that the R.C.A.F. did not expect to be able to offer any employment at Resolute except if Eskimos there had some type of technical training. He asked how many families would be going to each of the settlement areas. Mr. Cantley stated that this would be decided on the boat taking the Eskimo to their destination. It was not desirable to break up family groups if possible.

Mr. Smith said that the Telecommunications Division of the Department of Transport operates ionosphere stations at various points in the north and had found Eskimos very useful particularly at Baker Lake and Fort Chino where they worked as general handymen and kitchen help. The Department of Transport would like to hire at least one Eskimo as a general handyman for the ionosphere station at Resolute if any of those settling there are found to be suitable. He asked what arrangements would be made for payment in the event that an Eskimo was hired at Resolute.

Mr. Cantley said that one of the Eskimo at Resolute, under the supervision of the R.C.M.P. constable, would act as trader for the group. An Eskimo employed by the Department of Transport would receive credit on the trader for his services, the bill would be sent to the Department of Resources and Development in Ottawa and forwarded to the Department of Transport.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Meteorological Division did not expect to be able to offer employment to any Eskimos at Resolute for the time being at least since the housekeeping arrangements there were provided by the R.C.A.F.

S/L O'Neil stated that he was afraid that there was not sufficient wildlife in the Resolute area to provide for the Eskimo population. Mr. Cantley replied that he had reason to believe that there was sufficient marine life to support the Eskimo families concerned. No one could say for sure that this was the case and, consequently, the experiment was being staged.

Mr. Sivertz pointed out that the Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared that in many cases the Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this.

Mr. Fraser outlined some steps being taken to provide technical training for Eskimo, particularly the trade school to be opened soon at Aklavik. Mr. Smith said that diesel mechanics were always very scarce and that his Department would welcome such a training programme if it could provide qualified diesel mechanics.

A discussion of medical facilities available at Resolute followed. Mr. Cantley stated that all the families taking part in the experiment had been examined beforehand by a doctor and given a clean bill of health. S/L O'Neil said that he understood the R.C.M.P. would be responsible for medical attention given to the Eskimo. Supt. Peacock said that the

R.C.M.P. representative had first-aid training and would have first-aid supplies available. S/L O'Neil said that a doctor visited the Resolute base once a month and that a medical orderly was on duty at all times.

W/C Brodribb requested that in future, when such experiments were being planned, that the Air Force be informed well in advance so that it would have a chance to comment on the plans.

Mr. Sivertz summarized the situation by stating that the R.C.M.P. constable in charge of the experiment was representing the Department of Resources and Development, that the Eskimos' prime purpose in going to the High North was to see if it were possible for them to adapt themselves to conditions there and secure a reasonable living. Steps will be taken to see that the Eskimo are provided for in case the experiment is not successful and that every effort will be made to see that the R.C.A.F. is not inconvenienced.

Mr. Cantley stated that those taking part in the experiment were not seeking employment but that the Administration would not stand in their way if employment became available.

At the conclusion of the meeting those attending were satisfied that the arrangements and planning of the experiment were such that the Eskimo families involved would not become a liability to the R.C.A.F.

C.J. Marshall,  
Secretariat, ACND.

## Appendix Six: Search for Similar Claims

Time allowed for only a limited search for aboriginal claims whose circumstances could be considered to be sufficiently similar as to provide some guidance to the Department in formulating a definitive response to this Inuit claim and to the recommendations of the Standing Committee. The Comprehensive Claims Branch and the Specific Claims Branch of the Department constituted the sole sources of the information we were able to gather on this subject.

A number of claims involving the relocation of Indians Bands or parts of Bands in British Columbia were brought to our attention, namely the Cheslata Band Claim (early 1950s) and the Ingenika Band Claim (early in the 1960s).

Both of these claims involved the relocation of Band members precipitated by the flooding of Band lands, by Alcan in the case of the first and by B.C. Hydro in the case of the second, and involved the selection and granting of new lands and other forms of compensation.

The Peace River Project in Northern British Columbia also involved the flooding of aboriginal lands, the relocation of the people involved, the replacement of lands lost and other forms of compensation.

The diversion of the Nelson and Churchill Rivers and some of their tributaries in Northern Manitoba, for hydro development in the 1970s requiring the relocation of Indian Bands and some non-status Indians, evoked a large claim involving the payment of compensation in various forms, primarily by the Manitoba Hydro and the signing of a number of agreements jointly by Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and the Government of Canada. This claim is still active.

The flooding of Indian lands under the James Bay and Nouveau Quebec Agreement, which permitted the immense James Bay Hydro Development Program to proceed also involved the relocation of Indian people and has many of the characteristics of the Nelson River Project, but on a much larger scale.

A common characteristic of this sampling of claims is that they all involve, effectively, a forced relocation of people and destruction or damage to property as a result of an action taken by government or private enterprise. These characteristics are not found in the Inuit claim in question and therefore we would regard them as largely irrelevant in this case.

The Killinek or Port Burwell Claim, involving the relocation of Inuit families from Port Burwell in the Northwest Territories to communities, principally in the Ungava Bay area of Arctic Quebec, has some of the characteristics of the subject Inuit claim. Under the Killinek Claim, members of the group were integrated into the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, new sites were selected and shelter and other forms of compensation provided. We did not have time to examine this claim in depth but it would appear to us to be a candidate for further study.

In the last few days of our study we were made aware of still another claim that is now under way and that would appear to have some similarities to the claim which is the subject of our study. This is the claim by the Churchill Band who were resettled from one area of Northern Manitoba to the Churchill area in the 1950s. The similarity between the two claims would seem to reside in part in the fact that the basic motivation behind the relocation of both groups was concern over poor hunting and trapping conditions in the areas in question, which were putting the people at risk. Other similarities relate to the purported dissatisfaction of the groups with their circumstances after relocation. We would recommend that this claim be examined in greater detail.

## Appendix Seven: Dictionary of Terms

**ESKIMOLOGY/WELFARE SECTION:** In the early 1950s, an Eskimology Section was established within the Administration and Lands Branch of the Department of Resources and Development to respond to letters written by Inuit in the various dialects of Inuktitut, on a broad range of subjects. Inuit speaking staff knowledgeable in the several dialects of the language were employed to translate and prepare replies to incoming letters on behalf of the departmental officials.

Many of the letters dealt with the problems of Inuit mothers, fathers and children while under treatment in hospitals in southern Canada. The unit endeavoured to maintain communications between the patients, the families in the home communities and policy sections of the department.

Over time this elementary service expanded to include visits to hospitals and participation in the evacuation, discharge and repatriation of Inuit patients. The Section became a Welfare Division in 1956 and gradually expanded to become the equivalent of a provincial department of social welfare and cultural development. The functions were largely transferred to the Territorial Government in 1966.

**GRISE FIORD, N.W.T.** Settlement, pop 114 (1986c), 106 (1981c) is located on the south coast of Ellesmere Island and is Canada's most northerly Inuit community. It is situated in game-rich country from which the residents derive their living. The settlement is the result of federal government efforts to alleviate poor economic conditions among the Inuit in the more depressed areas of the Arctic. Inuit families from other areas of the North were first settled in the area in 1953. Many N.W.T. residents consider the community setting the most beautiful in the North.

**INUIT TAPIRISAT OF CANADA (ITC;** formerly the Inuit Brotherhood) was founded in 1971 when an organizing committee of Inuit decided it was time to speak with a united voice on various issues concerning development of the Canadian North and preservation of Inuit culture.

The goals of ITC are to preserve Inuit language and culture; to promote a sense of dignity and pride in Inuit heritage; to provide a focal point for determining the needs and wishes of all Inuit; to represent Inuit on matters affecting their well being; to improve communications to and between Inuit communities; and to help Inuit achieve full participation in Canadian society.

ITC is a non-profit organization; its funding sources are mainly government agencies and private foundations in Canada.

**INUKJUAK (PORT HARRISON)** is located on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay about 490 kilometers south of the Arctic Circle. Like many arctic communities, Inukjuak was originally used by Inuit as a large seasonal village. Later it became the site of a Hudson Bay Company post that served the outlying villages. By the early 1960s, it became a central community site and a consolidation of much of the dispersed regional population. By the 1980s, the community had become an important center of the region and is presently the headquarters of the Makivik Corporation of Quebec. The population currently is about 850 people.

**MAKIVIK CORPORATION OF QUEBEC** was the first Inuit development corporation, the successor to NQIA. Its founder and president is Senator Charlie Watt.

An example of Makivik's activities is the tentative agreement reached in 1989 with the federal government over Canada's outstanding obligations under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The JBNQA implementation agreement seeks to improve delivery of provincial and federal programs and services by devolving them to local institutions. The implementation agreement commits the federal government to establishing a

Northern Quebec Marine Transportation Infrastructure program and to participating in a review of the justice system in Nunavik. Moreover, the implementation agreement provides for a payment of \$20.5 million to Nunavik Inuit at a time of government spending cutbacks.

**RESOLUTE** is located 1,561 air km NE of Yellowknife on the northeast shore of Resolute Bay and on the south coast of Cornwallis Island in the Queen Elizabeth Islands in the Baffin Region. It is approximately 950 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle.

The area and site have been used by Inuit for centuries however the development sequence is largely attributable to government activities. An airfield was established at Resolute Bay in 1947 during construction of a joint US-Canadian meteorological station. The island then became one of the most easily accessible parts of the Arctic. In 1953, Inuit from Port Harrison, Quebec and Pond Inlet were relocated to Resolute to take advantage of the island's superior game resources. The move was successful enough that they requested some of their relatives to join them, and in 1955 a number of other families were moved in.

## **Appendix Eight: New Housing at Port Harrison, 1990**

[Photos not reproduced]

## **Appendix Nine: Chronology of the Department of Northern Affairs**

1867-1873

Under the Department of the Secretary of State for the Provinces

1873-1936

Under the Department of the Interior

1937-1949

Under the Department of Mines and Resources

1950-1953

Under the Department of Resources and Development

1953-1966 (October 3)

Under the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources

1966 (October 3)

Under the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development



## Appendix Ten: Eastern Arctic Patrol

### REPORT OF THE 195[?] EASTERN ARCTIC PATROL CHURCHILL ONWARD

...

#### CRAIG HARBOUR – GRISE FJORD, August 25-26

Loading of material to be transferred to Grise Fjord, took place on August 25 and the ship left for Grise Fjord at [8:45?] with ten Eskimo on board, the remainder already being at Grise. Superintendent Larsen and Corporal Sargent with S/C [Kayan?] decided to make the trip in the Peterhead.

The new site at Grise Fjord seems to be a better location subject to the qualification that anchorage (less than 50 fathoms) could only be located quite close to shore. A safer anchorage in rough weather will likely be found further up the Fjord. Two small buildings had been dismantled, freighted over by dog team and erected so that the main problem was the erection of the new prefabricated dwelling.

The people at Grise Fjord are doing quite well. Aside from Family Allowances where there are three families with total credits of over 500, most of the men have credits with the trader varying from 350 down. One or two are slightly in debt, but these latter are men brought up last year who are still bringing their equipment up to a reasonable level.

However, the group is small (45 in all) and they want to bring relatives in. Angnekadlok E5-787 wants to bring his father Keepume in from Pond and won't stay unless the old man can join him. Corporal Sargent says Keepume is a natural leader and would be an upset. Akpaleoepik E5-834 wants to bring his brother from Pond. Corporal Sargent recommends that the above two families be brought in and possibly two Port Harrison families. If Angnekadlok leaves, he suggests bringing in three or four younger families from Port Harrison. Corporal Sargent claims the area can easily support more people as there are lots of seal and bearded seal. The group at Grise Fjord could stand two or three additional families and if there were any need to find additional locations for another group, it is quite likely other Fjords could be found in the general area with an abundance of seal and other wildlife resources. Alexandria Fjord and Dundas Harbor were also mentioned as suitable locations for communities.

The ostensible trader now is Thomassie E9-1539. Corporal Sargent has adopted the practice of employing a different trader yearly with the aim of training several people in thoroughness and systematic operation. Books similar to a [illegible] book are used to record credits, debits and balances. Each man also uses this book to record his game take as well.

Shortly after leaving Grise at 21:30, August 26, Dr. Fonnedy and I saw the Captain regarding diversion of the ship to Arctic Bay to pick up an emergency case--by 9:30 August 27, this proved unnecessary as word was received a Canso would pick up the patient.

#### NAVY BOARD INLET

As Pond Inlet had advised it was impossible to bring in three camps on Navy Board Inlet, the location of the camps was secured by radio from the R.C.M. Police at Pond Inlet and the Captain agreed to go through Navy Board Inlet and do these camps.

The first two camps were located at 17:30 and 20:30 and the helicopter was used to ferry the people aboard and back to their camps. The third camp was very difficult to find at 2:30 a.m. and with the weather getting rougher. It was located and since the swells were too rough for the use of boats, the helicopter was employed again.

POND INLET, August 28-29

We had some difficulty at Pond Inlet persuading a woman with four small children and a husband already in the Sanitorium to go out. Having no close relatives to care for the children, she was reluctant to go until it was pointed out her only chance of living to bring up her children and to see them grow up without tuberculosis, was to go out and recover. She arranged with two other families to take over the children and Constable Johnson undertook to issue rations as necessary to ensure proper care of the children. We had hoped to drop anchor in Hamilton Bay midway between Pond and Clyde to do an otherwise inaccessible camp near Adams Island, but according to information at Pond, the camp was about 50 miles up an inlet and the Captain could not see his way clear to risk the ship any further in unknown waters.

...

## Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol

1950

Alex Stevenson

Arctic Division, Northwest Territories Administration

On Monday, July 17, the "C.D. Howe" sailed from Montreal on her maiden voyage carrying supplies and personnel to a number of settlements in the Eastern Arctic. This 3,600-ton vessel, the latest of the Department of Transport's fleet, with Captain A. Chouinard as Master, was built to undertake the duties of the Eastern Arctic Patrol which, in former years was carried out on the R.M.S. "Nascopie". Calls were made at the various points as follows:

	<u>Date of Arrival</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>
Montreal, Quebec		July 17
Quebec, Quebec	July 17	July 25
Cape Harrison, Labrador	July 29	July 31
Port Burwell, N.W.T.	Aug. 2	Aug. 3
Fort Chimo, Quebec	Aug. 4	Aug. 11
Churchill, Manitoba	Aug. 15	Aug. 23
Cape Dorset, N.W.T.	Aug. 26	Aug. 27
Lake Harbor, N.W.T.	Aug. 28	Aug. 29
Pangnirtung, N.W.T.	Sept. 1	Sept. 1
River Clyde, N.W.T.	Sept. 4	Sept. 5
Pond Inlet, N.W.T.	Sept. 6	Sept. 7
Arctic Bay, N.W.T.	Sept. 8	Sept. 8
Dundas Harbor, N.W.T.	Sept. 9	Sept. 9
Frobisher Bay, N.W.T.	Sept. 13	Sept. 15
Quebec, Quebec	Sept. 22	

The following is a list of the Government party that sailed from Montreal:

Mr. A. Stevenson	Resources and Development	O.I.C. Eastern Arctic Patrol.
Mr. R.E.G. Johnston	Resources & Development	Asst. to O.I.C., Eastern Arctic Patrol.
Mr. R. A. Hadden	Post Office	Postmaster.
Dr. J. H. Nesbitt	Nat. Health & Welfare	Senior Medical Officer.
Dr. R. S. Robertson	Nat. Health & Welfare	Dentist.
Mr. W. Lezewski	Nat. Health & Welfare	X-ray Technician.
Mr. W. Prooter	Nat. Health & Welfare	Medical Attendant.
Mr. C. A. Parkin	Dept. of Transport	Helicopter Pilot.
Mr. K. Wallingford	Dept. of Transport	Flight Engineer.

Owing to the railway strikes being on when we arrived at Churchill we missed part of the vessel's oil shipment. The Captain was quite concerned about this shortage and felt that there was some danger of the vessel encountering so much ice that we would consume more fuel than would allow us to complete the itinerary. With this in mind and the exceptionally good weather no time was lost and each post was visited in rapid succession. Furthermore, the stay at each settlement was cut short. I may say that this was not entirely satisfactory from an administrative point of view or for the medical services rendered to the Eskimo.

# 3

## *Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the Complaints of the Inuit People Relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and 1955 (“Soberman Report”)*

REPORT TO THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON  
THE COMPLAINTS OF THE INUIT PEOPLE RELOCATED FROM  
INUKJUAK AND POND INLET, TO GRISE FIORD AND  
RESOLUTE BAY IN 1953 AND 1955

DECEMBER 11, 1991

D. Soberman

Kingston, Ontario

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report results from a decision of the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) to review the complaints made in 1990 by Inuit representatives, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. The complaints are with respect to the relocation, in 1953 and 1955, of a number of Inuit families, principally from Inukjuak on the east coast of Hudson Bay in northern Quebec.

The Committee referred the matter to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). In response to the referral DIAND commissioned a study by the firm of J.F. Hickling Management Consultants. In November 1990, the Consultant's report, along with DIAND's reply to the Inuit complaints, were presented to the Committee. The substance of the response was that the Government of Canada had acted properly with respect to the relocations and would not apologize.

Dissatisfaction with the Consultant's report and DIAND's response prompted ITC to appeal to CHRC. Since the main events occurred in the 1950s – long before the Canadian Human Rights Act became law and CHRC came into existence – CHRC concluded that its statutory procedures for investigating complaints did not apply to the situation. However, in January 1991, CHRC made an informal arrangement with ITC and DIAND to conduct a review of their complaints and their surrounding circumstances.

It is helpful, because of the unusual origin and nature of this report, to set out the Mandate for the investigation as agreed between the CHRC and myself:

to act as Special Reporter to the Commission to investigate the relocation of the Inuit People from Northern Quebec to the High Arctic and to provide an opinion on the claims of the Inuit regarding the relocation.

Among the more technical aspects, is one specific addition to the Mandate:

if the contractor and Commission Representative determine it feasible, to explore the possibility of arriving at a conclusion mutually acceptable to the Inuit and DIAND.

The mandate, therefore, includes a meditative element, that of trying to reach a resolution of the disagreement between the two sides.

It should be noted that this report is not a formal decision of a tribunal, based on hearing sworn testimonies subject to cross-examination and the reception of documents as exhibits, followed by argument of counsel on fact and law. But neither is it a paper written without regard to the juridical view of evidence and of legal obligations arising from facts that have been established on a balance of probabilities. Rather, it is a report by an independent investigator striving for impartiality and informally employing juridical norms.

Thus, I conceived of my first task as that of listening as carefully and fully as I could to the complainants' concerns and arguments. The next step was to listen to the reply of the other side, by interviewing former and current civil servants, including RCMP officers. I also invited both sides as well as any other interested persons not only to meet with me but also to submit all relevant documents. While the documents considered in reaching my conclusions have not been subjected to court-like verification procedures, I have no doubt about their validity.

With the written consent of both parties this review began in August 1991. I first travelled to the High Arctic (Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay and Pond Inlet) to interview as many of the Inuit directly involved in the events of the 1950s as was feasible in the time available. A few days later, I made a second trip to Inukjuak, the original home of most of the relocated families, to interview those who had returned from the High Arctic.

These visits have been followed by interviews with persons recommended by DIAND, to obtain information from those acting on behalf of the Government of Canada in the 1950s, and from other observers of the events. With help from CHRC research staff, we have made as extensive an examination and review as is possible, within the time frame available, of documents within the Government of Canada Archives and in related government departments. We have also examined reports and research studies from the 1960s to the present time.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE COMPLAINT

There is no formal statement of complaint from an Inuit organization, but the substance of their claims is generally agreed to be as follows:

1. The primary reason for relocating Inuit families from northern Quebec to the High Arctic in 1953 and 1955 was to strengthen Canada's claim to territorial sovereignty over the eastern Arctic archipelago.
2. This purpose was not disclosed to them but rather they were told they were being moved solely for the altruistic reason of improving their quality of life, and especially with respect to the availability of "country food" (game).
3. They were promised that they would be returned to their original homes without expense if, within "two or three years," they stated they were not happy with the new location and wished to return.
4. The relocation itself in terms of both planning and implementation was seriously flawed and inadequate, resulting in unnecessary hardship to the relocated families.
5. A large proportion of the Inuit families asked to be returned but the promise to return them was not kept.
6. The result has been long term hardship for many of the families, caused primarily by separation from other member of their family in the south.
7. The relocation did in fact strengthen Canada's claim to territorial sovereignty.

Therefore the complainants have asked for three things:

- a) Recognition of their contribution to the Canadian claim to territorial sovereignty in the High Arctic;
- b) An apology for the hardship that Inuit suffered in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay; and
- c) Compensation for the wrongs done to them.

### 3. THE FACTS

#### (a) Relocation to the High Arctic

In 1952, the Government decided to consider relocating a number of Inuit families from the Ungava region of northern Quebec to the High Arctic.<sup>2</sup> The result was a plan to relocate families, principally from Inukjuak but with a smaller number from Pond Inlet to help the Inukjuak people acclimatize, to three locations in the High Arctic: Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island, Craig Harbour at the southeast corner of Ellesmere Island and Alexandra Fiord<sup>3</sup>, about halfway up the east coast of Ellesmere Island on Smith Sound and close to Greenland.

In the spring of 1953, local RCMP officers, accompanied by an interpreter, visited various Inuit camps located in the region surrounding Inukjuak, as much as 100 miles or more from the community. They arranged for Inuit families to travel to Inukjuak in late July to board the Government supply and medical ship, the “C.D. Howe” for the journey to the High Arctic. Similar arrangements were made by the local RCMP at Pond Inlet on northern Baffin Island, for three families in that region to join the re-location, one family to settle in each of the three locations. The ship made various stops on its usual route, including Pond Inlet where the three families came aboard.

On August 27, the ship arrived at Craig Harbour, where it met with another Government vessel, the “d’Iberville”. One Pond Inlet family and three Inukjuak families were disembarked at Craig Harbour. The remainder of the Inuit families were transferred from the “C.D. Howe” to the “d’Iberville”, which sailed north toward Smith Sound with the intention of depositing seven families at Alexandra Fiord, over 200 miles away. Part way there the ship encountered heavy sea ice and was unable to continue northward. At that point, the plan for an Inuit settlement at Alexandra Fiord was abandoned. The “C.D. Howe” had meanwhile begun its return journey to Quebec.

The “d’Iberville” returned to Craig Harbour where it deposited three more families (two from Inukjuak and one from Pond Inlet) originally intended for Alexander Fiord, who then joined the families already disembarked during the first stop. Within a few days, the whole group were escorted by the RCMP to a location on Lindstrom Peninsula, between 40 and 50 miles to the west where they set up camp. Within a few years this group moved several miles east to the present Grise Fiord location. The remaining families aboard the “d’Iberville” (three from Inukjuak and one from Pond Inlet) continued to Resolute Bay and, on September 6, 1953, were disembarked on the shore several miles from the weather station.

In 1955, four more families from Inukjuak and one from Arctic Bay (Another community on northern Baffin Island) were moved north, three to Resolute Bay and two to Grise Fiord. In 1959 one more family moved from Pond Inlet to Resolute Bay.

In all, seventeen families, comprising 87 persons, 58 from Inukjuak, 8 from Arctic Bay and 21 from Pond Inlet were moved north, 42 to Grise Fiord and 45 to Resolute Bay.

#### (b) Return to the Original Communities

The first family to return to its former home went back to Pond Inlet in 1956. Subsequently, fewer than ten additional Pond Inlet relocates returned home. I have been unable to find an accurate record of all those who returned to Inukjuak, so that what follows are merely estimates.

In the 1960s, several individuals returned to Inukjuak. Between 1970 and 1980, over 20 people returned to Inukjuak, some as individuals or couples, some as families. In the 1980s, and especially in 1988, when the Government offered to pay for the return of another group of families, at least five more families returned. (The Government also offered to compensate families who had returned earlier at their own expense.) It must be noted that a substantial number of the original adult relocates had died by the late 1980s, so that by 1989, a very large proportion of the survivors had returned to Inukjuak. My estimate is that between 40 and 50 inhabitants of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, including a number of young children and just a few in their teens or twenties, returned to Inukjuak over a period of three decades.

#### 4. BACKGROUND: GOVERNMENT POLICIES TOWARD THE INUIT

Until the Second World War and the ensuing cold war, the general level of knowledge and concern in the Federal Government about the Canadian Arctic appears to have been low. Even in the early 1950s, the well-being of the Inuit received little consideration. As Richard Diubaldo stated:

... for an era which spawned numerous planners of defence and economic policy, there appeared to be little actual, long-range and coordinated policy formation regarding the Inuit ... civil servants of the Northwest Territories branch struggled manfully and humanely without any real rudder.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, in interviewing the Inuit who were part of the relocation and in reading the reports and correspondence by civil servants of the era, one finds an absence of government policy, with decisions left largely to those civil servants directly responsible for administration. The staff of the department in Ottawa supervising the North was usually very small, often without the direct experience of having spent time in the North.

That substantial problems had resulted for the Inuit from the increasing presence of southern peoples, there was no disagreement. As might be expected, however, neither a common perception of these problems nor of the best way to resolve them was shared by Government policy makers. Nevertheless, I believe a dominant view at the time ultimately guided the relocation policy; it was supported by three quite closely related ideas.

First, a number of members of the Canadian Arctic administration shared a wistful desire to help aboriginal peoples generally to return to the lifestyle and values of an earlier era. This goal was not exclusive to its Government supporters; it has been asserted in varying degrees by aboriginal peoples themselves both Indian and Inuit, and it is still frequently heard.

To what extent is such a goal, at least with respect to returning to a traditional lifestyle, practical and worth the effort, or is it naïve and unworkable, perhaps even harmful? Who, for instance, can imagine banning rifles and insisting that Inuit return to using ancient weapons to hunt polar bears and whales? Or, perhaps more to the point, who wishes to deny Inuit access to health care, or their children opportunities for modern education?

Nevertheless, this desire for a return to the traditional way of life appears to have been a significant element in the minds of those who planned relocations of Inuit families from the 1930s to the 1950s.<sup>5</sup>

Second, there was a widely shared fear that the increasing Inuit population<sup>6</sup> was exhausting the game resources of certain regions, in this case, northern Quebec.<sup>7</sup> Evidence about the poor conditions of Inuit life, especially their perceived diminishing food supplies, was mentioned frequently in Government reports. Decreasing the population in Northern Quebec by relocating a significant proportion of Inuit to regions where game was plentiful was seen as a means of alleviating the food supply problem.



Third, administrators were concerned that the Inuit had become enmeshed in a demeaning process of increasing dependency on the Government of Canada for welfare handouts – “relief” payments as they were called in the 1950s. It was assumed that returning them to their traditional lifestyle would also return them to their former independence. Moreover, the worry about ever larger sums being absorbed by native welfare obligations might thus be addressed and save the Government significant sums of money.

There was, however, a countervailing view – that the Government could not “turn back the clock”, that encroachments of modern life were largely irreversible and that it was necessary to help the Inuit adapt to the new environment.<sup>8</sup> This countervailing view was never far from the surface and from time to time was the prime factor in making decisions.

## 5. THE ROLE OF SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS IN THE ARCTIC

Long before the World War II, Government officials had expressed general concern over Canadian territorial sovereignty in the Arctic. In the late 1940s, the “cold war” and the very large presence of the U.S. military and civilian personnel in the Arctic caused the Government to worry about its ability to sustain Canada’s own presence there.<sup>9</sup> The response to the sovereignty concern seems to have focused primarily on Canada expanding the presence of its own armed forces, and increasing its control over weather stations and transportation links; depending on the Americans to perform too many duties was troubling the Government.<sup>10</sup> In the early 1950s, there were many references in Government documents to establishing clear control over weather stations, which until that time were shared with U.S. personnel and to establishing new RCMP posts or to re-establishing posts that had been closed.

By 1950, the Government also expressed concern over excursions into the Canadian Arctic by Greenland Inuit: they frequently crossed over from Greenland to Ellesmere Island in the vicinity of the Bache Peninsula, hunted and sometimes passed a number of months on the island. Indeed, it appears that some Greenlanders stayed on Ellesmere for two years, from 1951 to 1953. There were discussions about taking measures to limit if not to prohibit the access of Greenland Inuit.<sup>11</sup> The government also stated that it wished to restrict contact between Canadian and Greenland Inuit, although no reasons appear to have been stated.

I have not found any direct evidence that, either immediately before or at the time of the relocations of the Inuit, the Government in Ottawa expressly decided to use them as a significant factor in reinforcing the Canadian claim to Arctic sovereignty. No document that I have examined coming from the highest levels of government, directly states that the reason – or a primary reason – for relocating Inuit from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay was to enhance Canadian claims to territorial sovereignty in the High Arctic. However, some civil servants at an intermediate level did make written comments which suggest that they perceived the Inuit relocations to be a means of increasing Canada’s presence there.<sup>12</sup> It may be that they were responding to oral statements emanating from higher levels. In any event, there is ample evidence to counter the stated recollections of some former civil servants that the sovereignty issue was never in their minds at the time of the relocation.

Their awareness of the general worries in Ottawa suggests two reasons for their mentioning sovereignty: first, they may have added their own view that relocating Inuit in specific locations would be helpful in this regard; second, they may have referred to sovereignty simply to gain support in Ottawa for their relocation proposals.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, there are a number of statements made years later in government documents<sup>14</sup> and in reports of observers<sup>15</sup> asserting that the new Inuit communities had indeed supported Canada's sovereignty claims.

In summary, the evidence about the existence of a developed Government policy in Ottawa with respect to sovereignty affecting the relocation may be considered circumstantial, but this does not mean it is insignificant. On the balance of probabilities, it is reasonable to conclude that sovereignty was a material, even if not a dominant, concern of the Canadian Government and may well have influenced relocation decisions. While I do not think the Government would have relocated Inuit for reasons of sovereignty alone, and indeed, might not even have thought of using relocation for that purpose, nevertheless – having previously used relocation of native peoples for other purposes, and having concluded that Inuit in the Inukjuak region ought to be relocated – sovereignty concerns may well have played a role in the time and location of the new settlements, and particularly in selecting Ellesmere Island.

Paradoxically, this conclusion is most easily reached with respect to the one relocation of the three proposed that was abandoned, that at Alexandra Fiord near Bache Peninsula, the area where Greenlanders traditionally crossed to Ellesmere Island to hunt polar bear. However, the speed and apparent lack of deliberation with which the decision was made aboard the “d'Iberville” to abandon this location, after more than one year's planning, suggests that sovereignty was not a dominant concern. It remains problematic just how significant territorial sovereignty concerns were.<sup>16</sup>

It follows from the Government denying that sovereignty was a reason for the relocation, that it would not have communicated a “non-reason” to the Inuit. Civil servants have not claimed to have discussed sovereignty with the Inuit nor have the Inuit recalled such any discussions. At most, as noted in footnote 15, above, the assumption that sovereignty was an object may have been mentioned in conversations among civil servants and observers.

In view of the matters discussed below, the sovereignty question is not, in my opinion, the most important issue in the complaint of the Inuit. However, even if every other aspect of the relocation was entirely satisfactory, the question would remain whether the Government of Canada ought to acknowledge that sovereignty was not irrelevant or even insignificant, and whether the Inuit should be thanked for their contribution towards enhancing Canadian territorial sovereignty in the Arctic. This question will be discussed later.

## 6. THE PROMISE TO RETURN FAMILIES TO INUKJUAKE IF THEY WERE UNHAPPY WITH THE RELOCATION

All the Inuit with whom I spoke and who were old enough to remember how they first learned about the relocation, gave similar narratives of that event:

1. An RCMP officer accompanied by an interpreter visited their family's camp;
2. He informed them that the government intended to move them to a new region where the hunting would be much better and their lives would improve;
3. He also said that if they were not happy with the new location they could return in “a couple of years” (or words to that effect);<sup>17</sup>

4. They were approached family by family at their campsites; an attempt was made to bring them together as a group to discuss the project; to them it seemed as if the government had already decided and they really had no option.
5. The RCMP offered little information about the new location since the Inuit was entirely unfamiliar with any environment other than their own, they naturally assumed that the new site would not be drastically different from what they knew; the assurance of their ability to return allayed most fears so that they did not ask probing questions about the new location.

To most of the hunters, the male heads of the families, the relocation seemed worth a try, so why protest? Some wives worried about being separated from their families in the Inukjuak area, but they were reassured by the knowledge that they would return to their traditional home within a relatively short time.

All this made sense and sounds consistent with my understanding of relations between representatives of the Canadian government and the Inuit. It is consistent with benevolent paternalism: the government presumed to know what was in the Inuits' [sic] best interests and prodded them along. This scenario does not suggest deception or malevolent withholding of information. Indeed, we do not know what the RCMP officers themselves, who visited the Inuit of Inukjuak, knew about conditions on Cornwallis Island and Ellesmere Island.

Most important, there is sufficient documentary evidence to corroborate the recollections of the Inuit about receiving a promise. The following letter is sufficiently important to be reproduced in full:

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Ottawa April 14, 1953

The Director

Northern Administration and Lands Branch

Dept. of Resources and Development

Ottawa, Ontario

Re: Responsibility, Care and  
Supervision of Eskimos.

1. By direction of the Commissioner of the R.C.M. Police, and having reference to your letter to him, dated the 8<sup>th</sup>. Inst., I enclose one copy of each of the wireless messages which we have today sent to our Port Harrison, Fort Chimo and Pond Inlet Detachments.
2. Please note the reference in the messages to the Eskimo families being brought back to their homes. I considered it advisable to make that promise. I have in mind the sad experiences of those families of Eskimos (I believe eleven families) who were taken from Cape Dorset to Dundas Harbour in 1934 by the then Northern Administration and after being there with the Hudson's Bay Company for two years were taken to Arctic Bay and Fort Ross. They suffered hardships and asked, from time to time to be taken back to Cape Dorset. They never were taken back and the survivors and their descendants, are still in the Fort Ross – Spence Bay Detachment.

[signed]

H.A. Larsen, Insp.,

Officer Commanding, "G" Division.

[emphasis added]

The accompanying Teletype messages of the same date, each ended with the following sentence:

FAMILIES WILL BE BROUGHT BACK HOME AT THE END OF ONE YEAR IF THEY SO DESIRE

H.A. LARSEN

This view was confirmed in a memorandum by J. Cantley, one month after the families were relocated:

... [the Inuit families] went north on the understanding that they would continue to live as hunters and trappers and that if they were satisfied to settle there permanently, we would provide the trading facilities. On the other hand, if they did not like the country, they would be returned to their homes again.

... We must now wait to see how it works out. If the first group is successful and satisfied, others will follow. If not, then we shall have to bring them back.<sup>18</sup> [emphasis added]

A further confirmation is found in an assessment of progress three years later:

After two years [sic] the people seem content to stay on, whereas they only agreed to go in the first place on condition that we promised to return them to their former home after "two or three years."<sup>19</sup>

Although there seems to be some confusion about whether the Inuit were promised to be returned after one, two or three years (and the Inuit themselves were uncertain of the exact time), there is no uncertainty that promises were made to return them if they so desired.

## 7. OVERALL PLANNING OF THE RELOCATION

### (a) Information about the Relocation Sites

I have noted that an important goal of the relocation – indeed the Government asserts, the primary goal – was to move Inuit families to regions where game resources were plentiful. It would seem reasonable, then, to expect to find scientific data used by civil servants to help them determine that Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island had sufficient game. However, there is no evidence that such data had ever been gathered.

Instead, the Government relied on two observations: first, that Greenland Inuit frequented Ellesmere Island in order to hunt because game appeared to be plentiful; second, the RCMP officers observed substantial numbers of polar bears, foxes and other game on Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island. But there were no systematic counts made<sup>20</sup> nor was the Wildlife Service asked to provide advice. The evidence was impressionistic albeit provided, at least in part, by some people quite experienced High Arctic conditions.

Government reports are consistent with this approach: they described the relocation in these regions as being in the nature of an experiment. R.G. Robertson, Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, summarized this view succinctly in a letter dated February 18, 1954, to C.M. Drury, Deputy Minister of National Defence:

As you will note from the Minutes of [the Meeting of the Advisory Council on Northern Development, held on 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1953] the transfer of a few families of Eskimos to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands was made as an experiment to determine how well Eskimos from southern areas could adapt themselves to conditions in the high Arctic and make a living for themselves by hunting and trapping.

... Present indications are that they will be able and happy to do so. If the experiment continues to show satisfactory results, we may consider transferring more families... [emphasis added]

This approach to the question of relocation was reflected consistently in Government communications, beginning in late 1952 and continuing through 1956. The following excerpts from a letter of May 10, 1956, by Mr. Robertson to Commissioner L.H. Nicholson of the RCMP, about a prospective resettlement to a location on Devon Island, explains well the approach taken:

With regard to the possibility of such a move in a later year, we have been looking into the history of Dundas Harbour. I gather there is some doubt about it as a location likely to support Eskimo hunters and trappers. The Hudson's Bay Company opened a post there with the idea that it might be productive. Their experience was that the wildlife population went down very quickly with a minimum of killing and was not capable of regenerating at a rate anywhere near sufficient for the needs of the small group of Eskimos that were moved in there ... [There follows some speculation about the reasons.]

... The two establishments at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay seem to be doing well. However, the officers in the Wildlife Service are not sure that a definite conclusion, based on the experience of only two years, would be justified. They feel that the question as to whether the animal population can stand the present amount of killing cannot be answered in such a short time. [emphasis added]

These quotations leave no doubt that selection of the relocation areas was not the results of extensive scientific research,<sup>21</sup> but was in the nature of an experiment with regard to both the game resources and the adaptability of "Eskimos from southern areas".

A further aspect of planning the relocation sites related to the selection of Inuit families and their allocation to the three settlements. Memoranda from late 1952 and early 1953 suggested relocating a total of 15 families, five at each site. There was no attempt to compare the availability of game in each region in order to learn whether one site might support more families than might another. We can only speculate that the authors assumed five families was a sufficiently low number that they would not exhaust the wildlife stocks at any location. As we shall see in Section 10, below, no effort was made to allocate families to each site in advance; those decisions were made on board the "C.D. Howe" just before disembarking at Craig Harbour.

The nature of the experiment deserves comment. After examining the documents and speaking with a number of civil servants who participated in the relocation, and speaking with RCMP Constable Gibson, who accompanied the first families from Inukjuak and remained with them at Resolute Bay, I find that no one believed they were putting the lives of the Inuit at risk. RCMP visited the new camps on a regular basis and believed themselves to be sufficiently nearby to cope with emergencies that might arise, although the visits were clearly less frequent at Lindstrom Peninsula where the RCMP detachment was almost 50 miles away. In addition, as noted below, the Government had promised to return those Inuit who were sufficiently dissatisfied with the High Arctic to request going back to Inukjuak. None of this is to say either that some risks did not arise,

or that they could not reasonably have been foreseen. Furthermore, while the experiment was not life endangering, it could and should have been foreseen as likely to cause some hardship.

**(b) Budget and Authorization for the Relocation**

I have been unable to find any formal authorization of the relocation; all information about planning and implementation is found in memoranda, letters and reports of committee meetings, prepared by civil servants at various levels from deputy minister to RCMP constables. Without studying normal Government practices in authorizing projects of a similar nature in the 1950s, I have no basis for assuming that the lack of formal authorization was irregular. Indeed, it may be consistent with normal practices, as well as with the budget arrangements discussed immediately below.

As for the transportation aboard the “C.D. Howe” and the “d’Iberville”, it appears that the Department of Transportation did not charge for the cargo space made available to the Inuit. It did charge a small amount for food – a very limited diet – the sum was recovered from “relief” (welfare) payments already set aside for the Inuit in Inukjuak. I do not know of any Department of Resources and Development budget item for transportation.

The only records of budget for the project refer to the “Eskimo Loan Fund” – a system of lending money to Inuit communities in order to make supplies available through Hudson’s Bay Company stores or Government supply outlets. The sums so lent were repaid when Inuit delivered fur pelt to the store, principally white fox pelts, but also some polar bear and seal skins. Thus, strictly speaking, there was no expenditure made that required authorization; there was only a loan given that was expected to be repaid. For each of the three anticipated settlements a loan fund of \$5000 was set up, formally in the name of a leading member of the Inuit community. Goods and equipment placed aboard the “C.D. Howe” and ultimately put ashore in the custody of an RCMP officer, were charged against the fund for each settlement when individual Inuit paid with fur pelts for items required by them, the loan fund account was credited accordingly.

To the best of my knowledge, then, there was neither formal authorization nor a specific budget allocation for the relocation project.

**(c) Housing, Equipment and Supplies**

As noted above, the sole source of these items for the Inuit relocates was the Eskimo Loan Fund. The sum of \$5000 in 1953, while perhaps ample for basic equipment and supplies (it is very difficult to assess the adequacy of such a sum), clearly did not include housing. Indeed, no civil servant has suggested that it did. A different assumption about housing the Inuit families prevailed: they had been expected to bring with them their own equipment – family possessions, sleds, dogs, guns and tents; deficiencies in any equipment and supplies were to be supplemented by purchases in their own names using the loan fund, to be repaid from subsequently earned income. They would live in tents, in snow houses and sod huts, as they had lived in the Inukjuak region. None of the reports suggested that any thought was given to providing housing. In fact, beyond transporting them to the High Arctic without charge, there appeared to be no intention to provide without charge to the Inuit any tangible benefits in return for their participation in the resettlement.<sup>22</sup>

I have heard contradictory opinions from civil servants regarding this policy. Some have asserted that housing conditions were very poor in and around Inukjuak, and accordingly, there was no special reason to provide additional housing resources in the High Arctic. Others have noted that the climate is harsher there: cold weather arrives much earlier, and often without sufficient snow to build snow houses. They point out that

in regions like Grise Fiord there is virtually no soil in lichen, only rocky terrain, making it very difficult to construct sod huts. As a result only tents, with less insulation than snow houses or sod hits, were available for most of the first winter. Indeed, some civil servants have suggested that failing to provide for adequate housing was a big mistake in planning the relocation project. After interviewing Inuit who spent their first winter at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in makeshift housing, I am inclined to agree with that opinion.

## 8. CARRYING OUT THE PLAN

### (a) Informing and Preparing the Families

As noted earlier in section 6, the Inuit claim they were told very little about conditions in the High Arctic. F. Ross Gibson the RCMP constable who travelled to the Inuit camps in the Inukjuak region, has said that at the time he thought they would be most affected by the differences in climate. Through his interpreter he made efforts to inform each family he visited about the High Arctic climate. He tried to explain the long period of winter darkness and the need to hunt while it continued, as well as speaking about the colder weather. His impression was that they took it quite lightly.

In contrast, welfare teacher, Miss E.M. Hinds, referring to her 1958 book to the “families who moved to the far north” several years earlier, wrote:

I helped outfit them, and I also tried to teach them about the sunless winter, quoting my experiences at Fort McPherson as illustration ... They have adapted themselves to the day winter, for in their imagination, before they experienced one such winter, it was a great deal worse than the real thing. Which is usually the case with imagined ills.<sup>23</sup> [emphasis added]

Here we can see that two well-informed inhabitants of Inukjuak during the preparation period for the relocation came away with opposite impressions of the Inuit reaction to information communicated to them about the High Arctic. In addition, former civil servants have noted that they knew it was difficult, if not impossible, to explain such matters to the Inuit. It has also been suggested that access to high quality translation between English and Inuktitut was very limited in the 1950s; it is uncertain how accurate the interpreters were in explaining the relocation to the Inuit as well as in conveying their response. Some misunderstanding may well have arisen through translation difficulties.

The conclusions that follow from these observations are that: informing the prospective Inuit relocates about conditions in the High Arctic was a very difficult task; and, it is uncertain how aware of the difficulties were the civil servants involved. In fact, it appears that the Inuit had very little idea of what the new living conditions would be like – they either assumed conditions would not be radically different from northern Quebec, or they trusted the Government – or both. I will discuss the consequences of this finding in section 12, below.

### (b) The Landing of the First Winter

The recollections of the Inuit and of civil servants with respect to the landings at Craig Harbour and at Resolute Bay do not differ in general terms. Those that landed at Craig Harbour spent one week near the detachment; they were joined during that week by the families turned back by heavy sea ice on the way to Alexandra Fiord. The RCMP then took the whole group by boat to Lindstrom peninsula, a location about 50 miles to the west on

the south shore of Ellesmere Island (six or seven miles west of the eventual permanent site at Grise Fiord). They had only their tents and their own equipment.

Apart from the RCMP detachment at Craig Harbour, there was no other settlement that as a practical matter they could visit. To reach Resolute Bay would take several weeks travel guided by someone who knew the route. The RCMP visited the new camp every ten days to two weeks. Otherwise, they were entirely isolated, dependent on their own resources. The two Pond Inlet families that had joined the families from Inukjuak were crucial to their survival, teaching them how to hunt under High Arctic conditions and how to identify fresh-water ice. They were unable to build sod huts the first winter and had to remain in their tents until there was enough snow in January to build snow houses. Because of errors made, either in loading sufficient equipment and supplies on board the "C.D. Howe" or in unloading them at Craig Harbour, there was a shortage of some important supplies, including tent fabric, furs used to insulate their tents, and clothing. They also had to make a 100-mile return trip from their campsite to Craig Harbour to obtain any additional supplies. Lastly, the variety of country food was much more limited than in Inukjuak, virtually no fish or fowl was available.

These conditions, unexplained to the relocated families beforehand (and, in any event, unknown to the Government people in Inukjuak), made their arrival an unpleasant surprise. It is reasonable to conclude that they were unprepared for the new conditions and found their first winter harsh and frightening. In particular, the women found it very difficult in the unrelieved darkness: when their husbands and teen-age sons would depart in hunting expeditions, they would find themselves confined to their tents or snow houses with the small children. To go outside was only to find darkness and lower temperatures. The following spring, a number were unhappy and wished to leave.

Conditions at Resolute Bay were somewhat less intimidating: the RCMP constable lived nearby at the RCAF base and could visit more frequently. Although the base was off limits to the Inuit, they were able to collect scrap wood to burn, and eventually found packing crates and other pieces of lumber to build winter homes in subsequent years. And it was easier to buy supplies and equipment at the detachment store. In other respects, the factors that made life harsh at Lindstrom Peninsula applied also at Resolute Bay.

Later reporters observed that the Inuits' [*sic*] state of health, their clothing and housing improved markedly over the next few years. They state that the relocated families were better off materially than they had been in Inukjuak. Whether or not these reports were accurate does not affect the fact that the first year was a stressful one for the relocates.

### (c) Provision of Services

At Inukjuak in 1953, there was a Hudson's Bay Company store, an Anglican church, a nursing station established in 1947, and a welfare teacher and school established in 1949. These facilities were available to the Inuit from the settlement and surrounding area, and had become significant elements in their lives. While not all children were able to attend school regularly, the families had access to the school and to medical care. The church and school were also centres of social activities.

With the exception of the limited store supplies available from the RCMP detachment, none of the other services were planned nor made available to the Inuit of the Grise Fiord region in the early years. At Resolute Bay, emergency medical services were available but not schooling or a church. Constable Gibson made personal efforts to help build a room for scrap lumber,<sup>24</sup> and to provide some social events, especially at Christmas.



Overall, however, there was a substantial reduction in services available to the Inuit families, services to which they had become accustomed in the years preceding their relocation.

In summary, the families arrived at their destinations in the High Arctic poorly informed about conditions, some were poorly equipped for winter conditions, especially with respect to housing, and some important supplies were not available. They found the first winter very hard.<sup>25</sup> And, they no longer had access to the majority of basic services to which they had become accustomed in Inukjuak.

...

## 9. THE CULTURAL GAP

In my view, the most important aspect of the relocation – and the most complex – is what may be called the “cultural gap” between those representing the Government of Canada and the Inuit people. Civil servants at all levels seem to have shared a common view that the Inuit could not look after themselves in the quickly changing conditions in Canada’s north, and it was the Government’s responsibility to look after the Inuit. In more recent writings and in interviews with former civil servants as well as others, I have found general agreement that the Canadian attitude and approach to the Inuit in the 1950s was highly paternalistic.

### (a) Inuit Values and Priorities

It is trite but true that recognizing the cultural gap is but the beginning. The second step, presumptuous though it may be, is to try and identify the elements of the Inuit culture that are relevant to the issues in this complain, and to examine the consequences of the relocation in the light of those elements. With a difference that I have decided to overcome, I shall examine three cultural elements encountered in my discussions with Inuit who were part of the relocation: i- the importance of family; ii- the importance of the environment; iii- the approach to personal relations and to resolution of disagreements.

*i-The importance of family.* Inuit have traditionally lived in a harsh environment with limited food resources; they have had to hunt over large areas to find sufficient country food (and material for clothing, etc.) to survive. Accordingly, they have lived in relatively small communities, usually not more than 30 persons. The community is an enlarged family or may be described as a small clan, with other related families often living within a journey of a day or two from their camp.

In these circumstances – closely related, dependent on one another for survival, and spending most of their time in the company of their own group – they develop a great attachment to one another, an attachment broader than that based solely on the more nuclear family of mother, father, and unmarried children. (I believe that this close attachment is not unique to the Inuit but is shared with people in other parts of the world that live under analogous conditions.) The Inuit are also accustomed to temporary separation during hunting seasons, and sometimes to migrating great distances, but when they do migrate the whole clan community moves together.

It follows that a separation of 1250 miles between parts of an Inuit clan, such as sisters and brothers who have become parents of their own nuclear families, once they realized that there was no practical way of visiting or joining each other, created serious emotional upset, especially for those who had undertaken the move away. It helps explain why, when they were informed that it was not feasible to

return to Inukjuak, they asked that other members of their family left in Inukjuak join them in the High Arctic.

*ii- The importance of the environment.* People who live close to the land and depend on it for virtually every aspect of their sustenance, become very knowledgeable and actually aware of that environment and all its characteristics. Familiarity brings with it a strong attachment to the land. Even though they are capable of adapting to strange surroundings and may eventually improve their quality of life, they keep their strong attachment to the land where they were born and grew up. Thus, it is not surprising that the Inuit who were relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay retained a strong desire to return to their familiar Inukjuak surroundings with its plant life and game. This was a second factor that contributed to their wish to return to the Inukjuak region of northern Quebec.

Unfortunately, this factor also contributed to the splitting of families more than a generation later. On the one hand, when finally it became practical for the original relocates to the High Arctic to return to Inukjuak, many were anxious both to join other members of their family and to be back in the environment of their youth. On the other hand, their children faced a new dilemma: they had grown up in the High Arctic in a changing society; they went to school with family members and friends their own age; thus, they had a different frame of reference from their parents. The new generation were confronted with the difficult choice of accompanying their parents to a strange environment in Inukjuak with an unfamiliar generation their own age, or of remaining in the High Arctic in familiar surroundings but being separated from their parents.

Some children refused to leave the High Arctic. Some went back with their parents, were unhappy and returned to Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay, while others decided to remain “south”, so dividing families of the same generation. These painful consequences were unforeseen by those who implemented the relocations. Whether with better scientific advice they could and should have been foreseen may be debatable. Nevertheless, the undesirable consequences for the families is clear enough: they have suffered emotional loss from the relocations in two generations, losses that seem little understood by other Canadians.

*iii- The approach to personal relations and to resolution of disagreements.* Travelers in the Arctic have often remarked in their accounts that in their contact with the Inuit they found them pleasant, friendly people who smile easily. While such observations are meant as compliments, they may be superficial and carry a connotation that is probably unintentionally pejorative: they support a long dominant view that the Inuit are like good children. A more carefully thought out interpretation of their friendliness arises from understanding how the Inuit have learned to live in small communities and survive in a harsh environment. Under these conditions, people must learn to cooperate, to depend on one another and to do their best to create an uncontentious social atmosphere: coping with the physical environment is enough of a challenge in itself. The Inuit approach to people from another culture was not different: they would avoid conflict and personal unpleasantness if they possibly could do so.

In addition, the white southerners entered the lives of the Inuit as a technologically dominant group – with guns and other equipment and ultimately with aircraft. The southerners presumed to be in charge, as we shall see illustrated in the next section by the 1951 report of welfare teacher, Miss E.M. Hinds. The Inuit with whom I have discussed this issue have freely stated that in the 1950s, they viewed representatives of the Government, and especially the RCMP, almost as gods, not to be argued with. The

southerners also brought desirable material benefits with them. Besides, as we have noted, it was contrary to the Inuit culture to engage in confrontation.

### (b) A Bargain or an Order?

The almost pervasive assessment of the Inuit as a very primitive people who needed protection contained no malevolence, but it did lead to them being treated as children by the Government in coming to decisions that might profoundly affect their lives.

The cultural gap problem is filled with nuances: there are a number of references to the Inuit who were relocated as “volunteers”, and it is probably true, especially among those civil servants who were removed from the actual conversations with the Inuit families, that in general they believed the Inuit to be volunteers who had made a bargain with the Government.

The language of many Government documents talks about “sending” or “transferring” Inuit families to new locations. These words are ambiguous: they might be taken to mean, “We are quite sure we can persuade a number of Inuit families to move to the new location.” However, after examining the words in context I find that the assumption about Government control is almost invariably much stronger: the words generally appear to mean “We can arrange to move enough Inuit families without worrying about the prospect of much resistance to the move.”

So, while the Government argues that it merely asked, but could not insist upon compliance, and while southern “white” administrators thought of their proposals only as suggestions or gentle persuasion, most Inuit perceived of the proposals as orders that had to be followed. Interviews with a number of Inuit who are old enough to remember lead me to conclude that they believed they had no real option but to accept: when an RCMP officer said, “You will be better off in the new location,” the Inuit listener very likely interpreted him as saying, “You must go to the new location where, by the way, you will be better off.”

This perception, perhaps even more strongly than I have put it, comes out clearly in the words of Miss E.M. Hinds, a welfare teacher in Port Harrison (Inukjuak) in the early 1950s. In discussing some lesser relocations in the regions, within 100 miles or so of Port Harrison, she stated:

Port Harrison natives have been [here] to tell me that the new policeman is going to send them away from the settlement ... the missionary and the clerk at the Hudson’s Bay store have heard from the constable himself that this is what he intends to do – to send away from Port Harrison all natives who are not working for white people.

... I feel that now that there is a school at Port Harrison it is ridiculous to send away from the settlement most of the families with children of school age and to leave those who have only tiny children or none...

Other people in the settlement, i.e. white people, apparently agree with the constable’s decision ...

I understand that natives lived here long before white men came to this region. The native name for Port Harrison means “the place where there are many Eskimos.” Two of the families who have been told to go have, I understand, never asked for relief, and they resent being told to go as their families have always lived there.

I would suggest that if the constable puts this plan into operation he should be asked to provide transport for the welfare teacher to visit the children concerned ...<sup>26</sup> [emphasis added]

This language unmistakably implied that decisions to relocate Inuit were those of the constable – not joint decisions reached with the Inuit but rather decisions imposed upon them. Miss Hinds, a white southern woman and a highly respected observer of the Arctic, assumed that the RCMP officer was in charge and gave orders. It hardly seems surprising then, that the Inuit themselves feel they had no real option but to accept the orders to go. While it is true that the events she described took place about 18 months before the relocations to the High Arctic, her description reinforces the pervasive paternalistic attitude toward making decisions for the Inuit, and we have no evidence to suggest that the prevailing attitude changed dramatically by the spring of 1953.

In summary, the accepted and official position within Government was that the Inuit who agreed to participate in the relocation were volunteers. As a practical matter, those responsible for implementing the plan gave little thought to the question of free choice: they assumed that their project was in the best interests of the Inuit and would be accepted by them without serious objection. Of course, if a particular family had been sufficiently upset to refuse to go, the civil servant would not likely have forced the issue, although there is evidence that great persistence was used to persuade a Pond Inlet family to agree to the move.

The Inuit impression of their position, as a practical matter, was not in conflict with the above view: they felt under great pressure not to resist the proposal to relocate, for the reasons already noted. It would have required feelings of desperation on their part to utter a definitive “no” when asked to. In my opinion, for such a request to be considered an order, it need not be backed by fear of physical compulsion. The circumstances support the claim that most Inuit felt they had no option but to participate in the relocation.

## 10. SOME EARLY CONSEQUENCES OF THE CULTURAL GAP

### (a) Placing Families in Settlements Far From Each Other

The unhappy consequences of separation, discussed under Inuit Values and Priorities in the preceding section, applied also to separating families in two High Arctic locations, 240 miles apart. While the distance was not so great as that between Inukjuak and the far north, in a different way the effect was more severe.

Without exception, all the Inuit interviewed stated that they did not learn about being separated into different camps until they arrived at Craig Harbour. Upon arrival they were told that several families would be disembarked and would remain in Craig Harbour area while the others would proceed to two different locations, some to the soon-to-be-abandoned Alexandra Fiord site and the remainder to Resolute Bay. The news of separation came suddenly, without any chance to prepare themselves emotionally. In contrast, before leaving on the “C.D. Howe” a month earlier, the Inuit had known for a number of weeks that they would be leaving family behind; they had also known which other members of their family would be joining them on the journey north, and they had spent a month together aboard ship. The news of the second separation came as a shock: in interviews I was told that the women began to sob and in response a number of their dogs began to howl.

There is no evidence at all that Inuit families were offered a choice of locations, or were asked whom they would prefer as neighbours. They simply were told to disembark at Craig Harbour or to transfer to the “d’Iberville” in order to proceed to the other two destinations. Whatever debate there might be about the

voluntary nature of originally consenting to leave the Inukjuak region, I believe there can be none about the choice of relocation sites: the Inuit were not given an option – they were told where to disembark.

This account is consistent with information in the documents available<sup>27</sup> and with a telephone interview with Mr. Ross Gibson, the RCMP officer who accompanied the Inuit aboard the “C.D. Howe”. He stated that he had not been given specific information about the location or locations of the new settlements and believed that the primary location was to be near the Bache Peninsula on Ellesmere Island. He was not aware of plans for Resolute Bay, despite the fact that a number of interdepartmental reports had discussed three locations. This picture suggests a substantial failure in communication between those directing the relocation and those responsible for implementing it.

### (b) Bringing Families from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet into a Single Community

The planners of the relocation were aware that northern Quebec Inuit, who lived almost 600 miles south of the Arctic Circle, a latitude of 58°30'N (much as in northern Scotland), were accustomed to daylight throughout the winter, even if the hours were quite short, and would be moving to the High Arctic (between 74° and 90° miles north of the Arctic Circle – 74°40'N at Resolute Bay, 76°26'N at Grise Fiord and 79°00'N at Alexandra Fiord) with its three months of darkness. The climate is also different: the temperatures year-round are substantially lower in the High Arctic and the summer season is much shorter, and there is no period of time southern Inuit would think of as summer weather. Ice and snow conditions and the nature of the land mean that hunting techniques are quite different from those in the south.

For these reasons, the planners decided that it would be particularly helpful to the Inuit from Inukjuak to have as neighbours and advisors in the newly established communities at least one family that was much more adapted to the far north. Accordingly, they arranged for three families from Pond Inlet, (over 400 miles north of the Arctic Circle, latitude 72°40'N) to be moved, one to each of the three relocation sites.

As noted earlier, two Pond Inlet families settled in Grise Fiord in 1953 and one family in Resolute Bay. The families from Inukjuak and the RCMP officers agree that the Pond Inlet hunters were especially helpful that first winter, in particular, in teaching High Arctic hunting skills and how to recognize supplies of fresh water in their frozen state. However, there is also general agreement that the two groups did not get along well because there were significant differences:

- In dialect that hindered communication, although it did not prevent it;
- In important customs; and
- In clothing and in design of essential equipment, such as sleds.

The two groups tended to look down on each other, did not spend time together socially and with rare exception, did not intermarry, the latter being an important disadvantage in such isolated communities where finding a spouse was very difficult without intensive travel. At one point, the Lindstrom Peninsula settlers actually divided into two locations, one for Inukjuak families and the other for Pond Inlet families, about two miles apart, before finally moving to the current Grise Fiord site where the RCMP detachment is located.

It may be argued that the cultural differences between the two groups were not grave and in any event that it was worth putting up with the subsequent difficulties in order to help the Inukjuak families acclimatize. Nevertheless, the civil servants seemed unaware of the differences beforehand, further indicating a lack of knowledge about the Inuit as a people.

### (c) Requests to Return to Inukjuak

The Inuit approach to personal relations helps explain the fact that most outside observers who visited Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay came away with an impression that the Inuit were generally very satisfied with their lot. These observations are also central to the views often expressed by civil servants that the Inuit did not state that they wished to return to Inukjuak, if they did ask about returning, did not complain when told that it would be difficult or impossible to do so.

First, in the minds of at least some civil servants the question of “return” was vague, or they thought that no promise had been made (although as already noted, in fact, promises had been made). Therefore, they attributed little importance to it.

Second, they failed to understand that in the circumstance of the person making the request -

- i. Having been separated from family in Inukjuak for two years or more,
- ii. Having been told that they must wait another year for the supply ship to return and take them, not to Inukjuak but to Montreal, whence they would have to find the money to return on their own to Inukjuak,<sup>28</sup> and
- iii. Having very little if any money at the early stage of their stay in the High Arctic, the consequences of stating these difficulties was tantamount in the mind of the requester to a complete refusal to return him and his family to Inukjuak.

In my opinion, a promise of return cannot mean less than that the Inuit family and their belongings would be transported from the High Arctic back to Inukjuak, without any expense to themselves. Accordingly, the Inuit were correct in their view that ii. and iii. above, amounted to a refusal of their request to be returned. A delay until the following year when a ship would arrive to pick them up was considered inevitable, and the Inuit would have so understood. However, the fact that the supply ships had a traditional route, one that had never gone from the High Arctic back into Hudson Bay is irrelevant to the promise made to the Inuit. The Government must be taken to have been aware of the route when it made its promises and it was up to it to make satisfactory arrangements to keep its promises.

Third, civil servants failed to appreciate that the lack of persistence by Inuit in face to face meetings on the subject of the promise to return them to Inukjuak was due not to lack of deep concern, but to their cultural disposition to avoid confrontation and unpleasantness, reinforced by the normal intimidation felt by Inuit from civil servants generally, and particularly from RCMP officers who were charged with looking after them.<sup>29</sup> It is important to emphasize that no malevolence is implied; to the extent that the Inuit felt intimidated, it was the result of the historical relationship between them and civil servants.

The Inuit's concern for avoiding conflict, yet keeping their desire to be reunited with family alive, is demonstrated two other ways. First, when their ability to return seemed blocked they sought an alternative solution and asked whether members of their family could not join them in the High Arctic. This request seems almost invariably to have been misinterpreted as evidence of great satisfaction with the relocation (“bring more of our family here”) rather than as a stoic, second-best request to be reunited with their family in the High Arctic if not in Inukjuak.

Second, they did not abandon their claim. Instead they substituted a more non-confrontational means that would avoid personal unpleasantness with civil servants whom they encountered on a more or less regular basis: they wrote letters directly to the Government requesting to be returned to Inukjuak.<sup>30</sup>



In Part 6, above, I found that the Inuit families who moved to the High Arctic had been promised that if they so requested they would be returned to Inukjuak at Government expense within one to three years. Here, I find further that:

- a) In the first three years after the move, a number of heads of families expressed to local officials, principally to local RCMP officers, their unhappiness with the new locations and their wish to return, although they may have couched their request in very mild terms.
- b) The officials tended to minimize the significance of the request and responded by explaining how difficult it would be in terms of both travel arrangements and money, to return to Inukjuak.
- c) The Inuit understandably and accurately interpreted these statements as a refusal in any practical sense to facilitate their return. For cultural reasons they did not persist in their face-to-face requests although they retained a strong desire to return to their former homes.
- d) The evidence of this desire is found in their continued writing of letters to the Government asking to be returned, and indeed, in ultimately returning to Inukjuak when the opportunities presented themselves, as late as 1988.

Accordingly, I find that in the 1950s and 1960s, the Government failed to keep its promise of return to Inukjuak, causing considerable unhappiness and pain to those Inuit who wished to return.

## 11. LONG TERM EFFECTS

### (a) Family Relations

In section 9, I have already noted one important consequence of the relocation, the unresolvable emotional conflict between remaining in the same region as other members of one's family and returning in the environment of one's childhood. A large proportion of the first generation relocatees who had survived, have chosen to return to Inukjuak, the place of their childhood environment and where their remaining family lived. However, a large proportion of those who grew up in the High Arctic with their own generation have chosen to remain there despite the fact that their parents have returned to Inukjuak. This geographic separation between generations has resulted in continuing stress and anguish for both groups. It is a difficult, indeed perplexing, problem for them.

A related difficulty, created by the substantial isolation of the two High Arctic communities, was that of young people of marriageable age finding suitable spouses. The Inuit shared a common concern about inbreeding resulting from intermarriage within one's own larger family. They traditionally looked outside the family group for spouses. As already noted, in northern Quebec, Inuit groups lived within a day or two of travel to other camps. Thus, it was relatively easy for young people to meet prospective spouses outside their own group. However, in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, such contact was impractical; as youngsters grew up they were forced to look outside of their own communities and it was both difficult to arrange and expensive. While those Inuit whom I interviewed did not raise this problem as a major complaint nowadays, it did cause hardship for at least two decades, until long-distance travel became practical. Reports of RCMP constables mention this difficulty, as do several academic studies.

### (b) A Sense of Injustice

A second and more subtle cause of anguish relates more closely to Inuit self awareness and self esteem. Looking back on the events of the 1950s, many wonder at the way they were treated. Having suffered the

consequences of separation, they ask why. The paternalism that is admitted by most civil servants is painfully obvious to Inuit who now have a more clear-eyed view of their white governors, with all their frailties of insensitivity and hubris. Looking back they can see that civil servants and RCMP officers were not omniscient: they took chances with respect to known game resources; they did not manage to explain, no matter how difficult, what the High Arctic would be like; they mismanaged transporting adequate supplies and equipment for the first winter; they failed to provide schooling and adequate medical care for a number of years; and they failed to honour the promise of return within two or three years. These things by themselves have contributed over the years to a growing sense of injustice.

It is no solace to say to the Inuit that it was for their own good, that the hardship and fright of the first year was worthwhile and in the longer term they were better off. In particular, they worry about the thought that they have been pawns in a project that was more distasteful than merely being paternalistic, namely, a project designed primarily to support Canadian claims to territorial sovereignty in the High Arctic. I believe this to be a very harmful worry – that they may have been duped by their own Government. It is harmful in two respects.

The first and most obvious is that of being wronged by their Government, by the people they should have been able to trust. Indeed, as I find in the next section, there was historically, both in fact and in law, a high fiduciary obligation on the Government of Canada to act in the best interests of the Inuit people. Putting their trust in the Government was the reasonable and proper thing to do. The second part comes from feeling duped. Most people feel personally diminished when they have been “[taken?] in”. For the Inuit, whose increasing education and understanding – especially during the late 1970s and the 1980s – of the dominant southern society in recent decades has permitted them to investigate the circumstances of the relocation, it is doubly hard because it implies that in the 1950s they were too simple and naïve to be capable of resisting manipulation by white civil servants.

(This discussion requires a brief observation about the claim of a number of critics, that the Inuit complaint is largely the work of a few malcontents. The critics have not understood that the growing Inuit perception of injustice is much more generalized: it comes from looking back at the events of the 1950s with greater sophistication, and using as a measure the values that prevailed in our southern society before the Inuit themselves understood them. They have become aware of the emphasis now placed on both individual and group rights encouraged by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.)

Fortunately, coping with the second cause of anguish should be eased, because – on the basis of this report – there is no evidence of a master plan, of manipulation of the Inuit families in order to carry out a project designed primarily to support sovereignty at the expense of the Inuit relocatees, or even if not at their expense, with minimal thought of incidentally improving their lot. I believe there is some consolation in the finding that the Inuit were not manipulated or deliberately misled in order to achieve a hidden goal. However, it does not follow that the Government of Canada is absolved of all responsibility because it was not devious. Criteria for judging the conduct of the Government of Canada are discussed in the two sections that follow.

## 12. GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY: FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS

Current medical jurisprudence states that a physician who subjects a patient to risks of treatment without making effective best efforts to explain those risks to the patient is deemed not to have obtained informed consent: the physician becomes legally responsible for any of the foreseeable harmful consequences that occur.<sup>31</sup> The physician’s liability is based on the dominant position gained through specialized knowledge



that makes the patient dependent on him or her. The point about informed consent is made here by way only of analogy.<sup>32</sup> However, it does serve to introduce the principle that a fiduciary, in this case the Government of Canada, has high obligations of good faith, diligence and care towards its beneficiaries, the Inuit people. All evidence available amply demonstrates, as a question of fact, that the Government assumed the dominant position of a fiduciary.

This position is also beyond doubt as a question of law. In a 1939 Supreme Court of Canada reference, the question asked was whether, under s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act,<sup>33</sup> “the term Indians included Eskimo inhabitants of the Province of Quebec”. The opinion of Chief Justice Sir Lyman Duff, concurred in by the five other judges, was strongly affirmative.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Chief Justice noted that in December 1867, the Parliament of Canada passed a joint address to Her Majesty requesting that northern British territories, including what is now northern Quebec, be transferred by the United Kingdom to Canada. The joint address contained the following Resolution of the Senate:

Resolved that upon the transference of the Territories in question to the Canadian Government, it will be the duty of the Government to make adequate provisions for the protection of the Indian Tribes, whose interest and well being are involved in the transfer.<sup>35</sup> [emphasis added]

The 1867 Resolution of the Senate, and the 1939 reference opinion of the Supreme Court firmly establish the Government’s jurisdiction and the fiduciary nature of its obligations toward the Inuit. General recognition of these obligations was confirmed in *Regina v. Sparrow*,<sup>36</sup> a recent decision of our Supreme Court, with respect to interpreting s. 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. S. 35 states:

- (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
- (2) In this Act, “aboriginal people of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. [emphasis added]

Speaking for the Court, Dickson, C.J. and La Forest, J., observed:

...[two earlier decisions] ground a general guiding principle for s. 35(1). That is, the government has a responsibility to act in a fiduciary capacity with respect to aboriginal peoples. The relationship between the government and temporary recognition and affirmation of aboriginal rights must be defined in the light of this historic relationship.<sup>37</sup> [emphasis added]

The duties of a fiduciary are of two types: first it must act in good faith in the best interest of the beneficiaries; second it must also exercise reasonable diligence and care when acting on their behalf. Consequently the fiduciary is responsible for harms done to the beneficiaries when those harms should have been foreseen and avoided. As noted by the Court, these responsibilities are very long standing, and they were evident in the continuing conduct of the Government in the 1950s.

### 13. PRESENT-DAY CRITERIA FOR JUDGING CONDUCT IN THE 1950s

#### (a) The Nature of the Problem

The events that are the subject of this investigation took place in the 1950s, the planning having begun during the winter of 1952, almost 39 years ago. What standards are appropriate for making judgements about the actions of the Canadian Government so long ago? It might be tempting to say that we cannot today insert

ourselves into a completely different “mind set”, that hindsight, especially after all these years, is much easier than foresight, and therefore, that we cannot presume to stand in judgment at all. I do not believe we can take that easy way out.

On the other hand, we cannot simply judge conduct of the 1950s by an uncompromising application of current awareness and sensibility. We must look for evidence of the level of sensitivity to the issues, as found in the material available to us from those years, and to interpret the evidence cautiously – but not overly cautiously.

#### (b) Shorter Term Risks: Evidence of Awareness

Interviews with civil servants and members of the RCMP, and documents examined earlier in this report, disclose awareness of a number of elements that could have been foreseen to cause early difficulties and unhappiness for the relocated families.

1. There was concern that the Inuit families be properly equipped for the High Arctic conditions – the RCAF expressed particular worry about adequate housing in the Resolute Bay area; there was a largely ineffective attempt to prepare them for the winter and darkness, as acknowledged in subsequent reports; there was awareness of the radically different hunting conditions – the reason for making sure the Pond Inlet families joined the new settlements. In addition, the repeated references to the project as an experiment in effect recognized that it might fail: there might not be adequate reserves of game, or the southern Inuit might not be able to adapt to the unfamiliar, dramatically different environment.

2. Well before the relocation project had been planned, the Government had acknowledged a continuing need for Inuit schooling and medical care through nursing stations; both had been made available at Inukjuak for several years. The only reason for ignoring these essentials in planning the High Arctic relocation appeared to have been an unwillingness to undertake expenditures (since services could not be covered by a repayable loan), justified perhaps, by a desire to return the Inuit to their traditional (more primitive) way of life.

3. Finally, as noted earlier in this report, there was also a contrary view to that of returning the Inuit to traditional ways; it recognized that irreversible changes in the Arctic meant that the Inuit would have to be helped to adapt in order to minimize the harmful effects of change. It asserted that the Inuit seemed to have lost power over their own lives through the changes brought by the southerners, and they needed to regain that power. This view was held not by just a few individuals toiling in the field but was acknowledged at the highest level of government: in an article entitled, “Canada and Our Eskimos”, in the March 1955, issue of the *Beaver*, the Honourable Jean Lesage, then Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, acknowledged that “we” had upset the balance of nature in the Arctic and stated:

It is not enough to cure disease, the cause of disease must be removed and this is largely a matter of education and improvement of economic conditions... A new social order is supplanting the primitive life of the Eskimos. In the new order, however, direction is given by the various white men on the scene. The Eskimo inevitably tends to lose initiative individually and collectively in such a regime. It seems obvious that an effort to place direction of local affairs in the hands of the Eskimo is desirable... The northern service officers ... are being instructed to encourage the Eskimos to take-responsibility for local decisions to as great an extent as possible.<sup>38</sup> (emphasis added)

Nevertheless, in implementing their plan, the civil servants knew, or should reasonably have known, that the Inuit did not appreciate the risks. In my opinion, to ask people to make essential decisions about their future

without adequate information is to deny them freedom to choose: to persuade the Inuit to participate in the relocation project, entailing risks of which they were unaware, was to diminish substantially their power to make decisions over their own lives. It was directly contrary to the intent of the statement made by Jean Lesage, quoted above.

### (c) Judging Conduct in the Light of Known Risks

Although representatives of the Government of Canada intended the relocation to be for the benefit of the Inuit, there were a number of ascertainable risks involved in the operation. These were risks which, if they materialized, would be at the expense of the Inuit – the consequences of inadequate equipment and housing, the problems of adapting to a harsh climate with a three-month dark period and virtually no vegetation. The Government was also prepared to resettle the Inuit without making schooling available and with drastically reduced medical care.

In my opinion, the observations made in subsection (b) above, are sufficient to establish that: the government ought to have been aware of a number of the risks it took in proceeding with the relocation; and under its fiduciary obligations it bears a substantial responsibility for the adverse consequences to the Inuit involved in the project.

### (d) Longer Term Risks

As I have noted in section 9, "The Cultural Gap", and again in section 11, "Long Term Effects", the separation of families from their kin and the environment in which they grew up has had the greatest impact on the relocated families. The letter of RCMP Inspector Larsen, at page 15 of this report, shows an awareness of the problems of separation. In referring to the Teletype promise that "Families will be brought back home at the end of one year if they so desire", he noted the:

sad experiences of those families ... who were taken from Cape Dorset to Dundas Harbour in 1934 ... and then to Arviat and Fort Ross. They suffered hardships and asked, from time to time to be taken back to Cape Dorset. They never were taken back and the survivors and their descendants are still in the Fort Ross-Spence Bay District...

The point made here by Inspector Larsen must have been known within senior ranks of the civil service in Ottawa. Whether they appreciated in detail the nature of the "hardships" is not material to the main point: they were aware of a prior relocation and the unfortunate consequences of not returning the Inuit to their earlier home; thus they knew there were risks for the Inuit who were to be relocated. Indeed, Inspector Larsen used the earlier experience to justify the promise to return the Inuit to Inukjuak. Despite the Dundas Harbour relocation failure in the 1930s, the Government made no arrangements to honour the 1953 promise. In these circumstances, a fiduciary cannot reasonably claim to be unaware of its responsibilities to the beneficiaries.

## 14. CONCLUSIONS, CONSEQUENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### (a) Conclusions and Consequences

I find that:

1. With regard to the sovereignty issue, in the early 1950s, the Government of Canada had concerns about effective occupation of the Canadian Arctic, primarily because of increasing activity and numbers of United States armed services personnel in the region, but also because of long-term hunting visits of Greenland

Inuit to Ellesmere Island. The combination of these elements was likely to have influenced the planned location of two settlements on Ellesmere Island.

The fact that one location – where the Greenlanders crossed over to Ellesmere Island – was quickly abandoned because of ice conditions during the voyage to Alexandra Fiord, however, suggests that sovereignty was not a primary concern. Nevertheless, the establishment of two permanent Inuit settlements in the High Arctic was viewed by the Government of Canada as reinforcing and contributing in a material way to Canada's claims of sovereignty over its Arctic territories.

2. It is firmly established, first by the Canadian Senate 1867, and subsequently by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1939 and again in 1990, that the Government of Canada from its founding has owed and continues to owe duties of good faith and diligence toward the Inuit people of Canada.
3. The Government of Canada:
  - (a) Promised the Inuit that if they so wished, they would be returned to the region of Inukjuak in northern Quebec, at most within three years after the relocation in 1953;
  - (b) Failed to meet its fiduciary duties of care and diligence in planning and carrying out the relocation, and in not taking steps in the first few years to honour its promise of return.
4. In those years, the Inuit relocatees of 1953 suffered unnecessary hardship, particularly in their first year – as did to a lesser extent the relocatees in 1955 – caused by inadequate planning and implementation of the project.
5. Their hardship was aggravated by the long delays and difficulties many of the first generation relocatees encountered in finding their way back to Inukjuak. The delays resulted in long-distance separation of different generations of the same family.

#### (b) Recommendations

1. Based on the documentary evidence between 1953 and 1960, the Government of Canada should accept that its predecessor Government of those years considered the presence of new Inuit communities in the High Arctic to be helpful in supporting Canadian claims to territorial sovereignty in the region. I recommend that the Government formally acknowledge the contribution of the Inuit relocatees at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic and publicly thank them.
2. The Government should apologize for the shortcomings in planning the relocation, particularly with respect to providing adequate equipment and housing for the first winter, and in failing to provide schools and nursing facilities in the early years.
3. The Government should acknowledge that it promised those Inuit who wished to go back to northern Quebec the opportunity to do so within, at most, three years of being relocated. It should admit that it made no serious efforts to honour its promise, and that as a consequence a substantial number who wished to return were unable to do so for many years. Accordingly, it should recognize its responsibility for that failure and for the unhappy consequences for many Inuit families.

By recognizing these failures and their unfortunate consequences for the relocated Inuit families, the Government will have gone a long way toward redressing the deep feelings of grievance felt by many Inuit; it will demonstrate a new sensitivity to their culture and values, and encourage mutual respect.

There remains the continuing anguish caused by separation between, on the one hand, the original families remaining in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay – especially the generation who grew up there in the 1950s to 1970s – and, on the other hand, those portions of their families that have returned to Inukjuak. I do not know of a solution that will undo the effects of separation. At best, any solution will resolve only part of the problem. I propose the following as a fair and feasible resolution:

4. (a) Any members of the original relocated families and their immediate children should retain a choice to be relocated to Inukjuak for a specified period of time, let us say, five years from the filing of this report. The Government should commit itself to return them to Inukjuak at Government expense, including reasonable allowance for transporting their belongings. For those belongings that are impractical to transport, the government will accept possession of them and pay fair compensation. With adequate notice, (say, one clear year) the Government will undertake to provide housing in Inukjuak equivalent to the housing left behind in the High Arctic.
- (b) Children of the original relocated families who choose to remain in the High Arctic after their parents have returned to Inukjuak, may visit their parents, accompanied by their own minor children still living with them, using return air transportation at Government expense, every second year during the lifetime of their parents.

Any original relocatees still in the High Arctic who, I believe, are all now in their late fifties or older, will thus have the choice of returning permanently to Inukjuak. Their children still in Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay will also have five years to decide whether to return. If they remain in the High Arctic they will be able to visit their parents every two years at Government expense.

There is no way to undo completely the consequences of separation, but as we move to a third generation, the bonds of family must weaken, especially for grand children who have had much less contact with grandparents over the years; the communities must get on with their separate communal lives. Accordingly, when the generation of original relocatees comes to an end, for practical purposes, so will the consequences of the relocation. So long as future decisions about relocating are left entirely in the hands of Inuit families, all that can practically be done will have been done.

NOTE: The Inuit communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay are well organized and the proposed agreement could easily be brought to the attention of all residents. All families and individuals who would qualify either for relocation to Inukjuak or for biennial visits there, could register with the hamlet council, stating their current family position and their decision – if and when they reach decision during the five-year period.

I have not recommended setting up a fund to pay for transportation, because the numbers remain unknown. However, the annual liability for the Government of Canada is not unlimited: the number of original families remaining in the High Arctic can be ascertained without difficulty. If numbers warranted, one or at most two charter flights per year from Resolute Bay could likely meet all demand. From Grise Fiord, several shuttle flights to Resolute Bay might be required.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Any generalizations in this report are the result of my overall judgments, based on extensive interviews with Inuit, civil servants and visitors to the High Arctic and on reviews of a large and diverse number of documents. The more detailed assertions are based on specific statements made in interviews and/or on information found in one or more documents. Whenever this report contains a direct quote, I shall cite the source. In other cases, however, in order to keep this report within a reasonable length, sources will not necessarily be cited but will be available from me should the need arise.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest found reference to the planned relocation is in a letter dated February 11, 1952, from Major General H.A. Young, Deputy Minister, Dept. of Resources & Development, to Brigadier L.H. Nicholson, Commissioner, RCMP. It states: "We have been considering, for some time, the feasibility of transferring Eskimos to Arctic islands from other overpopulated areas."

<sup>3</sup> This area is variously referred to as Cape Herschel, Cape Sabine, Bache Peninsula and Twin Glaciers.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Diubaldo, *The Government of Canada and the Inuit 1900-1967*, p. 107. A study for the Research Branch. Corporate Policy, Indian and Northern Affairs, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> Government reports refer to the fact that there were 11 or more relocations of Inuit and northern Indian populations during the period.

<sup>6</sup> It is generally accepted that the increase in population was the result of modest improvements in basic hygiene and health care quickly adopted by the Inuit, factors which decreased their infant mortality rate and increased life expectancy.

<sup>7</sup> The evidence of depleted game resources is mixed. In the RCMP Port Harrison Detachment Annual Report for 1952, dated March 9, 1953, Corporal A.A. Webster stated:

"During the present winter white foxes are building up to a peak which is expected to be reached next year. The H.B.C. have forecast a return of 1500 white foxes and to date the return is up to expectations ... The winter has been mild...and ...has enabled the natives to procure a higher than average amount of seal meat throughout most of the winter. These factors have resulted in a marked decrease in relief issues ... Very little government relief is being issued..."

Nevertheless, he continued: "...their economy is still unsound ... the population of this area appears to be too great for the available resources."

<sup>8</sup> A good example occurred in a letter dated August 15, 1956, from A/Chief, Arctic Division, J.P. Richards, replying to an inquiry from L.M. Forbes, Editor Scott Polar Research Institute, U.K.:

"With regard to the future, modern transportation ... and ... installations ... have had the effect of opening up the Canadian Arctic ... It is no longer possible to treat the Eskimos as an isolated group, and it is necessary to ensure that steps are taken to prepare them to take their place in the changing Arctic, eventually to be assimilated into the new economy which is developing. For many of the Eskimos the new life is completely replacing the old. For the majority, however, the present is a transition stage, and this also applies to the group recently moved to Resolute Bay."

<sup>9</sup> That this concern was a serious one is shown by the fact that the Advisory Committee on Northern Development in 1948 commissioned a secret study by a distinguished constitutional and international law expert, Dean Vincent C. MacDonald of the Dalhousie Law School. The study "Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic" was completed and submitted by the Deputy Minister of Resources and Development, H.L. Keenleyside, to General A.G.L. McNaughton, Chairman Canadian section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, in February 1950.

<sup>10</sup> In a January 26, 1953 letter from J.W. Pickersgill, Secretary to the Cabinet, to Major General H.A. Young, regarding Canadian concerns over a large U.S. presence, he stated that it was "an urgent priority to study the Arctic".

<sup>11</sup> A letter, dated February 11, 1952, from Brigadier L.H. Nicholson, Commissioner, RCMP, to Major General H.A. Young, Deputy Minister, Dept. of Resources & Development, states:

"We have been giving some consideration to moving our Craig Harbour Detachment next year to a point somewhere in the vicinity of Cape Sabine [Alexandra Fiord] ...

The advantages of placing our detachment across from Greenland would be that we then would have full control and supervision of Greenland Eskimos and others travelling back and forth, and over-hunting activities they may engage in. As you already know, we had a detachment established at Bache Peninsula in 1926 primarily for the maintenance of sovereignty. This Detachment was closed in 1933..."

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the statement that comes closest to such a position is made in an October 1950 report, by A. Stevenson, Officer in charge, Eastern Arctic Patrol, at page 7:

"There is no doubt that country produce is plentiful in the aforementioned regions [Dundas Harbour on Devon Island, and Bache Peninsula and Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island] and Baffin Island Eskimos could easily live off the country. In this regard I understand that the Greenland Eskimos are hunting on Ellesmere Island and vicinity. Why not give our natives a chance to cover this country and also if it is considered necessary help improve the position regarding sovereignty rights. [emphasis added]

A second statement is found in an Eastern Arctic Patrol report of October 1952, regarding the presence of Greenland Inuit:

"If Police detachments could be maintained at both Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine ..., ten or twelve Canadian Eskimo families could be transferred to Ellesmere Island and use made of the natural resources that are undoubtedly there. The occupation of the island by Canadian Eskimos will remove any excuse Greenlanders may presently have for crossing and hunting there..." [emphasis added]

<sup>13</sup> In the minutes of a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development in Ottawa, August 10, 1953 (while the Inuit families were on board the "C.D. Howe"), at page 2, C.J. Marshall, of the Secretariat reported that B.G. Sivertz of Resources and Development:

"pointed out that the Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the Arctic as possible and it appeared that in many areas the Eskimos were the only people capable of doing this." [emphasis added]

<sup>14</sup> Three examples:

Alex Stevenson, "Inuit Relocation -- High Arctic". Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1977, page 1.

"There is no doubt that sovereignty was of concern to some."

He then refers to the statement quoted in fn. 13, above, but attributed it to the "Department Director" as having been expressed in 1952.

C.M Bolger, Administrator of the Arctic,

i) Memorandum for Mr. Stevenson, October 4, 1960, "Relocation of Eskimo Groups in the High Arctic", at page 1:

"I pointed out to the director some of the problems we have had in respect supply and of medical services, and his own feeling is that while Grise Fiord should be continued for sovereignty purposes, it should not be duplicated at other isolated locations." [emphasis added]

ii) Memorandum for the Director, November 15, 1960, "Relocation of Eskimo Groups in the High Arctic", at page 3:

"Although the Eskimos at Grise Fiord have not had the opportunities of employment, they have, however, obtained a good livelihood from the country and this community also serves a distinctly useful purpose in confirming in a tangible manner. Canada's sovereignty over this vast region of the Arctic." [emphasis added]

<sup>15</sup> Wilfred Doucette, "Cape Herschel, The Post Office That never Was". Postal History Society of Canada, No. 46, (1986) page 20. Mr. Doucette was a "freelance photographer on the 'd'Iberville'" whose assignment was "to record the voyage for the Department of Transport." He states that"

"The object of the voyage was to establish Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic... The final goal was Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island, only 700 miles from the North Pole, to establish the northern RCMP post, an Eskimo settlement and a post office ..." [emphasis added]

<sup>16</sup> At least two documents state a primary purpose unrelated to sovereignty:

- (i) a June 15, 1953, letter from Major General H.A. Young, Deputy Minister, Dept. of Resources & Development, to Brigadier G.M. Drury, Deputy Minister of National Defence -- "primarily, our aim is to find out how Eskimos from southern areas can adapt themselves to conditions in the high Arctic..."
- (ii) an August 4, 1953 "Memorandum for Mr. C.W. Jackson" from F.J.G. Cunningham, Director -- "Our primary object is to find out how many Eskimos from overpopulated southern areas can adapt themselves to conditions in the High Arctic."

<sup>17</sup> F. Ross Gibson, who was the RCMP constable that visited the camps states that he does not recall conveying such a promise to the Inuit families. However, he acknowledges that they may have learned of it from others who visited the areas, such as A. Stevenson.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum for the Director, October 13, 1953 by J. Cantley, Arctic Services, Dept. of Resources and Development, at pages 2 and 3.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum for the Director, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1956, by B.G. Sivertz, Chief, Arctic Division.

<sup>20</sup> The August 21, 1954, "Annual Report of Game Conditions. Craig Harbour Detachment Area", by Cpl. G.K. Sargent, less than 12 months after relocation, states:

"It is the writer's opinion that with the establishment of the small native camp on Lindstrom Peninsula approximately forty-five miles west of Craig Harbour that it is the first time the game resources of this area have really been tested. Previously with only the R.C.M.P. Detachment here only a small amount of game could be observed and would be taken by personnel and native specials concerned. Also as more native men would be travelling around more game has been observed." [emphasis added]

<sup>21</sup> Among other correspondence to the same effect, the following quote from a memorandum for the Director, National Parks Branch, dated June 19, 1956, from F.J.G. Cunningham, shows that there was a substantial awareness of the problem:

"I certainly agree with you that if further moves of Eskimos are contemplated for any reason, early planning should involve careful investigation of the wildlife resources upon which these people would depend."

<sup>22</sup> Air Commodore R.C. Ripley, Air Officer Commanding, RCAF Air Transport Command, expressed deep concern about the planning in a letter dated July 6, 1953, to the Chief of Air Staff. Among other concerns, he notes:

"No mention is made of housing or support of the Eskimos... They must have a properly balanced diet, clean healthy living accommodation and proper clothing, which will have to be supplied to them.

I am very much against the proposed program, except if ...

(a) [proper schooling is arranged];

(b) [they are] housed in properly constructed homes.

<sup>23</sup> E.M. Hinds, School House in the Arctic. London: Wyman & Sons, 1958, p. 161.

<sup>24</sup> In this report of October 14, 1953, Constable Gibson wrote:

"A building approximately thirty feet long, sixteen feet wide and seven feet high has been constructed at the camp site by the natives assisted by the writer. The material... obtained from the Ionosphere station [here] ... was formerly packing boxes... This building will be used this coming winter as a community centre where the natives will be able to dry pelts and clothing as well as using it for a work shop and church. The writer intends... to instruct the native children in simple schooling and to keep the camp active as the Port Harrison Natives have never experienced a dark period."

<sup>25</sup> That the RCMP was aware of the harshness of the first winter is confirmed in a letter by Insp. W.J. Fitzsimmons, dated September 21, 1956, to The Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch. It was about building materials for the several "Eskimo houses", delivered to Resolute Bay in the fall of 1956 but lost for one year at the air base. The Inspector reported that Constable Gibson advised:

"... if the buildings were considered for occupancy by Eskimos that the first four families that proceeded to Resolute Bay should be given the first consideration, as it was they who suffered the first winter in snow houses and had the real problem of adjusting to the new surroundings." [emphasis added]

In a letter of July 11, 1958, Supt. H.A. Larsen, RCMP Officer Commanding "G" Division, wrote to the Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, referred to a tape recording by Constable Gibson and noted:



“... some were of great interest, especially the narration by Cst. GIBSON of the landing of the Eskimos at Resolute Bay in 1953, and the many difficulties experienced during the first winter owing to a lack of supplies and inadequate equipment.” [emphasis added]

<sup>26</sup> E.M. Hinds, “Welfare Teacher’s Report”, September 1951. Pages 1 and 2.

<sup>27</sup> A letter, dated June 18, 1953, from C.K. LeCapelain, Acting Director, Arctic Division, to A. Watson, Marine Superintendent, Department of Transport, states:

“As requested by your Mr. Hall, I am attaching hereto a list of the Eskimos to be transferred on board both the CGS “C.D. HOWE” and the CGS “d’IBERVILLE”.

The destination of a number of these natives is not known at the present time. However, Captain Fournier and the Chief Steward will be advised sometime during the course of the voyage.” [emphasis added] Minutes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee of Northern Development, by C.J. Marshall of the Secretariat, held on August 10, 1953, while the “C.D. Howe” was en route from Inukjuak to Craig Harbour, record:

“S/L O’Neil [R.C.A.F.] ... asked how many families would be going to each of the three settlement areas. Mr. Cantley [Resources and Development] stated that this would be decided on the boat taking the Eskimos to their destination. It was not desirable to break up family groups if possible.” [emphasis added]

<sup>28</sup> Of course, if their return to Inukjuak somehow did not work out -- there was bound to be some uncertainty after an absence of, say two years -- they were reminded that they would have to remain there a further year until the supply ship could take them back to the High Arctic.

<sup>29</sup> However, the RCMP officers were not oblivious to the question of some Inuits’ interest in returning to their former homes. Corporal G.R. Sargent, in command of the Craig Harbour Detachment in 1955, stated in his end-of-year report, at page 3:

“There has been no definite word from any native families to return to their native land. However it is expected that possibly native family AKPALEEPIK will wish to return to POND INLET in 1957. Last year he requested that his brother and family come to CRAIG HARBOUR and as same did not arrive he may wish to return to them... One tentative request has been put forward by a HARRISON family JOATAMIE to have the mother of his wife come to CRAIG HARBOUR providing she is still a widow and has not acquired a new husband. When it is definitely known what these natives want a further report will be submitted.” [emphasis added]

Constable F.R. Gibson of Resolute Bay Detachment, stated in his November 14, 1956 report, at page 1:

“To date the present natives have enjoyed the virgin country surrounding Resolute Bay and have grown to be a part of it taking pride in their every undertaking. They do however from time to time express their desire to return to friends and relations at Port Harrison. They wish only to return for one year. The writer believes they were promised by the Department they could return at the end of a given time. Rather than increase the population for the time being a rotation program could be brought into effect by letting those who wish to return to Port Harrison and have them replaced at Resolute by other keen and interested settlers. This rotation would not need to be compulsory.” [emphasis added]

Alex Stevenson, “Inuit Relocation -- High Arctic”. Indian and Northern Affairs, 1977, at page 4, states:

“In the early years, as this was an experiment, the understanding was, should it fail or the Harrison people wished to return to their original homes, they could do so. There were rumours from time to time in the first seven years that there were some dissatisfied or were homesick but this was never confirmed or were there any approaches on record having been made to officials of the Federal or Territorial Governments. In this regard, there was also from a sociological point of view some expressions being made that the Baffin Islanders were not interested or avoided interrelation with the Port Harrison people. Here again there is nothing on file to confirm this.” [emphasis added]

Stevenson’s last two remarks about records show that he was not informed about every important aspect of the relocation. I have already noted that local RCMP detachments were aware of Inuit concerns about returning. In addition, the source cited in the next footnote, contradicts the absence of written communication of some Inuits’ [sic] wish to return. And as already noted, there is substantial, generally accepted evidence that the Pond Inlet and Inukjuak peoples did not mix well.

<sup>30</sup> Source: interview of October 18, 1991, with [Rhoda] Inuksuk, a former president of the Inuit Tapisat of Canada, who is in the process of translating, from syllabic form of Inuktitut into English, a large number of letters from people in Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay and Inukjuak. In particular, she is now working on letters written from 1958 to 1963, by residents of Resolute Bay to translators Robert Williamson and Elijah Iqlout, intended for the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs or to the Department.

The letters contain a series of continuing requests to be returned to Inukjuak or to have their relatives from there join them in Resolute Bay. They speak of family dislocation, concern about the local environment and about teen-age children going south for schooling. She quoted from one letter from an older man:

“How do we get our message across without hurting anyone, show appreciation for what was done without showing too much our dissatisfaction? We must not hurt or upset them [our local RCMP officers] because without their assistance, money and approval for transport, there is no way to get back.”

This letter encapsulates both the cultural desire to avoid conflict and the awe, even fear, of authority.

<sup>31</sup> A leading case is *Reibl v. Hughes* (1980), 114 D.L.R. (3d) 1. See also G. Robertson, “Informed Consent Ten Years Later: The Impact of *Reibl v. Hughes*”, 70 Can. B. Rev. 423 (1991).

<sup>32</sup> In any event, the doctrine of informed consent had not been fully developed in tort law in the 1950s, when the relocation took place.

<sup>33</sup> S. 91 sets out most of the legislative powers of the Government of Canada. Its “exclusive legislative authority” extends, by virtue of Subsection 24, to “Indians, and Lands reserved for Indians.”

<sup>34</sup> Reference re Eskimos, [1939] S.C.R. 104, at 106:

“It is indisputable that in the census [prepared by a committee of the U.K. Parliament in 1857] and in the map the ‘Esquimaux’ fall under the general designation ‘Indians’ and that, indeed, in these documents, ‘Indians’ is used synonymous with ‘aborigines’.”

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, at 108.

<sup>36</sup> [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, at 1108.

<sup>38</sup> This article is quoted by Richard Diubaldo. He observed that it was a “carefully worded article, crafted by members of his department... and was tantamount to a policy statement”. *Op.cit.* p. 114.





# 4

## *The 1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit to the High Arctic: A Documentary Analysis and Evaluation* (“Gunther Report”)

### THE 1953 RELOCATIONS OF THE INUKJUAK INUIT TO THE HIGH ARCTIC A DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

SECOND EDITION

This Report was Carried Out  
Under Contract to the  
Department of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development

M. GUNTHER  
Professor, Trent University  
AUGUST 1993



## [FOREWORD]

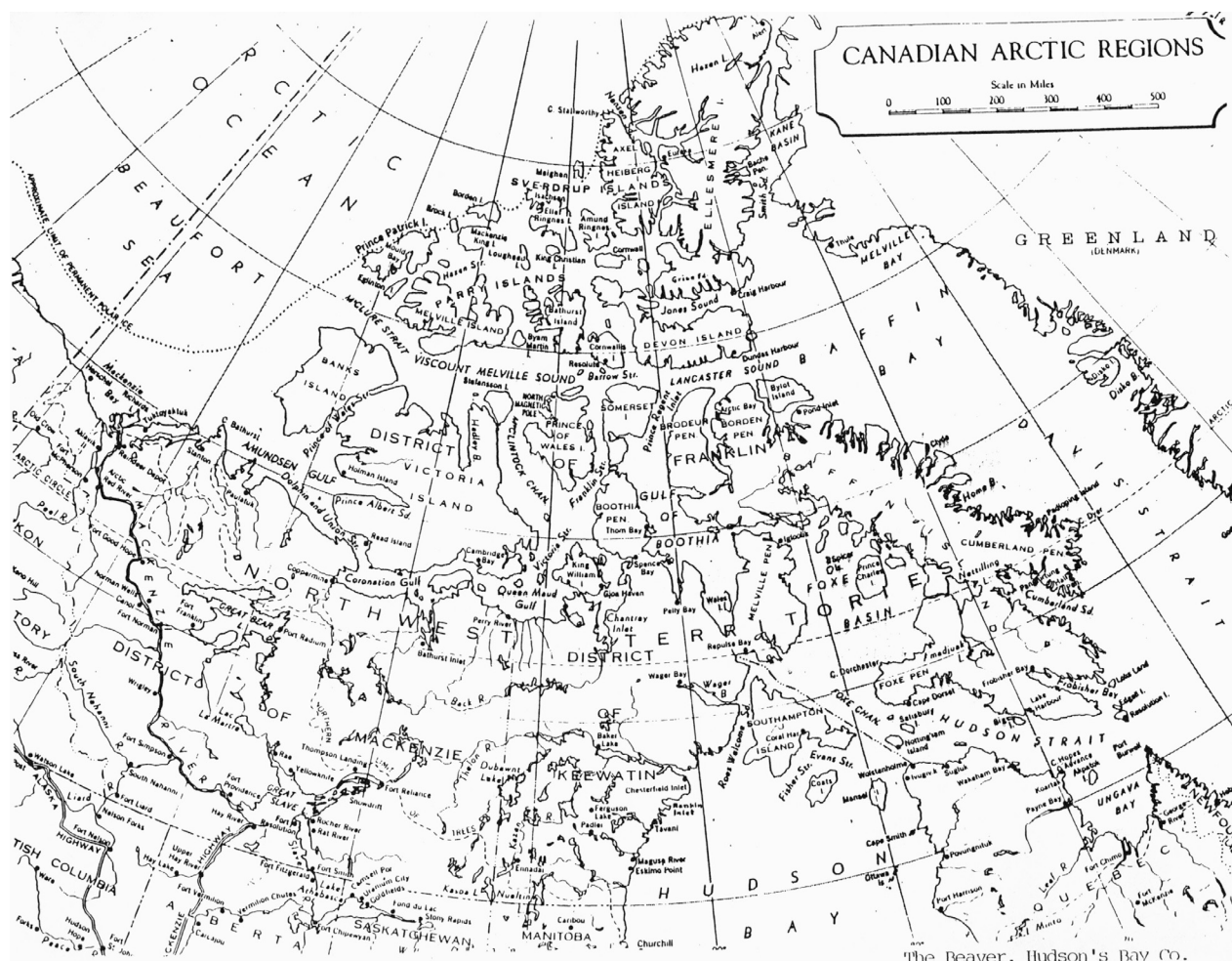
This revised edition of my report does not differ a great deal from the first edition. However, a very thorough checking for typographical errors and, more unfortunately, for a number of misplaced references has resulted, I trust, in a much improved version of the report. While there were considerable numbers of niggling but important errors of detail in the first edition, none, when revised, created a need to change any matter of substance in the report. The errata which appeared in the first report are listed at the end of this edition.

A few of the readers of the first edition raised criticisms which I have sought to address in the three or four instances in which this occurred.

This second edition also differs from the first in that it became clear, after checking the Guidelines for Disclosure of Personal Information of the Public Archives of Canada and consulting an archivist, that there was no need to exclude the names which had been previously left out. With the names included, certain sections of the report should now be much clearer.

Magnus Gunther Professor

August 2, 1993



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of three recent reports dealing with the relocation of a small group of Inuit families to Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island, and Craig Harbour, Ellesmere Island in 1953. Two of these reports have raised serious and critical questions about the “real” motives for carrying out these relocations and the allegedly inadequate way they were planned and implemented. The other report largely exonerated the Canadian government of criticisms that the resettlement policy had been motivated primarily by concerns about sovereignty in the High Arctic and that the moves had caused undue hardship and suffering for the people involved.<sup>1</sup>

This analysis and evaluation of these reports is mainly a documentary review. It examines the issues from the perspective of government letters and memoranda found in the extensive archival material available in the Public Archives of Canada. The archival search has been supplemented, occasionally, by other pertinent studies and reports and also recollections by some of those involved at the time. Essentially, however, it depends on written accounts of the events and issues as they were dealt with by those responsible at the time they occurred. Documentary searches of this kind have definite advantages and limitations. The next sections of this introduction touch on some issues of methodology which have to be dealt with in this kind of study.

- (i) The advantages are that the people writing at the time had no idea they would be the subjects of such intense examination forty years later. They had no idea they would be accused forty years later of human rights violations, sexual and financial misdemeanors, bad faith, incompetence and a conspiracy to conceal their true motives from the Canadian public. In fact, they would probably have been astonished at the very thought that this might happen in the future. The documents show that the public servants involved believed they were doing the best they could and, in the case of the two settlements, had achieved a success story well beyond their initial expectations. From the perspectives of the 1990s, these successes were modest, from the perspectives of the 1950s they seemed very considerable. All this reminds us that the situation of the Eastern Arctic Inuit in the 1950s was quite appalling and even modest “successes” could assume, at least in the short term, considerable significance. Given the conviction by the officials of the day that they were ameliorating, even if only in a small way, a rapidly deteriorating situation, there was little or no impulse to distort documents. Records are often the most satisfactory and credible of documentary sources because they are intended to convey instructions or serve as memory aids for people actually involved in the activities. The latter can then and do in reply correct false or mistaken transcripts or misunderstandings. Essentially, documents can be useful sources of what has happened because their

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<sup>1</sup> The three reports are: S.D. Grant, “A Case of Compounded Error: The Inuit Resettlement Project 1953, and the Government Response, 1990”. *Northern Perspectives*, Vol. 19, No 1, Spring 1991; A.R. Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada’s Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic 1953-1990* (Master of Philosophy Thesis, Cambridge University, June 1990); Hickling Corporation, *Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inukjuak Inuit Families in the 1950s*. (September 1990). These will be referred to as *Grant*, *Marcus* and *Hickling*.

content is independent of the investigators' selective processes. Moreover, since these were internal documents they tended, within limits, to be much more frank and critical than official public statements. But no one would suggest they offer a complete picture.

- (ii) All sources are suspect and, as historians know, few of the raw materials of history were devised especially for use by historians. In the realm of documentary history there will always be many open questions, for some of which there will not be answers. There will always be a lack of documentary completeness because of bureaucratic sloppiness and the normal processes of paper erosion. Problems of the reliability and completeness of the available documentation are by no means the most difficult or problematic in this case. The most significant disadvantage of the documents under consideration is that they are all written from the perspectives of the dominant "white" culture of the time and its administrators. An Inuit "Roots" remains to be written and thus, for the present, we are required to rely mainly on the "view from the top."
- (iii) A point of particular importance is the lack of an unambiguously reliable procedure for interpretation of the documents. The user of documents, because remote from the objects of study, is uniquely tempted to stretch material to suit a preconceived thesis.

A small instance can be used to illustrate the difficulty. In two or three cases a public servant writing at the time talks about "inducing" the Inuit to move to the High Arctic. There are also one or two references to the "transplanted Port Harrison Eskimo." For Marcus, this is clear evidence in the first instance of coercion having been used in moving the Inuit, and for Grant, in the second, of regarding Inuit as a kind of plant that could be moved around for aesthetic purposes. Writers from Jane Austen to George Orwell have used the word "induce" meaning simply to persuade (without any overtone of coercion). None of the dictionary meanings of the word imply a coercive element as Marcus seems to believe it does. The same applies to the word "transplant." One of the dictionary meanings of the word is "to remove (people) from one place and resettle in another." Thus a perfectly accurate description becomes an illustration of underlying malevolent intent when the historian has a preconceived thesis and an inability to empathize (not necessarily sympathize) with the past.

This is not the place to recount the nineteenth century battle between those historians who believed their task to be the unprejudiced and objective presentation of the past as it actually happened and others who saw their task as that of interpreting the past and explaining its significance for present and future social improvement (the historian must be the judge, "to accuse in the name of the oppressed past in the interests of the future" as one of them expressed it). However, the issue remains, to what degree do the facts mold the mind of the historian and to what degree does the mind of the historian mold the facts? Expunging all bias is impossible and this raises a special difficulty where the issue is as politicized as is the present question, involving not only "human rights" but also a \$10,000,000 claim against the federal government.

Do we study the past for the sake of the present as did the Whig historians or do we try to understand the past for the sake of the past? Do we organize the historical story in direct reference to the present by removing the troublesome elements of complexity in the past in favour of moral judgements that conform to our principles? Do we impose a pattern or continuity on the past when, in fact, it may have just involved one emergency following another?<sup>2</sup> While these differing approaches to historical interpretation are

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<sup>2</sup> These matters are discussed in P. Geyl, *Debates with Historians*, London, 1955 and H. Butterfield, *The Whip*

overdrawn and too stark they do remind us that the process of selection of information, especially in a documentary search, is as important as its interpretation. They remind us, too, that our basic intellectual framework assumptions will play a huge role in the selection and interpretation of documentary material.

Moreover, the use of highly selective, brief comments, often out of context, bedevils the research which has been done on this subject. In the hope both of minimizing the distortions which sometimes result from this and making available material which is known to few but commented on by many, this report relies heavily on extensive quotations from the key documents. Hopefully, this will permit readers to consider how well based the conclusions drawn from these documents are and reduce the impact of bias by permitting a fuller and more critical evaluation of them.

- (iv) There is some direct information available from Inuit sources but, unfortunately, woefully little in their own words. There are a few articles written by former members of the two High Arctic communities but the main source of direct recollections (there are also a good number of summations of such information in formal reports of various kinds but this is not the same thing) is to be found in the presentations made by seven former Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay community members to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in 1990.<sup>3</sup> The fact that neither Marcus, nor Soberman, nor the Makivik Corporation either did not carry out or did not make available to the public the transcripts of in-depth, systematic or even non-directive interviews is a real loss to those studying the issue.<sup>4</sup> While documents are more precise, recall data can convey a richness of personal feelings and human diversity which documents often fail to provide -especially formal reports which can be “trapped” in prevailing bureaucratic conventions about what is reported and how matters are reported. Since we are dealing, in part, with a clash of cultures, a more extensive, representative, and in-depth record of the voices of those who were being “administered” in the 1950s and 1960s would have been invaluable.

However, the disadvantage of recall data is the difficulty not only of separating the subjective from objective components, but in this case of weighing memories which are decades old and thus subject to all the attenuation resulting from time and circumstance. There is the added complication that an important component of the criticisms that were made by the Inuit witnesses to the Parliamentary Committee came from people who were in their pre-teens in 1953 – of the seven witnesses one was four, one five, one six and one 12 years old (the others were 17 and 18).<sup>5</sup>

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Interpretation of History, New York, 1965.

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes ... of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs”, March 19, 1990. House of Commons. Issue No. 22.

Hereafter referred to as the Parliamentary Committee.

<sup>4</sup> D. Soberman, Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the Complaints of the Inuit People relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and 1955. Mimeo., December 11, 1991. Hereafter referred to as Soberman. Makivik Corporation, et al, Position Paper Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue. Mimeo., January 20, 1987. Hereafter referred to as Makivik.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix I for names used in RCMP Reports in the 1950s and the names chosen by the same people after 1960, when first and second names among the Inuit became more common. Names among the Inuit have a special significance, and I have made every effort to avoid error both about names and ages. But names have so many varied spellings in the documents that some mistakes may be inevitable. Ages are based on “List, etc.”, 20.5.57, RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1 and reports on individual family names and ages, 30.9.53, RG 85, Vol. 1466, File 1000/123, Pt. 1. The age of one of the older witnesses is given as 17 and 24 in different documents. One additional witness, Flaherty, was not part of the 1953



- (v) The perceptions and memories of early youth have to be respected but should be handled gingerly and with caution. For example, at the Parliamentary Committee hearings, one of the allegations made was that the RCMP at both Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay had traded food for sex. This allegation, which was first heard at the Makivik meeting in Iqaluit in 1985, was repeated by three of the seven witnesses. The RCMP investigated this charge and reported that two of the witnesses were basing themselves on what they had been told by the third. When the RCMP interviewed this person by phone, (she did not wish to meet with them), she elaborated on her allegations, “Stating that when she was five years old she saw an RCMP member talking to three Inuit women while the men were out hunting, and later overheard the women refer to ‘the arrangements’ they had with the member.” The RCMP report then goes on to say, “Flaherty now interprets this to mean an arrangement to exchange food for sex, although she never witnessed any such exchange.”<sup>6</sup> The flimsy basis for this allegation suggests that childhood memories cannot simply be taken at face value and need considerable corroboration, particularly when such serious charges are made involving people still alive but in no position to defend themselves. As Grant has noted oral histories should be treated with “caution” since “memory is selective in all human beings – a defensive mechanism which sub-consciously, or even consciously, supports one’s self-esteem.”<sup>7</sup>
- (vi) A last matter which requires mention is how does one determine what is government policy, or rather, who speaks for government within bureaucratic hierarchies. The fact that bureaucracies are hierarchical means that all voices or opinions do not count equally. Before a statement by a public servant can be taken as government policy his or her level in the hierarchy must be taken into account and weighed accordingly. To spell this out, a Deputy Minister counts more [than] an Assistant Deputy Minister who ranks higher than a Director who outranks a Chief. For example, an Alex Stevenson in 1953 was a fourth level public servant as was J. Cantley. (These two are mentioned because they were important field officers at the time.) While their views must be given weight and respect these must be balanced by the basic rule that “managers” statements, since they are ultimately responsible for policy, should be given more weight. Since they are responsible they are more careful and accurate in expressing departmental “philosophy” and policy. Whether lower level public servants’ statements are more useful as expressing the “real” intentions of government or whether they are mere idiosyncratic personal views which they can allow themselves to make is a matter for judgement and analysis. But to assume that the views of a Stevenson count equally with those of a Cunningham (Director of Northern Administration and Lands Branch in 1953) is to misunderstand how government works.

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group. She went north in 1955 at age 5.

<sup>6</sup> *RCMP Internal Investigation into Allegations of RCMP Misconduct, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, CA 1953*. Mimeo., July 1991. One other witness before the Standing Committee alleged that on two occasions in the 1960s, an Inuit woman in Resolute Bay had complained that an RCMP member had forced her to have sex and that a different RCMP member was involved on both occasions. However, this individual did not forward her complaint to anyone at the time although the woman asked him to. This individual, who was not identified in the RCMP report, refused to identify either the women or the members involved.

<sup>7</sup> Grant, p. 25. Grant is here critical of using interviews with departmental officials of the 1950s, but her point can be applied to all oral history.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

#### Introduction

Two major developments affected the Canadian North in the 1950s. The first was the catastrophic decline in what was called the “Eskimo economy.” The second was the already significant but expanding U.S. military presence in Canada in response to the Cold War. They were of dissimilar concern to different departments of government, but ultimately they were to become linked both administratively and politically. Much later, in the 1980s, certain members of the Inuit communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, together with the Makivik Corporation, claimed that Inuit from northern Quebec who had been moved to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands in 1953 had been wrongfully used in an ill-designed attempt by the Canadian government to create an “illusion” of Canadian occupation in the High Arctic.<sup>8</sup>

These claims were made in oral and written evidence presented to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs considering the matter in 1990, where the argument was made that overwhelming evidence showed the “central” if not the “sole” reason for the moves was to ensure sovereignty in the High Arctic. The most emphatic commentator supporting this view is S.D. Grant who states that in the case of Grise Fiord and the abortive plans for Alexandra Fiord, concern for sovereignty was, unquestionably, the primary motive behind both the initial idea and the selection of the sites. Resolute Bay was added later in direct relation to the “Canadianization” discussions taking place within the Canadian government at the time. Grant asserts that concern for sovereignty determined the time and the place of the moves and that without this concern there would have been no reason to relocate southern Inuit to such a distant and alien environment. In her view, concern for sovereignty was the primary motive in determining when and where.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Government of Canada has maintained otherwise and, furthermore, since only a minuscule number of the documents (out of the nine to ten thousand which were examined by me) made mention of any possibility that sovereignty was a primary, or for that matter secondary, motive in this matter, it is important to consider how serious was the issue of sovereignty in Canada’s North in the early 1950s and to assess, also, whether this concern was serious enough to warrant the Government of Canada displacing, “against their will”, 54 Inuit who went to these settlements in 1953. This chapter i) reviews the meaning of the term sovereignty in international law; ii) discusses the legal advice the Government of Canada received in the early 1950s about the status of its “effective” sovereignty in the High Arctic; iii) reviews the basis for the claims by Grant and Marcus that there was a Greenlander “threat” to the effective occupation of Ellesmere Island in the early 1950s; and iv) evaluates the evidence for this claim.

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<sup>8</sup> Grant, p. 11-12; Parliamentary Committee, 22: A 43.

<sup>9</sup> Grant, p. 11.

### **Sovereignty in the High Arctic In 1950**

Since the term sovereignty plays such an extraordinarily important part in this discussion it is essential to provide some background on its meaning and complexity.

McWhinney gives the following definition of the term, providing a useful starting point:

In international law, sovereignty denotes the international legal personality of states. Only states are persons (legal actors) at international law; and the state's sovereignty for these purposes is projected in all its legal control of territory, territorial waters and national airspace, and its legal power to exclude other states from these domains; Its legal power to represent and vindicate the claims and interests of its citizens with other states; and Its own representation in international legal arenas... and before international tribunals such as the World Court.<sup>10</sup>

The question of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic after 1945 was first taken up in a systematic, deliberative way by the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND) at one of its first meetings, in June 1948. There it was agreed that a memorandum should be prepared on the subject of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. This memo was completed in early 1950 by the Dean of the Dalhousie Law Faculty, V.C. MacDonald, K.C.<sup>11</sup> His analysis was supplemented by a 250-page document prepared by the Department of Mines and Resources entitled Factual Records Supporting Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic, which listed every federal government activity and act of administration carried out in the Arctic in the previous 100 years.

MacDonald's report is important because it provides a significant insight into how seriously the federal government needed to take the sovereignty question in the High Arctic, as seen from the perspective of an eminent legal scholar. The report gives an indication of whether the government could feel relatively secure or not on the issue.

MacDonald reviewed those fundamental legal principles and practices that could be considered to substantiate Canada's claim to territorial sovereignty over the Canadian Arctic. Like other experts he considers that of the several ways in which sovereignty can be acquired – prescription, conquest, cession, discovery and occupation – it is generally agreed that occupation effected by taking possession of, and establishing an administration over, the territory in question is of greatest significance. This occupation had to be real and, in the words of one of the great writers on the subject, "Possession and administration are the two essential facts that constitute an effective occupation."<sup>12</sup> In two important cases, the Palmas Case and the Eastern Greenland Case (where the claim of Norway to certain parts of East Greenland was disputed by Denmark) the Permanent Court of International Justice provided a listing of criteria which could be used to ascertain whether the exercise of sovereignty had been established through effective occupation. In the Eastern Greenland Case the Court noted that to maintain sovereignty, the exercise of authority need not be continuous but that the discontinuity caused by the character of the territory required only such acts as were appropriate to the territory in question. The acts noted in this case as confirming effective occupation were Danish hunting expeditions, scientific expeditions, mapping and exploration expeditions by non-official institutions, visits of vessels, and the formal

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<sup>10</sup> E. McWhinney, "Sovereignty", Canadian Encyclopedia, 1988, p. 2052.

<sup>11</sup> V.C. MacDonald, Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic, 3.3.50. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File PJB D - Sovereignty, etc.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

issuing of permits.

MacDonald goes on to ask whether effective occupation requires settlement on occupied territory and answers his own question by noting that there is “high authority” for the view that such actual settlement is not essential in polar regions because of climatic conditions, provided the claimant can furnish proof that possession was taken and that it is in a position to exercise control over of what it claims” (my emphasis).<sup>13</sup> The rule of effectiveness requires that an administration must maintain civil order and provide for the organization and administration of justice in the territory in question. The usual ways to do this in Arctic lands, according to MacDonald, were the maintenance of police posts, custom houses, post offices, schools and hospitals, scientific posts, weather stations and wireless stations. A local administration was not always required, regular official visits and patrol vessels were other means of exercising actual jurisdiction. These foregoing considerations indicate, he says, how “little may be necessary in abnormal situations such as obtain in the Canadian Arctic” to maintain sovereignty (my emphasis).<sup>14</sup>

MacDonald’s conclusion is worth quoting at some length:

As indicated in section I hereof the general principle of International Law is that title may be acquired by a country which takes possession of unoccupied territory and manifests sovereignty over it by subjecting it to actual State Administration by means and to a degree appropriate to the character of the Territory; that it is not necessary that the display of authority extend into every place in that Territory if the fair inference is that the occupying power has assumed administration of the territory as a whole; and finally, that the title claimed by occupation depends largely upon whether there is a competing claimant and, If so, the strength of his adverse claim....

Canada fell heir to the rights of France and Great Britain and began providing for the administration of the Canadian Arctic in the Sixties; and by statutes, by orders-in-council and ordinances has continuously and progressively asserted its administrative authority over the whole of the Arctic Regions, as it did likewise since 1904 by the publication of many official maps of its limits. Apart from this assumption and continued assertion of Canadian sovereignty, Canada has reduced the region into possession by supplying for it a complete framework of laws, and of law-making and law-enforcing organs, and of executive authority; and has engaged progressively in detailed acts of administration, i.e., the actual display of State activities such as belongs only to the territorial sovereign.

The acts of administration outlined in the section above are so numerous and so varied and so wide-flung that, it is submitted, they would have satisfied the requirements of the law in its most absolute terms if that were required. A fortiori they amount to effective occupation in the terms of the law relative to Arctic regions. For relatively to the physical and climatic conditions which obtain in those regions they provide a convincing demonstration that Canada has occupied them in as effective a manner as could possibly be accomplished. The record shows not mere declarations or symbolic acts of possession or sporadic expeditions or occasional visits of government officials or locally circumscribed displays of activity such as have sufficed in other areas; but rather the complete incorporation of the whole region into the realm of Canadian law and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

administration, and the gradual and systematic penetration of the arm of Canadian government into all the component parts of the region, and the extension to the inhabitants of the normal benefits of Canadian citizenship, and numerous provisions for their special needs.

To these considerations may be added the absence of challenge of Canada's title by other countries, their submission to Canadian legislation requiring travel and exploration permits, and other evidences of tacit recognition mentioned in a later Chapter.

Accordingly, the conclusion appears inevitable that Canada has made so many displays of sovereignty, in so many respects, in so many places, for so long a period, and with so little challenge, as to establish its title to the whole of the Canadian Arctic Region by effective occupation in conformity with international law.<sup>15</sup>

The last section of MacDonald's report reviews actual recognition of Canada's title since even were a title defective under the rules of international law it could still be validated by the "expressed recognition of other nations which would amount to a waiver of claims conflicting with the right so recognized."<sup>16</sup> His review of the situation in 1950 noted that Denmark, Norway and the United States had clearly recognized Canadian title in the Arctic either tacitly or overtly. The ultimate conclusion of the study was that Canada's title to the Arctic regions as a whole:

... may safely be asserted on the basis of Effective Occupation (and the support which it derives from Discovery (aided by symbolic acts of possession) in general, and as to any particular area therein allegedly not reduced into effective possession); and upon the Tacit Recognition by the nations concerned and their acquiescence. In Canada's long continued and oft-repeated claim of title; and (to the extent that it may be valid in relation to the Arctic) upon the so-called Sector Principle; and may be asserted, with less confidence, upon the doctrine of Prescription.

In sum, however, it appears that considerations of policy should lead to the maintenance of Canada's title upon the ground of Effective Occupation alone as the chief and most satisfactory ground of reliance, to which the other doctrines discussed are merely supplementary.<sup>17</sup>

The conclusion that Canada's legal claim to sovereignty in terms of effective occupation was fundamentally secure but not necessarily perfect does not necessarily settle the issue under debate since there remains the claim that it was a concern with de facto loss of sovereignty that drove the federal government in the late 1940s, and, particularly the early 1950s, into the various acts which are under criticism today.<sup>18</sup>

It is, however, important to bear in mind that in "abnormal" situations like the High Arctic, effective occupation did not require settlement or colonization but it did require effective administration, and we will see that a concern with buttressing effective administration, particularly civilian government activities and services, was an ongoing issue in the late 1940s and early 1950s to ensure that there was no de facto loss of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 20-21

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Grant defines de facto loss of sovereignty as an "insidious" situation in which a "nation-state" can "no longer exert full (sic) control over its territory (usually as a result of bilateral agreements)". This definition is a little confusing since if a sovereign state voluntarily, through bilateral agreement, surrenders or shares its sovereignty, the issue of de facto loss of sovereignty would hardly apply, nor is it clear why this must be "insidious". Grant, p. 6.

sovereignty as had occurred in a number of instances during the Second World War.<sup>19</sup>

However, Grant is not content merely to acknowledge Government of Canada concerns with possible de facto loss of sovereignty in the North, but also develops the peculiar notion that a “threat” to sovereignty can be not only direct but may be “manifest in the benign activities of foreigners acting without the permission of the nation state or by actions which violate the laws of the state” (my emphasis).<sup>20</sup>

This extraordinarily wide definition of threats to sovereignty is, of course, a political, albeit somewhat idiosyncratic, rather than a legal, definition of terms. In international law only states can constitute threats to each other’s sovereignty. It is not clear from Grant’s account whether the presence of the 12 Greenlanders on southern Ellesmere Island in 1952 constituted a “benign” threat to Canadian sovereignty or a de facto loss of control over Ellesmere Island, or both, in either case leading the federal government to respond by sending the majority of the 54 Inuit colonists there. In the case of Resolute Bay, Grant is clear that she believes that there was a fear of de facto loss of sovereignty (to the U.S.) which prompted the settlement of Inuit there.

### **The Greenlander “Threat” to Sovereignty**

This section will examine the claims made by Grant and Marcus that a Greenlander “threat” to sovereignty existed in the early 1950s and that to counter this, colonies were to be set up at Alexandra Fiord and Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island. The first part of the discussion sets out a chronology of key events as well as extracts from all the key documents. The second part evaluates this evidence.

- (i) The single most direct legal threat to Canadian sovereignty over Ellesmere Island in this century came in 1919 when the Danish government stated that the island was a “no mans land.” This was in response to a Canadian request, based on a recommendation of a Royal Commission, that they act to restrain Greenlanders from killing musk-oxen on the island. This legal “threat” by another government was met by a plan for the effective occupation of Ellesmere and other islands. “Effective occupation” meant establishing a government presence through the setting up of RCMP posts at Craig Harbour and Pond Inlet in 1922, at Pangnirtung in 1923, Dundas Harbour in 1924 and the Bache Peninsula (Ellesmere Island) in 1926 – where a post office was also established because (according to sovereignty expert Sir Joseph Pope) it constituted particularly significant proof of sovereignty in international law. The response of the Danish government was to let the matter drop and to give tacit recognition to Canada’s claim.<sup>21</sup>
- (ii) In 1930, the Norwegian government (which had a very weak potential claim to ownership and one which

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<sup>19</sup> See J.L. Granatstein, “A Fit of Absence of Mind: Canada’s National Interest in the North to 1968” in E.J. Dosman ed., The Arctic in Question, Oxford, 1976; and K. Coates ed., The Alaska Highway, UBC, 1985, especially articles by C.R. Norman and R.J. Diubaldo.

<sup>20</sup> Grant, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> W.R. Morrison, “Arctic Sovereignty”, Canadian Encyclopedia, 1988, p. 112-113 and Granatstein, Op cit. See also G.W. Smith, “Sovereignty in the North...” in R. St. J. MacDonald, ed., The Arctic Frontier, 1966. Grant states these posts were set up “to prevent further denials (sic) of ownership by Greenlanders or Danes”. Grant, p. 7. The concerns about Ellesmere Island in the 1920s are fully discussed in RG 85, Vol. 347, File 200-2. See also W.R. Morrison, Under the Flag: Canadian Sovereignty and the Native People in Northern Canada, mimeo., Indian and Northern Affairs, 1984, pp. 115-116, for an account of how the Danes were to be stalled if they did not abandon their claim.

they had never made public) formally recognized Canadian jurisdiction over the Sverdrup Islands after Sverdrup who had explored the islands was given an ex-gratia payment of \$67,000 for his maps. As a result, by 1933 it could be agreed that “all foreign claims to the Archipelago had disappeared and Canada’s claim had been established.”<sup>22</sup>

- (iii) The RCMP posts on Ellesmere Island were closed in 1933 (Bache Peninsula) and 1940 (Craig Harbour) due to difficulty in supplying them, and a permanent Canadian administrative presence ended until Joint Canadian – U.S. Weather Stations were set up at Eureka in 1947 and Alert in 1950. At each station, Canada provided the Officer-in-Charge, half the personnel, the site and part of the costs. A post office was opened at each of the Weather Stations.
- (iv) The annual sea-supply of the Weather Stations also permitted tangible assertions of effective occupation on Ellesmere Island. For example, during the 1950 voyage eight government departments sent representatives who carried out one-or two-day visits to Cape Camperdown, Bache Peninsula, Maury Bay, the Wrangle-Lincoln Bay area, Cape Sheridan, Alert, Robbin Bay, the Cape Belknap area, Dumb Bell Bay and Fort Conger in order to establish Astro positions; for geological reconnaissance; for air and ground photography; to recover an historical record; for biological reconnaissance; to investigate a plane crash; to survey certain areas; for hydrographic soundings and to inspect unoccupied RCMP buildings.<sup>23</sup>
- (v) An RCMP Sub-Inspector attached to the Arctic Weather Station Resupply Mission of 1950 submitted a report which included the information that, on visiting the Bache Peninsula detachment house which had been closed since 1933, he had discovered the buildings in poor repair and the detachment quarters filthy as Greenlanders had been using them for skinning seals. There were indications that the Greenland Inuit had been using the area as a base for hunting. A large and recent cache of seal, walrus, white whale, fox and musk-ox had been located on Cape Camperdown in the same area. He also reported that he had heard that the Royal Danish Trading Company was proposing to establish a trading post at Etah and that five families of Greenland Inuit were being moved there as hunters. He stated, “These natives would undoubtedly extend their hunting activities to Ellesmere Island and I’m sure will kill muskox at every opportunity.” (my emphasis) Inspector Larsen, Officer Commanding RCMP “G” Division, reviewing this report, felt that these hunters were probably going to operate to a great extent on Ellesmere and that if they were “not checked may seriously deplete the muskox and other forms of animal life which inhabit the area.” He suggested that External Affairs be approached to reach an agreement with the Danes to prevent this “hunting” on Ellesmere Island, since it would be difficult to control hunting around Bache Peninsula from Craig Harbour where the opening of a detachment post was under review.<sup>24</sup> This is the origin of the claim that there was a Greenlander “threat” to sovereignty.
- (vi) Alex Stevenson, Officer-in-Charge on the 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol (who would have been well aware of the contents of the influential 1950 Cantley Economic Report on Eskimo Affairs which first discussed the

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<sup>22</sup> Granatstein, *Op cit.*; Smith, *Op cit.*, p. 210; Dept. of External Affairs, 28.10.29. RG 85, Vol. 347, File 202-2, Maps, Reports, etc. Grant calls this “the Norwegian Challenge”. Grant, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> “Projects”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 304, File 1009-5(2).

<sup>24</sup> Burton to Wright, 29.9.50. RG 85, Vol. 304, File 1000-5(2); Larsen to Commissioner 11.10.50. RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7(5).

need for relocations), first raised the question of establishing, “Eskimo camps north of Lancaster Sound.” He did this, too, in the context of a long section of the report which dealt with another crisis of scarcity and possible starvation at Cape Dorset, when 110 Inuit had to be congregated at Dorset and two drops of horse meat made in order to sustain the group. Stevenson reported a discussion with Larsen on whether a number of Inuit families might be moved from Baffin Island and re-established on Devon Island, Ellesmere Island and other islands of the Canadian Archipelago. Larsen is reported as saying that such a plan was “feasible, providing the natives were willing to move.” Stevenson continues:

For example, at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island there are only two native families at present. These, of course, are employed by the RCMP. Inspector Larsen greatly favoured my suggestion that we place at least four families on the Island and have RCMP as they are elsewhere, responsible for their welfare. If the RCMP detachment could not carry sufficient trading supplies, arrangements for the Eskimos to trade could be made and the trading could be conducted at ship time. ... After all, when I was at Pond Inlet, the natives from Igloodik only traded once a year. Insofar as Family Allowance supplies are concerned the RCMP could definitely handle this.

If the RCMP closed Dundas Harbour and re-opened Craig Harbour, I still think some natives should be left on Devon Island and others established on Ellesmere Island, spreading out along the coast as far north as Bache Peninsula. If Bache was well stocked, plus a radio transmitter, the police could make a patrol back and forth visiting camps en route. It would even be possible to go up from Craig in the spring – spend the summer at Bache – then return in the fall or the early winter.

There is no doubt that country produce is plentiful in the aforementioned regions and Baffin Island Eskimos could easily live off the country. In this regard I understand that there is evidence that the Greenland Eskimos are hunting on Ellesmere Island and vicinity. Why not give our natives a chance to cover this country and also if it is considered necessary help improve the position regarding sovereignty rights. (my emphases)<sup>25</sup>

This is the first of the only two references I was able to find, both by Stevenson, which make a direct connection between resettlement and sovereignty. The context, the need for and availability of “plentiful country produce” and, secondarily, the utility of such a move to improve sovereignty rights, “if it is considered necessary” should be noted.

- (vii) RCMP Commissioner Woods repeated these concerns in a letter to the Deputy Commissioner of the NWT, stressing that if hunters were established at the Etah trading-post they would be a threat to the musk-oxen (a strictly protected species) and he asked that representation be made to Denmark for assistance in preventing “hunting on Ellesmere Island.”<sup>26</sup>
- (viii) Mr. J. Tener, a Canadian Wildlife Service mammalogist, started a two-year survey of the wildlife of western Ellesmere Island, with special reference to musk-oxen. (At the time the CWS had only six research

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<sup>25</sup> “Extract Report...Eastern Arctic Patrol 1950”. nd. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8 (2A).

<sup>26</sup> 13.10.50, RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7(5).



mammalogists in the whole of the NWT, indicating the priority of concerns about musk-ox in the High Arctic.) The Department of Agriculture also began its annual Insect Research Programmes on Ellesmere in 1951.<sup>27</sup>

- (ix) According to Grant there was another event (in addition to the Greenland hunters in 1950), this time in 1951, which allegedly added to the sense of “threat” about Ellesmere. This was a so-called “suspect” scientific expedition by the French geographer and explorer, Jean Malaurie, who had been commissioned by the French National Centre of Scientific Research to spend 14 months in Greenland. Why this expedition is regarded as “suspect” is not clear, it is simply labelled as such. Malaurie had, according to the Canadian Embassy in Paris, attempted to contact, by radio, the Canadian station at Resolute Bay, to inform them that he had crossed a small section of Canadian territory during this trip, but his radio failed. He then felt that he ought to report the matter to the Canadian government through its Paris Embassy, “in order to set the facts straight and so that this presence on Canadian ground would not be misinterpreted.” The Embassy report goes on to say, “We have assured him that the Canadian Government would not take umbrage of (sic) his scientific enterprise, we congratulated him, not only for his courage, but also for the delicate thought in bringing these facts to our attention.” In other words, Malaurie went to extraordinary lengths to respect Canadian sovereignty.<sup>28</sup>
- (x) In September 1951, the Craig Harbour detachment of the RCMP was re-established. It consisted of two Constables and two Inuit Special Constables and their families. It was the most northerly active establishment of the RCMP. In a telegram proudly announcing the opening, Alex Stevenson noted, “Sovereignty now is a cinch.”<sup>29</sup> Stevenson after this says no more about sovereignty (apart from the more ambiguous comments he made in 1952 which are discussed in section (xiii)).
- (xi) On November 7, 1951, Inspector Larsen wrote to the Commissioner of the RCMP on the general question of visits by Greenlanders, noting that the RCMP, had “known for... a considerable number of years that some Eskimos from the Etah District... were crossing over to Ellesmere... for bear hunting” and that these were Greenlanders who had been employed, years previously, at the Bache Peninsula and Craig Harbour RCMP detachments. At the time the matter was brought to the attention of the Commissioner of the NWT, with the RCMP recommending that there was no need to take any action and that they “be allowed to continue with these hunts.” However, in 1950 when it was learned that a trading post was to be established at Etah, it was felt that this would result in “more extensive hunting on Ellesmere Island than had been done by the two or three families previously mentioned.” He was of the opinion that Greenland Eskimos should now be stopped from coming to Canadian territory as they were “likely to kill off a great deal of game, such as musk-oxen and caribou.” He urged, again, an approach to External Affairs to ask the

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<sup>27</sup> “Wildlife Investigations”, nd., (probably 1952). RG 109, Vol. 32, File WLT 300-(3).

<sup>28</sup> Grant, p. 7. Canadian Embassy to Under-Secretary, External Affairs, 16.10.51. RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7(5). The only concern that the Department showed on this matter was the large number of dogs with Malaurie’s party and the impact feeding them might have had on game. The Embassy in Paris was under the mistaken impression that “Greenland (Eskimos) have a permanent authorization to cross the so-called (sic) border between Danish and Canadian Territories”. Bouchard to Wright, 17.1.52. RG 22, Vol. 124, File 82-34-4, Vol. 3.

<sup>29</sup> 6.9.51. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

cooperation of the Danish authorities to prevent this from happening.<sup>30</sup>

- (xii) On January 26, 1952, Sinclair, the Director of Resources and Development's Northern Administration and Lands Branch, wrote to the Commissioner of the RCMP suggesting that before any approach be made to External Affairs they discuss the matter with N.O. Christensen, Governor of North Greenland, who was joining the Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1952<sup>31</sup>. On June 10, 1952, Cunningham, then Acting Director of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, wrote Christensen saying that, "Our principal concern is the effect that unrestricted hunting by Greenlanders may have on the resources of Ellesmere Island and particularly on the small caribou and musk-ox population." On June 20, 1952, Christensen wrote to the Greenland Department in Copenhagen saying that while the Canadian Government had until recently tolerated the practice of Greenlanders hunting on Ellesmere Island, they now believed that "the hunting rules of the Northwest Territories were being broken" since musk-oxen were being shot, and that these visits should be discontinued.<sup>32</sup>
- (xiii) Grant also claims that a request by the Danes, in January 1952, to permit members of a Danish Geodetic Survey to land on Canadian territory and make certain observations as a small part of their work, was regarded with "concern." National Defence, in advising External Affairs on this question, stated that they "had no objection" to the Danish request providing that the group confine themselves to the area that they had requested and that any photographs taken in the vicinity of defence installations be submitted for screening. There is no hint in the archival documentation that this was seen as a concern of any kind. The Danes were in fact carrying out standard procedures for acknowledging and respecting Canadian sovereignty.<sup>33</sup>
- (xiv) Nicholson, Commissioner of the RCMP, then took up Larsen's concerns with Young<sup>34</sup>, the Department Deputy Minister, on February 11, 1952, saying that the RCMP were considering moving their Craig Harbour detachment to the vicinity of Cape Sabine, where it would be easier to service the detachment and it would be possible to "maintain some surveillance over that part of the coast of Ellesmere visited most frequently by Greenland natives. As you know, there are indications that these natives are making periodic trips to Ellesmere to take advantage of good hunting." He went on to quote Larsen's views:

As you know Craig Harbour was reopened last year after being closed for over ten years, but the disadvantage with Craig Harbour is that it is very poorly located from the patrol point of view and from a supply point of view, as it is nearly always choked up with ice...

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<sup>30</sup> 7.11.51, RG 22, Vol. 124, File 82-34-1, Vol. 3. Grant maintains that Larsen was first concerned about sovereignty and then only later became concerned about game. Larsen never did express a concern about sovereignty in these letters and his letters show an overwhelming concern with overhunting. Grant, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> 26.1.52, RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7(5). Responsibility for "Eskimo Affairs" was vested by Order-in-Council with the Department of Mines and Resources from 1937 to 1949 and after that with its successor departments - Resources and Development, 1950-1953; Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1953-1966; Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1966 to the present. Throughout this report they will simply be designated as the Department.

<sup>32</sup> Cunningham to Christensen, 10.6.52 and Christensen to Greenland Department, 20.6.52, and also Larsen to Commissioner, 14.10.52. *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> National Defence to External Affairs, 12.2.52. RG 22, Vol. 124, File 82-34-1, Vol. 3.

<sup>34</sup> See point (xi) above.

conditions were much more favourable for establishing and supplying a detachment in the vicinity of Cape Sabine... The advantage of placing the detachment directly across from Greenland would be that we would then have full control and supervision of Greenland Eskimos and others travelling back and forth, and over hunting activities they may engage in.

As will be discussed further, it is also in this letter that Nicholson passed on to Young Larsen's view that if the detachment at Cape Sabine was opened three or four Pond Inlet Inuit should be "recruited" to form a small settlement there as well, in order to "improve their economic circumstances."<sup>35</sup>

- (xv) Proposals for moving Inuit to the High Arctic, which appear in the post-war files as early as 1950, were given considerable impetus in early 1952 in letters between the RCMP and the Department and especially at a major Conference on Eskimo Affairs, held in May 1952. This was the first conference of its kind ever held, bringing together 60 of the key figures in the main organisations concerned with the Arctic. Out of it came a patchwork quilt of policy which was important not so much for its consistency and coherence but because it was the first time any overarching, semi-systematic policy had been articulated. Overpopulation and its amelioration by moves to "areas not presently occupied or where natural resources could support a greater number of people", was one of the policies that was approved by the Conference. Stevenson, who was Officer-in-Charge of the northern leg of the Eastern Arctic Patrol, had visited Craig Harbour in September 1952, was impressed by the plentiful game and suggested that Inuit from overpopulated Northern Quebec might move there. His comments, since they bring together the issue of "sovereignty" and the relocations, are regarded by Grant<sup>36</sup> as crucial evidence in support of the thesis that sovereignty was the "primary motive" for the relocations, and deserve quoting at length:

Craig Harbour

...Walrus, seals and other country food are quite plentiful in the area and there is no reason why Eskimos should not be moved over to Ellesmere Island to live permanently. This was suggested to Inspector Larsen and he expressed his willingness to have the Police detachment cooperate. ...A similar arrangement could also be made if a further detachment is established in the Cape Sabine area next year. Six or eight families could be placed there also and could probably be drawn from one or other of the over-populated northern Quebec areas. A few families at Port Harrison have already expressed their willingness to go further north and others could also probably be found in other areas if they were to be canvassed.

Muskox and caribou were reported to be fairly numerous on Ellesmere Island although no estimate of the actual numbers could be obtained. The Craig Harbour natives shot a few caribou during the winter but otherwise land animals were left unmolested. The most disturbing news is, however, that Greenlanders are crossing over to the island and apparently hunting there. Six of them visited Craig Harbour last spring by dog team and

<sup>35</sup> 11.2.52, RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>36</sup> As noted earlier there was in fact one previous direct reference as well, see point (vi) above. There was also an item on the Agenda of the Conference on Eskimo Affairs to search for permanent employment of Inuit to carry out security and sovereignty tasks. This will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

Eureka has since reported that twelve Eskimos had arrived from around Bache Peninsula, where they had apparently spent the winter. Mr. Christensen wrote to the Greenland authorities at Thule last spring, asking them to discourage Greenlanders from crossing to Canadian territories but he admitted that it was unlikely that this would have any effect. The only way that any control could be exercised would be to have a R.C.M. Police detachment in the Cape Sabine area where these people are entering. If Police detachments could be maintained at both Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine and arrangements could be made to have them supplied through the "loan fund", ten or twelve Canadian Eskimo families could be transferred to Ellesmere Island and use made of the natural resources that are undoubtedly available there. The occupation of the Island by Canadian Eskimos will remove any excuse Greenlanders may presently have for crossing over and hunting there (my emphasis). Using Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine as starting points, consideration might then be given to the possibility of finding employment for natives at Eureka and Alert, under the supervision of the Police, during the summer months. Such an arrangement would probably be welcomed by the Meteorological Division and also have the support of the R.C.M. Police.<sup>37</sup>

- (xvi) On October 13, 1952, the Officer-in-Charge of the Eureka Weather Station reported that three "Eskimos" had arrived at the Station and said that they had been living on the Bache Peninsula, "where food was plentiful" during the previous year. Larsen then sent a radiogram to the Constable-in-Charge of the Craig Harbour detachment, which had been opened in the previous year, stating that in the next spring when travel conditions were good a patrol should be made to the Bache Peninsula to "make these people return to Greenland."<sup>38</sup>

The issue of the Greenlanders did not end there. In March 1953, the Craig Harbour post reported (incorrectly) that two families (four adults and eight children) of Greenlanders were still living near Bache Peninsula.<sup>39</sup> On May 29, 1953, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, writing to the Canadian Ambassador in Copenhagen, asked that the Danish government be informed that the "Eskimo" who had been living on Bache Peninsula would be given rifles, ammunition, and food and then sent back to Greenland in the near future and requested that the Danes cooperate in preventing "casual migrations."

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied in September 1953 that the Danish government concurred that casual migrations should not take place, and that the Inspector of the Thule district had been asked to so inform the population.<sup>40</sup>

The Canadians were apparently unaware of the full effect this letter would have because four years later, in 1957, the Danish Ambassador wrote to the Canadian Embassy in Copenhagen that because of some previous "illegal migration" Greenlanders had been forbidden by Denmark to travel through parts of Ellesmere Island

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<sup>37</sup> "Report on the Eastern Arctic Patrol", September 1952. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3. Grant, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Larsen to Commissioner, 14.10.52. RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7 (5).

<sup>39</sup> Dick to Commissioner, 19.3.53. RG 85, Vol. 294, File 1005-7 (5). See also Young to Under-Secretary, External Affairs, 2.4.53, noting that more Canadian Inuit families were moving to Ellesmere (in addition to the two already at Craig Harbour) and steps should be taken to send the Greenlanders back (who had in any case already left), "before any difficulties may arise through the intermingling of the two groups". Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Allard to Canadian Minister, 29.5.53; Note verbale to Canadian Legation, 28.9.53. RG 25, Vol. 3278, File 6732-40.

while on hunting expeditions. While the Danes agreed with the Canadian Government that migration of Greenlanders to Ellesmere Island should not take place, they were concerned that this extensive limitation would preclude Greenlanders from getting the skins of polar bear which provided necessary clothing, particularly since Greenland territory no longer offered a sufficient supply. They, therefore, requested that Greenlanders be given permission to travel through three sections of Canadian territory to hunt polar bear on the open ice. The Under Secretary of State for External Affairs supported this request and emphasized that in 1953, Canada was concerned about “illegal permanent migration” (my emphasis) and seemed surprised that the Danish government had prohibited “any” access whatsoever. According to External Affairs at least, this had not been the intention.<sup>41</sup>

In any case, notwithstanding the bureaucracies involved, the Greenlanders had continued to visit parts of Ellesmere on polar bear hunting expeditions, and the Commissioner of the RCMP noted on April 16, 1957, that the detachments at Alexandra and Grise Fiords had become well acquainted with these people who visited each spring, and expressed themselves as being in favour of allowing the visits to continue since they were very beneficial.<sup>42</sup>

## **Conclusion**

1. There was clearly nothing but excellent cooperation between Denmark and Canada at the time. The files indicate that the two countries cooperated on a number of issues and that there was a great deal of mutual admiration and cooperation between the top officials dealing with the North in both countries. Denmark respected Canadian sovereignty on Ellesmere (and elsewhere) fully and unequivocally.
2. There was no “threat” to Canadian sovereignty from the two families of Greenlanders who lived on Bache Peninsula for two years, nor was there any indication in the archival material that the Canadian government felt its “legal” sovereignty threatened or that it feared some de facto loss of sovereignty because of this migration by two families. External Affairs, the “lead” department on matters of sovereignty, showed not the slightest indication that this was at issue in this instance. To apply the term “sovereignty” here is a case of a popular, not legal, usage, an instance of McWhinney’s observation that the word “sovereignty” is “sometimes employed out of intellectual fuzziness and sometimes to extract the extra public relations mileage deriving from a presumably ancient and hallowed concept like sovereignty.”<sup>43</sup>
3. The notion that visits by very small groups of Greenlanders to southern Ellesmere Island, which had been taking place from time to time for many years previously (without evoking much concern or comment),

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<sup>41</sup> Danish Embassy to Secretary of State, 3.4.57; External Affairs to various Deputy Ministers, 4.4.57. See also correspondence 24.4.57. *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> RCMP Commissioner to Under Secretary External Affairs, 16.4.57. *Ibid.* Rowley, too, writing in late 1953 to the Deputy Minister, thought the excluding of the Greenlanders to have been a mistake. They were an “excellent” people who should be allowed to visit Ellesmere, provided they obeyed the game laws. Rowley to Deputy Minister, 23.10.53. RG 22, Vol. 124, File 82-34-1, Vol. 3. In 1958, possible overhunting of polar bear by Greenlanders became an issue once again. Rowley to Deputy Minister, 21.10.58. RG 22, Vol. 545, Rowley ACND, 1958.

<sup>43</sup> McWhinney, *Op cit.*

constituted either a “benign” threat to (an odd oxymoron) or a de facto loss of sovereignty on Ellesmere Island is so overblown and exaggerated that it stretches credibility to the breaking point. The claim that this “threat” required, as a response, a fairly large-scale (by the standards of the time) colonization scheme is even more far-fetched. The Greenlanders were ignorant of Canadian immigration laws and had (perhaps for many years previously) contravened the hunting regulations pertaining to the Arctic Preserve. However, the numbers involved were so tiny, and the fact that Denmark also disapproved of these visits, suggests that to talk of a “threat” to sovereignty is thoroughly misleading.

4. There was a serious concern about illegal overhunting and game depletion, especially the hunting of musk-oxen, a concern the RCMP did not take lightly. This concern about game depletion was greatly exacerbated by reports of a trading post being set up at Etah.
5. These concerns were dealt with in the usual way, namely by plans to set up an RCMP detachment after informal communications between the Greenland and Canadian administrations seemed insufficient.
6. The issue of effective occupation, already well established according to Dean MacDonald, had been strongly reinforced in 1951 by the opening of the Craig Harbour RCMP detachment. In the mind of Stevenson (who at the time, admittedly, was only a fourth level public servant), the opening of that post meant that “sovereignty was now a cinch.”<sup>44</sup> The two Joint Weather Stations, with their Canadian commanders and post masters (the same person) provided further reinforcement. As the RCMP noted in their 1953 submission to the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND), the Alexandra Fiord (they refer to nearby Cape Herschel, at that time the preferred site) Detachment was to be established in that year in order to “encourage the move of some Canadian Eskimos into that part of Ellesmere Island” and the opening of the Detachment would “tend to prevent Greenland natives from making hunting excursions into Canadian territory”, i.e., control over Greenlanders was an RCMP task. There is no indication in any of the documentary material that a “primary”, “sole” or even secondary preoccupation with a so-called “threat” to sovereignty required colonization and settlement as a response. Law and order could more than easily be maintained by a detachment of two regular and two special (Inuit) constables. The RCMP did not require the assistance of other Inuit colonists to maintain control over hunting by Greenlanders on Ellesmere.
7. In the case of Ellesmere Island, at least, the preoccupation with upholding the Game Ordinances and protecting the Arctic Preserve was the primary concern. Onto this concern were grafted, as we shall see later, problems arising from a crisis in the “Eskimo economy” which were also of major concern to both the RCMP and the Department at that time.
8. Stevenson’s 1950 and 1952 references, rather than supporting the primacy of a sovereignty motive, emphasize the primacy of a concern with improving hunting (economic) conditions for a small group of Inuit families. The two sentences, “The occupation of the island will remove any excuse Greenlanders may presently have for crossing over and hunting there” and, “... also if it is considered necessary help improve the position regarding sovereignty rights” are a flimsy basis for supporting the sovereignty thesis, especially when considered in the light of the discussion to follow on the origins and purposes of the

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<sup>44</sup> 6.9.51, RG 85, File 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

relocations. It is worth noting these lines, however, because they are the only two in all the mass of the documentation which suggest a sovereignty function, albeit indirect, for Inuit civilians in dealing with Greenlanders.<sup>45</sup>

9. Even had there been a primary concern with a “threat” to sovereignty, given the minuscule nature of this threat it could quite easily have been handled by the Craig Harbour post or by the (Cape Herschel/Cape Sabine /Alexandra Fiord) police post that was proposed in 1952-53 for Ellesmere Island. The question then arises as to why were the Inuit from Inukjuak sent so far north, if we are to take Stevenson’s 1951 comment seriously, namely, that “sovereignty was now a cinch”?
10. Finally, it should be noted that a memorandum of January 13, 1956 from Rowley, Secretary of the ACND, to the Department Deputy Minister states that the move of six families of “colonists” was part of the recent “great increase in Canadian activity in Ellesmere Island.” The memorandum, which dealt with “Canadian Sovereignty in Ellesmere Island,” detailed 26 examples of “effective occupation” since 1950, including the opening of two Joint Weather Stations, the opening of two post offices, the appointment of a game officer and two immigration and customs officers, a game survey by the Canadian Wildlife Service, an insect survey by the Department of Agriculture, biological studies, a geographical reconnaissance, brief reconnaissances during the annual weather station sea supply, the opening of two RCMP posts, and four long RCMP patrols in 1952 and 1953. All these had taken place before the arrival of the six families at Craig Harbour in August 1953. Whilst the contribution made by the settlement at Grise Fiord to the maintenance of sovereignty was clearly acknowledged by 1956, this does not help much with the issue at hand since this does not imply that this was the primary reason for sending this group to Ellesmere in the first place.<sup>46</sup>
11. Marcus makes the mistaken claim that Greenlander Inuit were hunting on “Canadian Land without any (sic) means of the government asserting Canadian sovereignty over the region” and assumes that only “permanent” residents could solve this problem. This is a strange misreading of MacDonald (*Op cit.*) who is quoted on the same page. There were many means of asserting sovereignty before the RCMP arrived in 1951. The visits of officials during the sea supply, the Weather-Stations, and the research carried out by the CWS and the Department of Agriculture were all assertions of sovereignty through effective occupation. After 1951, it was reinforced considerably by the presence of a permanent RCMP force which could have

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<sup>45</sup> As pointed out earlier in footnote 26 there is one additional reference to sovereignty. An agenda item for the May 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs proposed discussing the possibility of seeking the “permanent employment” of Inuit for purposes of “security and sovereignty”. I point out in Chapter 3 that this one reference, which is then not picked up in the Summary of Proceedings of the Conference, dealt with long-term possibilities which, even had they become part of the recommendations of the Conference, had no further relevance to the 1953 relocations.

<sup>46</sup> Rowley, 13.1.56. RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley ACND, 1956. In 1955, Rowley had prepared a memorandum on activities which had been carried out on Axel Heiberg Island, Banks Island, Cameron Island, Cornwallis Island, Devon Island, Ellef Ringnes Island, Ellesmere Island, Mackenzie King Island, Prince Patrick Island, Queen Elizabeth Islands, Stefansson Island and the Northwest Passage between 1950 and 1954, and which could be designated as examples of effective occupation of the High Arctic. There were 63 such patrols, surveys, explorations, etc., including the two settlements. No heading, nd (approximately April 1955). RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley ACND, 1955.

evicted the Greenlanders at any time if necessary.<sup>47</sup>

12. The Greenlanders were neither a threat to legal or de facto sovereignty over Ellesmere Island – nor were they perceived to be so. Greenlander hunting expeditions could easily be controlled by the RCMP and the Special Constables. The resettlement of the Inuit to Grise Fiord was not done to counter a non-existent threat.

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<sup>47</sup> Marcus, p. 62.



### CHAPTER 3

#### **U.S. THREATS TO DE FACTO SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RELOCATION TO RESOLUTE BAY**

The contention that the relocation of the Inuit families to Resolute Bay was primarily because of a threat to de facto sovereignty is based on the following claims, largely by Grant:

- (i) There was an “intense” concern to protect sovereignty, particularly on the part of the Privy Council Office (PCO) and the Department of External Affairs after the end of World War II.
- (ii) “Numerous” legal and political assessments in and after 1946 indicated that Canadian claims to sovereignty in the Arctic were “tenuous and weak” and it was particularly important that northerly islands “be occupied.”
- (iii) While this debate went on, “U.S.A.F. Intelligence” was studying the possibility of claiming uninhabited regions in northern Ellesmere Island and elsewhere.
- (iv) Canadian strategy was to “Canadianize” U.S. military operations by assuming responsibility for as many of these activities as possible and by establishing a Canadian presence and carrying out as many Canadian activities as possible in the High Arctic. The Canadian government also attempted to keep the extent of U.S. military operations in the North from the media in order to prevent public criticism by applying “strict censorship rules” to all military activities in the North.
- (v) Because the “Canadianization” plans were proceeding too slowly (and other events) the government created the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND) in 1948 to get improved advice and policy coordination. Although it did not continue for long, its first five meetings were “dominated” by sovereignty concerns. ACND ceased to meet in early 1949 for the next four years.
- (vi) In December 1952, the Under Secretary of State wrote to the Minister of External Affairs suggesting the need to “re-Canadianize” the Arctic in the light of “new” U.S. defence plans and that ACND be revived to coordinate a “vigorous” Canadian policy in the Arctic.
- (vii) On January 19, 1953, Cabinet held a meeting to discuss the concerns of the Secretary of State for External Affairs about increasing U.S. activity in the Arctic, especially the projected DEW Line. Pearson stated that he was concerned about the risk of possible de facto loss of sovereignty to the U.S. in the Arctic such as had happened in parts of Canada in the last war. Cabinet agreed that ACND should be re-constituted to keep Arctic policy under “serious examination” and “constant ... review.”
- (viii) At the first meeting of the reconvened ACND, the Secretary to the Cabinet (J. Pickersgill) suggested that the Committee address the important questions of a “seeming encroachment” on Canadian sovereignty and the need to ensure that “civilian activities in the North were predominantly Canadian.” The potential threat posed by U.S. military plans “seemed” to dominate ACND discussions over the next six months. While sovereignty concerns were “central” to government they were rarely “mentioned in public” because public sensitivity on the matter led government to “demand strict confidentiality and censorship regulations for reasons that had little to do with national security.”

- (ix) While Canadians comprised a majority of on-site personnel at Resolute Bay in 1951, by 1953 the situation “threatened to change with the announcement of plans (our emphasis) for a new radar station at Resolute.” The proposed construction of a massive radar network would increase traffic through Resolute Bay enormously.
- (x) On February 20, 1953, the Department Deputy Minister wrote the Commissioner of the RCMP to request the opening of a detachment at Resolute Bay “so Inuit could be employed at the weather station.”
- (xi) At the next ACND meeting on March 16, 1953, External Affairs distributed a report showing “U.S. plans” to construct a GCI radar station “in the vicinity of Resolute” (our emphasis). Grant continues:

It was hardly coincidental that on the same day, the director of the northern administration would submit his request for funding the resettlement projects to include Resolute. At the same time, the RCMP suddenly changed their report to Cabinet to include reopening of the Resolute post. The sequence of events suggests that Canadianization discussions at the two ACND meetings (February 16 and March 16) had a direct influence on these discussions, verified by the fact that the deputy minister of Resources and Development chaired the meetings and the director of the (sic) northern administration was in attendance.<sup>48</sup> (Dates of ACND meetings my addition.)

Some background information on U.S. activities in the Canadian North is needed to consider this second crucial issue, namely, whether the primary reason for locating a second group of Inuit families at Resolute Bay in 1953 was because of a concern about an actual or potential loss of de facto sovereignty in the High Arctic to the United States.

Canada was neither sanguine nor indifferent to the U.S. presence in the North. Far from it, there was a continuing nervousness and concern well into the early 1960s and the issue of de facto loss of control was a real one.<sup>49</sup>

The following sections i) review the early post-World War II threats to Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic; ii) examine government publicity policy with respect to U.S. activities in the North; iii) discuss the early activities of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND); iv) consider U.S. activities in the North in 1951/1952; v) summarize the key 1953 Cabinet meeting which discussed how to proceed, especially in response to the impending DEW Line; vi) analyze the discussions and decisions of the newly reconstituted ACND in 1953; vii) review an ad hoc August 1953 meeting where the functions of the settlement policy were discussed; and viii) conclude by evaluating the materials considered in the previous sections.

### **Early Post War U.S. Threats to Sovereignty**

The large and sometimes overpowering U.S. presence in the North started during the Second World War. Defence of Greenland and the need to support forces in Europe led to the establishment of the Crimson Staging

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<sup>48</sup> Point vii is drawn from Marcus, p. 63. The other sections are drawn from Grant, pp. 9-11.

<sup>49</sup> The Hickling Report misses the significance of de facto sovereignty. See, for example, Rowley's discussion on the status of Hans Island (was it Canadian or Danish and what should be done about clarifying the question). Rowley to Deputy Minister, 12.2.54. RG 22, Vol 544, File Rowley ACND 1954, Pt. 3.

Route across the Eastern Arctic, and the defence of Alaska and the delivery of supplies to the Soviet Union gave rise to the Alaska Highway, the Northwest Staging Route and the CANOL pipeline projects. Canada played little or no part in these activities. By the end of the Second World War, the United States had made very considerable expenditures in northern Canada and according to G.W. Rowley (Secretary of the ACND from 1953 to 1967):

...many of the senior officers considered this gave them propriety rights and it was only owing to the statesmanship of Mr. LaGuardia at the Permanent Joint Board on Defence and the substantial payment (nearly 100 million dollars) to the United States to cover the cost of several of their projects in the Canadian north that Canada was able to regain de facto control.<sup>50</sup>

Although it was expected that U.S. interests in the North would decline after World War II, this did not occur. The first shock to Canada after the War was when the United States Government decided in 1946 to establish a number of weather stations in the Canadian Arctic. This was planned unilaterally and it was only after all the preparations were complete and a U.S. Navy task force had assembled that Government of Canada permission was sought. Alarmed at this U.S. assumption that Canadian permission was a pure formality, Canada withheld permission. Instead, it was agreed that the two countries would operate the weather stations on a joint basis. The Canadians contributed the minimum needed to protect sovereignty (half the personnel at each station including the Officer-in-Charge, the site, and the provision of certain buildings). The United States, however, provided the sea and air transportation, the expensive part of the program. It was this program which, as much as any, was to bedevil discussions within the Canadian government on issues of sovereignty. It took Canada an inordinate length of time to take over the weather stations although the principle of such take-overs had been agreed to early on.<sup>51</sup> The problem was not resistance on the part of the Americans. Differences of opinion within the Canadian government led to a delay in the Canadian take-over of these “civilian” activities, with the Department of Transport and others finding all sorts of technical and financial reasons for not doing so. It was not until 1954 that Canada assumed sole responsibility for supplying all the weather stations, and U.S. personnel were finally withdrawn only in 1972.

There were other problems and challenges. Grant cites Bankes’ discussion of the U.S. proposals to construct the weather stations which included (as a fall back position) a U.S. Air Coordinating Committee proposal (obtained by Canada through unofficial channels) that the U.S. Army might carry out reconnaissance flights in the sector west of Greenland to discover if unexplored islands existed which could be claimed by the United States in order to establish a weather station. Bankes says that this led to “major concerns within the Canadian government,” and Grant, too, suggests that this was a “serious challenge.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Rowley to Cunningham, 22.4.58. RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley, ACND 1958. This memorandum provides an interesting overview of Rowley’s views on aspects of the U.S. presence in the North.

<sup>51</sup> Cabinet had expected the eventual full take-over of the weather stations right from the start. This position was reiterated in 1954. “Canadian Operation of Joint Arctic Weather Stations”, 5.3.54. MG 30, E 133, Vol. 294, Rowley, File January to May 1954.

<sup>52</sup> N.D. Bankes “40 years of Canadian Sovereignty Assertion in the Arctic, 1947-1987”. *Arctic*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec. 1987), p. 187. Grant, p. 9. It is unclear whether this was taken quite as seriously as these two authors suggest since two days after receiving a memo about this proposal from the Head of the Third Political Division, the head of the Legal Division of External Affairs merely advised that no questions should be raised concerning this report (reflecting the interest of some U.S. circles) on the grounds that “It would not be wise to indicate that we entertain any doubts with

Grant cites as further evidence of these potential American threats a 1946 study carried out by the Army Air Forces Headquarters, Atlantic Division, Air Transport Command. This she claims was a study looking at the “possibility of claiming uninhabited regions in Grant Land (Northern Ellesmere) and on Prince Patrick and Melville Islands.” This is a curiously distorted reading of the study (which, of course, did not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, let alone the Department of State or the official views of the U.S. Executive). It was actually a study of problems of Canadian-United States cooperation in the Arctic.

One of the issues that it examined as one of a number of hypothetical options considered the issue of effective occupation with a view to examining whether there were any weaknesses in the case that Canada could make, particularly in areas where its activity had been “slight,” such as those mentioned above. The study comes to the firm conclusion that in view of the East Greenland Case, “We are forced to conclude that the Canadian claim to sovereignty over the entire American Arctic would be substantiated by an international judicial body.” The paper then gets to the nub of the issue and notes that any such U.S. hypothetical attempted legal claim to Grant Land, Prince Patrick and Melville Islands would have consequences “so grave” that “they could scarcely be justified even in terms of short-term expediency.”

This paper, which is cited as grist for the “U.S. threat” mill, actually ends up recommending that the United States offer Canada, in order to ensure cooperation in the Arctic, a reassurance which the U.S. had never previously been willing to provide. They recommended strongly that Canada’s claims in the Arctic be given “formal recognition,” even though it had failed to meet the rigid standards that the United States had traditionally set for promulgation of sovereignty claims over uninhabited areas. Had this recommendation been accepted as U.S. official policy the Canadian government would have been delighted. Far from adding to the sense of threat, the paper is one of the most reassuring on the intentions and willingness of the U.S. (or rather of some U.S. military analysts) to fully accept and respect Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic.<sup>53</sup>

It was not until the 1954 agreement to build the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line that, according to R.J. Sutherland, “Canada secured what the United States had up to that time assiduously endeavoured to avoid, namely, an explicit recognition of Canadian claims to the exercise of sovereignty in the Far North.”<sup>54</sup>

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regard to our sovereignty”. Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 12, 1980, No. 908, p. 1545 and No. 909, p. 1547.

<sup>53</sup> Problems of Canadian-U.S. Cooperation in the Arctic, 29.10.46. U.S. National Archives (hereafter USNA), RG 59, Box 10, File 1946 Correspondence.

Grant does note in her conclusion on the document that it recommended that “The U.S. (reassure Canada that it) has no intention of claiming sovereignty over any section of the Canadian Arctic” (Grant, p. 9), but she vastly understates how very favourable the document was towards Canada. However, Grant is quite correct in drawing attention to a memorandum prepared by Major General Spry in 1946 on sovereignty and defence in the Canadian Arctic in which he expresses concern that because of an absence of effective occupation, Canada’s claims in the region are “at best tenuous and weak” and further that it could not be assumed that these claims to sovereignty, “will continue to go unchallenged”. The memorandum then proposes a set of principles and policies intended to guarantee Canadian sovereignty. External Affairs had some reservations about this paper (a senior official appended a note saying “Spry underestimates the amount of action taken in the past to fortify Canadian claims in the Arctic”) but in general approved of it. Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 12, 1980, No. 913, p. 1554-1561, nd.

<sup>54</sup> R.J. Sutherland, “The Strategic Significance of the Canadian Arctic”, p. 271 in R. St. J. MacDonald, ed., The Arctic

The weather station contretemps had the utility of leading to discussions on overall post-war cooperation between the U.S. and Canada. As a result the Prime Minister, in February 1947, announced a new framework for extensive joint-defence measures between the two countries. This was not to be on the basis of a treaty, an executive agreement or any contractual obligation, said the Prime Minister, and either country might at any time discontinue collaboration on any or all of the projects and activities proposed. The underlying principle of all future cooperative arrangements was to be without “impairment of the control of either country of all activities in its territory.”<sup>55</sup> A month later, C.D. Howe announced that the weather stations were to be a joint cooperative arrangement and, according to Bankes, “thus ended what was the last potential legal threat to Canadian sovereignty over its Arctic lands.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Publicity in the Arctic**

Public opinion was, however, still extremely skittish about the possibility that the joint defence arrangements were going to allow for the possibility of the establishment of new U.S. military bases in Canada – a problem to which the government remained extremely sensitive. As Grant notes, the Canadian government was acutely aware of the possibility of adverse publicity in connection with U.S. activities in the North. She says, “strict censorship rules were applied to all (sic) Arctic military activities” as a result of this policy.<sup>57</sup>

This is an over simplistic account of publicity policy for the North. However, sensitivity on the part of Canada there certainly was. The Secretary of the U.S. section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence noted to its Chairman:

All of us connected with the PJBD and with Canadian-United States relations recognized that Canadian sensitivity on press matters is something which we have to bear with, and that we have to lean over backwards at times in order to avoid any difficulties. They themselves on occasion make announcements without prior consultation with the United States but there is the consideration that most of these installations are placed on Canadian soil.<sup>58</sup>

In fact, the directive concerning publicity that was developed by the United States and Canada through the Permanent Joint Board of Defence in 1948, the “Forrestal Directive,” was designed rather to ensure that unnecessary secrecy did not become counterproductive. The Directive noted that:

It is considered a fundamental principle that Canadian United States defense arrangements should, within the limitations necessarily imposed by the requirements of military security and in the light of the international situation, be made known to the peoples of the two countries. Apart from the fact that secrecy is counter to the traditions of the United States and of Canada, the

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Frontier, U. of T. Press, 1966.

<sup>55</sup> For political reasons, Mackenzie King wanted to minimize publicity about the U.S. military presence in the North and as Granatstein says, “...he maintained with a straight face” that Canada’s northern programme “is thus primarily a civilian one to which contributions are made by the armed forces”. Granatstein, Op cit, p. 24. This “policy” was to reappear in the significant Cabinet discussions on sovereignty in the North on January 18, 1953.

<sup>56</sup> Bankes, Op cit, p. 287. For extracts of the speech see “PJBD Canada-U.S.” 21.10.52, USNA, RG. 59, PJBD, Box 12, File Documents 1951/52. (This reference may be an error.)

<sup>57</sup> Grant, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> 27.8.54, USNA. RG 59, PJBD, Box 12, File Basic Papers.

strength of the defense arrangements depends in the last analysis upon their general acceptance and support by the two peoples. Again, undue secrecy has led occasionally to sensational stories in the press – stories embarrassing to the two governments and harmful to the joint defense program.<sup>59</sup>

The main political concern (apart from the military security aspect) of the Directive was to avoid the embarrassment (particularly for the Canadian side) of unilateral issuing of press releases by the U.S. and the operational details it contained were designed to ensure that “no information on Canada-U.S. defence matters is released by either country without the approval of both governments.”<sup>60</sup>

The issue of joint U.S.-Canadian information about the North was only one aspect of the discussion within government about publicity in the North. There was also a difference of opinions about how extensively the Official Secrets Act should apply in the District of Franklin. In early 1952, the secretary of the Joint Security Committee criticized an attempt by National Defence to have more restrictive special security provisions for the High Arctic. The secretary noted that the Department of Resources and Development was opposed to these proposals because “they want the area as open as possible” (my emphasis). The revised security regulations that followed restricted the scope of the National Defence proposals to “vital installations” and provided for complete openness both with respect to movement and information for the rest of the North.<sup>61</sup>

The question of public information in the North was taken up by the ACND which in 1954 issued guidelines on the matter to government departments. These provide not only a very useful indication as to how the government wished to portray itself in the North but as well, a statement of its overall goals there. While the guidelines deal also with economic and political development, the sections quoted below are drawn only from those that are concerned with northern development in general, defence and Canadian-U.S. relations and sovereignty:

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION

The first object of public information on the north is to emphasize that the northern regions are as much a part of Canada as any other area in the country.

It is most important that all Canadians should be aware of this fact in order that the measures to stimulate and encourage the development of our northern frontier will be supported and sustained. It is also important that the rest of the world should be aware that the Canadian Arctic

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<sup>59</sup> “Memorandum on Publicity, etc.” 1.4.48, USNA. RG 59, PJBD, Box (unknown), File Meeting Journals.

<sup>60</sup> Publicity Directives, etc.”, 24.1.51. RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, Vol. 4480, File 5-1225, Pt. 39. A 1947 memorandum “U.S. Activities Northern Canada” (which became an intense source of disagreement within the ACND in 1948). RG 22, Vol. 499, File 5-82-10-3, Pt. 1, says:

In spite of any agreement to the contrary which may exist, the United States military agencies have released to the press, news on activities in Northern Canada. Such reports have often been coloured from the American point of view, have been inaccurate and have naturally given the impression abroad that most activity in Northern Canada is under the American auspices.

Three examples were then given of the kinds of distortions “that Canada wishes to avoid”.

<sup>61</sup> Dwyer to R.G. Robertson, 5.4.52 and “Security Regulations”, 10.9.52. RG 2, Series 18, Vol. 235, File S-100-6. See also sections 2, 3, 4 “Security Regulations for Vulnerable Installations in the District of Franklin, etc.” PCO to ACND, Document ND-55, 9.6.53. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, Vol. 1, 1953.

is not an "Ultima Thule" but is being effectively occupied, administered and developed by the Canadian Government and people.

This emphasis should underline all public information on the north whether it relates to long-range policy plans or to spot news. It may be developed through reference whenever possible to the Canadian civil administration and activity in the north in order to draw to the attention of the general public, both at home and abroad, that the north, like any other part of Canada, has its own civil government and a developing economy.

There are, of course, wide areas where the civil administration is not represented on the ground, but where there are Canadian activities of a military, scientific, or commercial nature. It is important that the public be aware of these activities and the contribution which they are making to northern and national development....

#### Northern Development

The Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet have made many public statements on the growing importance of the north and the growing attention to be focused on that area. This growing importance should be emphasized. The reason for the increased interest is not, in the government view, due primarily to defence requirements, but it is the logical extension of the development of Canadian nationhood....

Canada is interested in northern development in part to exploit for present and future generations its immense natural resources. In part, also, Canada is developing the north merely because it is Canada and because we have a responsibility to ensure that conditions are established to permit residents of the north, Eskimos, Indians, and others, to share in the benefits of and to contribute to Canadian national life. Our shortcomings in the past, particularly in relation to policy for native people, are recognized but there is now a determination to fulfil our responsibilities.

#### Defence

The role of the military in the development of the north should be given full credit, but we should avoid the impression that defence activities are the only, or even the main, interest of the Canadian Government in the far north. To some extent it is in fact necessary to correct the imbalance between military and civil aspects of the north which has sometimes been created by journalists....

#### Canadian-United States Relations and Sovereignty

Canada welcomes cooperation with the United States in northern activities which are of mutual concern to the two countries. We fully acknowledge the useful work which agencies of the United States have done in cooperation with Canada in the Canadian north. Northern development, however, is never a joint responsibility; it is a Canadian responsibility which cannot be allowed to go by default or left to others to carry out.

Reference to U.S. activities in the Canadian north in isolation should be avoided, if they can be coupled with reference to Canadian work. The status of U.S. defence activities should be clearly defined. For instance, if any mention is made of U.S. troops at Frobisher, it should be accompanied by a report in some form that the installation is an RCAF station in Canadian command and control. Any extensive reference to the five joint Arctic weather stations should be

accompanied by some mention of the large network of Canadian stations.

No emphasis should be placed on Canadian claims in the north lest we seem to be on the defensive. Canada owns all the lands shown on official maps of Canada and we recognize no differences in degree of control between any of the northern islands and counties in a southern province. We do recognize, however, that the maintenance of sovereignty in any part of Canada requires continuous, effective administration which there now is and will continue to be.<sup>62</sup>

We cannot assume that these guidelines also applied (perhaps in unwritten form) in the period before 1954. However, they do coincide with the persisting equation of a civilian government presence with effective administration as the keystones to maintenance of sovereignty.

### **Advisory Committee on Northern Development**

In January 1948, the Government decided that a senior-coordination and advisory mechanism concerned with the North would be required and set up the Advisory Committee for Northern Development (ACND) comprising the main departments and public servants concerned with the North.

ACND only functioned (initially) for two years and very imperfectly at that, but its debates throw some light on the complexities of Canadian-U.S. relations and help us to understand why, although concern with the U.S. continuing presence in the North was an ongoing and serious one, it never did become the "obsession" which Grant claims. At its first meeting in February 1948, the new ACND considered a memorandum highly critical of the U.S. presence in Canada prepared by the Chief of the Geographical Bureau (T. Lloyd) on "U.S. Military Activities in Canada." A number of the important members of the committee disagreed strongly with the way the U.S. presence in Canada was portrayed in this evaluation. A.D.P. Heeney, Secretary to the Cabinet, and L.B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, were particularly critical. Heeney stated that:

He had, however, received the general impression from the memorandum that the United States authorities were consciously attempting to carry on activities in Canada without seeking proper authority or fully informing the Canadian government. This was a view which might be held by others but his experience would indicate that there was no underlying design of this sort in the United States; rather the condition arose from lack of coordination in Canada and failure of departments to keep other interested departments fully informed both in Ottawa and Washington.<sup>63</sup>

He went on to point out a number of inaccuracies in the report. Pearson echoed this view saying that there was no intention on the part of the United States to conduct such activities in clandestine fashion, rather the problem was one of lack of coordination in both countries.

The issue of the U.S. presence in the Arctic was again taken up at the second ACND meeting in June of 1948. Pearson repeated his opinion that "The U.S. authorities have not attempted to evade Canadian authority in the projects undertaken in Canadian territory, but rather authority had sometimes been loosely drafted and had been, therefore, somewhat ambiguous."

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<sup>62</sup> "Policy Guidance Paper for Release of Information on the North", 28.5.54. RG 85, Vol. 376, File 1009-3(6).

<sup>63</sup> Minutes ACND, 2.2.48. RG 85, Vol. 300, File 1009-3, Pt. 1.



General McNaughton, the Chairman of the Canadian Section of the Permanent Joint Board of Defence, thought that the problem tended to be with comparatively junior officers in Washington who were often not familiar with proper procedures and that the basic problem was a general lack of knowledge of proper procedures at lower levels. The U.S. authorities had to be reminded regularly that when operating in Canada the proper authority had to be obtained for every project undertaken and the Canadian authorities kept fully informed. O.M. Solandt, the Chairman of the Defence Research Board, believed that “nothing had been done which had not been authorized or would not have been authorized if authority had been sought” on the part of the United States. Keenleyside, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources and Chairman of ACND, when summarizing what he saw as the problems, mentioned only three issues. At this distance in time these seem relatively minor. The problems between Canada and the U.S. were due (1) to boastful ignorant talk on the part of comparatively junior officers; (2) disregard of established procedures by field officers either through lack of knowledge or an impatient effort to get things done; and (3) publication by U.S. services or other official agencies relating to Canada without prior clearance with Ottawa.<sup>64</sup>

The ACND stopped meeting in 1949. This was an odd time to stop meeting since the entry of Newfoundland into Canada meant that the large number of U.S. military personnel based there would add materially to the U.S. presence in Canada. Curiously, as late as June 1952 there was apparently still “difficulty in outlining an agenda which would warrant bringing the committee together and so it was decided to hold the matter (of a meeting) in abeyance.”<sup>65</sup>

Before continuing with developments within the ACND it is well to consider how some of the key U.S. (PJBD) officials understood the Canadian concerns and irritations and also because these documents show the Canadian tactics in responding to U.S. requests for defense facilities.

General A.V. Henry, Chairman of the U.S. Section, PJBD, wrote U.S. Secretary of Defense, R.A. Lovett, in October 1952 regarding the continuous delays that Canadians came up with on defense proposals. Canadian policy, Henry believed, was oriented to keep the defense program “in the planning phase” rather than the maintenance of forces in being. This was because the Canadians had a different estimate of the “danger inherent in the Soviet threat” and also because they did not want to give defense a higher priority than economic and industrial development. Canadian resources were inadequate to discharge the mission they had taken on for the defense of Canada. However, the Canadian government, “fearful of public criticism, has a basic objection to the stationing of U.S. troops on Canadian soil in peace time.”

A second and equally “potent” factor that underlay the attitudes of Canadian politicians was their belief that if they did not create actual defense facilities in the relatively sparsely-settled sections... there would be no cause for the potential enemy to take neutralizing action. (Creating “hostile” defense installations would, in other

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<sup>64</sup> Minutes ACND, 2.2.48; 1.6.48 and 9.3.49. RG 85, Vol. 300, File 1009-3, Pt. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Young to Chipman, 13.6.52. RG 2, Series 18, Vol.210, File A-25-2-(C). According to Rowley, Keenleyside stopped calling meetings of ACND because he had lost his battle to use the committee “as a means of discrediting the activities of the Department of National Defence in the north and enhancing the role of his own department”. He failed partly because his proposals were “in some respects unreasonable” and also because DND was “better briefed than he”. G.W. Rowley, The Role of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development in the Development of Policy and the Coordination of Federal Government Activities in Northern Canada. Mimeo., DIAND, 1992, p. 7.

words, simply be a hazard for Canada should there be conflict.) The letter then turned to the second major irritant in U.S.-Canadian relations – the lack of adequate joint planning, that is, the “coordination” difficulties which had concerned the ACND. The rest of the letter is focused on methods of ameliorating the situation and meeting the Canadians’ concerns. A month later, a critically sympathetic memorandum (possibly) from Wight (US-PJBD) to Raynor (State Department) provided a more detailed view of Canadian criticisms and tactics.<sup>66</sup>

Canadian desire for better order in presentation of military requests. In the past the USAF had laid itself open to criticism in that it has presented frequent and improperly coordinated requests for various facilities. The Canadians have often asked for a long-range plan listing U.S. military requirements in Canada two or three years in advance. The U.S. does not have such an overall plan all worked out, and it is impossible to give the Canadians a statement saying this represents all U.S. requirements....

The Canadian thinking that the U.S. asks for too much. Here again there is some justification in the Canadian view and we feel the U.S. Services should screen their needs carefully to keep them to a minimum. The Canadian attitude, however, seems to stem from their innate caution, their desire to give everything careful consideration, and their basic opposition to more U.S. projects. The U.S. is often in the position of asking for operating requirements for the defense of the Northeast and the Arctic because the Canadians do not have the manpower or the equipment and have not taken steps of their own to defend Canada’s vast territory. For example, the Canadians have only three aircraft at Goose Bay, none of which is a military type.

Canadian desire to be convinced of the need for facilities. This well-known attitude often serves a useful purpose since it causes the U.S. Services to consider carefully their requirements. However, it appears that the Canadians use this as a means of delaying projects to which they are reluctant to agree; e.g., the very long delays suffered by the GLOBECOM project, and what appears may be a long delay in the approval of the six additional radar stations. We are afraid that the defense of the area will be seriously hindered if every project is subject to months and even years of examination....

Canadian desire for more civilian control of military requests. The Canadian Services are under strict control of External Affairs and receive a much greater degree of political guidance than is the case in the United States. The Canadians at times fail to appreciate the great size and complexity of the U.S. Government and the fact that the U.S. has decentralized its military planning....

One great difficulty in military cooperation at present is the Canadian desire to keep everything in the planning stage rather than in the operating stage. They do not have the sense of urgency of the U.S. and appear not as seriously concerned by the Russian threat. Therefore, they do not appear worried over the fact that fighter planes in Canada are not on the alert, that the radar chain is not in operation and that the anti-aircraft units are not in place. The U.S. is constantly in the position of prodding Canada to do more, or else to let the U.S. furnish certain installations if Canada is unable or unwilling to do so....

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<sup>66</sup> Wight to Raynor, 13.11.52 and Henry to Lovett, 24.10.52, USNA. RG 59, PJBD Box 2 or Box 12, Correspondence File 1951/52. See also the U.S. document on all the requests by the Canadian section of PJBD for improved planning and coordination, October (probably) 1952. *Ibid.*

I believe the Canadians should appreciate the fact that the U.S. does not wish to station U.S. troops in Canada merely because we like to spend millions of dollars, nor because we wish to infringe on Canadian sovereignty. The two countries have agreed that we constitute a single unit for defense purposes. It is because of the geographic and strategic necessities that so many installations have to be located in Canada.

### **The U.S. in the North during 1951/52**

The overall lack of a sense of urgency about U.S.-Canadian Defence relations throughout 1951 and 1952 is surprising. Despite two suggestions by General Young that the ACND be revived there was apparently little support for the suggestion. Perhaps this was because Cabinet received few urgent issues to discuss. External Affairs, as might be expected, expressed more concern about the U.S. military presence but not to the point of taking the issue to Cabinet. The only matter referred to Cabinet by the Cabinet Defence Committee during 1952 concerned the Loran stations in Newfoundland. Out of 380 issues discussed by Cabinet that year this was the only one on U.S.-Canadian defence relations and the only one with sovereignty overtones.<sup>67</sup> The main pre-occupations of the Cabinet Defence Committee were NATO and the Korean War. In 1951 only 17 out of 102 issues, and in 1952 only four out of 60 issues on the agenda of this committee concerned Canada-U.S relations.<sup>68</sup>

There was no lack of potential and actual issues. In December 1951, a draft memorandum (prepared by PCO) on U.S. activities in Northern Canada noted 17 items still pertinent to the matters discussed in March 1949 on the "Re-Canadianization of Northern Canada." None of these issues were particularly controversial but some did create uneasiness. For example, Canada had given permission to the U.S. to station some 300 additional personnel at Frobisher Bay for various activities including the operation of a radar station – more requests to station personnel there were expected. In a covering letter, Chipman (Secretary of ACND) noted that he had not included in the memorandum a concern that if the U.S. went ahead with the Frobisher and other proposed radar stations, "Their people will considerably outnumber the Canadians in the district."<sup>69</sup>

This same memorandum also mentions the radar stations which Grant believes provide a key clue to understanding the move to Resolute Bay. However, Resolute Bay is not actually mentioned as a possible site approved by Cabinet:

#### **Coburg and Ellesmere Islands**

The United States government recently requested permission for the U.S. Air Force to conduct surveys of Coburg Island and the East Coast of Ellesmere Island, with a view to establishing in each locality a radar station as part of a network surrounding the USAF base at Thule, Greenland. Cabinet Defence Committee, on August 30, approved the proposed surveys subject to the usual conditions regarding representation of the RCAF and the provision to Canada of resultant reports, and agreed that, in the event of a subsequent request for permission for the USAF to construct and maintain radar stations at these locations, the government, although unable to grant long-term leases, would be prepared to grant such rights and facilities as the USAF required in order to construct and operate the stations effectively.

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<sup>67</sup> Cabinet Document ND35 and Young to Chipman 13.6.52. RG 2, Series 18, Vol. 210, File A-25-2(C).

<sup>68</sup> RG 2, Vol. 2749, Vol. V and VI, File Cabinet Defence Committee Conclusions.

<sup>69</sup> Chipman to Young, 27.12.51. RG 22, Vol. 499, File S-82-10-3, Pt. 2.

The Cabinet Defence Committee which had approved this proposal to first survey, and then, provided that there was a further formal request, to build and operate radar stations on Coburg and Ellesmere Islands, met on August 30, 1951. In attendance, *inter alia*, were St-Laurent, Claxton, Pearson, as well as Robertson (then Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet) and Heeney.

The U.S. proposal was for the use of some 100 acres of land on each of the two Islands, to build radar stations required for the defence of the Thule, Greenland base and for aerial navigation. At that point the Americans were proposing only surveys of possible sites.

The Chiefs of Staff had no objection to the site surveys provided that, in the usual way, the RCAF were free to be represented on them and all copies of resulting reports were made available to the Canadian Government.” Canada should retain ownership of the land and any immoveables placed thereon and the U.S. should bear the full cost of equipping and maintaining the stations. The minutes report that Pearson said:

... the government had taken a firm stand against granting long term leases in Canada to U.S. Forces. He thought the government should do everything to facilitate the Coburg-Ellesmere project and accord the rights and facilities required by the USAF at the two sites, but that it should be made clear to the Americans that it would not be possible to grant long term leases which appeared unnecessary. (my emphasis)

This was the same kind of arrangement NATO countries made with one another for airfield infrastructures, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff pointed out.

The proposal to survey sites was then approved “subject to eventual negotiations for use of sites by the USAF.”<sup>70</sup>

The Radar Stations at Cobourg and Ellesmere Islands were never discussed again by the Cabinet Defence Committee. There were a number of discussions of continental radar defence but nothing further on these stations. For example, in a lengthy and crucial memorandum to Cabinet of October 3, 1953 which was intended to “summarize our relations” with the U.S. in the field of continental radar defence under the heading of “Presently Authorized U.S. Radar Installations in Canada,” nothing is said of the Cobourg and Ellesmere sites.<sup>71</sup>

A memorandum from the Defence Liaison Division (External Affairs) to the Under-Secretary for External Affairs in July 1952, noted eleven issues on defence policy which involved U.S. requests for closer cooperation and the problems this might create. Difficulties were likely to arise because of U.S. impatience with Canadian delays in processing requests (once appropriations were received by the U.S. military they were in a hurry to get things done); once one facility was established they inevitably led to subsidiary requests; expansion of a U.S. military presence was likely to lead to more incidents of U.S. military personnel “throwing their weight around.” While the most important concern throughout 1952 was the expansion of, and who was to command U.S. installations in Newfoundland and Labrador, the memorandum included a reference to the U.S. request “to survey sites in the Arctic Islands for two additional radar stations” (presumed for the protection of Thule Base

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<sup>70</sup> 77th Meeting, Cabinet Defence Committee, 30.8.51. RG 2, Vol. 2749, Vol.5.

<sup>71</sup> It was to be years after the August 30, 1951 meeting before the Defence Committee discussed any matter even tenuously related to this issue. See Minutes 9.10.52; 14.11.53; 10.2.53; 17.3.53 and 6.10.53. At none of these is there the remotest reference to the two GCI Stations. RG 2, Vol. 2749, Vol. V and VI.

but no mention of location) as one of the eleven potential problem issues. The memorandum recommended that the basic policy, which had been worked out during the Second World War and after, be continued on all these projects:

- (i) The U.S. should be granted no long-term rights of occupation to defence sites in Canada;
- (ii) As far as possible all facilities should be joint enterprises, in which Canada would maintain command and control;
- (iii) Canadian command for defence of Canadian territory (to make this effective we should be prepared to provide the major forces required for the defence of Canadian territory);
- (iv) We should avoid entering into arrangements which would permit the stationing of U.S. troops in Canada and seek to liquidate existing arrangements... (e.g. the manning of radar stations by U.S. personnel).

### **The Phillips Memorandum**

While a serious preoccupation of External Affairs and Defence in the latter half of 1952 was with the immense increase in the U.S. presence in Newfoundland and Labrador, there were other matters of concern. The anticipated presence in Ottawa, in early January 1953, of most officials interested in the Arctic, led R.A.J. Phillips, who was responsible for the sovereignty "file" in PCO and who was to represent Pickersgill (Clerk of the Privy Council) at future ACND meetings, to prepare a note on December 29, 1952 on new problems which had emerged in the Arctic as a result of increased U.S. activity in the area. The urgent context for this memorandum was the Truman administration decision, in December 1952, to propose a start to what was to become within two years the DEW Line.<sup>72</sup>

The note set out ten "unfortunate incidents" involving the U.S. which had taken place in the Arctic in the previous three years. All were rather minor in scope and impact but they were also potentially embarrassing. In a separate note Phillips set out five "possible" developments in the Arctic which had ramifications for the government policy of maintaining sovereignty in the Arctic. While some of those developments "might fail to materialize," the government had already received or could expect to receive requests to approve these five. One of these concerned the possibility of the U.S. building radar stations for the defence of Thule in the Northeastern Arctic:

Over a year ago the United States asked to make surveys as a preliminary for the establishment of radar stations on Ellesmere and Cobourg Islands for the protection of Thule. During the spring airlift in 1952, the USAF investigated the possibility of putting these radar stations in the vicinity of the Joint Arctic Weather Stations at Alert, Eureka and/or Resolute. Resolute, with about 35 Canadians, has the largest Canadian community in the Arctic Archipelago. Alert and Eureka have seven Canadians between them. Each U.S. radar station would probably have about 200 US servicemen....

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<sup>72</sup> Bankes, *Op cit*, p. 287.

There is at least the possibility that the U.S. will ask to put a U.S. main radar station with between 100 and 200 men at Resolute.<sup>73</sup>

This is the first mention of Resolute as a possible radar site. Phillips' preoccupation was that until now the main Canadian activity in the Arctic Archipelago had been the weather station program. Canada had less than 50 "men" (i.e., government employees) in the whole of the Arctic Archipelago and now this figure was matched by the United States<sup>74</sup>. Any new U.S. activity would change the "delicate balance of manpower in the northern Arctic." This, Phillips said, was not necessarily in itself serious, but experiences during the Second World War indicated that extreme care had to be taken to preserve Canadian sovereignty in remote areas "where Canadians are out-numbered." He was not worried about formal claims since "the U.S. administration has been eminently reasonable during the past six years that we have been working together in the Arctic." There was greater concern about the sort of "de facto U.S. sovereignty" which had caused difficulties during the Second World War and might embarrass the government. Phillips then suggested eleven proposals for dealing with the situation. These included:

- possibly taking over the Arctic weather stations. This would require 20 men;
- opening up new RCMP posts. "There is a proposal that the post at Resolute should be reopened and I recommend we support this idea";
- Canada might assume responsibility for the Padloping Island weather station, for operation of all radio aids to navigation, for any future Loran stations; use of expeditions of exploration and flag rising;
- improving coordination for Arctic government activities, more study of Arctic problems, more lectures and films and speeches by Ministers to educate government officials and the public on the North.

The only proposal which has any bearing on the issue of the GCI radar stations on Cobourg and Ellesmere Islands, and possibly Resolute Bay, was his suggestion that "there is a proposal that the post at Resolute should be re-opened and I recommend that we support this idea." (The earlier detachment had been closed in 1951 because it had "nothing to do.") This suggests that Phillips may have been aware of the proposal made some months earlier (in October 1952) of possibly moving Inuit to Resolute as part of the policies developed in May 1952 by the Conference on Eskimo Affairs and in October 1952 by the ongoing Committee on Eskimo Affairs set up by the Conference. It is significant that nowhere in the Phillips' memorandum is mention made of the possibility of moving Inuit to Resolute or Eureka or Alert as a possible counterfoil to the possible increased U.S. Radar Station presence in the High Arctic. However, even if I am wrong we can be reasonably sure that he knew of Cantley's proposal (to be discussed in a later section of this report) after the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol that the RCMP post at Resolute Bay be re-opened so that there would be a "central authority governing the settlement as a whole."<sup>75</sup>

There was some confusion about these radar stations. Phillips was wrong about the "possibility" of a radar station at Resolute Bay. The Cabinet Defence Committee had, as noted earlier, only approved surveys on

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<sup>73</sup> Documents on Canadian External Relations. Vol. 18, no. 744, p. 1197 and 1198.

<sup>74</sup> In the summers there were far more people working in the North. For example, in the summer of 1952 there were 200 people (mostly government employees) working at Resolute Bay alone.

<sup>75</sup> "Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol – 1952", nd. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

Cobourg and Ellesmere Islands, not Resolute Bay, as possible sites for GCI radar stations. This error was confirmed the day after Phillips had penned his memorandum. Wilgress wrote to Pearson, also noting some “prospective new developments,” but differed from Phillips about the possible location of one of these new developments, namely the radar stations.<sup>76</sup>

Wilgress repeated the earlier information that there was a possibility of two early warning/GCI stations, one on Cobourg Island and one on Ellesmere Island. That is, although the possibility of a station at Resolute Bay had been “investigated,” no site survey approval had yet been sought by the U.S. nor given by the Cabinet Defence Committee. A site survey required RCAF presence and none had been requested. Nor did a site survey mean there would in fact be a station. Separate approval for building stations would be required by the Cabinet Committee. Wilgress went on to say that since there was every likelihood that in the next three or four years there could be a new influx of U.S. citizens in the Arctic, it was perhaps time to give serious consideration to the adoption “at the highest level of a vigorous policy of all-Canadian services, including communications, transportation, aids to navigation, meteorology and police” (my emphasis). He felt that this was a matter of some urgency since past experience had shown that a lengthy period was required when dealing with Arctic activities to convert decisions into realities.<sup>77</sup>

Pearson, on January 15, 1953, returning Phillips’ paper to the Clerk of the Privy Council, noted the danger of being excluded from developments in the Arctic by U.S. penetration and that he intended to talk to the Prime Minister about it as soon as possible, preparatory to a full consideration in Cabinet. He ended his note saying “In this regard I am not so critical of the United States’ action as I am of our own inaction.”<sup>78</sup>

### **The January 22, 1953 Cabinet Meeting**

A week later, at the January 22, 1953 meeting of Cabinet, Pearson raised the issue of developments in the Arctic, basing his introductory statement on the Phillips and Wilgress memoranda. He, too, noted that a year previously the United States had been given permission to make surveys as a preliminary to the establishment of radar stations on Ellesmere and Cobourg Islands (our emphasis) for the protection of Thule. (He made no mention of a GCI station at Resolute.) His main preoccupation was, however, the proposed 40 radar station DEW Line, the expansion of some air strips and a proposed Loran station. He expressed concern that if Canadian claims to territory in the Arctic rested on discovery and continuous occupation, Canadian claims to some “relatively unexplored areas” might be questioned in the future. He noted that there might be a problem with the de facto exercise of sovereignty by the U.S., examples of which were numerous during the last war in other parts of Canada. Increased U.S. activity in the Arctic would “present risks of misunderstandings, incidents and infringements on the exercise of Canadian sovereignty.” He urged strongly that the Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND) be reactivated. The Prime Minister also expressed concern and noted that it was “within the realm of the possible that in years to come U.S. development might be just about the only form of human activity in the vast wastelands of the Canadian Arctic.” He proposed one concrete suggestion, namely, that the ACND consider some practical way in which normal Canadian customs and immigration facilities could

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<sup>76</sup> Phillips was also in error on the number of personnel the radar stations would require – it was 100, not 200. Walsh, USAF to Wright, PJBD, 24.10.51. RG 22, Vol. 499, File S-82-10-3, Pt.2.

<sup>77</sup> Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 18, No. 745, p. 1201.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. No. 746, p. 1202.

be extended to the Arctic where the more important developments were taking place. (This was done in October 1953 when 23 northern officials were appointed Customs and Immigration officers.)

The only dissenting voice was that of the Minister of National Defence who noted that in the most recent report from the Pentagon, there was in fact a decrease in the total numbers of civilian and military U.S. personnel in all parts of Canada except Newfoundland and Labrador. "He was satisfied that everything which could be done had, in fact, been done in respect of existing U.S. activities in Canada to ensure preservation for Canadian sovereignty." But he, too, felt that continued U.S. activity in the North merited review by the ACND.<sup>79</sup>

### **The New ACND**

The ACND was then reconvened, and its extremely important sixth meeting (that is, the first meeting of the newly revived committee) on February 16, 1953, is, according to Grant, a major source of evidence supporting the thesis that the Inuit were sent North primarily for sovereignty reasons.

The Secretary to the Cabinet (Pickersgill), who was greatly exercised about sovereignty, noted at the meeting that a reason why the ACND was formed was because "there was.....an apprehension (on the part of Ministers) of seeming encroachment on Canadian sovereignty" and thus Cabinet wanted to be informed of all activities in this area and also wanted recommendations as to what could be done "to promote Canadian initiative." Cabinet wanted Canada to "take the lead rather than be paced by the United States in the areas of joint participation."

As was not unusual, government was divided (or at least the top public servants, presumably also representing the views of their ministers, were divided) on how important and how urgent the issue was. The Chairman of the Defence Research Board noted that there appeared to be, "little or no real grounds for objecting to U.S. activities. On every occasion the U.S. had been more than willing to cooperate with Canada." He saw the problem more as one of coordination between the military and civilian interest within the government and the need to adjust military interest where possible to conform to projected civilian developments. General McNaughton, Canadian Chairman of the PJBD, also "expressed the view that there was nothing sinister about U.S. activities in Canada." He noted the 1947 declaration by the Board (i.e., PJBD) which included a self-liquidation clause by which either the United States or Canada could participate in joint activities as long as required and then withdraw. Ownership of sites reverted to Canada on completion of operations and he felt that sovereignty was not under threat. The Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee stated that he, too, did not feel "that Canadian sovereignty was in jeopardy" and suggested great caution in Canada attempting to assume too great a share of defence and related activities in the Canadian North.

Pickersgill, however, was not willing to leave the matter there and argued that there seemed to be a lack of Canadian initiative in the Arctic. For example, he queried the need for the use of U.S. facilities for working up Canadian statistics at the Joint Weather Stations. He asked "what was the root of the problem of Canada not taking the initiative.....personnel, salary limitations, the priority on departmental estimates for the Arctic"? At this point, the Deputy Minister of Finance agreed that in the preparation of department estimates, "The Arctic was a fringe problem and asked whether a higher priority should be assigned to northern development"?

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<sup>79</sup> Minutes, Cabinet Meeting, 22.1.53. RG 2, Vol. 2652, File 07, January 1953 - 26 February, 1953.



Great importance has been attached to a further statement by Pickersgill who “emphasised the need to ensure that the civilian services in the North were predominately Canadian.” It is important to bear in mind that what Pickersgill is referring to here is government civilian services (such as transportation, communications, mapping, policing, etc.). There is no hint that this might have meant sending civilians to widely dispersed parts of the Arctic. From at least the time that Mackenzie King referred to most government activities in the North as being civilian rather than military, it became government policy to emphasize the civilian side of its work in the North.

There was also a question raised on the “potential of the inhabitants of the North.” Had the primary or secondary purpose of sending Inuit north been sovereignty, this would have been the perfect place for Young<sup>80</sup> to indicate what his Department was doing with respect to Pickersgill’s concern, since at this point in the discussion each department was listing activities that strengthened Canada’s presence in the North in support of sovereignty. Yet Young, in reply, says nothing about the three settlements being planned for the North. Instead he “outlined the plan for education of the Eskimos over the next ten year period.” The implication was that only with more formal education would the Inuit be able to make the kind of government civilian contribution Pickersgill was asking for.

The relocation proposals had been under very active consideration for over a year. By February 1953, plans were in the last stages of decision. The question then arises why at this point did Young not mention them since almost any, even small, activity in the Archipelago contributed to the maintenance of sovereignty? The obvious answer seems to be that sovereignty was seen as a matter of effective administration in the North and this involved government activity by either civilian or military staff. It also suggests that the idea of sending Inuit civilians north for purposes of sovereignty was absent from their intentions.<sup>81</sup>

The seventh meeting of the ACND was held on March 16, 1953 and considered sixty pages of reports submitted by twenty departments and agencies on their Activities in Northern Canada.

The GCI radar stations for the defence of Thule are reported but there is no indication that these were of any great urgency and indeed there were already, by this time, indications that they would not proceed and that, instead, emphasis was now being placed on three experimental radar stations that were to be the precursors of the DEW Line. However, they do make the second reference to Resolute found in the documents although they speak of the “general area” rather than the settlement. External Affairs in its report listing thirteen current U.S. activities says:

The U.S.A.F. has been granted permission to carry out surveys for sites for radar stations in the general area of Resolute, Eureka and Alert. The proposed stations would have a compliment of about 200 men each. Permission had however, not yet been asked to establish these stations.<sup>82</sup> (my emphasis)

Grant reports this as follows. She says that at the March 16 ACND meeting, External Affairs, “Distributed

<sup>80</sup> Deputy Minister of Resources and Development.

<sup>81</sup> All the 1953 minutes of ACND meetings referred to in this section can be found in MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, Vol. 1 to 31, December 1953.

<sup>82</sup> ACND First Report on Activities in Northern Canada. External Affairs “U.S. Activities in the Canadian Arctic”. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, March 1953. External were wrong. Cabinet Defence Committee had not approved this general area. They had approved site surveys specifically for Coburg and Ellesmere Islands.

a report showing U.S. plans to construct a GCI radar station in the vicinity of Resolute.”<sup>83</sup>

This is an extraordinary distortion of the facts. There was no report showing plans of any kind. External Affairs did distribute a two and a half page account of U.S. activities, present and future, real and possible, in the Canadian Arctic. The section on the radar stations for Thule merely notes that the U.S. had received permission to carry out surveys for sites in an area larger than the size of Great Britain (not specifically the vicinity of Resolute Bay). Specific mention is made of the fact that no request for permission to construct any stations had yet been made. While some site examination activities had been carried out in the spring of 1952, the uncertainty of the project was such that by March 1953, the U.S. had still not indicated whether it was interested in pursuing the project, and by May 1953, the ACND had dropped further reference to a possible station “in the general area of” Resolute. On May 8, 1953 a map issued by the PCO to ACND on actual and projected U.S. government personnel in the High North shows a projected, potential large increase of U.S. personnel at Alert and Eureka (because of the GCI stations), but none at Resolute where no projected increase over the five existing U.S. employees was forecast, while the 37 Canadians there were to have only one additional governmental employee (presumably, the RCMP constable going to Resolute with the Inuit settlers). The Inuit settlers are not noted on this map, neither at Resolute nor Craig Harbour nor Cape Hershel (the projected RCMP detachment at that point). They are not seen as a relevant factor in offsetting the presence of U.S. Government personnel. At that point there were 140 Canadian government and 72 U.S. government personnel in the Arctic Archipelago.<sup>84</sup>

Grant goes on to say that: “It was hardly coincidence that on the same day (March 16, 1953), the Director of Northern Administration would submit his request for funding the resettlement projects to include Resolute.”<sup>85</sup> Since this meeting of ACND started at 2:30 p.m. and had a weighty and lengthy agenda, the likelihood that Cunningham rushed back to his office, drafted and had typed a seven-page revised list of projects which now included the Resolute settlement, all before the end of the work day, is highly unlikely.

There was some discussion of the early warning radar stations (Operation Counterchange – the DEW Line) at the seventh ACND meeting. The Canadians were highly [skeptical] about the value of the proposal and had as a consequence only agreed to permit one experimental station without any commitment to the whole chain. The Joint Pine Tree Line was at that point under construction (a network of 33 stations running from Vancouver to Labrador, 17 of which were manned by Canada). The Canadians were already considering their “cheap” early warning system (the McGill Fence) which was to become the all-Canadian Mid-Canada Line involving 98 stations that were approved in 1954 and built by 1957. However, more to the point, ACND was informed that a Canada-United States study group was being set up to consider the whole problem of air defence. It was clear from this that there was not going to be any precipitous move on the highly tentative proposals for the Thule air defence radar stations.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Grant, p. 11.

<sup>84</sup> Chipman, PCO to ACND, Document ND-52, 8.5.53. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, Vol. 1 to 31 December 1953. Chipman does say if “all the projected and presently proposed” U.S. developments were implemented, this would in the future have meant 1200 U.S. personnel in the High Arctic.

<sup>85</sup> Grant, p. 11.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes Seventh Meeting ACND, 16.3.53. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, Vol. 1 to 31, December 1953.

Curiously, the Department of Resources and Development made no mention of moving Inuit to the High Arctic in their March 1953 report Activities in the North. However, the RCMP did and under the heading of “future plans” stated:

The force expects to continue the service we presently give the North and to open new detachments when Canadian interests seem to call for such action. For instance – it is planned to open a detachment at Cape Herschel on the east coast of Ellesmere Island and another one at Clyde River on the east coast of Baffin Island this year.<sup>87</sup>

This “interim report” submitted to the March 16th meeting of the ACND was modified and a final version of Activities in the North was completed by March 31, 1953. In this later version the RCMP report added two detachments to the previous two the RCMP had planned to open in 1953:

... it is planned to open four new detachments in the Arctic Islands this year: one at Sachs Harbour ... one at Resolute Bay. ... one at Cape Herschel, ... and one at Clyde River. The detachments at Sachs Harbour and Cape Herschel will have to do almost solely with the administration of Eskimo affairs, and in respect to the latter point, it is hoped by setting up a detachment at Cape Herschel to not only encourage the move of Canadian Eskimos into that part of Ellesmere Island, but to prevent or control the movement of Greenland natives on hunting excursions into Canadian territory. The projected detachments at Resolute Bay and Clyde River will be set up to provide for the administration of Eskimo families working in and about these bases.<sup>88</sup>

Grant, however, believes this addition of Resolute Bay to the list of detachments was directly due to discussions at the March 16 meeting of ACND and the “plans announced” there to construct a GCI radar station “in the vicinity of Resolute.”<sup>89</sup> It is significant, too, that the RCMP said nothing of their going to Resolute Bay to control a possible increased U.S. presence. It is of interest, too, to note how the RCMP separate the “administration of Eskimo Affairs” from the control of Greenlander hunting.

The difficulty with Grant’s hypothesis is that, as noted earlier: (i) there were no such “plans” to construct a GCI station; and (ii) there was no indication of any concern, nor was there any discussion at ACND of the imminent likelihood of a massive radar station, involving possibly hundreds of American troops and civilians, appearing in the vicinity of Resolute. There was discussion of three issues relating to the U.S. presence in the North at the March (seventh) ACND meeting, including concerns about the Northwest Highway System, the NWT and Yukon Radio System, as well as the proposed DEW Line. If the Resolute radar station had been a concern, a concern sufficient to warrant colonisation to counter the U.S. threat, it is inconceivable that there would have been no discussion at ACND of such a massive U.S. intrusion and how to deal with it.<sup>90</sup>

The seventh ACND meeting also set up a sub-committee under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of

<sup>87</sup> ACND First Report etc. “The Work of the RCMP in the Canadian North”. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, March 1953.

<sup>88</sup> RG 85, Acc. 89-90/233, Vol.3, File Report to Cabinet, “Activities in Northern Canada”, 31.3.53.

<sup>89</sup> Grant, p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> Minutes, Seventh Meeting ACND, 16.3.53. Op cit. It would be more accurate to say that it would have required a “conspiracy of silence” of some considerable scope which would be hard to explain given the openness with which other U.S. activities, and coping with them, were discussed and recorded at the time.

the RCMP – the Administration Sub-Committee – which had the responsibility of dealing with issues such as the relocation of the Inuit to the North. Among its draft terms of reference approved at the eighth ACND meeting on April 13, 1953 were:

- (d) to study questions arising from the employment of natives, both Eskimo and Indian, and to examine the desirability of recommending arranged movements of natives with a view to bettering their conditions.<sup>91</sup>

These draft terms of reference which were proposed by the Commissioner of the RCMP aroused some sharp comment. Pickersgill pointed out that, “Nowhere in the terms of reference of the sub-committee was there any mention of the question of sovereignty. It would seem that the sub-committee would be the appropriate one for consideration of certain aspects of sovereignty problems”. The full committee, thereupon, added a sixth guideline for the sub-committee, namely, “To consider from time to time reports on U.S. activity in the Canadian North and to recommend measures which would contribute to maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the area.” Representatives from PCO and External Affairs were added to this sub-committee. Here then, one would assume the issue of relocations and sovereignty might become linked. Yet despite this mandate and the preparations that were in process with respect to the relocations, the sub-committee waited until August 29, 1953 to have its first meeting – long after the planning for the move to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord had been initiated. This de facto separation of the relocation from the sovereignty concerns of the ACND is another matter which will be discussed in the conclusion to this section.

The eighth meeting of the ACND was interesting in some other respects. There was a discussion on the supply of the Resolute Joint Weather Station and despite the considerable costs which would be involved, it was strongly recommended that by 1954 and in subsequent years the resupply of Resolute be undertaken completely under Canadian auspices through the use of Canadian icebreakers and the chartering of vessels necessary for the resupply. Transportation was the key to the North and Canadian control of that transportation was the key to maintaining effective control. Here again, some departments were not particularly forthcoming in support of showing effective occupation with respect to government civilian activities in this way. The Royal Canadian Navy was unable to give assurance that its icebreaker would in fact be made available each year for Arctic supply purposes. Even the normally enthusiastic Pickersgill noted that while the project seemed desirable, it might be useful to delay a decision until more information was available on the costs that were involved. No one suggested that the presence of Inuit civilians at Resolute Bay now made such expensive projects less necessary.

The U.S. always invited Canada to send observers on the resupply missions to the Joint Arctic Weather Stations and in 1953 had invited ten Canadian observers to participate. Only three departments had indicated a willingness to send observers and once again it was the Secretary of the Cabinet who had to remind the ACND that because of the importance which the government attached to the sovereignty question, more than three observers should be sent.<sup>92</sup>

It was not until the eleventh ACND meeting, in September 1953, that Young reviewed “Government Policy on the Administration of the Eskimo.” The Department’s emphasis was on provision of adequate

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<sup>91</sup> Minutes Eighth Meeting ACND, 13.4.53. MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, File ACND, Vol. 1 to 31, December 1953.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes, Eighth Meeting, ACND, 13.4.53. Ibid.

education over the longer term while at the same time dealing with many short term problems on a more ad hoc basis. Young reported that he had set up a Committee on Eskimo Affairs and suggested that its “valuable” proposals should be referred to the Administration Sub-Committee for consideration. (The Sub-Committee later simply referred the question of general policy back to the ACND.) Nothing was said about the possible contribution the Inuit who had left for the High Arctic in July might make towards maintenance of sovereignty.<sup>93</sup>

Another opportunity arose in October 1953, at the twelfth ACND meeting, to mention the contribution of the Inuit settlers to the maintenance of sovereignty. However, under the heading of “Movements of Eskimos from Certain Areas,” it was simply noted that:

36. An experiment is being made in moving Eskimo from areas where conditions are difficult to places where they can find employment or good hunting. Seven families from Port Harrison have been moved to Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island while five young men have gone to Fort Churchill where they are employed by the services.<sup>94</sup>

The thirteenth ACND meeting (November 1953) involved a wide ranging and important discussion on, “One of the most sensitive Canadian areas for the maintenance of sovereignty ... the Arctic Archipelago ...” where the main installations were the five Joint Weather Stations. So Rowley noted in a memorandum which was to provide the basis for a discussion of the future of the weather stations. For effective occupation, he argued, permanent Canadian installations were “highly” desirable since joint stations in which another nation played an equal part did not provide “the type of sole occupation” that was “desirable to demonstrate our sovereignty.” In the Far North these five weather stations were the only civilian installations which were not operated entirely by Canadians. To take them over would require replacing the 23 American civilian employees with Canadians. There were, however, serious impediments to such a takeover, including serious difficulties in finding the personnel, the costs involved and the inability of Canada to supply at least one of the stations. The Department of Transport was particularly insistent on the importance of the weather stations to their work while stressing how difficult it would be for them to be solely responsible. Rowley stressed that:

If Canada is to maintain and develop its position in the north, it must, even at considerable cost, build a growing corps of men, both civilian and service, who know the Arctic. Canada must have within the country, and preferably within the reach of the public service, a reserve of Arctic specialists who will eventually make Canada independent of outside help in the development of its north, even though the co-operation of other countries will always be welcomed.<sup>95</sup>

As a longer term proposition, he suggested the possibility of training Inuit to take over the work of the stations.

The discussion which followed, based on this report, showed the usual divisions of opinion between the various departments about how seriously to respond to this concern, and even more division about what to do about it. Some departments maintained that there was no effective occupation problem at the stations. For example, General McNaughton felt that since there was a Canadian Officer-in-Charge and Canadian representatives at each station, the requirements of sovereignty were being met. Moreover, the benefit from U.S.

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<sup>93</sup> Minutes, Eleventh Meeting, ACND, 14.9.53. Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Minutes, Twelfth Meeting ACND, 19.10.53. Op cit.

<sup>95</sup> Minutes, Document ND-69-A, Thirteenth Meeting ACND, 23.11.53. Op cit.

participation in the weather stations was considerable. The Department of Transport “considered that “effective occupation was demonstrated” by the fact that Officers-in-Charge of the stations were also postmasters, justices of the peace and game wardens. The Meteorological Services were establishing new stations in Northern Canada and until these were completed they did not want to prejudice these new programmes by assuming new responsibilities. However, the Commissioner of the RCMP thought that “such civilian operations should be carried out by Canadians.” The PCO representative (Phillips) also felt that “Canadian sovereignty could be fortified by the Canadian manning of civilian stations.” In the end, the committee agreed to recommend the takeover of the stations “as soon as time and resources permit.” During this discussion there was no mention at all of the contribution that the four families of Inuit at Resolute Bay were or might be making to Canadian sovereignty there. If sovereignty had been the primary motive in sending them to Resolute Bay why was it not mentioned? Why was it not understood by the participants that the Inuit had allegedly been sent to help ameliorate this problem?

The total silence about any “sovereignty” role of the Inuit settlers at the ACND meetings in 1953 is, in my view, overwhelming evidence that there was in fact no such function.

Canada seems to have done well in dealing with the U.S. presence in the North. When the Prime Minister met the U.S. President in 1958, Rowley was asked to prepare a memorandum on “recent” U.S. infringements of Canadian sovereignty since the issue might be discussed between the two. He cited only four incidents, one in 1946 (the weather stations), one in 1950 (an unauthorized excavation of an Inuit site), and two in “recent years” (both less serious), and noted there were “very few instances where Canadian sovereignty in the north has been ignored by agents of the U.S. government.” There had been two more “serious” occasions involving U.S. commercial companies: one an “announcement” of a “plan” to divert the Yukon River, and the other a construction of a road without permission. He reported also a number of other “annoying but insignificant incidents.” All in all, given the extent of the U.S. presence in the North this was a very considerable achievement in maintaining de facto control of Canada.<sup>96</sup>

### **The Ad Hoc August 1953 Meeting**

In August 1953 an ad hoc comparatively low level meeting took place where comments by one of the public servants who participated are regarded as fundamental to proponents of the case that sovereignty was the prime motive for the relocations.

The RCAF had expressed strong objection to the Resolute Bay settlement project and at this ad hoc inter-departmental meeting, held on August 10, 1953 in an attempt to resolve the difficulties, Sivertz made a statement which is taken to be representative of the true government motives in this case.

Sivertz says, at one point in this meeting after Cantley had indicated that Resolute was an experiment with some uncertainty about the availability of wildlife there, that the:

Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared that in many cases Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this.

Sivertz seems clearly to be referring to the expectation that occupation of the North by Inuit civilians would

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<sup>96</sup> Rowley to Deputy Minister, 7.7.58. RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley ACND 1958.

enhance sovereignty and that this was the policy of the Government in sending the relocatees to the High North.<sup>97</sup> This statement must be given some weight. Although Sivertz was a fifth level public servant at the time (below the DM, ADM, Director and Division Chief), he was a special assistant to the Deputy Minister and would, within the next two years, succeed Cunningham as Director of Northern Administration. This is not all Sivertz said, but his further comments have been overlooked by both Grant and Marcus. Sivertz expands on what he meant at the end of the meeting when he goes on to say:

... That the Eskimos' prime purpose in going to the High North was to see if it were possible for them to adapt themselves to conditions there and secure a reasonable living. Steps will be taken to see that the Eskimo are provided for in case the experiment is not successful and that every effort will be made to see that the RCAF is not inconvenienced.<sup>98</sup>

Sivertz, in my view[,], believed that the presence of Inuit in as much of the North as possible would enhance effective occupation, as well as assist in the economic development of the North – which was becoming an important objective. He is, however, also clear that the “prime” purpose of the move to Resolute Bay was to secure a “reasonable living” for the Inuit provided they could “adapt” to the new environment. He also believed here that it was government policy to settle as much of the North as possible, and although he does not mention the word sovereignty, it seems reasonably clear from the context that this was part of his meaning. If this interpretation is correct then Sivertz is the only Departmental official to link the Resolute relocation with sovereignty functions both in 1953 and 1960. Sivertz' recollection of what he said differs from my view.<sup>99</sup>

### **The 1960 Review**

On June 27, 1960 the Department submitted a Memorandum to Cabinet on “Canadian Sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago.” This, essentially, repeated the form, contents and claims of the memorandum prepared by Dean MacDonald ten years earlier but updated the record of Canada's administrative and other activities in the Canadian Arctic, reinforcing MacDonald's claim that effective sovereignty had been displayed in so many respects and for so long that title was fully established. The summary of record includes only government activities in the North and says nothing about the contribution to effective occupation made by the Inuit settlers at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. However, the government services provided the settlers, such as schools, Family Allowances, etc., are mentioned as examples of effective occupation.<sup>100</sup>

Later in 1960, the possibility of further relocations to the High Arctic (to take advantage of oil explorations occurring there) was raised by Sivertz, then Director of Northern Administration, with Bolger, the Administrator of the Arctic. Bolger had pointed out “some” problem that there had been in supplying Grise

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<sup>97</sup> Rowley disagreed with this interpretation. He believes the statement had nothing to do with sovereignty, but wanted to convey the determination of government to use the vast resources of the North more effectively. He believes Sivertz's focus was on economic development. Personal communication, 22.9.91.

<sup>98</sup> “Minutes of Meeting ... to discuss the transfer etc.”, 10.8.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>99</sup> Sivertz in a 1990 letter explained to Marcus that his comment “was a reference to concern over sovereignty, but not in the sense that we thought there was a danger of the USA appropriating Canada's Arctic Lands”. Quoting from Keenleyside's Memoirs, he explained that he was referring to a “new appreciation” for the economic possibilities of that region. Sivertz to Marcus, 25.5.90.

<sup>100</sup> Memo to Cabinet, 27.6.60. RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley ACND, 1960.

Fiord. There had also recently been a death of a child (during an epidemic) which might have been prevented had there been a doctor in the community. Bolger reports that Sivertz felt:

... that while Grise Fiord should be continued for sovereignty purposes, it should not be duplicated at other isolated locations.<sup>101</sup>

Instead consideration should be given to the possibility of new colonies based around the other weather stations. Sivertz asked that a paper be prepared on the history of the communities, and the advantages and problems of establishing additional colonies in the High Arctic. The paper should also:

... ask if it is the wish of Government to fortify our claims to sovereignty of these islands by establishing Eskimo groups on them and it should contain our best recommendation on what, if anything, should be done along this line.<sup>102</sup>

Bolger submitted a seven page report on November 15, 1960. This is a very important document since it not only provided the first opportunity to do a frank, internal evaluation of these projects, but to do so, again for the first time, within a context of a concern for sovereignty and it is quoted here at length:

In the early 1950s this Department instituted several projects whereby encouragement and assistance was given to various groups of Eskimos to move from areas where they were finding difficulty in making a satisfactory living from the available resources to areas where hunting and trapping conditions were more favourable or where there were opportunities for other steady employment. One of these projects started in the summer of 1953 when four families ... voluntarily transferred ... to the vicinity of the Air Base at Resolute Bay. Another small group ... moved to Grise Fiord.

This movement of Eskimos was regarded more or less as an experiment to determine how well Eskimos from southern areas would adapt to conditions and the environment of the High Arctic, together with filling all the requirements of making a good living for themselves. It was thought at the time of the move that the Harrison group would not only find the environment strange, but, as they had never experienced the dark period, the assumption was that travelling and trapping would be most difficult. This is one of the reasons why Pond Inlet people were involved, so as to help the southern group adjust to their new terrain and related situations ...

The outcome of these ventures has been more successful and satisfactory than had ever been anticipated. The Eskimos have been able to obtain all the country food they need and sufficient fur and additional produce to purchase their other requirements from the store. They have adapted themselves quickly to the changed conditions and have been, on the whole, happy in their new environment. So much so, they requested that arrangements be made to have some of their relatives transferred north. This was done – in 1955 and subsequent years when small numbers of Eskimos were moved north.

The memorandum goes on to note the initial opposition of the RCAF to the project at Resolute and that the RCAF now welcomed the Inuit employees as being very much to their advantage. The memorandum continues:

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<sup>101</sup> Bolger to Stevenson, 4.10.60. RG 85, Vol. 1962, File A, 1012-13, Pt. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



Although the Eskimos at Grise Fiord have not had the opportunities of employment, they have, however, obtained a good livelihood from the country and this community also serves a distinctly useful purpose in confirming, in a tangible manner, Canada's sovereignty over this vast region of the Arctic. (my emphasis)

You will recall that part of the history of the migration scheme was one of a greatly increased population over-burdening a depleted game population. Withdrawal of some hunters from the area not only benefited them but relieved Port Harrison of some of its large human population. However, the Canadian Wildlife Service have always showed great concern that this adjustment should not proceed to the point where the population would exceed the known available game resources. At the present time the number of people hunting seem to be able to obtain enough country food, but an increased population living off the country entirely could swing the pendulum in the other direction.

Therefore, no further large scale moves have been made, awaiting surveys which would determine whether the animal population could stand the present amount of killing or whether other resources were available. Because of staff limitations, it has never been possible to make the survey required...

In considering any moves north and to meet changing conditions in the Arctic, is our policy still along the lines as follows:

1. To ensure to Eskimos the means of obtaining a reasonable standard of living according to their stage of development.
2. To assist those of the more primitive groups to continue their hunting and trapping way of life by seeing that they are adequately equipped and by encouraging them to make fuller use of the resources that are available. Assistance is also to be given to members of these groups to transfer, when necessary, to areas where hunting conditions are more favourable. They are also to be encouraged to take up other occupations besides trapping, where feasible, such as handicrafts and small home industries.
3. To assist more advanced groups to combine other occupations with trapping and also take up employment, temporary or permanent, that will enable them to augment their income without, however, unfitting themselves for the life of a hunter should employment cease and they be thrown back on their own resources. Seasonal employees will spend part of the year working and part trapping. Year-round employees should be allowed reasonable time off for hunting throughout the year. In this way they will retain certain ethnic skills and be more content in their work.
4. The more advanced, younger men of any group will be given opportunities and encouraged to take employment or training for employment in order that they may fill positions available at the weather stations, other military and civilian centres, and with oil companies.

I raise the above policy statements because we have had some problems at Grise Fiord in respect of supply and medical services and I believe we should not duplicate such communities at other isolated locations....

Therefore, taking all the foregoing facts into consideration, I would suggest that the time has come for the reconvening of meetings involving the D.O.T., the R.C.A.F., oil companies and this Department to assess the employment potentialities of Eskimos in the High Arctic. If adequate

assurances are received that employment opportunities exist for Eskimos, and as to whether they are permanent or temporary, then we should consider the relocation of further groups in the High Arctic and the most advantageous bases from which they would operate.

One important factor to always keep in mind is that the Eskimos at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord are an invaluable human resource in the Northern economic development taking place on Cornwallis Island and the adjacent islands, and other groups at several other points in this vast region might develop a similar importance. Then again, as already mentioned, the occupation of these northern islands by Canada's first Arctic citizens only enhances our claims to sovereignty of these regions.

In summary, it is recommended for your consideration and approval that we do the following:

1. Canvass or hold meeting (sic) individually or collectively, with organizations concerned to discuss employment opportunities.
2. Revise the suggestion that proper surveys be carried out to ascertain the wildlife and other resources of the region. We consider this important in the interests of the Eskimo people and the economy of the country. More adequate knowledge of all the resources would be invaluable in planning for the future.
3. We should make a careful survey of the present distribution of population with a view to determining which areas are over-populated and which groups would benefit most by being transferred, provided they are willing to move! Presumably, as a result of any surveys as suggested in Recommendation No. 2, we would decide on the areas to which such groups should be transferred, keeping in mind the resources available and other advantages that may accrue.
4. Pursue, immediately and vigorously, with the RCAF their desire to employ more Eskimos, provided they have training as outlined in my memorandum to you of July 21.
5. Related considerations which will have to be made in any move are numbers, educational facilities, housing, supplies, medical treatment and supervision. There are also other features which will be brought out if we have your approval and direction of the scheme in principal.<sup>103</sup>

These latter six steps outline what ideally the Department should have carried out in 1953 had they had the resources to do so and what they attempted to do in a much more rough and ready way.

What should be noted is the marginal significance assigned to the sovereignty role of the Inuit in any new resettlement policy. No mention is made of any sovereignty purpose in 1953. The overwhelming message in this policy statement is that resettlement was designed to improve economic circumstances. Once established the settlements did contribute to effective occupation, as Rowley's memoranda of 1955 and 1956 had already stated.

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<sup>103</sup> Bolger to Director, 15.11.60. Ibid. Marcus takes just one line from this memorandum (the useful sovereignty function of Grise Fiord) to support his claim that the Canadian government's concerns about sovereignty led to the establishing and maintaining of the Resolute and Grise Fiord settlements. Marcus, p. 64. This despite the fact that Resolute is not specifically mentioned in this connection and that no sovereignty motive is ascribed to the 1953 objectives. Marcus, too often, relies on one line taken out of context to make his arguments.

## **Conclusion**

1. The relevance of the various 1946 accounts of potential U.S. threats to and Canadian uncertainty about Arctic sovereignty to the Resolute settlement are not only remote but also ambiguous as to the nature of the U.S. threat to Canadian sovereignty. As late as 1948-1949, the discussions within ACND show that the Canadian concerns about sovereignty were moderate and considered quite manageable by improved administrative coordination measures.
2. The issues in the High Arctic at that time were not legal sovereignty but, because of an increase in U.S. activities in the North, there was a concern with a de facto loss of sovereignty which was serious and real, at least for some important sectors of government (PCO and External Affairs). However, some Departments did not regard the U.S. presence as a threat (Defence) while others, although concerned, felt that sovereignty concerns could be well taken care of by improving joint administrative and coordination arrangements with the U.S. (Defence Research Board). Some departments, because of financial constraints, felt that sovereignty concerns should take second place to more practical issues (Transport), while others believed sovereignty to be a rather “intangible” question and hence not of that great a concern (RCAF). There was no unified government voice on the question – there were different views held with different intensity coming from different department perspectives. With the exception of the two statements made by Stevenson noted earlier, (and one reference to the long term possibility of Inuit finding permanent employment to occupy and patrol the Arctic for the purposes of sovereignty and security), none of the plethora of documents written by Resources and Development in 1951 and 1952 says anything about sovereignty.
3. Upholding sovereignty through the maintaining of effective occupation meant increasing and more effective (civilian) government services, not activities by civilians. This preoccupation stemmed from the rash assurance by Mackenzie King in 1947 that “All civilian activities in the North were under Canadian control.” There is no indication in the documents that “colonization” was considered necessary for maintenance of sovereignty. The absence of any comments during various crucial ACND meetings on the significance of the Inuit relocations appears conclusive. At many of these meetings, both in 1953 and in later years (all the minutes of the Committee were reviewed), sovereignty issues and concerns were discussed openly, and yet never once are the Inuit relocations mentioned in connection with maintenance of sovereignty. Nor are they mentioned when, for example, there were direct discussions about other sovereignty concerns at Resolute Bay in 1953. This overwhelming silence is significant and, in my view, decisive.
4. Government policy on publicity in the North was more complicated than simply being an attempt to prevent Canadians from having any knowledge about the U.S. military presence there. A review of the extensive newspaper coverage on the subject at the time shows how futile any such attempt (if in fact it was tried), was. On this matter, too, government was divided. National Defence wanted extensive security and censorship, Resources and Development wanted as much openness as possible, both for travel and publication of information. The result was a policy which limited the application of the Official Secrets Act to “vulnerable installations” which were designated by the Department of Defence and for the rest all other parts of the District of Franklin were to be “fully open.”

5. The Phillips memorandum is of considerable significance. It can be taken as representing the PCO view, including that of J. Pickersgill. The memorandum provided the basis for part of Pearson's contribution to the January 22, 1953, Cabinet meeting. It was the first attempt at a systematic development of an overarching (albeit, ad hoc) policy response to the anticipated increase of U.S. activity (DEW Line) in the archipelago and its possible effect on de facto sovereignty. Phillips' reference to the reopening of the Resolute Bay RCMP detachment suggests he may have been aware of the Inuit settlement proposals which had first been put to paper in concrete form in October, 1952 by the Department. Even if he did not know, we may ask why he makes no mention of the possibility of using Inuit settlers to help obviate some of the de facto sovereignty problems that he thought might be anticipated? Why, in such a wide ranging document is no such suggestion made? The answer cannot be some "fear of publicity" since it was an internal secret document. Other such secret documents discussed sensitive issues of sovereignty quite frankly. Are we then to believe that using Inuit settlers for sovereignty purposes was so secret, something so embarrassing perhaps, that no mention of it could be made, even on paper? It would be more plausible to assume that if the planners had felt that defending Canada's interests in the North required the sending of volunteer Inuit settlers to the High Arctic for sovereignty purposes, they would have said so. The conviction that "using" people for sovereignty is wrong is part of a later value system and it would not have been seen the same way in the more government trusting, less individual rights-oriented white culture of the 1950s. The absence of references that could reasonably be expected in so many pertinent documents must be given considerable weight.
6. There was no "plan" to construct a GCI radar station in the vicinity of Resolute Bay. Nor had there been an "announcement" to this effect. Permission had been granted to "survey" possible "sites" for GCI radar stations on Coburg and Ellesmere Islands, but the U.S. had given no indication that it in fact would proceed with these projects. Even had the U.S. wished to proceed, there was no information about whether there would be one, two or three of these stations. Until the January 18, 1953 Cabinet meeting, External Affairs believed there might be two stations located on Coburg and Ellesmere Islands (PCO believed they might be in the "vicinity" of Resolute, Eureka and Alert) for which permission to survey sites had been given. The formal survey of possible sites seems not to have been carried out since no RCAF presence during the surveys had been requested nor had reports of any survey results been sent to National Defence. Had there been any possibility of actually constructing the radar stations this would have reappeared in Defence Committee discussions and memoranda after August 1951, but this did not occur. Nor was there information on where the stations might be. In fact, by May 8, 1953, it was clear to PCO that Resolute Bay was no longer even a possible site for one of these stations – yet despite this, the Department continued with the relocations, the purpose of which was to counter, Grant alleges, a sovereignty "threat" which no longer existed and, in my view, had not existed in the first place.
7. The only two accounts mentioning the relocations which appear in the 1953 ACND documents state that the sole reason for the moves was to take people from "areas where conditions are difficult to places where they can find employment or good hunting." These cannot be dismissed as a kind of facade and cover up.
8. The seeming indifference of the ACND Administrative Sub-Committee to the sovereignty and relocation issue, which would have been its specific mandate, also suggests a lack of connection between these issues.

9. The fact that there is no discussion of the Resolute “threat” at either of the crucial February and March ACND meetings must also be considered. Grant believes that there was a real chance of a 200-person U.S. GCI radar station in the vicinity of Resolute Bay, as well as a vast increase in air traffic at Resolute Bay that would follow. Had such a station been built and manned it would have completely upset the balance of U.S.-Canadian personnel in the High Arctic. Given all the matters relating to the U.S. presence in the North that were discussed, this one would have far outranked them in terms of impact and importance. The likelihood that while, for example, take-over of the Joint Weather Stations merited a full memorandum and discussion while nothing was said about a possible U.S. presence that would have been overwhelmingly more intrusive than these civilian stations is both implausible and extremely unlikely.
10. Sivertz is the only official who on two occasions, once in 1953, when he was a junior official (who had been away from Ottawa during much of the time in 1952 and 1953 when the planning of the relocations was taking place) and once in 1960, when he was a senior official, linked a general concern with sovereignty to the resettlement policy.<sup>104</sup>

Was Sivertz, despite his junior status, articulating Government policy in 1953? Had there been, even, just one or two more such references, especially if coming from management level officials, then a case for such an interpretation might be possible. However, it is the only statement of its kind found in the documentation examined. The conclusion must be that his was an idiosyncratic interpretation since no one else repeated or authorised this view. Moreover, the fact that he, too, stressed that the prime reason for the move to Resolute Bay was to find better living conditions, diminishes the significance that can be attached to his earlier statement (to which he attributes a different meaning) at the August 1953 meeting.<sup>105</sup>

The statements made by Sivertz in 1960 have far greater weight but do not help decide the issue at hand. The fact that Sivertz felt that Grise Fiord should only be kept going for sovereignty purposes in 1960 tells us little about why the settlement had been created seven years earlier.

Moreover, the review he had called for confirms again that sovereignty was not the primary reason for creating the settlements in the first place but that they did make a contribution to effective occupation, something that had been acknowledged as early as 1955. There is a fundamental difference between setting up a project for sovereignty reasons and its making a contribution to sovereignty once set up. There were many projects in the High Arctic that made contributions to effective occupation without ever having been planned for that purpose.

11. The proposals to situate people at Resolute Bay started much earlier than the reconvened ACND meetings. They originated with the Cantley Report to be discussed in the next section and with proposals made as early as the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol Report which suggested that Inuit should be engaged:

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<sup>104</sup> Sivertz, Personal Communication, 15.12.91.

<sup>105</sup> This, too, is the conclusion of the Hickling Report on this matter.

... at all weather stations, airfields and other establishments where they could learn a trade and be taken on some sort of contract which could guarantee them some kind of future.<sup>106</sup>

12. In my view the evidence in support of the sovereignty claim is minuscule, flimsy and flawed. The evidence against this claim is overwhelming.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> “Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol - 1951”. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

<sup>107</sup> Soberman, who bases his conclusions on the 1950 and 1952 statements by Stevenson and Sivertz, ends up, in my view, with an unnecessarily circumloquacious conclusion when he says:

In summary, the evidence ... with respect to sovereignty affecting the relocation may be considered circumstantial, but this does not mean it is insignificant. On the balance of probabilities, it is reasonable to conclude that sovereignty was a material, even if not a dominant, concern of the Canadian Government and may well have influenced relocation decisions. While I do not think the Government would have relocated Inuit for reasons of sovereignty alone, and indeed, might not even have thought of using relocation for that purpose, nevertheless -- having previously used relocation of native peoples for other purposes, and having concluded that Inuit in the Inukjuak region ought to be relocated — sovereignty concerns may well have played a role in the timing and location of the new settlements, and particularly in selecting Ellesmere Island. ... the speed and apparent lack of deliberation with which the decision was made aboard the “d’Iberville” to abandon this location, (Alexandra Fiord) after more than one year’s planning, suggests that sovereignty was not a dominant concern. It remains problematic just how significant territorial sovereignty concerns were. Soberman, pp. 11-13.

## CHAPTER 4

### BACKGROUND TO THE RELOCATIONS

Rather than starting with the issue of sovereignty and fitting the Inuit relocations immediately into an external relations framework, it is more fruitful and gives a better understanding of what happened if one starts with the issue of the relations between the Inuit and the Government of Canada in the context of domestic policy.

This chapter is divided into sections which will consider: (i) “Eskimo” administration before 1950; (ii) the Cantley Report as a response to the collapse of the “Eskimo” economy in 1949; (iii) responses to the Cantley Report and the evolution of Eskimo policy into the later 1950s; (iv) Inspector Larsen’s views on causes of the crisis and proposed remedies; (v) the Conference on Eskimo Affairs, May 1952; and (vi) the first meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs and the decision to proceed with the settlements after October 1953; (viii) the legal and organizational basis of the administration of Eskimo affairs.<sup>108</sup>

#### **Eskimo Administration – The “Dark Ages” before 1945**

Diamond Jenness in his well-known Eskimo Administration: II Canada<sup>109</sup> provides a useful starting point when he divides the administration of what were then called “Eskimo Affairs” into four periods after 1903. The titles he used for these periods are evocative. From 1903 to 1921 the Inuit were “simply wards of the police.” Subsequently, from 1921 to 1931, there was the period of a “shackled administration” which did not treat the Inuit very much better. Administration was carried out by the government’s “handymen,” the RCMP, the least of whose tasks was a concern with law breakers, since there were not many of these. The RCMP were concerned primarily with enforcement of game regulations, collecting customs duties, acting as postmasters and census officers and treating the sick when no doctors or nurses were available. They also spent a great deal of their time on dog sled patrols checking on Inuit camps. (As late as 1960 they still covered 66,000 miles on patrols by dog sled.) Responsibility for these “wards” was also entrusted to a number of other departments, as well as to the fur traders and missionaries.

The “shackled administration” of the 1920s was encouraged to meet threats to sovereignty in the High Arctic by a marked increase in the number of RCMP posts. But government was not willing to increase funding for improvements in the health, welfare, and ultimate integration of the Inuit communities.

This was followed by a period of even greater indifference. Jenness calls it the period of government by “inaction and passivity.” Despite the disastrous slump in fur prices that occurred in the 1930s and a number of grim tragedies that had struck Inuit groups in the Eastern Arctic, government policy was to exercise care “In the distribution of relief so that indolence may not be encouraged nor their sense of self-dependence unduly weakened,” and to shift its responsibilities, wherever possible onto the missionaries or the trading company. In

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<sup>108</sup> “Inuit” began to replace “Eskimo” in the late 1960s.

<sup>109</sup> D. Jenness, Eskimo Administration: II Canada, Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper No. 14, 1964. Robertson referred to the periods before 1946 as the “Dark Ages” of Inuit administration. R.G. Robertson, “Administration for the Development of Northern Canada, etc.” Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 3, 1960, p. 356.

Jenness' words this was "shamelessly passing the buck." The Depression justified prudence and prudence was translated into penny-pinching of the worst kind.<sup>110</sup>

By 1930 reports were already suggesting that the great majority of the Inuit on the east coast of Hudson Bay and in Ungava were the worst off of all in the Central Arctic. Caribou in various parts of this area had virtually disappeared and neither seals nor foxes were as plentiful as elsewhere. Out of this, then, was born the policy of moving destitute Inuit to places within the Arctic Archipelago where there was more abundant game, fur trapping on an economic scale could resume, and if all this was carried out by the Hudson's Bay Company, some Inuit families might find employment. The whole exercise would cost the government nothing while reducing relief payments. Such a scheme would have the additional advantage of showing Canadian occupancy of these territories.

There had, of course, been moves of Inuit groups by both police and trading companies prior to this, but this was the first time that a policy, which in various forms was to continue well into the 1960s, was formulated. The secretary of the Northwest Territories Council called it:

...the general plan of northern migration and settlement where game is abundant. The opening of those posts will provide employment and relieve destitution of those natives who were compelled through lack of transportation and other means to seek better hunting grounds and maintain their independence.

Dundas Harbour is the spearhead of the movement. Upon its success depends the whole future of northern migration and Eskimo independence.<sup>111</sup>

Dundas Harbour refers to the "experiment" of sending 52 Inuit from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet to Dundas Harbour in 1935, all under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company. A press release prepared in 1935, apparently by Mines and Resources and which has figured prominently in two of the studies under review, refers to the "experiment" as involving careful explanation and permitting Inuit to accept or reject the proposals.<sup>112</sup> In any case, the group was to live at Dundas Harbour for two years, after which if they were

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapters 3-5. (Quotations, p. 53 and p. 55.)

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58. This press release by Mines and Resources has been made much of by two of the studies under consideration because it seems to give support to the notion that the idea of moving Inuit to the Arctic Archipelago primarily for sovereignty reasons was a policy of long standing. The last of the five paragraphs of the news release ends by saying:

In addition to placing the Eskimos in new regions where game is more abundant and work more regular, there is the angle of occupation of the country, now that aerial routes, and mineral developments and other reasons make possible claims of other countries to part of Canada's Arctic, which now reaches to the North Pole. To forestall any such future claims the Dominion is occupying the Arctic Islands to within nearly seven hundred miles of the North Pole.

However, the first four paragraphs of the news release focus entirely on the problems of scarcity of game and the opportunities for better hunting and trapping as well as the possibility of employment as being the primary reason for the "experiment". Clearly such moves, particularly in the 1930s, had a directly stated sovereignty component, but even then sovereignty was a derivative, secondary factor, at least if the order of emphasis in the press release is to be believed.



dissatisfied, a vessel would return them to their homes. The story about why the colonization scheme failed is well known, as is the story of how the groups were moved first to Arctic Bay, then to Fort Ross, and finally in 1947 to Spence Bay, leading one writer to speak caustically of “the portable Eskimo.”<sup>113</sup>

Jenness believed that any such attempt to encourage Inuit to live off the land and follow their traditional way of life was a “blind and discredited policy.” Penny-pinching continued to be the order of the day. In 1939, the United States was spending \$44.00 per capita on Inuit in Alaska, Denmark, \$19.00 per capita in Greenland, while Canada was spending slightly under \$13.00 (including \$7.00 per capita on health and \$3.00 per capita on education). Even less of this went to the 1,800 Inuit in Quebec. They received only \$5.50 per capita.<sup>114</sup>

While World War II affected those Inuit living near the air bases, it had, otherwise, comparatively little impact on their economy and lives in general. But the War did open up the North to people who became aware of and concerned about the disastrous situation of Inuit health. A report submitted in 1945 to the Social Science Research Council noted that out of 729 deaths that had been recently recorded among the Inuit in the Arctic, 613, or 84 percent, had the attendance of neither a doctor nor of a nurse. Infections of pulmonary tuberculosis were extraordinarily high and the Inuit communities were devastated by rampant epidemics that from time to time ravaged them (for instance the 1945 diphtheria epidemic at Eskimo Point on the west side of Hudson Bay which killed 48 out of 170 victims).<sup>115</sup>

Although Jenness speaks of the period after 1945 as the beginnings of some real change, “At long last the winds of change were stirring,” it was still governed by a grossly underfunded, administratively dispersed, haphazard and (apart from specific and admirable attempts to begin the eradication of TB), directionless policy. One major change that contributed some stability to the grim struggle for food and shelter in the harsh world of the Arctic was the provision of Family Allowances in 1946, but as we shall see, there was some considerable ambivalence about the net effect of this stabilizing income. It would be unfair to dismiss these policy initiatives, especially with respect to health care and the beginnings of a school system, out of hand. The administrators, missionaries and RCMP who were dedicated to working in the North would rightly have resented any such easy dismissal of the tremendous efforts they were making with minimal resources. However, the statistics for health, education and the general state of the “Eskimo” economy by the early 1950s suggest that “the winds of change” between 1945 and 1950 had merely slowed a gravely deteriorating situation.

The shock which finally compelled the beginnings of a co-ordinated, more systematic “policy” came in the period from 1950 to 1952. The catalyst was the devastation caused by the serious deterioration in the market for white fox fur. Average market prices for furs which had been \$32.00 between 1920 and 1924, had dropped to \$11.76 between 1936 and 1940, risen again between 1940 and 1944 to \$25.99, only to drop again in the period from 1948 to 1949 to \$8.88, falling as low, in 1949-1950, as \$3.50. Once again, it was the Hudson Bay region, both east and west, that was hit hardest. (A quote from Jenness conveys some of the drama and difficulties of the time.)

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 6.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 9 and p. 142. Much was to change in the 1950s with respect to Inuit health. Where \$29,480 was spent on Inuit health (for 7,000 people) in 1939, over \$3 million was spent (for 11,000 people) in 1961. In addition to the assault on TB there were also massive vaccination and inoculation programmes, especially in the Eastern Arctic in the 1950s. *Ibid.*, Chap. 14.

For the second time within the memory of living Eskimos, then, the foundations of Eskimo economy were crumbling. Hardly more than a generation earlier, the Eskimos of the Central Arctic had procured their food, their clothing, and all the other necessities of life from their own environment, undisturbed by contact with the white man and totally ignorant of the infinite variety and complexity of his possessions. Then the storm had burst over them, as it had burst over other Eskimos a generation or two before. The pressure of the white man's demands, and his superior tools and weapons shattered their self-contained existence; and his insistence on furs, ever more furs, had forced them to build up their lives on an entirely new foundation. Too weak to resist the aggressive and domineering invaders, they had surrendered their immemorial freedom and resigned themselves to the lot of helots labouring for foreigners who seldom troubled to learn their language. Now in the 1940s, their new economy, too, was tottering on its base, and it was by no means clear that the white man who had built the unstable edifice would not quickly abandon it again and leave the Eskimos to their fate.<sup>116</sup>

### **The Cantley Report**

This then was the situation when the Northwest Territories Council, once again, started discussing schemes to "relocate" destitute Eskimo to areas where game was more abundant. In 1949 the Department, at the request of the Council, had began a number of area surveys which were consolidated to form part of a major 55-page report in 1951 by James Cantley, his Survey of Economic Conditions Among the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic. This was the first attempt ever made to survey, in a systematic way, both the economic and social conditions of the Inuit. The purpose of the Cantley Report was also to suggest means by which "the difficulties may be overcome and the general economy and well-being of the natives improved."

If we are to understand the relocations of 1953 we must grasp the significance of this report. We need also to remember the administrative realities of the time. What strikes one at this remove, particularly in this age of large scale government, is how extraordinarily under-staffed the administration of all Inuit affairs was at the time. Inuit administration was the responsibility of the Arctic Services Section of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch within the Department of Mines and Resources. The Ottawa staff in 1950 consisted of a Chief, two administrative officers, two clerks and two stenographers. In the field, there were six teachers. There were, in the NWT, 72 RCMP and Inuit Special Constables, the general "handy men" who administered most other government programs in the field. In addition, Health and Welfare had responsibility for medical care with one nurse at each of six settlements and resident doctors at three (including Aklavik). By 1953, when the relocations started, the numbers had barely increased (but an additional administrative officer had been added). This was the administrative apparatus available to serve the needs of 8,500 Inuit dispersed over an immense territory.<sup>117</sup>

The Cantley Report started by comparing the situation of Canada's Inuit with those in Greenland, Siberia and Alaska. In all these comparisons Canada was seriously wanting. The demographics analyzed by Cantley

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81.

<sup>117</sup> The Cantley Economic Report on Eskimo Affairs. Mimeo., nd. Indian Affairs and Northern Development Library, hereafter referred to as the Cantley Report, p. 44. Cantley was one of two Department administrative officers who had had long experience of the Arctic both as a trader and public official. The Report was requested by the N.W.T. Council at its meeting of 27.10.49. See also "Detachments in Eskimo Territory", April 1950. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D-1512-2-4-Q27, 1952. There were an additional 28 RCMP and six Special Constables in the Yukon.

were to have a major role in influencing the policy decisions of the 1950s. All of New Quebec, extending from Cape Jones on the east to Cape Chidley at the northern tip of Labrador, including the islands off shore, was estimated to have 2,465 people.<sup>118</sup> The next largest population group in the Eastern Arctic was Baffin Island, Melville Peninsula and adjacent islands with 2,405 and then the Keewatin with 1,525 for a total of 6,395 Inuit in the Eastern Arctic. The main part of his analysis dealt with the distribution of this population to the number of square miles (of hunting territory) available to each Inuit, as well as the miles of coastline per Inuit. In both these respects there were problems with "New Quebec," where there were only 57 square miles per Inuit of hunting territory, compared to 138 in Keewatin and 95 on Baffin Island. Since most of the Quebec Inuit were scattered along the coastline the amount of coastline per Inuit was also important. "New Quebec" had only 3.4 miles per person compared to 7.82 per person for the Baffin Islanders. Even the shorter Keewatin coastline provided 5.38 miles of coastline per coastal dweller. The report notes:

It is in new Quebec only that there is any immediate cause for concern regarding the size and density of the population. Almost 30% of the Eskimo population of Canada is concentrated in this region which comprises only 15% of the land area and 17% of the coast line available to the Eskimo.<sup>119</sup>

Cantley notes, cautiously, that the amount of land and length of coastline or density of population can only be used as a very general indicator because so much, of course, depended also on the nature of the land and the coastline and the natural resources that were available there. Each region had, in addition, to be studied separately and this he then proceeded to do.<sup>120</sup> A related factor was the way the use of imported foods and the collapse of the fur trade also affected each region.

The use of imported foods is increasing steadily from year to year throughout the Arctic. Goods considered as luxuries less than 40 years ago are now regarded as necessities in most areas. The areas most noticeably affected are in Quebec where the rather meagre natural resources cannot provide sufficient food for the large population....

If there were any prospect that native income could be increased in the foreseeable future to provide for a higher scale of living, an increasing demand for imported foods would not cause any great concern. When, however, it is remembered that the majority of the natives are dependent on white foxes for their income, the numbers and prices of which fluctuate widely from year to year, that income is ordinarily no more than just sufficient to provide for bare subsistence, the necessity for exercising great care in encouraging any changes in native food habits is apparent. The fact that the Eskimo race survived for centuries before the white man even came into their country and that even today the most primitive communities, living largely on the resources within the country are still the healthiest and most virile, would indicate that as long as they can obtain sufficient of their native food they are getting everything in the need of nourishment.

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<sup>118</sup> There were three RCMP and one nurse serving the region in 1952.

<sup>119</sup> Cantley Report, p. 17.

<sup>120</sup> Loc cit.

Experience with the primitive races in both Canada and Greenland have shown that if the natives are to live off the resources of the country, they must be distributed in small communities over as wide an area as possible. There are few places where the resources are sufficient to support a large population for any length of time, but there are innumerable places where a few families can hunt and obtain a living indefinitely. They will have seasons of moderate abundance and extreme scarcity, just as their forefathers had, but overall they will obtain not luxury, but at least a higher standard of living than could ever be provided for permanently in larger communities.

Taking the Arctic as a whole, it may be said that there are sufficient resources to feed the present population, provided means can be devised to distribute the natives over the available, suitable areas and encourage and assist them to preserve their native skills and independence. (my emphases)<sup>121</sup>

This, in essence, became one leg of the wobbly three-legged policy that emerged later from the May 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs, the first to bring together most of the people and institutions that controlled Inuit life. The other “legs” involved education and wage employment.

Cantley also gave estimates of the various sources of Inuit income at the time. The following tables are drawn from the report:<sup>122</sup>

<u>ESTIMATED ANNUAL INCOME PER FAMILY</u>					
Cycle Years	Quebec	Baffin Island	Keewatin	Western Arctic	Total
1933/34-1936/37	196	181	196	235	202
1937/38-1940/41	175	160	200	350	221
1941/42-1944/45	266	416	286	300	355
1945/46-1948/49	296	334	279	650	383
(Family Allowances and Relief)	<u>75</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>56</u>
	1,006	1,147	990	1,795	1,216
Annual Average	252	287	248	449	304

Figures now available for 1949/50 indicate the following as the approximate average income for that year:

<sup>121</sup> Cantley Report, pp. 27-28.

<sup>122</sup> Cantley Report, p. 38. Note slight computation errors are in the original.

ESTIMATED AVERAGE INCOME FOR 1949/50<sup>123</sup>

	Quebec	Baffin Island	Keewatin	Western Arctic	Total
Earned Income	121	176	105	628	247
Family Allowances, relief and unpaid debts.	213	249	112	172	182
	334	425	217	800	429

As Cantley says, these estimates indicate that income had never been much above bare subsistence level, particularly when the very high cost of goods at the Arctic posts was taken into account. Although income had increased since the Second World War, by 1949-50, however, the slump in fox prices and the fact that income from other employment had fallen to practically nothing, meant that "The income of the Inuit had been reduced to a point where they could not possibly get even their bare essentials without assistance." In the Quebec, Baffin Island and Keewatin areas, combined Family Allowances, relief and unpaid debts accounted for about 60 percent of the goods sold. In other words, "The natives were able to earn only 40 percent of what they needed to subsist."<sup>124</sup>

1949-1950 was, in the words of the report, an "extraordinary year in the sudden collapse of the white fox prices." The effect was so traumatic that it was now necessary for the administration to "reconsider" their responsibilities towards the Inuit.<sup>125</sup>

In developing his recommendations, Cantley again stresses that "Arctic Quebec is the most densely populated area with one person for every 60 square miles. The remainder of the eastern arctic has one person for every 108 square miles." He emphasises that there were approximately another 185,000 square miles "not presently occupied" in the High Arctic islands. This raised two main policy questions. First, what use was to be made of the total of 1,100,000 square miles of Arctic territory, and second, what was to be done for the future of its 8,550 Inuit inhabitants?

Cantley was writing at a time when few additional financial resources were to be expected from government and it seemed as though there would be little expansion in the minuscule bureaucracy that served the Inuit population. His recommendations focused largely on how to function with minimal resources. This "realism" in addition to the paternalism which was the dominant philosophy of the day led to anything but radical suggestions. Noting that there were 37 trading posts but only 13 police detachments in the North, he felt that a more effective approach to "Eskimo" administration would be if the RCMP were relieved of all responsibility for the supervision of economic and welfare matters and these responsibilities were to be assumed by the Arctic Services Division of the Department, which would co-operate closely with the HBC on all matters

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<sup>123</sup> Family Income.

<sup>124</sup> Cantley Report, p. 39.

<sup>125</sup> Loc cit.

of general policy and with regular field investigations. There were also some rather ad hoc recommendations on prohibiting Inuit from camping within 10 miles of any settlement, the continued provision of a minimum of income to all Inuit by government, increased adult education, the setting up of local councils and overall the continued “careful, sympathetic guidance” of the Inuit.<sup>126</sup>

The early 1950s were a strange period from a budgetary perspective compared, for example, to the 1980s. Defence expenditures increased from 16 percent of the budget in 1952 to 45 percent in 1953. However, over the six-year period from 1948 to 1954 the Government had run up surpluses (15 percent of total revenues) which in the more frugal custom of the time went, partly, to pay off the deficit while the rest went into housing. Despite the surplus, taxes were raised in 1950 and 1952. The main reason was to fight inflation which had reached an unparalleled 17 percent between 1949 and 1952 and another 10 percent between 1951 and 1952. In 1951 and in 1952 department appropriations went down on a year over year basis.<sup>127</sup>

The Cantley Report and the way that it highlighted the collapse of the Inuit economy had a powerful effect on the Department. But there were other issues which also shocked what had been an indifferently aware, underfinanced administration.

- The epidemics, of crisis proportions, which seemed to appear every three or four years, struck once again in 1949 with a devastating poliomyelitis attack, 90 cases and 14 deaths.<sup>128</sup>
- Tuberculosis (TB) was ravaging the Inuit communities not only in terms of health but also in disrupting family life. A quite incredible number of people were evacuated to hospitals in the south. In 1956 it was estimated that 1,600 out of 9,500 Inuit were in hospitals in southern Canada (reduced to 350 by 1962); 3,000 Inuit had been hospitalized between 1950 and 1962. TB affected 15-20 percent of the communities. The average stay of a patient in the south was just under two years and the tragedy for the families and the unimaginable loneliness of the evacuees was further compounded by more tragedy when those who had been healed returned to the North but could not continue to earn their living off the land.<sup>129</sup>
- The school system was not problem-free. Schools “remained vacant and unused for long periods” since even for the minority who lived near the settlements, there was still the necessity to hunt, fish and trap for long periods, far removed from the settlement schools. By 1961 only one Inuit [*sic*] in the Eastern Arctic had reached grade 7 and none beyond this. (In 1951 there were 245 children in school, in 1961 there were 2,600.) Teacher turnover of 30 percent each year did not help.<sup>130</sup>

Cantley's report and three addenda were completed by mid-1951 and provided an important prod towards the holding of the first General Conference on Eskimo Affairs in May 1952.

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<sup>126</sup> Cantley Report, p. 43, *passim*, and pp. 47-48. There were in fact 39 police detachments in the NWT and Yukon in 1952. I believe Cantley must be referring to the Eastern Arctic, Northern Quebec and James Bay sub-division. Alternatively, this may be a typographical error.

<sup>127</sup> R. Bothwell, et al, Canada Since 1945, etc., 1981, Chapter 19.

<sup>128</sup> Jenness, Op cit, p. 87.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., Chapter 13.

### **Responses to the Cantley Report**

Responses to the Report came from both the RCMP and the Department. RCMP Commissioner Nicholson, quoting Inspector Larsen who was in charge of "G" Division, gave the RCMP views in a letter to Resources and Development Deputy Minister Young:

It is believed the encroachment of civilization is having a detrimental effect on the natives generally, particularly where there has been a large influx of white persons. The natives remark that they are confused with so many white officials governing their lives, that it is extremely difficult to know just what the government requires of them. It would appear that the natives are becoming more and more dependent on Family Allowance and relief, congregating in the settlements and in many cases living in dire circumstances. The Eskimos as we knew them a few years ago are quickly disappearing, and instead we have a sadly dejected race, under nourished, ill-clad, living in filth and squalor, with no immediate hope of any improvement in conditions.<sup>131</sup>

Sinclair, the Director to whom Arctic Services reported, raised some related issues in November 1951. He expressed serious concern with respect to the contradictory advice the Department was getting on Inuit policy and how to administer policy generally:

While the increasing cost of relief is a real concern to us, the serious aspect is that the natives, with very limited opportunities of gaining a livelihood, are giving up their former mode of life and depending on hand-outs of one kind or another to sustain themselves.

He then suggested the need to determine policy by first starting with a round table discussion by as many people as possible who had an intimate knowledge of the problem.

Young responded, in a letter of November 28, 1951, with the understatement of the decade: "...some action should be taken in connection with the Eskimo." He accepted the need for a conference to develop policy. Young, too, emphasized that the problem was not so much relief itself but the impact that relief was having on the lives of the Inuit and the seeming lack of alternatives to continued dependence on relief in the future.<sup>132</sup>

On January 14, 1952, a small group met in the Deputy Minister's office to consider alternatives to the Inuit eking out a bare subsistence, given the likelihood of little improvement in the fur market, but decided that the Department would not place "concrete" proposals before the proposed conference but would wait to see what kinds of proposals came from that meeting.<sup>133</sup>

The documentation of this period and the extensive but *ad hoc* proposals of the Conference on Eskimo Affairs give one the impression of a well meaning Department, but one "steering without a compass". It was uncertain about what to do and concerned that following one point of the compass might be dangerous. Gradualism and moving on a number of often diverse and sometimes contradictory fronts became the order of the day. It also had pitifully few human resources.<sup>134</sup> Stevenson noted the dilemmas in a 1950 report on Inuit

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<sup>131</sup> Nicholson to Young, 28.9.51. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2.

<sup>132</sup> Sinclair to Commissioner, NWT, 22.11.51; Young to Sinclair, 28.11.51. *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Cunningham to Commissioner, N.W.T., 16.1.52, and Sinclair to Deputy Minister, 2.2.52. *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> In 1954 things changed. After the new leadership of Lesage and Robertson took over in 1954, the number of public

education. If there was to be an educational program it would fundamentally affect the nomadic way of life of the Inuit since most either did not remain long at settlements or were encouraged to leave. Schools required permanent settlement. A permanent settlement would mean a society that abandoned hunting and trapping. If they did so and there was no alternative economy or employment, then the whole exercise was rife with contradictions and potential disasters.<sup>135</sup>

### **Policy Changes after 1954**

Cantley discussed these dilemmas in a thoughtful letter he sent to the Deputy Minister just before he retired in 1955. In this somewhat rambling set of reflections he noted the need to steer between the policy goals of those who “would like to see them (the Inuit) isolated and preserved in their aboriginal state” and those “who would have them assimilated into the Canadian community as rapidly as possible”. The Inuit should be seen as an asset not a liability, an asset in the mere fact of their adapting to the High Arctic. The determination of the Inuit to remain in “their domain” had to be understood and accepted. He was extremely cautious about making a commitment to a single integrated set of policies while, however, making a bow to the need for “a clear conception of what our general long term policy is to be”:

In anything we may attempt to do for Eskimos, we must keep in mind also that there are wide variations in the cultural advancement of various groups and that there are just as wide differences in intelligence and adaptability among Eskimos as there are among individuals of other races. Eskimos cannot be classified generally as Eskimos; we must take into account the background of each group and the progress they have made away from the primitive. Some groups and even individuals within groups may be about ready to make a complete change: others may be brought gradually to this stage, but there will always be remnants everywhere among the present generation at least who will never be able or willing to adapt themselves to anything but the life of the hunter and trapper.

If we accept this as the starting point, then I think we should now very carefully consider not only what our ultimate goal for the Eskimo people is to be but also how it is to be reached. I do not think that any rigid programme can be laid down: adaptations will have to be made to meet changing conditions and special circumstances that will undoubtedly arise from time to time....

Lastly, we should also perhaps consider the Eskimos themselves and how they will regard all these plans we are busy making on their behalf. My own feeling is that the Eskimos are the least concerned of anybody. They listen politely to the trader, the policeman, the teacher, the missionary, the nurse and perhaps to a few other new-comers, try possibly to make some sense of all their different ideas, try undoubtedly to see what is to be gained in a material way from any or all of them and then decide to follow their own bent. We should never delude ourselves into believing that the Eskimos are just waiting to be shown a better way of life.<sup>136</sup>

It was to be some years before these policy dilemmas were to some degree resolved. First, in 1955, the

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servants dealing with Inuit Affairs increased ten fold between 1954 and 1960.

<sup>135</sup> Extracts from “Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol, 1950 - Education of Eskimos”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Cantley to Deputy Minister, 13.1.55. RG 22, Vol. 298, File 40-8-1, Vol. 5.



Minister responsible, the Honourable Jean Lesage, noted the need for a coherent and integrated policy:

In the present in-between state, the Eskimos have received a few, a very few of the benefits of our civilization. For their furs they have got some of our food, our tools, our clothing. This, however, is not enough to give in terms of the civilization we, through our contacts and ideas, have taken from them. The nation as a whole gives them Family Allowances, Old Age Pension, and relief when indigent. But the broader needs – and they are immediate needs – are health, education and sound economy. They are not separate problems, each is related to the other. It is not enough to cure disease, the cause of disease must be removed and this is largely a matter of education and improvement of economic conditions. Education must be provided, but this depends on good health and the needs of the economy. A sound economy means a diversified economy, not based on the white fox alone; but for new occupations, both health and education are required. In providing health, education and the sound economy the complications are infinite. The area is enormous, the population small, communication extremely difficult.<sup>137</sup>

This then led to Cantley urging some pause and reevaluation of the settlement policy. He apparently had become a convert to a more holistic view. A proposal had been made by Larsen to move people to Dundas Harbour and Cantley suggested that consideration of this be postponed for a year, but that the Eastern Arctic patrol in 1956 be instructed to enquire what groups would be prepared to move north and to select those that would be most suitable so that they might be ready to move in 1957. However, he warned:

With all the changes that are taking place in the Arctic now, we should perhaps be cautious in our approach to setting up new communities in the far north. At least, I think we should make a careful survey of (over populated and unused resource areas)....

We must also keep in mind possible development in the areas from which such groups may be drawn from. Apart from the Mid-Canada Line operations at Great Whale River, I am thinking of possible mining developments on the Belcher Islands and Ungava Bay in northern Quebec and also Rankin Inlet in Keewatin. If these developments come about, as they very well may, there is a possibility that quite a few Eskimos may find wage employment which might appeal to them more [than] going north to hunt and trap.

North Baffin Island, Dundas Harbour and Resolute Bay, and possibly other places in this general area, could I think support larger populations than they are now, but before we decide on any large scale moves I think it would be desirable to carefully consider what the general pattern for Eskimos development is to be. Are we to encourage and assist Eskimos to remain scattered in smaller groups, or to congregate into larger settlements where they will have access to educational facilities for their children at least, and where they themselves may be better taken care of and trained in skills other [than] those of the hunter and trapper? I think we should attempt to look at the whole picture before making any temporary piecemeal arrangements.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> The Honourable Jean Lesage, "Enter the Europeans," *The Beaver*, Spring 1955, pp. 3-9.

<sup>138</sup> Cantley to Sivertz, 28.3.56. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. Grant believes that had this proposal been implemented it would have endangered the Inuit since the USAF were planning to use the Island for photo/bombing practice. Devon is the size of New Brunswick. Why a move would have been dangerous on those grounds is unclear. *Grant*, p. 18.

Robertson, in a 1956 (when planning of the sort we know today started) paper and then a 1957 article, took this policy a step further. His 1956 paper dealt with the “Economic Crisis of the Resident Population in the North” and provided the basis for his 1957 article. Armed with a detailed estimate of the jobs that might be available to the Inuit in the North over the next decade, he articulated the direction the Department was going to take. He noted that it took approximately two years to work out a policy, five to six years to build the schools that might be necessary and provide the staff, and eight to ten years to educate and train a child. Policy, therefore, had to look fifteen to twenty years ahead and that was what the Department intended to do. The impact of white society had made the continuance of “the native way of life” impossible unless animal resources were increased, but there, too, the technology of the same white society that had helped increase the population of the Inuit had also destroyed the animal base on which that society lived. Given that fur prices were less than their 1937 level while the price of food had escalated, it had become obvious that the only other possible source of income for the Inuit was “employment and administrative tasks in the North, in defence activities, or economic development.” The Department estimated that over the next ten years 1,270 of such jobs might be available. This would require an even more extensive education system and acceptance of the continued growth of settlement life. His conclusion is also useful in giving some sense of the “ethos,” at least, of the Deputy Minister of the Department at the time:

The conclusion that a steadily increasing proportion of Eskimos and Indians will be engaged in wage employment is not based on any assumption that this is a superior way of life, leading to greater happiness. An attitude of white superiority undoubtedly often exists but there is little to justify it. ...It is not any assumption of superiority for our way of life that leads to the conclusion that wage employment and education must be provided. It is plain, unavoidable economic facts. The inevitable changes which face the northern peoples will certainly entail a very difficult period of adjustment for them. This process of adjustment may take place too rapidly, in too many places and involving too many people. The Eskimos and Indians may become bewildered and dismayed and their problems must be met with sympathy and understanding. What is important is to protect and preserve their cultural heritage, their pride and their independence. If we can do this in the adjustment to the new economic conditions we shall have achieved a great victory.<sup>139</sup>

By 1959, when Frobisher Bay had a population of some 500 Inuit, the new policy, though well intentioned, had produced unintended consequences. Robertson’s concluding comments had been prescient. Nicholson, writing to Robertson on February 27, 1959, gave a bleak account of the impact that settlement living and employment and “white civilization” had had.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> R.G. Robertson, “The Future of the North”, *The Arctic Circular*, Vol. X, No. 1, 1957, pp. 2-7.

<sup>140</sup> Nicholson had a month earlier called for a return to the policy of preventing access to settlements until Inuit had both sufficient employment and housing, on the grounds that there had been a great increase in crime which he attributed to:

The causes of crime and delinquency at Frobisher Bay are varied and complex. No longer can we consider the problem as being solely Eskimo or White one, but it must be combined as this is fast becoming a socially and economically integrated community, dominated to quite an extent by the latter group. There is lack of firm control of the children at home and in the community, lack of religious training, a break-down of the family unit structure, congestion of population, association with bad Influences, over-Indulgence in opportunities without exercising effective controls, insecurity, lack of

**Responses to the Cantley Report (continued)**

The Cantley Report gives an indication of the importance the Department attached to the problem of overpopulation among the Inuit.<sup>141</sup> Even before he had completed this study (the first part was finished in April and the second in November 1951), consideration was being given to moving families to areas of better hunting. The Department supported a move of nine families from Tuktoyaktuk to Banks Island, an “experiment” which was to influence the moves to the High Arctic.<sup>142</sup> There were other moves as well, one involving people from the “Port Harrison” area to the Ottawa Islands. Sinclair suggested to Stevenson that during the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol he enquire whether any Inuit from the east coast of Hudson Bay would:

... be prepared to travel to Eastern Baffinland or other suitable place where they would have a better chance of making a living.<sup>143</sup>

The Cantley proposals were then given elaboration by Stevenson who, in January 1952, submitted his report on the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol, in the course of which he reviewed a number of options for increasing Inuit employment, one of which would involve “Engaging them at all weather stations, air fields and other establishments where they could learn a trade and be taken on some sort of a contract which would guarantee them some kind of a future.” His most significant recommendation was:

Relating to employment of natives and the general economy, the suggestion has been made that the transfer of natives from over-populated areas to areas where they would be able to make a better living might be advisable. There are points on Baffin Island, Devon Island, Ellesmere Island and other Islands of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago where a good number of natives could be reestablished. There is no doubt that country produce are plentiful in the fore mentioned regions and providing the natives are willing to move, I can see no reason why it should not be a success. Incidentally when I was in Pond Inlet, Eskimo Idlout ...who is one of the top natives in that district, approached me on this very subject. He said that his camp which comprised about four families would be extremely interested in being moved north to Ellesmere Island .... Any venture of moving Eskimos to the Islands might well take advantage of this voluntary interest by Idlout... and his group. He would make an excellent leader and could be put in charge of a group of natives from Pond Inlet or further south where the hunting conditions are not so good.... The employment of Eskimos is another problem which should be given consideration as to the long term policy to be followed in providing for the steadily increasing Eskimo population. The question is what is to be our stand in this matter. Are we to encourage the Eskimos to seek employment, or should they remain close to the land, living as hunters and trappers? As you know, most Eskimos are presently nomadic, comparatively primitive people, and conditions of settled living and employment are a drastic change for them. There is a tendency on the part of organizations where Eskimos are employed to look at the matter from the standpoint of securing

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entertainment, the pangs of changing attitudes and values...

Nicholson to Robertson, 27.2.59. RG 22. Vol. 334, File, 40-8-1, Pt. 11. Also “The Economic Crisis of the Resident Population in the North”. RG 85, Vol. 552, File 1009-3, Pt. 8.

<sup>141</sup> The report, according to Young, was “A very important document”. Young to Sinclair, 1.5.51. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2.

<sup>142</sup> “Trip to Banks Island”, L.A.C.O. Hunt, 9.4.52. *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Sinclair to Stevenson. RG 85, nd., (probably May/June 1951), Vol. 80, File 201-1, Pt. 26.

labour, without taking into account the fact that a profound change in the life of the native takes place when he accepts employment, and that interest and help are required if he is to adjust to this change.<sup>144</sup> (my emphasis)

On February 11, 1952, Nicholson wrote to Young stating that the RCMP were considering moving their Craig Harbour detachment to a point somewhere in the vicinity of Cape Sabine in 1952. This proposal had come from Larsen in October 1951. (His letter is quoted fully in the section on the Greenland “threat.”) The Commissioner reiterated that a detachment at Cape Sabine could be serviced by the sea supply missions more readily than could Craig Harbour. Also, “...Such a detachment would be a better place for police purposes, as it could maintain some surveillance over that part of the coast of Ellesmere Island, visited most frequently by the Greenland natives. As you know, the indications are these natives make periodic trips to Ellesmere to take advantage of good hunting.” He, too, had heard of Idlout’s proposal to move to Ellesmere and supported Larsen’s suggestion that if the police post was set up efforts should be made to “Recruit three or four good Eskimo families from the Pond Inlet area to be transported there for the purpose of trapping, hunting, etc. and thereby, in a general way, improving their economic circumstances.”<sup>145</sup>

It is worth emphasizing how Nicholson separates the policing function, which would be to deal with the Greenlanders, from the advantages of moving people to Ellesmere to improve their economic circumstances in association with the police move.

Young replied to Nicholson on February 22, 1952 supporting the decision to have an RCMP officer accompany the sea supply of the weather stations to look into the possibility of a site around Cape Sabine. Young goes on to say:

We have been considering for some time the feasibility of transferring Eskimos to Arctic Islands from overpopulated areas. There is no doubt that they could quickly adapt themselves to the changed conditions and could make a better living there than they are doing in their present locations. However, I would prefer to wait until we see what comes out of the meeting on Eskimo Affairs in May, before taking any definite steps in this direction.<sup>146</sup>

### **Larsen’s Views**

Larsen, who has been accused by Marcus of harbouring a misguided desire to return the Inuit to their traditional form of life, provided a lengthy account of his concerns prior to the May 1952 Conference of Eskimo Affairs. His views were far more complex than the simplistic, indeed false, stereotype presented by Marcus. Allegedly, one of the “hidden motives” in establishing the High Arctic settlements was a mythological dream on Larsen’s part to free the Inuit “from the endless exploitation of traders and missionaries” by “enforcement of a back to the land policy.”<sup>147</sup> Since Marcus believes that Larsen’s views “in effect turned the new colonies into reformatory camps” it is useful to note what his actual views were.

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<sup>144</sup> Report - EAP, 1951, 24.1.52. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3. Cantley then reported to Wright on 4.3.52, that Ellesmere was being considered for colonisation. *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Nicholson to Young. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D1512-2-4-Q27, 1952.

<sup>146</sup> Young to Nicholson, 22.2.52. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File, 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>147</sup> Marcus, pp. 51-55. Quotes, in order of presentation, are from pages 51, 53 and 52.

Larsen in two 1952 memoranda noted that he saw the terrible decline in the economy, health and psychology of the Inuit as due to a number of causes. First, the “abhorrent conditions” were brought about:

...By the unscrupulous methods used by the covetous white men who were responsible for the sad plight of the Eskimo to a large extent. The bad acts of the past are being repeated today under a cloak of sanctity and our administration of Eskimo affairs appears to be closely related to and governed by the wishes of traders and missionaries whose practices have the effect of crushing the Eskimos into submission and servitude.

In particular, he felt that the traders had made enormous profits from fur shipped out by the North in the past, but that this had not benefitted the Inuit. The claim of the traders that they were merely purchasing handicrafts to help the Inuit was a “falsehood” since they were making a nice profit out of this, “The people need protection from the forces of civilization.” Another problem was the uncertain legal status of the Inuit. Larsen asked for legislation to clarify this. He noted:

Are they to be educated and encouraged to assume their place as ordinary citizens of the country, or are they to continue to be treated partly as wards of the government as at present? Are their lives to be controlled more or less entirely by the traders as at present? The status of the Eskimos could be a subject for debate in the House of Commons.

He implied that publicity would be useful since the NWT would be a very productive field for a “wide-awake journalist” and a story could be disclosed to the public which “would shame our citizens beyond measure.”

A further cause was that the Inuit (and Indian) economic problems were created in good part by “the congregation of natives in or near settlements where they have reduced the game by local intensive hunting in small areas.” The most serious problem in some areas was one of over-population. The most significant decline of available country food was in the areas off the coast of Northern Quebec, for seals and walrus, while caribou had almost completely disappeared.

While the employment of Inuit at the air bases had been “very beneficial to them and their families,” a system should be set up to ensure that they received the same pay for comparative work as white persons and that their finances should be controlled and administered “until such a time that they are able to look after their money affairs themselves.”

He was dubious about the need for concern about relief expenditures, maintaining that changes in prices had affected these, or probably, that the increase was simply due to the fact that, in previous years, Inuit who needed relief had not obtained it. He was strongly in favour of the Family Allowance, Old Age Assistance and Blind Pension payments, although he felt Family Allowance payments should be made once a year, rather [than] every month or so, so as to keep people longer on their hunting grounds and away from the trading posts. As to why the Inuit were congregating at the trading posts, he felt that it was because they wanted more of the amenities of the “white’s way of life” for themselves and their children and that in fact if they were to ensure that their children were to get any schooling, under the present conditions it would be necessary that the families congregate around the trading post. A further reason he said, was, “The fear they have of starving to death if they go too far from the post. That fear has been expressed to the police by certain natives in the Port Harrison and Fort Chimo districts.” He felt that the RCMP should continue to do welfare work pertaining to the Inuit as there were no other persons more competent or more experienced in doing it and besides, “The Eskimos prefer to do business with and bring their troubles to the police rather than to others.” He added:

(b) There is really no valid reason why the Eskimos should be made or encouraged to continue to exist as hunters and trappers in Arctic, especially if they don't want to. ... The fact that they are as free as white persons to move where and when they want to must be kept in mind. ... (c) I would say that the more employment that is found for Eskimos other than as hunters and trappers, the better. I think that it is useless to talk of them resuming the native way of life. They should be brought to a white man's standard as quickly as possible. (my emphasis)<sup>148</sup>

He then suggested a number of proposals for dealing with the crisis. Since all of these have been reduced by Marcus to supporting a "back to the land policy," it is worthwhile mentioning a number of these:

- A government trading organization should be established since it offered "the most hope of salvation" for the Inuit given that "it is too late now for them to follow their original way of life." (my emphasis) If no government trading organization could be agreed to, then the Inuit should be assisted to organize and operate native co-operative stores.
- The handicraft industry should be encouraged – there should be "resident Eskimo agents" to assist in the schooling of people to run the co-operatives as well as helping with the marketing of furs and handicraft works.
- A guaranteed "basic minimum grant" should be given to every man, woman and child to take the place of Family Allowances and relief payments.
- Prices of commodities sold by the traders should be controlled. A "floor" should be established under fur prices.

He felt that education was the key to improved living standards:

If the living standards of the Eskimos are ever to be raised they will require education, and education will interfere with their so-called nomadic life, but their nomadic life has to a large extent already been eliminated by changing them from hunters of meat to fur trappers...if the Eskimos were living their true nomadic life, they would, to a large extent be living hundreds of miles away from trading posts.

...Anything in the way of education, whether Federal or mission day schools, residential schools or hostels, itinerant teachers, summer schools, manual and technical training in the country, advanced educational facilities or technical training in "Outside" institutions, literature in the Eskimo language, ...should be introduced if the Eskimos are ever to attain a higher standard of living....

Wherever the Inuit continued to remain as hunters and trappers, permanent wooden buildings should be built for them or by themselves under competent direction.

Native Councils should be formed in each district.

The view of the white man on Eskimo welfare should not be the only views taken notice of. The administration should take notice of the Eskimos's own views.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Larsen to Commissioner, 2.5.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D-1512-2-4-Q27.

<sup>149</sup> It was to be another seven years, in 1959, before the first elected Inuit representatives appeared on the Committee

To “relieve the over-population of some areas,” he suggested that settlements be set up at Craig Harbour, Cape Sabine, and Dundas Harbour, where “several needy families” could earn a better living. (The reason he suggested these places was not so much because of the remains of an Eskimo civilization 300 years previously on Ellesmere, but because the Greenland Inuit had in the past and “perhaps recently” obtained a “lucrative” hunt from fur bearers and other game there.) He suggested that these settlements should be supported by a government store where the lowest prices possible be maintained and that there should be no transportation charged for these goods. The RCMP would run these stores, assist in community hunts, and help in the setting up of co-operatives. He added:

Once the natives had established themselves in the system outlined above perhaps some other plan could be adopted; however, a start should be made to place these people in a position where they will ultimately be wholly self-sufficient including operating their own community stores.

The ultimate purpose of all of this was to ensure that:

The Eskimos should be entitled to all protection possible and to help and guidance to enable them to reach some standard whereby they can attain the normal comforts of life, and freed from the ravages of ill health brought about by malnutrition and freed from the endless exploitation of traders and missionaries. They should be taught that they have a rightful place in this great Dominion of Canada. The average Canadian citizen has no conception of how the once healthful and resourceful Eskimo has been exploited to such a degree that he now lives a life comparable to that of a dog.<sup>150</sup>

To reduce all this to a view that Larsen believed in a mythical “back to the land policy” is mischievous, and unscholarly, and inaccurate.

Prior to the May 1952, Conference on Eskimo Affairs, an extensive set of comments on the Conference agenda was also prepared by [R.H.] Chesshire, General Manager of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who presented a study of the “Eskimo economy, a review of the relief issues” and ten pages of comments on other items. It is worth quoting from this report, too, since it gives some idea of the tone of the Conference and the kind of information it was considering.

In a review of the sources of income of the five main groups of Inuit, he pointed out that in 1951, \$73,000 of relief had been distributed in the Arctic. There were in total 1,741 Inuit families. In comparing Baffinland with Northern Quebec he noted that the latter, with 507 families, had received 72 percent of total relief funds, while the former, with 540 families, had received 12 percent. While Baffinland had adequate supplies of sea food, the Inuit in Northern Quebec “... as a result of their habit of concentrating their activities in restricted areas, have only limited country food available and are almost entirely dependent on the result of their trapping and local labouring for the bare necessities of existence.”

More pertinent were his comments on the “transfer of groups to underpopulated areas.” I quote

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on Eskimo Affairs.

<sup>150</sup> Larsen to Commissioner, “Problems Affecting Eskimos”, 2.5.52, and Larsen to Commissioner, “Conditions Amongst Eskimos Generally”, 22.9.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D 1512-2-4-0 27. (Larsen’s views are drawn from the following paragraphs in these two reports, 22.9.52: 19, 22, 23, 27, 7, 26, 4; 2.5.52: 1 a; 22.9.52: 10; 2.5.52: 1b, 1c, 2c, 3, 6b, 6a, 4a; 22.9.52: 24; 2.5.52: 4b, 4d, 4f, 5; 22.9.52: 7a, 18, 10; 2.5.52: 4a, 4c; 22.9.52: 11, 8.)

extensively from this:

A transfer of Eskimos from one area to another is often highly desirable but the Eskimos themselves are reluctant to move from their familiar homes. They would sooner congregate in large communities than go to distant places where they might secure a better livelihood. Experiments in moving them have been tried – always under government supervision – but, generally speaking the results have not been encouraging.

However, the advisability of moving people to areas which are more productive either in terms of foxes or country food – or both – is something which obviously should be carefully and thoroughly explored. The main thing is to make sure that the potentials of the areas, to which such transfers are to be made, are sufficient to provide the newcomers with a reasonable livelihood without at the same time reducing the living standards of the present inhabitants.

Another important point is that such transfers shall be made in camp groups, which often consist of three or four families, as only in this way are they likely to establish themselves satisfactorily.<sup>151</sup>

### **The Conference on Eskimo Affairs, May 1952**

The first meeting of the General Conference on Eskimo Affairs took place May 19-20, 1952. Ten federal departments, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Roman Catholic and Anglican Missions took part – almost 60 people participated. In attendance were the three great "empires" which controlled the lives of the Inuit – the missions, the HBC and the federal government (particularly the RCMP).

The discussions were wide ranging but for the purposes of this report the sections dealing with relocations are the significant ones. In the main, the agenda focused on the need for fundamental change in the basic underpinnings of the Inuit economy. A great deal of attention was also given to issues of education, health and welfare.

The general review of the economic situation noted that Northern Quebec and Newfoundland Labrador "are the most vastly populated and the poorest economically...." It was added that:

Presently there are less than 250 whites employed in various capacities in Eskimo Territories, so that unless there are extensive future developments, the opportunities to Eskimos in their own country, even when they become capable of taking on such work are definitely limited.

It was agreed that the educational program should be directed to fitting Inuit to take over as many of these jobs as possible, as they become available in the north country.

The "immediate need," (my emphasis) however, was to assist the Inuit:

...To continue to follow their traditional way of life as hunters. ... Movements could be initiated from overpopulated or depleted districts to areas not presently occupied or where the natural resources could support a greater number of people....

This did not mean the Eskimo should be discouraged from accepting any suitable employment that may be offered so long as they could be assured that it would be reasonably permanent or

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<sup>151</sup> "Reports on Eskimo Economy, Relief and Brief Comments on Government Agenda on Arctic Affairs", (nd, probably April 1952). *Ibid.*



that by following it they would not become wholly incapable of returning to their native way of life if it should fail.<sup>152</sup>

The meeting was not regarded as a success by everyone. It put aside a number of policy proposals that various of the participants considered important. In particular, the Anglican Mission and the RCMP were dissatisfied with the piecemeal, tentative, and what they saw as inconclusive, policies that had been developed. However, a start had been made.

Another factor which contributed to the decision to proceed with a relocation program to the High Arctic was a very positive report that had been received in April 1952 about a project arranged by the Hudson's Bay Company which sent nine families (27 people) of Tuktoyaktuk Inuit to Banks Island (over the winter and spring) in 1951. L.A.C.O. Hunt, the administrator in the area, sent the Department a glowing account of how successful this project had been and came forward with a number of recommendations which had wider ramifications. *Inter alia*, he proposed setting up an "Eskimo Loan Fund" similar to Funds provided for under the Indian Act which could assist in sending more Inuit to the Arctic Preserve.<sup>153</sup>

These proposals were fleshed out during the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol. Cantley, as Officer in-Charge, reported (as mentioned in the section on the Greenlander "threat") after his visit to Craig Harbour that Inuit should be moved to Ellesmere, and Larsen had indicated the RCMP would cooperate if supplies for the settlers could be provided at both Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine. Country food, Cantley said, was plentiful based on the reports of the RCMP and the two Pond Inlet families who assisted the RCMP. Musk-ox and caribou were reported to be fairly numerous on Ellesmere Island although no estimate of the actual numbers could be obtained.

Cantley also visited Resolute Bay and noted that there were 200 men working there, a large number in construction for the RCAF. The report said that although there was cooperation between all the "factions," there was no one person in charge. The RCMP had a detachment there until a year before but it was closed because there was insufficient work. Cantley was concerned that there were no means of enforcing the game regulations, the protection of archaeological sites or any of the other NWT ordinances. To enforce anything required the separate agreement of three officers-in-command. This led to a great deal of confusion. A scientist visiting Resolute in the previous summer had abused his privileges and taken far more scientific specimens than were needed and he also had killed a musk-ox, allegedly in "self-defence." The report recommended the desirability of having a capable police officer or some one else who would be independent of the various factions to act as "general government representative."

His overall assessment of the situation of the Inuit that year is worth quoting:

It is the long term outlook, however, that causes the greatest concern. If fox prices continue their low level, the earnings of most of these people will be greatly reduced in poor fur years. During the past year, they were able to get by but they were quite unable to put anything aside for replacement of major equipment, such as boats, rifles, tents etc. most of which after a succession of years of low earnings are now coming to the state where renewal will be necessary...

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<sup>152</sup> Minutes, Conference Eskimo Affairs, May 19-20, 1952. RG 32, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>153</sup> 9.4.52, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2.

It would appear, however, that the time is now passed where the economy could be based almost entirely on white fox and that other means will have be found to permit Eskimos in all sections of the Arctic to earn sufficient by their own efforts to be assured of a reasonable standard of living. Family Allowances and relief have assisted greatly in the past few years but they can only be regarded as temporary expedients, the continued use of which can only result in the complete demoralization of the people.<sup>154</sup>

### **The Decision to Proceed with the Settlements – October to December 1952**

The General Conference on Eskimo Affairs was followed by a meeting of its ongoing Committee on Eskimo Affairs in October 1952. The official function of these bodies was, according to the Minister, the Honourable R. Winters, to “advise” him on Inuit policy. Cantley suggested that the most “pressing” item for consideration at that meeting should be “what immediate steps can be taken to improve economic conditions” and secondly, what should be done towards the care and rehabilitation of Inuit discharged from hospital. The agenda the Department proposed included setting up a Loan Fund to assist Inuit to buy supplies and equipment in order to increase their earning power and also:

Item 3(G): Transfer of Eskimos from overpopulated and/or depleted areas to presently underpopulated and/or more favourable hunting territories, and also to areas where employment, seasonal or otherwise may be obtained.<sup>155</sup>

This was the first linkage of two different types of relocations to appear in the documents. What the policy entailed became more definite during the Committee discussion on “Improvement of the Eskimo economy.” Consideration was to be given to “the possibility of assisting natives to move” from:

#### **(c) TRANSFER OF ESKIMOS:**

...overpopulated areas to places where they could more readily obtain a living. It was agreed that Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine on Ellesmere Island should be investigated and possible localities where Eskimos could be placed under the care of RCM Police detachments and arrangements made to obtain necessary supplies through the loan fund.

It was also agreed that:

#### **(d) EMPLOYMENT OF ESKIMOS:**

Eskimo should be encouraged to take employment at northern centres, provided they and their families do not lose their ability to return to the native way of life if employment should cease. Rotation of employment and timed off for hunting are good precautions.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> “Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol – Churchill to Quebec”, nd. 1952. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>155</sup> “Agenda”. Cantley to Wright, 27.7.52 and Cunningham to Deputy Minister, 8.10.52. RG 85, Vol. 1513, File 1012-1, Pt. 1.

<sup>156</sup> Minutes, “First Meeting, Special Committee on Eskimo Affairs”, 16.10.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3. The Committee also considered the possibility of calling for a Royal Commission on Eskimo Affairs, a proposal suggested earlier by Larsen, but decided to postpone a decision until the effects of the new programmes were apparent. Another recommendation looked into encouraging Inuit to take employment at northern centres. It recommended that steps be taken to ensure that they be paid the same wages as white employees for work of the same class and that

Following the October meeting, a long issues and implementation memorandum was drawn up by the Department. Under the heading “Transfer of Eskimos from over-populated and/or depleted areas to under-populated and/or more favourable hunting areas where employment, seasonal or otherwise may be obtained”:

Transfers from northern Quebec to north and northeast Baffin Island. Transfers to northern islands which are not populated at present, viz. Ellesmere Island where there is a RCMP Police Detachment; to other areas where there are weather stations but where at present there is no one capable of dealing with the Eskimos.<sup>157</sup>

The only weather station where an administrative arrangement for these purposes (“dealing with the Eskimos”) was being considered was Resolute Bay, where, as noted earlier, the Department had recommended reopening an RCMP detachment. By December 1952, Resolute Bay was specifically mentioned as the probable site for one of the relocations.

The need for the assistance of Pond Inlet Inuit was also confirmed that month. If ten families were moved from “Port Harrison” to Ellesmere Island, Stevenson wrote, assistance from the Pond Inlet Inuit would be necessary in order to help them “contend with the dark period which they are not familiar with and although the terrain is similar to the Quebec coast, I know that from past experience with the Dorset natives that the dark period causes some discontentment.”<sup>158</sup>

On December 18th, 1952, Cantley set out 22 projects as “immediate steps that may be taken to improve Eskimo economy and welfare.” The first three of these confirmed that the plans for the relocations to the north were now largely in place.<sup>159</sup>

1. Transfer of about ten families from the Port Harrison area and Northern Quebec to Ellesmere Island where they can be looked after by the present RCM Police detachment at Craig Harbour and by the proposed detachment near Cape Herschel....
2. Transfer of about ten families from Northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset area to Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island, provided arrangements can be made with the RCM Police to station a man there to look after the natives and enforce observance of Northwest Territories ordinances and regulations. ... Eskimos could find at least seasonable employment at the base. Arrangements could probably be made with the Department of Transport or the RCAF to employ some on a year round basis as maintenance crew.
3. Transfer of ten Eskimo families from Northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset area to Clyde River, Baffin Island. There is no RCM Police detachment but if the Hudson’s Bay Company places a capable man there, he could be responsible for looking after the Eskimos’ interests.

These plans were scaled down considerably by April 1953. Apparently Cunningham had [become] instrumental in reducing the scope of the project. In a letter of January 12th, 1953 he had explained his less grandiose vision of the projects:

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government departments and contractors who imported labour into the north should be asked to use “native” labour on local projects whenever possible.

<sup>157</sup> Memorandum (no title, nd, probably October 1952). RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>158</sup> Stevenson to Cantley, 8.12.52. RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 251-1, Pt. 2.

<sup>159</sup> Cantley to Meikle, 18.12.52. *Ibid.*

Consideration is being given ... to the possibility of transferring about five families each to Craig Harbour and Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island and possibly to Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island. These natives would be transferred from presently overpopulated areas where they have difficulty in obtaining their living by hunting and trapping. These small groups would in the absence of a trading post, be placed under direct supervision of the RCMP detachments at those places and these detachments would carry supplies necessary for looking after these people during the year. Although we are only considering sending a few families this year, it is possible that if the experiment proves successful, these communities might enlarge later on. This might apply more particularly to Resolute Bay where there is every prospect that the base will be a permanent one and that there will be employment beside hunting and trapping for quite a large number of men.

...As northern Quebec is the area which is causing us the most concern at the present, we shall endeavour to draw the families for Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands from there, but since there is a big difference between living conditions in the High Arctic and those in Quebec, we think it would advisable to make a limited experiment only, until we can be sure that the people taken from the Quebec area can accustom themselves to living in the High Arctic. It may be necessary to send one or two families from northern Baffin Island with these people to assist them in getting them used to hunting conditions, particularly during the longer winter. It may then be possible to transfer families from northern Quebec to northern Baffin Island to replace the families moved and to gradually build a larger population in this area.<sup>160</sup>

By this time, too, the Department had stitched together a “policy” position drawing on the Conference and Committee on Eskimo Affairs discussions. However, the first formal articulation of it seems to have appeared in print only in August 1953:

1. In areas where the natural resources will support the Eskimo inhabitants it has been decided that their basic way of life is to be maintained as far as possible.
2. In areas where permanent white settlements have grown up, the Eskimos will be educated to adapt them to this new situation.
3. In areas of the north which cannot continue to support the present Eskimo population, attempts will be made to move the Eskimo to areas with greater natural resources.<sup>161</sup>

### **Administration of Inuit Affairs**

Before concluding this chapter, I will review the legal and organizational basis of Inuit administration since it is essential to understand how policy was made and carried out in the 1950s. The Northwest Territories Act provided for the administration of the NWT by a Commissioner under instructions given from time to time by the Governor in Council or the Minister of the Department handling federal responsibilities there, (Resources and Development from 1950-1953; Northern Affairs and National Resources from 1953-1966) and (in the 1950s) a Council of eight members which had legislative powers analogous to those of a Province. The membership of the NWT Council in the 1950s consisted of five senior civil servants appointed by the Governor in Council and

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<sup>160</sup> Cunningham to Chesshire, 12.1.53. RG 85, Vol. 1513, file 1012-Pt. 1.

<sup>161</sup> “Minutes of Meeting ... to discuss Transfer of Certain Eskimo Families, etc.”. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

three elected representatives from the District of Mackenzie.<sup>162</sup>

The NWT Council was difficult to distinguish from whatever federal department was responsible for the Territory. Its Commissioner was always the Deputy Minister of that department (until 1963) and the Deputy Commissioner would usually also be the Director of the Branch within the department that was responsible for administration of the NWT. The Northern Administration and Lands Branch of the responsible department administered the NWT under the NWT Act. There was no territorial civil service.

This central administration in Ottawa was responsible for all matters of policy and for general supervision of the NWT while the RCMP acted as local representatives of the administration. In the Eastern Arctic the main work of the RCMP was to ensure the “welfare” of the Inuit by: i) administering Family Allowances, Old Age Allowances, and pensions for the Blind; ii) providing for “relief of destitution” among the Inuit; iii) assisting “Eskimos to establish new camps in new and better hunting grounds,” and iv) preventing the “material exploitation” of Inuit, i.e., “see to it that the Eskimo receives fair dealings in his relations with white men, particularly where fur is concerned.” They also acted for eight other departments as postmasters, veterinary inspectors, customs officers, citizenship judges, took vital statistics and gave first aid.<sup>163</sup>

This next section draws heavily on the excellent account of the evolution of the legal meaning of the term “Eskimos” provided by Diubaldo.<sup>164</sup>

Jurisdiction over “Eskimo Affairs” was transferred to the Commissioner of the NWT in 1928. He in turn was responsible to the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior (etc.) and the Governor-in-Council.

“Eskimos” were declared to be considered as “Indians” within the meaning of the Constitution (BNA) Act of 1867 by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1939. Despite the 1939 Supreme Court decision the Indian Act was not applied to Inuit (Eskimos) since it was felt that the way of life of Inuit (Eskimos) and Indians was different. There had been no treaties with the latter nor did they live on reservations.

As a result, a fundamental question which the Department continued to wrestle with even into the late 1950s was the legal status of the Inuit. Since there had been no treaty signed with them, “Were they a type of ‘Indian’ or simply ordinary citizens, albeit with a radically different lifestyle from most Canadians?”<sup>165</sup> The Indian Act had been amended to include administration of “Eskimo Affairs” in 1924 despite protests that this degraded their status to that of wards of the state. This amendment was repealed in 1928 after an Order-in-Council had transferred administration of “Eskimo Affairs” to the Commissioner of the NWT. This did not change the kinds of issues their uncertain status evoked:

...the question of the status of the Eskimo with respect to the issue of liquor permits was brought before the Northwest Territories Council in session of the 11th December, 1928 .... Parliament has declared that the Eskimo is neither an Indian nor is he a ward of the nation. It has always been felt

<sup>162</sup> Northwest Territories Act, R.S.C. 1952.

<sup>163</sup> “Outline of the work of the RCM Police etc.”, nd. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D-1512-2-4-Q 27; “Outline of the work of the RCMP - First Report etc.”. MG 30, E. 133, Series V, Vol. 294, file ACND, First Report, March 1953.

<sup>164</sup> R. Diubaldo, “The Government of Canada and the Inuit, 1900-1967”. Mimeo., DIAND, 1985. All non-footnoted quotes are drawn from Chapter 3.

<sup>165</sup> MacKinnon, “Keewatin etc.”, *Op cit.*, 3:0.

that he should enjoy the full status of a white man in the Territories. However, for the present it is not considered to be in the best interests of the Eskimo to issue liquor permits for medicinal purposes....<sup>166</sup>

When the Indian Act was revised in 1950-1951 its provisions specifically excluded Inuit. The view was thus that Inuit were citizens like all others except that if they could not “look after themselves,” Canada, not the provinces would be responsible for the cost of their welfare.

This did not clear up confusion about the practical consequences of the status of Inuit. In 1952, the Deputy Commissioner of the NWT (Cunningham) raised questions about the Inuit “squandering” their income and whether this could be prevented by regulation:

The basic issue seems to be this, are we to regard the Eskimo as a fully privileged, economically responsible citizen with the right to spend his income as he pleases; or are we to regard the Eskimo as backward people who need special guidance in the use of their income?

To this the Commissioner (Young) replied:

My understanding is that the Eskimos are not constitutionally Wards of the government. This would mean parliamentary legislation to give us the necessary authority to regulate the lives of the Eskimo.

This possibility he was unwilling to pursue. Instead the only possible way of ensuring greater savings was to influence the HBC to pay Inuit in monthly installments or the like.<sup>167</sup> Hence too, the language of the day. Inuit were citizens but ones who needed encouragement, assistance, guidance. Unlike Indians they could [receive] pensions, [and] had access to liquor (in legal theory at least and could vote if living in the District of Mackenzie in the 1950s). If, for example, they claimed the right to brew liquor at Grise Fiord in the 1960s this could not be denied but the RCMP would attempt to give guidance on the evils of alcohol.<sup>168</sup> Another case dealt with five Cape Dorset families determined to move 300 miles from the settlement in order to return to their “old way of life.” Houston thought the isolated area they picked was potentially dangerous to their safety and health and they should be stopped. The Department position was that it was “powerless to prevent them.” All the Department could do was ask government aircraft to make patrols to the area whenever possible.<sup>169</sup>

## **Conclusion**

1. The origins of the settlement policy of the early 1950s is to be found not in a concern about effective occupation of the High Arctic but in the collapse of the “Eskimo Economy” and the problems this led to as set out in the 1951 Cantley Report.

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<sup>166</sup> Diubaldo, *Op cit.*, p. 37, quoting Jenness.

<sup>167</sup> Cunningham to Commissioner, 16.1.52, and Young to Cunningham, 17.1.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2. See also Jackson to Deputy Minister, 3.4.50. *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> “Adverse Conditions Amongst Eskimos”, 14.6.66. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5 shows how an application for permission to brew beer for home consumption was handled at Grise Fiord. Freeman (1969) says this application then kept getting “lost” at headquarters. See also discussion on need to control spending in “Report on EAP - 1952, etc.”. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>169</sup> Bolger to Houston, 14.6.60. RG 85, Vol. 1962, File A-1012-13, Pt. 1.

2. The report maintained that it was in “new Quebec” where there was an “immediate” cause for alarm because of the size and density of its population. With 30 percent of the Inuit population it had only 15 percent of the land area and 17 percent of the coast line available to the Inuit. The solution to this problem of overpopulation in relation to the available resources was to distribute population to other available, suitable places where a better living could be obtained.
3. While a more integrated and coherent set of policies emerged after 1954, the period of 1951 to 1953 was a transitional one in which an unsure administration was coping with exceedingly difficult problems on a shoestring budget.
4. In response to the Cantley recommendations, Stevenson in January 1952 suggested that Baffin Island, Devon Island and Ellesmere Island might be places where people could be re-established and noted that one large Inuit camp at Pond Inlet had suggested in 1951 they would be prepared to move to Ellesmere Island.
5. The key RCMP official involved in the moves, Larsen, was not, as Marcus alleges, engaged in “mythology” in an attempt to enforce a “back to the land” policy. He, in fact, explicitly repudiates this point of view.
6. The policy of moving people to the High Arctic, which was endorsed by the Committee on Eskimo Affairs meeting of October 1952, emerged from: i) a concern about the situation in Northern Quebec; ii) the lack of employment, educational and training opportunities for Inuit at the time, which meant that living off a hunting and trapping economy would be inevitable for most people for some years to come; iii) the belief, given the meagre employment opportunities in the North, that attempts should be made to make more use of the Weather Stations.
7. The decision to reopen the RCMP post at Resolute Bay had nothing to do with a sovereignty “threat.” It emerged from Cantley’s recommendation in the summer of 1952 on the need to have a “general” government representative there. The recommendation (and decision) to send settlers to Resolute, provided the RCMP reopened their post there, was already well advanced by the October 1952 meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs (which Larsen had attended).
8. This background confirms, in my view, the welfare and economy concerns which were front and centre of the resettlement policy.
9. The origins of the relocation policy are to be found in the 1950 Cape Dorset crisis and the suggestion that establishing Eskimo camps north of Lancaster Sound might help prevent such problems in the future; in the 1951 suggestion by Idlout that his group be moved from Pond Inlet to Ellesmere; in the Northern Quebec crisis as highlighted by the Cantley report; in the opportunities provided by the opening of the Craig Harbour RCMP post in 1951; in Cantley’s suggestion that Resolute Bay needed an RCMP officer again and the opportunities this provided for supervised relocations. All these factors led to the decisions to attempt three relocations which were in place well before any of the so-called crucial meetings in 1953 dealing with sovereignty.

### **Addendum 1**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Footnote 26, there is one additional reference in 1952 to sovereignty that I did not

bring out in the first edition of this report. It has been drawn to my attention that I did not refer to an agenda item of the May 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs that consideration be given to:

...(d) Exploration of the possibilities of finding permanent employment in the Arctic for the average Eskimo or for those who could trained in any particular field, viz., (my emphasis)

- (i) as Canadian citizens or as a branch of the Armed Services to occupy and patrol the Arctic – for the purposes of sovereignty and security;
- (ii) as labourers and mechanics at Arctic settlements, radio and meteorological stations, airfields, etc.;
- (iii) as specialists in trades such as carpentering, boat-building, the designing and making of suitable clothing, repairing rifles and guns, clocks and watches, cooking, practical nursing, midwifery, etc.; ...
- (viii) transfer of groups to underpopulated areas.

I did not consider this reference to be of material relevance to the matter under discussion for the following reasons:

- a) The relocations in 1953 did not involve a search for permanent employment for purposes of sovereignty and security.

The Summary of Proceedings of the May Conference says nothing further about permanent employment for sovereignty and security purposes. It was my assumption that the matter had thus received no or not enough consideration to warrant inclusion in the Summary.

The Summary clearly says that the short term problems of the Inuit should be the main concern of the Department. Finding employment was not to be discouraged provided certain conditions were met. No concern was expressed about sovereignty. The focus was entirely on ways of improving the well being of the Inuit, including possibilities of full time employment and transfers to areas with more food resources.

- b) The only record found of a response to Section d(i) (by Chesshire before the May Conference) interpreted this as recruiting Inuit into the military and warned that they would not respond well to hierarchical and regimented organizations.
- c) The more important October 1952 meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs which discussed ways of implementing the recommendations of the May Conference made it even clearer that there was no connection in the minds of the planners between the relocations and sovereignty issues. Neither in the departments' interpretation of what the Conference had recommended nor in the priority items listed is there any reference to sovereignty or to a search for permanent employment for the purposes of sovereignty maintenance. There was to be a search for employment as labourers and mechanics at Arctic meteorological stations, i.e., Section d(ii).<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Suggested Agenda, etc., nd; and Summary of Proceedings, etc., 19-20 May 1952; and Minutes of First Meeting etc., 16.10.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3. See also "Reports on Eskimo Economy, Relief, etc.", (nd, probably April 1952). RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D 1512-2-4-Q-27.



## CHAPTER 5

### WHY QUEBEC

It has been noted in earlier sections of this report that Northern Quebec was the area of greatest concern throughout the period after the Second World War and the early 1950s. The area is reported, at least until 1951-1952, as the one which was the most impoverished, as evidenced in part by the extraordinarily high amount of relief its population was receiving. It was also the most overpopulated and the population was over-concentrated in or near a number of settlement areas. It was, as one compendium of RCMP reports puts it, one of a number of areas of “suffering and poverty.” A teacher remembered that in the 1950s it was known as the “hungry coast.”<sup>171</sup> One of the first settlers recalled in 1981 that at Inukjuak “we used to be very hungry and when we first got there we were very poor.”<sup>172</sup>

The question, however, has been raised by both Grant and Marcus as to whether the relocations could really have been justified on the grounds of the alleged impoverishment of this area since RCMP reports in both 1952 and 1953 suggested that conditions in the “Port Harrison” area had improved so significantly that, in their view, relocation was unnecessary.

This section reviews extracts from some of the RCMP and other reports of the time which deal with this question.

#### **1949**

An RCMP report stated:

Along this coast, particularly in the Port Harrison and Povungnituk area, there isn't enough game for natives to depend on for a living. There is enough for him to starve on but not enough to give him a sufficient supply of food... Even when the natives are able to obtain seals, etc., the commercial return for the skins is not enough to buy ammunition to go hunting again. The only time when the natives can obtain their supplies of meat for food and dog feed is when they received the outfits in the form of relief, so that they can go away from the coast to hunt.<sup>173</sup>

#### **1950**

The annual “Port Harrison” RCMP report (unusual in its length and the quality of its analysis of the problems) expressed concern about:

The tendency amongst all the natives in this district to congregate in large camps as close as possible to the various posts. It is suggested that this is due to the ingrained fear of starvation which every Eskimo in the district has. In the past they have seen whole camps die out from starvation and they are still afraid of it recurring. They are afraid that if they get into a camp a long distance from a post they may become stranded sometime and not be able to get in for food. There is a certain amount of good reason to this too as the past winter in Port Harrison has

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<sup>171</sup> Bill Applewhite, welfare teacher, 1954-1957, in N.J. Macpherson, Dreams and Visions -Education in the NWT from Early Days to 1984. (NWT Department of Education, 1988), p. 76.

<sup>172</sup> Anna Nungag, Inuktitut, December 1981, p. 6.

<sup>173</sup> “Conditions Amongst Eskimos”, 14.10.49. RG 22, Vol. 254, File, 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

demonstrated. When there was a great lack of seals during January and February it was not uncommon for a camp to hunt for two or three days after their last food was gone before coming to the post for assistance. For this reason, the writer and the H.B.C. post-manager had to keep close check on the condition of the various camps as if they had got to the end of their food and then were holed up for a few days by bad weather, it is conceivable that starvation could have resulted....

From observations made by the writer in the last two years it is considered that the Eskimo in this district, with a very few exceptions, are not lazy; considering the amount of hunting and travelling they do as compared to the return they receive for it, their effort is very great, and they do it willingly. However, as has been seen in the Port Harrison area in the past winter, despite their efforts, they have not been able to earn enough either to feed or clothe themselves and it is considered that if this situation carries on for any length of time Eskimos are going to become fed up with making the effort and not getting any return for it. At the present time, they have to depend on relief issues to tide them over for times when they haven't enough to eat, etc. Also, they have to depend a lot of the time on relief for the necessary ammunition, nets and walrus hunting outfits which they use to obtain their country food....

It is the desire of the department to have these Eskimos continue to live the Eskimo mode of life and support themselves but I would submit that these people have nothing on which they can depend for their support....

The point is that at present, the Eskimo has nothing that he can definitely depend on and plan with. He is not sure whether he will get any seals during the next week, he is not sure how many fish he can catch at any one time. He knows he will be kept from starving but he is not sure that he will get enough for what he considers his needs. He is not sure that he will get enough foxes this winter, or next winter with which to replace his worn out rifle or buy a new tent etc.<sup>174</sup>

Constable Mansell, author of the report, went on to suggest that in order to introduce more stability in the lives of the Inuit, all relief, etc. should be replaced by a guaranteed, fixed monthly income for every Inuk, children and adults.<sup>175</sup>

As the Cantley Report points out, Northern Quebec and Keewatin had the lowest average income in 1950, but in Quebec there was the additional problem of the "size and density" of the population; with almost 30 percent of the population it comprised only 15 percent of the land area and 17 percent of the coast line available to the Eskimo. In addition, in 1951, the highest proportion of relief was paid in Quebec and the amount of relief paid to "capable hunters" was regarded as an indicator of an economy (and a social system) in difficulties.

## 1951

There was also concern about malnutrition among the Quebec Inuit and how this was affected by the "dangers" of settlement living. A representative view of the medical importance of country food is provided in a 1951 report by Dr. B.J. Harper. He says:

I have to report that I have noted several forms of malnutrition in (sic) numerous among Indian

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<sup>174</sup> "Conditions among the Eskimos ..., Port Harrison" ..., 24.4.50. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

Eskimo natives at Great Whale and Richmond Gulf. This may be due to lack of vitamins and the use of more so-called “white man’s food” than they are accustomed to.

I find that in most areas, the Indians and Eskimos who live on their own country food are far healthier and less prone to disease, especially pulmonary and other forms of tuberculosis, than those who live around the posts on a diet of flour, sugar and tea. Since we, in our Department are most anxious to cut down on sickness among natives, we from time to time recommend to the Department of Indian Affairs and the RCMP that particular attention be given to aiding the natives to hunt and seek their own food.<sup>176</sup>

Among the instructions to Cantley, Officer-in-Charge of one leg of the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP), was the provision that he was to study the economic and social conditions among the Inuit visited:

As you are aware, Northern Quebec is the area where Eskimo problems are most acute and it will be necessary for you to enquire closely into what can be done to alleviate conditions there. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of breaking up the present concentrations of population around Fort Chimo, Ivuyivik, and Port Harrison and to the possibility of finding other areas along that coast where food is available and where these people with some assistance, may gradually be made self-supporting again. Enquiries might also be made with a view to finding out whether any Eskimo families in this area would be prepared to be transferred to Eastern Baffinland or other suitable places where they would have a better chance of making a living.<sup>177</sup>

Cantley, reviewing the food resources of Northern Quebec following the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol, felt that despite the disappearance of caribou and the relative scarcity of marine mammals:

Although conditions among the Eskimos all along the Quebec coast have not been good since the price of white fox declined so drastically two years ago, there are indications now that these people are trying to adjust themselves to the changed conditions ....

At Port Harrison more families are taking Interest in going to the outlying Islands for the winter....

I do not think there has been any appreciable decline in the food resources of this area. Conditions do not appear to be any worse than they were thirty or forty years ago; the only difference is that the people themselves are less spread out and have reached a stage where they are inclined to rely less on their own efforts and more on the Government for the fulfilment of their wants. The remedies lie in encouraging a wider distribution – possibly including the transfer of family groups to other areas and in seeing that these people are given leadership and the equipment to make greater use of the resources that are available to them. (my emphasis)

The same report also says that the average “Port Harrison” income per capita was \$115 (29.5 percent from sale of furs, etc., and 70.5 percent from Family Allowance and relief).<sup>178</sup> Given these rather ambiguous

<sup>176</sup> Stewart to O/C “G” Division, 18.9.51. RG 85, Vol. 107, File, 253-2/304. Settlements were regarded as places of “infection, starchy diets and cultural degeneration”. C.S. MacKinnon, “Keewatin 1893-1963”, mimeo., nd., p. 3:13.

<sup>177</sup> Wright to Cantley, 21.6.51. RG 85, Vol. 80, File 201-1(26). See also 1951 EAP report on population pressures and dangers of epidemics in Northern Quebec. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

<sup>178</sup> “Report on 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

comments it is perhaps not surprising that in the next year, 1952, Cantley instructed Johnson, the Officer-in-Charge of the EAP, that since "... Northern Quebec is the area where Eskimo problems are becoming most acute," he (Johnson) should enquire into ways of "alleviating conditions there."<sup>179</sup>

Average Eskimo Income per Family and per Person

For Year ended June 30, 1951

	Sugluk		Cape Smith		Povungnituk		Port Harrison		Total	
	Ave. per Family	Ave. per Person	Ave. per Family	Ave. per Person	Ave. per Family	Ave. per Person	Ave. per Family	Ave. per Person	Ave. per Family	Ave. per Person
Furs, etc.	\$142	\$31	\$175	\$33	\$133	\$34	\$65	\$15	\$106	\$25
Handicrafts					5	2	43	10	22	5
Labour etc.	46	10	19	3	25	7	43	10	37	8
Family	305	67	210	39	126	32	159	35	182	41
Relief-	262	57	121	23	132	34	156	35	165	37
Traders	89	19	61	11	111	28	44	10	69	15
Unpaid debts	21	5	9	2					5	2
Old Age	7	2	4	1					2	
Other					0	3			2	
	<u>\$872</u>	<u>\$191</u>	<u>\$599</u>	<u>\$112</u>	<u>\$543</u>	<u>\$140</u>	<u>\$510</u>	<u>\$115</u>	<u>\$590</u>	<u>\$133</u>
Population	(160)		(128)		(178)		(445)		(911)	

*Analysis of the total income reveals that over-all the Eskimos at these posts actually earned only 28.4% of the goods they received during the past year. Family and Old Age Allowance provided 31.2 percent and relief and unpaid debts the remaining 40.4 percent.*<sup>180</sup>

## 1952

However, by 1952 the situation had improved. McRae, the "Port Harrison" constable, reported that the area "has fared very (sic) good during the past winter." This, in part, was because he had provided the "inefficient" trappers with equipment to make a living and told them that if they did not use it to procure a sufficient amount of country food and fur, it would be taken away and given to someone who was "willing to work for a living."<sup>181</sup> McRae, who it seems was obsessed both with reducing relief and with the philosophy that one must help oneself before receiving any outside assistance, says:

The real reason for the present living conditions of the natives in this area is not the scarcity of

<sup>179</sup> Cantley to Johnson, 11.6.52. RG 85. Vol. 80, File 201-1 (27).

<sup>180</sup> Report on EAP - 1951. RG 85, Vol. 1127, File 201-1-8, Pt. 2A.

<sup>181</sup> "Inefficient trappers was the name given to the able-bodied few who, due to lack of ability, ambition, or just plain laziness, are unable to trap sufficient furs to maintain themselves or their families - their catch of furs every year being exceedingly low. Natives falling into this category are also the responsibility of the government". Chesshire, "HBC Eskimo Relief Policy (1944)", nd. RG 18, Acc. 8586/048, Vol. 42, File, D-1512-2-4-Q 27.

food, but the overpopulation of the area, and if some of the natives could be made interested (sic) to move to the outlying islands or to another district entirely, conditions would be much better for the remaining natives.<sup>182</sup>

Also, according to the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol, Inukjuak was both the poorest and most populated of four areas of Northern Quebec that there were data for.

Cheshire, General Manager of the HBC, gave income figures for 1951 to the May 1952, Conference on Eskimo Affairs which suggested that average income per family in all districts had improved considerably by 1951 except in Baffinland where there had been a precipitous drop. It is likely that the sharp differences between Cantley (discussed in Chapter Four) and Cheshire are due to their using somewhat different data sources. As Cantley says it is only possible to make “a reasonably accurate estimate” of what Inuit income had been.<sup>183</sup> But the differences are so marked, particularly for Baffinland, and the one year increases so considerable in other instances, that it is best to treat these numbers with caution. As a rough rule of thumb, I would simply add their estimates and divide by two to get more realistic figures.

Comparison Cantley/Cheshire Income Figures

	<u>1949-1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	
	<u>(Cantley)</u>	<u>(Cheshire)</u>	<u>Relief</u>
	<u>Average Family Income all sources</u>		
Western Arctic	800	846	(21)
Central Arctic	217	454	(18)
Baffinland	425	334	(16)
Northern Quebec	334	445	(103)

Despite the relatively promising Quebec numbers, Cheshire still claims that “... any serious decline in the supply of Eskimo country food is confined to Northern Quebec.” He explains this as follows:

Turning to the poorer income returns of the Central Arctic, Baffinland and Northern Quebec, it might at first be supposed that trapping and other conditions were almost identical. That this is very definitely not the case is clearly evident from the sharply higher relief costs relating to Northern Quebec.

In most cases, the natives of Baffinland have adequate supplies of sea food. Again, in the Central Arctic, in most years, there is a sufficient supply of deer meat. Furthermore, at certain settlements

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<sup>182</sup> “General Conditions-Eskimo”, 29.6.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D 1512-2-4-Q 27 (1952). The same report noted overpopulation as the main problem in Sugluk and Povungnituk as well. These were the other main population groups in the region. Island camps established on the Ottawa, Sleeper and King George Islands had, with the exception of the latter, done well. The 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol also had a brief note about the “country produce” around “Port Harrison” being “fairly plentiful”, particularly seal and fish. “Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol”, nd, 1952. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File, 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>183</sup> Cantley Report, p. 37.

within each of these groups, additional income can be earned from miscellaneous activities, which helps towards providing for items other than the bare necessities.

On the other hand, the Eskimo in Northern Quebec, as a result of their habit of concentrating their activities in restricted areas, have only limited country food available and are almost entirely dependent on the result of their trapping and local labouring for the bare necessities of existence....

It is this area, therefore, that demands priority of consideration. ... but these facts do suggest that something constructive, involving among other things perhaps the transfer of families to other more productive regions – should be undertaken as soon as practicable In Northern Quebec.<sup>184</sup>

### **1953**

In July 1953, Alex Stevenson visited Inukjuak and reported that, “the economy of the natives of the Port Harrison region was fairly good during the past year,” fur had had a “fair” year and spring seals seemed to be on the increase so that the Inuit were “better off for meat than they had been for a number of years.” All the signs, he said, pointed to a bumper fur year in 1953-1954, as indeed it was. Stevenson added that there had been an experiment “to send people to the Belcher Islands but without the RCMP or HBC going along.” This had not worked well as the Inuit had not obtained the expected run of fish and seal. Stevenson’s comment on this is of some interest as it indicates his views on the requirements for successful relocation.

However, even if conditions have been bad this past spring, I do not think the overall project of moving natives to the Island should be considered a failure. Once again, I believe it’s a case of poor organizing and lack of leadership....Of course, when one is living a precarious existence of the hunt, no two years are the same and weather and ice conditions often play a part in preventing the natives from getting a good supply of fish, walrus, seal...<sup>185</sup>

Ottawa, however, did not see the improvements at “Port Harrison” as an indication that the fundamental problems had changed. As Stevenson said, “no two years were the same” and Cunningham wrote to Larsen in March 1953, in response to the RCMP reports he had received saying:

The problems on the whole of the Quebec coast stem largely from the fact that there is too large a population for the resources that are available. This is further aggravated by a tendency, in more recent years, for the Eskimos to congregate in a few large communities rather than to spread out along the coast.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> “Brief Comments on Government Agenda of Arctic Affairs”, nd. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File D-1512-2-4-Q 27.

<sup>185</sup> “Inspection Trip ... July 1953, etc.”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>186</sup> Cunningham, in the same letter, repeats the prevailing wisdom about self-reliance, “After making due allowance for all other factors, there is no doubt that some groups have come to depend too much on issues of relief and family allowance rather than on their own efforts. We fully concur, however, with the steps that Constable Webster is taking to combat this tendency, and to emphasize to the natives that they are expected to provide for their own needs whenever it is possible for them to do so”. Cunningham to Larsen, 8.5.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13.

### **Conditions at Inukjuak after 1953**

The 1953 RCMP Annual Report noted that the stability of the handicraft market had seemed to be in some doubt in 1952-1953 but it had picked up again in 1953. As had been predicted, 1953-1954 was a peak year in the fox-fur cycle, the numbers of furs had reached 5,100 by June 1954, while the “average” catch was 1,500. Relief payments were down. While there were problems with walrus, game in general was reported as average. Prices of fur, however, were very depressed, at \$7.00 to \$8.00 a pelt. Prices of goods continued to rise but in general the previous fifteen months had been very good.

The situation was somewhat different for other areas. The Belcher Islands had an epidemic of influenza and an emergency food drop had to be made there. The large number of Inuit settling at Povungnituk (30 tents) was leading to overhunting and depletion of game. A very large percentage of the dogs were destroyed by diseases from Povungnituk to Port Harrison. Handicraft production and sales declined considerably because the trapping had been so good.

However, the usual feast and famine picture reappeared in the report sent in at the end of 1954. White fox were very much on the decline and lynx were destroying whatever foxes were being caught. The RCMP constable reported that “suitable camp localities are slightly overcrowded and in order to maintain a better standard of living from country feed it would be necessary to minimize the size of the camps.” He suggested that moving people to the High Arctic might be one possibility because:

Several native families have received correspondence from the natives who left here on the “C.D. Howe” in 1953 that were placed at Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour, the conditions to them seemed very favourable and several families have asked for their names to be placed on the list should any further native families be moved north. It is felt that this additional group could be moved, it certainly would clear some of the congested areas (sic).

Dog food was in short supply and there was a great shortage of walrus. However, people were not faring “too badly.”

By March 1956, the RCMP were reporting that in the “Port Harrison” district itself, the hunting could “not be said to be good, but since a fairly large number of natives had been moved to other areas (Craig Harbour) the country supplied adequate game to keep most of the natives happy.” A large number of men at the settlement had some employment. The 1957 report notes that there had been a steady improvement, especially in health, but once again the same ups and downs with respect to income from trapping, etc. Large amounts of clothing had had to be issued to the Inuit in the area and relief payments had gone up. The 1959 report notes that the whole area was once again overpopulated, but this time “Port Harrison” had less of a problem than Povungnituk and Sugluk.<sup>187</sup>

### **Conclusion**

1. Northern Quebec and the area around Inukjuak was chosen for the relocations because it was considered to be overpopulated in relation to the game resources available. It had a very high level of dependence on

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<sup>187</sup> All these reports are in RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA-500-8-1-13. By 1957 the Inukjuak area had lost 25 percent of its population by migration to the High Arctic and Great Whale River.

relief and other government payments. In the words of the time this meant it had a high level of “destitution.” However, the high level of relief in 1950-1951 was reduced considerably by 1952-1953.

2. As Cantley said in 1952, things were no worse in Northern Quebec than they had been 30 or 40 years ago when existence had been marginal at best. Thus while 1952 saw an improvement over 1950, and 1953 and 1954 were good years at Inukjuak, these improvements were relative. Even had the planners foreseen the extraordinary fur take in 1953-1954, they probably would not have abandoned the projects. First, as Stevenson said, “no two years were the same.” Second, they had seen feast followed by famine often enough to be wary of the significance of one or two good years.
3. The Department believed that a reduced population was one essential requirement to improve the lives of the Inuit. The reduction of the population by about 60 people over two years, as well as other moves to Great Whale River, did help make life materially easier at Inukjuak (according to Wilmott, see Chapter 5) during the next few years, although it was not the only factor at work. The problems of overpopulation continued to be seen as a difficulty in later years despite the moves, suggesting that life would probably have been harder for everyone had the relocation not taken place.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONDITIONS AT PORT HARRISON IN THE 1950s

In 1958 W.E. Willmott, a graduate student in Sociology and Anthropology at McGill University, spent the summer at “Port Harrison” (later Inukjuak) under the auspices of the Northern Coordination and Research Centre of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. His MA thesis, which emerged from that research, provides something of a base line by which comparisons can be made as to how much better or worse things were at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in comparison to Inukjuak.<sup>188</sup>

Comparison is, however, severely compromised by the fact that in 1958 there had been a very large drop in the population of Inukjuak where, prior to 1953, the population was around 500 (the Department estimate was 585). By 1958 this had dropped to 337 and thus the problems of over-population that had preoccupied officials in the early 1950s had changed a great deal. Living conditions had improved since 1953. There was a better balance of game and fur to people. Average family income had also increased over the low levels reported by Cantley. Thus 1958 is a very imperfect substitute for 1953.

Nevertheless the study provides useful insights into Inuit life in the 1950s even though the circumstances are inadequately comparable. The settlement at that point consisted of about 75 Inuit and approximately 10 whites, including a teacher at the federal day school, the nurse at the Health Service Nursing Station and two RCMP officers. The remaining 263 Inuit lived in seven camps scattered along a hundred miles of coastline which were from one to fifty miles distant from Inukjuak and ranged from three to ten households during the summer.

Apart from the marked differences between the white and the Inuit communities (which Willmott characterizes as two castes in a caste society), the sharpest differences at Inukjuak were between the so-called “settlement Eskimos” and the “camp Eskimos.” In almost every area of social life the differences between these groups, he says, were “apparent.” The main difference between the two was that the latter were still community centred, while within the settlement there was a clear shift away from indigenous community organization to the dominant Canadian culture where the household was an independent unit but interrelated with others through a complex economic system.<sup>189</sup>

Inukjuak, though 600 miles from the Arctic Circle, has an Arctic climate and biology. In only four months of the year does the average temperature rise above freezing, while summer day time temperatures range around 45 to 55 degree Fahrenheit. Snow covers the ground eight months of the year and lakes and coastal waters are frozen for that period as well. (A. Orkin, on the CBC “Quirks and Quarks” programme, stated that this was the “Bahamas” of the Inuit!)

As to flora there were, Willmott says, “many varieties” of plants and there were three kinds of berries that could be eaten. Moss and willow twigs were burned for heat while willow twigs were also used as flooring under the caribou hides that made mattresses. The primary source of wood was packing cases from ships and freight

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<sup>188</sup> W.E. Willmott, *The Eskimo Community at Port Harrison, P.Q.*, Mimeo., Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1961. Hereafter referred to as Willmott.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., Chapter 1.

and this was supplemented with drift wood and scrap lumber from construction, whenever possible. Fauna in 1958 was reported as plentiful in the summer and constituted the major item of Inuit nutrition. This included seal, blue geese, three varieties of ducks and some sea pigeons, gulls and terns. Three main forms of fish were netted, white fish, Arctic Char and trout. During the summer there were also expeditions to hunt white whales. Throughout the winter most adult males ran trap lines for white fox. Caribou were very occasionally hunted in the interior of Ungava, but in 1956 caribou hunting was banned for conservation purposes.

Interestingly, 1953-54 had been a peak year in numbers of foxes traded, 4,920. Willmott does not give the figures for the next winter but then the usual drop in the four-year fox cycle followed, with 1,500 traded in 1955-56 and only 600 in 1956-57 and even fewer in 1957-58, 415.

Parasites in fish were not a serious problem at Inukjuak. However, mosquitoes were very numerous on still days in July and early August and black flies “become unbearable” inland from the coast. However, there was, usually, enough wind blowing so that one was not bothered by the flies or mosquitoes unless walking with the wind. (He includes mosquitoes as parasites.) Trichinosis was not a problem since so few walrus or polar bear were taken.<sup>190</sup>

Despite an improved health situation in the 1950s, life was still very rigorous and life expectancy was low. At birth “a baby can expect to live 20.4 years, and even after the first year life expectancy rises to only 31.6 years.” Infant mortality was still very high in comparison to the rest of Canada (27 per thousand live births in 1961) as the following table shows:

YEAR	DEATHS PER THOUSAND LIVE BIRTHS
1950	470
1951	381
1952	157
1953	307
1954	210
1955	214
1956	181
1957	333
1958	190 <sup>191</sup>

The birth rate among the Inuit at 59 per thousand, in 1961, was one of the highest in the world. The Arctic mortality rate for newborns (0-12 months) was 257 per thousand in 1958. The Inukjuak death rate was also declining during this period but showed some strange oscillations. From a mortality rate of 52 per thousand in 1950 there was a drop to 12 per thousand in 1953, a jump to 37.65 per thousand in 1954, a decline to 5.72 in 1956 and then another jump to 32.64 in 1958. Between 1953 and 1957 there were no deaths from TB. The mortality

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

rate at Inukjuak was higher than the average for the Arctic, which was 26 per thousand in 1958 and 17 per thousand in 1959. Inukjuak was not free of epidemics; for example, in 1958 five people (mostly young babies) died during a pneumonia-influenza epidemic.<sup>192</sup>

Camp size and location varied with the season. During the early summer, camps ranged in size from five to nine households, that is, 30 to 50 individuals, but these numbers varied considerably at different times of the year. The most highly organized households remained relatively stable while others split up for the winter into smaller units, reassembling in May or June, just before or just after the spring breakup. There was also a move to the settlement if construction or stevedoring employment became available. Families tended to move out of the settlement in September and then to their winter locations in November and December when the snow became suitable for building snow houses. Winter camps ranged from two to eight households and camps generally visited the trading post once a week during the winter. Most of the households moved at least twice a year and often three or more times. Settlement life had been changed “somewhat” in 1957 when the RCMP constable “ordered” all Inuit who were not employed by white establishments to leave. This reduced the population of the settlement from 135 to 76. The people who left moved from one to 20 miles away and established camps.

Subsistence production was generally shared, that is, while the products of the hunt were owned by the hunters they were shared around the camp to ensure an adequate supply for everyone. This was true of game and fowl, but not of fish which were not divided but went directly to the household whose nets caught them. On the other hand if a household did not have fish it would be provided for by households that did.

Average annual income per household was \$1,264 (\$924 from wages) in the settlement while average camp income was \$985, of which four percent came from wages, 24 percent from furs, 34 percent from handicrafts, 18 percent from relief and 18 percent from Family Allowances.<sup>193</sup>

While relief was an important component of the income of Inuit living in the camps, relief payments had in fact dropped in the area since 1950. In 1950, 20 percent of the population was receiving relief, 15 percent in 1951, five percent in 1952, and 3.2 percent in 1953. The reason for the reduction of relief was first, the introduction of Family Allowances, second, the great increase in the soapstone industry in the past decade and third, “The Canadian government’s policy of reducing the population of Port Harrison through migration to the High Arctic has increased the land available to each household, allowing them to depend more on country food.”<sup>194</sup> By 1958, however, camp households were once again, as noted above, dependent on relief for close to 20 percent of their income.

There was a difference in attitude between the camps and the settlement which was “... akin to the mutual antagonism between town and country in our society,” says Willmott. The Inuit in the settlement tended to look on themselves as different from those in the camps and “in some respects superior to them.” For instance, “camp Eskimos” were discouraged from attending dances in the settlement, and few of them “learn how to dance.” But the central difference was in community organization. The white man dominated the settlement and without “him” the community would disintegrate. The camps were communities – while in the settlement community

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<sup>192</sup> *Loc cit.*

<sup>193</sup> The only camp household for which Willmott obtained “detailed” figures had a considerably lower average of \$750. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

organization was at a minimum. In contrast, "The solidarity of the most highly organized camps depends on kinship, property and authority relations within the camp community."<sup>195</sup>

Housing was also different between the two. In the settlement, most households (at least of those who had employment) lived in small wooden houses provided by their employers during the winter. However, all of the Inuit in the camps spent seven months of the year in snow houses. The snow houses were organized very much like the tents, with the exception that they were smaller and that the seal oil lamp replaced the stove in the centre. From the outside, the tents of the settlement and the camp varied but little, excepting that many of the camp tents had been heavily patched in the last several seasons. On average, a tent would last two or three years. In the settlement, tents had floors made from packing cases or scrap linoleum. In the camp, tents tended to use the ground, levelling it with gravel. The sleeping platform was almost universal in both camp and settlement tents. This platform was separated from the floor by a large plank or log, covered with mats formed of willow twigs and on top of these were placed caribou skins and then spread with bedding, patchwork quilts, blankets and the like. Every tent had at least one table, a box upon which cooking utensils and food were placed. In the centre of all the camp tents was a stove made of sheet iron or discarded oil drums resting on stones or a wooden base. Caribou moss was used in the camp stoves, collected by the women who tramped inland every day to carry home a great pile on their backs.

The network of kinship relationships covered almost everybody since the population was so small. One informant told Willmott that the Inuit preferred marriages between as distant kin as possible. The incest taboo appeared to be "bilateral and proportional to the degree of relationship, first cousins never marrying, second cousins less likely to and so on. Since few relations were recognized beyond the third degree, this essentially meant that the taboo was meant for all first cousins."<sup>196</sup>

A matter which would have some bearing on the groups that moved to the High Arctic and their small numbers in the initial years is found in his discussion of recreation. According to Willmott, the most important form of recreation among both the camp and the settlement Inuit was visiting, of which there were five different forms, each with its own appropriate behaviour for the host and the guests.

All the Inuit in the Inukjuak area were Anglicans. All adult Inuit in the settlement and many of those in the camps owned a New Testament and the Anglican book of Common Prayers, both of them in syllabics. There was a service in Inuktitut every Sunday morning and on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Because the camp Inuit were only "infrequently able to attend church in the settlement," their religious life centred, says Willmott, around prayers rather than services. These prayers were often said both morning and evening, although conscientiousness varied. Aside from prayers the only other observable religious behaviour in the camps was that work was set aside, there was no card playing and there was reading of the New Testament and the prayer book on Sundays. Willmott says that the mission had a unique relationship with the Inuit and the missionary's relationship with them was different from all other "white-Eskimo relations." The missionary was the only white

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43-44. Note that the household is not the equivalent of a nuclear family since some households were composed of joint families. Of the 65 households Willmott studied only two thirds were nuclear families. Hinds also mentioned that settlement children were "mean" to camp children and consequently preferred the latter to meet with her after normal school hours. Hinds, *School House in the Arctic*, 1958, p. 105.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 7, p. 80.

who spoke Inuktitut fluently but he was also the only white person who was actively trying to change the personal life of the Inuit. He says:

Such identification on the one hand and “meddling” on the other produces an ambivalent relationship with Eskimo. Several Eskimos are hostile toward the missionary, many others avoid him. As one regular church going Eskimo told me “missionary talk too much.”<sup>197</sup>

A federal day school was established at Inukjuak in January 1950, a building was provided in 1951 and then school furniture in 1952. E.M. Hinds was the teacher from 1950 to 1954 and she organised a system so that the children in the settlement could attend school daily while children in the camps followed a kind of correspondence course, with their lessons being brought to the teacher each time men came to the settlement to trade. This was supplemented by yearly trips to the camps by Hinds who would live in the camp for a few days, conducting lessons. However, after she left, the camp education program “gradually dwindled until in 1957-58, there was none.”<sup>198</sup> Education, in other words, was a settlement phenomenon and by 1957 formal education was now entirely limited to children who lived in the settlement. In 1957-58 the school had an average of fifteen settlement pupils (the under 19 population, both camp and settlement, was 164) and students received either two hours or three and half hours of schooling a day. Willmott notes the lack of success of the school in 1958 when he was there, compared to when Hinds first arrived and enthusiasm was, apparently, very high. The 1957-58 teacher was apparently very discouraged by the lack of motivation of the children. The teacher’s job had been described as teaching English and basic arithmetic so that “the Inuit could keep up with the great changes that would come about as they became more and more integrated in Canadian society.” It struck Willmott as surprising how very few of the Inuit at Inukjuak spoke English. Education was entirely in English and even reading materials had no Inuktitut content. Willmott says of the school in 1957-1958, that:

Its functions are limited, as stated before, to 1) freeing women from the care of children for a few hours a day, and 2) caring for the health of the children by providing them warmth during the winter and one meal a day as well as a constant checkup and the referring of all infirmities to the nursing station.<sup>199</sup>

Apart from this, the school was important in providing recreation, such as dances and movies which were shown twice a month. A good, enthusiastic teacher like Hinds who was able to maintain enthusiasm and interest in education was also able to expand the function of the school beyond these narrow limits.

By 1958 the facilities of the nursing station had improved and included two wards with four beds as well as an X-ray apparatus. It was now staffed by two nurses and because of this it was possible to make more frequent trips to the camps and other settlements up the coast.

Some of the statistics with respect to health were given earlier. The spring and the fall, apparently, were the most dangerous times for the Inukjuak Inuit. The snow was not ready for making igloos until December, so they had to live in tents through October and November in temperatures that, on average, were as low as fifteen degrees Fahrenheit and sometimes dropped far below zero degrees Fahrenheit. In the spring the igloos melted in early April and families were forced into tents long before the daily mean temperatures had risen above freezing.

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

These were, then, the periods of epidemics, sometimes ending in a substantial number of deaths. The health of the settlement and camp Inuit was not appreciably different. The settlement people were, however, slightly healthier, for example, 112 of the 263 people living in the camps had been evacuated to hospital for TB, while only 24 of the 75 settlement Inuit had been so hospitalized.

What struck Willmott from his experience in Inukjuak was the extraordinary flexibility that the Inuit communities had shown over time. The rigorous life in the Arctic, where subsistence itself “is a never-ending challenge to man’s ingenuity, has demanded a degree of inventiveness that is always almost unique. The necessity of nomadism does not allow for large local groups where patterns may develop into values, for the group is constantly meeting new challenges. The result of this life is that the Eskimo is well equipped for cultural change.”<sup>200</sup>

Willmott’s concluding summary is worth quoting as well because it provides some context for a number of the issues that are discussed later in this report:

There is no doubt that this flexibility had much to do with the fact that white contact with Eskimos had been relatively free of conflict. Changes introduced by whites were not viewed as threats to the Eskimo way of life, but rather a factor of the environment to which the Eskimo must adapt with the same approach he has used since prehistorical times in adapting to a hard and capricious physical environment. The Eskimos’ attitude toward the environment is summed up in the word arunamut, which literally means because nothing can be done, and implies therefore you must face the situation without regret. Ever since the white man entered the Arctic, the Eskimo has said arunamut to all his incomprehensible antics. White economy, then white religion, and finally white political authority in the form of the R.C.M.P. have penetrated Eskimo society, brought far-reaching and irrevocable changes on (sic) it, often without the understanding of the Eskimo individuals involved. Yet these changes have not been overtly opposed by the Eskimos.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

## CHAPTER 7

### WAS THE MOVE VOLUNTARY?

There is some uncertainty and confusion about whether the move by the Inuit to the High Arctic was voluntary. The Inuit who testified before the Parliamentary Committee made different claims about the nature of the move. One claimed that they had never volunteered and that they had in fact been forced to go. Another indicated that the police were looking for people “willing to move”; another, that they were asked if they “wanted to move” and though their relatives did not want them to go, they did so because “the leaders had made the decision”; another that the RCMP came back a number of times and were so persistent that in the end “we agreed.” Another said that they had “only agreed” providing all stayed together and could come back if they did not like it. “The RCMP agreed to this.”<sup>202</sup>

The Makivik Corporation, in a letter of March 23, 1989 to the Honourable Pierre Cadieux, Minister of DIAND, wrote that “Northern Quebec Inuit went along with the federal relocation “experiment” since they had been told that the hunting and quality of life would be better in the far north.” Earlier, in its 1987 Position Paper, Makivik had claimed that the 1984 Hammond Report provided documentation which “tends to confirm the complete lack of consultation and information with the Inuit concerned.”<sup>203</sup>

Despite what these Inuit witnesses have said, Grant not only believes that it is unlikely the Inuit could have “fully understood the terms”, but goes on to claim they could not even have had a “reasonable understanding” of the project, but gives no evidence to support this supposition.

Grant also quotes a Departmental statement to the effect that this was a “pioneer experiment to determine if Eskimos can be induced to live on northern islands,” to support her claim that the significant term is the word “induced” which she says suggests the “move would be against one’s will or inclination.”<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, one participant has said he moved willingly. Salluviniq said in a 1977 interview that “In 1953 I moved to Resolute Bay. I hadn’t been planning to move but an RCMP came to me and told me I could move to Resolute if I wanted to. He told me that there were a lot more animals up there. So I wanted to move, so that I could have more food up there.”<sup>205</sup> Former RCMP Constable R. Gibson, who recruited the Inuit around “Port Harrison,” also claims the moves were voluntary.<sup>206</sup>

Ann Padlo, who was the Department interpreter on the C.D. Howe in 1953, visited both settlements every

<sup>202</sup> Amagoalik says with respect to his family that “In the end my p<sup>a</sup>rents finally agreed under certain conditions, and these conditions were that whoever was relocated was to remain together and that if we did not like it there we would be taken back home. The RCMP readily agreed to these terms”. This evidence is drawn from the presentation to the Parliamentary Committee, 22.5-13.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 22, A:53. I am unable to find support for this statement in Hammond’s report - M.A. Hammond, Report of Findings on an Alleged Promise of Government to Finance Return of Inuit at Resolute and Grise Fiord to their Original Homes at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet. Mimeo., DIAND, 1984 - henceforth referred to as Hammond.

<sup>204</sup> Grant, p. 14. She seems unaware of the fact that its dictionary meaning is “to lead or move by persuasion”. The idea of its being against one’s will is precisely what the word does not mean.

<sup>205</sup> Nunatsiaq News, 25.5.77, p. 7.

<sup>206</sup> Personal Communication, 31.12.91.

year until 1956. Later in the 1950s, she was the star of the CBC's "Ann Padlo show" which was a favourite programme of Inuit in the High Arctic. She also had relatives at the two settlements. She recalled, a reporter writes:

When we picked up the Port Harrison Inuit, they were starving and very skinny. Many were sick and had lots of head lice. One man told me how he had been living on nothing but lemmings. Can you imagine? There is not much meat on a lemming. No one was forced to go. The two men from DIAND, Leo Manning and Waiter Rudnicki, asked who wanted to move and only took those who volunteered.

While many were sad about leaving their relatives behind, most were very excited about the prospect of plentiful game. Padlo says this became a reality and by the next summer when Padlo revisited the Inuit, everyone looked much healthier and seemed very happy living in their new homes.... The only complaint I heard was about the long dark nights in the winter. The Northern Quebec Inuit found it a little difficult to become accustomed to.<sup>207</sup>

Hammond, who interviewed former RCMP Constable D. Moodie, reports that he (Moodie) recalled approaching six Pond Inlet families to ask their assistance to help the Inukjuak families adapt to the High Arctic and that "three families volunteered."<sup>208</sup>

Marjorie Hinds, who had a remarkable career in the Arctic as the "welfare teacher" at Inukjuak and Arctic Bay, wrote two books on her experiences and was also interviewed by Hammond in 1984. Her accounts of the preparations for the move, which are dealt with at some length later in this report, give no indication that the Inuit moving to the High Arctic were going unwillingly, in fact the reverse. Hinds was a feisty, independent, very outspoken woman (and a strong critic of some Departmental policies) who spent time with the three groups who went on the move, and was not the kind of person who would have collaborated on anything like a "forced" move. In her book School House in the Arctic, she also claims that the Inuit were given some idea of the conditions they would encounter in their new homes:

(the people) ... have difficult times in the Port Harrison area, for there are really more people there than the natural resources of the country can support. Good enterprising hunters can often hunt for days on end without seeing anything of use. That was a very wise plan to give the people of the area the opportunity to go to regions far away where supplies of country food as well as fur animals are plentiful. Those families who moved to the far north, to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands have written me encouraging letters – I helped outfit them, and I also tried to teach them about the sunless winter, quoting my experience at Fort McPherson as illustrations.<sup>209</sup>

We also should note Stevenson's report that when he visited Inukjuak in 1953, prior to joining the Eastern Arctic Patrol, he met two of the men who were to make the move, "I discussed the whole project with them and

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<sup>207</sup> Nunatsiaq News, 30.11.90, p. 1.

<sup>208</sup> Hammond, p. 14.

<sup>209</sup> M. Hinds, Schoolhouse in the Arctic, (London, 1958), pp. 161-163. Soberman mentions a case where Hinds protested an enforced move. Hammond also interviewed Hinds who said that "It fell to me as Welfare Teacher to explain to the Inuit how different and how far away Resolute and Craig Harbour were from Port Harrison. She emphasized to me that the Inuit were fully aware that adjustments might have to be made and might not succeed". Hammond, p. 14.



they fully understood the plan for their movement ... I was able to answer all their questions to their satisfaction.”<sup>210</sup> In Stevenson’s case there could not have been any communications problems. He was one of the best linguists in the Arctic and understood a wide range of dialects. His account, too, suggests the move was voluntary.

Bishop D. Marsh, an excellent linguist and virulent critic of the Department, visited Grise Fiord in 1956 and his report, too, says the people volunteered.<sup>211</sup>

There are other considerations. Five of the seven witnesses appearing before the Parliamentary Committee were in their pre- or early teens when the moves occurred. The whole experience may well have appeared as quite intimidating to these children. Former RCMP Constable B. Pilot, in his presentation to the Parliamentary Committee, agreed that “The children were afraid of us.” However, he maintained the adults were not. He added that, in particular, there were a couple of “very aggressive Inuit men from Port Harrison” and (at Grise Fiord) “they certainly were not afraid to express their opinions.”<sup>212</sup>

We may also ask whether the Inuit, at the time, were easily malleable and thus whether persuasion really amounted to some form of coercion? Did the Inuit feel that when the RCMP made suggestions, “for their own good,” they really had no option but to accept, as Soberman believes?<sup>213</sup> There might well have been such cases. Rowley, in a lengthy 1958 analysis on the deteriorating situation of the Ennadai Inuit (who had been moved to Henik Lake – with disastrous results as it turned out), notes: “It is, of course, comparatively easy to get a temporary acquiescence from the Eskimos to any suggestion put on them, and especially from this group (Ennadai Inuit) who go to great lengths to avoid any form of conflict.”<sup>214</sup> Rowley believed that the Ennadai Inuit had not been properly consulted and had not really accepted their move.

Soberman cites Hinds’ account of RCMP Constable McRae’s decision to “tell” all Inuit who were not employed at “Port Harrison” to move out of the settlement in 1951 in order to reduce reliance on relief and to ensure greater use of hunting areas further from the settlement. Hinds notes in her Monthly Welfare Teacher’s Report on this that she had “no information about this from Constable McRae” (they lived on opposite sides of the river) but from Inuit and the local HBC factor. She was deeply concerned about the impact this would have on the school and wrote to the Department that she believed Larsen (who was strongly in favour of her teaching activities) would surely be opposed to such a move. McRae’s account of this is different from that of Hinds. He says the “inefficient trappers” of the area were provided with equipment (e.g., rifles) and “advised” that if they did not obtain sufficient food and fur the equipment would be taken back. This led to their moving out to better hunting areas.<sup>215</sup> In this instance Hinds’ protest to the Department may have been effective, or, just as likely, McRae may have decided not to proceed with a move on this large a scale, or may not have intended it in the

<sup>210</sup> “Inspection Trip, etc., June-July 1953”. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt 3.

<sup>211</sup> The Arctic News, October 1956. Marsh’s editorial in this issue gives a good idea of how repugnant he would have found any information given by the Inuit that they had been coerced.

<sup>212</sup> B. Pilot, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, House of Commons, Issue No. 40, 18.6.90, 40:53. Henceforth, Parliamentary Committee (2), 18.6.90.

<sup>213</sup> Soberman, p. 36.

<sup>214</sup> Rowley to Deputy Minister, 22.1.58. RG 22, Vol. 545; Rowley, ACND, 1958.

<sup>215</sup> “General Conditions - Eskimos,.. Etc.”, 29.2.52 and 29.6.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13; “Welfare Teacher’s Report, September 1951”. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 2

first place. I was unable to find further evidence on this. However, there is one known instance (of which Soberman is apparently not aware) where non-employed Inuit at the settlement were in fact pressured to move, and that was in 1957. They did so, moving to new camps from one to twenty miles away.<sup>216</sup>

Soberman uses the 1951 account by Hinds to generalize that it was the characteristic relationship between the Inuit and the RCMP when it came to relocations. While the administrators thought of their proposals as “suggestions” or gentle persuasion, “... most Inuit perceived of the proposals as orders that had to be followed.” He goes on to interpret government documents which speak of “sending” or “transferring” Inuit families to new locations to mean, “We can arrange to move enough Inuit families without worrying about the prospect of much resistance to the move.” He says there is no evidence that this pervasive paternalistic attitude had changed much by 1953<sup>217</sup>. This one case is, however, a very uncertain instance to claim as emblematic, so it should be treated with considerable caution.

There probably were instances where people were pressured or where they did not really understand what was implied by a move. Perhaps the most notorious case is the move to Nueltin Lake by the Kazan group in 1950, which was taken up by Farley Mowat in his People of the Deer. Rowley’s 1958 account of the move to Henik Lake by the Ennadai (Kazan) group is another instance of serious communications problems, at the very least, and probably undue pressure to move, in reality.<sup>218</sup>

However, in the case of the Inukjuak relocation, Soberman’s interpretation must be treated with much more scepticism. The research he cites is very limited and the tendency to generalize from a single instance is unwarranted. A more balanced account is needed.

- i) The instances Soberman cites of the moves in 1951 is of limited assistance in understanding what happened since where Hinds saw unwarranted pressure, McRae claimed to be providing equipment to persuade people to get more country food. However, in 1957, the RCMP at Inukjuak made no attempt to suggest that this was a voluntary move. Moreover, the 1957 move dispersed people over relatively small distances of from one to twenty miles away, and did not involve a completely new environment as did the moves to the High Arctic. In other words, when the RCMP ordered people to move, the documents in this 1957 instance show that the intention was unambiguously reported. The question which remains unanswered is whether this was also the case when they reported that people had “volunteered” to move?<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> W.E. Willmott, The Eskimo Community at Port Harrison, P.O. Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1961, pp. 17-18. In the 1957 case the RCMP report claims the moves were carried out “at the request” of the nurse and the HBC Factor and with the approval of the teacher. “Conditions, etc.”, 30.12.57. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13. Rowley said of any policy that pressured Inuit to “go out and trap” that it was possibly “illegal” and in any case “too highhanded to be tolerated”. Rowley to Sivertz, June 1954. Source: MacKinnon, 4:9.

<sup>217</sup> Soberman, pp. 36-37.

<sup>218</sup> Rowley to Deputy Minister, 22.1.58. RG 22, Vol. 545, Rowley ACND, 1958.

<sup>219</sup> See C.S. MacKinnon, “The 1958 Government Reversal in Keewatin”, in For Purposes of Dominion, ed. K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, 1989, p. 162, for discussion of a similar arrangement at Chesterfield Inlet in 1955. As the RCMP reports show, these moves could not be sustained and before long people moved back into the settlement.

- ii) We cannot just assume that all RCMP officers were authoritarian and insensitive to their wards, the picture Soberman evokes. Like all stereotypes this one has its basis in fact. However, the stereotype also badly distorts the reality that the majority of the officers liked or greatly admired the Inuit and were not only caring and supportive but could be remarkably sensitive to their real circumstances and needs.<sup>220</sup> Moreover, as MacKinnon has noted, attempts to persuade “reluctant” Inuit (in this instance to be hospitalised in the south if they were diagnosed as having TB) were counterproductive and risked the prestige of RCMP who did not want to pressure people. The relation between the RCMP and the Inuit was far more complicated than the rather simplistic picture presented by Soberman.<sup>221</sup>
- iii) The image presented by Soberman of compliant, yea-saying, intimidated Inuit is something of a caricature, too. Some Inuit, at least, were quite capable of refusing to move either as groups or individuals. For example, the Sugluk Inuit (a Northern Quebec group who were in a worse economic situation than the Inukjuak group) were reported as having refused “on a number of occasions” to move to “a more productive area in Baffinland but without success.”<sup>222</sup> The Stanton and Paulatuk Inuit were reported as likely being unwilling to move when the mission trading store closed down in 1954.<sup>223</sup> Cape Dorset Inuit are reported as refusing to move as part of the 1953 High Arctic Relocation under discussion.<sup>224</sup> In 1955 the Ennadai Lake Inuit indicated in the face of strong Department disapproval that they were “determined to remain at their present location.”<sup>225</sup> Individuals were also quite willing to say that they did not wish to move. For example, two of the women who had been asked by friends or family in the High Arctic to move in 1955 said they did not wish to do so.<sup>226</sup> In 1958, too, three families previously interested in moving to the settlements in the High Arctic changed their minds and said no.<sup>227</sup> There has been no claim that the five families who moved north in 1955 did so other than of their own choice. In other words, there are so many counter instances that the picture Soberman draws of the

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<sup>220</sup> Examples of this kind of RCMP constable and their relations with the Inuit can be found in the reports of Const. Mansell in Inukjuak in 1950 and Const. Van Norman in Frobisher Bay in 1953-54. See “Conditions etc.”, 24.4.50. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13 and various reports by Van Norman, especially, 15.6.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4. See Sargent, who was to be in charge at Grise Fiord for five years, on the importance of careful explanation and the positive response this evoked from Inuit - in this case to spread out more around Spence Bay to prevent spread of disease - 7.2.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, File 1512-2-4-027.

<sup>221</sup> C.S. MacKinnon, “Canada’s Eastern Arctic Patrol 1922-68”. *Polar Record*, Vol. 27, No. 161, April 1991. As a result, in the early 1950s resentful officers were able to get the N.W.T. Ordinances changed to permit them to use legal compulsion, rather than what they saw as unwarranted arm twisting.

<sup>222</sup> Nichols to Sivertz, 24.5.55. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2.

<sup>223</sup> Minutes, Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 20.10.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>224</sup> This claim by K. Lowther in a M.A. thesis “An Exercise in Sovereignty: the Government of Canada and the Inuit Relocation of 1953”, University of Calgary, 1989, p. 98, should be treated with caution since no documentary evidence is given.

<sup>225</sup> Bella to O/C “G” Division, 12.7.55. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 14, File G 577-14, Pt. 3.

<sup>226</sup> Decker to Northern Administration, 18.5.55. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. For other examples: Gibson to Larsen, 2.7.58. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 4. Idlout to Sivertz, 1.10.56, and Kerr to Chief, Arctic Service, 9.11.56. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1.

<sup>227</sup> Gibson to Director, 2.7.58. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 4.

Inuit seems to be rather one-dimensional.<sup>228</sup>

- iv) The official policy of the Department, and the “operational code” of the RCMP, repeated in numerous documents, was to emphasize consultation and voluntary agreement in the case of moves. The language of the day was “to get the opinion of” the Inuit in connection with a move to Great Whale River; the need to “consult” about a move to Dundas Harbour; the need to consult and get full cooperation in connection with a move to Padlei; a request to the RCMP “to ascertain whether Eskimo (from “Port Harrison” and Pond Inlet) are available and prepared to go north this summer.”<sup>229</sup> The files are replete with these kinds of requirements and expectations. This is not to deny that some officers sometimes tried to exceed their rights and mandate.<sup>230</sup>
- v) By 1956 the Department was still not sure whether the “experiment,” which had gone extremely well according to all the reports they had received, would continue to do well. In a letter from the Deputy Minister, Robertson, to Nicholson, there is a reference which supports the inference that the move had been voluntary and that the Department did not regard the relocatees as being on a “one way ticket”:

We are thinking over the possibility of establishing other Eskimo communities in the High Arctic. The two establishments at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay seem to be doing well, but we are not sure that a definite conclusion, based on the experience of only two years, would be justified. The Canadian Wildlife Service feels that the question as to whether the animal populations can stand the present amount of killing cannot be answered in such a short time. In addition, the sociological problems have not yet been worked out. We do not know what proportion of the Craig Harbour Eskimos and those at Resolute Bay may wish to return to their former homes after a stay of say three or four years in the high Arctic. We have been hoping that the majority of them would regard their new locations as permanent. If, on the other hand, they are not content to stay and demand to be sent back, this would be a disappointment to us and a factor to be considered in connection with establishing other groups.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> One might also note how three of the “intimidated” Inuit of Resolute were quite able to write a strong letter of protest (in syllabics) to the Minister of DNANR (the Honourable A. Hamilton) in 1958, about how long it was taking to get a large boat they had ordered in 1955-1956 to them. Simonie to Hamilton, 20.8.58. RG 22, Vol. 334, File 40-8-1, Pt. 10.

<sup>229</sup> Stewart to O/C North Bay, 6.6.55; Cantley to Sivertz, 28.3.56. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. Also Larsen to “D” Division, 27.6.55. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 14, File G 577-14, Pt. 3.

<sup>230</sup> See Williamson to Chief Arctic Division, 4.3.58. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 4, where Williamson had to remind Moodie that he had no right to order anyone to leave Resolute. An early example of Larsen’s concern that no pressure be put on an Inuit group is found in his discussion of the Kazan group on 12.12.50. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Box 13, G 577-14, Supp. F, Vol. 1. The attached correspondence gives a good sense of how the RCMP carried on their “Welfare” function. Also see Sinclair to Larsen, 30.1.51. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 13, G 577-14, Supp. F, Vol. 2. Comments that “no coercion” of Inuit to move would be acceptable.

<sup>231</sup> Robertson to Nicholson, 8.5.56. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. Nor was the notion of getting Inuit agreement confined to these issues. It also applied to U.S. activities in the North. A 1954 draft Aide Memoire on plans to construct a Loran station at Cape Christian on Baffin Island notes as one of the conditions that:

If the location of any new construction, including roads, should Interfere with Eskimo camp sites,

- (vi) Some note should also be taken of the fact that Inuit groups and individuals were also able, and did in fact, indicate a willingness to move – well before alleged pressure came from the RCMP. A year before the moves from Inukjuak, two families (mentioned by name) from the area indicated to the Officer-in-Charge of the Eastern Arctic Patrol that they were willing to move to the High Arctic and that eight other families were also interested. One of the families (from (“Fatty’s”) camp) mentioned in 1952 then, in fact, relocated in 1953.<sup>232</sup> Hinds reported that [“Fatty’s”) camp was willing to move in March 1953 well before Gibson visited the camps.<sup>233</sup> Other Inuit insisted on moving despite the Department “having done everything we could to dissuade him from making the move ... However, Idlout is apparently determined to go and we cannot very well refuse him the opportunity.” (This was a request by two families of 13 people to move to Resolute from Pond Inlet in 1954.)
- (vii) There were, however, two references in the archival documents suggesting that if Inuit were unwilling to move they might still be forced to do so.

The first was a suggestion by the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1952 that if Inuit were reluctant to move to better hunting areas, the legal provisions of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Programme (Act) should be implemented with respect to them as well. Under this Act farmers could be, and some were, ordered to leave their land and were transported to alternate nearby farming areas or to other provinces. Most did so voluntarily. Between 1937 and 1950, 263 farm families were moved, 118 from one province to another. The CWS proposal was not even discussed by the Department and was not its policy.<sup>234</sup>

A more disturbing case involved Cunningham in an uncharacteristically dictatorial mood. In June 1956 the perennial issue of moving the Ennadai Lake Inuit came up again. Robertson, in discussing the proposal, says, “As a preliminary, it is necessary to ascertain whether the Ennadai Lake natives would agree to this proposed change.”<sup>235</sup> However, Cunningham used a very different tone in a letter to Larsen discussing what to do about the situation. He wanted representatives of the three organizations concerned (the Department, the RCMP and the HBC) to be present at a meeting to discuss a proposal to move the Inuit to Padlei where a trading post rather than departmental flights would service their needs:

...We think it is very desirable that representatives of the three organizations concerned should be present during these discussions with the Eskimos, so that they may thoroughly understand the situation and be made to realize that they cannot expect the government to provide them with free transportation, storage, handling, in short, most of the services provided by traders to other Eskimos groups and charged for. We are afraid that if the

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burial grounds, or other Eskimo Interests, the agreement of the local Eskimo community will be secured. if it is necessary to Interfere with burial grounds, the United States will be responsible for the removal of the remains and their reinterment at locations acceptable to Eskimo community.

11.5.53, MG 30, E 133, Series V, Vol. 294, Files ACND, Vol. 1 to 31, Dec. 1953.

<sup>232</sup> See also request of Inuit on Cape Hope Island and Factory River to be moved to Akimski Island because of starvation, 14.4.55. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2.

<sup>233</sup> “Extracts”, 16.3.53. RG 85, Vol. 1072, File 252-3(4).

<sup>234</sup> Smart (CWS) from Tener (Mammalogist) and Solman (Chief Biologist), 4.6.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3. “Fifteenth Annual Report on ... PFR Act, etc.”, 31.3.50, Department of Agriculture.

<sup>235</sup> Robertson to Nicholson 8.6.56. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 14, File G 577-14, Pt. 3.

situation at Ennadai Lake continues, the government will be subjected to further (sic) and increasing criticism from air carriers and traders alike. However, our success in countering unfair criticism is likely to be greater if we make sure that matters such as this free servicing of Ennadai are discontinued as soon as satisfactory alternative (sic) can be found. I realize that the alternative I propose may not be satisfactory to the Eskimos, but in this case I don't think the government should give undue consideration to the imagined convenience of this small and perverse group of ex-Padleimiuts who have apparently become used to, and fond of, free help from the Ennadai radio station.<sup>236</sup>

Larsen, however, disagreed with this approach and in a terse note on June 27, 1955 replied, "You will understand that Sgt. Rothery (the local officer) will not be able to exercise any pressure on this group of Eskimos regarding their move."<sup>237</sup>

The same day, Larsen requested the Officer Commanding "D" Division:

Would you kindly instruct Sgt. Rothery not to use any undue influence to help persuade the Eskimos concerned to move to Padlei. However, in the event that this group are willing to make the move we should do everything possible to assist them in the same.<sup>238</sup>

In July 1955, Larsen informed Cunningham that the Ennadai Inuit had refused, "... to consider the proposal that they move to Padlei. In view of the stand they have taken, I cannot see that we can take any action but accede to their wishes and leave them remain (sic) at Ennadai, as to use force or pressure to make them move to Padlei is out of the question."<sup>239</sup>

Soberman has also raised the important question of whether the Inuit appreciated the risks they were taking in going to the High Arctic and believes they did not and that, furthermore, the civil servants knew, or should reasonably have known, that the Inuit did not appreciate the risks. He adds:

... to ask people to make essential decisions about their future without adequate information is to deny them the freedom to choose: to persuade the Inuit to participate in the relocation project, entailing risks of which they were unaware, was to diminish substantially their power to make decisions over their own lives.<sup>240</sup>

Few would disagree with these reasonable and compassionate sentiments. However, they have a 1990s tone and sensibility which cannot be applied to the 1950s in an uncompromising fashion. The same criticism that Soberman makes of the relocations can be applied a hundred-fold to the huge numbers of Inuit moved to the south, for years at a time, confined in lonely and alienating TB hospitals. The Inuit could, until the NWT Ordinances were changed, have refused to move to these hospitals. Most did not. Few had any idea of what their treatment would be like, what its risks were and what impact it would have (often devastating) on the family they left behind. Most had no idea of what the hospitals would be like or what the city it was located in would be. They had to make decisions about their future without "full" or completely adequate information and their

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<sup>236</sup> Cunningham to Larsen, 8.6.55. *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> Larsen to Cunningham, 27.6.55, *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> Larsen to O/C, "D" Division, 27.6.55. *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> Larsen to Cunningham, 11.7.55. *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Soberman*, p. 53.

freedom to choose was very circumscribed.

Essentially, they chose as anyone does with limited knowledge. They went on trust. They had as little understanding of the medical treatment of TB as the average Canadian has of nuclear fission. Ultimately, they went to desolate lives in southern sanatoria because they believed the doctors knew what they are doing. They trusted the experts, realising or accepting that if they stayed with their families there was a danger of wider infection. The separations did result in a 90 percent reduction in death rates by 1954 but at a horrendous personal and psychological cost.<sup>241</sup>

The RCMP were the people the Inuit turned to when they needed help and protection. This is not to make angels of them. Some could be overbearing, abrasive and out of their element as latent social scientists.<sup>242</sup> However, their reports and the views of observers suggest that they generally did take their designated role of ensuring the welfare of the Inuit and protecting them from white exploitation with great seriousness – among these would be Gibson, Sargent and Moodie. There were highly dedicated members among them and many still retained some of the characteristics of the earlier generations of RCMP whom MacKinnon characterised as, “... trained and moulded to behave in a certain way. These isolated men took pride and identity from serving something larger than themselves.”<sup>243</sup>

Environment, the need to hunt for a living, the impact of colonisation and minimal formal skills in dealing with the 20th Century had already reduced the Inuit “freedom to choose” to a fraction of what it was for other Canadians. They were the great survivors of the 20th century and to do so they used both their extraordinary skills for coping in a harsh environment and also by clinging to whatever life rafts were available, such as the RCMP.

Setting up an abstract, inappropriate standard of comprehensive knowledge and freedom of choice – a legal fiction more appropriate to an educated urbanite of the 1990s, is setting up something of a straw man.

The Inuit were neither incapacitated nor were they sophisticated urbanites. But they were able to make reasonable choices about what would be to their benefit. They probably made those choices in terms of four factors. The first was that they trusted the RCMP and believed that they knew what they were doing. The second was that the RCMP would be at the new locations to help and assist them. The third was the promises that were made to them. Promises of better game conditions, of housing that would be provided and in one instance, at least, that they would be provided a boat.<sup>244</sup> They were, in short, promised that their material lives would be

<sup>241</sup> C.S. MacKinnon, “Keewatin, 1893-1963: Some Aspects of Government Policy Towards the Caribou Inuit”. Mimeo., nd., 4:5.

<sup>242</sup> D. Wilkinson, “A Vanishing Canadian”, *The Beaver*, Outfit 289, 1959, p. 28. For an example of the better kind of dedicated RCMP officer see the reports of Constable Van Norman who was at Frobisher Bay in the early 1950s noted earlier. For other views on the RCMP in the North, see M. Freeman, “Tolerance and Rejection of Patron Roles in an Eskimo Settlement”, in R. Paine, ed. *Patrons and Brokers in the Eastern Arctic*, 1971, pp. 34-53. Freeman cites other studies dealing with the RCMP.

<sup>243</sup> MacKinnon, *Ibid.*, 2:5. These three RCMP officers were the key figures in the early years at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord.

<sup>244</sup> Shortly after their arrival at Craig Harbour, Constable Sargent wrote Larsen stating that (“Fatty”), the “camp boss”, had told Sargent that he had been promised the use of the RCMP’s small power boat. Sargent wanted to check with

better. Fourth, they were promised that they could return within a reasonable time (whether, one, two or three years is somewhat uncertain), if they did not approve the new location. This in part is what the Makivik letter of March 23, 1987 also said.

## Conclusion

- 1) The language used to describe why they joined the relocations by the people who participated indicates they were asked if they would go on a voluntary basis – not forced to go – and that they agreed to go willingly. Not all did so for the same reasons or with the same level of comprehension. It must also be recalled that households were indivisible and leaders of camps played an important role in group decision.
- 2) There were cases in the 1950s where undue pressure may have been used to persuade Inuit to carry out actions they did not agree with but which the Department or the RCMP felt were for their own good.” However, the evidence found suggests that the need to obtain voluntary cooperation was overwhelmingly a fundamental matter of policy both within the Department and the RCMP. Moreover, Larsen, who was in charge of the operational side of the relocation, showed that when there was a discussion of the possibility of using undue pressure in another project he would have nothing to do with it and made special efforts to ensure that none of his officers would engage in any “arm twisting.” Officers did seem to have had some leeway in pressuring people to move short distances from settlements when these became overpopulated in the view of the officers. This may have been done in a high handed way.
- 3) The Inuit who went to the High Arctic were neither helpless pawns in the hands of the RCMP nor were they equipped to make a “fully informed” decision on the basis of complete information about what the environment and circumstances of their new lives would be. Nor did they go on a fully informed basis despite the efforts of Gibson, Stevenson and, particularly, Hinds, who made what they regarded as serious efforts to prepare the settlers for what to expect. It should be noted, however, that the idea of moving to the High Arctic was not new to the Inukjuak area since anywhere from two to ten families had indicated an interest in moving the year before the relocations took place.
- 4) The Hickling Report quotes one of the original participants as saying, “We did not really know where we were going till we got there” and notes that this is probably an accurate account of the level of understanding at the time.<sup>245</sup> I agree. The fact that their understanding of the project was far from complete does not mean that it was non-voluntary nor that it was an unreasonable decision to make. The situation at Inukjuak was harsh and marginal, the “Eskimo economy” had collapsed and the RCMP promised that they would be able to get more game, more furs, housing, and in one instance, use of a power boat (available to very few Inukjuak Inuit). As will be seen in a later chapter, the people who moved were among the poorest of the poor in the district. They were also promised that they could return home after a few years if they did not like the project. They were promised the constant presence of an RCMP detachment which would also have been a considerable reassurance. They were probably told (this is

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Larsen whether this was indeed true. Sargent to Larsen 5.9.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5. See also same file, Director to Larsen, 14.4.54; Larsen to Director, 21.4.54; and Sargent to “G” Division, 25.9.54

<sup>245</sup> Hickling, pp. 26-27.



surmise) that there would be other Inuit there who knew the environment and who could help them adjust. It is reasonable to conclude that in these terms they understood and were interested in participating in the project.<sup>246</sup> Given their material circumstances this might well have been a sensible choice.

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<sup>246</sup> Loc cit.

## CHAPTER 8

### “A HUMAN EXPERIMENT?”

Grant says that the relocation project:

... evolved into what some have charged were “human experiments” or tests of adaptability and adjustment. References similar to the above appear in a variety of correspondence, minutes, memos and reports throughout 1953 and into the next spring indicating the above statements were not one individual’s interpretation or an unfortunate choice of words.<sup>247</sup>

Later, she shifts ground somewhat and says that for the most part “experiment” was employed in the context of a “pilot study.” She claims that by March 1954 references to the word “experiment” had virtually disappeared, abruptly and without explanation.<sup>248</sup> In any case, for Grant and a number of other commentators, the fact that the relocations were referred to as “experiments” is another indication of the inhumanity they involved.

Grant adds that the use of this word by the Department officials “indicated apparent ignorance of responsibilities as set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948)”, and at another point maintains that “Once the Inuit set foot on the boat, they were locked into a controlled experiment of which they had no means of escape for two years (according to their understanding).”<sup>249</sup>

This in turn has led to suggestions that in carrying out the “experiment” the principles which were laid down at the trial of Nazi concentration camp doctors for war crimes at Nuremberg in 1947, and now known as the “Nuremberg Code”, should have been applied to the project.

Since they were not, the implication is that there was something of a parallel between these projects and the horrendous doctors’ experiments at Nazi concentration camps.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Grant, p. 12.

<sup>248</sup> This is factually incorrect - the term was still much in use as late as 1958.

<sup>249</sup> Grant, p. 12 and 15. We do not know whether officials were ignorant of the UN Declaration of Human Rights or not. Grant seems to be unaware of Article 29(2) which officials might have called on to justify their policies.

<sup>250</sup> These suggestions were made in the CBC program Quirks and Quarks, September 28, 1991, “A Long Dark Winter in Canadian History”. This was a very poorly researched programme (if it was researched at all), and the source that they used for some of these claims, A. Orkin, had apparently done no documentary research whatsoever. It is also apparent that Orkin has not the slightest idea of the animal and marine ecology of the High Arctic. The principles laid down at the Nuremberg Trials do not refer to nor are they applicable to all public policies. They refer to controlled medical experiments, using the word “control” here in the normal sense that social scientists use it, rather than in the looser Grant usage. For instance, the Nuremberg Code states that an experiment should be designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and a knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study; that no experiment should be conducted where there is reason to believe that disabling injury will occur except perhaps in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects. In other words, the Code is designed for an entirely different set of circumstances from those evoked, arbitrarily in my view, by the CBC. Orkin and the CBC have decided that this was comparable to a medical experiment and, therefore, a Code applicable to medical experiments applied in this instance. The logic is as torturous as the factual basis is tenuous. “Medical

There is no evidence in the documentation that would support this kind of guilt by association. Different meanings of the word “experiment” are used by these critics of the relocation project and the officials in the 1950s.

First, no one during that period used the term “human experiments.” This is Grant’s phrase. The assumption seems to be that since the officials referred to the relocations as “experiments” and since human beings were involved, they could therefore be called “human experiments.” Since “human experiments” had connotations of science on the one hand and the concentration camp doctors on the other, the officials in the 1950s were, therefore, engaging either in a “controlled” (scientific) experiment (Grant), or in some equivalent of the concentration camp doctors’ experiments during World War II (*Quirks and Quarks*).<sup>251</sup> This is an unwarranted and uninformed set of assumptions.

Second, the term “experiment” was used throughout the period, in the vernacular sense of ascertaining something by experience, a project which was provisional and tentative in nature, as dictionaries define it. Nor was this a “controlled experiment”, not in the sense the term is used in the social sciences. Perhaps the relocations come close to what are called observational studies, although, in fact, all these terms are simply inappropriate to the policies carried out in the period 1952-1953. These were pragmatic, *ad hoc* and experiential projects. There was nothing scientific about them nor was there any intention of trying to be scientific. “Patience and flexibility, revision in the light of experience, and trial again were the policy of the day.”<sup>252</sup>

The term was something of a fad word in the 1950s documentation, and listed below are a sample of some of the ways it was used:

- An experiment to have the Houstons (a married couple who made an important contribution to the handicraft industry in the North) do a certain amount of school teaching at Cape Dorset and in Eskimo camps outside of that settlement (7.5.52).<sup>253</sup>
- An experiment to create a small fishery plant at Port Burwell (9.6.50).<sup>254</sup>
- An experiment to utilize synthetic nylon clothing in the Arctic because of a declining availability of caribou skins (18.1.51).<sup>255</sup>
- An experiment to establish an “Eskimo Rehabilitation Centre” at Driftpile for Inuit TB patients (various references, 17.10.52).<sup>256</sup>
- An experiment for paying Inuit wages by cheque (14.10.52).<sup>257</sup>

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Experiments on Human Subjects” by S.M. Waddams, *Faculty of Law Review*, Vol. 25, May 1967, pp. 25-60.

<sup>251</sup> Two of the Inuit who appeared before the Parliamentary Committee expanded on this saying that “experiment” implied to them a doctor’s experiment to see if white mice lived or died and that the term meant that they had been used like laboratory animals. They were, in my view, rightly horrified at the idea. *Parliamentary Committee*. 22:12;13;10 and 16.

<sup>252</sup> R. Diubaldo, *The Government of Canada and the Inuit 1900-1967*. Mimeo., 1985, p. 138.

<sup>253</sup> RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>257</sup> RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

- An experiment to help disabled Inuit “adapt” at Rideau Centre, Ottawa (31.7.53).
- An experiment to make concrete blocks as part of vocational training for former T.B. patients (20.10.53).<sup>258</sup>
- An experiment at Fort Churchill where five Fort Chimo and two Keewatin men were “adapting” to training for work at the military base (20.10.53).<sup>259</sup>
- Another experiment in job training and “adaptability” involving 38 men from Fort Chimo sent to Fort Churchill (20.10.55).<sup>260</sup>
- An experiment to pay teachers in a new way. (18.12.53).<sup>261</sup>
- A “modest” experiment to resettle people in Southern Canada (13.5.57).<sup>262</sup>
- An experiment to develop better housing (26.5.58).<sup>263</sup>
- A “radical” experiment to possibly establish a community on the west coast of Hudson Bay for the Henik Lake people (26.5.58).<sup>264</sup>

The word “experiment” was applied to any and every project of which the outcome was uncertain or to anything that was being tried for the first time. It meant to the planners that these were all in the nature of tentative pilot projects. It is unfortunate that the loose terminology used by Grant has allowed this to be built into a claim that “human experimentation” took place with overtones linking them to Nazi death camps. Certainly, no such experimentation took place, nor was it intended, as is apparent from an examination of the archive documents. The critics cited have built the common sense, vernacular use of the word “experiment” used at the time into an image of planners who engaged in the calculated “scientific” manipulation of human beings. This was neither the intent of the planners nor is it what they in fact did.

This does raise the related question as to whether there was any discernible policy making “method” that the Department used at the time. To the degree there was it can be called an “emergency” incrementalism. No one, however, specifically articulated an approach in these terms. There are two documents which set out considerations about how policy might or could be made, at the time. In one instance, Dr. P.E. Moore, the Director of Indian Health Services in the early 1950s, discussed options for a proposal to set up an Inuit Rehabilitation Centre for patients released from hospital after TB treatment who needed more convalescent care before returning to their home communities. Moore notes that there were “two” methods that could be used in the development of a new program “with such far reaching ramifications as a rehabilitation plan.” Either there could be a “highly refined” plan going into every possible detail of site, buildings, equipment, “which will take months or years to formulate” or alternatively, “We make a modest pilot project and learn more of the points which will have to receive attention at the same time as the final plan is being perfected.” Noting that they were faced with the immediate need for a home for handicapped patients and “appreciating fully that a new

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<sup>258</sup> RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> RG 22, Vol. 270, File 40-8-1, Pt. 6. (Montreal Gazette)

<sup>261</sup> RG 2, Vol. 2653, File Oct.14 - Dec. 29, 1953.

<sup>262</sup> Minutes, Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 13.5.57. RG 22, Vol. 335, File 40-8-19.

<sup>263</sup> Minutes, Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 26.5.58. Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

endeavour inevitably improves with experience”, he urged immediate implementation of the scheme.<sup>265</sup>

This describes quite well, in my view, the general approach the Department took to the twenty-five or so projects developed in 1952-1953 to alleviate economic conditions in the Arctic.

A second insight into the policy making perspectives of the Ottawa planners is provided by a discussion which took place during the Ninth Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs in May 1958. Despite the fact that it occurred under a Deputy Minister with far greater resources than were available in 1953 and who was himself committed to a more integrated (synoptic) approach to policy making, it nevertheless gives an indication of the kind of thinking that occurred in 1953. In response to the tragedies at Henik and Garry Lakes that year, the Department was considering setting up a community on the west coast of Hudson Bay where people adapted to the sea culture would assist the inland Caribou Inuit to establish a new life. The Department had “misgivings in undertaking so radical an experiment” and asked the advice of the Committee. At the conclusion of the discussion Robertson said:

... the situation in the Keewatin was so precarious that the Administration was justified in taking a chance and going ahead ... There would be risks no matter what was done, and it was certain that some action would have to be taken immediately. He added, however, that the plan could be undertaken only with adequate resources to operate it. To attempt the project without adequate financial backing would probably result only in failure. (my emphasis)<sup>266</sup>

Later that year, Robertson again raised the issue of whether more settlements should go ahead before there was field sources of resources. He notes that the two High Arctic Settlements were established and succeeded without a survey. He asks: “Might it not be a good idea to do one (a relocation) in 1959 on the same basis? Things are so bad in some H.B. (Hudson Bay) areas, that the Eskimos would not be worse off.”<sup>267</sup>

## Conclusion

The relocations were neither “human” experimentation of the sort medical research engages in, nor of the kind that gave rise to the Nuremberg Code in the first place. They were pilot projects – attempts to find ways of ameliorating a deteriorating situation in “Eskimo Land.” The appropriate criterion for judging these projects is not the methods of a medical laboratory but rather how well and responsibly they were carried out given the resources available at the time.

Anyone who has even a slight awareness of the archival documentation will find the charges by Orkin and Ingram in “Quirks and Quarks”, linking the relocations to Nazi concentration camp-type medical experiments, quite astonishing. One can only conclude that it is based on non-existent or shoddy research. One can disagree with whether the relocations should have taken place in the first instance or how good or bad the preparations were, but to link all this with the death camps is dishonest and irresponsible.

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<sup>265</sup> Moore to Young, 24.3.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>266</sup> Minutes Ninth Meeting, 26.5.58. RG 22, Vol. 335, File 40-8-19. In any event, this project never reached the planning stage.

<sup>267</sup> Cunningham to Sivertz, 27.6.58. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 4.

## CHAPTER 9

### PREPARATIONS

The preliminary preparations, for the relocations which started in October 1952, have been discussed in an earlier chapter. This chapter discusses:

- (i) the stated objectives of the projects and whether they concealed the “real” goals of the exercise;
- (ii) the orders for the trading stores and whether these were appropriate and placed in a timely fashion by experienced officials;
- (iii) the search for volunteers and who was chosen;
- (iv) whether the volunteers got adequate support and preparation for the trip;
- (v) the separation of the groups;
- (iv) what happened when the groups arrived at Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour and reports on the first year at each settlement;
- (vii) criticisms of the way the projects were implemented;
- (viii) the adequacy or otherwise of the supplies provided;
- (ix) the issue of employment at Resolute Bay;
- (x) the transportation problems which resulted in supplies not arriving at Resolute Bay;
- (xi) whether the time was sufficient to interview the volunteers;
- (xii) alleged discriminatory treatment of the Inuit passengers on the C.D. Howe;
- (xiii) whether the Inuit received inadequate assistance. when they arrived at the new settlements;
- (xiv) whether the planners lacked sufficient knowledge about the settlers’ needs;
- (xv) the alleged conflicts between the RCMP and the Department;
- (xvi) the special situation at Grise Fiord in the first year;
- (xvii) the Marshall criticisms;
- (xviii) other critics – Ripley, Stead and Sivertz; and
- (xix) conclusions.

#### **Objectives**

The chronology of events was taken up to December 1952 in a previous chapter. The next stage of the planning involved sending an RCMP staff sergeant to Resolute Bay to check on the possibility of housing and jobs for Inuit who might be moved there. This was probably in January 1953, since his report was under discussion by early February of that year. On February 20, 1953, Young wrote Nicholson:

I wish to thank you for the copy of Staff Sergeant Kearney’s report on Resolute Bay enclosed with

your letter of the 2nd of February.

As you are aware, we have been giving consideration to the possibility of transferring a few Eskimo families from overpopulated areas to places in the high Arctic, including Craig Harbour, the proposed detachment site at Cape Herschel, and Resolute Bay. It would be possible to establish these small settlements only with your co-operation as there is no one else at these places who could assist these people in adjusting themselves to new conditions.

You have a detachment at Craig Harbour, and I understand you intend to put one at Cape Herschel this year. There is none at Resolute Bay at present, but I understand the meteorological people would like very much to see a detachment reopened there. We could not consider placing Eskimos at Resolute Bay unless we had someone to look after them and direct their activities.

The latter then replied on February 24th:

We did have a man stationed at Resolute for a time but moved him a year ago because there was no work for him to do except arbitrate disputes...

It is, however, an entirely different matter if some native families are to be moved to Resolute. In that case I would be quite willing to select a good man and have him stationed there with the specific job of taking care of the natives. He might even be able to encourage some hunting and trapping on their part and handle their furs for them.<sup>268</sup>

The subsequent events were as follows:

Fifteen "Assisted Eskimo Projects" were submitted for approval to the Department Deputy Minister on March 16, 1953; nine of these were specifically directed at northern Quebec. In the interests of "improving the Eskimo economy" the memorandum proposed approval for (extracts):<sup>269</sup>

Loan Project No. 1 – Cape Herschel

The R.C.M. Police will establish a detachment at Cape Herschel on the east coast of Ellesmere Island to police a region where Greenland natives have from time to time been hunting on Canadian territory. Native food supplies are reported to be plentiful. There are no Canadian Eskimos in the region and it is planned to move in five Eskimo families from over-populated depressed areas and establish them in the native way of life under the direction of the R.C.M. Police...

As there is no trading post at Cape Herschel a year's stock of supplies for the natives will have to be provided in care of the R.C.M. Police. It is proposed to finance the purchase of these supplies under a loan issued to a leading Eskimo In the Group...

Loan Project No. 2 – Craig Harbour

This project is similar to Project 1. Five Eskimo families would be established under the R.C.M. Police to live off the country where native food supplies are reported to be good...

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<sup>268</sup> Young to Nicholson, 20.2.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>269</sup> "Assisted Eskimo Projects". Cunningham to Deputy Minister, 16.3.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3. The costs of equipment and transportation were covered by an item in the estimates - Transportation of Eskimos and under Relief. Then loans were provided under the Eskimo Loan Fund, to be discussed in a later chapter.

Loan Project No. 3 – Resolute Bay

It has been tentatively agreed with the R.C.M. Police that if we will move five Eskimo families to Resolute Bay they will reopen their detachment there to supervise the Eskimos and maintain law and order in a settlement where there are four different organizations, each with its own senior officer, and many transient visitors.

The Meteorological Service could offer permanent employment to at least one Eskimo to learn to replace one of their mechanics and might employ one or two others on semi-skilled jobs. All could be employed on menial jobs but, except in summer, we prefer at least part of the group to hunt and trap after the native way so that the children of employed Eskimos can learn the native way of life with them...

The above three projects have as their object:

- a) relief of population pressure in distressed areas.
- b) a pioneer experiment to determine if Eskimos can be induced to live on the northern islands which, relics indicate, once supported a native population.
- c) an experiment to work out a method by which Eskimos may be trained to replace white employees in the north without the Eskimo children losing touch with the native way of life.
- d) if these projects warrant it, more natives can be moved north both to these pioneer points and to other points to be selected later.

Also included under the heading of "Projects Under Relief" were:

Port Harrison-Sleeper Islands

The region around Port Harrison is over-populated in relation to the available country resources. Food supplies from the sea are scarce but white foxes are usually plentiful in good years. Relief costs are high in poor fur years and with low fox prices some unsuccessful trappers are unable to support their families even in good fur years.

For several years it has been the policy to assist indigent Eskimo to earn part of their living on the chains of outer islands 100 miles or so out in Hudson Bay where seals are plentiful. In 1951-1952, fifty-five Eskimos were outfitted to ...winter on the Sleeper Islands. In 1952-53, thirty-five Eskimos went to the Sleeper Islands.

Port Harrison – King George Islands

Twenty-five natives wintered successfully on King George Islands ... It is proposed to continue this project next fall.

Port Harrison – Richmond Gulf

Four Eskimo families from Port Harrison were assisted last summer to move south to Richmond Gulf where sea food is plentiful... While there is little prospect that these people will be able to produce much in the way of trade goods, they are able to secure country food supplies which reduces the cost of relief and benefits their morale... It is proposed to continue this project if it works out well this winter.



Grant believes that objective (a), “merely (sic) gives a legitimate reason for the funding” and (d), “verifies that the unwritten sovereignty objective was still the underlining rationale....” That is, the whole operation was something of an elaborate conspiracy to cover up the real reason for the relocations. Elsewhere she says, “The ability to fund arctic resettlement would require a legitimate (sic) reason... the meagre food and fur supplies... at Inukjuak provided the opportunity.” This kind of conspiracy theory is difficult to disprove since, in essence, the less the evidence the more convinced the “conspiratorialist” becomes that a cover up has taken place. What is absent in evidence is provided by a dubious deductive logic. Thus Grant says: “Aside from the RCMP, it is unlikely that any department would list a budget item under ‘sovereignty’...”, hence the need for a “legitimate” reason like destitution in northern Quebec.<sup>270</sup>

While there may not have been budget items under this rubric, there were certainly many internal discussions on expenditures related directly to sovereignty objectives. For example, every single meeting of the ACND in 1953, seven meetings in all, had a discussion of some item which involved expenditures on sovereignty. These were explicitly discussed as such and ranged from the need for two new ice breakers (“for transport independent of the U.S.”) to the appointment of 30-odd customs and immigration officers in the North. Departments were quite willing to use the word “sovereignty” when it was applicable. Defending sovereignty was nothing to be ashamed of. However, there is no such mention in the case of the relocations. Instead, the documents repeat, *ad nauseam*, that their purpose was to ameliorate conditions of scarcity and over-population. To accept Grant’s thesis, these statements must all be regarded as some elaborate internal justification ritual while the “real” reason was never put to paper.

On the second objective she says, “The idea of returning to a “native way of life” is a romantic fantasy at best or a “form of apartheid” at worst.” This is an overly simplistic, basically incorrect interpretation of the objective. As noted earlier, none of the key planners in the relocation exercise believed in “returning” people to a “native” way of life. As Larsen and a number of the others said, the native way of life had been irretrievably changed by the fur trade and the intrusion of white civilization. All the plans for the relocations stress the opportunities for better fur trading as well as more plentiful country food and jobs. The people moving north would be receiving income from several sources, furs, wages, relief when needed, Family Allowances, Old Age Assistance, Old Age Security and possibly Blind Pensions. It is difficult to see this as some kind of “return to the native way of life.”<sup>271</sup> Moreover, neither the second objective nor any other key documents ever use the words a “return” to a “native way of life” in the sense of “turning the clock back.” If the meaning of the term refers to a life of hunting and trapping then there was nothing to return to since the people involved were already hunters and trappers. The documents state that the purpose of this exercise was to find ways of enhancing this way of making a livelihood.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> *Grant*, p. 13. Despite the large number of references from 1950 on to the need to move people because of scarce resources and population pressures, Grant says concern about these matters was a “sudden switch of emphasis” in early 1953. *Loc cit.*

<sup>271</sup> “Memorandum to RCMP Detachments Regarding Operations at Eskimo Settlements at Craig Harbour, Cape Herschel and Resolute Bay”, prepared by Stevenson, probably April 1953, revised version issued to RCMP in August 1953. As will be noted later, the section on employment at Resolute was excluded from the final draft because of RCAF objections to the project which emerged in June and July 1953. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File, 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>272</sup> *Grant*, p. 13.

Grant also believes that there were many other possibilities for solving the socio-economic problems at Inukjuak and then lists all the other projects intended for the NWT, as the Assisted Eskimo Projects for 1953, as examples of what might have been done. Some of these, such as the transfer to Banks Island and a workshop at Aklavik, would hardly have helped in Northern Quebec. Other projects were such that if the High Arctic resettlement had not taken place it would have reduced opportunities for economic improvement generally. If the 34 people who went to the High Arctic had instead, for example, gone to the Sleeper Islands, this would have meant that 35 or more people slated for the Islands would have been displaced and required to stay on the mainland with its circumscribed opportunities. The other projects mentioned were paper plans only and thus not available in 1953, e.g., reindeer herding. Grant states that none of these other projects would have left the Inuit "to fend for themselves" as occurred at Grise Fiord in the first two years. Unfortunately, in fact, the Inuit on the Sleeper Islands, King George Islands and Richmond Gulf were left to fend for themselves. In all these cases they were farther from the RCMP post than were the people at Grise Fiord. Not only were they more distant and inaccessible, they did not have one detachment entirely concerned with their welfare and available in case of emergency as was the case at Grise Fiord.<sup>273</sup>

### **Orders for the Trading Stores**

Grant says that on May 15, 1953, "Orders for a long list of goods (which) were identical for the three posts, with only the ammunition order held back pending reports on the type of guns owned by the Inuit" were sent by Cantley to Packwood (responsible for equipment and supplies in the Department). Grant believes that this was a sign of the inadequate preparations since there was no knowledge of "who, how many, or the state of their equipment."<sup>274</sup>

Actually, the orders were sent to Packwood on April 28, 1953. On May 15, Cantley, showing both his expertise in spelling and the specific type of equipment that he wanted, corrected the list of orders that had been sent out earlier. Grant is apparently unaware that the lists of goods prepared by Cantley were also sent on April 29 to Larsen with the request that he comment on their adequacy.<sup>275</sup> She in fact claims that the police were not consulted and cites this as another indication of inadequate planning.

It is difficult to fathom why all this is a sign of "inadequate planning." Why Cantley, who had decades of experience in the two major northern trading companies, should have been unable adequately to plan supplies for groups of five families for a year is unclear. Larsen, too, would have been helpful since the RCMP had to plan annual supplies for its detachments which usually included two families of Inuit Special Constables. Moreover, Cantley was planning on the basis of five families to each of the three settlements and if there were fewer families, as turned out to be the case, there would be more than sufficient supplies. The purchase forms show that care was taken in ordering items. Cantley, as his letters show, was a stickler for the precise items he wanted. This was not a hasty or pro forma exercise. The key issue of providing the right kind of ammunition for the specific type of guns people had does not seem unreasonable as the only personalised items ordered. All the other items, tent materials, cooking pots, utensils, traps, would be more generally usable by all families.

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<sup>273</sup> Grant, p. 14.

<sup>274</sup> Cantley to Packwood. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File, 251-4. Pt. 1; Grant, p. 18.

<sup>275</sup> Cunningham to Larsen, 29.4.53. Ibid. The list was apparently hand delivered to Larsen.

Furthermore, Stevenson pointed out in the instructions given to the RCMP that after a year of experience with the adequacy of the supplies it would be their task to improve on them if need be.<sup>276</sup>

Cantley then proceeded with further orders for supplies which were to come from various shippers in Quebec and the West with the requirement that the fifteen tons of supplies that were going to the three settlements had to be delivered between July 26 and July 30 at Churchill with a sailing date of August 8, 1953. In early June, orders for mattresses and additional chemical toilets required on the C.D. Howe were also sent out.<sup>277</sup> All supplies seem to have arrived, on time.

### **Search for Volunteers**

The same day the projects were approved, on March 16, 1953, Hinds wrote Cunningham to say that while another camp leader, Inukpuk, would not likely go north, "I understand that Fatty wants to go... (he) has two excellent sons and I think it would be good to have them in the party."<sup>278</sup>

The moves to the High Arctic had apparently been discussed as early as the spring of 1952 according to an April 1953 wire from Cunningham to the Inukjuak RCMP asking for volunteers:

Officers of Resources and Development Department discussed with Constable McRae last spring and also with Miss Hinds in Ottawa recently suggestion to move out ten families from Port Harrison to Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands by C.D. Howe this summer. Understand several families expressed willingness to go. If they are still interested, please wire names and disc numbers of hunters, number of dependants and relationships of families involved, also give particulars of boats, calibres of rifles and other major equipment owned and also number of dogs to be transferred. Conditions in High Arctic should be carefully explained to natives. Some may find temporary or permanent employment but majority will have to hunt and trap for a living.<sup>279</sup>

Moreover, what is worth noting is that the moves to Cornwallis and Ellesmere were discussed in Ottawa well before March 16, 1953, with Hinds who, by that date, was already suggesting possible volunteers. Grant's suggestion that the Resolute Bay proposal flowed directly from the ACND meeting of that day is further undermined as is the alleged significance of the fact that Resolute Bay was not mentioned in the March 16, 1953 draft report (to ACND) of RCMP activities in the North, but was mentioned in the March 31 final version.

The same day, April 8, 1953, Cunningham also sought volunteers from Pond Inlet:

In connection with plans being made to transfer Eskimos from northern Quebec and southern Baffin Island to Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands this season understand Idlout previously expressed desire to go to Ellesmere. If he still wishes to go there to hunt and trap please wire names of hunters who would accompany him... If Idlout is not interested can you suggest one or two other men who would be qualified to assist newcomers in adjusting themselves to conditions in High Arctic.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> "Memorandum to RCMP etc...." nd. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>277</sup> Cantley to Packwood and Meikel, 12.6.53 and 8.6.53. RG 85, Vol. 80, File 201-1(28).

<sup>278</sup> "Extract", 16.3.53. RG 85, Vol. 1072, File, 252-3 (4). We do not know when this letter arrived.

<sup>279</sup> Cunningham to Constable-in-Charge, 8.4.53. Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Cunningham to Officer-in-Charge, 8.4.53. Ibid.

Three similar but not identical telegrams were sent by Larsen to the detachments at Fort Chimo, Pond Inlet and "Port Harrison" asking for volunteers. The wires to the latter two sites were identical except for the numbers of volunteers sought (three rather than five families from Pond Inlet). The telegrams are of considerable interest.

#### Port Harrison

It is suggested by Director, Northern Administration to move this summer on the C.D. Howe from Port Harrison detachment area, four Eskimo families to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island and three families to Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island to hunt and trap for a living under supervision of R.C.M. Police detachments. Please ascertain whether any families are willing to go and if so wire names and identification numbers and numbers of dependents and relationships of families involved. Also give particulars of boats, calibers of rifles and other major equipment owned and number of dogs. Conditions on Ellesmere Island should be carefully explained particularly complete dark period of two months and other short days and only annual visits by supply ship... Pond Inlet detachment being asked to name three families and Fort Chimo detachment five families. Final distribution of all fifteen families will be five each at Craig Harbour, Cape Herschel and Resolute Bay. The heads of families should be good energetic hunters. Families will be brought back home at end of one year if they so desire.<sup>281</sup> (my emphases)

The wire to Fort Chimo was somewhat different:

It is suggested by Director, Northern Administration to move five Eskimo families this summer on C.D. Howe from Fort Chimo detachment area to live at Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island N.W.T. where they can possibly get permanent employment at air base and weather station as drivers of trucks, caterpillars and bulldozers and hunt and trap in spare time and be under supervision of R.C.M. Police detachment. Please ascertain whether any families having members previously qualified as drivers of above mentioned equipment are willing to go and if so wire names. Living conditions at Resolute Bay are favourable... The heads of families should be good energetic hunters. Families will be brought back home at end of one year if they so desire.<sup>282</sup>

Larsen apparently at this point believed that the Fort Chimo group would be able to get employment in their skills at Resolute Bay and that wooden houses would be available for them. This was probably based on the report of January 1953 by Sergeant Kearney who had visited Resolute to check on the possibility of employment and housing for the Chimo group.<sup>283</sup>

Larsen on the same day informed Cunningham why he had included (on his own initiative) the guarantee of a return within one year:

Please note the reference in the messages to the Eskimo families being brought back to their homes. I considered it advisable to make that promise. I have in mind the sad experiences of those families of Eskimos (I believe eleven families) who were taken from Cape Dorset to Dundas

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<sup>281</sup> Larsen to Constable-in-Charge, 14.4.53. Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Larsen to Constable-in-Charge, 14.4.53. Ibid. I am indebted to Professor D. Soberman for these documents. Although Marcus and Grant refer to these telegrams, neither seems actually to have seen the originals. Marcus offers no file references, and the cables are not in the file Grant cites, but a reference to them is.

<sup>283</sup> Larsen to Cunningham, 19.6.53. RG 85 Vol. 1070, File 251-1-4, Pt. 2.

Harbour in 1934 by the then Northern Administration and after being there with the Hudson's Bay Company for two years were taken to Arctic Bay and Fort Ross. They suffered hardships and asked, from time to time to be taken back to Cape Dorset. They never were taken back and the survivors and their descendants are still in the Fort Ross – Spence Bay district, under the supervision of our Spence Bay Detachment.<sup>284</sup>

These documents, on their face at least, suggest that the planners in Ottawa were (1) anxious to secure genuine volunteers; (2) desirous of ensuring that the volunteers understood the different environment they were going to; and (3) committed to returning the Inuit if they did not wish to stay. From these and other documents, we can also assume that Gibson, Hinds and Stevenson knew the groups would be split up.

The Fort Chimo detachment replied with the names of five volunteers on May 18, 1953, the other two detachments replied a few days later.<sup>285</sup> The Fort Chimo volunteers had considerable experience with handling heavy equipment but none had ever lived on the barren lands. Le Capelain, the Acting Director, met with Larsen a few days later. They agreed that the Chimo group should not be sent to Resolute Bay. If the provision of wooden houses proved infeasible for unforeseen reasons there would be difficulties for this group since few, if any, could build a snow house. Moreover, the Acting Director adds:

As explained to you when you were in the office recently, we think that it would not be advisable to include any Fort Chimo Eskimos this year. These people have been accustomed to living in the bush and we are afraid that they would not adapt themselves very well even at Resolute Bay, where they could probably find employment and be housed. It would be advisable, we feel, to defer any action with regard to this group until we have had an opportunity of discussing the matter more fully with them and of obtaining some first-hand experience at Resolute Bay during the coming year.

The Port Harrison group, consisting of seven families, includes eleven grown males and these, with the four families that are to be transferred from Pond Inlet, should be sufficient for the initial experiment.<sup>286</sup> (my emphases)

On May 4, 1953, Constable Gibson at Inukjuak had called a meeting with the nurse, the HBC post-manager and E.M. Hinds, the welfare teacher, to "Discuss the question of moving some families to the North." Gibson, according to Hinds' report, made it very clear that he was under no obligation to discuss the question with anyone but that he thought the others might be interested and have suggestions to offer. Hinds proposed that people who had proven themselves capable of living far from the trading post and who got along without much help from the government were more likely to be the most successful. She also felt that people with close relatives in hospital should be ruled out, as well as those "Who run to the nursing station with every little ache and pain should not be considered either." The HBC manager stressed the importance of informing people of the different lengths of daylight and darkness in the North. Gibson, at first, proposed holding a dance in the police warehouse to tell the local people about the project but later dropped the idea. Instead, he visited various

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<sup>284</sup> Larsen to Cunningham, 14.4.53. RG 85, Vol. 1072, File 252-3, Pt. 4.

<sup>285</sup> Larsen to Cunningham, 20.5.53 and 23.5.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File, 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>286</sup> Le Capelain to Larsen, 8.6.53. RG 85, Vol. 1072, File 252-3(4).

camps, both those close to the settlement and also made at least two trips to camps outside the settlement.<sup>287</sup> He had the assistance of an excellent interpreter, Tommy Pallisser. Three groups of families volunteered according to the reports.

The Inuit families going North were drawn from three camps. One, where “Fatty” (Paddy Aqiatasuk) was camp leader, was five miles from the settlement but could only be reached by boat. A second, Akuliak’s, was on an island fifteen miles from the settlement and a third, Echalook’s, was fifty miles from the settlement.

### **Preparations and Assistance for the Relocates**

In two reports, her monthly report for July, and especially in her “Welfare Teachers Comments On The Seven Families That Are Migrating To The Far North”, Hinds deals with her visits to assist the Inuit who had volunteered to go North.<sup>288</sup> These were detailed accounts not only of conditions in each camp but also give a cursory history of each and some account of their internal group dynamics. The reports also discuss the characteristics of many of the people going North, both adults and children; who was a good hunter and who was not; who was a capable needle woman and who was not; which women were strong leaders and which not; whose tent was clean and whose not; who bullied whom; who had a falling out with whom – all are set out in fascinating, if rather gossipy detail.

She had first visited “Fatty’s” (I will use Aqiatasuk) camp “mainly for the purpose of inspecting the garments, etc., of the people who were going North in the C.D. Howe so as to ascertain what extra items will be required.” She notes that there were four tents at the camp. (One belonged to a family with whom there had been a conflict and which was being ostracised – as a result they were not going North.) Her report mentions that Aqiatasuk was one of the best carvers in the district. Also that his son Joadamie and the latter’s wife were sharing the father’s home (tent), something Hinds disapproved of – people should (on marriage) set up their own homes and have “lives for themselves”, she believed. The third family, “Pellypusy” (Philipusie Novalinga, who was Paddy Aqiatasuk’s brother), was also very poor, “almost everything in the home is worn out.”<sup>289</sup> Grant, too, expressed shock that two families shared one tent in the High Arctic but she is not aware that they had evidently chosen to, and did so also in Northern Quebec.<sup>290</sup>

Hinds also visited the camp of Johnny Echalook (who moved to Resolute Bay in 1955), which was fifty miles north of Inukjuak (more people from this camp were to move in 1955). Her detailed account of personal relations within the camp does not warrant inclusion here. However, she did note that four of the men who were going north seemed to be among the most destitute in the camp, one family being in particularly “abject” condition with the children having “almost no clothing.” She reported also that the camp seemed to be well

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<sup>287</sup> For references see footnote 20. Information about Pallisser is from a personal communication with R. Ploughman, former NBC post-manager, 14.12.91.

<sup>288</sup> “Welfare Teacher’s Report for July 1953” and “Welfare Teacher’s Comments on the 7 Families that are Migrating to Areas in the Far North”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 3 and Vol. 2. See also Parliamentary Committee, 22A: 132-134, for names used above and later in this report.

<sup>289</sup> Hinds had also visited this camp on August 6, 1952, and reported, “there seemed to be no food in the camp” although there was good fishing in nearby lakes. “Visits by Welfare Teacher, August 1952”. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 2.

<sup>290</sup> Grant, p. 19.

provided with native food, sea pigeon eggs, gull and eider duck as well as arctic char, geese and ducks. They also seemed to have sufficient seals but complained of having no tea and were using “daydelook.” There was, she said, a “happy atmosphere” in this camp though she felt that there were two clusters of people, the “elite” and the “servants.” She also visited the third camp (Akuliak’s) fifteen miles north of Inukjuak, on an island. There were only two families there, one of which was going north (named variously Allie, or Alex, Amagoalik in archival material and Alex Patsauq in *Parliamentary Committee*).

Hinds’ account also provides some understanding of why different families may have volunteered to go north and how they were separated.

The Amagoalik/Patsauq family had earlier left the Echalook camp over a conflict about who would be “boss” (in the language of the day) there.<sup>291</sup> When he had joined the Akuliak camp another dispute about who would be “boss” led to three families leaving, namely the families of Sudluginik, Simeonie (Amagoalik) and Thomassie (Amagoalik), who had gone to the Echalook camp. This camp had then become “too big” (with ten families) and these three families in turn had volunteered for the High Arctic. Perhaps it was because he seemed to be the “odd man out” in this group, that Allie/Alex Amagoalik/Patsauq, too, had agreed to move north. This family, too, were very poor, having “insufficient caribou skins for sleeping and the children had only dog skins to sleep on.” The family told Hinds that they had had no new clothes for a long time. However, the children looked well fed. If this interpretation is correct it would explain the initial plans as to who was going where. The three families led by Paddy Aqiatasuk made a natural group and went to Craig Harbour. My guess is that they were sent there rather than Resolute Bay because they had three years earlier been cited in an RCMP report as a “classic example... of begging around the post.”<sup>292</sup>

The potential breakup of the families which at one time or another had been associated with the Echalook camp can also be understood better from Hinds’ account of the Thomassie family. She claims of Thomassie that his:

...parents died when he was small and apparently he has been camp chore boy most of his life. He seems to have reached that state of resignation of not being able to act without instructions from someone and of being too shy to take initiative...

If Allie (Alex) and Thomassie are in the same settlement in the north it seems to me highly desirable that Allie be not (sic) allowed to boss Thomassie. Thomassie has some nice little boys and for their sake, it is desirable that Thomassie have the chance to assert himself and to improve the home conditions for his family. He can never improve his home conditions if he is forced to remain camp choreman.

This would perhaps explain why the Thomassie family together with a Pond Inlet family were supposed to settle at Alexandra Fiord until this proved impossible and instead they went back to join the Craig Harbour group.

The family of Allie/Alex together with those of Sudluginik and Simeonie were settled at Resolute Bay but apparently, as will be seen later in the report, the Allie/Alex family were in some further conflict with the

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<sup>291</sup> This was the Inukjuak Amagoalik (Patsauq) family - not be confused with the Pond Inlet Amagoaliks who also went to Resolute in 1953.

<sup>292</sup> “Conditions of Eskimos”, 20.04.50. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13.

community, leaving it in 1960 for Fort Churchill, only to return again in 1961.

The fact that Hinds knew that there would be a separation of the groups is worth noting. Gibson says he had no idea there would be a separation of the groups until he got to the High Arctic. He believes that the Resolute Bay settlement was to have been a fall back in case it was impossible to set up the settlements on Ellesmere but he is mistaken about this. I believe his memory has failed him on this. Although it is presumptuous to say this, I believe Gibson must have known that the groups would be separated on Ellesmere (the wires from headquarters are clear on this) but only learned later in the summer that some of the Inukjuak group (including himself) would go to Cornwallis.

Hinds noted that the Tower Construction Company provided some part-time employment for the men waiting for the C.D. Howe so they could earn some money and that besides buying food to support their families, they also bought new clothing. She added:

A very strenuous job of work was done with the women of the families who were going north, to sew and wash and mend clothing.<sup>293</sup>

Years later Hinds remembered:

One summer, I think it was 1952, I was asked to prepare the people of Johnny Echaloock's camp for their move to Resolute Bay. Corporal Webster, RCMP lent me the Police Peterhead boat and crew and I went to the camp to find out exactly what would be required for their new life in the far north. This was mainly clothing. The men had already begun making new kayaks. In fact, some of the women were sewing the kayak skins when I arrived at the camp. Later, I saw the expertly made, beautiful new kayaks. I also supervised the disposal of duffle for the making of the new clothes. Some years later, while on my way to Arctic Bay I visited these people in their new location at Resolute Bay. They all looked prosperous and happy, but I could see no kayaks. "We don't use them now" they told us, "We all have canoes with motors."<sup>294</sup>

Her final comments to the Department were in a letter to Cunningham, dated July 14, 1953:

Since talking to Mr. Stevenson about the project to send certain Eskimo families to the north, I have visited the three camps at which they are now staying and have inspected all their clothing and equipment, and have discussed my findings with the RCMP. Some are exceedingly poor families and I feel that given proper guidance and supervision (underlined in the original) in their new locations, they may do well. There are some very healthy looking and attractive children in the families going north.<sup>295</sup>

In her 1958 book School House in the Arctic, Hinds, looking back on her five years as the welfare teacher at Inukjuak and recalling the over-population and "difficult" times there, says:

Thus it was a very wise plan to give the people of the area the opportunity to go to regions far away where supplies of country food as well as fur animals are plentiful. Those families who

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<sup>293</sup> "Welfare Teachers Report for July 1953", 31.7.53. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 2.

<sup>294</sup> N.J.H. MacPherson, *Dreams and Visions – Education in the NWT From Early Days to 1984*. NWT Department of Education, 1986. pp. 74-76.

<sup>295</sup> Hinds to Cunningham, 14.7.53. See also "Welfare Teacher's Comments on the Seven Families That Are Migrating to Areas in the Far North"; Welfare Teacher's Report for June 1953. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 2.



moved to the far north, to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands, have written me encouraging letters – I helped outfit them, and I also tried to teach them about the sunless winter, quoting my experience at Fort McPherson as illustration.<sup>296</sup>

On June 4, 1953, Stevenson suggested that he accompany Larsen on an inspection trip which would take in Inukjuak so that he could help to complete the arrangements with the Inuit there. This was approved on June 8, 1953 by Cantley who gave Stevenson the following instructions:

If you visit Port Harrison by the R.C.M. Police plane, you should discuss with Constable Webster, the arrangements to be made for the transfer of natives from that point to places in the high Arctic. Please arrange with Constable Webster to see that all these families have good tents and that they have sufficient clothing and other equipment to take care of their needs until such time as the supplies at their destinations can be opened up. Any supplies issued at Port Harrison can be charged as relief and we can allocate it here against the appropriation of \$5000 which we have for expenses in connection with the transfers of natives.

It will be necessary for you when you arrive at Craig Harbour, Cape Herschel and Resolute Bay, to check the rifles and shotguns owned by the families that are landed at each place and see that they have the right ammunition for these rifles and guns. Where ammunition has been ordered and may not be required in one place, it can be transferred to one of the other places where the natives have rifles and guns of these calibers.<sup>297</sup>

During the same period Constable Gibson states that he met a number of times with families that had volunteered and that he also helped outfit the families with both clothing, tenting, and sewing machines in some cases.<sup>298</sup>

On June 22, 1953, Lessard, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Transport, issued instructions to the master of the C.D. Howe noting that there were some “special” features of the voyage in that year. The ship would be carrying a considerable number of passengers and “it is particularly desired that they... should be courteously treated by the ship’s officers and crew and made as comfortable as possible while on board.”<sup>299</sup>

Stevenson prepared a memorandum setting out in detail the purpose of the exercise and the detailed tasks, especially with respect to the trading stores and the administration of Family Allowances and relief, that were expected of the RCMP. He wrote:

The purpose of these operations is primarily to determine how well Eskimos transferring from over-populated areas in northern Quebec can adapt themselves to conditions in presently unpopulated High Arctic areas where there is reason to expect they can make a satisfactory native living by hunting and trapping.

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<sup>296</sup> She also spends two pages on the beneficial transformation she claims occurred in the Thomassie family after the transfer north. M. Hinds, *School House in the Arctic*, 1958, p. 162.

<sup>297</sup> Cantley to Stevenson, 8.6.53. RG 85, Vol. 80, File 201-1-(28).

<sup>298</sup> R. Gibson, personal communication, 31.12.92. Gibson complained that the Pond Inlet Amagoaliks had arrived at Resolute very poorly equipped - their tent was “unliveable”. We may presume this contrasted with his equipping of the Inukjuak group. “Conditions ... etc.”, 20.5.54. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14.

<sup>299</sup> Lessard to Master, C.D. Howe, 22.6.53. RG 85, Vol. 80, File, 201-1-(28).

The families being transferred from Port Harrison this year are essentially hunters and trappers and it is thought that with assistance and guidance, they can make a better living for themselves in the High Arctic than they can ever hope to do around Port Harrison now. To assist them in adapting themselves to High Arctic conditions, and, particularly, to the period of darkness, it is being arranged to have at least one family from Pond Inlet placed at each station. It is hoped that with the experienced guidance of the Pond Inlet natives and the encouragement and supervision of the men in charge of the detachment, these Quebec natives will quickly become accustomed to their new environment and adapt themselves to the difference in hunting and living conditions there... There may also be times when it will be necessary to issue direct relief to certain individuals when they may be temporarily unable to provide for themselves... If anyone needs supplies, that he cannot pay for, these will be issued on Relief Account...

The supplies that are being sent in this year are comprised only of the staple goods which we have considered necessary for the first years operations. In the event of the Eskimo earnings being fairly high, care will be taken to ensure that these supplies are equitably distributed to the various families over the year...

After the first year's experience you will be in a position to judge more accurately what the requirements will be and to send in requisitions accordingly...<sup>300</sup>

Grant says of all this:

Curiously, there are no (sic) records of any (sic) discussion about measures to avoid undue hardship. It was simply left to the discretion of the police in the field who had no input into ordering supplies in the first year, no flexibility in the operation of the government stores, and no say in the means or timing of transportation...<sup>301</sup>

Grant, as mentioned earlier, seems to be unaware of the fact that the RCMP were asked to comment on the goods ordered. Apart from having the RCMP on the spot whose task was to ensure there were no "undue" hardships, and the availability of relief, the directives seem clearly to indicate very considerable flexibility in the operation of the stores. Perhaps she regards the detailed instructions, which were also included in Stevenson's memorandum about how to maintain the account ledgers, as an indicator of "inflexibility." It would be more reasonable to take these for what they were, normal methods of accounting for financial transactions.

On July 3, 1953, Stevenson met with Corporal Webster, Ploughman and Hinds to discuss the seven families. He reported that:

Arrangements were completed for the transfer of these families and instructions were given to Corporal Webster to see that all these families had good tents and that they had sufficient clothing and other equipment to take care of their needs until such time as the supplies at their destination can be opened up... With the exception of clothing material, I suggested that any other items issued should be put on board the C.D. Howe in care of the Officer-in-Charge of the Eastern Arctic Patrol for distribution to the natives in question while on route to their final destination. I felt that this might be a better procedure than making a general hand-out to the natives at Port Harrison in the presence of the other Eskimos at the settlement...

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<sup>300</sup> "Memorandum to RCMP etc." nd, (probably July 1953) Stevenson. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File, 251-4. Pt. 1.

<sup>301</sup> Grant, p. 15. There was no other means of transport than the C.D. Howe, according to the Department.

As the majority of the natives to be moved were camped some distance from Port Harrison, I only had the opportunity to interview two of the men who happened to be at the Post trading some handicrafts. I discussed the whole project with them and they fully understood the plan for their movement. They were well pleased and I was able to answer all their questions to their satisfaction.

As a number of natives to be moved are excellent stone carvers, I advised them to take a quantity of stone with them until they could locate some similar material for carving at the points where they would be disembarking.

One final item regarding this movement is that the Eskimos agreed that they would go north for a period of two years at least. Then If they were dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment, they could return to Port Harrison.<sup>302</sup>

Marcus has raised critical questions about the appropriateness of some of the people selected to go North. He points out they included a pregnant woman, a grandmother of 80 years and a cripple "who could not walk."<sup>303</sup> There was actually a second 80 year old woman who came as part of one of the Pond Inlet families. Marcus also believed that moving some people who were in their 50s was unsuitable.<sup>304</sup> Current sensibility would probably agree with Marcus that people 80 years old or with this kind of handicap were not appropriate colonists. However, neither Gibson nor Hinds thought there was anything incongruous in this. Neither apparently did Constable Moodie at Pond Inlet. Nor did the Inuit. Given the closeness of the small Inuit families and the strong ties between generations it would have been near to inconceivable for the Inuit to have left people behind to whom they were attached or who had no other means of support. Presumably, these were decisions taken by the family of the camp in the traditional way. Since family members of all ages moved when a camp moved, the Inuit at the time would not have found the idea of people of all ages moving together to the High Arctic as surprising as white observers do today. There seems to have been a very great reciprocal attachment among these family members. Gibson recalls that Simeonie and his brother Jaybeddie were strongly tied to their grandmother and determined that she move with them. There was also a "matter of factness" about age and disability which seems to affront present day sensibilities.

Hinds simply reports that "Old Nellie" brought up Sarah, wife of Sudluvinik, that is why it is suggested that these two families stay together." Gibson reports that she was a mainstay of her family and the best "boot chewer" in the camp. She apparently lived on for another four years at Resolute.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Inspection trip, etc. June-July 1953 - A. Stevenson. RG 85, Vol. 1207, File, 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>303</sup> Marcus, p. 20.

<sup>304</sup> The ages of the couples going to Grise Fiord, according to the documents, were 55(H) and 45(W), 51 and 51, ? and 31, 32 and 44, 28 and 27. The ages of couples who went to Resolute were 36 and 31, 20 and 18, 36 and 35, 37 and 36. The first couple in their fifties (above) had a 28 year old son as part of their family. The second couple in their fifties had a 26 year old son in the family. "Lists of Eskimos", nd. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14. "Destitute Reports" on the Argnakadlak, Anukudluk, Akpaleeapik (Akpaliapik), "Fatty" (Aqiatasuk), Thomassie (Amagoalik), Philapushie (Novalinga), Joatamee (Aqiatasuk), all dated 30.9.53. RG 85, Vol. 1446, File 1000/133, Pt. 1. The names in brackets are those given in Parliamentary Committee, 22A, pp. 112-114.

<sup>305</sup> "Welfare Teachers Comments On The Seven Families That Are Migrating To Areas In The Far North". RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, and Gibson, Personal Communication, 31.12.91.

Finally, there is a tenaciousness, a toughness to the Inuit which is perhaps overlooked today. Anna, the young crippled woman who had to be carried when she wanted to “move from one place to another” is next mentioned in the reports as a mother of three (Gibson believed she had four or more children in all).<sup>306</sup>

The case of the 18 year old woman who was pregnant at the time is quite different since there were very rarely medical services available when pregnant women gave birth. Pregnancy in itself would not have been seen as a bar to moving. As Grant also notes, this pregnancy had the attendance of a doctor on the C.D. Howe when the baby was born and thus the mother had better attention than any other mother in the Inukjuak area would have had.<sup>307</sup> As the Hickling Report says, the participation of these people was not out of line with Inuit cultural values nor with the realities of life at the time.

On July 24, 1953, the C.D. Howe arrived at Inukjuak and the following day, the 34 Inuit who were going north were given medical examinations. These were clinical examinations since the X-ray machine was not working at this point.<sup>308</sup> It was apparently repaired somewhere en route. The medical report goes on to note that “The Harrison Eskimos for the northern posts were X-rayed” after the ship left Frobisher Bay with no indication that there were any problems. The C.D. Howe was to meet the d’Iberville, and the latter’s medical records also showed that one of the Pond Inlet families for Craig Harbour had been examined and was “found to be in perfect health.” The two Inuit families (one from Inukjuak) who were proceeding from Craig Harbour to Cape Herschel were also examined on the d’Iberville and “found to be in good health.” On the return to Craig Harbour, “An aged woman was examined who complained of a cough and pain in her chest. Her temperature was normal, but her X-ray was not too good. She appeared to be suffering from “bronchitis.”<sup>309</sup> This must have been the eighty year old who was part of a Pond Inlet family.

Marcus claims that because the x-ray machine was not working this was why one of the people sent north was not diagnosed as having TB. He says of this that the “lack of sufficient health care given in the early period of the relocation was alarming.”<sup>310</sup> He bases this statement on two incidents, one in 1960 which will be discussed later. The second rests on the claim, by the then twelve-year old Markoosie Patsauq, who has stated that “he was spitting up blood” when he boarded the C.D. Howe in 1953 and this was only diagnosed in 1954 when he was sent to a southern hospital. He claimed further that this misdiagnosis led to the infection of “each and every

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<sup>306</sup> Gibson, *Ibid.*, and “Conditions etc.”, 31.12.55, and 27.1.66. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5. The 1957 Grise Fiord Annual Report says that the two oldest hunters had the longest trap lines, 31.12.57. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5.

<sup>307</sup> Grant, p. 20. It should be added that Gibson, too, seems to have had reservations about sending older people to the High Arctic. In a 1955 report, he says : “It is felt this area is not the place for aged who would be a hinderance in making this programme a success”. “Conditions etc.” 22.3.55. RG 18, Acc. 85, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14.

<sup>308</sup> There were also other Inuit embarking on the C.D. Howe for other points in the north. The Doctor reported diagnosing one case of pulmonary tuberculosis among this group - “The patient agreed to go to Moose Factory Indian Hospital for treatment”. “Eastern Arctic Patrol, 1953.” RG 85, Vol. 376, File 201-1, Part 29. The number of people going north is variously reported also as 33 and 34.

<sup>309</sup> *Marine Activities in the North - Annual Report*, DOT Marine Service, 1953. Dr. Simpson reports in the EAP Report of 1953 that the “Harrison” group was X-rayed, p. 82. See also previous footnote.

<sup>310</sup> *Marcus*, pp. 37-39.

member” of the Resolute group. He also claimed there were “no medicines or medical personnel at Resolute.”<sup>311</sup> Marcus further states that the doctor on board, Dr. Simpson, “Did not mention that the X-ray machine used routinely to check Inuit from the communities was not on board the ship at the time they examined the families at Port Harrison.” Simpson had no need to do this since only certain parts were missing. Patsauq, according to the records, must have received both a clinical examination when he joined the C.D. Howe and an X-ray. It is difficult to understand how someone spitting blood would have been missed by these examinations. It is also not clear why his parents would not have drawn the bleeding to the attention of the doctor. Moreover, Constable Gibson reported that he visited the camp every day or second day during the first year of its operation (when not out on hunts with the men). Gibson’s reports show that when someone was ill or pregnant he made regular checks on their condition. How someone constantly spitting up blood for a year could have escaped detection from these visits is also hard to comprehend. Yet at no point did Gibson report on Patsauq’s condition until the summer of 1954 when it was discovered that the latter was suffering from “tuberculosis of the lung” and moved to the south. Gibson on December 27, 1954, was concerned that no government department had provided more information on Patsauq’s general health although letters had been received by his parents. There is no evidence supporting Amagoalik’s claim to the Parliamentary Committee that “the government knew (about the TB) and .... they were condemned to die in the Arctic.”<sup>312</sup> Such a claim would have required a conspiracy between Dr. Simpson, who had committed his career to the eradication of TB, and the Department to cover up one case of detected TB. I believe this to be farfetched.

### **The Separation of the Groups**

Shortly before the C.D. Howe linked up with the d’Iberville the decision was made on how the groups were to split up. As noted earlier the decision to open three settlement sites had been finalised in mid-March 1953. The documentary references to the fact that the groups would be going to different locations are found in the instructions of Larsen and Cunningham to the RCMP and the reports of Stevenson and Hinds, the latter making recommendations about some people who should not be in the same settlement. Two of the Inuit witnesses appearing before the Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in 1990, one who was aged four and the other six at the time, recall the shock:

We had been promised that our whole group would stay together, that we would not be separated. But when we got near Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island, the RCMP said to us, half of you have to get off here. We Just went into a panic because they had promised that they would not separate us.

Another witness confirmed this saying:

We were told that we would all be located in one place. Then when we had Just about arrived our people were told they had to be separated. This was devastating.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Marcus, p. 37, and Parliamentary Committee, 22:5.

<sup>312</sup> Parliamentary Committee, 22:14. “Eskimo Markosie, etc.”, 27.12.54. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1. See also “Conditions, etc.”, 27.12.54, for the way Gibson dealt with illnesses.

<sup>313</sup> Parliamentary Committee, 22:11. For ages see “List of Eskimos”, 7.9.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14.

This is one of the least documented facets of the move, and it is particularly disturbing. Gibson says he thought that all the Inukjuak group were going to Alexandra Fiord.<sup>314</sup>

My guess is, as mentioned earlier, that Gibson's memory has failed him on this. Both Cunningham's wire of April 8 and Larsen's of April 18 to the Inukjuak detachment make it clear that there were to be at least two locations on Ellesmere (Larsen) and a third at Cornwallis (Cunningham). Hinds, too, knew there would be more than one settlement and that the groups would be separated. However, the nature of the project changed when it became clear that the Fort Chimo group would need facilities not available at Resolute.

By June 6, 1953, the implication of Le Capelain's letter is that the Resolute Bay settlement would have to draw on the Inukjuak group. However, the latter, I believe, had either been told they would all be going to Ellesmere, but split there, or (unlikely) that they would all be going to Alexandra Fiord (Gibson's version which would have required him not following orders and would have been unlikely).

I believe that two separate groups of people were recruited at Inukjuak to move to Craig Harbour and Alexandra Fiord. One, the family group headed by Paddy Aqiatasuk, nearest Inukjuak, and the other group, the three families from the "over-populated" camp of Johnny Echalook, fifty miles north of Inukjuak, plus the one family that had left that camp in the previous year, that of Allie/Alex Amagoalik/Patsauq, were intended to relocate to the two sites on Ellesmere Island. However, the nature of the Resolute Bay relocation changed in early June 1953. It was then left to Larsen to decide who was going to which location, but my surmise is that the Inukjuak group were not told about Resolute until they reached the High Arctic. This, too, would explain Cantley's statement at the August 10 meeting with the RCAF that the decision as to who would be going to each of the three settlements "would be decided on the boat taking the Eskimo to their destination. It was not desirable to break up family groups if possible."<sup>315</sup>

My guess is, to follow this logic, that the Inukjuak groups may have known they were going to two settlements on Ellesmere (perhaps not realising they would be four days' sled drive from one another) but the shock was the shift of the three "Echalook" families, without the Thomassies, to Resolute Bay.

Grant rightly criticizes this (but for the wrong reasons) as an example of the inadequate preparations undertaken by the Department. Larsen believed until the end of May 1953 that the Chimo group would be accommodated at Resolute Bay and have jobs there. For unknown reasons this proved not to be the case and the Department became committed to Resolute Bay as a hunting and trapping settlement, rather than one based largely on employment and hunting.<sup>316</sup> This, too, is why the Department wrote to the RCAF and DOT about

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<sup>314</sup> Gibson, personal communications, 31.12.91. Gibson, too, recalled the families being very upset.

<sup>315</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting, etc.", 10.8.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Part. 4.

<sup>316</sup> Memorandum to RCMP, etc., nd, probably April 1953. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1, and Le Capelain to Larsen, 18.6.53, and Young to Drury and Young to Lessard, 15.6.53, Ibid.. It would also explain Stevenson's July amendments to his April draft memorandum of instructions to the RCMP at the three settlements. The original draft stated that "It is quite probable that all those going to Resolute Bay will find permanent employment". This was written before it became apparent that it would not be possible for the Fort Chimo Inuit to be properly accommodated. There was, obviously, a serious miscommunication with the RCAF and to a lesser degree, the Department of Transport, at this point. Pure surmise would suggest that the original arrangement with the RCAF officer at Resolute Bay by Staff Sergeant Kearney for employment at Resolute Bay was not then backed up by the

possible employment at Resolute “as late” as June 15, 1953.

The Inukjuak Inuit were not, in my view, given the information they should have been provided with about the fact that some of them would be going to Resolute Bay. I believe that the assumption, an erroneous one as it turned out, was simply made that the groups had agreed to go to the High Arctic and the particular location would not require their specific agreement. I assume the 220-odd miles between each of these settlements were simply regarded as relatively short distance by Arctic standards, and little thought was given to how vast these distances would have seemed at first. The fact that groups would be separated was either not conveyed or not conveyed clearly enough. It should have been, and was one of the failures in the planning of the project. At best it involved unacceptable confusion, at worst it was insensitive and high handed.<sup>317</sup>

### **Arrival at Resolute Bay**

Once the group arrived at Resolute, the RCMP (Gibson) helped set up the camp. The RCAF loaned the use of a boat with two airmen who were assigned to running it to assist in the obtaining of food. Robert Jasse, the zoologist who had been doing animal research on Cornwallis for the previous two years, also assisted in the early hunting parties.<sup>318</sup> By October 14, 1953, it was reported that enough food had been obtained to last “for some time”, that arctic fox was very plentiful and that trapping would commence when the season opened. Gibson had also taken the hunters on several long patrols and assisted in their hunting parties. With the help of the Inuit a 30-foot long by 16-foot wide community building had been completed and this would be used as a place to dry pelts, a workshop and a church (a lay reader assisted the services). Gibson was also going to provide some “simple schooling.” He had arranged to have some ivory and soapstone flown in to be used during the dark period. By December, Gibson reported that the Inuit were now living in “snow houses.”<sup>319</sup> He visited the settlement every second day.<sup>320</sup>

By December 6, 1953, it was reported that 55 foxes, four polar bears, 40 seals and several ptarmigan and Arctic hares had been taken. Trapping in 1954 was expected to exceed the 1953 catch. Walrus was plentiful, as were silver jar seals. No fish were obtained but it was expected that in August 1954 there would be fishing at Laura Lake (about fifty miles from Resolute) which contained “plentiful” fish.<sup>321</sup>

higher officers of the region. The difficulties of dealing with the higher command as opposed to the local officers on matters of employment was remarked on again in 1954 by Cantley who suggested by-passing regular channels. Cantley to Director, 7.3.55. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1.

<sup>317</sup> “Salluviniq’s Story”, Nunatsiaq News, 25.5.77, p. 7. This settler recalled that he was told he would be going to Resolute.

<sup>318</sup> Grant reports this as, “Tired from the long boat trip, they were expected to set up camp and find food for themselves and their hungry dogs.... There was no available boat transport nor would be until the next summer....”. Grant, p. 20.

<sup>319</sup> “Eskimo Project”, 14.10.53 and 6.12.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/04.8, Vol. 55, File 500-8-1-14.

<sup>320</sup> Personal Communication from Gibson, 31.12.91, and “Eskimo Project”, Ibid..

<sup>321</sup> As mentioned above, during the dark period, Gibson had accompanied the Inuit on two and three day hunting patrols. At some point whites from the stations were also invited to go along. On two occasions the accompanying visitor had shot a polar bear “with the natives getting the full benefit of the hunt” and Gibson was strongly criticised by headquarters for allowing this “illegal” activity. This is discussed later in this report. “Eskimo Project”, 14.10.53,

Gibson had been highly sensitized to not allowing the settlement to become dependant on the RCAF. In his report of March 26, 1954, he says that the Inuit had “very little contact with the Air Base”; that there was only one time that there were Inuit at the Air Base for a meal; that although fox traps had been set some 300 yards from the base garbage dump “strict instructions were given... that they were not to carry away any articles found in the dump.”

However, packing boxes had been salvaged and used for floors and other purposes. These boxes would have eventually been burned and “valuable wood” destroyed. He added that the women and children had not left the camp site since their arrival at Resolute Bay. There were no serious problems with clothing as “the natives brought several caribou skins with them and since have made them into clothing.” (Ten additional bales of caribou hides for clothing and sleeping purposes were flown in in March 1954.) There were also difficulties which arose from the non-arrival of some of the store goods, which will be discussed later. He thought that camp morale was “very good and the natives stated they are happy with their new home.” Gibson had made arrangements for some of the Inuit to speak over the radio to their people at Port Harrison because “it is felt this will keep the people more settled at this point.” In the March 1954 report, Gibson says:

The writer has conversed with the natives since receiving this correspondence (asking him to comment on DND allegations that the camp had become wards of the RCAF) and inquired of them if at any time they were hungry and received food from any establishment at Resolute Bay. They stated they had not been hungry since their arrival at Resolute Bay and that they wished to remain here if possible. They stated, however, that if they had been here earlier last summer they would not have had to work so hard for dog food during the past winter....

In 1955, Gibson added:

The natives that are presently living on Cornwallis Island say that they are content and wish to remain here for longer (sic) period of time. They are, however, very keen on having other natives join them here. The writer is in favour of this as it is felt that the area could support at least four more families of average size.<sup>322</sup>

### **Arrival at Craig Harbour**

The first report from Craig Harbour, dated December 31, 1953, noted that there were now six families in the settlement – the two families that had been intended for Alexandra Fiord having joined the Craig Harbour group. The group had been moved 40 miles from Craig Harbour to Lindstrom Peninsula – one day’s sled travel away:

This location was chosen because of the known abundance of seal game, especially the Harp seal in Grise Fiord and for the fact that it would be a good distance away from the caribou and muskox feeding grounds.

A more distant camp was more suitable since it would reduce the possibility of depleting the caribou herds in too short a time. It was also chosen, says the December 31 report, because it would prevent a “tendency to look

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Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> See Report to Officer Commanding “G” Division, 15.9.53; 6.12.53; 26.3.54 and 22.3.55. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File, TA 500-8-1-14.



for hand outs.”<sup>323</sup>

The Lindstrom Peninsula site was reported as being very good for seeing sea game at a good distance but it was poor for operating a boat and this was particularly a problem since a small power boat had been provided for the camp. (Apparently this had been promised to Paddy Aqiatasuk while at Inukjuak and he had insisted that it be provided – Constable Sargent, Officer-in-Charge, had not been told and had to get confirmation.) The “Port Harrison” Inuit were not happy with this site because it had a high cliff immediately behind them and they were more accustomed to residing in a valley where one could see a long way. The Inuit were intending to scout an alternative site in the spring time. Sargent, an experienced and capable RCMP officer who was also fluent in Inuktitut, had also taken the groups on two caribou hunts in September and 20 caribou were shot. The people had been “advised” that it would be best, as long as they had other native foods, not to take any more caribou between the camp and Craig Harbour, but to hunt caribou that might be to the west of the camp.<sup>324</sup> Relief rations had also been issued to each family on arrival. Sargent also reported to his superiors that the two groups from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet were “getting along very well together, much better than first expected. There is no sign of friction whatsoever.” Both groups, he thought, were “adept” at hunting seal through the seal holes but the Inukjuak Inuit were better boat men. The Inukjuak Inuit obviously had to make a considerable adaptation; for example, they had not used seal oil lamps for cooking (but did use them for heating) to any great extent, having relied previously on small wood stoves. Moreover, conditions were very difficult at Grise Fiord due to a lack of suitable snow for snow houses and at the end of December people were still living in tents with buffalo skins for outside covering. There was also an inadequate supply of “skin clothing.” This caused hardship since the “Port Harrison” Inuit were more used to “whiteman’s clothing.” All the hunters had them but the children had few or none. As a result, Sargent requested, in early December, that 200 clothing skins be sent as soon as possible and headquarters had responded that the RCAF would drop these, if possible, “sometime during the winter.” This would not have been of particular comfort to people facing the very considerable adjustments of their new environment. At Grise Fiord then, reading between the lines, one gets the sense that the adjustments must have been more difficult than the reports suggest. A considerable handicap, too, as the report notes, was the fact that there was no suitable material for carving purposes. Although \$170 worth of carving had been done by December 31, 1953, this was from local whalebone and some ivory which the people had brought with them. The report stressed that there was a need for more carving material and that this, plus the trapping and the game available, would ensure that the Inuit were “in much better condition next winter.” One positive aspect of the report was the fact that 152 fox had been traded by the end of December, a very good take, given the traps that were available. Traps had been loaned out by the RCMP and divided equally among all those over 16 years of age, but apparently were still “somewhat” insufficient. Another problem related to the Inukjuak Inuit not having sufficient dogs but the person most in need, Thomassie, had teamed up with Pellypussie for trapping purposes. Old police sleds had been made available since the Inukjuak sled was not wholly practical for the kind of travelling encountered in the area. The amount of game hunted was reported as sufficient and the report also noted that as soon as ice conditions permitted the large police power boat would be used in joint police-Inuit

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<sup>323</sup> “Conditions ... etc.”, 31.12.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5.

<sup>324</sup> There was some testimony given at the Parliamentary Committee Hearings to the effect that people had been forbidden to hunt caribou and that there were no caribou. The reports do show that from time to time in the 1960s, restrictions of this sort were imposed for purposes of conservation. Parliamentary Committee, 22:8.

hunting operations to provide more dog food. By December 29, \$2,000 had been traded at the store.

Finally, the report noted that “all natives with the exception of one, state being happy and content in the Craig Harbour area.” That person was Paddy Aqiatasuk who clearly did not adapt well to the new environment nor apparently to the rigors of hunting and trapping. While the report is not particularly sensitive to what he was perhaps trying to tell the police, it does say that he “has stated that this is a good native country and since their arrival have (sic) not gone in want as they have done at Port Harrison.” The report also remarks that “There have been no rumours of natives wanting to leave the area in the very near future.”<sup>325</sup>

Constable Fryer, the second RCMP officer at Craig Harbour, wrote an extraordinarily enthusiastic article in January 1954 for the RCMP Quarterly on the project. He, too, notes the supervised hunting trips undertaken to familiarize the hunters with the surrounding country and hunting conditions and that these were very successful in obtaining walrus which the Inukjuak people were unfamiliar with and had to learn to cut up. He says, too, that the group stated that this was the first time they had seen and shot caribou.

Despite its somewhat misplaced hyperbole the article is of interest both on the difficulties faced by the newcomers and how the RCMP saw things – some extracts follow:

For many years it has been evident that Eskimo districts were becoming overpopulated, and that game was gradually dwindling. These conditions were more apparent in the Hudson Bay area, at places such as Port Harrison in the province of Quebec.

The Canadian Government decided to take steps to rehabilitate groups of Port Harrison natives to further Northern areas, where game was known to be plentiful. With this plan, the Eskimo could follow their native way of life and become less dependent of (sic) the white man....

Even in the short time that had passed since the natives had arrived at Craig Harbour, there was a marked difference in them. The first impression given to the members of this detachment by the Port Harrison natives, was that they were a depressed, lifeless group of individuals, who were looking for too many handouts from the white men. Since familiarizing the natives with surrounding country and hunting conditions, they now have an eagerness to proceed to their new camp and look after themselves....

All the families, prior to leaving for Grise Fiord, had been given a substantial issue of Government Relief, enough supplies to carry them over until they could bring in items to trade. Also to assist the natives, the police loaned an old trap-boat in serviceable condition....

It seemed to be a peak year for land game, as there were not only large numbers of caribou seen, but also hundreds of ptarmigan and scores of Arctic hare....

Nothing was seen (from the middle of September) of the natives until October 16, when four dog teams arrived at the settlement to trade. Everyone at the camp was reported to be in good health. The natives had added two walrus, six narwhal, three bearded seal, three harp seal and a dozen

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<sup>325</sup> These accounts drawn from “Eskimo Conditions, Craig Harbour, 31.12.53, and “Rehabilitation Program of Eskimo at Craig Harbour’ by Const. A.C. Fryer, RCMP Quarterly, draft sent 1.2.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File, TA 500-8-1-5. The 31.12.53 report also regrets that two musk-oxen had been killed when, surrounded by the dogs, they had killed one and threatened others. “But under the circumstances the writer advised the natives concerned that they were perfectly in the right and that they would hear no more about the incident”.

common seal to their winter cache of meat. Ivory carvings were traded, Family Allowance issued and approximately fifty traps per hunter were loaned in preparation for open trapping season.

First results of trapping were brought in on November 9, and fox were reported plentiful. The Port Harrison natives could hardly be recognized as the same ones that had first landed at Craig Harbour. They all looked happier and healthier, having visibly put on weight.

Trapping conditions continued to be good through November and all the natives joined in on spending sprees at the trading store. It would be difficult to find a group of Eskimos anywhere in the North that could claim to be as well off as the Grise Fiord camp. Along with all the luxury items that can be obtained at the native trading store with fox pelts, they have an unequalled variety of fresh meats.

In December, trapping became poorer but the natives were still obtaining enough fox to indulge in extravagant buying. They had also added six bear to their larder by this time. The dark period, in which the sun is not seen above the horizon from the middle of November to the middle of February, had not seemed to interfere with their routine, with the exception that all the natives purchased flashlights so that they could find and tend their trap-line. About half of the camp occupants arrived.... for the Christmas festivities. A dance and games were staged and enjoyed by everyone.

By the new year, the meat caches were nearly depleted, so that the natives were spending more time at hunting seals through agios (breathing-holes of seals). The results of their concerted efforts proved to be better than anyone had expected. There have been over one hundred seals obtained in this manner. These natives disproved that Craig Harbour was a poor seal producing area. On one of the numerous (sic) seal hunts in January, a Pond inlet native bagged six seals in one day, a feat that would be hard to beat in the best of seal hunting districts.

At the time of this writing, February 1, 1954, Eskimo conditions could hardly be better. The Port Harrison natives have adapted themselves very well, following the example set by the Pond Inlet group. It was expected, of course, that the Pond Inlet families would make a good showing, as both hunters had good reputations and conditions at Craig Harbour are similar to those of Pond Inlet.

The Port Harrison natives however had to familiarize themselves with the different types of game and the hunting method of same. They had to become accustomed to the dark period, more mountainous country, differend (sic) sled travelling conditions and for heating and cooking they had to depend solely on the blubber lamp instead of their wood-burning stove. Relations between the Port Harrison and Pond Inlet natives are good. Differences in dialect and routine hasn't formed any barriers.

It is expected that the natives will be moving their camp several miles west of the present location. At the proposed spot, they will have better harbour facilities, shelter from the strong seasonal...winds and more snow for building igloos.

These natives have spent five of the worst months of the year for living and hunting in, and in answer to the query of whether or not they were desirous of remaining at Craig Harbour for another year, all the natives, with the exception of the old fogey from Port Harrison who declined to answer, expressed their desire of remaining. This one native wishes to see what the spring and summer have to offer. The Port Harrison natives with their ability to carve ivory and stone, would

never have to go in need even in a poor trapping year, as they have a source of income that would buy the necessities at the trading store. There is no reason why these natives or three times their number, could not live and thrive off the abundance of game of Craig Harbour for many years to come.<sup>326</sup>

One of the few early visitors to Grise Fiord was Bishop Donald Marsh of the Anglican Church who visited there in the summer of 1956 to carry out baptisms and marriages. Marsh was one of the most virulent critics of the Department, a constant thorn in the flesh (according to one report), although his own views about Inuit policy were certainly highly debatable. Marsh noted the cleanliness and orderliness of the camp at Grise Fiord and the abundance of food to be found along the twenty mile Grise Fiord above which towered mountainous cliffs. In his brief account, he compared the new location to “Port Harrison” and noted:

Here no mosquitoes plague them; no blowflies ever contaminated their cached meat; vegetation was lush in the few valleys fed by the mountain streams .... the (grounded) ice bergs ... provided an abundance of fresh water both winter and summer... this indeed is a paradise for these people from the southern arctic. Perfectly happy they have no desire to return to their former location. Spiritual ministrations are few and far between. Mine was the first visit from a missionary in a year. ... (the doctor’s verdict was that this was) the finest, healthiest group he had seen (presumably on that voyage of the C.D. Howe).<sup>327</sup>

### **Criticisms of the Project**

The other side of the story was presented in the Makivik Corporation’s 1987 Position Paper. Summing up what they had heard, they noted that the Inuit from Inukjuak had to undergo “fundamental social, economic, physical and psychological changes.” The Position Paper claimed that there was an insufficiency of land-based wildlife at Resolute. That there had been unfamiliarity with the environment, particularly the long periods of darkness on Ellesmere Island. That there had been a disruption of individual, family and community life. That while game had been present, it was “inaccessible” until the hunters developed knowledge of the land required to hunt effectively and that this caused a great degree of stress both personally and for the group. As to the later years they stated that employment was easier to find in Inukjuak than at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay during the 1950s and 1970s. That, therefore, there was much less cash available. That furthermore, the Inuit had not received payment for much work that they had done. That the “demographic” differences between the three centres had made the finding of spouses extremely difficult. That the spiritual needs of the people were also negatively affected and that the “sense of community” that had existed in Inukjuak was disrupted. That the cohesive community and intense family ties which were available at Inukjuak were not available in the High North. That the children of the original settlers had lost their social and cultural roots and that they had foregone much of the knowledge, teaching and customs that they would have gained at Inukjuak. That government services that were available at Inukjuak, as well as the lack of an HBC store which provided credit, had made life extremely difficult and that in fact no credit had been provided at either Grise Fiord or Resolute Bay. That welfare payments that had been paid in Inukjuak had suddenly come to an end for some people and that medical services and educational facilities were in no way comparable between the two groups in the High

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<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, (Fryer).

<sup>327</sup> *The Arctic News*, October 1956, p. 6.

North and the south.<sup>328</sup>

Many of these criticisms will be discussed later in this report dealing with the way the communities developed after the first difficult year, but it is important to bear these counter points in mind when considering the reports Ottawa was receiving from the settlements.

Other specific criticisms were made by Grant and Marcus:

- (i) That the assessment of what wildlife resources would be available at the settlement were inadequate<sup>329</sup> or non-existent.<sup>330</sup>
- (ii) That goods ordered for the trading stores at the proposed three locations were inadequate.<sup>331</sup>
- (iii) That the groups going north had “grossly inadequate equipment compared to those from Pond Inlet.”<sup>332</sup>
- (iv) That the preparations for the settlement at Alexandra Fiord were particularly inadequate and could have resulted in a disaster.<sup>333</sup>
- (v) That the preparations for “employment” at Resolute Bay were untimely and inadequate.<sup>334</sup>
- (vi) That there was insufficient time to interview the volunteers.<sup>335</sup>
- (vii) That officials should have known that there might be shipping problems and possible non-arrival of goods and should have taken steps to avoid them.<sup>336</sup>
- (viii) That the transportation to the High North was inadequate and discriminatory; the Inuit were only fed hard tack and tea for noonday meals and shown insensitive movies about Indians as villains.<sup>337</sup>
- (ix) That after the long boat trip people were expected to set up camp and find food for themselves with little time to cache meat supplies before the winter set in or to trap furs.<sup>338</sup>
- (x) That the planners sending the Inuit north had little idea of their state of health or the condition of their clothing and equipment or the necessities required for survival in the new environment.<sup>339</sup>
- (xi) That, particularly at Resolute, no site had been properly chosen for the settlement and that no quarters had been arranged for the constable, that even a rifle had to be borrowed from the RCAF so that one of

<sup>328</sup> Position Paper Regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Relocation Issue, Makivik Corporation, 20.1.87, Section C.

<sup>329</sup> Grant, p. 18 (with respect to Alexandra Fiord).

<sup>330</sup> Marcus, p. 32.

<sup>331</sup> Grant, p. 19.

<sup>332</sup> Grant, *Ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> Grant, p. 18.

<sup>334</sup> Grant, pp. 20-21.

<sup>335</sup> Grant, p. 18.

<sup>336</sup> Grant, p. 20.

<sup>337</sup> Grant, *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Grant, *Ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> Grant, *Ibid.*

the Inuit could continue to hunt.<sup>340</sup>

- (xii) That the project at Resolute Bay succeeded mainly because of good luck and the resourcefulness of Constable Gibson.<sup>341</sup>
- (xiii) The situation at Grise Fiord was not the same because it was a different physical and psychological experience. Grant reports that the Inuit were described as dispirited, in poor health, inadequately clothed, tents and equipment in poor condition, dogs too few in number and weak. Once the people were settled, the police returned to their post and waited. The people somehow survived the winter but not without unnecessary hardship. For example, the snow was not adequate to build snow houses. The women and children had inadequate clothing. (Generally, she says, it was the RCMP – which she sees as caring versus an inefficient and heartless Department – which tried to remedy the situation by ordering caribou and buffalo skins to be flown in and requesting soapstone.)<sup>342</sup>
- (xiv) Finally, Grant believes that a “major factor contributing to the problems in 1953 was possibly the limited time allowed for preparation.” In this connection she notes the following key dates:
- February 20, 1953, the first senior level request for help from the RCMP.
  - March 16, 1953, first submission of the three projects for approval.
  - April 18, 1953, first messages to RCMP posts asking for volunteers.
  - April 26, 1953, first response from Fort Chimo (Kuukjuaq). (This was a request for information on the part of possible volunteers who wanted to know if they would have “houses to live in.”)
  - May 15, 1953 “without knowledge of who, how many or the state of their equipment”, identical supply orders were placed. Orders for ammunition were placed later when the type of guns owned were known.
  - May 26, 1953, information about the families and their equipment arrived in Ottawa, “but no changes were made to meet the needs of the southern Inuit.”
  - June 15, 1953, the Department finally got around to seeking employment possibilities at Resolute and it was only when the Inuit were already shipbound that information came to the effect that no employment was likely.<sup>343</sup>

These criticisms, which are sometimes quite correct and valid, are also sometimes exaggerated, not factually true or so one-sided that a more balanced analysis of them is required.

### **Analysis of Wildlife Resources**

A serious criticism of the projects was that no comprehensive scientific studies of wildlife were available to the planners for the three relocations which had been chosen. At the time, the Canadian Wildlife Service had

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<sup>340</sup> Grant, p. 21.

<sup>341</sup> Grant, p. 21.

<sup>342</sup> Grant, *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> Grant, p. 5, 14-17. Grant does not present the dates in this order or in this way.

eight mammalogists covering the whole of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and their main studies were focused on the devastating decline that had started some years earlier in the size of the caribou herds. There were studies carried out by scientists on Ellesmere Island starting in 1951, but these were focused on game (particularly musk-ox herds) around Eureka or were short biological, zoological, and geographical studies carried out at various locations during each of the annual sea-supplies to the Joint Weather Stations.<sup>344</sup> Apart from that the Department and the RCMP relied on the reports that were given to them on game conditions in each of the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol Reports, as well as the wildlife reports that were submitted annually by the RCMP detachments.

Soberman says, "The (wildlife) evidence was impressionistic albeit provided, at least in part, by some people quite experienced in High Arctic conditions." It was not, in his words "the result of extensive scientific research."<sup>345</sup>

In fact, the information was more than impressionistic and less than comprehensive. Given the Department's impoverished scientific resources, funds and personnel in 1953, to say that the relocation projects should not have been carried out without a comprehensive scientific survey (which would have taken two to three years to measure change over time), is simply another way of saying the projects should not have been undertaken. The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) was inadequate for this task, not only in 1952-1953 but throughout the 1950s. For example, the Department's Arctic Division had urged the CWS to embark on studies of food resources in the Lancaster Sound area in 1956 and agreed to delay any further resettlements pending such studies. The CWS then announced a 10-year series of studies that were to be carried out between 1956 and 1966, but as late as 1960 none of these had been carried out.<sup>346</sup> In the meantime, the Department was still uncertain and caught between the dilemmas caused by an increasingly marginalized fur economy, an expanding population and the alternative of an increasing but still limited number of jobs available for Inuit.<sup>347</sup>

Had the Department waited for the research skills of the CWS to produce comprehensive, scientific reports, it would have done nothing. Such immobility would in my view, have exacerbated the ongoing crisis of the 1950s. As Diubaldo notes:

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<sup>344</sup> The 1951 research program of the Arctic Division, which was to include a wildlife and geographical survey on Western Ellesmere, is noted in a memorandum of 1.11.50. RG 85, Vol. 304, File, 1009-5(2A). Typical of the research projects carried out on Ellesmere by Canadian observers on the U.S. sea supply is the list found headed "Projects - Canadian Observer Party", nd., (1951). RG 85, Vol. 304, File 1-009-5(2).

<sup>345</sup> Soberman, p. 17-18.

<sup>346</sup> Bolger to Director, 15.11.60. RG 85, Vol. 1962, File A, 1012-13, Pt. 1.

<sup>347</sup> Sivertz to Robertson, 6.6.58. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4.4. As Sivertz put this as late as 1958:

...Eskimos from many other areas might well be allowed to move if we had confidence in what awaited them...we still have only the sketchiest ideas of the areas in which they could be absorbed in a sea culture elsewhere in the Arctic. The present inability of the fur market increases the number of trapping Eskimos in a marginal economy and heightens the folly of assuming that they can all be absorbed in jobs; we must still look for more efficient places where they could hunt and form some efficient ways for them to do it. Unfortunately, while our program on wage employment is going satisfactorily, the years are going by with no progress on the examination of the local food resources.

Starvation among the Inuit had been endemic for decades. Government policy in the 1950s had been directed towards its eradication, with the relocation policy as one major facet of the solution.<sup>348</sup>

Essentially, the Department relied on the reports that it had received during the Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP) and RCMP reports in judging the resettlement program as viable.<sup>349</sup>

Typical of these accounts was the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol where Cantley reported, after visiting Craig Harbour, that:

Walrus, seals and other country food are quite plentiful in the area and there is no reason why more Eskimos should not be moved over to Ellesmere Island to live permanently...Muskox and caribou are reported to be fairly numerous on Ellesmere Island although no estimate of the actual numbers could be obtained.<sup>350</sup>

Earlier EAP reports had made the same claims. Cantley was impressed by the fact that Greenlanders had been hunting on Ellesmere and this, too, was “evidence” that resettlement might be feasible. Marcus believes there were “no” studies of game resources available to the planners but he is wrong.<sup>351</sup> The Craig Harbour detachment sent, in 1952, its first Annual Game Report covering 1951-1952 and this indicated that a wide variety of game was available, but no comparison was possible with earlier years since this was the first time the report had been submitted. The second report, covering 1952-1953, confirmed the earlier findings.<sup>352</sup> In this instance, the limited, empirical evidence that the Department relied on was correct. The August 1954 “Annual Report on Game Conditions, Craig Harbour”, covering 1953, provided a detailed account of the animal resources, habitat and potentials for game. Twenty-six caribou had been taken in the previous year, the take evenly distributed among all the families. It was a good polar bear area; 38 had been taken and were providing an adequate supply of dog food. A very large catch of 544 white fox and nine blue fox had been taken, as had 35 ermine, 80 rabbits, 300 ptarmigan, 35 eider ducks (which were numerous), five geese, 26 walrus, 13 narwhal (with both the walrus and the narwhal being reported as numerous). Also, 208 seal were taken, mostly harp seals. The Inukjuak Inuit believed that there were fish and that there had to be a river or lake somewhere in the area that held them. The RCMP were planning scouting expeditions to discover whether this was so. The later reports all indicate that this was an area that was very rich in game. Caribou populations fluctuated but every two or three years 20 or 30 of these were taken.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> R. Diubaldo, *The Government of Canada and the Inuit 1900-1967*. Indian and Northern Affairs, 1985, p. 122.

<sup>349</sup> The CWS had three methods of carrying out wildlife studies which supplemented each other: (1) aerial surveys; (2) ground studies; (3) summation of facts from sources such as Inuit, RCMP, HBC reports, etc. “Memorandum for Chief,” 29.8.52. RG 109, Vol. 32, File, WLT 300 (5). This file also has examples of CWS/RCAF reconnaissances over Cornwallis and Ellesmere in 1951 and 1952.

<sup>350</sup> EAP - 1952”. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Pt. 3.

<sup>351</sup> Marcus, p. 24.

<sup>352</sup> RCMP detachments had to send in two main reports each year, one on “Conditions Among the Eskimo” and the other on “Game Conditions” in their area. “Game Conditions – 1952-1953, Craig Harbour Detachment”, 1.7.53. RG 109, Vol. 32, File WLT 300(5).

<sup>353</sup> “Annual Report, etc.”, 21.8.54. RG 85, Vol. 1446, File 1000/133, Pt. 1. Game Reports are available for each year to 1967.



The situation at Resolute Bay was different since the RCMP had closed their post there in 1951 and it is unclear whether there was a Game Report for that and the previous year. Game reports available to the Department were those by the Hammond party which went around the coast and part of the interior of Cornwallis between July and August 1950, reporting harp seals, polar bear and ptarmigan were plentiful but other game less so than expected;<sup>354</sup> and the reports of Robert Jasse, a zoologist, who submitted annual reports on work he had been doing in the previous two years. I was unable to get his May 1953 report but it seems that he submitted annual reports on general game conditions, as well as on the specific work he was doing on bird life. For example, his December 14, 1953 report on general game conditions notes that white whale were a very common summer resident, walrus common summer resident, ringed and bearded seals were common permanent residents and harp seal, a very common summer resident. But this assumes these data were available earlier. Jasse, who later assisted the Inuit in their first two weeks' hunting on the island, had also given a verbal report on his work to the Department in January 1953.<sup>355</sup>

Gibson's reports from Resolute Bay were not as detailed as those of Sargent, but these confirm Jasse's reports. On October 14, 1953, Gibson reported that "satisfactory progress had been made to obtain sufficient country food to last for some time", arctic fox would be very plentiful. On July 7, 1954, he reported that hunting had been "excellent" in the previous period.<sup>356</sup> With respect to Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour, then, the Department and the RCMP could reasonably feel that the choice of settlement site had been realistic and indeed advantageous to the people coming north.

However, the story of Alexandra Fiord is another matter altogether. As both Grant and Marcus have pointed out, it was lucky that this project did not proceed and that ice conditions prevented the d'Iberville from landing its people. RCMP reports indicated that game had largely disappeared by the winter of 1953 and only reappeared in 1955 when the Alexandra Fiord RCMP post reported that probably three or four families could now maintain themselves there. If this project had continued it might have required an emergency evacuation by land or air, since the trading store and RCMP food supplies would likely have proven insufficient even though only two families were to settle there.

### **Adequacy of Supplies**

The criticism has been made that supplies should not have been ordered until more was known of who was going north. Grant says "without knowledge of who, how many or the state of their equipment, the supply order was placed on May 15."

The Department did know that, at a maximum, there would be five families at each settlement, they presumably knew average family sizes and that these were impoverished Inuit families. Why supplies for a trading store had to be customized in order to be adequate is not clear. The living conditions of the customers

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<sup>354</sup> "Wildlife Observed on and in the Coastal Waters of Cornwallis Island, July-August, 1949-1950", nd. RG 109, Vol. 32, File, WLT 300(3).

<sup>355</sup> R. Jasse to Director, Conservation and Development Service, 14.12.53. RG 109, Vol. 32, File WLT 300(5). Jasse to Cunningham, 15.5.53, *Ibid.* Jasse was a member of the Biology Department of Boston College carrying out a three-year study of Cornwallis Island which started in 1951.

<sup>356</sup> All these reports by Gibson are in RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File, TA 500-8-1-14.

and the kinds of things they typically bought would have been known to people like Cantley and Larsen. Moreover, as noted earlier, the Department had instructed the RCMP and the Welfare Teacher to ensure that the people going north were properly outfitted and both Gibson and Hinds felt that they had done this. Grant does not indicate which supplies needed to be customized. Ammunition and (less so) clothing were the only items that would have been personal, requiring some custom ordering, and this was done in the case of the former.<sup>357</sup>

A listing of the items ordered gives some sense of the adequacy or otherwise of the goods provided by the stores.

Items Ordered<sup>358</sup>

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Dry Goods</u>	<u>Size</u>
20 each	Grey wool Blankets	64 x 80
60 yds.	Cotton Print, bright colours	36"
60 yds.	Khaki drill	29"
60 yds.	Striped cottonade	29"
120 yds.	White cotton duck	8 oz.
30 yds.	White cotton	36"
60 yds.	Blue denim	29"
60 yds.	Striped flannelette	36"
40 yds.	White Duffle	54"
24 each	Terry towels	20" x 40"
12 pairs	Willson's sun goggles	
12 pairs	Children's sun goggles	
12 each	Dressing combs	9"
12 each	Fine tooth combs	3 1/2"
144 yds.	Llama Braid	Asstd. colours

<sup>357</sup> Ration lists for one year for Inuit employees at government stations were also available as a guide. Christiansen Report, p. 28a, nd.(1952). RG 85/375, File 1005-7, Vol. 6.

<sup>358</sup> Lists of Goods to be ordered, May 1-4, 1953. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. Cantley corrected these lists on 15.5.53 when the orders went out. Cantley to Packwood. Ibid:

Will you please note the following corrections to be made in your orders for supplies for Craig Harbour, Resolute Bay and Cape Herschel:

ART. L.F. 5727, 5728, 5729 - "Cocoa" is spelled "coca".

ART. L.F. 5730, 5731, 5732 - "24 no. 1 1/2 Traps, fox, Oneida" should read "240 only no. 1 1/2 Traps, fox, Oneida"

ART. L.F. 5712, 5713, 5714 - "50 lbs. Wood rope, 1/2" diam." should read "50 lbs. Hemp rope, 1/2" diam."

"5 only Premier Stoves" should read "5 only Primus stoves".

"5 only Premier stove burners" should read "5 only Primus stove burners."

"24 only Premier stove nipples" should read "24 only Primus stove nipples."

"12 only Packages Premier stove cleaning needles" should read "12 only Packages Primus stove cleaning needles".

Note: These stoves are not made by Coleman.

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Dry Goods</u>	<u>Size</u>
12 cards	Fancy dress buttons	
1 doz.	Men's Police braces	
10	Packets Glovers needles	Asstd Sizes 1-5
12	Packets Sharpe needles	Asstd Sizes 1-7
12 each	Steel thimbles	large sizes
24 spools	Machine thread, white cotton	36-40
24 spools	Machine thread, black cotton	36-40
32	Knots linen thread, white	
32	Knots linen thread, black	
48 balls	Knitting wool, asst'd. colours	1 oz. balls
12 each	Baby feeding bottles	8 oz.
24 each	Baby feeding nipples	

Women's and Children's Wear

12 prs.	Women's wool hose, black	9-9 1/2-10
12 each	Women's fleecelined vests	34-36
12 prs	Women's fleecelined drawers	34-36-38
12 prs	Heavy wool mitts	
12 prs	Children's hose	7 1/2-8
12 each	Fleecelined shirts	26-28-30
12 prs	Girls' Fleecelined ankle length drawers	26-28-30
12 prs	Fleecelined bloomers	26-28-30

Men's and Boys' Wear

12 prs	Men's wool mitts	
24 each	Men's Work socks	
12 each	Men's flannelette work shirts	15-15 1/2
12 each	Men's fleecelined shirts	38-40
12 prs	Men's fleecelined drawers	36-40
12 prs	Men's blue denim work pants	36-38
12 prs	Men's tweed work pants	36-38
12 prs	Boys' wool mitts	
12 prs	Boys' work socks, wool	
12 each	Boys' flannelette work shirts	13-14 1/2

Men's and Boys' Wear

12 each	Boys' fleecelined shirts	28-32
12 prs	Boys' fleecelined drawers	28-32
12 prs	Boys' tweed work pants	30-32
12 only	Men's heavy wool coat sweaters	38-42

Condiments

48 pkgs	Salt, iodized, 2's	
288 tins	Baking powder, Magic, 1/2's	
48 lbs	Raisins, seedless, 1 lb packages	

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Dry Goods</u>
60 bales	Flour, 2nd patent, enriched, 4/24's
500 lbs	Sugar, granulated white, 5's
2 bales	Rolled Oats, 15/6's
10 cases	Pablum, 12/1's
20 cases	Pilot biscuits, 50's
24 jars	Jam, assorted, 24 oz.
24 tins	Molasses, 2's
1 case	Safety matches, 720's
96 lbs	Butter, 1's, tins
120 lbs	Lard, Domestic, 1's
240 tins	Milk, Klim, 2 1/2's
100 bars	Soap, toilet, medium size
200 bars	Soap, sunlight
240 lbs	Tea, 1's, Yellow Label
24 lbs	Coffee, Nabob, 1's
3 only	Pairs scissors 8 inches
3 only	Beacon lanterns no. 2
12 only	Double blade pocket knives
2 only	Engine hot shot batteries, 6 volt
5 only	Lengths round iron, 6 feet x 3/8 inch diameter
6 only	Cigarette lighters, storm proof, semi-automatic
24 tins	Lighter fluid, Auer
24 only	Packages lighter flints and wicks
6 only	Aluminum tea kettles, 5 1/2 quart
6 only	Aluminum potato pots, 4 1/2 quarts
3 only	White enamel wash bowls, 12 1/8 inch diameter
6 only	Enamel plates, 9 1/2 inch diameter
12 only	Enamel mugs
3 only	Galvanized coal oil cans, 2 gallon
6 only	Galvanized water pails, 13 quart size
3 only	Sheet iron frying pans, 10 inch diameter
12 only	Teaspoons, non-tarnishing
12 only	Tablespoons, non-tarnishing
6 only	Butcher knives, 10 inch steel
6 only	Butcher knives, 14 inch steel
1 gross	Wood screws, 2" x 12"
1 gross	Wood screws, 2 1/2" x 16"
50 lbs	Hemp rope, 1/2" diameter
5 lbs	Prepared putty, 1's
24 tins	Methyl Hydrate, 20 oz size
6 only	Axes, 3 1/2 lbs., 3.D. with handles
6 only	Wood rasp files, 10 inch
12 only	M.B. files, 6 inch
6 only	Slim Taper files, 5 inch

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Dry Goods</u>
12 only	Hacksaw blades, 10 inch
6 only	Two cell flashlights, Eveready
72 only	Flashlight batteries, leak proof
6 only	Flashlight bulbs
5 only	Primus stoves,
5 only	Primus stove burners
24 only	Primus stove nipples
3 only	Winchester rifles, 30-30 caliber, model 94.
3 only	.22 rifles, single shot, model 74, Cooey 27 inch barrel, weight 6 lbs
240 only	1 1/2 traps, fox, Oneida.
10 only	Boxes chewing gum, Wrigley's 3 oz. spearmint; 3 doublemint; 4 of Juicy Fruit; 20's
20 only	Boxes cigarette paper, Vogue 50's
120 only	Tins tobacco, fine cut, Ogden's 1/2's
60 only	Tins tobacco, pipe, Old Virginia 1/2's
12 only	Wood pipes
150 only	Caribou skins, suitable for making clothing
50 only	Caribou skins, for use as bedding
50 only	Caribou sinews
100 only	Caribou legs
72 only	Balls Gilling twine, 4 oz. no. 25
30 lbs	Seine twine no. 72
10 lbs	Seine twine no. 12
12 only	Single cod lines, 24 thread, 30 fathoms
250 gals	Coal oil, 10 gallon kegs
200 gals	Premier Gasoline, 10 gallon kegs
10 gals	Lubricating oil S.A.E. no. 10, 1 gallon tins
5 lbs	Cup grease, 1 lb tins
10	Pieces, Spruce, rough, 2" x 4" x 16'
1000	Board feet, rough, spruce, 1"x 6"x 6'

A detailed set of criticisms of the supplies ordered for the Trading Stores came from C.J. Marshall who had just joined the ACND secretariat and was familiarizing himself with the North for the first time. He had visited the Resolute settlement in October 1953. His lengthy critique of the project was taken seriously both by the ACND secretariat (Rowley) and the Department. The letter will be dealt with in full later. At this point we should note his criticisms of what he called "unnecessary items." He was concerned because these had been purchased under the Eskimo Loans, which had to be repaid, and since this was an experiment, the store should, in his view, have emphasized "necessities" only. These were:

- 96 lbs of butter at \$1.00 a pound but only 124 lbs of lard at \$0.25 a pound
- 60 yards of cheap cotton print
- 24 towels at a \$1.00 each
- 144 yards of llama braid for decorating parkas – enough for about 30 parkas

- 24 pairs of men's work pants although there are only four men in the group. These pants are in sizes 36 to 38 which makes them much too big for the Eskimo.
- 12 pairs of boys pants although there are only two boys in the settlement
- 5 lbs of putty
- 200 lbs of gasoline at approximately \$0.70 a gallon and 2 Hot Shock batteries although the Eskimos have no Internal combustion engine of any kind
- 36 pairs of wool mitts which I understand the Eskimo can easily make for themselves
- 12 pairs of men's braces for four men
- 12 coat sweaters of poor quality at \$7.00 each for four men.<sup>359</sup>

There were some 150 different items ordered for the store. Given the large number of items which were purchased, very few of them seem "unnecessary" (or "absurdities" to use Grant's phrase) at least to this non-expert. Some, however, may well have been overpriced or unnecessary. Some of the items that were "unnecessary" turned out to have a use but not at Resolute Bay. For example, the gasoline and putty were useful for the boat which was loaned to the Craig Harbour group. There, too, for example, the supply of llama braid ran out before the next year's supplies arrived. Some items would simply have required alterations, e.g., the work pants. Sewing was a constant activity inside the camps. All in all, it seems reasonable (to this observer) to dismiss eleven debatable "misorders" out of 150 items as a somewhat negligible issue.<sup>360</sup>

The Department did not treat it so lightly. A few of the items ordered, especially the expensive butter, were taken up by Gibson with the Deputy Minister when they travelled together in January 1954. Robertson then asked his officials to check out the prices again and to see if cheaper items could be obtained in the future.<sup>361</sup>

Where the planning did fail, I believe, was with respect to the provision of caribou skins for making clothing and use as bedding. The order was sent out on May 15th, 1953, and it was assumed that the skins needed would easily be available. But early in June, Cantley was informed by the HBC that only 150 skins were available. Stevenson on his visit to Inukjuak in June 1953 bought another 60 skins but the numbers acquired were clearly inadequate and skins had to be flown into the settlements that winter. This did add, I believe, in a real way to the hardship that first winter.<sup>362</sup>

### **Inadequate Equipment**

Some of the equipment of those going north was certainly minimal, "grossly inadequate...compared with

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<sup>359</sup> "Eskimo Settlement at Resolute" 9.11.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1. (There were five men and three boys at the settlement.)

<sup>360</sup> At Craig Harbour, Sargent thought that there would be many surplus items. In fact the store, with a double set of goods, was "practically depleted" by August 1954. Sargent to Officer Commanding, "G" Division, 31.7.54 and 23.8.54. RG 85, Vol. 1474. File 251-2, Pt. 6.

<sup>361</sup> Packwood's response on the matter of prices is found in Packwood to Cantley, 11.1.54. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. Cunningham's justification of the prices is found in his memorandum to the Deputy Minister, 25.1.54. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>362</sup> Cantley to Nichols, 22.5.53 and 3.6.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

those from Pond Inlet”, according to Grant.<sup>363</sup> The list of this equipment is worth itemizing since it gives some sense not only of how pitifully limited were the resources of the Inukjuak group but also of whether their lives had improved, materially at least, some years later.

Inukjuak (list given by Grant)<sup>364</sup>

#### Camp 1

##### Paddy Aqiatasuk

3 hunters (including 2 sons), wife, daughter, step daughter, 1 sled, 6 dogs, 2 rifles, 2 shot guns, 1 tent, no traps, 1 kayak. (There are errors here. Grant fails to include one additional rifle, one 16-foot canoe and one 5 hp outboard motor that this group had). These were the Aqiatasuk and Nutarak families. There was also another younger son.<sup>365</sup>

##### Ioadamie

1 hunter, wife and child (to use equipment of above family)

(This was the son of Paddy Aqiatasuk who shared the family equipment.)

##### Philipushie Novalinga

1 hunter, wife and 2 children, 1 sled, 4 dogs, 2 rifles, 1 shotgun, 50 traps, 1 tent, 1 kayak.

#### Camp 2

##### Daniel Sulluviniq

1 hunter, wife, 1 son, 2 daughters, 1 sled, 5 dogs, 2 rifles, 20 traps, 1 tent, 1 kayak.

##### Simeonie Amaqolik

2 hunters (brothers), 1 wife, 1 grandmother, 1 sled, 7 dogs, 2 rifles, 1 tent, 1 kayak. (Grant fails to include 20 traps belonging to this family.)

##### Thomassie Amaqolik

1 hunter, wife, 3 sons, no sled, 3 dogs, 1 rifle, 15 traps, 1 tent, 1 kayak.

#### Camp 3

##### Alex Amaqolik/Patsauq

1 hunter, wife, 3 sons and 1 daughter, 1 sled, 5 dogs, 1 rifle, 20 traps, 1 tent, 1 kayak.

##### Pond Inlet

##### Samuel Anakudluk

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<sup>363</sup> Grant, p. 19. Grant uses initials, not names, of these families. The division of the families into camps is my addition.

<sup>364</sup> Grant, p. 17.

<sup>365</sup> Names given in Parliamentary Committee, 22A: 132-134.

1 hunter, wife and 3 children, 1 sled, 11 dogs, 1 rifle, 40 traps, 1 seal net, 1 fish net, 1 tent.

Simonee Akpaliakpik

1 hunter, wife and 3 children, 1 sled, 14 dogs, 3 rifles, 40 traps, 1 tent.

Jaybeddie Amagoalik

1 hunter, wife and 4 children, 1 sled, 13 dogs, 3 rifles, 90 traps, 1 seal net, 1 tent.<sup>366</sup>

The Inukjuak Inuit, while seeming to have the “average” rifle power of the time and more boats than the Pond Inlet group, clearly had far fewer dogs and fewer traps. Instead of providing more dogs, which would surely have made the transition easier, the Department relied instead on the “cheaper” method, that is relying partly on the “extra” Pond Inlet dogs and sharing (in the case of Thomassie who teamed up with Philapushie in the first year) as noted earlier. There were insufficient traps, but at Craig Harbour, the police loaned 40 traps to each hunter and this seems to have been sufficient to bring in a bumper crop of fox, thus, in practice, not to have been a major problem. I presume the assumption was that since these families were making do with this number of dogs at Inukjuak, they would also be able to do so in the High Arctic. Nothing in connection with the relocations was ever done on a lavish scale!

### **Employment at Resolute**

Once it was clear in late May 1953 that there would be no possibility of sending trained Inuit heavy equipment workers to Resolute Bay because of a lack of housing, and no guarantee of full-time employment, the issue of employment by the DOT and RCAF became much less urgent. The Inukjuak Inuit were not expected to earn their living by employment. Hence, it is not that surprising that it was only in the middle of June 1953 that the Department wrote to the latter two departments inquiring about the possibilities of employment. Since the C.D. Howe was only going to arrive on September 7, long after the sea supply had taken place, and since the rest of the fall had to be taken up with obtaining winter supplies, there obviously would not have been any requirement for employment in the first year of settlement. We know that Sergeant Kearney’s January or February report encouraged the RCMP to believe there would “probably” be employment and houses for these skilled workers at Resolute, but even they were expected to be “good hunters” and would probably not have been able to take up any regular employment in the first year. In any case, the Department view that this was not a primary objective at Resolute after May 28, should be accepted, and it explains why there was little urgency at that point in arranging for employment. As the RCMP reports show, employment was available starting in the winter of 1954 and considerable employment income started coming in, in the summer of that year.

Grant believes it was illogical for the planners to expect that Inuit should both work and hunt in the summers at Resolute since only in the summers during the supply missions was “menial work” available. This was, according to Grant, another indication that the Director was misinformed about the situation at Resolute. However, it was common in the North to give time off for hunting. For example, at Resolute, the Inuit worked in two groups of five, each group working for two weeks then hunting for two weeks.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Larsen to Director, 23.5.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>367</sup> Grant, p. 5. Gould to Lariviere, 17.10.58. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1.



### **Inadequate Time for Interviewing Volunteers**

Grant says that according to the constable in charge of getting volunteers (Gibson) there had not been adequate time to interview the families around Inukjuak. That the “best” candidates were already out on the spring hunt.<sup>368</sup>

First, a small matter of accuracy. Gibson did not say this, Marshall does, nor does he claim to be directly quoting Gibson. But this is a minor matter. However, Marshall said nothing about the “best” candidates being out hunting – this is Grant’s invention. What he says is:

By this time most of the Eskimos in the Port Harrison area were away on the spring hunt and it was only with some difficulty that he was able to contact a number of families to ask for volunteers to go to Resolute.<sup>369</sup>

We know from the documents that 10 families from Inukjuak had indicated an interest in moving to the High Arctic in 1952. By March 16, 1953, one of these, Inukpuk, was no longer available, and another, the 26-year old son of Philipushie, was part of Paddy Aqiatasuk’s camp which, according to Hinds, was willing to move. Gibson says he visited Camps 2 and 3 a number of times, which may mean that sometimes hunters were away from the camps when he got there, but which also suggests there was sufficient time. Gibson also now says that there were many more volunteers than were needed.<sup>370</sup>

Cunningham said in response to Marshall’s criticism that there was no such thing as a “spring hunt” which precluded contacting camps. In other words, there is some confusion on this issue but Marshall’s account cannot be accepted uncritically. Gibson cannot now recall this as a problem. Hinds makes no mention of time pressures and it would seem that six weeks was sufficient time to find people willing to go, particularly as one group had already indicated by early March that they were interested in going north. The only other factor affected by time was the delivery of supplies and all of these arrived at the C.D. Howe in time. The problems were in the delivery once the ship arrived in the Arctic. Finally, as noted earlier, the only other time related matter was employment at Resolute, which was not an issue in that first autumn.

### **Transportation Problems**

A far more serious problem than the “unnecessary” items ordered for the trading stores was the non-arrival of key items which are also reported in the Marshall letter. Grant says of these, “Some articles had been ordered, then mysteriously (sic) disappeared.” The actual shortages at Resolute amounted to goods worth \$785.66. Grant believes the shortages amounted to \$2,000.<sup>371</sup> She has misread what Marshall says here. He says it was his “personal estimate” that \$2,000 worth of goods either “went astray” or were “unnecessary” items or were overpriced goods. Just above this section he sets out the value of goods which went astray, given to him by Gibson. The amount was \$1,124 but included items Gibson had, mistakenly, not yet unpacked.<sup>372</sup> The Deputy

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<sup>368</sup> Grant, p. 19.

<sup>369</sup> “Eskimo Settlement at Resolute”, 9.11.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

<sup>370</sup> Gibson, personal communication, 3.2.92.

<sup>371</sup> Grant, p. 19.

<sup>372</sup> “Eskimo Settlement at Resolute”, 9.11.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1.

Minister asked Cunningham to track down the lost goods, which he did.<sup>373</sup> They included some important items, including six rifles, 120 yards of tent material, 60 yards of cotton drill, 60 yards of blue denim, 40 yards of white duffle and 1,000 board feet of spruce.<sup>374</sup>

The Department took the loss of the rifles, tent material and blue denim seriously and arranged to have replacements flown in by the RCAF. The remaining ten lost items were then tracked down and located by March 18, 1954. When the items which had been lost were traced it was discovered that two of them (the cotton drill and white duffle) had, after all, been landed but not yet unpacked at Resolute Bay at the time Marshall wrote. The rifles, blue denim and white cotton duck had been sent in error to Arctic Bay, and the wood landed at Craig Harbour. Despite the non-delivery of the wood, Gibson and the Inuit had built a community hall using wood from packing boxes. Two items could not be traced (two double bladed pocket knives and four Primus stove nipples), leaving \$2.46 unaccounted for.

The problems with transportation in the North were known to the Department. Complaints had been registered for a number of years with DOT about the C.D. Howe and by DOT about various departments not packing materials properly and not getting them to the point of departure on time. After each EAP a report was submitted discussing problems on the ship and ways of improving on these. Despite the interdepartmental meeting held each year before the C.D. Howe left on the Eastern Arctic Patrol, some problems persisted. However, it was not until Sivertz, in August 1954, made a blistering critique of conditions on the ship that a more energetic approach was taken to improving conditions.<sup>375</sup>

This is not the place to go into these criticisms except to note they were taken up with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Transport and the Minister. A special committee was set up at Cunningham's suggestion to review the entire transportation operation of the Eastern Arctic Patrol as a result of Sivertz's criticisms. This committee would look into the issue of safety precautions, discipline and organization which Sivertz described as "casual." It would also look into the question of inefficient freight handling because, as Robertson noted in a letter of November 2, 1954 to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Transport, "Breakage, broaching and misdelivery appear to occur every year."<sup>376</sup>

### **Discriminatory Treatment of Inuit Passengers**

Grant says:

The patrol officials ate a full course noon meal at a cost of \$0.80 charged to the Department; the Inuit were fed four hard tack biscuits with paper cups of tea for \$0.40.<sup>377</sup>

Here Grant misunderstands what Sivertz, whom she relies on as her source, actually says. He says that the chief steward was under contract with the Department of Transport and was authorized to charge \$1.85 per day for

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<sup>373</sup> Cunningham to Deputy Minister, 18.3.54. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt.4.

<sup>374</sup> The other missing items, according to Grant - drawing on Marshall - included oil lamps, wash tubs and medical supplies.

<sup>375</sup> Sivertz to Cunningham, 27.8.54. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Pt. 3.

<sup>376</sup> Sivertz to Director, 27.8.54, Robertson to Booth, 26.11.54, Baldwin to Robertson, 7.2.55. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Pt. 3. See also "Reports on EAP - 1952". RG 85, Vol. 1207, File 201-1-8, Pt. 3.

<sup>377</sup> Grant, p. 20.

all passengers and that \$0.80 per meal was charged for guests while \$0.40 per “lunch” was charged for Inuit visitors, not shipboard Inuit. This is made even clearer in a memorandum which Baldwin, Deputy Minister of Transport, sent to Robertson on February 7, 1955. There he notes that “Meals for Eskimo passengers in the past have always been arranged in the manner as for other passengers on board. For Eskimos who simply visit the ship (my emphasis) for treatment, the providing of tea and hard biscuits for such Eskimos has been undertaken by the ship steward under direction from Northern Affairs.” In fact, the steward received about \$1,500.00 for lunches provided to visitors throughout the trip. The Department complained that the Inuit visitors were not getting good value from these lunches and decided to revise the contracting arrangements.<sup>378</sup>

Grant also notes that the movies “shown displayed complete insensitivity”, but does not point out that this was information drawn from a 1954 letter and that there was no evidence that this also occurred in 1953, though it might have. She might also have pointed out the context in which Sivertz made this criticism of one of the movies shown. Instead the impression is given that the Department approved of the movies. Sivertz says in this connection:

The patrol could be a better occasion for interesting and valuable contact with Eskimos. For example, I have thought that the education officer could organize a program – oral and visual – for the Eskimos, with lectures and film – on board ship and in shore places. As it was, the Eskimos from the shore were shown a film once – it was a Hollywood B – an epic of railroad building in which Indians were villains and all unattractive characters got shot or beaten up. Incidentally, the ship’s company and Eskimos and other passengers were treated to several other films of similar value. I am planning to discuss this with officers of the Department of Transport with a view to providing the ship with some worthwhile picture material.<sup>379</sup>

### **Lack of Assistance on Arrival**

Grant says that the Inuit, tired from the long boat trip, were expected to set up camp and find food for themselves and that there was little time to cache game before winter set in or to trap furs for credit at the store.<sup>380</sup>

Earlier sections of this report have shown how one-sided and inaccurate this account is. The RCMP role was specifically to help the groups set up camp. This they did. The RCMP were also supposed to help with the hunting and to ensure that the Inuit were able to cache sufficient meat supplies before the winter set in, and this they, and the RCAF at Resolute Bay, did. Finally, the trapping season had not yet started, so there was no question of at that point starting to trap fur. Once the season opened, the trapping started, and at both settlements there were good catches. At Grise Fiord they had an extraordinarily good year. This is fully discussed in earlier sections.

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<sup>378</sup> Baldwin to Robertson, 7.2.55 and Robertson to Booth, 26.11.54. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 402-20, Pt. 3.

<sup>379</sup> Sivertz to Director, 27.8.54. *Ibid.*

<sup>380</sup> Grant, pp. 20-21. Grant does, however, note approvingly the help the RCMP gave once the settlements had been set up.

### **Planners' Lack of Information about the Colonists and their Needs**

The planners, at least at the local level, had a great deal of information about the people going north. Hinds' reports contain almost too much information at times. As welfare teacher, she had visited most of the camps in the previous two years. Her monthly reports at one time or another covered conditions among most of the people who went north.<sup>381</sup>

The RCMP also had considerable knowledge of each of the camps which they attempted to visit at least twice a year.

Hinds, as noted earlier, visited each of the camps and the people going north and worked to prepare them for the voyage. Gibson has stated that he did help equip people as instructed by Ottawa. Had there been health problems, Hinds would have referred people to the health nurse and reported the matter, as she did in many other cases, in her monthly accounts of conditions at Inukjuak. Before the group left Inukjuak, they were given a clinical examination by the doctor on the C.D. Howe.

Grant believes that there is no record confirming Stevenson's instructions to the RCMP, that clothing and supplies be provided to the Inuit going north, were carried out. This is not true. The RCMP at Craig Harbour confirmed that relief supplies were issued there (Fryer also claims this in the article quoted earlier). Hinds confirms that supplies were issued at "Port Harrison." She says of her visit to "Fatty's" (Aqiatasuk) camp that the purpose was not only "inspecting the garments, etc.", but also "so as to ascertain what extra items will be required."<sup>382</sup> It is thus difficult to understand Grant's claim that the officials in Ottawa "had little knowledge about the state of health of the Inuit, the condition of their clothes and equipment, or the necessities required for survival in their new environment."

While it is true that they left the search for volunteers to the local RCMP, they were kept informed in some detail of who they were and how well equipped they were. In the main these were people with pathetically little in terms of worldly goods. The Ottawa planners believed that to survive the move to the High Arctic would require, even more than goods and equipment, permanent ongoing assistance in the form of the RCMP detachments, and, just as important, the assistance of good Pond Inlet hunters who could assist the newcomers on a day-to-day basis.

The three men primarily involved in the various planning phases at the operational level were all highly experienced northerners, namely Cantley, Stevenson, and Larsen. All of them had years of experience in the North and knew it intimately. They had both direct and practical knowledge of the North, as traders, seamen as well as public servants. Stevenson, moreover, was one of the finest linguists in the North, and had little difficulty in communicating in a wide range of dialects. Cantley had had decades in the Arctic. Cunningham had been a magistrate in Yellowknife and Young had been a number of years in the Arctic, having opened the first RCCGS Station in Aklavik in 1928. Rowley spent three years in the Arctic between 1936 and 1939, travelling by dogsled and living in igloos on geographical research. Why they are cast as ignorant of the North and of the needs of the colonists would need much more evidence from Grant than the mere assertion she makes.

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<sup>381</sup> For example, see "Visit to Fatty's Camp", 6.8.52. RG 85, Vol. 1269, File 1000/304, Vol. 2.

<sup>382</sup> "Welfare Teachers Report", 31.7.53. Ibid.

**No Preparations at Resolute**

Grant says, in the case of Resolute Bay that, according to Marshall, the Inuit were simply dumped on the beach, that no site had been chosen previously for the settlement, and that no quarters had been arranged for Constable Gibson, and no storage space had been provided for supplies for the store.<sup>383</sup>

Grant is quite aware of the response which Cunningham and Cantley had made to this claim. They noted that Larsen had in fact visited Resolute Bay well in advance of the coming of the Inuit and had selected a site for the camp and that particulars of this had been communicated to Gibson; that discussion had also been held on this with the local weather station officials.

Larsen had, in Cantley's presence, had a discussion with the person in charge of the ionospheric stations in the North in June, where it was agreed that the ionospheric officials at Resolute Bay "would provide Constable Gibson with quarters and with such storage space for supplies as would be necessary." Moreover, Larsen confirmed these arrangements on his next trip to Resolute Bay and that he was satisfied before the group arrived that quarters for Gibson, and warehousing, were available.

We do not, of course, know for sure which account is correct. We do know that these people were not writing for an audience such as they have had in the 1980s and 1990s. What is incumbent on any researcher when there are such glaringly different accounts is surely to give a fair idea of both sides of the story before making a judgement. Instead, Grant simply dismisses Cunningham's response to Marshall's criticisms as "defensive", giving no idea of their content.<sup>384</sup>

**The Essential Role of the RCMP in Ensuring the Success of the Project at Resolute Bay**

This is a somewhat curious criticism since the purpose of sending Gibson to Resolute Bay was to ensure that the project succeeded. As Young wrote Nicholson in February 1953:

It would be possible to establish these small settlements only with your cooperation as there is no one else at these places who could assist these people in adjusting themselves to new conditions.<sup>385</sup>

However, Grant's point is rather that the Department in Ottawa prepared the project so badly and was so unhelpful to the RCMP, once the projects were established, that it often made the RCMP task "doubly difficult by seemingly (sic) unreasonable directives and inadequate supplies and equipment." She even "speculates" that Cantley (there was, she believes, a "hidden experiment" involved) deliberately mismanaged the supplies for the trading stores at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in order to prove that the RCMP could not run stores as effectively as the HBC. This was supposed to be part of the internecine conflict between the Department and the RCMP on whether a government trading store should be set up for the Arctic (the RCMP position), or whether the HBC should continue as the major and private trader in the North. This was actually a localised conflict between the Department and an exceptionally energetic and idealistic RCMP officer at Frobisher Bay (Van Norman) who wanted to divert as much Inuit income as possible away from the HBC (there seems to have been

<sup>383</sup> Grant, p. 20. Marshall is always referred to as "a visiting official", giving the impression that his criticisms may come from a number of different people. He is in fact the main source for Grant's critique.

<sup>384</sup> Cunningham to Rowley, 15.12.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4, and Grant, p. 20.

<sup>385</sup> Young to Nicholson, 20.2.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

a general view among the RCMP that the HBC was a major part of the “white” world which exploited the Inuit).<sup>386</sup>

This is not the place to revive this issue which disappeared from the political agenda shortly thereafter. However, Grant leaves out a crucial section of the memorandum she quotes from on this matter. While Cantley was highly critical of Van Norman’s attempt to make “changes in policy without first receiving authorization”, the key point he makes relates to how limited was the operational power of the Department and how dependent it was on the RCMP in the field. He says:

This raises the point as to where R.C.M. Police responsibility in the administration of Eskimo affairs begins and ends. With practically no personnel of our own resident in the field, we have to depend almost entirely on the R.C.M. Police and the Hudson’s Bay Company to deal with local matters. Co-operation between the two in the field and between all three agencies at administrative level is essential. Without it, we can never hope to accomplish anything. It would seem, however, from what has happened at Frobisher Bay and from what we have been observing elsewhere, that the Police are not prepared to accept our policy with regard to trade, or to attempt to co-operate with the Hudson’s Bay Company in the field. Their feeling seems to be that they are at least equally responsible as this Department for Eskimo welfare and that they are not obliged to follow the lead of Resources and Development unless it is in line with their own ideas. If this attitude is to continue, then perhaps the time has come when the whole problem of Eskimo administration should be carefully reviewed again.<sup>387</sup>

This then leads Grant into a number of statements for which no evidence is given:

- That during the first five years attempts by the police to recommend changes in policy were “usually either lost, disregarded or, if necessary, disclaimed.”
- Many memos reflected differences of opinions between those in the field (RCMP and Department) and those behind desks in Ottawa.
- The RCMP were “exploited” by the Department because the latter “contributed” so little in resources.
- That in 1990 the government stated “by inference” that the RCMP should “shoulder the blame” if any blame were to accrue for the relocation.<sup>388</sup>

These statements should be treated with very considerable caution – the last is particularly astonishing. There is little point or truth to seeing the relations between the Department (or at least its Ottawa officials) and the RCMP as a kind of medieval morality play between good and evil. The two departments in fact cooperated effectively and a great deal more than this portrait suggests. They saw eye to eye on various policies and disagreed on others. While they disagreed on the need for a government trading company to replace the HBC in

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<sup>386</sup> Grant, p. 16. Grant is apparently unaware that the HBC was offered the opportunity of running the stores at the two settlements but refused. LeCapelaine to Chesshire, 1.12.52, and Chesshire to LeCapelaine, 31.12.52. RG 85, Vol. 1513, File 1012-1, Pt. 1.

<sup>387</sup> Cantley to Fraser, 19.5.53. RG 85, Vol. 693, File 1009-10-169.

<sup>388</sup> Grant, p. 15.

the North, they agreed on what they saw as the debilitating effect of relief, the need to maintain self-reliance, and even to some degree their uneasiness about settlement life. They also agreed on the need for modern education and employment as a long term solution, although the RCMP was more fearful of the speed of change and some of the consequences which they, in particular, came into contact with – alcoholism, prostitution and loss of traditional values. If there was one project on which the two departments strongly agreed, it was the relocations, and they made, for the times and given the circumstances, a very considerable effort at collaboration and mutual support. This was shown in a number of ways: the number of visits by Ottawa officials to Resolute Bay in the first year, partly in order to check on the progress of the project; the seriousness with which criticisms were treated and the systematic way attempts were made to remedy deficiencies in planning. As an example one might cite the new Department Deputy Minister's conversation with Gibson (apparently this was on a familiarisation flight to the North for Robertson) sometime in March 1954 which he then passed on to Cunningham for comment:

(a) Eskimos at Resolute – Constable Gibson raised the following points:

- (1) The desirability of ensuring that his Eskimos got some employment on the summer sea-supply. I mentioned this the other day to Mr. Sivertz.
- (2) The desirability of ascertaining whether the Department of Transport would use its helicopters during the sea-supply to take some of the Eskimo women from Resolute to the fishing ground fifty miles from there. He said that if this cannot be done it will mean that the Eskimos miss some of the best fishing that will occur during the sea-supply period. I believe there are two helicopters that will be in the area and perhaps they could be used in the manner suggested.
- (3) The payment of an Old Age pension for "Old Nellie" (Nellie Amagoalik) at Resolute. This has apparently been raised on several occasions and Gibson advised me that he had not got any definite word. I mentioned this, too, to Mr. Sivertz the other day.
- (4) Supplies for Resolute – Gibson said that he thought that when the supplies were provided last year it would have been better to have sent denim and other dry goods for the Eskimo women to make up, rather than to provide the actual garments. He said that such goods would have been considerably cheaper and would have avoided the waste that is involved when garments do not fit or when too many are provided of the wrong size. He said that the Eskimo women were quite capable of handling the sewing and had enough time to do it. This seemed to me to be a reasonable and sensible point that would be worth keeping in mind for future instances. Gibson also said that quite a bit of butter had been provided and he did not think that butter was really as good a product as lard – at about 1/5 the price. These points perhaps do not relate very much to Resolute since that operation is now complete, although there may be further supplies to go in.
- (5) Gibson said he would like to get some samples of dehydrated vegetables for experimental use by the Eskimo families. I do not know anything about the merits of this and simply pass it on.

(b) Eskimo matters generally:

- (1) Gibson raised the question whether it might not be possible to have tax free gasoline provided for Eskimo peterhead boats on the analogy of the tax free gasoline that is

made available for farmers' tractors in this part of Canada.

- (2) Gibson said that in Greenland there is a regulation in effect that walrus must be harpooned before being shot. I am not sure whether he said this also applied to seals. In any event, he said that his impression was that the wastage (sic) of walrus by shooting alone is at least 50%. He thought there would be a lot of advantage in requiring harpooning first.
- (3) Gibson said that he thought some thought should be given to the use of English by the R.C.M.P. in talking to the Eskimos in their charge. He said that there was a tendency for the R.C.M.P. constables to talk Eskimo to their charges – largely for the laudatory purpose of improving their own knowledge of the language. He said, however, that his experience was that the Eskimos could pick up English very rapidly if it was used generally in speaking to them. He thought it might be worth considering whether the officials handling Eskimos should not, while continuing to learn Eskimo as much as possible, try to make it a policy to use English as much as possible in their actual dealings with the Eskimos. This might be worth some consideration.<sup>389</sup>

No one would suggest that this exceptional concern and interest about general and specific issues continued at the Deputy Minister level. (However, general interest in the project on the part of Robertson continued unabated.) It did, in my view, continue at the level of the Director (Cunningham) and the Officer Commanding "G" Division (Larsen). To be fair to Grant, we need to note, too, that we do not know how many of these suggestions were implemented, nor whether all could be or were worth implementing. We do know the pension was arranged and that a check on prices charged for the trading store goods was carried out at Robertson's (who made various suggestions as to where better prices might be found) request.<sup>390</sup>

The documents do not show that suggestions and proposals from the RCMP were ignored. If anything they show that, at least in the first few years, suggestions from the field were taken very seriously up to the highest levels within the Department.

Suggestions made in the field, especially if they received confirming support from Larsen, were usually followed up. This is not to say that every suggestion by Sargent or Gibson was accepted. However, many of the suggestions were noted and responded to.<sup>391</sup> Later on, once the hierarchy of Northern Service Officers and Northern Administrators appeared, the documentation becomes more sparse, and the need for Ottawa to deal with every item became less necessary as the communities became more established and many issues were settled locally. To balance this picture, we also need to note times when there was friction and conflict between the two departments – usually on matters of "turf."<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Robertson to Cunningham, 5.4.54. RG 22, Vol. 298, File 40-8-1, Vol. 5.

<sup>390</sup> Robertson to Cunningham, 6.1.54; Cunningham to Robertson, 25.1.54. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4; and Gibson, Personal Communication, 31.12.91.

<sup>391</sup> Files which give a good sense of what the RCMP suggested and how these were passed on to the Department by Larsen and then responded to are: RG 18, 85-86/048, Vol. 55, Files TA 500-8-1-5, TA 500-8-1-14 and TA 500-8-1-13. One might also note Cantley's support for Gibson when one of the Northern Service Officers wanted to "end run" him in 1956. Cantley to Wilkinson, 10.1.56. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1.

<sup>392</sup> For example, Lysk to Officer Commanding, etc., 5.6.64, and Macdonnell to Officer Commanding, etc., 21.2.64. RG



In this alleged continual state of conflict between the Department and the RCMP, Grant maintains that Gibson, "Was continually defending himself against suggestions that he might be fraternizing with the Inuit and maybe even allowing them white man's food on hunting trips."<sup>393</sup>

The letters she cites in fact deal with something else. Gibson never had to defend himself against suggestions that he was "fraternizing." The issue at hand was whether the Northwest Territories Game Ordinance had been infringed, a matter that both the Department and the RCMP took extremely seriously. A question arose about whether white men, who did not have licenses, were going out hunting, providing that anything that they shot (game not "white man's food") was given to the Inuit. This would have been a clear contravention of the Game Ordinance and Gibson was able to reply that the hunter in question had been Robert Jasse who did have a permit to take seal and polar bear and had helped the Inuit build up a cache when they first arrived at Resolute. Gibson also reported that he had allowed non-Inuit on two occasions to shoot "cornered" polar bear, with "the natives getting full benefit of the hunt"; otherwise no whites were allowed to hunt.

Cunningham's reply is not as irrelevant nor as carping as Grant suggests:

There is no reason, in so far as this administration is concerned, why Constable Gibson should not invite persons stationed at Resolute to accompany him on trips or patrols. However, he should not permit illegal hunting whether the kill goes to the natives or not. The Constable is now in the position of having allowed two white men at Resolute to shoot polar bears, within the Arctic Islands Preserve, for sport and kudos. With the large weather station at Resolute and the RCAF establishment, there is a fairly numerous staff; presumably others, who would like to be able to state that they have shot a polar bear, will now consider they have the right to ask for the same privilege. Under the circumstances, it seems to me that strict enforcement of the Ordinance is not only mandatory, but most advisable from the standpoint of good Judgment and the Constable's position in the Community.<sup>394</sup>

As noted previously, Gibson was never accused of "fraternizing" with the Inuit. He was in fact commended for a Christmas party and a gift-giving that he arranged in 1954 at the RCAF base. The issue raised by the Department was whether the policy of having the Inuit "live some distance" from, and only visit the base "when it is necessary for them to do" was still in effect. Of more interest is the fact that far from chastising Gibson, Sivertz asks whether this policy needs modification. He says:

In view of the rapidly changing conditions at Resolute Bay, and throughout the Arctic, it may be necessary to modify our thinking with respect to such groups and perhaps to encourage rather than discourage, them in taking up employment at such places. We, of course, know that they have had some employment during the past year, but this has been of a temporary rather than of a continuing nature.

We are studying the possibilities with other departments of providing employment for Eskimos on some of these northern projects, but it would be helpful if we could have your views on what

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18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5.

<sup>393</sup> Grant, p. 21.

<sup>394</sup> Fraser to Larsen, 17.6.54, Gibson to "G" Division, 7.7.54, Cunningham to Nicholson, 13.8.54. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14. Gibson spells Jasse as Chasse

may be done at Resolute Bay.

We would be interested particularly in hearing if the Eskimos there would be interested in taking permanent employment if it were offered and also if the population at Resolute could be increased by transferring more families from the Port Harrison area.<sup>395</sup>

### **Grise Fiord**

In general the Grise Fiord group may have had a much harder first year than the people at Resolute Bay. For one thing, they were a day's sled ride away from the RCMP detachment and the store. While they apparently visited the store once a month and the RCMP would have patrolled to their camp, they were thrust on their own devices much more than were the group at Resolute Bay where Gibson visited the camp every second day and went on two – and three-day hunts with the hunters throughout the first winter. The one “comfort” the Grise Fiord people had was that they were a larger group – six families – and had the help of two Pond Inlet families. While mostly undocumented, the Pond Inlet families may be the unsung heroes in the story of how the settlements survived. Certainly Gibson felt that the Pond Inlet Amagoalik were “essential” to the survival and success in the first year at Resolute Bay. Moodie says the same of the two families at Grise Fiord.

Average winter temperatures were warmer at Grise Fiord than at Resolute. But other aspects of life were harder. The absence of the two RCMP officers and the two Inuit Special Constables and their families further circumscribed the social life in this new, alien and difficult environment. There was no lake for water, as there was, apparently at Resolute Bay. Instead, desalinated sea water had to be found. Finding adequate snow for building snow houses seems to have been impossible until well into the first winter. The absence of an adequate number of caribou skins and the need to airdrop extra skins meant that for part of the winter, at least, conditions must have been very harsh indeed. The fact that the children did not have adequate “skin” clothing was an added hardship since “whiteman's clothing” was not sufficient.

Although families did not live close to each other at Inukjuak, the Inuit are gregarious, and visiting together was an important part of their social lives and, I assume, their psychological security. This, in an important sense, they lost by immigrating. Gibson believes that not being able to visit more widely and with more people was one of the hardest adaptations the two groups had to make. This is not to underestimate the isolation the four families at Resolute Bay must also have felt, but one has the sense that at least there, there was some feeling of connection with the wider world.

What is remarkable is that despite all this the group not only survived but, to use the source Grant does to describe the “depressed” state of the Inuit when they first arrived, they also looked “happier and healthier” within a few months of their arrival.<sup>396</sup> This must have been assisted by the excellent hunting they had that first year.

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<sup>395</sup> Sivertz to Gibson, 28.12.54. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14.

<sup>396</sup> Fryer, A.G., “Rehabilitation Program, etc.”, February 1954. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-10-5. Freeman, 1971, *Op cit.*, p. 40. has a good discussion of the difficulties the Inukjuak Inuit faced that first year. See Bibliography.

### **The Marshall Letter**

Since the Marshall letter is so central to the criticisms made of the preparations for the relocation project, it is worth noting other reservations he had and the Department's response to them. Extracts from the Marshall/Cunningham interchange follow.<sup>397</sup> Marshall's points are underlined while Cunningham's answers are not:

2. The Eskimos were transported from Port Harrison to Resolute via Churchill by boat. They were on board ship for approximately six weeks during the summer when hunting was at its best and consequently when they arrived at Resolute on September 7 they had no stock pile of meat for the winter. This has meant that they have had to hunt every day since they arrived there and must continue to do so as long as the weather allows leaving them insufficient time to repair their gear and prepare in other ways for the winter. I was told that during the summer there were RCAF North Star aircraft flying from Churchill to Resolute on an average of once a week. If the Eskimo had been carried on one of these planes they could have been at Resolute by early August and have had that month to hunt walrus which are apparently plentiful there.

Mr. Marshall does not say how the Eskimos would have got to Port Churchill to catch the plane. They can only get from Port Harrison to Port Churchill by boat and the first boat available to carry them was the "C.D. Howe" on which they were actually carried. Further, there would have not been much use in having the Eskimos at Resolute without their supplies of food and equipment. We doubt very much even if we could have got the Eskimos and their supplies to Churchill earlier, the RCAF would have agreed to carry such a volume of freight as well as the Eskimos themselves, including their dogs.

5. The Eskimo tents were in very bad condition but no new tents or repair material were sent to Resolute.

The Constable at Port Harrison, who was made responsible for the selection of the Eskimos and for the condition of their equipment before leaving Port Harrison, was given definite instructions to see that the Eskimos were properly outfitted at Port Harrison. It was therefore his responsibility to see that tents and other like equipment were in good condition and repair. 140 yards of duck were ordered, among other supplies, for delivery to Resolute so that repair material for tents would be available. This material was sufficient to either construct four new tents or to repair existing tents, or both.

6. As a result the first week was unnecessarily unpleasant while the members of the group adjusted themselves.

As the Eskimos had quite evidently been living in the same tents before they went to Resolute, it is not considered that the conditions they met with there were any more unpleasant than those they left.

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<sup>397</sup> Cunningham to Rowley, 15.12.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4, and "Eskimo Settlement at Resolute", 9.11.53. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 1. See also Rowley to Deputy Minister, 5.1.54. RG 22, Vol. 544, File Rowley ACND 1954, Pt. 3.

8. As you know, a \$5,000 loan was made from the Eskimo Loan Fund to purchase these supplies and the Eskimos are expected to pay this loan back. Since this first year at Resolute is an experiment, one would have expected that every effort would have been made to see that the store contained a good supply of the necessities and that most unnecessary items were omitted.

There is no mention of what items which were supplied were nonessential and what essential supplies were omitted. The outfits were confined to standard articles that many years of experience in trading posts in the Arctic has shown would be in greatest demand. An identical shipment which had been made to Craig Harbour had been opened out when the ship called there a second time and was commented on very favourably by the Eskimos and the Police detachment there as well as by Superintendent Larsen. I might say that butter, lard, cotton print, towels, llama braid, work pants, wool mitts, men's braces, coat sweaters are standard merchandise at every northern trading post and are readily saleable. The quantities are reasonable for the number of people involved. Putty and gasoline are both necessary for boat repairs and operations.

9. Among the items which were not included in the supplies were:

( a ) Rifles -

Six rifles were ordered. These were purchased for stock as a customary line of trade goods and not for the immediate needs of the Eskimos who were all equipped with rifles before leaving Port Harrison. Steps have been taken to trace the articles and to have them shipped to Resolute. if they are not found within a reasonable time, replacements will be ordered. It is not felt, however, that they are an immediate necessity.

(b) Duffle cloth – I am told that duffle cloth is an absolute necessity for Eskimos in making their clothing.

40 yards of duffle goods were ordered and are among the goods which arrived at Resolute.

(c) Oil Lamps – there were no lamps and only three lanterns for four families. Most of these people are to experience their first dark period and should have lamps to help them light their homes.

Most Eskimos use the ordinary Eskimo stone lamp. An oil lamp is a luxury as few Eskimos can afford to buy coal oil.

(d) Wash tubs – it is hoped that the Eskimo will be taught basic sanitation and personal cleanliness but they have no means of washing.

Eskimos do not wash in the winter time. No source of water is available and they could only melt down snow which would take an unconscionable amount of fuel. Had tubs been supplied it is doubtful if they would have been used. There are wash basins and pails if an Eskimo wished to wash.

(f) Snow knives – the knives sent for this purpose were apparently of no use. The Eskimo just laughed when shown them.

We have tried several times to get suitable snow knives, but we find that the Eskimos

prefer to make their own. Custom varies from place to place. For example, in Baffin Island the Eskimos cut the block of snow with a saw and use a butcher knife to trim it and fit it in place. The Quebec Eskimos make their own knives, generally out of old saw blades. The butcher knives, which Eskimos use for a variety of purposes other than building snow houses, were sent as a general utility knife.

(g) Fish hooks – fishing line was sent but no fish hooks. It was hoped that the Eskimo could fish through the ice during the winter but this will not be possible now.

The fishing line was not sent for the purpose of fishing with hooks. It was sent to repair nets and make nets. The Port Harrison Eskimos do not normally fish with hooks, but use nets during the open water season and spears through the ice.

(h) First-aid supplies – Constable Gibson has no first-aid supplies at his disposal in case of any accident or sickness.

No first-aid supplies or medicines were sent in with the group. Inspector Larsen, in an earlier visit to Resolute Bay, made arrangements with the Air Force Station to provide first-aid supplies. Dr. Simpson left a supply of medicines with Constable Gibson. Constable Gibson was informed that first-aid supplies were available from the Air Force.

10. When Constable Gibson arrived at Resolute he went over the supplies which had been landed there comparing them against the manifest. He found a total shortage of \$1,124 worth of goods. These shortages were made up of three .303 rifles, three .22 rifles, 120 yds. of tent material, 60 yds. of khaki drill, 60 yds. of blue denim, 40 yds. of white duffle, 1,000 board feet of spruce.

It seems particularly unfortunate that all the shortages should be made up of those items which are the most necessary for the Eskimo and I understand that the lack of such items as rifles and duffle cloth will make their life more difficult than it need have been this winter. What happened to the \$1,124 worth of goods no one appears to know, but the fact remains that the Eskimo, during the most difficult period of the year, will have to do without some of the necessities of life.

We are very concerned about the shortages which have been found in the goods disembarked at Resolute. These appear to be 6 rifles, 140 yards of tent material, 60 yards of blue denim and 1,000 ft. of lumber. It is unfortunate that Constable Gibson did not unpack and check the goods immediately and report any shortages by radio. As soon as we learned of the non-arrival of these goods, we took steps to trace and replace them. The Eskimos will not be charged for any goods not delivered and will not be required to pay for them. Only those goods delivered at Resolute will be charged against the Eskimo Loan Fund. In the meantime the non-arrival of these goods is apparently causing no hardship. I attach a copy of a report from Constable Gibson dated October 14th. It is our impression here that the Constable would be a very surprised man if he read Mr. Marshall's report.

11. I personally examined the goods in the Eskimo store and would say that for the prices charged some of the items are of extremely poor quality. If the supplies had been purchased from a wholesale house at Montreal and loaded on the "C.D. Howe" instead of being bought in

Winnipeg and shipped by rail to Churchill, it might have been possible to secure them at lower prices.<sup>398</sup>

The "C.D. Howe" handles freight shipments from Montreal only for points between Montreal and Churchill. Any goods for shipment from Churchill north must be shipped to Churchill by rail and loaded on the "Howe" there. If goods for shipment at Churchill are ordered in Montreal, they must be brought from Montreal to Churchill by rail which increases the cost and makes delivery more doubtful. It is, therefore, our policy to order all goods shipped from Churchill from wholesale houses in the west. It may well be, however, that we are not getting value for our money and this is something we mean to look into. The prices to which Mr. Marshall refers are, of course, the selling price in the native stores. This selling price is the landed cost, plus about 25% on an average. The mark-up on essential goods is of the order of 10% and on non-essential luxuries, 40%. The profits, of course, accrue to the Eskimos themselves and the high prices for luxury goods will tend to restrict their buying to essentials only, as far as possible.

Despite these criticisms Marshall also reported:

From what I could gather the settlement is a happy one because hunting has been very good. Almost every time the men go on a hunting trip, they bring back one or more seals and have already shot 5 polar bears. White fox are very plentiful and as soon as the season opens the Eskimos will lay out their trap lines. Reports indicate that during the summer months walrus are numerous in the Resolute area. With what the men are able to secure from hunting and purchase from their store, they and their families have plenty to eat. Health is very good and there is no reason why this should not continue to be the case since the Eskimos' contact with the white residents of the area is very limited.<sup>399</sup>

### **Other Criticisms**

Marshall was not the only critical visitor to Resolute nor were his the first criticisms which had been made of the project. Marshall had seen himself as someone inexperienced in the North, who was offering friendly and helpful criticisms. The RCAF was initially anything but friendly to the proposed resettlement and their criticisms came from a highly respected member of the Air Force who also had considerable experience of the North.

This was R.C. Ripley, Air Officer, Commanding RCAF Air Transport Command. Young had written Lessard, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Transport, on June 15, 1953, indicating that "a few families from the overpopulated Port Harrison area of northern Quebec" would be going to Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands under the "guidance" of the RCMP and that the aim was primarily to find out whether the Inuit from the south could adapt to conditions in the High Arctic as "hunters and trappers." Young intimated his hope that some of the Inuit could find employment at Resolute. He had been informed that local officers of the RCAF and the Department of Transport at Resolute Bay had indicated that Inuit could be used for a variety of jobs "either

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<sup>398</sup> Grant reports that Marshall was "incensed" about the quality of the supplies and the fact that some of goods did not arrive. Grant, p. 19

<sup>399</sup> Marshall to Rowley, 9.11.53. RG 22, Vol. 544, File Rowley, ACND, 1953, Pt. 4.

temporarily or on a permanent basis.” He asked the RCAF to cooperate by giving Inuit “an opportunity to take any employment that may become available.” To this Ripley responded strongly on July 6, 1953. Young’s letter had been very poorly drafted and Ripley, understandably, misunderstood what was involved. In his reply he agreed that “The general principle of establishing Eskimos under proper surroundings where their standard of living can be improved and where they could be usefully employed cannot be argued against.” This was, in fact, the stated goal of the Department. However, Ripley says that because of “casual information picked up by myself” he had become convinced there would be serious problems with the Resolute settlement.

As he understood it, the settlement at Resolute might very well result in the same problems the RCAF had had to deal with at Frobisher Bay. The end result he maintained would be that the onus for ensuring the viability of the settlement would fall on the RCAF. He seems to have believed that the Department wanted full time employment for the Inuit and, quite reasonably, felt that if this was the case neither proper preparation nor planning had taken place to make this possible. He was highly reluctant to take on the onus “for training and employment” which would, he believed, inevitably fall on the RCAF. Moreover, he had received general instructions from Defence to “reduce overhead and airlift” into Resolute Bay for financial reasons, and, in the light of this, asked for a review of the necessity of adding more people to Cornwallis Island. He also claimed that the RCAF would have to provide housing for the Inuit families and was concerned that Young’s letter made “no mention ... of housing or support of the Eskimos.” Instead, he proposed, quite reasonably, that before the Inuit be sent north in order to gain what he obviously thought would be full-time employment, they should be placed in proper schools and given training as drivers, etc. The letter, in other words, suggested a plan for full-time employment of Inuit at the RCAF base. This was similar to the Department’s original proposal to send trained heavy equipment operators from Fort Chimo to Resolute Bay, with the exception that the latter were expected to live off hunting as well.

The problem with Ripley’s letter is that it missed the point. What Ripley proposed was more in line with the Department’s experiment at Fort Churchill where five Fort Chimo men were being trained at the military base. What the Department had in mind was opportunities for casual employment to supplement what was still expected to be a hunting and trapping community.<sup>400</sup> As Cunningham noted on August 4, 1953, in a report to the acting Deputy Minister:

Air Commodore Ripley appears to be under a misapprehension as to our purpose in transferring these Eskimos. Our primary object is to find out how Eskimos from over-populated southern areas can adapt themselves to conditions in the High Arctic where there is at present no Eskimo population and where natural food resources are reported to be much more readily available than they now are in southern areas. Each group will be a self-contained unit with its own supplies, and will be in charge of a (sic) N.C.O. of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

While we have not over-looked the possibility of the Eskimos at Resolute Bay finding at least part-time employment at the station there, it was not our intention to ask either the RCAF or the Department of Transport to make any special arrangements until such time as we could ascertain how well these people could adapt themselves both to their new environment and to conditions of

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<sup>400</sup> Young to Lessard, 15.6.53; Drury to Young 30.7.53; Ripley to Chief of Air Staff, 6.7.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1-, Pt. 4.

employment.<sup>401</sup>

This exchange of correspondence then led to a meeting on August 10, 1953, also mentioned earlier, between ten junior and middle level officials from various departments having an interest in the project, chaired by Fraser, the Chief of the Northern Administration Division.

Cantley started the discussion at this meeting by noting how many families would be going north and how they would be assisted by families from Pond Inlet, emphasizing that all the people involved were volunteers and knew of the environmental conditions where they were going. Only at Resolute was there an interest in the possibility of finding employment. "However the possibility of securing employment was not an important factor in deciding where the Eskimo should be settled. The men of the group are primarily hunters and the main purpose of the experiment was to see if it is possible for people to adapt themselves to conditions in the High Arctic and secure a living from the land." Cantley might also have pointed out that these plans for Resolute had been reformulated as late as the end of May, 1953.

The chairman then asked the RCAF "If they were afraid that the Eskimos taking part in the experiment might become dependent on the RCAF for food and clothing if the experiment was not successful." The RCAF representative said that "This was the case and that the RCAF did not expect to be able to offer any employment at Resolute except if Eskimos there had some type of technical training." The Department of Transport, however, indicated that they wanted to hire at least one Inuit as a "general handyman." The RCAF representative also stated that there might not be sufficient wildlife to provide for the proposed population. Cantley answered that "He had reason to believe that there was sufficient marine life to support the Eskimo families concerned. No one could say for sure that this was the case and consequently the experiment was being staged." Sivertz then added as mentioned earlier that "The Canadian government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared that in many cases the Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this." (my emphasis)<sup>402</sup>

There followed a discussion of medical facilities available at Resolute and the RCMP noted that their representative had had first-aid training and would have first-aid supplies available while the RCAF indicated that a doctor visited Resolute once a month and that a medical orderly was on duty at all times.<sup>403</sup>

At the end of the meeting Sivertz added that:

The Eskimos prime purpose in going to the High North was to see if it were possible for them to adapt themselves to conditions there and secure a reasonable living. Steps will be taken to see that the Eskimo are provided for in case the experiment is not successful and that every effort will be made to see that the RCAF is not inconvenienced.

Cantley then repeated that those taking part in the experiment were "not seeking employment but the

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<sup>401</sup> Cunningham to Jackson, 4.8.53. *Ibid.*

<sup>402</sup> Our emphasis - these two comments are an important part of the evidence supporting the critics of the projects. I have already commented on the significance of these statements.

<sup>403</sup> The reference to the medical training of Constable Gibson may refer to the fact that the RCMP started giving medical (first-aid) courses to officers in the north in the 1952-1953 period. Minutes, Second Meeting, Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 6.5.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.



administration would not stand in their way if employment became available.” Marshall, who was taking minutes, added that, in conclusion, the meeting was satisfied that “The arrangements and planning of the experiment was such that the Eskimo families involved would not become a liability to the RCAF.”<sup>404</sup>

However, the matter was not to end there and for reasons which were inexplicable to the Department officials who dealt with it. The RCAF, once again, persuaded the office of the Deputy Minister of National Defence to write to Robertson on February 2, 1954 saying:

In the fall of last year the Department of Natural Resources and Development experimented with a move of twenty (sic) Eskimo families to Resolute Bay N.W.T. It has been reported that these families have become, more or less, wards of the RCAF detachment of Resolute Bay. It is, perhaps, possible that this state of affairs could have been avoided if a representative of a responsible department had been posted to the RCAF detachment, Resolute Bay, for the purposes of administering and directing the Eskimos involved in the experiment.

On February 16, 1954, a surprised Robertson responded to Drury. He did not point out that it was four, not twenty, families who had gone to Resolute Bay but did note that the matter had been discussed at the ad hoc August 1953 meeting and that there was an RCMP officer representing the Department who was responsible for the welfare of the Inuit. Based on the reports that he had received, he believed that:

... In brief, they (Inuit) had been living their native life, had had little to no contact with the base, and were so happy in their new surroundings that they were already talking of having some of their relatives from Port Harrison join them.

In view of the careful arrangements that were made and of this recent report, I am rather at a loss to understand why it should have been reported to you that the Eskimos have become wards of the RCAF or that there is no one at Resolute Bay responsible for the administration and direction of their affairs.... If, however, you still feel that there is anything that is prejudicial to your operations in having Eskimos at Resolute Bay, I would be glad if you would let me know, so that we may deal with it.

As I have explained, our primary object in sending these few families to Resolute Bay was to ascertain if they could adapt themselves to a new environment and make a satisfactory living there as hunters and trappers. Present indications are that they will be able and happy to do so.

He then went on to indicate continued interest in any employment that might be available, also reporting on other departments that had indicated interest in providing employment for the Inuit.

Cunningham, on February 18, 1954, could also not understand the complaint, saying, “Mr. Drury has apparently been mislead regarding the arrangements at Resolute Bay.” He wrote that the RCAF had not had any part in the operation beyond taking a few packages of reindeer skins and other supplies to replace those that had been short landed in the previous summer. These were taken when space was available on regular flights and had caused no expense or inconvenience. He complained “It is rather difficult to understand why the RCAF should be so concerned about this project, particularly since the Eskimos have been purposely kept away from the base ...”

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<sup>404</sup> “Minutes of Meeting to Discuss the Transfer of Certain Eskimo Families”, 10.8.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File40-8-1, Pt. 4.

Nicholson, too, expressed surprise and informed Robertson that the officer commanding the air base at Resolute, on being informed of the misunderstanding, had promised to take immediate steps to have the matter clarified.<sup>405</sup> On March 9, 1954, a terse letter, in Drury's name, retreated, saying:

It is gratifying to learn that your Eskimo settlement plan is proceeding satisfactorily. Should any difficulty arise in the future you will be kept informed. I reiterate that is the intention of this department to cooperate, whenever possible and practical, in any of your plans or experiments.<sup>406</sup>

There were other visitors to Resolute in the autumn of 1953. One was Sivertz who had accompanied G.W. Stead and Ripley on a whirlwind five-day tour of the North, a visit he admitted "while short and not calculated to make an Arctic expert out of me, was never the less of very great value." He, too, commented on the Resolute project. Grant merely cites a brief line from his report to the effect that the Inuit "would become camp fringe dwellers, combing refuse dumps and looking for handouts."<sup>407</sup> However, the full context of his remarks is worthy of note since it indicates a renewed RCAF interest in the project as well as an articulation of what was in part, the original conception for the relocations, although Sivertz does not seem to realize this. The difference between his views and those of the planners (Cantley and Cunningham) is that it does not recognize the tentative nature of the project and seems to be unaware of the switch, in May 1953, in the nature of the Resolute project to one involving far less employment at the base than had originally been hoped for. (Even had the Fort Chimo group moved to Resolute it was expected, as noted earlier, that they would sustain themselves, partly by hunting and trapping.) Sivertz, too, seems much less comfortable with the incremental, "muddling through" aspect of the projects which the "old timers" such as Cantley were willing to bow to. He wanted clear cut alternatives which the facts of life in the Arctic did not easily accommodate:

It seems to me that our Eskimo resettlement project has two forms – one is the arranging of permanent employment for selected individuals preferably trained in some trade as is being done at Churchill with 7 Eskimos, 5 recently transported from Chimo. For such to be successful it is essential that the men and their families be housed adequately. In other words, the change over from the primitive way of life must be complete. If this is not done the workman will show up in clothing appropriate to the snow house or tent and carrying evidence of the dietary and sanitary practices of the primitive life. It would be impossible for the employee or his children to study or read. Also, the ties of such an employee to his job must leave much to be desired because life in the snow house or tent is too likely to continue in the semi-nomadic pattern which is not conducive to regularity or punctuality.

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<sup>405</sup> Nicholson to Robertson 25.2.54 and Cunningham to Robertson, 18.2.54. In the same file there is a handwritten note to Cantley indicating that the information was based on "some disgruntled airmen who had visited Ottawa after a trip to Resolute". RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2. My guess would be that if this is the case then it might be because they ran into Gibson's prohibition on visiting the camp. Gibson was determined to not let casual visitors exploit the Inuit carvers. He was also determined to prevent sexual harassment.

<sup>406</sup> Grant reports this by quoting Drury but not giving any sense at all of how inaccurate and absurd were his comments. She alleges that his mistaken beliefs that there was no representative of the administration at Resolute, somehow led to the appointment of Northern Service Officers to various communities, shortly thereafter. In fact, the proposal to employ Northern Service Officers had been agreed to in principle in 1953. None was appointed to Resolute until years afterwards. Grant, p. 17, and Drury to Robertson, 9.3.54. *Ibid.*

<sup>407</sup> *Grant*, p. 17.

The second form of Eskimo resettlement is the transplanting of groups of families from regions where game is scarce to places where it is plentiful and where the people can live as hunters. Such is the Craig Harbour project.

At Resolute ... they are expected to earn their living principally by hunting but it is intended also that they be employed at the RCAF and Department of Transport establishments casually from time to time. The two forms of Eskimo resettlement are here being mixed. I think there is danger these people will become camp fringe dwellers, combing future dumps and looking for handouts. (my emphasis) If they are to be hunters they should live away from the base. If they are to live near the base they should be made part of it.

Air Commodore Ripley informs me that the 4 Eskimo men now at Resolute could all be employed as unskilled workers by the RCAF, and, if Eskimos can be found who have any experience in any of the common trades he feels sure that employment could be found next summer for 15 or 20 more. He considers that it would be advantageous to Canada in many ways to replace with Eskimos as many as possible of the white men who have to be sent there at great expense and who are generally dissatisfied themselves and render indifferent service.

Sivertz envisaged that such a policy would require building an Inuit married quarters and above all a school which pupils could attend full time. In ten years such a school would produce children for vocational and technical training at Aklavik after which they might return to the High Arctic and run establishments like the weather stations.<sup>408</sup>

Cantley's response to the Sivertz report not only reiterated the original goals of the projects but confirmed the commitment to bring people back if they were not satisfied. The response also reflected the "go cautiously and slowly" approach of the older official versus the greater impatience of a newcomer like Sivertz.

At the time these arrangements were made, we inquired into the possibilities of some of the people finding employment, but nobody was interested. As a matter of fact, most of those we approached were quite lukewarm to the idea of transferring Eskimos to the High Arctic at all. However, we felt that the experiment was worth while. Faced with the problem of having too many people in northern Quebec for the resources available, it was felt that if we could encourage people to move to virtually virgin territories where there seemed to be every prospect that they could at least obtain sufficient food, it would be a step in the right direction. We must now wait to see how it works out. If the first group is successful and satisfied, others will wish to follow. If not, then we shall have to bring them back. (my emphasis)

Although the initial step was taken in an attempt to better the condition of hunting groups, we did not overlook the possibility of some at least finding employment, casual or permanent, particularly at Resolute Bay. As a matter of fact, we felt quite sure that once the natives were there, they would be offered at least casual employment. It now appears that we were correct in this assumption and it is probable that we shall now receive further requests for native labour from other High Arctic stations.

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<sup>408</sup> Grant, p. 17, believes that there were "plans" to establish similar relocations at Alert, Eureka, Mould Bay and Isachsen. I was not able to discover any such plans. There were occasional suggestions for such future possibilities. Sivertz to Deputy Minister, 23.9.53. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Pt. 3.

I do not think we can accept the proposal that the “change-over from the primitive way of life must be complete.” Most Eskimos are hunters by instinct and any attempt made to immediately and completely divorce them from their traditional way of life would probably result in making them unsettled and dissatisfied. Past experience has shown that where employed Eskimos are allowed reasonable time off for hunting, they become more readily reconciled to the restrictions of regular employment.

It is quite probable that Resolute Bay can also be developed to provide all the advantages Mr. Sivertz mentions, but we shall have fewer problems to contend with and more chance of success if we proceed slowly. The thinking and habits of a primitive people do not change readily and, adaptable though the Eskimos are, they should not be pushed too far or too fast.<sup>409</sup>

This was a continuation of the debates which had taken place during the first meetings of the Conference and the Committee on Eskimo Affairs in 1952. As mentioned earlier a tripartite “policy” of assimilation, partial assimilation and continuation of hunting and trapping had emerged at these meetings. Officials like Sivertz wanted to resolve the inherent ambiguities and contradictions this involved. To some degree the policy he advocated was beginning to emerge in 1953, especially the emphasis on the need for a more stable, effective schooling programme. In 1953, however, the Department was either not able or not willing to introduce a less ambiguous, less tentative and experimental approach.

Another visitor was G.W. Stead, who represented the Department of Finance at ACND meetings. He flew to Resolute with Ripley and Sivertz five days after the Inuit landed. He visited the military installations but he was not able to see the Inuit settlement since he was there only for a few hours. He thought only one Inuit family had landed at Resolute. Despite this he provided a paragraph critical of the whole operation. He claimed that “As soon as the (sic) Eskimo family arrived problems of their relationship to the military encampment began to appear”, but gave no details. He then offered some general comments about the tendency for settlements of his kind to turn Inuit into “camp followers.” Grant gives considerable credence to Stead and quotes the following extract from his report:

When Military camps and Eskimos villages are adjacent, the Eskimos tend to be turned into “camp followers.” The different moral bases of the two societies tend to exercise a harmful influence on both; junior members of the Armed Forces attempt to get a corner on the output of handicrafts and so forth. The ad hoc approach that presently passes for policy falls between two stools. The reasons for moving this family are grounded in an attempt to keep the Eskimo in his native state and to preserve that culture as primitive as it is. However, by moving the Eskimos to an area where they come into intimate contact with White men destroys the basis of this reasoning while leaving them untrained to cope with the problems presented by this contact.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Cantley to Director, 13.10.53. RG 85, Vol. 1042, File 22341.

<sup>410</sup> Report on Tour of the Arctic Islands - September 8.12.53”, 29.9.53. RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Pt. 3. Grant states that Stead was Deputy Minister of the Treasury Board. Apart from the fact that the Treasury Board has never had a Deputy Minister, Stead was actually with the Department of Finance and a middle level official in that Department. At the end of his memorandum he proposed a policy of gradual assimilation and training of Inuit at military establishments. This was in fact the incipient objective of the settlement at Resolute. He also has a confused discussion about Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic which he says could be in jeopardy if “We do not carry out the somewhat basic function of adequately training the aboriginal population so as to fit them for participation in the life of a

(my emphasis)

Grant asks why, given these criticisms, the projects were not suspended and the Inuit returned home, particularly as conditions “appeared to improve in Northern Quebec.” It was reported earlier that conditions there had in fact improved very much in 1953 and especially in 1954. The planners could hardly have known this would occur but they did know that 1953 would again be a peak year in the fox cycle. However, even if they had known it would probably not have made a difference to the planned relocations. Prices for fox remained depressed while the prices of goods continued to rise. The need to move people because of overpopulation was once again recommended by the RCMP at the end of 1954 when the fox cycle had turned down again.<sup>411</sup> However, be that as it may, the more important issue is how the Department treated these criticisms.

Some it regarded as serious, others it ignored:

- (i) It ignored Stead’s comments (for good reason in my view) since his was a one paragraph criticism of a very general sort by someone who had no experience of the North, spent a few hours at Resolute, did not visit the camp, and made his definitive judgements only a week after the group had arrived there.
- (ii) Air Commander Ripley’s criticisms were provoked by concern that the RCAF not be burdened with the project and were oriented to promoting a different kind of project, namely, one which created permanent employment for Inuit in the High Arctic. His first objection was easy for the Department to comply with. His second involved a difference of opinion about how the resettlement policy should be implemented. The essence of planning is to see opportunities and threats in the future and to exploit or combat them by decisions taken in the present. Ripley believed that vocational training should be provided before Inuit were sent north for full time employment. He assumed Inuit workers could adapt to the new environment. The Department was not sure Inuit from northern Quebec could adapt to the High Arctic at all (this applied to the Fort Chimo group, too), and the first step was to find out if the northern Quebecers could adjust to the new environment and were willing to stay on. In the jargon of the current academic planning literature this might be seen as a difference of opinion between “logical incrementalists” and “rational optimisers.”<sup>412</sup> Cantley states this clearly in the opening paragraph of his response to the Sivertz comments on Resolute Bay:

The transfer of seven families of Eskimos from Port Harrison and three families from Pond Inlet during the past season was made primarily to determine how well natives from northern Quebec could adapt themselves to high Arctic conditions. They went north on the understanding that they would continue to live as hunters and trappers and that if they were satisfied to settle there permanently we would provide the trading facilities. On the other hand, if they did not like the country, they would be returned to

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modern state”. This odd interpretation is unclear unless the implication is that unassimilated, aboriginal people are somehow not full citizens and that only full citizens could be of use in asserting sovereignty. In any case, he is wrong on all counts. Stead then ends with a set of recommendations which he does not seem to realize are more or less the direction the Department was in fact taking. (Report, p. 1314). *Grant*, p. 17.

<sup>411</sup> See various RCMP reports on Conditions at “Port Harrison”. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-13.

<sup>412</sup> J.B. Quinn, *Strategies for Change: Logical Incrementalism*, 1980.

their home again.<sup>413</sup>

- (iii) Marshall's more concrete criticisms of the operational aspects of the project were taken very seriously, right up to the Deputy Minister level. Cunningham's response to Marshall cannot just be dismissed as Grant does as "...a long memo, which claimed the order (for the stores) was standard for all posts. His arguments were even less convincing. As an example, his reply to the omission of washtubs was that Inuit did not wash in the winter."<sup>414</sup> If Marshall's criticisms are to be taken seriously then so must the response to them. Marshall was right on some issues and clearly wrong on others, while other criticisms were at least debatable. A rather simplistic count suggests that he was wrong on eight issues, right on six and three were debatable. For example, Inuit did not use washtubs for bathing in the winter. Any washing that was done would have been, as Cunningham/Cantley say, in wash basins and pails.<sup>415</sup> No one bathed very much in the Arctic in the winter and certainly not if one lived in an igloo. The most useful and effective of the Marshall criticisms dealt with the missing stores at Resolute. The Department felt it had rectified this by flying in replacements for some of the most crucial of these items. Lastly, the Department would probably also have given some weight to Marshall's remarks introducing his report. We must recall that he was a friendly critic who believed the project at Resolute would be an "unqualified success":

Although it is too early to make any definite statement I feel personally that the experiment will be an unqualified success. The people are well fed and happy and seem to be satisfied with their new environment. However, it appeared to me that if the experiment is successful it will be owing primarily to good luck and to the resourcefulness of Constable Gibson. Since my experience in the north is so limited my observations and any conclusions I have reached should of course be examined by someone with more extensive knowledge of the problems.<sup>416</sup>

- (iv) The February 1954 criticisms from National Defence were so ill-informed that the Department could only react with surprise. Particularly as, at the same time, they were receiving reports from the field indicating that things were going well.
- (v) In the case of Sivertz, Cunningham decided not to respond on grounds that the "excellent report (from) Commissioner Nicholson ... on the adaptation of these Eskimo to their new environment", made this unnecessary. This was precipitous but conveys the sense of optimism that the RCMP reports had induced in the Department planners at that point."<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Cantley to Director, 13.10.53. RG 85, Vol. 1042, File 22341. A few years later Cantley was much more cautious about a "piecemeal" approach calling instead for "an attempt to look at the whole picture before making any more piecemeal arrangements". Cantley to Sivertz, 28.3.56. RG 85, Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2.

<sup>414</sup> Grant, p. 20.

<sup>415</sup> Grant also claims that this memo was not passed on to the Deputy Minister. It was. Robertson saw both Marshall's report and the response to it. Robertson to Cunningham, 6.1.54. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>416</sup> "Eskimos Settlement at Resolute", 9.11.53. Ibid. None of these positive comments is acknowledged by Grant.

<sup>417</sup> FJGC to Cantley, 30.10.53. RG 85, Vol. 1042, File 22341.

**Conclusion**

1. The documents dealing with preparations for the relocations fail to give support to the claim that there was an unwritten sovereignty objective in the relocations. Had the Fort Chimo group been moved and obtained full time employment as government employees at Resolute it might have been argued that they were only sent north to increase the “civilian” presence there. The readiness with which the Fort Chimo project was transferred to Churchill, further suggests how absent was a need to counter a threat to sovereignty in the minds of the planners.
2. The main purpose of the projects was to deal with what was perceived to be a problem of overpopulation in relation to resources in Northern Quebec – there is no evidence to indicate that this was a “romantic” attempt to return the Inuit to a traditional “native way of life.”
3. The planning for what supplies the trading post would carry was neither perfect nor incompetent. A few serious errors were made, for example a lack of sufficient caribou skins. For the rest, expensive butter, clothing of the wrong sizes off the rack, and the like, rated concern but were hardly fatal to the adequacy of the orders which showed, in general, care and experience. These stores were to provide basic staples for a project which might not succeed and should be judged in that light. The assumption was that these would be improved in subsequent years as the needs of the families changed.
4. There is little evidence to suggest that there was insufficient time to find seven families of volunteers during the twelve weeks before the C.D. Howe sailed, particularly, since three of the families were available as early as March 1953.
5. There are repeated statements in the documents guaranteeing the Inuit they could return after one or two years if the resettlement did not suit them. The Department was as committed as the RCMP to returning the settlers under these circumstances.
6. The Department (and the RCMP) through the reports of Ms. Hinds knew a great deal about the health, state of equipment, and social relations of the Inuit going north. Hinds as welfare teacher put considerable energy into preparing the families (especially their clothing) for the move. So, too, did Gibson and Stevenson. The Department took reasonable, though far from lavish, steps to ensure that people needing supplies and equipment received these either at “Port Harrison” or on arrival at Craig Harbour and Resolute. For example, relief was provided at Craig Harbour as were traps, sleds and the use of a boat. At Resolute considerable assistance in hunting (and obtaining wood for construction of a community hall) was provided by both the RCMP, the RCAF and a visiting zoologist who knew the game situation on the island well.
7. The Department and RCMP headquarters instructed officials in the field to convey to volunteers some of the changes they would face in the High Arctic, the two month long dark period, short days and only one annual supply visit. Hinds, Stevenson and Gibson claimed they had done so.
8. The RCMP at Inukjuak, as well as Hinds, knew that groups would be going to three different locations. I believe it is possible that the Inukjuak group may have been told that they would go to two locations on Ellesmere (“one place”) but that they were not told they would be split into three groups. There is no documentation suggesting that this decision to send some people to a third location, taken in early June,

- was conveyed to the Inukjuak Inuit – hence their shock and dismay when they learned on shipboard that some would go to Resolute. The separation of the groups was handled inadequately, caused unnecessary hardship and showed an unacceptable level of insensitivity towards the Inuit settlers and was high-handed.
9. Both groups, the Resolute group in particular, were given active and adequate assistance in setting up camp and obtaining the winter cache, as well as establishing traps for the trapping season. The decision to move the Craig Harbour group to Lindstrom Peninsula, while understandable from a conservation point of view, must have added to the stress and loneliness of the first year, for the three Inukjuak families that had been used to living a few hours' rather than a day's travel from a RCMP post.
  10. If one accepts the fact that "starvation had been endemic for decades" and that a relocation policy was a "major facet of the solution" then the range of information about game conditions at Craig Harbour and Resolute was adequate but far from complete, as the Alexandra Fiord project showed. Given the meagre resources of the CWS in the 1950's and their inability to carry out projects, waiting for their more comprehensive/scientific studies would have meant doing nothing. If one accepts the Department view that doing something was essential then the information base the Department acted on was reasonable and acceptable. There was, however, a major miscalculation in the case of game resources at Alexandra Fiord where the information base proved to be superficial and inadequate. However, there is little reason to believe that the lack of game there would have led to a "disaster." Only two families were destined for that site and they could have been supported sufficiently by the supplies in the store (sufficient for five families) as well as the police detachment stores until rescue or airdrops arrived.
  11. Bearing in mind that all the Inuit groups involved in the move had pathetically little by way of equipment, it is also true that compared to the Pond Inlet group, those from Inukjuak had far fewer dogs and less traps. However, sufficient traps were provided at Craig Harbour and although one family had to share the dogs of another, the small number of dogs did not prevent the community from obtaining sufficient game and fur in that first year. Had the Department provided more dogs for the Inukjuak group it would have made life easier. However, the RCMP reports show that despite their limited equipment, the Craig Harbour group had a bumper year for game and fur and, as well, that hunting had been "excellent" at Resolute Bay.
  12. The arrangements for employment at Resolute were not inadequate given the suddenly altered objectives of the project and the time of year the settlers arrived.
  13. The "missing supplies" at Resolute undoubtedly added to the stress of the first year. The Department should not, properly, be blamed for the failings of the Department of Transport. The Department took reasonable steps to replace the essential missing items (rifles, tent material and blue denim) by flying in replacements. The Department went to unusual lengths to track down the missing items.
  14. The Inuit were not (throughout a six week voyage!) fed four hard tack biscuits and tea for lunch, as has been alleged. Nor is there any evidence that they were shown movies that showed "complete insensitivity" in 1953.
  15. There was very considerable assistance provided to the settlers on their arrival. Though it is undocumented, the role of the Pond Inlet families in this regard should not be underestimated.



16. The planners had quite adequate reports on the state of health (one clinical examination, X-rays and reports of the welfare teacher), state of equipment (RCMP and Hinds), and group dynamics of the people going north. The planners themselves had years of experience as sailors (Larsen), traders (Cantley), public officials (Cantley, Stevenson and Cunningham) and police officers (Larsen), who had adequate background and knowledge of what was needed for survival in the High Arctic, bearing in mind that the new communities were stripped down Model T Fords, not Cadillacs.
17. The RCMP played a vital role in ensuring the survival and success of the projects. Sargent at Craig Harbour was an excellent officer, fluent in Inuktitut, responsible and committed to helping the settlement and its people survive and prosper. Gibson was also an exceptional officer, who while not as careful about paperwork and routines, showed unusual dedication in caring for the settlers and taking initiatives for making life easier in the new settlement. This is not to elevate these and other officers who worked at the settlements in 1950s to sainthood, but it is appropriate, at this point, to recognize that many of these public servants were unusual in the dedicated and unappreciated service they gave in the High Arctic, for minimal wages and under harsh and dangerous conditions. This is particularly important as they have been accused of sexual abuse and theft on utterly flimsy grounds, with no recourse in the court of public opinion. Cooperation between the Department and the RCMP on these projects was generally good, but occasionally strained on issues of accountability and “turf.”<sup>418</sup>
18. Despite the good hunting and trapping in the first year at Grise Fiord, the first winter was, I believe, very difficult. The lack of snow houses in the first part of the winter, the absence of skin-clothing for the children, the darkness, the distance from the police detachment, all must have put people under a tremendous psychological and social strain. At Resolute Bay, things were also difficult, particularly getting used to the greater cold, but there the isolation was far less extreme. Although Gibson managed the settlement like a benign boarding school principal, he did provide constant security and actively helped get food in a way the Craig Harbour police did not and could not.
19. While the planning was not problem free, it was, given the limited resources of the RCMP and the Department at that period, timely, fairly comprehensive and able to adjust to and overcome its own deficiencies in commensurate and adequate fashion.
20. Among the critics of the project the comments of Stead and the 1954 Department of Defence criticisms did not deserve consideration. The arguments of Sivertz and Ripley reflected a thoughtful but not a fundamental difference of approach to the planning of the Resolute relocation project. Both supported the Craig Harbour approach. The former advocated more “comprehensive” planning while the Department chose a more tentative, step by step approach. Both could be justified on intellectual and practical grounds. However, given the uncertainty of whether the projects were viable, the step-by-step approach was probably more appropriate. Those parts of Marshall’s detailed and useful report which were accurate were taken seriously and acted upon. It must be remembered, too, that he was a friendly critic who believed the project at Resolute would be an “outstanding success.”

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<sup>418</sup> Grant speaks of the strong sense of “duty” that the RCMP had, but for some reason which I do not understand regards this as “comical”. Perhaps she is being ironic. *Grant*, p. 15.

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21. At the time, the RCMP had a total of 72 personnel in the whole of the NWT, with 19 policemen and 13 Special Constables in the Eastern Arctic. It committed five policemen and four Special Constables, or 30 percent of its person power in the Eastern Arctic to the (three) projects. This was an enormous commitment of resources by any standards. The headquarters of both the Department and the RCMP sent trusted officers (Larsen and Stevenson) to ensure that preparations were adequate shortly before embarkation. The Department's welfare teacher spent time and effort to help the volunteers prepare for the move. On the arrival of the Inuit the RCMP, RCAF and DOT helped establish the settlements. The Pond Inlet families played the vital role expected of them, helping the newcomers adjust on a day-to-day basis.
  22. In general, the preparations, given the truncated resources of the Department, the abject poverty of the participants, the parsimonious approach to government spending and the obsession with self help and individual responsibility of the day, were adequate and acceptable.

## CHAPTER 10

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AT THE NEW SETTLEMENTS

This section provides some information on the physical characteristics of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, mostly based on RCMP Reports.

(i) **Temperature Ranges (Fahrenheit).**

Months	Inukjuak Daily		Craig Harbour Daily		Resolute <sup>419</sup> Daily	
	Max. °F	Min. °F	Max. °F	Min. °F	Max. °F	Min. °F
January	-3	- 18	- 13	- 30	- 22	- 35
February	-5	- 20	- 16	- 30	- 25	- 38
March	5	- 11	-6	- 23	- 16	- 30
April	19	3	8	- 12	1	- 15
May	32	21	25	9	21	9
June	45	31	39	28	37	29
July	53	39	48	35	45	35
August	53	40	42	34	42	33
September	45	36	32	25	28	20
October	35	27	16	8	12	1
November	25	14	0	- 11	-3	- 16
December	6	- 7	- 12	-24	- 14	- 27
Mean	26	13	14	1	9	3

(ii) **Extracts from RCMP in Canada's North, 1961.**

#### **GRISE FIORD**

##### **Population**

68 Eskimos and 2 whites.

##### **Geographical Location**

Southern Ellesmere Island on the east shore of Grise Fiord. Lat. 76°25'N., Long. 83°01'W.

##### **Topography**

The settlement is located in a shallow valley surrounded by rocky cliffs reaching heights of 2,500 feet. The entire area around Grise Fiord is high with some points 4,500 feet above sea level. The area for the most part is capped with ice or snow and there are many glaciers, large and small, active and inactive, winding down through the steep-walled valleys to Jones Sound. The rugged coastlines of southern Ellesmere Island, North Devon Island and Cobourg Island have numerous fiords which are broken by glaciers and valleys varying in size. Some of the valleys have grass, small willows and a variety of Arctic flowers. There are no trees.

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<sup>419</sup> Pilot of Arctic Canada (Ottawa, 1959), Vol. 1 and 2. Labrador and Hudson Bay Pilot (Ottawa, 1954).

**Climate**

The coldest part of winter is in March when temperatures reach forty degrees below zero Fahrenheit or lower. Average winter temperature is 15-30 below. Freeze-up occurs in mid-September and break-up in late July or early August. Winds and blizzards are infrequent and snowfall is light. Skies are generally clear from April to the end of August and summer temperatures seldom reach sixty degrees Fahrenheit.

**Food and Water**

During the summer drinking water is carried by bucket from several small streams nearby. During winter ice is chopped from icebergs and hauled to the Detachment by dog team. Members are issued with rations and cooking chores are shared.

**RESOLUTE BAY****Population**

130 whites and 84 Eskimos.

**Geographical Location**

On the south coast of Cornwallis Island. Lat. 74°40'N., 94°50'W.

**Topography**

The interior of the island is a flat table-land but hilly along the coast. The land surface is shale. Lakes are numerous and the area surrounding them is moss covered. There are no trees.

**Climate**

Very cold during the long winters with temperatures well below zero. Snowfall is light but strong winds and blizzards are frequent. Freeze-up occurs in the middle of September and break-up the end of July. Temperatures are above freezing from early July to the end of August. There is considerable rain and fog during the short navigation season.

**Game**

Records of game taken at the two settlement is provided in the concluding chapter of this report. The Annual Game Conditions Reports of Grise Fiord discuss the prevalence of the following animals: Caribou, Musk-ox, Polar Bear, Fox, Ermine, Wolves, Rabbits, Ptarmigan, Ducks, Geese, Walrus, Whale (white), Harp and Bearded Seals. Birdlife consisted of Glaucous and Herring Gulls, Kittiwakes, Red-Throated Loons, Long-Tailed Jaegers, Arctic Terns, Dovekies, Murres, Ravens, Snowy Owls, Snowbirds, and Red Polls. Occasionally Lake Trout and Arctic Char were taken.

The Resolute Game Reports give the prevalence of the following: Caribou, Musk-ox, White Fox, Wolf, Ringed, Bearded and Harp Seals, Walrus, Whales (white), Narwhal, Polar Bear, Arctic Hare, Lemmings, Ptamigan (rock and willow), Eider Ducks, Geese and Arctic Char. They do not discuss smaller birdlife.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 57, Files TA 500-20-10-16 and TA 500-20-10-11.

*CHAPTER 11: CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE INUKJUAQ AND POND INLET INUIT (not reproduced)*

## CHAPTER 12

### PROMISES MADE, PROMISES KEPT?

A number of the Inuit witnesses appearing before the Parliamentary Committee claimed that promises were made that if their families did not adapt to the High Arctic the government would return them to Inukjuak. These promises, they said, were not kept. Specifically, witness Amagoalik stated that requests were made in 1954 to return and these were refused by the RCMP. Instead, the RCMP said they would bring relatives to the High Arctic.<sup>421</sup> As instances of promises not kept, Makivik, in their 1987 Position Paper, stated that: i) by the early 1960s, a “few families” had returned south at their own expense; ii) in 1966 “several” of the original families “requested permission” to return to Inukjuak but this was ignored; iii) in the late 1970s, three families returned, at their own expense, to Quebec, two to Inukjuak.<sup>422</sup>

Marcus, in discussing this question, states that “In fact, in the 1950s the authorities made it virtually impossible for the families to return to Port Harrison to visit or live.” He adds that not only were officials “unsympathetic”, but they also “made it appear almost impossible to do so.” He notes, too, that the RCMP even discouraged Grise Fiord people from moving to Resolute. He adds that, after 1955, policy changed and the RCMP instead tried to dissuade people from moving to the High Arctic because of fears of over-population and over hunting, and they were successful in doing so.<sup>423</sup>

The Hammond Report of 1984 concluded that a promise of a financed return, if people were not satisfied, was clearly made to the Pond Inlet immigrants. Also that a promise of a financed return was at least strongly implied in the case of the Inukjuak Inuit. He further concluded, “The upshot of the foregoing comments is that the experiment was not an unqualified success and that the Inuit had grounds to call in the promise I am convinced was made.” He also believed that such requests had been made repeatedly and not just 30 years later, but that no one seemed to have listened. He urged that some effort be made to discover the frequency of such requests to return to their original homes and why the government had chosen not to act financially on these requests.<sup>424</sup> In part, this chapter attempts to do this.

Hammond does not seem to have had access to a great number of documents which have subsequently become available. Documents cited earlier now make it absolutely clear that the government promised the relocatees they would be returned (within one, two or three years) if they did not find Grise Fiord and Resolute acceptable. These promises were made by Larsen (one year) and Stevenson (two years), both in 1953. At the same time Cantley in 1953 and Sivertz and Robertson in 1956 all stated that the government had promised and would bring people back if they were not “satisfied.” These documents have been cited earlier.

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<sup>421</sup> Parliamentary Committee, 22:15.

<sup>422</sup> Makivik in Parliamentary Committee, 22A: 40-47.

<sup>423</sup> Marcus, pp. 56-60.

<sup>424</sup> Hammond, pp. 17-19.

It can safely be assumed that this issue is now settled. The only outstanding question is whether this promise was to be honoured beyond the first few years, and up to 40 years after the event.

Although Soberman believes that in the minds of some civil servants, the question was “vague”, or they thought no promise had been made, I believe the documents show that all the key players did know, that is, Robertson, Stevenson, Cantley, Gibson and Sargent. Although he was not involved in the planning of the project, Sivertz also knew.<sup>425</sup>

However, as Soberman has noted, most outside observers who visited the settlements “came away with an impression that the Inuit were generally satisfied with their lot.” This, too, was the impression of the RCMP, according to the archival documents. They repeatedly stated that people, apart from some specific cases, did not want to leave. To explain the discrepancy, Soberman has provided a thoughtful appraisal of the cultural misunderstandings which occurred and which might help us understand the discrepancies between the two sets of accounts. These hypotheses will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>426</sup>

Moving into or out of the two settlements was rather different in each case. By 1958 the RCMP were arguing that Resolute Bay should not be expanded (although in fact its population did increase markedly over the years), while at Grise Fiord, the RCMP maintained well into the 1960s that the area could take additional population. This section will thus consider each settlement separately.

It should also be noted that the legal right of Inuit to travel freely was understood by the Department and stated on a number of occasions to the RCMP. For example, in July 1954, Cunningham explained, in a case where a young Inuit woman wanted to return to a home where she had been abused and the RCMP wanted to prevent this:

I do not think that any regulations can be laid down to control the movement of Eskimos. Eskimos are not wards in the sense that Indians are and are free to move anywhere and take up any occupation that may appeal to them. In a case of this kind, however, if it can be proved that coercion was used (to get the woman home), the police could intervene. That, so far as we can see, is about all we can do legally.<sup>427</sup>

The following section sets out pertinent extracts from the RCMP annual reports (and some other relevant documents) to give an indication of what Ottawa was hearing from its field agents about whether people were content to stay or wanted to leave. The section covers almost all of the documents I was able to find which touch on this question.

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<sup>425</sup> Sivertz to Director, 22.10.56. RG 85, Vol. 1514, File 1012-1, Pt. 5. The only civil servants who expressed any uncertainty were Jackson in 1956, who led the Eastern Arctic Patrols on a number of occasions, and Bolger in 1960. “Report on Eastern Arctic Patrol, 1956”, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 201-1-8, Pt. 5; Bolger to Regional Administrator, Churchill, 12.2.60. RG 85, Vol. 1951, File A 1000/123, Pt. 1.

<sup>426</sup> Soberman, pp. 42-45.

<sup>427</sup> Cunningham to Goldsmith, Officer-in-Charge, 6.7.54 (Reference unknown).

**1953**<sup>428</sup>

At Grise Fiord, Sargent reported at year's end (31.12.53):

All natives, with the exception of one state being happy and content in the Craig Harbour area. The one native being not wholly content is Fatty ... he complains of not being able to see a long way in all directions from his tent, but this will probably be corrected in the spring or summer. However, he has stated that this is a good native country and since their arrival have not gone in want as they have done at Port Harrison. There have been no rumours of natives wanting to leave the area in the very near future.

Gibson at Resolute said nothing in 1953 about whether people had indicated a desire to stay or leave.

**1954**

At Resolute, Gibson was asked to comment on the claim made by DND that the Inuit were wholly dependent on the RCAF base. In response, Gibson noted:

The writer has conversed with the natives since receiving this correspondence and inquired of them if at any time they were hungry and received food from any establishment at Resolute Bay. They stated they had not been hungry since their arrival at Resolute Bay and that they wished to remain here if possible.<sup>429</sup>

The report from Grise Fiord said (31.12.54):

To date no natives have requested a move back to thier (sic) own countries, i.e. Port Harrison and Pond Inlet. The Port Harrison natives advise that they have never been hungry or in need or want since thier (sic) arrival at Craig Harbour and state they are very happy to remain in this area. They also advise that if sometime in the future they had to leave Craig Harbour due to the detachment closing down they would like to go elsewhere in the area such as Dundas Harbour or Resolute Bay, rather than return to Port Harrison. Craig Harbour and surrounding countries is thier (sic) "Garden of Eden." The Pond Inlet families have advised that they like Craig Harbour and that they do better here than at Pond Inlet. However, both families have mentioned that although they have no immediate desire to return they would like to go back possibly in a few years to help their aging parents and relatives. It is understood that both the Port Harrison families and Pond Inlet families requested the departmental officials last year to have some of thier (sic) relations come to this naviation (sic) to join them here. It is felt by the writer that this would be a good move and that the surrounding country could support more families than at present and now that the first migration has become climatized and established they could be of assistance to new families coming into the area.

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<sup>428</sup> All accounts of Grise Fiord are drawn from RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5, unless as otherwise specified.

<sup>429</sup> Gibson to "G" Division, 26.3.54. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14. All references to Resolute Bay not otherwise footnoted are drawn from this file.

Stevenson visited both Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay during the 1954 Eastern Arctic Patrol and reported:

I might say briefly at this time that both the projects at Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour have been a huge success during the past year. The Eskimo are all happy and contented, and were eager to advise us that they had never fared so well in their lives, particularly the Eskimos from Port Harrison, Quebec. In fact, they are so enthused with their new environment that they gave us some of the names of their immediate relatives whom they would like to have come north to join them next year. If this meets with your approval, I will write to the RCMP at Port Harrison and Pond Inlet regarding the Eskimos in question that they be interviewed and if they so desire, be prepared to move north next summer.<sup>430</sup>

In the meantime people at the settlements had apparently taken things in their own hands and Constable Decker, of the Port Harrison Detachment, in his 1954 annual report stated that:

Several native families have received correspondence from the natives who left here on the "C.D. Howe" in 1953 that were placed at Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour, the conditions to them seemed very favourable and several families have asked for their names to be placed on the list should any further native families be moved north. It is felt that if this additional group could be moved, it certainly would clear some of the congested areas. At the present time suitable camp localities are slightly overcrowded and in order to maintain a better standard of living from country feed, it would be necessary to minimize the size of the camps.<sup>431</sup>

## **1955**

The annual Grise Fiord report (2.1.56) stated:

There has been no definite word from any native families to return to thier (sic) native land. However, it is expected that possibly native family Akpaleepik...will wish to return to Pond Inlet in 1957. Last year he requested that his brother and family come to Craig Harbour and as the same did not arrive he may wish to return to them. He advised that if same arrives or had arrived he would have no present or near future desire to return. He will be approached again in the near future on this matter. Pond Inlet family Angnakadlak requested that his father come to Craig Harbour but same did not arrive. He has not mentioned wishing to return but he will be approached in the near future in this regard. One tentative request has been put forward by a Harrison family, Joatamie to have the mother of his wife come to Craig Harbour, providing she is still a widow and has not acquired a new husband. When it is definitely known what these natives want, a further report will submitted. It is felt that the area could support more families. (my emphasis)

One additional family joined the community in 1955, that of Josephie from Inukjuak. It now consisted of nine families and 43 people.

Gibson reported from Resolute (22.3.55) that:

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<sup>430</sup> Stevenson to Sivertz and Cantley, 17.9.54. RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1. Soberman gives no evidence for his claim that in the spring of 1954 a number of Inuit were unhappy and wished to leave. Soberman, p. 25.

<sup>431</sup> "Conditions Amongst the Eskimos", 27.12.54. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA-500-8-1-13.



The natives at present living on Cornwallis Island state they are content and wish to remain here for a longer period of time. They are however, very keen on having other natives join them here. The writer is in favour of this as its felt that the area could support at least four more families of every size.

The Craig Harbour group had requested Stevenson in 1954 to see if three families (one from Inukjuak) and two young single women (both from Inukjuak) would be willing to move north. The Resolute group had asked for two families to come north (both from Inukjuak).<sup>432</sup> In addition, Idlout from Pond Inlet indicated that his and two other families in his camp wished to move to Resolute.<sup>433</sup>

As a result of these and other initiatives, by May 1955, 70 people (13 families) from Pond Inlet and Inukjuak had “expressed their desire” to move to the High Arctic. All but one family wished to go to Resolute.<sup>434</sup> The Department, however, came to the conclusion that there would be a problem with transportation and supplies for so large a number and also that the Pond Inlet population might become too small:

We are also rather perturbed about the number of people leaving Pond Inlet, where the population is already relatively small and where hunting conditions are by no means unfavourable. Our original objective was to transfer people from northern Quebec, where the population is too large in some places for the resources that are available, and to have only one or two families of Pond Inlet natives with them at the outset to assist them in climatizing themselves to the high Arctic.<sup>435</sup>

In the end only 30 of the 70 went north; 14 people (three families) from Pond Inlet and 16 people (two families) from Inukjuak transferred to Resolute.<sup>436</sup> The two single Inukjuak women refused to move.

### **1956 to 1967**

[Omitted for the purposes of this volume.]

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<sup>432</sup> Fraser to Larsen, 8.2.55. RG 85. Vol. 1070, File 251-4, Pt. 2.

<sup>433</sup> Retel HQT 292/15, etc.” Moodie, nd. *Ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> Decker, “Re Your Report of February 14th, etc.”, 18.5.55. *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> Sivertz to Larsen, 16.5.55; Fitzsimmons to Director, 31.3.55. *Ibid.*

<sup>436</sup> At this time, too, the project to train a number of Fort Chimo men at the Churchill military base which had seemed so promising in 1953, did not work out as expected and by 1955, five single men had returned to Fort Chimo. “The main cause for dissatisfaction appears to have been separation from family and friends. There is no need to elaborate on this as the strong Eskimo family ties are well known”. Walton (NSO) to Sivertz, 1.11.55. *Ibid.* The Department paid for all but the last segment of boat travel of this return.

GRISE FIORD – POPULATION AND MIGRATION<sup>437</sup>

	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Arriving</u>	<u>Leaving</u>
1954	36	7		
1955	43	9	1 family	
1956	46	9		
1957	43	9		1 family (to Pond Inlet)
				1 single man (to Pond Inlet)
1958	58	12	3 families	1 single man (to Resolute)
1959	58	14	1 family	1 family (to Alexandra Fiord)
			1 widower	
1960	81	16	2 families	
			1 widower	
1961	70	15	1 family	1 family (to Pond Inlet)
1962	73	15		
1963	85	17		
1964				2 families (to Resolute)
1965	82	17		1 family (to Frobisher)
1966	86	18	1 family	
1967	91	17		1 family (to Resolute)
1968	89	17		
1969	88	16		
1970	90	15		

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<sup>437</sup> Drawn from RCMP Annual Reports and M.M.R. Freeman, 1969, Op cit. p. 771 and M.M.R. Freeman, “The Grise Fiord Project”, Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 5, 1984, p. 677. Arrivals and exits do not balance because data are incomplete. This is true for both tables.

RESOLUTE BAY – POPULATION AND MIGRATION<sup>438</sup>

	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Arriving</u>	<u>Leaving</u>
1953	22	4		
1954	23	-		
1955	56	9	5 families	
1956	-	-	1 family	
1957	-	-	1 family	
1958	70	12	1 family	
1959	83	-	1 family 1 single man	
1960	78	-		2 families (to Churchill)
1961	86	-	2 families	
1962	95	-	1 family	
1963	98	-	1 family	
1964	119	-		
1965	124	-		
1966	136	-		
1967	150	22	1 family	2 families 1 single man
1968	161	23		
1970	-	-		
1971	-	-		

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<sup>438</sup> Drawn from RCMP reports and Bissett, *Op cit.*, 1967. Data in both these tables should be treated with some caution since the documents are not always complete and sometimes the numbers include and other times exclude people in hospital.

## Conclusion

The archival documents show the RCMP (and various Departmental officials) reporting that:

1. One person (family?) indicated unhappiness with Grise Fiord in the first year. The RCMP apparently believed that this discontent would be remedied when the camp moved to a valley, (“where they see a long way” – the Inukjuak custom) in the summer of 1954. They were also planning to move this person to Craig Harbour to work at the store and earn income from carving when the soapstone arrived.<sup>439</sup> Whether this would have satisfied Paddy Aqiatasuk who had told Constable Fryer that he was willing to wait and “see what the spring and summer have to offer”, is impossible to say since he died in August, 1954.
2. By 1954 Sargent at Grise Fiord (who spoke Inuktitut fluently), Gibson at Resolute and Stevenson (one of the best linguists in the North) believed that all the immigrants (presumably despite the very difficult first winter they had passed through) wanted to remain at their new locations and were satisfied, particularly by the absence of “hunger.” According to Stevenson, they were so “enthused” that in 1954 they gave names of relatives they wished to come north to join them. Some people also wrote independently to relatives in Quebec to the same effect. As a result some 70 people from 13 families indicated an interest in moving North in 1955 (35 actually went). After 1957 the Department became increasingly concerned with reducing the flow of people into Resolute rather than “making it impossible ... to return to Port Harrison.” People were, however, still encouraged to move to Grise Fiord.
3. Some or all of both Pond Inlet and Inukjuak families indicated from time to time at both settlements that they “would like” in future to help aging parents or relatives or to visit “friends and relations” for “one year.”
4. The RCMP reported from 1956 on when people wanted to return to their home communities and the reasons for the move. They often made a distinction between a definite decision to move as opposed to more tentative or inconclusive indications of discontent such as in 1958 at Grise Fiord where people had first wanted to leave after a family tragedy had occurred there, but then changed their minds.
5. The 1956 Treasury Board Minute which authorized the “movement of Eskimos for welfare reasons” would have covered the costs of permanently returning families to their previous homes but did not cover visits.
6. There is no documentary evidence supporting the claim that the 1955 settlers were given the same promises about being returned if not satisfied as were the 1953 group. However, as late as 1956 the Department Deputy Minister thought that all the people in the two settlements might yet have to be brought back if the project did not work out.<sup>440</sup>
7. All the key RCMP and Departmental officials knew that promises had been made to return the Inuit to

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<sup>439</sup> Sargent to “G” Division, 31.7.54. RG 85, Vol. 1474, File 251-2, Pt. 6.

<sup>440</sup> Marcus cites a “Mary Echalook” as saying that Gibson, “a frightening man”, promised they could return after a few years so they decided not to anger the man. Marcus, p. 20. The only Mary Echalook I came across would have been about three years old in 1953 and her family left for the north in 1955 in response to letters from relatives.

their original homes if they so desired after one, two or three years (depending on the official being quoted). I believe a very great deal of confusion arose from this promise. Some of the Inuit seem to have interpreted this to mean that they would receive government assistance for travel to return for visits to their “home country.” Some people (perhaps all) assumed that this promise would continue throughout the whole period they were in the High Arctic. The Department had no authorization to fund visits but it could and did fund permanent returns to the original home and other moves of a health and rehabilitation nature.

8. The departmental records suggest that financing visits (at least as far as Churchill) was “not a problem” as long as it had use of police aircraft. This use may have started as early as 1955 when the RCMP “Air” Division Detachment was set up at Churchill and started making a very large number of flights for health, welfare and administrative purposes.<sup>441</sup> It became a problem after 1961 when what had been a joint financing of the RCMP plane changed and the Department had to pay on a per-passenger basis. I was able to find only one reference, in 1960, to three people getting a “free” trip from Resolute to Churchill as part of a return visit to Inukjuak. At the same time, from 1956 on, officials, rightly or wrongly, believed that a good proportion of the Resolute citizens were able to finance their own visits to their original homes. However, as Bissett has said, this was an expensive proposition for a whole family.<sup>442</sup> Less information is available from Grise Fiord but it was far more isolated, for a longer period of time, and the income of people was lower than at Resolute. It would thus have been more difficult for them to make visits back to Inukjuak. Given the assumptions made, by at least some of the Inuit about what they had been promised this could well have caused some considerable resentment, and the belief that promises had been broken.
9. I agree with John Parker that “no one in government expected that a promise of relocation would be called on more than 25 years after the original move.” (See Chapter 16, Chronology, 1983.)
10. While the documentary records show actual moves out of the settlements to Pond Inlet, Churchill, Frobisher Bay and to Resolute from Grise Fiord during the first 15 years, they show only occasional intentions to move back to Inukjuak (1958) and (1961) with people sometimes changing their minds about going.
11. Former Constable Pilot, Grise Fiord (1955-1959), noted that the Inuit “always” talked about going home if they were disenchanted but “as long as hunting conditions were good... the people were happy.” He felt they had a good income and lifestyle but became homesick when hunting conditions turned poor.<sup>443</sup>
12. Soberman has suggested an interesting interpretation of how the officials and the Inuit might have had such divergent interpretations of these events. Soberman makes no distinction between requests to visit Inukjuak and requests to return permanently. He believes that all persons requesting a return to Inukjuak were told they would have to pay their own way. The documentary evidence, however, does not say this. The two accounts that discuss self-financing refer only to visits. The Inuit, thus, according

<sup>441</sup> See RCMP Annual Reports to ACND, e.g., for 1955 in Larsen to Commissioner, 19.1.56. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 51, File T-369-3. There were two police planes operating out of Churchill by 1960.

<sup>442</sup> Bissett, *Op cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>443</sup> Parliamentary Committee,(2), 18.6.90, 40:55.

to Soberman's account, faced the following barriers: (1) a one year wait for the annual supply ship (presumably only if they made up their minds just after the previous supply ship had left); (2) a trip to Montreal (the C.D. Howe's destination on its return from the High Arctic) and then a flight from there to Inukjuak; (3) very little, if any (sic), money in the early stage of their stay in the High Arctic. In addition, the Inuit had a "cultural disposition to avoid confrontation and unpleasantness" and this induced the civil servants (i.e., RCMP officers mainly) to think that requests for return, since they were not persistent, were not to be taken too seriously. Soberman suggests the Inuit were, in the face of these barriers, forced to fall back on an alternative solution (to going back to Northern Quebec) and that was to invite their relatives north. These requests in turn were then misinterpreted as evidence of great satisfaction with the relocation.<sup>444</sup>

However, the Resolute families in 1956 were described as "extremely well off" (five families had credits of over \$1,000 each). The Grise Fiord families were described as "doing quite well" (with credits of over \$300 on average). This was "a lot" of money in those days.<sup>445</sup> Requests to return permanently to their original homes could be and were covered by government funding. Visits were often covered by informal arrangements with the RCMP until 1961 when the RCMP started charging the Department for Inuit using their planes.

However, my main difficulty with the Soberman hypothesis is that it implies a degree of insensitivity, if not cynicism, which does not do the Inuit credit. While this is very clearly not Soberman's intention it implies to me that the Inuit, faced with an unbearable existence at the settlements, would nevertheless invite their relatives to join them in an equally lonely, cold, hunger-driven existence. I find this hard to believe.

13. Basing myself on the archival documentation, it is, I think, more reasonable to assume that in the 1950s most people wanted to visit rather than return permanently to Inukjuak. That although more lonely and socially isolated (not by any means inconsequential matters), they nevertheless were doing in most ways materially better than they had at Inukjuak. They encouraged people to come north not only for extended social support, but also because they were able to persuade their relatives that life would be materially better in the High Arctic. When they asked to return for visits, they were told these would not be paid for. They then had the option, after 1955, of getting a free ride or paying for a flight to Churchill and then paying for a further flight or boat trip to Inukjuak. Some chose to do this. Clearly some also believed this refusal involved broken promises on the part of government and this helped build up into long-standing grievances.

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<sup>444</sup> The alleged lack of income is debatable at Resolute even in the early years. Soberman, pp. 42-45.

<sup>445</sup> Report on 1956 Eastern Arctic Patrol, nd. RG 85, Vol. 1234, File, 201-1-8, Pt. 5, and Pilot, Parliamentary Committee (2), (18.6.90), 40:49.

## CHAPTER 13

### OTHER HIDDEN MOTIVES AND CRITICISMS

This chapter examines seven other criticisms made of the resettlement project: (i) that behind the scheme was a “hidden” motive to reduce government expenditures by cutting relief payments and providing cheap labour at Resolute Bay; (ii) that the absence of adequate soapstone at both settlements denied good carvers a basis for improving their income as well as impoverishing their daily lives by denying them an important activity; (iii) that the Inuit had been forced to use the garbage dumps at the settlements to survive; (iv) that the RCMP had stolen money that Inuit sent south by mail; (v) that there were unnecessary restrictions on the freedom of movement of the people at Resolute; (vi) allegations that the RCMP and Stevenson attempted to prevent the appointment of a nurse and the setting up of low cost housing at Grise Fiord.

#### **Relief Payments**

Marcus places a great deal of emphasis on what he calls “a hidden” economic motive behind the resettlement programme. This was a desire to reduce the amount of money that government was providing for welfare needs, that is relief. There was also a desire to provide cheap “casual labour” at Resolute, he claims.<sup>446</sup>

Earlier sections of this report have shown that there was indeed a concern in the early 1950s with the rising costs of relief.<sup>447</sup> There was also a care and prudence in the expenditure of money which, from today’s perspective, while quite admirable in itself, was somewhat obsessive and sometimes verged on being plain mean-spirited.

We must recall that 1953-1954 was a year of radical transition. In December 1953, the Department got a new name and legislative mandate signifying a new direction and new very young leadership (Lesage was the future leader of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, the youngest Minister in the St-Laurent government and Robertson the youngest Deputy Minister ever appointed). A year later the purse strings started loosening. MacKinnon has given an evocative account of this new period:

For the first time since ... 1931 there was an esprit de corps among northern administrators. The dark ages of penury and neglect were over, a fresh team had arrived.... The growth in head quarters and field staff must be almost unexampled for a peacetime department. To exaggerate a bit, northern administration in 1952 seemed to be Roy Gibson (Deputy Commissioner of NWT) and a typist or two. A decade later Phillips was assuring the public that civil servants in the North were not actually outnumbering the Inuit.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> Marcus, pp. 8-10.

<sup>447</sup> For example, see Mansell’s report on Northern Quebec in 1950, and the limitations of the relief policy of the time. “Conditions of the Eskimo”, 4.24.50, p. 9. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, TA 500-8-1-13.

<sup>448</sup> MacKinnon, “Keewatin, etc.”, Op cit., 6:2.

Departmental personnel increased ten-fold over the next six years as more teachers, social workers, technical workers and Northern Service Officers were appointed.<sup>449</sup> By 1960, Canada spent about \$2,000 per capita on the NWT, Yukon and the 3,000 Inuit and Indians of Northern Quebec. By comparison the US was spending \$1,700 per capita in Alaska in 1966.<sup>450</sup>

The bridge years of 1950-1953 were, however, governed not only by penury and penny-pinching but were also still influenced by an ideology of self help and initiative that seems rather startling and alien today. Responsible public policy for a (dedicated) official like Roy Gibson meant maintaining the Inuit in a “spirit of independence and self-reliance for which they are well known.”<sup>451</sup> Family Allowances, he said, should be denied to those who continued “to loiter around the settlements.” Although the RCMP protested, this was also the prevailing wisdom among some academics, for example, the “sympathetic” anthropologist, Jean Michéa who believed the Inuit were being corrupted by Family Allowances.<sup>452</sup>

Even before the generally useful shock treatment administered to some of these assumptions by Farley Mowat’s The People of the Deer, in 1952, the winds of change had started to blow. The collapse and unlikely recovery in the near term of the white fox economy, referred to earlier, had led to the realization that “... the Eskimos will have to depend largely on various forms of government assistance in order to merely get a better existence.”<sup>453</sup> By that time, too, the need for, and utility of, Family Allowances could be accepted because it was oriented to the needs of children. Relief, too, was acceptable if it helped people “definitely unable to fend for themselves, either through advanced age or physical handicap.”<sup>454</sup>

However, the view that relief for the able-bodied reduced “native morale and independence” while congregation around the settlements led to rapid depletion of “accessible country produce”, as well as decline in “vitality and resistance to disease (especially TB)”, was still strongly held in 1952.<sup>455</sup> At the field level, Constable McRae at “Port Harrison”, in 1951-1952, with his enthusiasm for the beneficial effects of self help by those who could help themselves (with some pressure from the RCMP), is an exemplar of this view.<sup>456</sup>

Added to this was a parsimony and concern about spending government money which is difficult to

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<sup>449</sup> Loc cit.

<sup>450</sup> M. Lantis, “The Administration of Northern Peoples: Canada and Alaska”, in R. St. J. MacDonald, ed., 1966, Op cit., pp. 89-90.

<sup>451</sup> Gibson, “Instructions regarding Family Allowances”, 23.3.48. RG 85, Vol. 1514, File 1012-1, Pt. 4. Source: MacKinnon, Op cit., 4:8.

<sup>452</sup> This section drawn from MacKinnon, “Keewatin etc.”, Op cit., 4:9. More accurately this was a protest by one RCMP Sergeant at Chesterfield Inlet: Bailey to Wright, 3.5.49. RG 85, Vol. 855, File 8012, Pt. 3. The comments by J. Michéa are from Oshawa Times Gazette, 16.10.51.

<sup>453</sup> Sinclair to Deputy Minister, 2.2.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 2.

<sup>454</sup> See Davidson (Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare) to Young, 21.1.53 on the need to defend Family Allowances. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3. And Constable Webster, “Conditions Among the Eskimos”, 9.3.53. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, TA 500-8-1-13.

<sup>455</sup> Press Release (following Conference on Eskimo Affairs), 22.5.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File, 40-8-1, Pt. 2. The Press Release also says Family Allowances etc., were reducing Inuit willingness to hunt. “Settlements were regarded as places of infection, starchy diet and cultural degeneration.” MacKinnon, Op. cit., 13:13.

<sup>456</sup> “Conditions Among the Eskimos 1952”, 29.6.52. RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 42, 29.6.52, File D 1512-2-4-0 27.



comprehend in a time when this is so unfashionable.<sup>457</sup> This concern about the size of government outlays was openly acknowledged. A typical example is the News Release issued after the May 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs. There concern was expressed about the rise in relief expenditures (\$11,000 in 1945 and \$115,000 in 1951) as fox prices declined. While \$405,000 had been paid out in relief between 1945 and 1951 (\$1,687,000 had been paid in Family Allowances), of especial concern was the fact that \$115,000, 28 percent of the total, in relief payments had been paid out in 1951 alone. More relief was issued to Northern Quebec in 1953 than to the whole of the rest of the N.W.T.<sup>458</sup> Clearly the policy of refusing relief to Inuit who seemed not to be making an effort to support themselves had simply not worked.

There was indeed a concern with reducing relief payments to the Inuit in the early 1950s. There was nothing “hidden” about this concern. This was not just a preoccupation with saving money pure and simple. Accepting relief (by able-bodied people) implied a loss of independence and reduced morale for the individual and a failure of policy on the part of government. Harsh as this view was when applied to Canada’s poorest citizens, it was a sincerely held belief and not just a cloak for saving money. Getting people off relief if they were able-bodied was “good for them.”

This view of the “fiduciary” responsibility of government was best described by Rowley as “the ultimate in paternalism, with a just, strict, and uncomprehending Victorian father” deciding what was good for the Inuit.<sup>459</sup> There were competing views both about relief and the appropriate functions of government but these were not to displace, or at least modify the old world view until after the new team came in, in 1954.<sup>460</sup>

A more generous and “enlightened” view came to prevail in later years. For example, Rowley in 1956 called for a study of the “issue of relief” and in raising some matters that required research added comments that convey some of the conflicting views of the time:

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<sup>457</sup> Examples of this parsimony abound in the files. To permit the Governor of North Greenland to visit Ottawa after his participation in the Eastern Arctic Patrol required an extra expenditure of \$250 and this had to be approved by the Deputy Minister, Young. Instead of throwing away an over-order of a few dozens of emblems and buttons, Packwood wrote to Arctic Services suggesting they might instead be distributed to an Inuit settlement for use as decorations on parkas made for personal use or for sale.

<sup>458</sup> “Relief Issued to Eskimos”, 16.2.53. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>459</sup> Rowley to van den Steenhoven, 2.6.58. RG 22, Vol. 545, Rowley ACND, 1958.

<sup>460</sup> As late as 1958, the conflict between these different view points reemerged on the issue of setting up a large coastal settlement on the west coast of Hudson Bay to care for 30 displaced Ennadai Lake families at Eskimo Point. Rowley said of this scheme, which did not see the light of day:

So far as I can determine the idea is to get these Eskimos and to put them where nobody else can get at them, no company, no missions, only a benevolent Administration. In this way they would be protected against everybody - except of course the government. I asked who would protect them against the government, but this was of course assumed to be a joke. If this scheme goes through - and there is a good possibility that something along these lines will be done - we will then have two policies going on at once. One might be described as “Integrate at any cost and the devil take the hindmost” and the other as the ultimate in paternalism, with a just, strict, and uncomprehending Victorian father. In pursuing these two extremes, which at any rate appear incompatible, it looks as if the gradual planned adjustment to conditions which are changing will be neglected. *Loc cit.*

Generally speaking relief, by whatever name it is called, tends to be a controversial subject on both practical and philosophical grounds. The issue of relief to Eskimos affects the relationship between two very different cultures, and this requires examination. The following specific questions may suggest directions in which to seek some of the answers.

1. What does relief mean to Eskimos?

Eskimo culture has been described as being based on mutual assistance. Relief may then be a natural concept to the Eskimo, but their attitude may be modified by the fact that relief is received from external sources rather than from among themselves.

2. What does relief mean to its administrators?

In our culture a certain stigma is attached to all recipients of relief. This affects relief administration in many ways. Its most common manifestation takes the form of condemning relief recipients as “lazy so and sos” or belief that financial assistance is Immoral and should therefore be as punitive as possible.

What attitudes are found among those administering relief in the north and how do they affect the Eskimo?

3. Why is relief granted?

Relief can perhaps be described as the result of two social conditions. On the one hand its need arises from loss of ability by an individual to make his own living because of economic or personal break-down. On the other hand, it stems from recognition by society of an obligation to meet the basic needs of all its members for food, shelter, and clothing. What are the personal (as distinct from economic) factors which result in the need for relief among the Eskimos, and how might they be alleviated.

4. How does relief affect the Eskimo?

There exists a general feeling that the provision of relief to Eskimos results in making them lazy or discouraging initiative. If however the Eskimos accept the provision of relief as a natural concept, analogous to sharing food among everybody at a camp when food is short, the lack of initiative may be owing to other factors such as inadequate diet, poor health, loss of cultural identification, lack of confidence in the future etc., and the apathy these factors can cause. Is there any evidence that a higher relief ration, a better diet, and a higher level of health would result in more vitality, and thus in less relief?

5. Is the scale and character of relief now granted satisfactory?

There have been suggestions that the relief granted is inadequate in cases of real need. Against this background is the scale of relief too small or too large? Could it be improved in the character of items provided?<sup>461</sup>

Marcus believes that it was because of a concern with saving money on relief payments that the government became committed to finding a “decisive” solution to the “Eskimo problem.” The idea that there was a “decisive”

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<sup>461</sup> Rowley to Duncan, 11.5.56. RG 22, Vol. 545, File Rowley ACND, 1956.

solution possible would, I suspect, have struck officials in 1952 with some astonishment.<sup>462</sup>

### Conclusion

Even if it were accepted that the reduction of relief payments was one of the main objectives of the relocations, this would not explain why people were recruited from Inukjuak since there the “problem” of relief had almost disappeared by 1952-1953. As mentioned earlier, where 20 percent of the population received relief in 1950, and 15 percent in 1951, this had dropped to five percent in 1952. The situation in the rest of Northern Quebec was different. Despite the reduction in relief payments, the problems of over-concentration and over-population remained.<sup>463</sup>

### Cheap Labour

Another of the “hidden motives” behind the colonization project, according to Marcus, was to provide cheap manual labour for Resolute Bay. This would reduce the considerable costs involved in transporting whites from the south to do manual labour at Resolute Bay. He cites a 1961 document to support the claim that “since Inuit could initially be paid lower wages”, this would make them a cheaper source of “casual labour” at Resolute. The government thus, according to Marcus, “proposed” the second stage (1955) move to Resolute, “to meet a developing demand for casual labour in that area in unloading supplies during airlifts and during the summer resupply.”<sup>464</sup>

The difficulty with this thesis is that: (i) Inuit wages were not, initially, lower at Resolute than the wages of people brought in from the south, they were higher; (ii) the departments which were supposed to benefit from this casual labour did not seem to appreciate these alleged benefits; (iii) the 1955 moves involved a more complex set of reasons than simply providing four or five so-called cheap casual labourers to Resolute; and (iv) the 1955 moves were initiated by the families at Resolute.

The question needs to be addressed within a broader context. The policy options with respect to employment of Inuit were considered in some detail at the Second Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs held in May 1953. The annotated agenda item on this matter developed a series of options, one of which had already been operationalized at Resolute. The agenda paper noted that with better medical care and Family Allowances, there were fewer Inuit infant deaths occurring. The 1951 census indicated that there were 4,938 Inuit under the age of 21 and 3,708 over 21 years. This trend made it likely there would be a great increase in the Eskimo population in the next 50 years. There were two options:

- (1) Large scale movement of Eskimo out of the Arctic and to integrate them with the white economy, and
- (2) to leave them in the Arctic and to endeavour to diversify the Eskimo economy, and to provide employment for them in conjunction with white activities such as weather station and defence

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<sup>462</sup> Marcus, p. 10. This was not the only major reason, according to Marcus.

<sup>463</sup> Willmott, Op cit., p. 35.

<sup>464</sup> Marcus, p. 45. The quotation is from Appendix 1, Minutes, Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Eskimos Affairs, 10.5.54. RG 22, Vol. 298, File 40-8-1, Pt. 5.

installations and, possibly, mining.<sup>465</sup>

In 1953, too, the ACND recommended that Canada take over the sea-supply to the Joint Weather Stations from the Americans. Seventy stevedores were, as a consequence, sent from Montreal to Resolute in the summer of 1954 to assist in this exercise. It was believed that these developments might provide opportunity for the Inuit at Resolute to learn some English and perhaps gain some experience with the tools and equipment which were used during the landing of supplies. The few weeks of the supply were seen as the only source of possible employment income in an economy where few unskilled jobs for people who spoke no English existed. Hence, at the Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs held in May 1954, the Department reported:

It is proposed to transfer a few more families from Port Harrison to Resolute Bay to meet a developing demand for casual labour in that area in unloading supplies during airlifts and during the summer resupply. The Geological Branch have also expressed Interest in using Eskimos and their teams on their surveys of the High Arctic islands. The Meteorological Branch are also considering using one or two families at each of their northern weather stations.<sup>466</sup>

None of this policy was new. The Conference on Eskimos Affairs in May 1952 had recommended that full-time employment for Inuit should be encouraged as long as it was “reasonably permanent” or, if the employment ceased, Inuit could still maintain themselves through the “native way of life.”<sup>467</sup> This had been amplified at the October 1952 meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs:

Eskimos should be encouraged to take employment at northern centres provided that they and their families do not lose their ability to return to the native way of life if employment should cease. Rotation of employment and time off for hunting are good precautions.

Eskimos should receive the same wages as white employees for the same class of work.<sup>468</sup>

The “long term plans” that emerged from these directives were that:

Where primitive Eskimos in remote areas are relatively free from contact with white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible. In [those areas] where there is already permanent contact integration with the white economy will be encouraged. Between these two extremes, employment of Eskimos will be encouraged, providing it does not interfere unduly with their normal life. It is also planned to diversify the Eskimo economy and to transfer families from unproductive areas to regions where game is more abundant or employment is available.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> The possibility of integration in the white economy was never seriously considered in 1953. However, a nonimplemented pilot project was discussed again towards the end of the decade. “Annotated Agenda ... for May 6, 1953 ...”. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>466</sup> Appendix 1 “Economic Development - Consideration of Actions Taken in 1953 and Proposed for 1954”. RG 22, Vol. 298, File 40-8-1, Vol. 5, 10.5.54. Marcus cites the agenda for this meeting but the quotation is from the appendix. He also only mentions the need for “casual labour”, not the other possibilities.

<sup>467</sup> “Summary of Proceedings, etc.”, 19/20.5.52. RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3.

<sup>468</sup> “Minutes of First Meeting, etc.”, 16.10.52. *Ibid.*

<sup>469</sup> Extracts DNANR – Arctic Division, “Report to ACND on Activities in the North, 1955”. RG 85, Vol. 552, File 1009-3(8). The most useful accounts of the Department’s employment policies are to be found in memoranda dealing

As a result some part-time employment had been secured with the DOT at Resolute Bay as early as February 1954 and a few months later some of the men were employed in the spring air-lift to the satellite stations.<sup>470</sup> Gibson, by that time, in cooperation with the RCAF, had arranged for Inuit men to be present while equipment on the base was in operation in order to gain some elementary knowledge of its use.<sup>471</sup> The Department had by early 1954 also made arrangements with the RCAF to employ four of the men during the summer sea-supply in the hope that this would lead to further employment being offered at Resolute or perhaps at other stations.<sup>472</sup>

Despite this, the higher officers of the Air Transport Command were still unwilling, in early 1955, to employ Inuit for skilled or casual labour. As Cantley put it "Despite the troubles they have with imported labour, they still prefer to deal with the devil they know rather than the one they don't know." He doubted:<sup>473</sup>

... if we shall get very far very fast through regular departmental channels. It seems to me a better approach would be through the actual field officers. If we can interest them in the employment of Eskimos and assist them in ironing out the initial difficulties, then I think we would have little difficulty in getting the concurrence of the departmental heads. This was the procedure we followed ... in the employment of Eskimos at Churchill.

While employment picked up in 1956 (13 were employed at "casual" labour by the RCAF) the main concern of the RCAF was that the Inuit labourers' rate of pay was more favourable than that of men brought in from Winnipeg. The Inuit were receiving \$1.55 per hour plus time and a half overtime, while those from Winnipeg received \$1.20 per hour plus time and a half overtime. While the imported labourers got \$1.65 per day northern allowance, they also had to pay \$65 per month for board. The Inuit were being paid the DEW Line rates while the Winnipeggers were being paid the going rate at Winnipeg. This was not quite in line with Gibson's and Larsen's insistence that Inuit receive the same rate of pay as "comparative ... white persons." However, the differential was enough to "concern" the RCAF and might affect Inuit employment in the future.<sup>474</sup>

A 1954 report noted that the issue of wages had caused the Inuit to be "both confused and dissatisfied", because of the great range of salaries and wages that were being paid. While Inuit outside the North were receiving the same wage rates as white personnel, for example at Churchill, or as nurses in training in Ontario, there was no uniform wage system in the NWT, where one federal department might pay one dollar an hour, another 25 cents and a third eighty cents. This issue was only finally addressed later in the decade.<sup>475</sup>

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with Inuit work on the DEW Line. See "Instructions for Northern Service Officers Representing NDNR on Construction of the DEW Warning Line", nd., 1955, and "Extract, NDNR Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs", 30.5.55. RG 22, Vol. 270, File-40-8-1, Pt. 6.

<sup>470</sup> Gibson to "G" Division, 10.2.54. RG 85, Vol 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1.

<sup>471</sup> Gibson to "G" Division, 24.4.54. *Ibid.*

<sup>472</sup> Cunningham to Larsen, 19.5.54. *Ibid.*

<sup>473</sup> Cantley to Director, 7.3.55. Robertson had written Drury on 18.1.55 to ask the RCAF to help train four Inuit in the operation of mechanical equipment since they could then replace some of the people being flown in each year. However, National Defence had replied that they were not interested in this possibility. *Ibid.*; Drury (Sharpe) to Robertson, 23.2.55, *Ibid.*

<sup>474</sup> "Report on the 1956 Eastern Arctic Patrol", p. 10. RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 201-1-8, Pt. 5.

<sup>475</sup> Proposed Agenda, Fifth Meeting Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 29.11.54. RG 22, Vol. 298, File 40-8-1, Vol. 5.

The new policy was that all employees who were not in formally designated trades, (and who were thereby governed by the rates applying to those trades) could in future be paid 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent or 100 percent of the rate established for their class by the Department of Labour. Formal guidelines were provided for interpretation as to which rates might apply. For example, the 50 percent rate might apply where an employee had little or no knowledge of English and therefore difficulty in understanding directions, had little or no familiarity with the use of tools or equipment with which they might be required to work, required extensive direction because of difficulty of understanding what was expected, requiring also close supervision to ensure that the minimum pace of work was maintained and also where the employee might be prone to mistakes in the performance of elementary tasks. The 100 percent rate was applied to those employees capable of organizing their own work after receiving initial direction and who had 12 months experience in wage employment.<sup>476</sup>

### Conclusion

There was no “hidden” motive to reduce government costs by using Inuit as cheap “casual labour” in the High Arctic. In the first few years at Resolute, Inuit workers were not regarded by the RCAF (the main employer) as a lower-cost source of savings, partly because of their lack of training and English language skills and partly because they were paid more than workers brought in from the south. (Savings on transportation did not seem to impress the RCAF.)

Departmental policy was to get as much employment as possible, to upgrade skills and to ensure that there be equal pay for equal levels of productivity. None of the documents shows a concern with using the Inuit to save on wage expenditures. They do overwhelmingly refer to the need for jobs for a rapidly expanding population. As Diubaldo says the military were only “mildly interested in the native people” for employment purposes.<sup>477</sup>

### Soapstone (not reproduced)

### The Dumps (not reproduced)

### Theft and Loss of Mail (not reproduced)

## Restrictions on Contact between the Base and Settlement at Resolute

Grant, as mentioned earlier, thought the limitations on contacts between the settlement and the base at Resolute as unnecessarily restrictive. Not only did Gibson strictly limit these contacts by keeping the two groups apart, he also insisted on limiting and controlling contacts with temporary visitors to Resolute. On one occasion he had the C.D. Howe helicopter pilot dismissed and flown out because he had insisted on his right to visit the settlement without being accompanied by the Constable.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Memorandum for Field Staff, 29.5.59. RG 22, Vol. 378, File 40-8-2, Pt. 2.

<sup>477</sup> Diubaldo, *Op cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>478</sup> *Grant*, pp. 14-15. “Report on EAP – 1956”. RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 201-1-8, Pt. 5. and Gibson, Personal Communications, 31.12.91.

This policy seems to have been governed by three considerations. First, the RCMP believed that they had a tutelary role with respect to the Inuit. Second, their mandate was to protect the Inuit from “white exploitation”, and while this generally meant economic exploitation, i.e., when Inuit did not get fair prices for carvings and other handicrafts, it also included a fear of sexual harassment (for example, the 1956 instance). Third, as much as anything it also was governed by a concern about the possibility of sickness and particularly epidemics in areas where there were large transient populations (such as Resolute Bay). Rowley, for example, in various memoranda, made reference to the experience at Fort Chimo, in this regard:

The Department of Northern Affairs asks all military, scientific, transportation and other parties working in the Canadian North to avoid contact with primitive Eskimos except in cases of emergencies. This principle is applied to Canadians as well as others. It is mainly intended to prevent the spread of disease. Exercise Sun Dog II which was held at Fort Chimo (in 1952) led to a very heavy mortality at Ungava Bay from an epidemic of measles combined with influenza. Between five and ten percent of the Eskimos population died in this epidemic.<sup>479</sup>

### Conclusion

Restrictions on contact between the base and the settlement at Resolute Bay in the first years were due to the RCMP’s mandate to protect the Inuit from “white exploitation”; a concern that such contact could lead to sickness and epidemics; and the departmental view that “scrounging” food at the dumps was both a health hazard and socially degrading.

### **Alleged RCMP Opposition to Medical Care and Housing at Grise Fiord** (not reproduced)

#### *CHAPTER 14: THE ESKIMO LOAN FUND (not reproduced)*

#### *CHAPTER 15: WERE THE RELOCATIONS A SUCCESS? (not reproduced)*

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<sup>479</sup> This was part of Section 13 of the Agreement on the DEW line which set out provisions respecting “Matters Affecting Canadian Eskimos”. See “Some Paragraphs to Explain and Justify Section 13”, 10.11.54. RG 22, Vol. 544, Rowley ACND, Pt. 3.

## OVERALL CONCLUSION

The main reason for the relocation projects to the High Arctic was a concern to improve the living conditions of the overpopulated and over-concentrated Inuit population of Northern Quebec.

There was no de facto or de jure threat to Canadian sovereignty on Ellesmere Island. There was a concern about controlling illegal hunting which the two police detachments established in 1951 and 1953 were quite easily able to control. They did not need the assistance of the Inuit from Northern Quebec to do this. The relocation projects were added to the establishment of these posts as a way of easing population and game pressures around Inukjuak. Nor was fear of a U.S. radar station at Resolute the reason for moving people there.

The Canadian government put considerable resources, in terms of RCMP personnel, into these projects, especially given the scanty resources available for activities in the Arctic at that time.

The documentary evidence suggests that a great deal of concern and dedicated, responsible action by government officials was undertaken to ensure the projects survived and prospered. This is not to say that some of the planning and implementation could not have been better, nor that mistakes were not made. But the care and diligence used in carrying out the projects was reasonable given the public philosophy of the importance of self-sufficiency and thrift which pervaded government at the time, and given the resources available to the Department. The notion of an adequate level of fiduciary responsibility must be measured in terms of what could reasonably be expected at that time, as various court decisions have shown. There is no concept in law of a universal standard of care irrespective of time, place and circumstance.

There is no documentary evidence to show that people who definitely wanted to return to Inukjuak permanently were denied this. However, there was a very great misunderstanding between the Inuit and the Government of Canada on whether visits should be financed and for how long the original promise to return people would remain in effect. Once the settlements became as (relatively) successful as they did, the government seems to have decided that their promises of providing the Inuit with a better life had been fulfilled.

We must bear in mind that this was the harsh, poverty stricken, disease-prone world of the Eastern Arctic in the early 1950s where government services were few, hunger a constant threat, and resources to deal with the modern world, few. Given this starting point, the poorest of the poor who went to the High Arctic did very well in a short time in income, housing, employment (at least at Resolute), and, above all, in food resources. As government services expanded after 1954 the settlements, especially Resolute Bay, were well served. Grise Fiord was healthier than many other northern communities but more limited in government services offered for the first eight years.

This study has focused on the first 15 years. Despite the mistakes, the penny-pinching, the discontent expressed from time to time, the benevolent boarding school atmosphere at Resolute in the early years, the delays and the frustrations of living in small communities far from original kith and kin, these projects must be seen (at least as portrayed in the archival documents) as a limited but not insignificant success story. The real test of this was the large number of people who either wanted to or did join the growing settlements in those years.

[Tables 1-4: not reproduced]



## **CHAPTER 16**

### **CHRONOLOGY**

This (incomplete) chronology is based on material found in files provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND).

#### **16.8.82**

The Deputy Minister of DIAND wrote to P. Jull, Political and Constitutional Advisor to the Inuit Committee on National Issues, that on several occasions in previous years families from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay had asked for assistance in moving back to Inukjuak, insisting that they had been promised that if they did not like the High Arctic the government would move them back. The letter stated that, "We have nothing on file to indicate that such a promise was ever made. Even if it had been, I suspect that it was for a limited number of years following the relocation...."

The letter also dealt with questions which had arisen in connection with the nature of the requests to return:

One of the problems we have encountered in dealing with such requests is in establishing if the Inuit have made a real commitment to return to Inukjuak on a permanent basis, or for a visit for a short period, or for a year or more. In this regard, some have requested that living accommodation similar to that enjoyed at Grise Fiord be made available in Inukjuak, and that their housing at Grise Fiord be held for them.

I am pointing this out since our department and the Government of the Northwest Territories would not be altogether sympathetic about funding visits even for extended periods. Governments have been more receptive in cases where the family or families have decided they wanted to return to Inukjuak to live, and where compassionate reasons were involved. It should be noted that there have been families who returned to Inukjuak to live, but soon became disenchanted with life "at home"...

I suggest that the Grise Fiord Inuit who are interested in moving to Inukjuak to live make their wishes known to the local representative of the Government of the Northwest Territories who will be in a more suitable position to decide if the people involved are really committed to a permanent move, and under what conditions. When this information is made available to Mr. John Parker, we can then decide how to proceed with the involvement of the appropriate agencies in Quebec.

#### **September 1982**

A paper by W.B. Kemp, "The Relocation of Inuit from the Port Harrison Region of Hudson Bay to the High Arctic Communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord", was published by the Makivik Research Department. His findings were, *inter alia*, that 1) the relocation was fostered by concern over poor hunting near Port Harrison; 2) secondary considerations of casual employment, and the presence of Canadian Inuit in the High Arctic had an influence – "Certain aspects of relocation implied that sovereignty was considered but not as a central issue."

**29.3.83**

J.H. Parker, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, reported that the issue of coercion being used in the relocations to Resolute and to Grise Fiord in 1953 had been discussed with him “from time to time.” He had, therefore, asked Alex Stevenson, former Administrator of the Arctic, for his views on the subject. In this letter to the then DIAND Deputy Minister, Parker notes, “It seems that there is no doubt that the people moved entirely of their own free will, but it also seems likely that promises were made to return them should the scheme not work out. I am sure that no one in government expected that the promise of relocation would be called on more than 25 years after the original move. The people have done reasonably well and I think they have received a high level of attention from both the federal and the territorial governments.”

Parker attached Stevenson’s five page report of November 1977 on the Inuit relocations. In this report Stevenson states that the relocations took place because those familiar with the High Arctic Islands believed that resources were sufficient there to support one or two communities of Inuit from Port Harrison where economic conditions were poor. That in addition there was a concern about controlling the visiting of Ellesmere Island by Greenland hunting parties. He noted, too, that the joint Canadian American Arctic Weather Stations established in 1947 and 1950 were heavily dependent on U.S. vessels and aircraft for supplies and that this was a concern. He notes, “There’s no doubt sovereignty was of concern to some”, and referred to a 1953 comment by a Resources and Development official that, “The Canadian government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the Arctic as possible and it appears that in many areas the Eskimos are the only people capable of doing this.” Stevenson noted that, “Arctic Quebec was experiencing an increasing population at the time which placed a strain on the limited country food resources available. The RCMP was asked to canvass with the “Eskimos” the matter of moving “on a voluntary basis” to two places in the High Arctic. Stevenson says that the RCMP were asked to explain to the Inuit the type of environment and conditions to which they would be going and that the constable-in-charge of the Port Harrison Detachment who “was transferred to Resolute Bay was familiar (sic) and was liked by the Eskimo who moved to that community that summer.” He goes on to note that “The philosophy of the time was that the Eskimos selected were essentially hunters and trappers and with the assistance and guidance they could make a better living for themselves in the unpopulated High Arctic area. In the early years, as this was an experiment, the understanding was, should it fail or the Harrison people wished to return to their original homes, they could do so. There were rumours from time to time in the first seven years that there were some dissatisfied or were homesick but this was never confirmed nor were there any approaches on record having been made to officials of the federal or territorial government.” He states that while misunderstandings were possible, claims that “coercion or force was used to move people was not so.” These were successful projects that had benefited the Inuit, who had indicated to “many associated with them their happiness and satisfaction in their new location.”

**13.1.83**

Stevenson in a letter to the Government of the Northwest Territories repeated his statement that the claim made “that coercion was used is absolutely untrue.”

**31.1.84**

Parker in a letter to the then Deputy Minister of DIAND set out the sequence of events in the 1950s, noting that “Discussion of such a relocation project took place and received approval by the Northwest

Territories Council during the 1950-1951 sitting”... “There is little doubt that the people were promised return passages to Pond Inlet and Port Harrison if they became disenchanted with life in the High Arctic.” He notes that other groups continued to arrive in 1955, 1958 and 1959, and that the last recorded relocation was in the mid-1960s. According to the records he examined, only one family (in 1957) requested a return to Pond Inlet and this was arranged that same year. He supports a continued honouring of the promise of return while noting, “I do not believe that anyone could have envisaged that 30 years later people would want to take advantage of such a promise, but this appears to have happened and I would suggest that the promise be honoured offering those who originally relocated in 1953 and 1955 (his emphasis) a one time and final offer to return to Inukjuak and Pond Inlet.”

### **July 1983**

A discussion paper prepared by Environment Canada, entitled Environment Canada and the North and presented at the Third General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, July 1983, stated inter alia, “To furthermore entrench the sovereignty claim, the government relocated Inuit from Northern Quebec to the Arctic Islands in the mid-1950s” (p. 59).

### **July/August 1984**

Four letters from Andrew Iqaluk, Markoosie Patsauq, Alex Patsauq and Edith Patsauq written, apparently, to John Amagoalik (then President of ITC) claiming that the moves had been mainly to secure sovereignty, that they had endangered the lives of certain individuals such as Markoosie Patsauq who was moved when he was “very sick with TB.” That they had not been informed that they would be divided between three settlements and that, in general, they had been treated very badly and with great negligence by the Government of Canada. (Amagoalik and the Patsauq’s are all members of the same family.)

### **3.8.84**

M.M. Hammond submitted his Report of Findings on an Alleged Promise to Finance the Return of Inuit at Resolute and Grise Fiord to their original Homes at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet in fulfilment of a contract with DIAND which had asked him to investigate the matter. Hammond’s findings (which have been confirmed by later documentation which he did not have available), concluded that, “The most telling fact about the High Arctic relocation of the Inuit is that government regarded it as “an experiment.” This meant admitting the possibility of failure. Stevenson’s report in July 1953, that the Eskimo had agreed they would go North for a period of two years at least, then if they were dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment, they could return to Port Harrison”, meant that a promise of government assistance to return had been made. Since possible failure was envisaged, it was also reasonable for the Inuit to believe that the government would fund their return. He notes that since the promise of a financed return was strongly implied in the experiment, the question of judging its success or failure also arose. What were the criteria that should be used to make this judgement? His examination of the documentation suggested that leaving aside the issue of sovereignty, the experiment was initiated in a laudable attempt to make Inuit economically reliant on their own efforts.” While the government had judged the experiment successful because the people at both locations were meeting their “daily material needs without due hardship”, Hammond felt that this was not sufficient to justify an unqualified judgement that the experiment was a success. He felt that a failure of the experiment was that the government “seems not to have worried about the difficulty of finding spouses in a small population” and thus the Inuit at

the two centres became “not only emotionally but also biologically isolated from where they originated” and he concluded, “the upshot of the foregoing comments is that the experiment was not an unqualified success and that the Inuit had grounds to call in the promise they were convinced was made.” He believed they had tried to do so repeatedly since 1956, and not only after 30 years. “No one seems to have listened.”

#### 26.2.85

The then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Honourable D. Crombie, met with some of the people at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord and was given the same account as noted above. That the relocatees had been promised that if they wanted to return after two years they could do so but that the RCMP had “brushed off their request.” That they were “literally dumped off with virtually no provisions” and that families were forced to live in tents “all winter.” That unlike the Pond Inlet Inuit, the Northern Quebec Inuit could not just get up and leave. That there had been serious social disruption and suffering, family dispersal and family breakdown and that there was resentment at being “used” for sovereignty purposes.

#### 12.1.87

The Toronto Globe and Mail reported that representatives of the Inuit who had been moved to the High Arctic had decided to ask Ottawa for \$10,000,000 in compensation for suffering in connection with the move. J. Gerin, then Associate Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, in response to this development noted that, “There is no question but that they are displaced people, that they were moved in a most rudimentary fashion... they were given a one-way ticket up there and if they want, they should get a one-way ticket back. The government would undertake to return anyone to Northern Quebec who wanted to go, as soon as housing and other services could be arranged for them there... we cannot deny that living in Port Harrison and Resolute are two very different things, but there was no ulterior motive. This was not a police measure. While they were not forcibly moved, it is also true it’s not the kind of the thing the government could get away with today without a lot of consultation.”

#### 14.1.87

J. Parker, Commissioner of the N.W.T., informed DIAND that the people of Grise Fiord “seem to be reasonably satisfied with their location... the people of Resolute Bay have been less satisfied ... The economic situation of that community has been up and down depending on oil and gas exploration and alcoholism has been a real problem.”

#### 16.8.87

The then Minister of the Environment, the Honourable T. McMillan, wrote to the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada suggesting that either Resolute Bay or Grise Fiord could be designated a national historic site and/or the Inuit relocation to the High Arctic could be recognized as an event of national historic significance by an article in Recognizing Canadian History.

#### 30.8.87

Former DIAND Minister, the Honourable W. McKnight, agreed to fund construction of ten housing units in 1988 in Inukjuak for Inuit desiring to relocate from Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. Funds were also to be made available to partially defray removal costs incurred in the past, as well as a 1988 move back to Inukjuak. \$200,000 was made available for this. (Ten housing units were constructed during 1988 and families from Grise Fiord and

Resolute Bay wishing to return to Inukjuak were relocated by charter aircraft.)

### **23.3.89**

The Makivik Corporation wrote to the former Minister of DIAND, the Honourable P. Cadieux, to say that their demands for a number of compensatory and remedial measures were still outstanding, including compensation for personal property losses incurred by those Inuit from Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay who relocated back to Inukjuak at their own expense since 1970.

They demanded that a Heritage Trust Fund of \$10,000,000 be set up to compensate the original 19 families. This fund would be “similar to the symbolic redress payments presently being made by the Government of Canada to Japanese Canadians who were subjected to internment.” They also asked for:

- i) Housing and transportation costs to cover future moves.
- ii) Travel costs for yearly visits by Inuit presently living in the two communities who wanted to be able to visit their families at regular intervals. A \$2,000,000 compensation fund for travel was to cover all current and future travel of this kind.
- iii) Some form of special and formal recognition by the Government of Canada for the “special contribution made to Canada in assisting and establishing Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic.”
- iv) Funding for “additional social support systems” such as additional social workers and psychologists to work with individual families to provide for their integration in the Inukjuak community.
- v) Funds to augment municipal and educational infrastructure at Inukjuak to accommodate the additional population and housing required by any relocation back to Inukjuak.
- vi) Funding to cover use by Makivik and Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay Inuit for travel, consultation and negotiation purposes pertaining to the settlement of the relocation issue.
- vii) Reimbursement for negotiation costs, minimally estimated at \$100,000.

### **March 1990**

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs met to hear presentations from seven people who had been involved in the relocations. The Committee also had available a lengthy submission from the Makivik Corporation. After hearing the Inuit witnesses the Committee recommended that the government acknowledge the role played by Inuit relocated to the High Arctic for the protection of Canadian sovereignty. It asked the government to apologize for the wrongdoing which the government had inflicted on the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay at the time, by imposing on them its concerns about northern sovereignty. The committee also asked that an apology be given, with due solemnity, and accompanied by some form of recognition of the contribution to Canadian sovereignty made by the Inuit people at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. The government was asked to consider compensation for the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay for

their service to Canada and for the wrongdoing inflicted on them.<sup>480</sup>

According to Standing Order 108 of the House of Commons, the government was required to table a comprehensive response to the Third Report of the Standing Committee within 150 days.

### **March 1990**

The Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development submitted to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs a ten-page statement of disagreement with claims that had been made to the Committee.

### **November 1990**

The government response to the Standing Committee recommendations relied heavily on a report prepared for DIAND by the Hickling Corporation, in September 1990, Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations Made Before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of the Inukjuak Families in 1950s.

After summarizing the Hickling account of the history of the relocation, the government responded to the Standing Committee recommendation, negatively, maintaining that the Inuit people were not relocated:

In order to protect or affirm Canadian sovereignty in the north. The motive was to assist them in continuing to follow their traditional livelihood through greater access to game resources.

The Inuit who moved to Grise Fiord did, to some extent, assist the RCMP in such matters as the enforcement of the territorial game legislation. While this type of activity cannot be interpreted as the protection of Arctic sovereignty, it nonetheless did assist in the proper management of the northern territories, something for which the Government of Canada is appreciative.

The government refused to acknowledge that it had acted improperly in the design and implementation of the project but it acknowledged that promises were made that people who relocated could be returned if they were not content with the move. The government accepted a “moral obligation” to fulfil that promise even though the intent of the promise seemed to have been subject to a time limitation of two or three years. The government also refused to make special recognition of the contribution made by “only one small group of Canadians” to the development of the North because they did not want to single out one small group. Finally, they concluded that there was only one area where compensation was appropriate, following the Consultant’s report, and that was to offer to fund the relocation of people who wanted to return to Inukjuak. (A Response to the Recommendations of the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on the Relocation of the Inukjuak Inuit to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.)

### **29.11.90**

Makivik Corporation and ITC requested the Prime Minister to intervene in the matter and elaborated on claims and criticisms made earlier. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, in a response of March 2, 1991, disagreed with a number of claims made in the November 29, 1990 letter. In particular, the government continued to maintain that, “There still is no evidence to indicate that the sovereignty factor was

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<sup>480</sup> House of Commons Debates, November 20, 1990, 15443-15446. See also Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, House of Commons, issue number 22, March 19, 1990, p. 3-38, and Third Report of the (same) Standing Committee, presented to House of Commons, 19.6.90.

any more significant than the conclusion reached in your (Makivik) own 1982 Position Paper (i.e., that sovereignty concerns played at best a secondary role and that there was no linkage of sovereignty concerns to the project prior to 1960, long after the last of the Inukjuak people had been relocated)." The Minister claimed that the written documentation available developed a far different picture from that which had been portrayed to the Standing Committee and that "no responsible government would or should make public apologies and compensation based solely on memories or recollection of events which had occurred so long ago", and finally, that while the government did not agree that recognition should be given of sovereignty considerations, "it does agree that there was historical significance to the move."

### **8.5.91**

Makivik Corporation sent a long detailed disagreement with the March 2, 1991 letter (see previous section) stating that there had been "a systematic cover up or ignoring of facts relevant to a fair resolution of the issue." They noted that the Hickling Report, on which the government most relied, was misleading and deficient and that it did not address a number of the key allegations which had been made before the Standing Committee about the relocation, namely: "inadequate and negligent medical services; use of slave labour; illegal interference with and theft of Inuit mail; sexual abuse of Inuit women by the RCMP; hunger and inadequate diets; lack of government services including education and health services; physical, emotional and psychological suffering and abuse; lack of basic shelter." The letter, in brief, repudiates the Hickling Report on grounds that it was incomplete on some matters, wrong on others and biased on others. Whether sovereignty "was a primary reason or a secondary reason for relocating Inuit to the High Arctic in the 1950s, evidence of Inuit suffering and serious lack of planning... are ignored or seriously minimised by the Hickling Report."

### **Summary of the Conclusions of the Hickling Report**

1. The decision by the government to actively encourage the relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic in 1953, and in the two or three years subsequent to that, was not motivated by a concern to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands at that time.
2. The main reason for the decision by the government to encourage some Inuit families to relocate to the High Arctic at that time was a concern to improve the living conditions of Inuit, particularly in the Hudson Bay region.
3. Reasonable steps were taken by the government officials to establish and apply suitable criteria for the selection of families, so as to ensure the success of the project and the security of the participants.
4. Reasonable efforts were made to explain the project to both of the Inuit groups involved before their departure, and to communicate the fact that participation in it was voluntary.
5. There are no grounds for an apology by the government for the manner in which the relocation projects was conceived, planned, and carried out. To apologise for a wrongdoing it did not commit would constitute deception on the part of the government and would imply that the project was a failure, when, in fact, it was a reasonably successful endeavour.
6. The department gave the Inuit an understanding that they would be returned to their original communities after one, two, or three years. There is no evidence to suggest that the department intended this undertaking to remain in force indefinitely.

7. The delay in settling the matter of the return of the remaining original families still at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord is the only real basis for criticism of the department.

### **Summary of the Findings of the Soberman Report**

1. There is no direct evidence that the government deliberately decided to relocate the Inukjuak Inuit for the express purpose of protection of sovereignty. There is, however, evidence that once relocated the Inuit were thought to have contributed to Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic by their presence there.
2. There is clear evidence that in organizing the relocation, the government did promise the Inuit that they would be returned to Inukjuak at government expense within two to three years if, at the end of such time, they were unhappy in their new northern home. There is clear evidence that this promise was not honoured.
3. The government has always characterized the relocation as voluntary, but there is no evidence that the Inuit were sufficiently informed as to what awaited them or that they understood the nature of the relocation proposal as presented.
4. Planning of the relocation was inadequate, resulting in hardship for the Inuit particularly during the first year in the High Arctic and, while officials did not believe they were putting Inuit lives at risk, it should have been foreseen that hardship would ensue.
5. Through having been separated initially from their family members in Inukjuak and then from each other in being sent to separate communities, the Inuit suffered both hardship and cultural shock.
6. There is evidence that in the matter of whether Inuit were paid for work done in the new communities, particularly in the early years, they did not understand that they were assigned credit for such work to accounts kept on their behalf at the store in each community.
7. Government officials of the day functioned in a highly paternalistic manner, seemingly just assuming that their suggestions were in the best interests of the Inuit and therefore debate with the Inuit about any government proposal affecting them was not required.
8. Government violated its role as fiduciary through having subjected the Inuit to the relocation without necessarily ensuring that this was in their best interests.
9. The Inuit continue to believe that they were duped by the government in that they were in fact relocated for sovereignty reasons and not for the reasons given at the time, e.g., economic opportunity for them.
10. In considering possible and appropriate remedy, Professor Soberman notes that it is difficult to decide what standards are appropriate for making [judgments] about the actions of the Canadian government taken so long ago. He concludes it is not valid to simply declare that it was another time and thus cannot be judged by today's standards. However, he considers it inappropriate to unequivocally judge the events of that time by today's standards of current awareness and sensitivities.



**APPENDIX I****A. FAMILIES RELOCATED TO GRISE FIORD AND RESOLUTE BAY IN 1953**<sup>481</sup>

<u>Name in RCMP Reports</u>	<u>Name in Makivik Documents</u>	
	Grise Fiord from <u>Inukjuak</u>	
Fatty	Paddy	AQUIATUSUK
Mary	Mary	
Samwillie	Samwillie	
Minnie	Minnie	
Larry	Larry	
Elijah	Elijah	NUTARAK
Anna	Anna	
Joadamie	Joadamie	AQIATUSUK
(Joatamee/Joalamee/Joatamie		
Ekooma (Ikoma)	Ekoomak	
Lydia	Lizzie	
Philapushie (Pellypusy)	Philipusie	NOVALINGA
Annie	Annie	
Paulasis (Pailoosie)	Pauloosie	
Elisabee (Elipsapee)	Elisabee	
Thomasie	Thomasie	AMAGOALIK
Mary	Mary	
Alle	Alex	
Josephine (Sadlooveenee)	Salluviniq	
Charlie	(not mentioned)	

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<sup>481</sup> I have included the group moved in 1955 separately since they are rarely mentioned in this report, and because no promises were made to return them if they were dissatisfied with their move.

<u>Name in RCMP Reports</u>	<u>Name in Makivik Documents</u>	
	Grise Fiord from <u>Pond Inlet</u> <sup>482</sup>	
Angnakudlak	Samuel	ANUKUDLUK
Koymayoo	Qaumayuk	
Muckpino	Mukpanuk	
Damaras	Tamarisee	
Rhoda	Rhoda	
(Not mentioned)	Jonathan	
Killitee	Phoebe	
Akpaleeapik (Akjaleeapik)	Simon	AKPALIPIK
Tataga	Tatigak	
Ootootee	Ruthie	
Tookahsee	Inutsiak	
Isaac	Isaac	
Muckpa	(Not mentioned)	
	Resolute Bay from <u>Inukjuak</u> <sup>483</sup>	
Nellie	Nellie	AMAGOALIK
Simeonie	Simeonie	
Sarah	Sarah	
Paul	Paul	
Jaybeddie	Jaybeddie	
Alex (Allie)	Alex	PATSAUQ
Edith	Edith	
Lizzie	Lizzie	
Markoosie	Markoosie	
Johnnie	Jonny	
Jimmie	Jimmy	
Sudluvinik (Sudlavenich)	Daniel	SALLUVINIQ
Sarah	Sarah	
Jeannie	Jeannie	
Alle (Allie)	Allie	
Lousia	Lousia	

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<sup>482</sup> I may be in error on the later names of Muckpa and Tookahsee.

<sup>483</sup> Lizzie and Johnny Patsauq are also referred to or refer to themselves as Amagoalik.

Name in RCMP ReportsName in Makivik Documents

Resolute Bay  
From  
Pond Inlet

Amagooalik	Jaybeddie	AMAGOALIK
Kanooinoos	Kanoinoos	
Ekaksak	Ekaksak	
Seepohrah	Sippora	
Merari	Merrari	
Muchkooloo	(not mentioned)	

B. Inukivak families moved in 1955 to:Resolute

Johnnie	ECHALOOK
Minnie	
Lizzie	
Rynee	
Dora	
George	
Mary	
Leah	

Andrew	IQALUK
Mawa	
Jackoosie	
Martha	
Emily	
Mary	

Levi	NUNGAK
Alici	
Annie	
Minnie	
Philipusie	
Anna	

Grise Fiord

Josephine	FLAHERTY
Rynee	
Martha	
Peter	

**ARCHIVAL RECORDS CONSULTED**

1. I have just set out the Record Groups and Volumes of Canadian and U.S. public archives material that I used. Since on average there are 5 to 10 files in each volume and since in most instances I went through each file in each volume setting out the specific file numbers would be a very lengthy, tedious, and unnecessary addition to this report. I have an unedited listing of all files consulted and these can be obtained by writing to me care of:

Department of Political Science  
Trent University  
PETERBOROUGH, Ontario  
K9J 7B8

2. Errors in work of this kind which make literally thousands of factual claims are inevitable. All of the reports I have reviewed make these mistakes. Most commonly these errors apply to references which are quoted. I attach a copy of the errata found in the first edition of this report. Unfortunately, there were a considerable number of these. I trust that the careful re-checking of all references and quotations for this second edition will have eliminated all these earlier errors. It is too much to hope that all errors have been removed and I would hope that if any are found the reader will let me know.

<u>Record Group</u>	<u>Volumes</u>	<u>Record Group</u>	<u>Volumes</u>
RG 2	2651	RG 22	254
	2653		150
	2655		246
	2652		176
	1894		2650
	2650		544
	2654		245
	2656		270
RG 2 Series 18	57		96
	213		124
	235	RG 22	210
	243		334
RG 2, Series 18, Acc. 83-84/213.	210		500
			505
RG 18	3668		499
	3665		365
	3670		519
RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048	57		520
	55		502
	13		546
	42		547
	51		1894
	14		319

<u>Record Group</u>	<u>Volumes</u>	<u>Record Group</u>	<u>Volumes</u>
	329		693
	480		1070
	487		1127
	350		1234
	351		1269
	365		1474
	378		1962
	122		1072
	335	85	1446
	165		300
	253		1513
	279		1234
	298		3278
	69		1042
	96		1471
	117		1543
	124	RG 85, Acc. 89-90/233	4
	155		2
	570		3
RG 22	210		10
	294	RG 85, Acc. 19/333	9
RG 22, Acc. 83-84/231	5		233
	6	<u>USNA</u>	
	7	RG18	PJBD File
	15		Intelligence Reports
RG 22, Acc. 84-85/134	11	RG 59	PJBD File 1946
	33		Documents
RG 25	3278		PJBD File
MG 30, E 133, Series V	294		Recommendations
RG 85	294		PJBD File Meeting
	640		Journals
	1207		PJBD File
	254		Correspondence
	304		PJBD File Basic
	316		papers
	347		
	375		
	376		

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# 5

## *The Relocation of Inuit from Hudson Bay and Baffin Island to the High Arctic in 1953, and Subsequent Events, including Disputed Sovereignty Issues*

Gordon W. Smith

### ***A. Introduction***

In 1953 the Canadian Government moved a small number of Inuit from their homes at Port Harrison (later renamed Inukjuak) on the east coast of Hudson Bay, and Pond Inlet, on the north coast of Baffin Island, to new locations on Cornwallis Island and the south coast of Ellesmere Island in the High Arctic. The relocations were carried out quietly and without attracting a great deal of public attention; and for a considerable time there was little news about them in the media or anywhere else. In later years, however, they became a subject of bitter controversy. Some of the Inuit who were moved, and some of their descendants claimed that they were used merely as pawns, in extremely inconsiderate fashion, as part of a government effort to bolster and consolidate Canadian sovereignty in the northern arctic islands. On the other hand surviving government officials who had an association with the moves generally maintained that they were carried out to improve the lives of the Inuit who were relocated, and that issues of sovereignty were of little or no importance. The dispute became the subject of much investigation, by academics and other private individuals, by researchers who were employed by the government to look into the matter, and ultimately by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. The Royal Commission held public hearings in Ottawa in April and June 1993, presented an interim report and final report. The heated disagreement which had been aroused did not abate with the presentation of the reports, some of the interested parties and individuals insisting that these reports did not go far enough in endorsing the Inuit case and condemning Government's role in the affair, others taking the opposite view.

In the course of the dispute a tremendous amount of information was uncovered and brought to light, by the investigators who endeavored to get to the bottom of the problem and come to some conclusions. Needless to say their work resulted in a great variety of interpretations and opinions. Speaking in a personal way, I do not think that I can add very much quantitatively to all the information that has been brought out, partly because of time limitations and partly because there is probably little of relevance that remains unseen. I shall simply try, therefore, to give a brief and largely factual account of the relocations, accompanied or followed by some comment on the issues involved and the great scope and variety of writing and opinion that has resulted therefrom.

The relocations of 1953 were not of course, an entirely new phenomenon. In preceding years there had been a number of suggestions and plans to move Inuit from one location to another, either temporarily or permanently, for various reasons; and on occasion such transfers had been carried out. As early as 1920 a

suggestion of this kind had been made by J. H. Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks. Harkin was a member of the Advisory Technical Board which was investigating the question of Canada's sovereignty over the northern islands, at a time when there was some fear that Denmark was going to make an attempt to take control of Ellesmere Island. Harkin, who was one of those most worried about the situation, included the following as a recommendation as to what should be done.

To scarcely establish Canada's title occupation and administration are necessary. Therefore, next Spring an expedition should be sent north to locate two or three permanent police posts on Ellesmere land. This probably should be followed by the transfer of some Canadian Eskimos to the Island.

Elsewhere he wrote in the same vein: —

Eventually if investigation shows that there are important natural resources in the Northern islands the government should transfer Eskimos from other Canadian areas to establish small centres of populations; should induce trading companies to extend their operations to the islands or establish trading posts of its own and should establish wireless stations to put the islands into communication with the south.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of taking Inuit to the Far North to stay with the R.C.M.P. at their northernmost posts began with the first annual Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1922, and the establishment during this expedition of the first two of these posts at Craig Harbour, on the southeastern coast of Ellesmere Island, and Pond Inlet, on the northern coast of Baffin Island. A family of Pond Inlet natives agreed to accompany the Mounties and stay with them for one year at Craig Harbour. In 1923 these Eskimos (to use the name in general use at the time) and the R.C.M.P. at Craig Harbour were taken north on the Eastern Arctic Patrol vessel *Arctic*, to help set up the planned new post at Cape Sabine; and two Greenland Eskimo families from Etah, who had agreed to stay with the police at the new post, were also taken along. However, bad weather and thick ice made it impossible to get to Cape Sabine; and so all police, Eskimos, building materials, and supplies destined for the projected new post were taken to Craig Harbour. In 1924 all personnel at Craig Harbour were picked up and the expedition succeeded in reaching the planned new site for the post at Fram Havn, near Cape Sabine; but the Eskimos who were going to stay with the police refused to do so; and therefore only a supply post, Kane Basin, was constructed on the site; and all personnel were taken back to Craig Harbour and left there. In 1925 the plan to establish a post in this locality, this time at Bache Peninsula, again had to be abandoned; the two Greenland Eskimo families obtained at Etah for this post were left at Craig Harbour; and the Eskimos already at Craig Harbour were left at Dundas Harbour, where a police post had been set up in 1924. In 1926 another attempt to establish a post at Bache Peninsula met with success; and three families of Eskimos were left there with the mounted police. In 1928 the Greenland Eskimos who had been with the police at Dundas Harbour were taken back to Nerik, in their own country. In 1933 some Greenland Eskimos helped the police conduct a long patrol from Bache Peninsula to the northern coast of Axel Heiberg Island, in a futile search for the lost German explorer Dr. H. Kroeger; and afterwards they were returned to their home at Robertson Bay.<sup>2</sup>

In 1934 a different and much larger scheme for transporting Inuit to more northerly locations was undertaken. The Department of the Interior and the Hudson's Bay Company collaborated in transferring a considerable number of Inuit from three settlements in Baffin Island to Dundas Harbour in Devon Island. The motivation for the project and its purpose appear to have been worthy, in other words, to move impoverished natives from areas where the supply of game was steadily decreasing to a locality where game was much more

plentiful. However, there appears also to have been a desire to increase occupation of the sparsely inhabited northern islands. In August 1934 the H.B.C. vessel *Nascopie* took twenty-two Eskimos from Cape Dorset, twelve from Pangnirtung, and eighteen from Pond Inlet to what was intended to be their new home at Dundas Harbour. The Eskimo party was made up of complete families of men, women, and children; and they took with them all their possessions, including household goods, dogs, kayaks, whaleboats, and sleds. They were volunteers in the sense that they had agreed to stay at Dundas Harbour for two years, after which, if they were not satisfied, they would be returned to their former homes. All did not go well in the new location because, although there was plenty of game there, the Eskimos were not adequately equipped to capture it. After an attempt to solve the problem by dispersing the natives more widely around Dundas Harbour, the H.B.C. closed the trading post there in 1936, transported the Cape Dorset and Pond Inlet Eskimos in the *Nascopie* to Arctic Bay at the northern extremity of Baffin Island, and took back those from Pangnirtung, making up two families, to their home. In 1937, the *Nascopie*, took some of the natives from Arctic Bay to Fort Ross, a new post which the H.B.C. was establishing on the southernmost extremity of Somerset Island at the entrance to Bellot Strait; and in 1938 arrangements were made to bring more families from Cape Dorset to both Arctic Bay and Fort Ross. However, in two successive summers during the war the *Nascopie* was unable to reach Fort Ross because of very heavy ice; and so the post was closed in 1947. The much-travelled Eskimo settlers were taken from there to still another new home at Spence Bay, on the southwestern shore of Boothia Peninsula. At Spence Bay they joined other natives who were already on the site, and there most of them remained.

As suggested above, this rather ill-fated and unsatisfactory attempt to establish Inuit settlements on the more northerly arctic islands appears to have been motivated both by a desire to improve the living conditions of the natives themselves and by a feeling that greater occupation of this remote region was desirable. Diamond Jenness discussed this episode in considerable detail in his *Eskimo Administration: II. Canada*, and gives several quotations which illustrate both aspects of the issue. Regarding benefit to the natives themselves, he quotes from a memo by the N.W.T. Council secretary relating to plans for the Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1935:

... There was also the probability of establishing posts at Craig Harbour and on other islands in the Archipelago to facilitate the general plan of northern migration and settlement where game is abundant. The opening of those posts will provide employment and relieve destitution of those natives who are compelled, thorough lack of transportation and other means, to seek better hunting grounds and maintain their independence.<sup>3</sup>

On the matter of increasing occupation, Jenness says that it “would show the world that the northern archipelago was indeed Canadian territory,” and later quotes from an article entitled “Occupy Arctic Isles to Insure Canadian Claims,” by a writer named James Montagnes, the date evidently being June 1935:

In addition to the placing of the Eskimos in new regions where game is more abundant and work more regular, there is the angle of occupation of the country, now that aerial routes, mineral developments, and other reasons make possible the claims of other countries to part of Canada's Arctic, which now reaches to the North Pole. To forestall any such future claims, the Dominion is occupying the Arctic islands to within nearly 700 miles of the North Pole.<sup>4</sup>

The rather unsatisfactory results of the attempt beginning in 1934 to resettle significant numbers of Inuit in the far northern islands apparently discouraged further projects of this kind. There was, it is true, another such attempted resettlement in a more southerly region in 1950, when the Department of Resources and Development moved forty-seven Ahiarmiut Inuit from the vicinity of the recently constructed radio station at

Ennadai, on Ennadai Lake in southwestern Keewatin, to what was thought to be a better location at Nueltin Lake, about seventy miles to the south. However, the Ahiarmiut were not at all pleased with their new home, where fishing rather than caribou-hunting provided most of their livelihood; and by the end of the year (1950) almost all of them had found their own way back to Ennadai. But apart from this additional failure, there was little other activity of this sort during the remainder of the 1930's and throughout the 1940's. There were other circumstances, of course, which made such efforts impractical, notably the limiting effect of World War II, the resultant closure of some of the northerly posts of the R.C.M.P., and also the loss of the *Nascopie* in 1947, with the additional problems of transportation and supply which resulted from this tragedy. Granting the truth of the foregoing, however, does not alter the fact that there had been considerable background of effort and experience in relocating Inuit from more southerly locations to the High Arctic, during a period of approximately thirty years; and so the 1953 resettlement project be looked upon as something completely new and without precedent.

...

### ***C. The Relocations of 1953: Immediate Background and Preparations***

Earlier attempts to relocate Eskimos have already been briefly described above. The more immediate background of the 1953 relocations, and the preparations for them, were, or became, much more involved. Following is an attempt to provide a brief summary of them.

The decision of the responsible Canadian authorities to undertake the relocations resulted from a number of events and circumstances, which occurred mostly during the immediately preceding period.

One of the main relevant factors was the disaster which struck the fur trade upon which the Eskimos had become so dependent. Before the advent of the white man the Eskimos were completely dependent upon their own resources for their livelihood and sustenance; and in the circumstances governing their lives their time, energy, and ingenuity were of necessity almost completely devoted to the activities which provided them with their food, clothing, and shelter. They showed remarkable skill in coping with their harsh environment, and in good times might have an adequate supply of what was essential to them. However, in bad times, when the hunt failed, or the vagaries of extremely severe weather, or accidents, or ill health intervened, they would undergo appalling suffering, and in their state of almost total helplessness to deal with such catastrophes, their lot would be starvation, sickness, and sometimes great loss of life. When the white man arrived, with his superior technology and equipment, the Eskimos fell under increasing temptation to do whatever was necessary to acquire the superior tools, weapons, utensils, etc. which the newcomers could provide. What these newcomers wanted more than anything else was the furs of the animals which hitherto had helped to supply the basic needs of the natives, especially the furs of the white fox, which were in great demand in white society. As a result the Eskimos became increasingly occupied with satisfying the white men's desires, accepting in return the goods which he provided, and, unfortunately becoming increasingly dependent in both respects.

Thus the independence of the Eskimos was gradually eroded, and they became increasingly vulnerable to their association with the white man, and particularly to the fur trade. There were two vital factors which determined their fortunes in this activity, i.e., the price and the quantity of furs. Regarding price, when it was high (referring especially to the furs of the white fox), many Eskimos would do quite well in economic and financial terms; but unfortunately prices fluctuated greatly over the years, and the general trend was downward. To illustrate briefly with a few statistics, the skin of a white fox was valued at approximately \$15.00 in 1914,

never dropped lower than \$30.00 in the 1920's, reached its maximum of up to \$60.00 in 1929, declined drastically during the depression years of the 1930's to a low of \$8.00 in 1934, rose to approximately \$12.00 in the late 1930's, rose again to approximately \$26.00 in the early 1940's, declined drastically in the late 1940's to approximately \$9.00, and dropped to as low as \$3.50 in 1949-1950. By 1952, the year before the relocations, the price had increased somewhat, reaching approximately \$6.00 in that year; but obviously the general picture was not encouraging, because of both the variability of prices and general decline.<sup>5</sup>

The number of furs which the Eskimos could obtain also varied greatly, in similarly drastic fashion. Like many other wild animals the white fox follows a sort of cycle in numbers, which in rather irregular fashion has a high and a low about every four years. To illustrate, in the Eastern Arctic the number of white fox taken in the year 1942-1943 totaled approximately 60,000; but in 1949-1950 the number was only about 10,000.<sup>6</sup> Diamond Jenness gives figures indicating that in a good year a trapper might capture as many as 1,000 white foxes in the single season; but in a bad year the number might drop to as low as five or ten. Jenness gives additional figures which show that during the ten-year period from 1952 to 1961 the average Eskimo family in the Northwest Territories caught no more than about twenty foxes per year.<sup>7</sup>

The deteriorating economic circumstances of the Eskimos in the late 1940's and early 1950's caused increasing concern among government officials. Alex Stevenson, one of the members of the Department of Resources and Development who had extensive experience with the Eskimos and was the department's official in charge of the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1950, included in his report on the patrol a suggestion that some Baffin Island Eskimos could be relocated in Ellesmere Island, where the R.C.M.P. were reestablishing themselves.<sup>8</sup> He discussed the suggestion with Inspector Henry Larsen of the R.C.M.P., who was accompanying the voyage; and Larsen agreed that it would be a good idea.<sup>9</sup>

In 1949 the Arctic Administration hired James Cantley, formerly of the Hudson's Bay Company but now working for the Department, to examine and report on Eskimo conditions with a view to making improvements. Cantley's principal report, bearing the title *Survey of Economic Conditions Among the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic*, was submitted to the Department in 1951 in two parts, the first part in April and the second in November. In the report, after giving much information about the Eskimos, including their history, means of livelihood, and increasing contacts with the white man, Cantley described the increasing difficulties they faced, with their economy and capacity to remain independent in decline, and growing problems in health, employment, etc. His report ended with a number of recommendations, two of the most important being that the R.C.M.P. should be relieved of all responsibility for issue of family allowances, relief, old age allowances, etc.; and that instead this responsibility should be taken over by the H.B.C., in collaboration with and under the direct supervision of Government Arctic Services.<sup>10</sup>

Cantley's report was well received and aroused favourable comment from a number of senior officials in the Department of Resources and Development, including Acting Chief J.G. Wright of the Northern Administration Division, Director G.E.B. Sinclair of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, and Deputy Minister H.A. Young.<sup>11</sup> More correspondence and comment followed; and on November 28, 1951, Young wrote a memo to Sinclair recording his agreement that some action should be taken regarding the Eskimos, and suggesting that a comprehensive conference that would involve a considerable number of interested people should be held, possibly during the following March.<sup>12</sup>

Acting on a suggestion from Sinclair, Young arranged a small preliminary conference of key officials, this meeting taking place on January 14, 1952.<sup>13</sup> Emanating from the conference was a long-suggested agenda of matters to be discussed at the later general meeting in March. Among the many ideas put forward to improve Eskimo conditions was a suggestion for explanation of the possibilities for employment or training of Eskimos “as Canadian citizens or as a branch of the Armed Forces to occupy and patrol the Arctic — for the purposes of sovereignty and security.”<sup>14</sup> Another, later version of the same document added the suggestion that Eskimo “groups” might be transferred to underpopulated areas.<sup>15</sup>

For various reasons it became necessary to postpone the general meeting, and it actually took place on May 19 and 20, 1952. The revised agenda listed in great detail practically everything that could be included relating to Eskimo administration and the improvement of their generally difficult and declining situation. A total of approximately sixty officials attended the meeting, with representatives from a number of departments and agencies including Resources and Development, National Health and Welfare, Citizenship and Immigration, National Defence, Transport, Fisheries, the N.W.T. Council, and the R.C.M.P., and also from the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions. The meeting was formally opened by the Hon. R.H. Winters, Minister of Resources and Development, and he and chairman Maj. Gen. Young gave a preliminary review of the matters to be discussed, stressing particularly the need to improve the living conditions of the Eskimos. This became the principal theme at the conference; and discussion focused specifically upon a number of related subjects including recent changes in the Eskimo economy, effects of government aid Eskimo employment, education, and health, and the need for, and the identification and application of, corrective measures. The last-named was clearly the most important and the most difficult to handle; and although many ideas were expressed and suggestions made, there was throughout an atmosphere of uncertainty and frustration and an absence of genuine optimism that, in the face of all the difficulties, a genuinely satisfactory solution could be found.<sup>16</sup>

Again the suggestion was made, in connection with Eskimo food resources, that improvement might be brought about by the “movement of Eskimos from over-populated areas to places where they can be assured of being able to make a better living.”<sup>17</sup>

One outcome of the meeting was the formation of a General or Special Committee on Eskimo Affairs, comprising about half a dozen varied and representative officials headed by Maj. Gen. Young himself.<sup>18</sup> The committee held its first on October 16, 1952, with all members present and an almost equal number of other key officials in attendance, including Col. F.J.G. Cunningham (Director Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Resources and Development), Mr. B.G. Sivertz (administrative officer in same department), and Inspector H.A. Larsen (O/C “G” Division, R.C.M.P.). A large number of issues were discussed and suggestions made, largely carrying on from the meeting on May 19-20. In the present context the following section from the minutes of the meeting is of particular interest:

#### 4. Improvement of Eskimo Economy. ....

##### (c) Transfer of Eskimos:

Consideration was given to the possibility of assisting natives to move from over-populated areas to places where they could more readily obtain a living. It was agreed that Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine on Ellesmere Island should be investigated as possible localities

where Eskimos could be placed under the care of the R.C.M. Police detachments and arrangements made to enable them to obtain necessary supplies through the loan fund.<sup>19</sup>

Neither here nor anywhere else in the minutes was there any mention of moving Eskimos for sovereignty purposes.

According to the findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, there was at the time of this meeting (i.e., October 1952) still no clear intention, and certainly no clear plan, to relocate northern Quebec Eskimos to the High Arctic. However, the idea had appeared, and had been discussed on various occasions and in various ways.<sup>20</sup> A number of events followed which together caused the idea to take more concrete form.

On December 18, 1952, James Cantley submitted a memorandum suggesting that if any action were to be taken the following year it would be necessary to start making arrangements without delay. In the memo were proposals to (1) transfer ten Eskimo families from the Port Harrison area to the vicinity of two R.C.M.P. locations on Ellesmere Island, the existing post at Craig Harbour and the proposed post near Cape Herschel, where the police would be available to give assistance; (2) transfer ten families from northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset to Resolute Bay, provided the R.C.M.P. would also locate themselves there; and (3) transfer ten families from northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset to Clyde River on Baffin Island.<sup>21</sup>

Not long before, on December 8, 1952, Alex Stevenson had already suggested to Cantley that any transfer of Port Harrison Eskimos to Ellesmere Island would require the assistance of some Pond Inlet Eskimos, to help accustom the newcomers to the long, dark winter period.<sup>22</sup>

F.J.G. Cunningham, Director of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch and Deputy Commissioner of the N.W.T., evidently thought that initially the project should be undertaken with a smaller number of Eskimos. In a letter dated January 12, 1953, to Mr. R.H. Chesshire, the general manager of the H.B.C. fur trade department, he wrote (in part) as follows.

Consideration is being given ... to the possibility of transferring about five families each to Craig Harbour and Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island and possibly to Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island. These natives would be transferred from presently overpopulated areas where they have difficulty in obtaining their living by hunting and trapping.... Although we are only considering a few families this year, it is possible that if the experiment proves successful, these communities might enlarge later on....

As northern Quebec is the area which is causing us the most concern at the present, we shall endeavour to draw the families from Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island from there, but since there is a big difference between living conditions in the High Arctic and those in Quebec, we think it would be advisable to make a limited experiment only, until we can be sure that the people taken from the Quebec area can accustom themselves to living in the High Arctic. It may be necessary to send one or two families from north Baffin Island with these people in getting them used to hunting conditions, particularly during the long winter. It may then be possible to transfer families from northern Quebec to north Baffin Island to replace the families moved to gradually build a larger population in this area.<sup>23</sup>

It is noticeable that this document deals only with the problem of improving conditions for the Eskimos, and does not relate the proposed relocations to sovereignty. It does, however, speak of the projects as experimental.



On February 20, 1953, Deputy Minister Young wrote to Commissioner Nicholson of the R.C.M.P., emphasizing that the proposed relocations could not be carried out without the cooperation and support of the Mounted Police:

As you are aware, we have been giving consideration to the possibility of transferring a few Eskimo families from overpopulated areas to places in the High Arctic, including Craig Harbour, the proposed detachment site at Cape Herschel, and Resolute Bay. It would be possible to establish these small settlements only with your cooperation as there is no one else at these places who could assist these people in adjusting themselves to new conditions .... We could not consider placing Eskimos at Resolute Bay unless we had someone to look after them and direct their activities .... I would be interested to hear, therefore, if you propose to open a detachment at that point this year.<sup>24</sup>

The reply of Commissioner Nicholson, dated February 24, was encouraging. It was worded (in part) as follows:

... I would be quite willing to select a good man and have him stationed there with the specific job of taking care of the natives. He might even be able to encourage some hunting and trapping on their part and handle their furs for them.<sup>25</sup>

On March 16, 1953, Cunningham submitted for Deputy Minister Young's approval a proposal for a number of projects designed to help the Eskimos. Prominent among them were the three projects for Cape Herschel, Craig Harbour, and Resolute Bay; but there were a considerable number of others, including somewhat similar projects for Banks Island and Herschel Island in the Western Arctic, and other projects including boat building at Lake Harbour, hunting and fishing at Ungava Bay, a workshop at Aklavik, etc. The memorandum, entitled, "Assisted Eskimo Projects," contained the following lengthy key passages:

It is proposed, with your approval, to initiate certain new projects and continue certain existing projects in the interest of improving the Eskimo economy. These projects are listed beneath the headings under which they will be financed.

#### *Eskimo Loan Fund*

##### *Loan Project No. 1. Cape Herschel*

The R.C.M. Police will establish a detachment at Cape Herschel on the east coast of Ellesmere Island to police a region where Greenland natives have from time to time been hunting on Canadian territory. Native food supplies are reported to be plentiful. There are no Canadian Eskimos in the region and it is planned to move in five Eskimo families from overpopulated depressed areas and establish them in the native way of life under the direction of the R.C.M. Police. It is estimated that the cost of moving these Eskimos and equipping them to live at Cape Herschel will not exceed \$200 per family or \$1,000 in all, which will be charged to the item in the estimates — Transportation of Eskimos — and to Relief.

As there is no trading post at Cape Herschel a year's stock of supplies for the natives will have to be provided in care of the R.C.M. Police. It is proposed to finance the purchase of these supplies under a loan issued to a leading Eskimo in the group. These goods will be held by the R.C.M. Police as security for the loan and will be dispensed by the Police on behalf of the loanee in return for payment in money or in kind and the proceeds will be credited to the loan. When goods for relief or Family Allowances are to be issued, the R.C.M. Police will make out the vouchers to show the order as being filled by the loanee who for this purpose

will be acting as a trade. When the vouchers are approved for payment the amounts will be credited to the loan.

The exact cost of supplies will not be known until the families are selected and the purchases made. It is estimated that the cost should not exceed \$1,000 per family. The loan to the leader of the group should, therefore, be for an amount up to \$5,000.

*Loan Project No. 2. Craig Harbour.*

This project is similar to Project 1. Five Eskimo families would be established under the R.C.M.P. Police to live off the country where native food supplies are reported to be good. The amount of the loan would be up to \$5,000.

*Loan Project No. 3. Resolute Bay.*

It has been tentatively agreed with the R.C.M. Police that if we will move five Eskimo families to Resolute Bay they will re-open their detachment there to supervise the Eskimos and maintain law and order in a settlement where there are four different organizations, each with its own senior officer, and many transient visitors. ....

As there is no trading post at Resolute Bay this project would operate on the same principle as Project 1. The amount of the loan would be up to \$5,000.

The above three projects have as their object:

- (a) Relief of population pressure in distressed areas.
- (b) A pioneer experiment to determine if Eskimos can be induced to live on the northern islands which, relics indicate, once supported a native population.
- (c) An experiment to work out a method by which Eskimos may be trained to replace white employees in the north without the Eskimo children losing touch with the native way of life.
- (d) If these projects warrant it, more natives can be moved north both to these pioneer points and to other points to be selected later.<sup>26</sup>

The memorandum gave similar detail about the other projects that were planned. With regard to the above three in particular, several facts stand out as being of primary significance. First, supplies for all three locations were to be financed by what was called the Eskimo Loan Fund, under which loans were to be issued to leading Eskimos who would use them to pay for needed supplies, which would be held and made available by the R.C.M.P. Second, the loan in each case was not to exceed \$5,000.00, so that all three together were to have a maximum of \$15,000.00. Third, the emphasis throughout was upon moving some Eskimos from what were considered to be overpopulated depressed areas to areas where native food supplies were more plentiful, and doing this, in such a way that the native way of life was preserved. Fourth, there was no mention of sovereignty in the memorandum, in connection with any of these three projects, or incidentally, in connection with any of the other projects discussed in the document.

The *Report* of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples takes note, with implied criticism, of what were seen as omissions in the memorandum, i.e., (1) the failure to describe the difference between living conditions in the High Arctic and those in northern Quebec, (2) the failure to mention the advisability of having more experienced Eskimos from northern Baffin Island join the relocatees, and (3) the failure to “set out the

manner in which the Inuit would be approached about the relocation, what would be said to them, or what representations, assurances, or promises would be given.”<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, while raising doubts about whether the Deputy Minister was given sufficient information about the projects, the *Report* is considerably more complimentary about the basic purposes of the planned relocations.

It can be safely concluded that the Deputy Minister would have understood that the reference to “overpopulated” areas and establishing the people “in the native way of life” captured the economic problem which had led to the decision on these relocations, namely, the decline in Inuit income as a result of the collapse of fur prices. In other words, the concern was not in increasing populations outstripping declining game resources. Rather, as discussed earlier, the concern was that the Inuit who were living close to posts such as Port Harrison had become dependent on store food which they no longer had the earned income to purchase and the game resources in the immediate area were insufficient to make up the difference with the result that relief in the area increased in bad fur years. To say that the people would be “established in the native way of life” was an entirely accurate description of what was involved since the object was plainly not to move them to another place where relief would constitute an important aspect of their livelihood but rather to move them to a place where they could increase their reliance on country food (and thus decrease their reliance on store food which they would not have the income to pay for in a depressed fur trading economy). The encouragement, guidance and direction provided by the local official (who would by necessity, be an RCMP member) would ensure that the people would do what it was perceived they could do, namely, increase their reliance on country food and become less dependent on relief. This approach, as discussed earlier, reflected a broad consensus among all those involved in northern affairs, both inside and outside government and including secular and non-secular concerns (although there were significant differences of view as to how things should be done).<sup>28</sup>

Thus, says the *Report*, the key problem was the collapse of fur prices, not increasing population outstripping declining game resources; this was recognized by all officials involved in northern affairs; and the accepted solution was seen to be moving the disadvantaged people to an area where country food was more plentiful and they could resume the native way of life.

Although there appears to be some uncertainty about the precise date of the decision, it was evidently in early April 1953, that Deputy Minister Young decided to accept the plan that had been presented to him and to go ahead with the relocations.<sup>29</sup> A succession of events and developments followed, leading to the actual transfer of the natives to the High Arctic. On April 8, 1953, Director Cunningham of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch advised the R.C.M.P. Commissioner of the decision.<sup>30</sup> During the next few days either he, or Henry Larsen (head of the R.C.M.P. “G” Division), or both, sent communiqués to the R.C.M.P. detachments at Port Harrison, Pond Inlet, and Fort Chimo, giving them information about the decision and the plan. The personnel at the detachments were asked to ascertain and send back information about natives who were willing to be transferred, including their names, identification numbers, dependents, relationships of those involved, property and equipment, etc. They were also asked to explain the different living conditions in the High Arctic including the two months of complete darkness in the middle of winter.<sup>31</sup> Evidently on his own authority Larsen, who was very conscious that the Eskimos relocated in 1934 were never returned to their homes, included a promise that the families who took part in this relocation would be brought back home at the end of one year if they wished to return.<sup>32</sup>

Larsen's message to the Port Harrison detachment (probably the most important of these messages in view of subsequent events) was worded as follows.

It is suggested by Director Northern Administration to move this summer on the *C.D. Howe* from Port Harrison detachment four Eskimo families to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island and three families to Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island to hunt and trap for a living under supervision of RCM Police detachments. Please ascertain whether any families are willing to go and if so were names and identification numbers and numbers of dependents and relationships of families involved. Also give particulars of boats, calibres of rifles and other major equipment owned and number of dogs. Conditions on Ellesmere Island should be carefully explained particularly complete dark period of two months and other short days and only annual visits by supply ship. It would be preferable if one or two members of families are qualified and named to act as traders under supervision of RCMP. Trade supplies will be shipped in. Pond Inlet detachment being asked to name three families and Fort Chimo detachment five families. Final distribution of all fifteen families will be five each at Craig Harbour, Cape Herschel and Resolute Bay. The heads of families should be good energetic hunters. Families will be brought home at end of one year if they so desire.<sup>33</sup>

Replies were received from the three detachments in May 1953. On May 20 the Pond Inlet detachment reported that three families were willing to go north; on May 23 the Port Harrison detachment gave similar information about seven families.<sup>34</sup> The reply from Fort Chimo, received on or about May 6, was not so positive, as the Eskimos approached expressed doubts about various matters, including living in snow houses at Resolute Bay. For this reason and others, including the uncertainty of native employment at Resolute Bay (the only relocation site where native employment was under significant consideration), the responsible officials became increasingly uncertain as to whether the Fort Chimo Eskimos would be able to adapt themselves to the living conditions they would encounter at Resolute Bay. It was therefore decided not to relocate Fort Chimo Eskimos at this site.<sup>35</sup>

The role and performance of the R.C.M.P. personnel at Port Harrison, Pond Inlet, and Fort Chimo, who provided information about prospective Eskimo relocatees, later became a subject of bitter controversy. This was particularly true at Port Harrison, where Constable Ross Gibson was appointed to carry out the investigation. Gibson insisted, then and afterwards, that he exerted no pressure on the Eskimos to persuade them to take part in the relocation, and that they went voluntarily and of their own free will. He and the other administrators with whom he worked were concerned only with trying to improve the lives of the Eskimos, and, so far as he was concerned, the issue of sovereignty was not a factor, and was not even discussed with him.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, particularly in later years, the Eskimo who had participated in the move maintained that the police had exerted a certain amount of pressure upon the natives to make the move, and this pressure, to some extent indirect rather than direct, was difficult for Eskimos to resist, because they were so thoroughly under the influence and control of white officials. Although Eskimo accusations of this sort were not made in any conspicuous way at the time of the relocations, they were made by numerous Eskimos in very bitter fashion some years later, conspicuously at hearings of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in March 1990,<sup>37</sup> and at the investigation conducted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Ottawa in April 1993.<sup>38</sup>

In the summer of 1953, by arrangement, Alex Stevenson of the Department of Resources and Development accompanied a flight by the R.C.M.P. to investigate the situation at Port Harrison. Stevenson was one of the few members of the department who had had a good deal of direct experience with Eskimos. In his

report Stevenson emphasized that although he had not had much luck in contacting Eskimos who were going to take part in the relocation, those that he was able to talk with fully understood the plan and were pleased with it.<sup>39</sup>

Already, in April and May, arrangements had been made for the establishment of the projected trading stores at Resolute Bay, Craig Harbour, and Cape Herschel, mainly by James Cantley. The supplies and equipment to be sent to each store were very basic, e.g., the foods provided were to be mainly flour, sugar, tea, and lard.<sup>40</sup>

#### ***D. The Relocations of 1953 and Their Aftermath***

Towards the end of July 1953, the *C.D. Howe* in the course of its annual Eastern Arctic Patrol picked up the seven Eskimo families at Port Harrison who were to be taken to Resolute Bay, Craig Harbour, and Cape Herschel. The total number of individuals was 34, counting men, women, and children; and they took with them as much as possible of their belongings and also some sled dogs. About a month later, towards the end of August, the *C.D. Howe* called at Pond Inlet, northern Baffin Island, and picked up three more Eskimo families, totaling sixteen men, women, and children. In the meantime the icebreaker *d'Iberville*, which according to the original plan was to rendezvous with the *C.D. Howe* at Clyde River and later take abroad both groups of Eskimos, was unable to meet the *C.D. Howe* as planned, because it had been delayed on a trip to Resolute Bay, Craig Harbour, and Cape Herschel. When the two ships finally met at Craig Harbour on August 29, the *C.D. Howe* disembarked four Port Harrison families and two Pond Inlet families, and departed. The remainder, three Port Harrison families and one Pond Inlet family, were taken aboard the *d'Iberville* and transported to the vicinity of the planned R.C.M.P. detachment at Alexandra Fiord (near Cape Herschel), where some of them were to stay. However, the *d'Iberville* could not get to Alexandra Fiord; and so all the Eskimos were brought back to Craig Harbour, and then, after an interval there, were taken by the *d'Iberville* to Resolute Bay and left there.<sup>41</sup>

To look ahead for a moment, a second, smaller relocation to Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour took place in 1955. The authorities thought that another influx of Eskimos could be accommodated at Resolute Bay, because of part-time employment opportunities there as casual labour to help unload airplanes and work as general handymen. Since such opportunities did not exist at Craig Harbour, the majority of the new arrivals were taken to Resolute Bay. According to figures given in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples *Report*, six families took part in the 1955 move, four of them from Port Harrison and two from Pond Inlet. Of these one family went to Craig Harbour, while all the others were taken to Resolute Bay. Thus by 1955, says the report, "there were seven families at Craig Harbour and nine families at Resolute Bay, for a total of about 92 people."<sup>42</sup>

Evidently the voyage north on the *C.D. Howe* in 1953 was not an easy one for the relocatees. After leaving Port Harrison the *C.D. Howe* went to Churchill and spent a week there, mainly loading goods. The Eskimos were taken ashore, where they camped until the ship was ready to sail again. There was some bad weather on the trip north; and in their state of unfamiliarity with all the new things that were happening to them it is not surprising that many of the natives felt frightened and lost. At the hearings of the Royal Commission in April 1953 some of them commented bitterly, in retrospect, about this aspect of the move.<sup>43</sup>

One of the main complaints of the relocatees, in the investigations that took place afterwards, was that they had assumed that they would all be in one location after they arrived at their destination, and then to their

dismay discovered, just before they got there, that they were to be separated. At the Royal Commission's hearings in April 1993 some of them voiced great resentment at this alleged heartless unconcern for their feelings. The Commission accepted the truth of this allegation; and commentators favourable to the natives' case have also done so. The evidence they present suggests that in fact the authorities in charge of the move did not have any clear idea in advance of how the division would be made; and that the actual details of the separation were only decided when the *C.D. Howe* was approaching Craig Harbour.<sup>44</sup>

Another aspect of the move about which many of the relocates complained, and which, understandably, must have been depressing to them, was the barren, inhospitable, and generally forbidding appearance of the locations which were to be their new homes. Certainly Port Harrison was no paradise in this respect; and the natives were quite unfamiliar with luxurious natural surroundings anyway; but, granting this, it is not surprising that they initially were surprised and frightened at what appeared to be unlivable natural terrain. Both the Resolute Bay and the Craig Harbour localities are completely treeless, with very little vegetation except for limited areas during the brief summer; Craig Harbour has the additional feature of rugged terrain with deep valleys, cliffs and steep heights of land. In both summer and winter the average temperatures at both Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour are considerably lower than they are at Port Harrison (Inukjuak); and although Port Harrison has a winter period when the days are very short, it has nothing comparable to the three-month period at both Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour when the sun does not come above the horizon at all. Some of these features would be apparent to the relocatees at first glance; others (except for the information that had been given them) they would learn from experience.<sup>45</sup>

The experiences of the relocatees in establishing themselves in their new homes; especially at the beginning, have also been the subject of much controversy. One thing is certain; there was very little time for them to get any help from the two ships which were at the scene. The *C.D. Howe* arrived at Craig Harbour on August 29, disembarked the families which were to stay there, and left without delay to continue the Eastern Arctic Patrol. The *d'Iberville* took aboard the families destined for Alexandra Fiord and Resolute Bay, and then, after making the unsuccessful voyage to the vicinity of Alexandra Fiord, returned to Craig Harbour, left there the families originally assigned to Alexandra Fiord, and then took the families intended for Resolute Bay to their destination. The *d'Iberville* arrived at Resolute Bay on September 7, unloaded the Eskimos families and their belongings in considerable haste, and departed as soon as possible, on September 18. In the circumstances the new arrivals had no alternative but to do the best they could for themselves.<sup>46</sup>

At both Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour the Eskimos had the help of, and to some extent were under the supervision of, R.C.M.P. officers who had been assigned the task of remaining in the scene and helping the natives as much as possible. At Resolute Bay the officer was Constable Ross Gibson, who had been posted to Port Harrison in 1952 and, as mentioned above, had been assigned the task in the spring of 1953 of finding willing and suitable volunteers for the relocation. He accompanied them on the *C.D. Howe*, and remained essentially in charge, for most purposes, after the ship had gone. It was under his direction, largely, that the necessary activities were carried out in the difficult struggle to provide shelter and food before winter set in. The site chosen for the settlement (by Larsen on an earlier trip) was several miles from the military base, near a fresh water lake on the west side of Resolute Bay. Immediately those who were suitable for hunting began the continuing search for food, with considerable success, so that by mid-October a fairly plentiful supply, mainly of seals, walrus, and polar bears, had been obtained. Initially some tents were erected for shelter, later to be replaced by snow houses

and wooden structures built from the plentiful supply of scrap wood and other materials obtainable from the military base. Gibson insisted on complete separation of the natives from the personnel at the base; neither element was allowed any access to the establishments of the other. He maintained consistently afterwards that none of the Eskimos ever complained to him while he was there that they were unhappy and wanted to go back to Port Harrison. He did face other problems, e.g. he suspected strongly that the natives were scrounging food from base leftovers, something that was forbidden (in fact the natives afterwards were quite open in acknowledging that this was true, and very forthright in asserting that their need to do this gave them one of their major reasons for complaint). Another problem, which was really beyond his capacity to solve, was the persistent and continuing unfriendly relations between the Port Harrison people and those from Pond Inlet. Gibson remained at Resolute Bay until he was posted elsewhere in 1957, thus he undoubtedly had a better and closer view of what happened there during these earliest years than any other government official.<sup>47</sup>

Gibson's counterpart at Craig Harbour was Corporal G. K. Sargeant, with him Constable A. C. Fryer. However, the natives disembarked at this location were not left there for very long, and by September 10 had all been transported to a site on the Lindstrom Peninsula, about 72 kilometres west of Craig Harbour. Some time later this group moved to another site, a short distance from the first site, which had better boat connections with Craig Harbour. This location became the settlement of Grise Fiord. In 1956 the police post at Craig Harbour was also moved to this site. From the start the Grise Fiord settlers were fortunate so far as their food supply was concerned. While they were being transported to Grise Fiord in the Mounties' power boat, and also while on several hunting trips arranged by the police, they were successful in obtaining considerable numbers of walrus, seal, and caribou. Afterwards they continued such hunting expeditions on their own, with generally consistent success. Also, with traps loaned by the police, they were able to obtain a considerable number of foxes, the pelts of which enabled them to buy a variety of supplies at the native trading store which had been set up. They were less fortunate regarding their living accommodations, however, because there was never enough snow during that entire winter for them to build satisfactory snow houses; and since the ground was frozen when they arrived they were equally unable to construct sod houses. In consequence they had to spend the entire first winter in tents, and although they used everything available for insulation, including peat, stones, ice, whatever snow they could find, and buffalo skins which were provided for them, on the whole their first winter at Grise Fiord was not very comfortable.<sup>48</sup>

The evidence suggests that after the first few difficult months conditions improved considerably at both Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. At Resolute Bay the supply of country food had been generally good from the start, and this favourable situation continued. The natives were able to construct quite satisfactory dwelling places, largely with scrap wood and other materials from the base; and although this took some time the results were good. Under the leadership and with the help of Gibson the natives were able to build a large shed from the scrap lumber, to use as a workshop, storage building, and drying shed, and for any other purpose desired. During the summer of 1954 some part-time work for the natives was available with the Geological Survey of Canada and the R.C.A.F.

At Grise Fiord, also, country food continued to be plentiful, and trapping continued to provide a source of income. The dwellings had been much improved, thanks to the provision of some lumber for building as well as to the continued use of snow and buffalo skins for insulation. The lukewarm relations between the Port

Harrison and the Pond Inlet elements of the population which posed a problem at Resolute Bay were not evident at Grise Fiord, where the two groups there were able to live in harmony.

A question that has aroused controversy is whether the settlers at Resolute and Grise Fiord, after the first few months of getting established in the midst of some discomforts, were willing to stay in their new homes or whether they wanted to return to the locations they had come from. The evidence seems to be incomplete and inconclusive, but on the whole, judging by the available information, it would appear that there was fairly general satisfaction with the new conditions and no strong inclination to return south. Only one case was reported of a native who expressed the wish to leave, after the first few months, and even he was willing to wait until the next summer to see what the situation would be at that time. On the other hand many statements are on record showing that the great majority of the settlers at both Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord were pleased with their new lives and expressed no wish to leave. Before long, however, at least three circumstances or situations developed which had the effect of lessening in some degree their otherwise quite marked satisfaction with the changed conditions of their lives. One of these was that a fair proportion of them wanted, not to return south themselves, but rather to have relatives and friends in their former homes come and join them – a desire the authorities felt inclined to handle with a measure of caution because of fears of overcrowding or overpopulation. A second was a widely felt wish to return to their former homes for a visit and to renew acquaintances with the people from whom they had become separated, after which they would return to their new homes in the north. The third desire was evident mainly in the young, unmarried adults in the two settlements, mostly males, who felt that there were not enough suitable members of the opposite sex in the local population, so that it would be difficult or impossible for them to find suitable partners. In later years, and at the 1993 hearings, these three problems became the subject of much bitter complaint by the natives, many of whom insisted that the white authorities had failed to realize the seriousness of their concerns and had been unsympathetic and uncooperative in handling them.

In spite of such problems, the two settlements continued and maintained their existence, and, on the whole, became more prosperous and more satisfactory as the years went by. At Resolute Bay the population increased from the original 22 to 83 by 1959, to 95 in 1962, to 119 in 1964, and to 161 in 1968. A few additional settlers came but much of the increase was local. The biggest increase from outside came in 1955, when four new families arrived, adding a total of 32 people to the population. A school was built and a teacher acquired in 1958; but it was not until 1965 that a church (Anglican) was built. Housing gradually improved; by 1956 eight small houses had been constructed of salvaged lumber; by 1960 all the homes were heated by oil; and gradually a variety of comforts such as stoves, sofas, and tables became common. By 1956 electricity was being acquired; and by 1963 all the homes had this utility, even if only in a limited way. Opportunities for both part-time and full-time wage-paying jobs increased, the main employers being the Geological Survey and the R.C.A.F. Although conditions at Resolute were by no means perfect, and problems and difficulties continued, it seems clear that on the whole there was gradual improvement, and life there became much more satisfactory than during the first months of hardship.

The same amelioration of living conditions was also evident at Grise Fiord. An additional family arrived from Port Harrison in 1955; three more families arrived in 1958, two from Port Harrison (seven people) and one from Arctic Bay (eight people); by 1965 the total population was 82; and by 1968 it was 89. Housing was very inadequate during the first winter, but gradually improved, thanks to the use of buffalo skins which were



supplied by the Department, and later, increasingly, of lumber which was also supplied. By 1963, practically all the families were established in their own homes; and by 1966 prefabricated houses were becoming available. By 1967 all the families were living in prefabricated houses, which were constructed with three bedrooms. Trapping was generally successful, so that incomes gradually increased; and as at Resolute Bay the living comforts and facilities of the South gradually appeared and became common – cooking utensils, primus stoves, rifles, lanterns, gas and kerosene lamps, sewing machines, outboard motors, sleds, radios, films, record players, electricity, etc. On the whole health remained at a high level, although there were several deaths of individuals, for a variety of reasons; and there was a serious epidemic of whooping cough in 1960. Handicrafts and stove carvings added to the income obtained from fur sales; but, unlike Resolute Bay, there was little opportunity to obtain employment with Government institutions, because these were largely absent. Materials for building a school arrived in 1961; and the school was in operation by 1963. Two Anglican lay preachers began conducting Sunday church services about the same time. There was no trained nurse in the settlement until 1968; prior to this time illness was dealt with by evacuation in a few serious cases, by doctors who accompanied the ships which generally came once annually, and, in the great majority of cases, by the Mounted Police who were present, and who relied upon their own usually slender knowledge and expertise, or obtained more professional advice by radio from outside. The unfortunate division between the Port Harrison and Pond Inlet elements persisted, although perhaps in a modified way; and although there was apparently little open enmity the two groups tended to remain apart. The R.C.M.P. reports stated consistently that there were very few requests to be returned to the original homes, until in 1966 three families expressed wishes of this kind.<sup>49</sup>

*This study has focused on the first fifteen years. Despite the mistakes, the penny-pinching, the discontent expressed from time to time, the benevolent boarding school atmosphere at Resolute in the early years, the delays and the frustrations of living in small communities far from original kith and kin, these projects must be seen (at least as portrayed in the archival document) as a limited but not insignificant success story. The real test of this was the large number of people who either wanted to or did join the growing settlements in those years.*<sup>50</sup>

The evidence that I have seen leads me to believe that as a capsule summary of the relocations this is a fair statement.

Life at the two settlements continued in the late 1960's and thereafter, with modest but not spectacular growth, and absence of any serious disasters or crises. Unfortunately, as time went on, evidence of dissatisfaction began to appear, in ways that had not been very apparent in the settlements during their early years. The reasons for the changing attitude are not easy to assess, but they included such elements as a growing sense of isolation, an increasing desire to have contacts with more southerly people of their own race, in some cases a wish to return permanently to their original homes, and under what motivation remains somewhat obscure, a developing feeling that the government authorities who promoted and carried out the relocations were motivated not so much by a genuine desire to help improve their lives as by a less creditable plan to use them as pawns, more or less, to provide more inhabitants in the thinly settled remote northern parts of the country so as to enhance and solidify Canada's claims to sovereignty over the region. It was these circumstances, basically, which led to the bitter dispute over whether the relocatees had been misused, and whether their determined claims for redress and compensation were justified.

It may be instructive to try to gain some impression of the opinions about the relocation, both pro and con on the part both Eskimos and whites, by quoting verbatim or at least as accurately as possible, a number of their statements.

### ***E. Conflicting Opinions About the Relocations: Statements by Both Eskimos and Whites, Made at the Time of the Relocations and During the Years Immediately Following***

#### **1. Favourable Statements by Eskimos**

##### **a. Letter from Joseph Idlout to Bent Sivertz, Head of the Arctic Division, Dep't of Northern Affairs and National Resources, from Resolute Bay (May 19, 1956).**

This place has more polar bear, foxes, walrus and seals in the summer than Pond Inlet. There are also more caribou here than anywhere else.

I am happy here and do not wish to return to Pond Inlet for a long while yet. The Port Harrison people seem to like it here too.<sup>51</sup>

##### **b. Letter from Idlout to Leo (identified by G. Kenny as probably Leo Manning). (March 20, 1957).**

No. Leo I don't want to live at any other place than here. I want you to know that I do not intend to go back to Pond Inlet because I think Resolute Bay is a better place for game.<sup>52</sup>

##### **c. Letter from Levi to Robert Williamson (Oct 26, 1958). From Resolute Bay.**

I want my mother-in-law and my brother who are at Port Harrison to come and stay with us next year.

I really do need someone to help me because this place of darkness has white foxes. It is a good place. Also people never go hungry here, because there are lots of animals to hunt.<sup>53</sup>

##### **d. Letter from Jaybeddie Amagoalik to the Dep't of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Nov. 26, 1958). From Resolute Bay.**

Because we here in our settlement are helped by the white man, we are grateful. Because there are not many people here in our settlement, we have never been hungry.<sup>54</sup>

##### **e. Letter from "J" to "Bobby" (March 21, 1960). No. Eg - 1635. From Resolute Bay. (No further identification of the personalities involved is given. Translated by Mary Panegoosh. The letter may be seen in the *Hickling Corporation Report* (1990), p. 33).**

... Esa, E9-706 wrote to me and sayings that he wants to come here to live in the High Arctic. It is possible for him to come I would like to have him and he also wants to come. He also said in his letter that he was not happy last winter at Port Harrison, because he finds it very difficult to get

the dog food. He has been hunting and trapping (but) there is nothing. At this place (there are) lots of walrus and plenty of seals and it has more foxes than Port Harrison and lots of square flipper seals, lots of whales. He can get more dog food here than at Port Harrison. It is a good place to live.<sup>55</sup>

**f. Letter from Johnny Ekaluck (or Echalook) to Robert Williamson (July, 1960). From Resolute Bay.**

We are getting a lot of help making money because of the white people are very kind to us. We are happy to work and all of us are well look [ed] after. And the police is very kind and he is alright, but sometimes we do not obey what he asks us to do.

All of us Eskimos are receiving help from the white people and we should be grateful about this and listen to the police.<sup>56</sup>

**g. Letter from Jasosie to Dep't of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Aug. 8, 1961). From Resolute Bay.**

We are just fine and have good food here in Resolute Bay. All the children are happy here. We have enough food for the dogs this year, and all the Eskimos here have enough money also.<sup>57</sup>

**h. Letter from Idlout to W. G. Brown (April or May, 1962). From Resolute Bay.**

Our country is one again very beautiful, and never gets dark even at night. Three dog teams came in yesterday bringing in 20 caribou plenty of food for people and dogs.<sup>58</sup>

**i. Letter from Idlout to W. G. Brown (Nov. 22, 1962). From Resolute Bay.**

Here at Resolute Bay, we have enough food and there are still a lot of animals. It does not seem to be too dark out here now, because we are used to it. My family and I are very well.<sup>59</sup>

**j. Letter from Sudluviniaq (or Salluviniq) who had moved from Port Harrison to Resolute Bay in 1953, to the editor of *Tukisiviaksat* (April, 1972).**

Now there are around 200 people coming from all over and we are still increasing. Right now there are more animals then it used to be and we the former Innocjuak [*sic*] residents are very greatful [*sic*].<sup>60</sup>

Such statements could easily be multiplied. Gerard Kenney in the two works just cited quotes many more of them than I have done. What I have given here, however, may be sufficient to indicate the general nature and tone of the many comments on the subject by the Inuit relocatees themselves. Individually and collectively these comments give the clear impression that they were straight forwardly honest, voluntary, unsolicited, and favourable. They contrast markedly with the bitter and critical attitudes and statements by the relocatees and their successors years later, in the 1980's and 1990's, when complaint and discontent came to a head; and obviously questions are raised as to where the truth really lies.

## 2. Favourable Statements by Whites

### a. Report by C. J. Marshall (A.C.N.D. Secretariat), *Eskimos Settlement at Resolute* (Nov. 9, 1953).

This report was written by Marshall shortly after he returned from a visit to Resolute with the R.C.A.F. in the autumn of 1953. On the whole the report amounts to a rather strange mix of complimentary and uncomplimentary remarks about the relocation. Among the complimentary remarks are the following:

Although it is too early to make any definite statement I feel personally that the experiment will be an unqualified success. The people are well fed and happy and seem to be satisfied with their new environment. However, it appeared to me that if the experiment is successful it will be owing primarily to good luck and to the resourcefulness of Constable Gibson.

Since my experience in the north is so limited my observations and any conclusions I have reached should of course be examined by someone with more extensive knowledge of the problem.

.....

From what I could gather the settlement is a happy one because hunting has been very good. Almost every time the men go on a hunting trip they bring back one or more seals and have already shot five polar bear. White fox are very plentiful and as soon as the season opens the Eskimos will lay out their trap lines. Reports indicate that during the summer months walrus are numerous in the Resolute Bay area. With what the men are able to secure from hunting and purchase from their store they and their families have plenty to eat. Health is very good and there is no reason why this should not continue to be the case since the Eskimo's contact with the white residents of the area is very limited. The women of the settlement have never been to the Air Force base and the men go there only once a month to pick up their Family Allowances. No white person goes to the settlement unless he is accompanied by Constable Gibson and these visits are kept to the minimum. The Officer Commanding the R.C.A.F. detachment at Resolute reports that the Eskimos have caused him absolutely no trouble and he is quite content to have them in the area.<sup>61</sup>

### b. Sargent, R.C.M.P. Corporal Glenn K. *Report on conditions at Grise Fiord* (Dec. 31, 1953). (This was one of the first reports sent from the sites of the two relocations.)

All natives, with the exception of one state being happy and content in the Craig Harbour area. The one native being not wholly content is Fatty...he complains of not being able to see a long way in all directions from his tent, but this will probably be corrected in the spring or summer. However, he has stated that this is a good native country and since their arrival have not gone in want as they have done at Port Harrison. There have been no rumours of natives wanting to leave the area in the very near future.<sup>62</sup>

### c. Article by Constable A. C. Fryer (Oct. 1954).

R.C.M.P. Constable A. C. Fryer, who was stationed at Craig Harbour with Corporal Sargent when the relocatees arrived in the summer of 1953, wrote an article which was published in the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly* in October 1954. The tone of the article is generally very enthusiastic about the relocation and its chances for success.

...After the natives were temporarily encamped, close to the detachment, the men were taken on a hunting trip in the vicinity of Jakeman Glacier. Hunting conditions were ideal for walrus on this particular day. ... Three walrus were killed and at least 50 others were counted, but

left unmolested as the boats had full loads. We returned to Craig Harbour with a spirited group of natives, who were enthused over the abundance of game.

Following the walrus hunt, the younger Eskimos were taken on a caribou hunting trip in Fram Fiord...Ten caribou were obtained, mainly for the purpose of supplying natives with skins, with which to make winter clothing.

Even in the short time that had passed since the natives had arrived at Craig harbour, there was a marked difference in them. The first impression given to the members of this detachment by the Port Harrison natives, was that they were a depressed, lifeless group of individuals, who were looking for too many handouts from the white man. Since familiarizing the Eskimos with surrounding country and hunting conditions, they now have an eagerness to proceed to their new camp and look after themselves. ...

Trapping conditions continued to be good throughout November and all the natives joined in on spending spree at the trading store. It would be difficult to find a group of Eskimos anywhere in the North that could claim to be as well off as the Grise camp. ...

By the new year, the meat caches were nearly depleted, so that the natives were spending more time at hunting seal through aglos (breathing-holes of seals). The results of their concerted efforts proved to be better than anyone had expected. There have been over 100 seals obtained in this manner. These natives disproved that Craig Harbour was a poor seal producing area. ...

At the time of this writing (February 1954) Eskimo conditions could hardly be better. ....

These natives have spent five of the worst months of the year for living and hunting, and in answer to the query of whether or not they were desirous of remaining at Craig Harbour for another year, all of them, with the exception of the old fogey from Port Harrison who declined to answer, expressed their desire to remain. This one native wanted to see what spring and summer have to offer. ...There is no reason why these natives or three times their number, couldn't live and thrive off the abundance of game at Craig Harbour for many years to come.<sup>63</sup>

**d. Report by Constable Gibson to R.C.M.P., "G" Division (March 26, 1954).** Gibson had been asked to comment on a claim that the Eskimos at Resolute were totally dependent upon the R.C.A.F. base. His response included the following: -

The writer has conversed with the natives since receiving this correspondence and inquire of them if at any time they were hungry and received food from any establishment at Resolute Bay. They stated they had not been hungry since their arrival at Resolute Bay and that they wished to remain here if possible.<sup>64</sup>

**e. Report by Alex Stevenson on conditions at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay, as seen during visits by the Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1954.**

I might say briefly at this time that both the projects at Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour have been a huge success during the past year. The Eskimos are all happy and contented, and were eager to advise us that they had never fared so well in their lives, particularly the Eskimos from Port Harrison, Quebec. In fact, they are so enthused with their new environment that they gave us some of the names of their immediate relatives whom they would like to have come north to join them next year. If this meets with your approval, I will write to the RCMP at Port Harrison and

Pond Inlet regarding the Eskimos in question that they be interviewed and if they so desire, be prepared to move north next summer.<sup>65</sup>

**f. Report by Cpl. G. Sargent on conditions at Grise Fiord in 1954 (Dec. 31, 1954).**

To date no natives have requested a move back to their [*sic*] own countries, i.e. Port Harrison and Pond Inlet. The Port Harrison natives advise that they have never been hungry or in need or want since thier [*sic*] arrival at Craig Harbour and state they are very happy to remain in this area. They also advise that if sometime in the future they had to leave Craig Harbour due to the detachment closing down they would like to go elsewhere in the area such as Dundas Harbour or Resolute Bay, rather than return to Port Harrison. Craig Harbour and surroundings countries is thier [*sic*] "Garden of Eden". The Pond Inlet families have advised that they like Craig Harbour and that they do better here than at Pond Inlet. However, both families have mentioned that although they have no immediate desire to return they would like to go back possibly in a few years to help their aging parents and relatives. It is understood that both the Port Harrison families and Pond Inlet families requested the department officials last year to have some of thier [*sic*] relations come to this naviation [*sic*] to join them here. It is felt by the writer that this would be a good move and that the surrounding country could support more families than at present and now that the first migration has become climatized and established they could be of assistance to new families coming into the area.<sup>66</sup>

**g. Report by Cst. F. Gibson on conditions at Resolute in 1955. (March 22, 1955).**

The natives at present living on Cornwallis Islands state they are content and wish to remain here for a longer period of time. They are, however, very keen on having other natives join them here. The writer is in favour of this as its felt that the area could support at least four more families of every size.<sup>67</sup>

**h. Report by Sup't H. A. Larsen (O. C. of "G" Div., R.C.M.P.) to Commissioner (R.C.M.P.), (Sept. 28, 1956).**

...The new location of Grise Fiord is very good. ...this is also an ideal spot for them and they are very happy there. ...All told, thanks to the assistance and effort made by our men, the natives settlement has prospered and it was hard for me to realize that they were the same people that I saw landed there in 1953, all in rags and with little or no equipment of any kind. The natives themselves are very grateful for the help they have received and barring any unforeseen accident, they should continue to prosper there for many years. A few young boys and girls might have to be added to the settlement from year to year as they become of marriageable age. ....<sup>68</sup>

**i. Marsh, Bishop Donald B. ("Donald the Arctic, writing in *The Arctic News* (October, 1956). Bishop Marsh was Anglican Bishop of the Arctic, and had visited Craig Harbour a little more than a year after the relocation.**

The clean and orderly tents were typical of the Port Harrison Eskimos but gone were the knick-knacks that every Eskimo acquires living near a trading post; no tins, bottles, pots or fancy useless articles - just essentials and piles of skins for clothing and fresh meat. The women and children were the picture of health. The little ones, chubby-cheeked, rosy and bright-eyed, were very happy and contented.

Stretching across to Devon Island was the clear blue sea that forms the passageway for countless seals which gather there at certain times of the year. The walrus also pass by on their way to their feeding grounds, while the white whales, curving and sporting themselves in the water as they feed, can be readily seen and pursued. Thus, close at hand is an abundance of food not only for these families but also for the long lines of dogs chained along the shore.... The icebergs which drifted from the base were probably some of those which grounded on the shores of the fiord and provided an abundant supply of fresh water and ice during both winter and summer. This indeed is a paradise for these people from the southern Arctic. Perfectly happy they have no desire to return to their former location.<sup>69</sup>

**j. Comment by Miss Margery Hinds**, who was a welfare teacher at Port Harrison in 1953 and gave some help in selecting the families to be relocated, and then, in 1958, went on a northern voyage during which she was able to meet some of the relocatees at Resolute. Miss Hinds evidently had some reservations about the move in 1953; but after her visit in 1958, as the following excerpt from her account shows, she had high praise for the way the relocation had turned out.

Eskimos came on board from time to time, among them people I had known at Port Harrison. It was difficult to recognize many of them. All were well dressed. Younger ones had grown tall, and older ones fat, so that even before they said life was good at Resolute Bay, it was obvious they were no longer destitute as they had been five years previously.

Fortunately, there came on board the late, Superintendent Henry Larsen, RCMP... "They're doing very well now," he commented. "You must see for yourself."

From the top of a slope we could see a row of small wooden houses overlooking a bay. They were painted in various bright colors and made a gay streak across the brownish – grey landscape. Parallel with the houses was a row of tents, all big and new looking.

"Just look at the tents," I exclaimed. "Obviously there are no poor Eskimos here."

The last time I visited these people in their homes was on an island in Hudson Bay to check their belongings so as to know what new equipment they needed to equip them for life in their new location in the High Arctic. They had certainly reached rock bottom, everything was worn out. That human beings could even exist with so little in such a harsh land, amazed and depressed me.

Here, at Resolute Bay, the older women spoke of that visit, and house – proud as they are now, they were delighted to show us, among other things, pretty china cups and saucers, electric steam irons and electric sewing machines and washing machines. Some had upholstered armchairs and settees.

"The base (RCAF) supplies us with electricity," one of them explained.

"What about food?" the Superintendent asked.

"Hunting is very good here, and trapping better than we have ever known," was the reply.

"We still like our own kind of food best, but when the men are too busy to hunt, we have plenty of money to buy store food."<sup>70</sup>

**k. Report by Corporal Doug Moodie, who had replaced Constable Gibson at Resolute, dated June 11, 1959.**

The morale of the Resolute Bay Eskimos had been very high in the majority of cases during the past year. There are a few male Eskimos who have been discontented this being due to the fact that their wives have been hospitalized for the past three years.

All the Eskimos have advised the writer at one time or another that they are very happy at Resolute Bay and under no circumstances would they consider returning to their original home. They further state that since moving to this area they have never been hungry, they have good homes and most of them have considerable savings.<sup>71</sup>

**l. Comment by R.C.M.P. Superintendent Henry Larsen, in unpublished autobiographical manuscript written shortly before his death in 1964.**

...The Department agreed to this move [i.e., the relocations], the Eskimos welcomed it when approached about it, under no circumstances did I wish to have any Eskimos talked into, or be moved against their will, as far as we in the Police were concerned, it had to be an absolutely voluntary move by the Eskimo involved. I had a good man at Port Harrison in Constable Ross Gibson whom the Eskimos both liked and trusted... [Gibson moved with the Inuit to Resolute Bay.] Corporal Glen Sargent [at Grise Fiord] and Ross Gibson remained with these people for four years, and to these two men do I attribute the success for the good outcome of the undertaking. The Eskimos were reluctant to let the two men go and begged me to let them stay, but I told the people they would be replaced by two other good men that had been trained for the job elsewhere in the arctic, Corporal Doug Moodie and Bob Pilot.<sup>72</sup>

**3. Unfavourable Statements by Eskimos**

I have not seen any statements by Eskimos, made at the time of the relocations and during the years immediately following, which were directly opposed to the relocations as such, and critical of them. On the other hand there were various expressions of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled desires, which, however, were generally related to matters other than the moves themselves. Most of these are not to be seen in the form of written complaints by the natives, but rather appear in reports, etc., made by R.C.M.P. officers and others. The few examples given below may serve to illustrate.

**a. Cpl. Sargent's Report from Grise Fiord (Dec. 31, 1953).**

All natives, with the exception of one state being happy and content in the Craig Harbour area. The one native being not wholly content is Fatty ... he complains of not being able to see a long way in all directions from his tent, but this will probably be corrected in the spring or summer.<sup>73</sup>

**b. Reports by Cst. Gibson from Resolute Bay (March 26, 1954 and March 22, 1955).**

.... They (i.e., the natives) stated that they had not been hungry since their arrival at Resolute Bay and that they wished to remain here if possible. They stated, however, that if they had been here earlier last summer they would not have had to work so hard for dog food during the past winter....



The natives that are presently living on Cornwallis Island say that they are content and wish to remain here for longer [*sic*] period of time. They are, however, very keen on having other natives join them here. ...<sup>74</sup>

**c. Report from Grise Fiord (Dec. 12, 1954).**

(The source does not identify the author, but presumably it would be Cpl. Sargent.)

To date no natives have requested a move back to thier [*sic*] own countries, i.e., Port Harrison natives advise that they have never been hungry or in need or want since thier [*sic*] arrival at Craig Harbour and state they are very happy to remain in this area. .... The Pond Inlet families have advised that they like Craig Harbour and that they do better here than at Pond Inlet. However, both families have mentioned that although they have no immediate desire to return they would like to go back possibly in a few years to help their aging parents and relatives. It is understood that both the Port Harrison families and Pond Inlet families requested the department officials last year to have some of thier [*sic*] relations come to this naviation [*sic*] to join them. ....<sup>75</sup>

**d. Report from Grise Fiord (Jan 2, 1956).**

There has been no definite word from any native families to return to thier [*sic*] native land. However, it is expected that possibly native family Akpaleepik...will wish to return to Pond Inlet in 1957. Last year he requested that his brother and family come to Craig Harbour and as the same did not arrive he may wish to return to them. He advised that if same arrives or had arrived he would have no present or near future desire to return.<sup>76</sup>

**e. Report from Grise Fiord (Dec. 31, 1957).**

One Eskimo family Angnakadlak and one young single Eskimo man Muckpa were transported from Grise Fiord to Pond Inlet during the summer past by the *C.D. Howe*. Angnakadlak (who is reported as saying he did not really want to leave Grise Fiord) returned to his former home to help his aged parents and Muckpa returned to Pond Inlet to seek a wife. One young Eskimo man Pauloosie arrived at this point last spring by dog team from Alexandra Fiord en route to Pond Inlet, however, during his stopover, he became married to the young Eskimo girl Minnie and has taken up residence in the area.<sup>77</sup>

**f. Report for 1958 from Grise Fiord (Jan. 19, 1959).**

After the sudden death of Thomassie's two children [who were aged 12 and 9 and accidentally drowned while playing on shore edge ice] morale was at a very low ebb at the native camp...and several men stated they wished to move from this area. Also at this time, staple food articles such as flour, rolled oats, sugar, milk and tobacco were depleted in the trading store, so that the natives were not too happy to start with. However, with the arrival of the *C.D. Howe* and the trading store supplies and especially the arrival of two [*this must be a typing error since it was actually three families*] new families to the area ... the men who had mentioned they wish to move from this area have now changed their minds.<sup>78</sup>

Other such quotations are available and could be quoted; but this does not seem to be necessary, because the pattern is clear. It is obvious that there were some complaints by some of the relocated natives; and there

were some expressions of desire to return to their more southerly homes; but these were not occasioned by dissatisfaction with their new locations. Rather they were occasioned by a variety of other sources of discontent, e.g. the desire to go south to persuade other relatives and friends to join them, the desire to take care of ill or aged parents or other relatives, the desire to return south to visit, the desire of young men to find wives, etc. So far as the sort of evidence presented here indicates, and it is plentiful, the complaints mentioned above did not include any widespread condemnation of the new locations and life there; on the contrary the general attitude seems to have been one of approval. All of this makes a strong contrast, of course, with the attempts by many of the Inuit representatives in the 1990's hearings and investigations to make the case that those of their people who were involved in the moves of the 1950's were opposed to them and displeased with them from the start.

#### 4. Unfavourable Statements by Whites

a. An early criticism of the 1953 relocation plan was expressed by Air Commodore R. C. Ripley Officer Commanding R.C.A.F. Air Transport Command, in a letter to the Chief of the Air Staff on July 6, 1953, in other words, almost a month before the *C.D. Howe* set sail from Port Harrison. Ripley was concerned about what he saw as inadequate population for the relocation, failure to provide adequately for housing, food, and clothing which the relocatees would need, and the resultant burden which would fall on the R.C.A.F. His letter ran in part as follows.

1. Your 443-5 (AMP) dated 23 June 53 concerning the proposal of the Department of Resources and Development to place a few Eskimo families on Cornwallis Island near Resolute Bay is viewed with considerable misgivings. The general principle of establishing Eskimos under proper surroundings where their standard of living can be improved and where they can be usefully employed cannot be argued against. However, casual information picked up by myself through various channels would indicate that the present proposal has not been discussed at the proper levels nor has the plan been formalized in a way that would guarantee some success. ....

3. No mention is made of housing or support [to] the Eskimos. Because of the necessity of holding all present buildings for overflow of personnel during operations, no accommodation has been allocated for either the RCMP or Eskimos families. Similarly the question of food arises. Cornwallis Island cannot be expected to support Eskimos on a scale that would make them suitable for manual or other labour. They must have a properly balanced diet, clean healthy living accommodation and proper clothing, which will have to be supplied to them. Medical attention is not possible on Cornwallis other than the simplest first aid.

4. I am very much against the proposed program, except....

Ripley went on to detail certain suggestions which might make the plan feasible, such as education and basic training in useful trades for selected Eskimos, proper housing, food, and clothing for Eskimo families, etc.<sup>79</sup>

Ripley's reservations were taken seriously, at least in his own department. On July 30, 1953, James Sharpe, Deputy Minister of National Defence, wrote a memo to Maj. Gen. Hugh Young, Deputy Minister of Resources and Development, in which he referred to Ripley's letter in the following anxious terms: -

It will be noted that the Air Officer Commanding is quite worried that the experiment will result in hardship on the Eskimo families concerned and that the RCAF will likely be faced with the problem of tendering care for which they are unprepared.<sup>80</sup>

Largely to deal with R.C.A.F. concerns, an interdepartmental meeting was held in Ottawa on August 10, 1953. At the meeting, which was attended by middle level officials, Squadron Leader O'Neil of the R.C.A.F. said that he "was afraid that there was not sufficient wildlife in the Resolute area to provide for the proposed Eskimo population." He emphasized the R.C.A.F.'s concerns that the natives would become dependent on the R.C.A.F. for food and clothing if the experiment did not succeed, and that the R.C.A.F. would probably not be able to offer any employment to untrained Eskimos at Resolute. Resources and Development personnel attempted to give assurance that such problems could be handled.<sup>81</sup>

b. Only a few days after the relocatees had arrived at Resolute Bay in early September 1953, the site was visited by a party of officials on a rather hastily carried out tour using an R.C.A.F. plane. One of the party was G. W. Stead of the Department of Finance, who attended meetings of the A.C.N.D. In his report, dated September 29, 1953, Stead was critical of the basic concept of the project.

An Eskimo family [*sic*] had just been put down a few days before by the sea supply at this place and an RCMP post established. The Eskimo family came from Port Harrison on the east coast of Hudson Bay where the increasing Eskimo population has been outrunning the food supply. Eskimos lived at Resolute some 300 years ago and I can only presume that they moved away owing to a decline in the availability of food which now appears to be restored. As soon as the Eskimo family arrived problems of their relationship to the Military encampment began to appear. Where Military camps and Eskimo villages are adjacent, the Eskimos tend to be turned into "camp followers." The different moral bases of the two societies tend to exercise a harmful influence on both; junior members of the Armed forces attempt to get a corner on the output of handicrafts and so forth. The ad hoc approach that presently passes for policy falls between two stools. The reasons for moving this family are grounded in an attempt to keep the Eskimo in his native state and to preserve that culture as primitive as it is. However, by moving the Eskimos to an area where they come into intimate contact with White men destroys the basis of this reasoning while leaving them untrained to cope with the problems presented by this contact.<sup>82</sup>

c. Following his visit to Resolute in the autumn of 1953 C.J. Marshall of the A.C.N.D. Secretariat had uncomplimentary as well as complimentary things to say about the relocation. His lengthy memo of November 9, 1953, contained the following.

...However, I think it should be pointed out at this stage that Constable Gibson's task at Resolute has been made more difficult than it need have been by what appears to have been hasty planning of the experiment.

The ship transporting the Eskimo arrived at Resolute at 9.00 p.m. September 7. The next morning Constable Gibson and the Eskimo were landed on the beach and the ship was gone by noon, though it had been planned to stay a couple of days to help the settlement to get established. No site had been previously chosen for the Eskimo settlement, no quarters had been arranged for Constable Gibson and no storage space had been provided for the supplies for the Eskimo store. The Eskimo tents were in very bad condition but no new tents or repair material were sent to Resolute.

... I was rather surprised at some of the items which were sent to Resolute and at others which were not sent.... Among the supplies sent to Resolute were: ...60 yds of cheap cotton print...<sup>24</sup>

pairs of men's work pants although there are only 4 men in the group...12 pairs of boys pants although there are only 2 boys in the settlement.

Among the items which were not included in the supplies were: Rifles ...Oil lamps.... Tent material.... First – aid supplies....

It seems particularly unfortunate that all the storages should be made up of those items which are the most necessary for the Eskimos.<sup>83</sup>

These few examples indicate that although government personnel who were involved in the relocations were generally favourable to the idea, nevertheless there were some who had doubts and reservations. This seems to have been particularly true of the R.C.A.F., for the understandable reason that if the relocations turned out badly and the Eskimos were threatened with disaster, the R.C.A.F., especially at its Resolute base, would hardly be able to escape being called upon to help provide rescue measures, even if its capacity to take effective action were limited.

## 5. Statements About Sovereignty: By Natives

I do not recall having seen any statements whatever by natives at the time of the relocations and for some years thereafter, which would indicate that they in any way connected the moves with sovereignty issues and questions. Their attempts to establish such a connection came at a later date. Since in the early years they apparently said nothing on the subject, it would appear that it was not at the time a matter of concern to them; and in fact significant statements pro or con seem to be non-existent.

## 6. Statements About Sovereignty: By Whites

In the voluminous literature on arctic sovereignty before, during, and after the relocations, there are numerous statements by whites which in one way or another appear to make some connection between the two. In some cases the connection is rather vague, imprecise, indefinite, and perhaps irrelevant; in others it is more direct and specific.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Canada (NAC, now Library and Archives Canada), Record Group (RG) 15, Vol. 1, Dep't of the Interior, *Arctic Islands: Documents: Reports on Sovereignty: Memorandae: Maps*, File *Arctic Islands: Reports on Sovereignty*, two excerpts from essays by J. H. Harkin, not dated, but written for meeting of the Advisory Technical Board on Nov. 10, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> I have given details of these early, temporary transfers of Inuit to posts in the Far North elsewhere, with detailed documentation. Consequently, I give only bare summary here, without repeating the documentation.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Diamond Jenness, *Eskimo Administration: II. Canada*, Arctic Institute of North America Technical Paper No. 14, (Montreal, 1964), p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 58. See pp. 56-61 for Jenness's fairly detailed account of this attempt to relocate Inuit in the Far North.

<sup>5</sup> I have put this summary of prices together from a number of sources. See Magnus Gunther, *The 1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit to the High Arctic — A Documentary Analysis and Evaluation*, report done under contract to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development revised. (Ottawa, 1993), p. 81; James Cantley, *Survey of Economic Conditions Among the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic*, mimeographed report done for Department of Resources and Development (Ottawa, 1951), pp. 39, 55-56; D. Jenness, *op. cit.* (1964), II, 36, 50-51, 74, 100-102; F. J. Tester and P. Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 98; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services, 1994), p. 41; *Ibid.*, *Summary of Supporting Information*, Vol. II, pp. 271, 275.

<sup>6</sup> Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 98.

<sup>7</sup> D. Jenness, *op. cit.* (1964), II, 101-102.

<sup>8</sup> Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), quoting extract from Stevenson's report on the 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol. The following was included in the extract: "Why not give the natives a chance to cover this country and also if it is considered necessary help improve the position regarding sovereignty rights." The extract quoted is in NAC, RG 85, Vol. 79, File 201-1-1, Pt. 25A.

<sup>9</sup> Alan R. Marcus, *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic* (Dartmouth: University Press of New England, 1995), pp. 67-69.

<sup>10</sup> J. Cantley, *op. cit.* (1951).

<sup>11</sup> NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, *Eskimo Affairs — (Eskimo — General)*, Vol. 2, Wright to Sinclair (Apr. 24, 1951); Sinclair to Commissioner of N.W.T. (Deputy Minister H. A. Young) (Apr. 27, 1951); Young to Sinclair (May 1, 1951).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Young to Sinclair (Nov. 28, 1951).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Young to Sinclair (Jan. 2, 1952).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, n. a., n. d., but evidently either January 14 or 15, 1952.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, later version of same document.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Sinclair to D/M Young (May 6, 1952), attaching rough outline for Young's opening address, revised agenda, and list of those to attend; also *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, *Summary of Proceedings of Meeting May 19-20, 1952*, sent by Cunningham to Young (Aug. 11, 1952), also revised version (Sept. 3, 1952), also list of those actually present at meeting.

<sup>17</sup> *Summary of Meeting*, sec. 8 (f).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Conclusion.

<sup>19</sup> NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Vol. 3, Minutes of First Meeting of Special Committee on Eskimo Affairs held Oct. 16, 1952, esp. sec. 4 (c).

<sup>20</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.*, (1994), II, 352.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 355-357, citing Cantley to Meikle (Dec. 18, 1952); also NAC, RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 251-1, Pt. 2; also M. Gunther, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359, citing M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1992), p. 106.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 359-360, citing Gunther, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108; also NAC, RG 85, Vol. 1513, File 1012, Pt. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369, citing NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3, Young to Nicholson (Feb. 20, 1953); also Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369, citing Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 369-371, citing NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3, also Gunther, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-165.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 379.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388. A word of correction to the information cited here would appear to be necessary. Resources and Development Minister R. H. Winters approved the program "in principle" on March 20, 1953, and Gen. Young took written note of this approval, the same day and a day later. See NAC, RG 22, Vol. 256, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3, memos by Winters (Mar 20, 1953) & Young (Mar. 20-21, 1953).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 388-394.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 393-394.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391, citing NAC, RG 85, Vol. 1072, File 252-3, Pt. 1, Also Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 403-404.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 400-402, 406-411, citing NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 3, Grant, and Gunther. See also A.Marcus, *op. cit.* (1995), pp. 82-83; also Commission Report, p. 84.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 168-181.

<sup>37</sup> House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* (March 19, 1990). See also Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 141-143.

<sup>38</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), I, 29-116; II, 437-464 (*passim.*); Report, 99-114, *et passim.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 384-385, 401, 404-406, citing Gunther and Grant.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 398.

<sup>41</sup> For brief details about the actual transport of the relocatees to their northern destinations in 1953, see *Ibid.*, Report, pp. 7-8, 173-175; Vol. I, pp. 8-10; Vol. II, pp. 406, 445-446, 450; Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 143-149; A.Marcus, *op. cit.* (1995), pp. 83-85; Shelagh D. Grant, "Their Garden of Eden, Sovereignty and Suffering in Canada's High Arctic; *Northern Perspectives* 19, No. 1 (Spring 1991), 1-32, esp. 17; M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1992), pp. 182-190. There are some discrepancies in these sources regarding members of Eskimos, dates, etc.

<sup>42</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), Report, pp. 7, 176-177, Vol. I, pp. 11-12; Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 184 ff.

<sup>43</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), Vol. I, e.g., p. 37 (testimony of Minnie Allakariallak); pp. 42-44 (Samwillie Elijasialak); p. 62 (Anna Nungaq); pp. 64-65 (Elijah Nutaraq); p. 70 (Jaybiddie Amagoalik); pp. 72-73 (Sarah Amagoalik).

<sup>44</sup> Commission Report, p. 92; Vol. I, e.g., p. 43 (testimony of Samwillie Elijasialak; pp. 59-60 (Anna Nungaqu); p. 65 (Elijah Nutaraqu), etc.; Vol. II, p. 414; Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 143-145; A.Marcus, *op. cit.* (1995), pp. 85-86.

<sup>45</sup> Gunther, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-257.

<sup>46</sup> See Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.*, (1994), pp. 143-149; A.Marcus, *op. cit.* (1995), pp. 83-85; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), Report, pp. 7-8.

<sup>47</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), I, 168-181; M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 358-360, *et passim.*; Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 151-152, 167, 181, 183, *et passim.*

<sup>48</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), I, 231-236 (testimony of Constable A. C. Fryer, including reprint of his article in the February 1954 issue of the *RCMP Quarterly* (details below); 181-186 (testimony of Constable Bob Pilot). The files at NAC dealing with the subject are voluminous. See RG 22, Vol. 259, File 40-8-1; RG 85, Vol. 1234, File 251-1.

<sup>49</sup> Among the most informative references on all this material are the relevant pages in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), Report, and *Summary of Supporting Information*, Vols. I and II. There is also much valuable information in Gerard Kenney, *Arctic Smoke & Mirrors* (Prescott, Ont.: Voyageur Publishing, 1994); Daniel Soberman, *Report to the Human Rights Commission on the Complaints of the Inuit People Relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and 1955*. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1991; Tester and Kulchyski, *op. cit.* (1994); Alan Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic* (Copenhagen; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) Document 71, 1992); Marcus *op. cit.* (1995); and Shelagh D. Grant, *Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic 1953-1960: "Errors Exposed,"* report submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, revised August, 1993 (Peterborough: Trent University, 1993). It should be said that all of these references contain factual information of verifiable authenticity and undoubted value; but all of them are to some degree subjective and reveal attitudes and opinions that reflect personal views. It thus becomes necessary to try to distinguish between fact and opinion, and in the case of opinion, to make some judgment about its reliability. In general it may be said that

Gunther and Kenney tend to downgrade the validity of the native case; Tester and Kulchyski, Marcus, and Grant tend to uphold it; and Soberman, although clearly anxious to present an impartial view and to give the whites who were involved credit where this is due, nevertheless leans strongly in favour of the Inuit case. The Royal Commission *Report and Summaries* also tend to favour the Inuit case.

<sup>50</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 384.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 83. Kenney notes that this and other letters he quotes come from original letters in syllabics in DIAND files, and that translations were done by Inuit translators. He mistakenly puts Bent Sivertz in the former Department of Resources and Development. Kenney does not give precise documentary references for most of these quotations.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85. 100.

<sup>55</sup> Hickling Corporation, *Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations Made Before the Banding Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inukiuak Families in the 1950's* (Ottawa: DIAND, 1990), p. 33. See the same letter in approximately the same form in G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 85.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 77; also in G. Kenney, *Critique of Alan R. Marcus' Relocating Eden* (Ottawa, 1996), photocopy, 13 pp.

<sup>61</sup> C. J. Marshall, memo *Eskimo Settlement at Resolute* (Nov. 9, 1953). See in NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.

<sup>62</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 273-274, citing NAC, RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5. For another citation of same report see A. Marcus, *op. cit.* (1992), p. 98, citing G. K. Sargent, *Eskimo conditions, Craig Harbour area, period ending December 31st, 1953*, in NAC, RG 85, 1446/1000-133/1.

<sup>63</sup> Const. A. C. Fryer, "Eskimo Rehabilitation Program at Craig Harbour," *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly*, 20, No. 2 (Oct, 1954), 139-142.

<sup>64</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 274, citing NAC, RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14.

<sup>65</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 275, citing RG 85, Vol. 1510, File 1000/123, Pt. 1. Stevenson to Sivertz and Cantley (Sept. 17, 1954).

<sup>66</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 274-275, also p. 346, quoting from Cpl. G. Sargent's report on conditions at Grise Fiord in 1954 (Dec. 31, 1954), in NAC, RG 18, Acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-5.

<sup>67</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 276, quoting from report by Cst. Gibson on conditions at Resolute (Mar. 22, 1955).

<sup>68</sup> Marc M. Hammond, *Report of Findings on an Alleged Promise of Government to Finance the Return of Inuit at Resolute and Grise Fiord to Their Original Homes at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet*, Dep't of Indian and Northern Affairs Contract No. 84-099 (Ottawa, 1984), Extract No. 15, p. 11. Sup't Larsen to R.C.M.P. Commissioner (Sept. 28, 1956). The letter is partially quoted in G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 69.

<sup>69</sup> Bishop Donald B. Marsh ("Donald the Arctic" — Anglican Bishop of the Arctic), writing in *The Arctic News* (Oct., 1956). This quotation may be seen in G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 74-75.

<sup>70</sup> G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 75-76, quoting Margery Hinds, *High Arctic Venture* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968). Kenney's quotation from this part of the Hinds text is not complete; and he does not indicate his omissions. However, the sections he does quote are generally correct.

<sup>71</sup> M. Gunther, *op. cit.*, (1993), p. 280, citing NAC, RG 18, acc. 85-86/048, Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-14. Gunther refers to this file frequently without identifying it in each case. See *Ibid.*, p. 274, fn. 9.

<sup>72</sup> G. Kenney, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 108-109, quoting from unpublished autobiographical manuscript by Henry Larson (c. 1963-1964), copy at NAC.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 273-274.

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 190. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 446-447.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 274. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 452.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 275-276.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 480.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 280. Evidently the underlined passages are comments by Gunther. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 484.

<sup>79</sup> NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 4D-8-1, Part 4, A/C Ripley (Officer Commanding R.C.A.F. Air Transport Command) to Chief of the Air Staff (July 6, 1953). See also M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 235-237; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 406-409; D. Soberman, *op. cit.* (1991), p. 64, fn. 22.

<sup>80</sup> NAC, RG 85, Vol. 10070 (get this file), File 251-4/1, Sharpe to Young (July 30, 1953), cited in A. R. Marcus, *op. cit.* (1992), pp. 22, 98. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 407.

<sup>81</sup> NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File (check this) 40-8-1, Part 4, Minutes of meeting (Aug. 10, 1953) to discuss the transfer of certain Eskimo families. See also M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), pp. 237-239; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *op. cit.* (1994), II, 409-413; A. R. Marcus, *op. cit.* (1992), pp. 22, 93.

<sup>82</sup> This excerpt from Stead's report is quoted in part by Tester and Kulchynski, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 152-154; M. Gunther, *op. cit.* (1993), p. 244; and S. Grant, *op. cit.* (1991), p. 17. They all cite NAC, RG 22, Vol. 176, File 40-2-20, Part. 3.

<sup>83</sup> C. J. Marshall, memo *Eskimo Settlement at Resolute* (Nov. 9, 1953). See in NAC, RG 22, Vol. 254, File 40-8-1, Pt. 4.





Inuit community at Resolute Bay, March 1956. *Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / PA-191422*

# Appendix A

## Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953–55 Relocation* (excerpts)

### Shedding New Light on the Relocation: Summary of the Commission's Conclusions<sup>1</sup>

In an appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in March 1990, John Amagoalik, then President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), testified that they had been dealing with the relocation issue for more than 30 years. Since the late 1970s, the Makivik Corporation (Makivik) and the ITC had made repeated representations to ministers and deputy ministers of Indian Affairs and Northern Development concerning relocation. Renewed efforts began in 1982. ...

Over time the divergence between the position of the relocatees and that of the government has become wider. The government has also backtracked from previously stated positions. Whereas it once stated that it had no knowledge of any promise to return [relocated Inuit to their communities of origin], the government has now acknowledged that such a promise was made and that the promise was not honoured. During 1980s the government made various statements about the role of the relocation in maintaining Canadian sovereignty that appeared to support the relocatees' contention that sovereignty was a motivating factor. The position of the government now is that the sovereignty was not a consideration. Had the government promptly acknowledged the failure to honour the promise to return and then acted to redress the wrong, the complaints might well have been resolved quickly. The reversal of position on sovereignty only added fuel to fire, and the government's refusal to adopt the unanimous recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Aboriginal Affairs was incomprehensible to the relocatees.

Each study or report that has been critical of the government has been met with a more extensive study commissioned by the government. The government has subjected each element of the complaints, piece by piece, to extensive analysis. The apparent focus of the government action has been to defend itself against these complaints and to put the government's actions in the best possible light. In adopting this approach, the government has been seen as an adversary that would argue a point so long as any evidence could be found to support it and would concede a point only in the face of overwhelming evidence. The government did not step back and begin with a reassessment of the social, political and cultural context in which the relocation took place and then consider the complaint broadly in that context. Had a different approach been adopted, the government might have been led to a new awareness that would have permitted it to see the validity in the relocatees' complaints and to move forward resolving them in a more positive way.

In short, the government's handling of the complaints has served to increase mistrust and deepen the sense of grievance.

The Commission's hearings and analysis have shed new light on the High Arctic relocation. Reconciliation of the evidence concerning the relocation provides a basis for reassessing the government's responsibilities

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<sup>1</sup> René Dussault and George Erasmus, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953–55 Relocation* [for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples] (Toronto: Canadian Government Publishing, 1994), 135–46.

concerning the relocation and is a first step in a more fundamental reconciliation between the relocatees and the government.

The Commission's conclusions, based on the preceding evidence and analysis, are, in summary, as follows:

### **Inuit Dependence and Vulnerability**

1. The High Arctic relocation took place in a cultural context where Inuit typically felt dependent upon non-Inuit and powerless in their dealings with them. The power that non-Inuit held over Inuit was well understood by non-Inuit, and even the wishes of well-intentioned non-Inuit could be taken as orders by Inuit. The government was present in the Arctic in the form of the RCMP, who were held in particular awe by the Inuit.
2. Not all Inuit were equally dependent or vulnerable in their relations with non-Inuit. There are indications that the dependence and vulnerability of the northern Quebec Inuit tended to be much greater than the people of northern Baffin Island.

### **Inuit Relationship to Homeland and Kin**

3. The Inuit have a particular attachment to homeland and kin. This attachment was known by non-Inuit at the time of the relocation.
4. The Inukjuak area has been inhabited by large numbers of Inuit for centuries and is a traditional hunting and fishing area.

### **Paternalistic Government Decision Making**

5. Government decision making concerning the Inuit into the early 1950s typically did not take into account the wishes and aspirations of the Inuit. Instead, government decisions reflected a paternalistic view of what would be good for the Inuit and tended to minimize or disregard Inuit needs and desires.

### **Sovereignty as a Factor in the Relocation**

6. The relocation took place at a time when the government was concerned about *de facto* Canadian sovereignty arising from the presence of the United States in the Arctic. The concern about *de facto* sovereignty involved a concern that Canada would not be seen to be controlling activities in the North so that, over time, Canada's *de jure* sovereignty could be questioned. The weight of the evidence points to sovereignty as a material consideration in the relocation decision, although the primary concerns were social and economic.

### **Population Growth or Game Decline Not Factors in the Relocation**

7. The information available to the government in early 1950's does not indicate that the Inukjuak area was experiencing population growth. Rather, high mortality rates tended to result in a stable population. Nor were there indications of a serious decline in food game resources. In fact, the situation had not changed in 30 to 40 years.

### **The Preoccupation with 'Handouts'**

8. There was a concern in the Department about the long-term instability of the fur trade and the capacity of the fur trade to sustain the income levels to which Inukjuak Inuit become accustomed. The government saw little prospect for increased earned income in the Inukjuak area, with the result that periodic reliance on relief would become a permanent feature of life and that other 'handouts', such as family allowance and old age pensions, arose periodically as a result of the cyclical nature of the fur trade, with poor years following good years over a four-year cycle. It was considered that the Inukjuak Inuit were becoming dependant on 'handouts', with a consequent loss of self-reliance and moral decline.

### **The Objective of Increased Reliance on Hunting**

9. Officials considered that greater reliance on hunting on the trade store would restore Inuit self-reliance and arrest the perceived moral decline. At the same time, this would resolve the perceived long-term economic concern regarding the instability of the fur trade, since a return to greater reliance on hunting would substitute for the income that fur trading would, in the long term, be unable to provide. This objective was never communicated to the Inuit.

### **“Overpopulation in Relation to Available Resources”**

10. It was perceived that decreased reliance on the trade store through increased reliance on hunting would not be possible in the Inukjuak area unless Inuit were relocated to other parts of the Quebec coast, to the islands of Hudson Bay off the Quebec coast, or to other parts of the Arctic. In this sense, and in this sense only, the Inukjuak area was considered to be “over-populated in relations to available resources”. This phrase was unfortunately ambiguous and was thought by some to refer a hunting population outstripping available game food resources. In fact, it characterizes an economic concern of the government related to a desire to require Inuit to hunt more and rely less on earned income.

### **The Goal of ‘Rehabilitation’**

11. The goal of restoring Inuit self-reliance and independence through greater reliance on hunting involved restoring the Inuit to what was perceived by non-Inuit to be their proper state. The goal was ‘rehabilitation’, and the High Arctic relocation would be understood at the time – though not by the Inuit – as a rehabilitation project.

### **Failure to Disclose the Rehabilitation Goal to the Inuit**

12. The Inukjuak Inuit were not told that the government considered them to be in need of rehabilitation and that the goal of relocation would be rehabilitation.

### **Relocation Would Not Relieve the Cycles in Hunting and Trapping**

13. At time of the 1953 relocation, the fur cycle was reaching its peak, and no able-bodied Inuit were on relief at Inukjuak. Hunting was good and conditions were much improved over those of 1949-50, when the fur economy collapse and a hard winter made hunting difficult. Such cycles occurred everywhere in the Arctic where Inuit lived by hunting and trapping. White fox trapping everywhere followed a four-year cycle.<sup>2</sup> Hunting, even in areas of relative abundance, could be affected by adverse weather or ice conditions or various migratory patterns. Relocating Inuit to other places would not relieve such variability in the conditions of life.

### **The Institutional Consensus Supporting Relocations**

14. There was consensus among all those with an interest in Arctic affairs, including the various government departments concerned, the RCMP, the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and the Hudson’s Bay Company, that relocation would solve perceived economic and social problems. There were, however, differences of opinion about how relocations should be undertaken, with some, such a Superintendent Larsen of the RCMP, advocating the creation of small communities with wooden houses and schools, so that the adult Inuit could maintain a hunting and trapping lifestyle while children received the education that would be essential for the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Cycles would not necessarily coincide in the same years in different parts of the Arctic; however, the typical cycle was of four years’ duration.

### **The Relocation Plan**

15. The High Arctic relocation was conceived by the Department as a way to place Inuit in areas believed to have adequate game resources and to require them to live largely by hunting, with some opportunity to trap. A small trade store would be established but would carry a limited and basic stock. The RCMP would be responsible for administering the store and, with the limited and basic stock, would be required to ration items from the store to ensure equitable distribution. It would also be the role of the RCMP to “encourage” the Inuit to hunt.

### **The Coercive Aspect of the Plan**

16. The relocation plan was inherently coercive. It was a plan designed to take people who were accustomed to an income economy, with the goods that income could purchase, and place them in a situation where they would be made to rely more heavily on game food, with all the hardship such a life naturally involved. The government did not need to use overt force. The imperative of survival achieved the desired objective.

### **The Coercive Aspects of Life in the New Communities**

17. Day-to-day life in the new communities would also have coercive elements. The RCMP were directed by the Department not to give credit to trappers, even though giving credit, or grubstaking, was the common practice of trading companies. The RCMP were also directed to exercise a firm hand in the giving of relief. Insufficient supplies in the trade stores established in the new communities would mean that the benefit of old age pensions and family allowance often would not reach the intended beneficiaries through goods issued from the store. Instead, these amounts would be recorded as a book entry in the form of forced savings. RCMP ‘encouragement’ of the Inuit in furtherance on the project’s objectives would result in the police telling the Inuit what to do and scolding them when they did not do what the police wanted. The Inuit camps were established at a distance from non-Inuit facilities to restrict contact between Inuit and non-Inuit and to prevent the Inuit from becoming a burden on the non-Inuit post or base. All these small elements of coercion became additionally coercive when carried out by a police force.

### **Misplaced Notions of Success**

18. The overt signs of success of such a project, namely, self-reliance, would be similar regardless of the state of mind of any of the relocatees. Whether or not the people were unhappy or had a desire to return home, they would still have to hunt. Reports by officials stating consistently that the relocatees were doing well reflect the overt state of affairs but do not address the unhappiness that many relocatees experienced and their desire to return home.

### **‘Rehabilitation’ versus Opportunities for Independent Hunters**

19. Not all Inuit relied on income from trapping to the same extent. The relocation scheme might have been entirely satisfactory for people who lived largely from hunting, with income from trapping providing only a supplement, and who did not look to government support in poor fur years. There were Inuit who went to Resolute Bay from Pond Inlet who did find the relocation satisfactory. However, these Pond Inlet Inuit were not typical of all the relocatees, and the relocation scheme, by its own terms, sought to relocate people who depended more heavily on an income economy, with government support as the safety net in poor years. Even the Pond Inlet Inuit at Grise Fiord, who were used to the support of a store, found conditions too hard. The recruitment of Inuit for the project was not, therefore, limited to those who had continued to live relatively distant from trading posts, with income from trading providing only a supplement to what obtained from hunting.

### Relocation A Regressive Step

20. At the time of relocation, Inukjuak was a substantial settlement with Hudson's Bay Company post, a police post, church missions, a school, a nursing station, a Department of Transport weather station and radio facility, and a port facility. The school and nursing station had been established relatively recently as part of a government program to remedy past decades of neglect. The relocation created new communities that would have no schools, no nursing stations and no missions. In this respect, the decision would turn the clock back to the era of neglect when there were no such facilities.

### Further Consequences of the Rehabilitation Objective

21. The highly generalized concern of administrators about Inuit relying too much on government 'handouts' was felt by relocatees in various ways. The concern applied both to government support programs, such as family allowance and old age security, which were available to Canadians on a universal basis, and to relief, which was available only in case of hardship. Thus, the relocation scheme was aimed not only at changing expectations about relief, but also at discouraging reliance on the universal programs. This would involve using administrative powers to restrict or withhold the actual benefit of payments universally available to Canadians. As a result, some of relocatees found that the benefit of their family allowance and old age security payments stopped after they left Inukjuak. The generalized concern about reliance on 'handouts' was also applied to all Inuit. Yet, not all Inuit, even in the Quebec part of the Arctic, were equally reliant on the combination of earned and unearned income. The relocatees were all not alike. Moreover, by 1953, conditions had improved considerably since the collapse of fur prices in 1949-50, and no able-bodied Inukjuak Inuit were receiving relief and 'hand-outs,' and the understanding of local officials that this was a 'rehabilitation' project served only to reinforce stereotypical attitudes that would adversely complicate relations between the relocatees and the local officials responsible for their well-being.

### The Deputy Minister Approved Little More than a Concept

22. The government plan included no indication of representations or promises that were to be made to the Inuit. The plan, as approved by the Deputy Minister, was very general in its description of what was to be done and for what purpose. The detail would be worked out as the plan was implemented. This meant a large amount of discretion was left to those implementing the decisions. The Deputy Minister approved little more than a concept.

### The Promise to Return

23. The decision to extend a promise to return was made initially by Henry Larsen of the RCMP. It appears that the Department accepted this decision and, in fact, a departmental representative, Alex Stevenson, also extended a promise to return in his discussions with some Inukjuak Inuit. These promises were recorded in official memoranda and reports at the time. These documents are still in existence. No plan was developed by the Department to give effect to the promise, and the means to return were not made available to the Inuit. The content of the promise to return ... never clearly defined, for example, whether it covered visits back and forth. If the promise was meant to apply only to the whole group, this was not conveyed to the Inuit.

### No Special Instructions about Obtaining Consent of Inuit

24. The RCMP detachments in northern Quebec and in Pond Inlet were responsible for recruiting Inuit for the relocation. The relocatees were to be volunteers, but the Department gave RCMP no special instructions about how to approach the Inuit or how to secure their consent, notwithstanding the well-known difficulty of obtaining genuine consent from Inuit. The RCMP member at Inukjuak responsible for carrying out these



instructions understood that it was his responsibility to sell the Inuit on a project that was for their benefit, and that is what he did.

### **The Absence of Free and Informed Consent**

25. It cannot be said that the Inukjuak Inuit gave free and informed consent to the relocation. The Inukjuak Inuit understood that they were going to a better place where there was an abundance of large land mammals, that they would be looked after, and that they would have the support of the Canadian government. Apart, in some cases, from an understanding that there would be dark period, the Inukjuak relocatees had no understanding of the disadvantages or risks of the project and did not believe that the relocation could change their lives fundamentally and adversely. Nor did they understand the rehabilitative character of the plan. What the Inukjuak Inuit were offered was less than what they had, in the sense that there would be less government income support available in the High Arctic and greater reliance on hunting. As a result, the relocatees, in addition to the many hardships suffered, experienced a sense of abandonment by the government and suffered considerable distress when their expectations of a significantly better life in the High Arctic were not met.

### **The Inukjuak Inuit Were Not Told of the Involvement of the Pond Inlet Inuit, and the Two Groups Did Not Get Along Well**

26. The Inukjuak Inuit were not told that they would be joined by Pond Inlet Inuit. There are significant differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet dialects, as well as differences in the two peoples' way of living. The Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups did not get along well in the new communities. The government's desire was to have Pond Inlet Inuit involved in the relocation to help the Inukjuak Inuit adjust to High Arctic conditions. This idea failed, however, to take into account the disruptive effects of putting the different groups together in an isolated community.

### **Failure to Compensate Pond Inlet Inuit**

27. The Pond Inlet Inuit found themselves providing a service to the government, giving guidance to the Inukjuak Inuit; they expected to be paid for this service but were not. The government failed to ensure that the conditions under which the Pond Inlet Inuit were participating were made clear to them. The government should accept responsibility for this misunderstanding.

### **The Last-Minute Decision to Send Inukjuak Families to Resolute Bay**

28. The original plan called for Inuit from Fort Chimo to go to Resolute Bay where they would find full- or part-time employment. This aspect of the plan fell apart because the government never had any intention of providing housing for the Inuit at Resolute Bay, and the Fort Chimo Inuit were used to living in houses. The initial planning by the Department failed to accommodate the characteristics of the people. As a result, the employment aspect of the relocation to Resolute Bay was downplayed, and it was decided that Inuit from Inukjuak would go to Resolute Bay instead to make their living by hunting and trapping.

### **Forced Separation of the Inukjuak Inuit**

29. The Inukjuak Inuit understood that they would all be going to the same place: they had not been told were going to Ellesmere Island. The Inukjuak Inuit would not learn that they were to be separated until they were already in the High Arctic, when they were separated and sent to different locations. This was painful and distressing for them and, in the circumstances, was clearly a forced separation.

### **Inadequate Regard for the Needs of the Relocateses**

30. The government proceeded with determination to implement the plan once it had been set in motion, without regard to matters that should have been incorporated in the planning process. The relocatees would need caribou skins for bedding and clothing, which are vital for people living on the land. When the required skins were not available, the Department nevertheless proceed with the relocation, and the relocatees went north with 60 instead of the 600 skins needed for clothing and bedding for the coming year. In addition, the relocatees arrived in the High Arctic without all the equipment they would need for life there.

### **The Spread of Tuberculosis to Resolute Bay**

31. The Inuit community at Resolute Bay became infected with tuberculosis which may have been carried from Inukjuak, resulting in additional hardship to the community as many members were transported south to hospital for extended periods.

### **The Eskimo Loan Fund was Used Improperly for Departmental Purposes**

32. The trade store in the new communities was funded through the Eskimo Loan Fund. There is no evidence that the arrangements for the loan were discussed with the relocatees before departure. The signature of one of the Inuit as the borrower would be obtained by the police after the relocatees arrived in the High Arctic. The loan arrangement lacked substance. The reality was that the Loan Fund was being used for departmental purposes, with an Inuk signing a loan agreement as a formality. The work of running the trade store was handled by the police. An Inuk signature on the loan agreement was a formality, not in the sense of being good legal form, but in the sense of something perfunctory and lacking in substance. In these circumstances, an Inuk's signature on loan documents does not imply consent to the loan.

### **Isolation in the High Arctic**

33. The environment in the new High Arctic communities was, in addition to the dark period, considerably different from Inukjuak. Climatic conditions are more severe, and varieties of game are significantly more limited. The move to the High Arctic thus involved significant changes for the Inukjuak relocatees. The Inukjuak Inuit also suffered isolation from home and the larger community at Inukjuak as a result of separation from immediate family, extended family, and friends who remained at Inukjuak. There was also isolation from those non-Inuit facilities that did exist in the new communities as a result of the separation of the Inuit settlement from non-Inuit facilities. Finally, isolation was created by the differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups in very small communities consisting of only a few families.

### **The Hardship Adjusting to the New Land**

34. The Inukjuak Inuit were placed in a situation where to survive they had to adapt to an area that was significantly different from the Inukjuak area in term of climate, terrain and hunting conditions. There were also significant differences in the types and variety of game and fish available: this meant that the Inukjuak relocatees had to adapt their hunting techniques to the new conditions, to learn where and when various types of game could be obtained most readily, and to adjust their equipment to the different terrain, particularly in the Grise Fiord area. Changes in diet were also required. At Grise Fiord, the Inukjuak Inuit would have to learn to obtain water from grounded icebergs. The Inukjuak Inuit were also used to burning wood, and although wood could be found in the base dump in Resolute Bay, at Grise Fiord, seal oil lamps were the only means of cooking and providing heat. The more severe weather and the periods of darkness made it more difficult to carry out daily tasks and required psychological adjustment. The Inukjuak Inuit found the adjustment difficult – and certainly much harder than they expected.



### **Risks to Inuit Health and Life in a Experimental Project and the Inadequacy of Measures to Prevent Hardship**

35. The relocation was an experiment to see whether the Inuit could adjust to life in the High Arctic. There was real risk attached to the project if it turned out that the land could not support the Inuit or if the Inuit had severe difficulty learning how to exploit the resources of the new land. This risk would have become a reality at the Cape Herschel site if that aspect of the relocation had gone ahead. Game failed to materialize in the Cape Herschel area in the winter of 1953-54, and the land would not have been able to support the relocatees.

The supplies sent in for the trade stores at Resolute and Craig Harbour were not sufficient to support the people should they be unable to take sufficient game for food but were intended only to supplement what they could obtain from hunting. There is no evidence that the Department developed a sufficient plan to meet the communities' food needs. The inherent riskiness of the project was not discussed with the Inuit. They were simply assured that there was abundant game in the High Arctic and that they would have a better life.

Some of the supplies intended for Resolute Bay did not arrive; eventually the missing supplies were flown in by the RCAF sometime after January 1954, more than five months after they should have arrived. At both Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, skins for clothing and bedding arrived late in the winter, in the early months of 1954. By contrast, if a Canadian government post had been established in the High Arctic and government personnel were missing essential items such as Arctic clothing and bedding, the government certainly would have arranged for these essential supplies to be sent immediately. The fact that the Department had arranged the relocation using the device of a loan limited the Department's financial ability to respond to contingencies that developed in what was in substance a government-initiated relocation. The project was insufficiently funded, and as contingencies developed over years, [such] as when supplies failed to arrive, cost considerations would outweigh considerations of Inuit welfare. Contingencies were absorbed in the form of increased hardship for the relocatees.

### **Inadequate Provisions for Necessary Boats**

36. Large boats formed an important part life in Inukjuak and were an important aspect of status in the community. These boats had been left behind in Inukjuak. The relocatees believed that there would be boats available for them in the new land. No arrangement had been made to provide the Inuit relocatees with boats.

### **Hardship and Suffering the Result of an Inherently Unsound Plan**

37. The relocation was not a case of an appropriate plan running into difficulty because of failures in carrying it out. The plan was inherently unsound, and the means necessary to carry it out were equally unsound. The failures in execution served only to aggravate the hardship and suffering inherent in the plan from the outset.

### **Inadequate Supplies for the Trades Stores**

38. The small trade stores were chronically understocked and, particularly at Grise Fiord, people suffered hardship year after year through the 1950s.

### **Difficulty in Finding Spouses**

39. The small size of the communities made it difficult for young people to find spouses.

### **Restrictions on Movement**

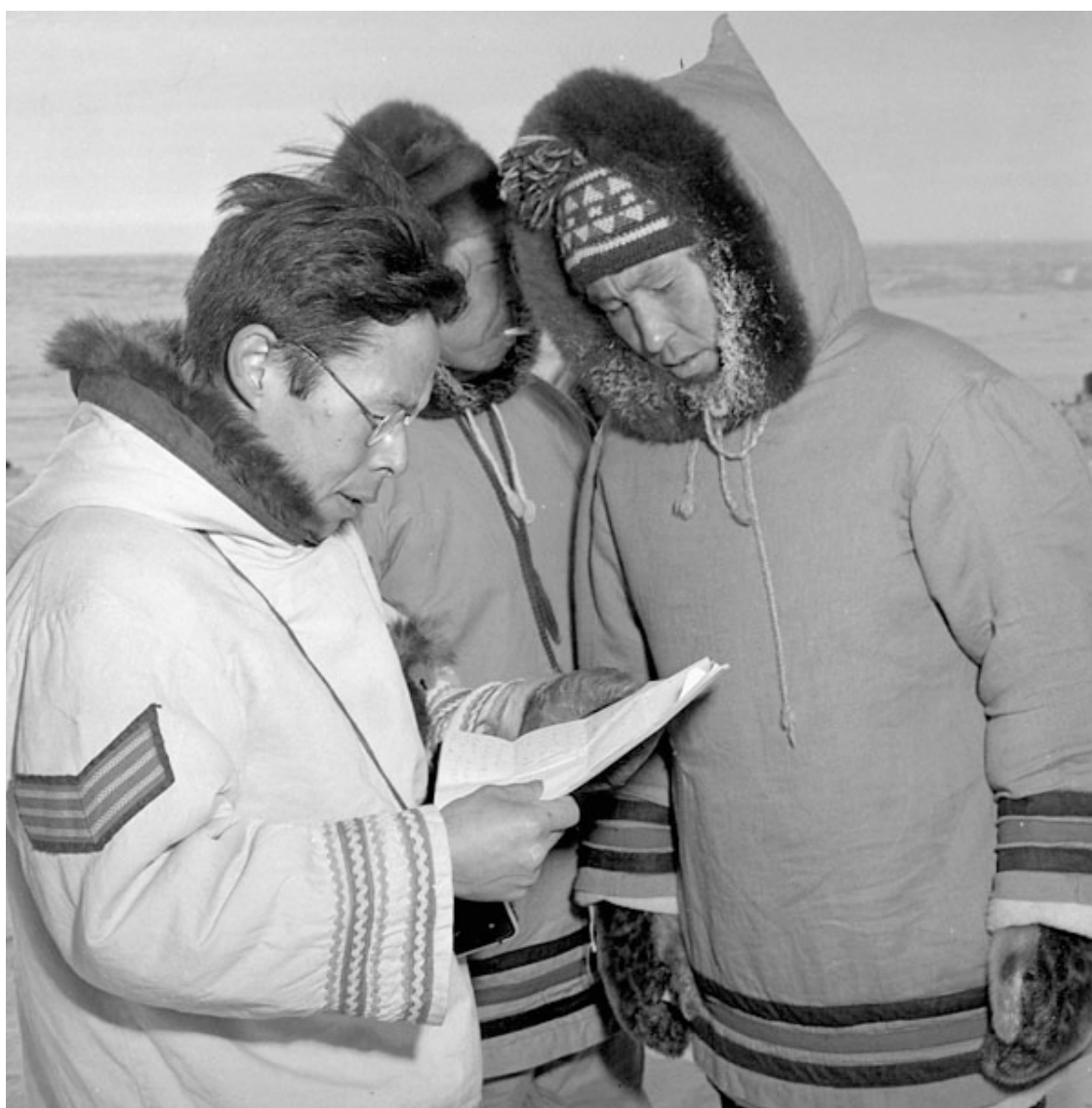
40. Grise Fiord lacked the employment opportunities of Resolute Bay, yet people were effectively prevented from moving from Grise Fiord to Resolute Bay to join relatives or to pursue other opportunities.

### The Failure to Honour the Promise to Return

41. The government failed to honour the promise to return, and the resulting hardship is not fully redressed by an offer to pay for a return many years after the return should have been provided. The lost years must be taken into account.

### The Relocates' Experience were Predictable

42. The experiences of the relocatees were the predictable result of a scheme that was inherently coercive in its objective and coercive in the means chosen to achieve that objective. The other failings in planning and implementation, as well as the failure to honour the promise to return, compounded the hardship suffered by the relocatees.



Idloul, adoptive father of Northern Affairs officer Douglas Wilkinson, reads letter written in Inuit syllabics by Wilkinson, presented to him by Governor General Vincent Massey in Resolute Bay [Qausuittuq], N.W.T., March 1956. *Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / PA-179003*

# Appendix B

## Official Apology by the Government of Canada for the Inuit High Arctic Relocation (2010)<sup>1</sup>

On August 18, 2010 in Inukjuak, Nunavik, the Honourable John Duncan, PC, MP, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic.

### Speaking Notes for the Honourable John Duncan

Elders, Inuit leaders, ladies and gentlemen, and especially those of you who were directly affected by the relocation; thank you for being here.

This is my first trip to the North as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and I am very honoured to be here for this historic event.

... Over half a century has gone by since the relocation of Inuit from this community to the High Arctic. I am here on behalf of the Prime Minister, the Government of Canada, and all Canadians to offer an apology for these events.

Today's ceremony is an important step towards healing and reconciliation. Please accept the apology I am about to offer on behalf of all Canadians. I hope that it will form the basis of a strengthened relationship with the Government of Canada.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, we would like to offer a full and sincere apology to Inuit for the relocation of families from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay during the 1950s.

We would like to express our deepest sorrow for the extreme hardship and suffering caused by the relocation. The families were separated from their home communities and extended families by more than a thousand kilometres. They were not provided with adequate shelter and supplies. They were not properly informed of how far away and how different from Inukjuak their new homes would be, and they were not aware that they would be separated into two communities once they arrived in the High Arctic. Moreover, the Government failed to act on its promise to return anyone that did not wish to stay in the High Arctic to their old homes.

The Government of Canada deeply regrets the mistakes and broken promises of this dark chapter of our history and apologizes for the High Arctic relocation having taken place. We would like to pay tribute to the relocatees for their perseverance and courage. Despite the suffering and hardship, the relocatees and their descendants were successful in building vibrant communities in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. The Government of Canada recognizes that these communities have contributed to a strong Canadian presence in the High Arctic.

The relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic is a tragic chapter in Canada's history that we should not forget, but that we must acknowledge, learn from and teach our children. Acknowledging our shared history allows us to move forward in partnership and in a spirit of reconciliation. The Government of Canada and Inuit have accomplished many great things together, and all Canadians have benefitted from the contributions of Inuit to our culture and history. We must continue to strengthen our connections and deepen our understanding and respect. We must jointly build a stronger, healthier and more vibrant Inuit Nunangat and, in turn, build a stronger, healthier and more vibrant Canada.

The Government of Canada hopes that this apology will help heal the wounds caused by events that began nearly 60 years ago and turn the page on this sad chapter in Canada's history. May it strengthen the foundation upon which the Government of Canada and Inuit can build and help keep the True North Strong and Free.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Apology for the Inuit High Arctic relocation," <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016115/1100100016116>.

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Short films and interviews available at Iqqaumavara, <http://www.iqqaumavara.com/>.

## About the Editor

Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer is the Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in the Study of the Canadian North and a Professor in the School for the Study of Canada at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario. He is also Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which encompasses patrols throughout Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. He serves as the network lead for the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN) funded by the Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) program.

Whitney's recent books include *Understanding Sovereignty and Security in the Circumpolar Arctic* (co-edited, forthcoming 2020); *Canada and the Maritime Arctic: Boundaries, Shelves, and Waters* (co-authored 2020); *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region* (co-authored 2019); *Breaking the Ice Curtain? Russia, Canada, and Arctic Security in a Changing Circumpolar World* (co-edited 2019); *The Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line Coordinating Committee: Minutes and Progress Reports, 1955-63* (co-edited 2019); *Defining Ice: Lieutenant E.B. Stolee's Accounts of the Canadian Arctic Voyages of CCGS John A. Macdonald, 1969/70* (co-edited 2019); "The Adventurous Voyage": St. Roch and the Northwest Passage, 1940-42 and 1944 (co-edited 2019); *Shaping Arctic Policy: The Minutes of the Eskimo Affairs Committee, 1952-62* (co-edited 2019); *Special Contract: A Story of Defence Communications in Canada* (co-edited 2019); *China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada* (co-authored 2018); and *Roots of Entanglement: Essays in Native-Newcomer Relations* (co-edited 2017). Previous books include *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History, 1942-2012* (2013); *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship* (co-authored 2011); and *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* (co-authored 2008, winner of the 2009 Donner Prize for the best book on Canadian public policy). Whitney is also co-editor of the Documents on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security (DCASS) series, to which he has contributed sixteen volumes.

Lackenbauer at the monument in  
Grise Fiord, February 2020.  
*Photo by Waheed Johnston*





# HUMAN FLAGPOLES OR HUMANITARIAN ACTION?

## *Discerning Government Motives behind the Inuit Relocations to the High Arctic, 1953-1960*

**Edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer**

In 1953, the Government of Canada announced plans to resettle Inuit from areas of dwindling food resources to the High Arctic where game and fur animals were reported in abundant supply. That August, seven families from the Inukjuak (Port Harrison) area in northern Quebec and three families from Pond Inlet were resettled in communities at Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island and at Grise Fiord, near the Craig Harbour police post on Ellesmere Island. This volume makes various research reports, offering differing interpretations on government motivations behind these controversial relocations, available to the public and provides essential background to understand the Government of Canada's 2010 official apology for the Inuit High Arctic relocation.



**Monument to Inuit relocated to the High Arctic community of Grise Fiord in 1953 and 1955.**

*Photo by P. Whitney Lackenbauer*

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