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Friday, June 4, 1993

Jack Iyerak Anawak

Speaker: The Honourable John A. Fraser, P.C., Q.C.

The text of the first 21 pages of this document is in Inuit syllabics (10 pages in the original, back to back). To remove it would, however, be both disrespectful and historically inaccurate. The English version that follows (as received) is largely by Jack Anawak, the Member of Parliament for Nunatsiag. It includes a brief history of Inuit Land claims, the latter's observations in this pursuit, the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement itself and a short postscript added by the present pdf transcriber { jnh }.



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 4, 1993

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NUNAVUT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut, translated as follows:]

[Translation]

It is a great honour and privilege for me to speak today on the Nunavut bills, the bills to ratify the Nunavut land claim agreement and to establish the new territory of Nunavut. Both bills before us impact profoundly on the future of Canada's north and Canada as a whole. Both these bills change the course of history. Canada is evolving and the Inuit of Nunavut are in the forefront of that evolution.

[English]

Madam Deputy Speaker: For the benefit of hon. members, there is English translation on channel five and there is someone translating from English to French so that all members can understand what the member is saying in Inuktitut on this very special day.

[Translation]

Mr. Anawak: This is a momentous and proud occasion for the Inuit of Nunavut. For me it is also very special for another reason. Today I am speaking both as a member of Parliament for the region concerned and as a beneficiary of the Nunavut land claim agreement.

I do not believe such a set of circumstances has occurred before in the House. This is a first, and for me this is a humbling experience.

• (1030)

[English]

For the Inuit the settlement of the land claim and the creation of Nunavut represent a bold new start and a chance to participate as partners in the development of our homeland and our country. Underlying everything is the hope of a better future for our children.

[Translation]

The land claim and the establishment of Nunavut are basic expressions of Inuit self-determination. For too long Inuit have been left out of the major economic and political decision making affecting our lives. Through the land claim agreement and Nunavut we are re-establishing some control over our own affairs. We are also ensuring the preservation and enhancement of our identity as distinct peoples: our culture, our language and our way of life.

Later today I will have more to say about the meaning of Nunavut when we deal with the bill to establish

[English]

The bill before us now, Bill C-133, is the land claim ratification bill. It is difficult, however, to talk about the land claim without talking about Nunavut because the two are inseparably linked.

Inuit have always tied the establishment of Nunavut to the settlement of the land claim. Obtaining a commitment to the territory of Nunavut was a fundamental component of the Inuit land claim negotiations from the beginning. It was in fact a prerequisite for the settlement of the land claim.

Bear with me while I continue in French.

[Translation]

What we are doing today is very important for all of Canada. The bill concerning the territory of Nunavut, which is connected with our claim, will legislate federal recognition of the new territory. However, hon. members and Canadians should realize that Nunavut already exists and has always existed in the minds and hearts of the Inuit. We know that Nunavut is our land.

We want to thank Canada for recognizing our rights and our desire to control our destiny and our territory and help create a stronger Canada.

[Translation]

To continue in Inuktitut, I want to congratulate the Inuit of Nunavut for their achievement and thank those who represented them at the negotiating table throughout the years for their hard work, their determination, and for all the sacrifices they and their families made.

Many of the individuals involved were present at the formal signing of the land claim agreement in Iqaluit on May 25, but there were others who for a variety of reasons were not in Iqaluit on that day. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions made by so many.

Thanks are due to current and past negotiators, board members and staff of the Inuit Federation of Nunavut and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada: Paul Quassa, James Eetoolook, John Amagoalik, James Arvaluk, Tagak Curley, Perer Ernerk, Donat Milortuk, Bob Kadlun, Jack Kupeuna, David Aglukark, Louis Tapardjuk, Mark Evaluardjuk, Louis Pilakapsi, Thomas Suluk, Simon Taipana, John Maksagak, Peter Ittinuar and Kane Tologanak.

Government Orders

I could go on and on and still probably leave someone out inadvertently. If I have I apologize.

I also want to recognize the contributions of the elders such as Peter Kaminguak and Abe Ookpik and those who are no longer with us.

• (1035)

[English]

The history of this land claim goes back many years. It spans several federal governments and numerous ministers of Indian and northern affairs. Very few people realize that prior to 1973 the Government of Canada did not have a policy to negotiate land claims. It was the current Leader of the Official Opposition, under whom I am proud to serve, who, when he was the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, brought forward the first policy to negotiate and resolve land claims.

In 1975 the Inuit of Nunavik achieved the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The following year, in 1976, the Inuit of the Northwest Territories, as represented by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, presented their land claim to the federal government for negotiation. Their submission included the proposal for the creation of the Nunavut territory.

The claim proposal was subsequently revised in 1977. In that same year, the Inuvialuit of the western Arctic filed their own land claim. In 1978 they signed an agreement in principle with the federal government and the final agreement was reached in 1984. Between 1976 and 1979 the Inuit of the central and eastern Arctic experienced difficulty with their negotiations. There was an impasse over dealing with Nunavut at the land claim table.

In 1980 a breakthrough was achieved. Agreement was reached to deal with the Inuit proposals on Nunavut through a political development process in the Northwest Territories separate from but parallel with the land claims negotiations. In 1982 the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut was formed for the specific purpose of negotiating the Inuit land claim.

In April 1990 an agreement in principle was reached. Article 4 of that agreement in principle affirmed federal, territorial and Inuit support for the creation of Nunavut

as soon as possible. In December 1991 negotiations were finalized on outstanding items in the land claims, including the creation of Nunavut. In November 1992 the Inuit of Nunavut voted to ratify their land claim agreement.

• (1040)

[Translation]

It has been a long journey filled with many rough spots and roadblocks. I want to focus now on the actual land claim and some of the obstacles Inuit encountered in their negotiations with the government. From the beginning the government set out all kinds of preconditions and restrictions. In return the Inuit were more than generous.

Some of the comments I am about to make I have made on other occasions over the past several years and many of the people watching or listening today will be familiar with them. However, I feel I must restate them for the record.

[English]

First I want to take issue with the term "land claim". It is highly inappropriate. I wish there were a better term to use but I will try to describe what I mean by inappropriate.

When aboriginal peoples talk about their lands, we are talking about our homelands. We are talking about the territories and resources upon which our people have survived for thousands of years. We are talking first and foremost about our cultures and our way of life on these territories. The land, the waters, the wildlife and we, the people, are one and the same. We are not separate from our environment. We are part of it and it is part of us.

Yet non-aboriginal governments have looked upon land claim negotiations as real estate transactions. This is not our view. It is difficult for us to understand the non-aboriginal concept of individual land title and ownership.

[Translation]

We see these negotiations primarily as the means to preserve our relationship with the land and ensure our survival as peoples in the larger society surrounding us. Therefore we are also talking about economic and political power. We require the economic and political means to control what happens on our lands.

In claim negotiations aboriginal peoples are not seeking something that someone else already owns. We dispute that implication. We are not asking the govern-

ment to give us anything that does not belong to us. We are only seeking recognition of what is rightfully ours. We are trying to take back what was taken away from us by governments without our consent in the past.

We are reasonable peoples. We have always been willing to share our lands and resources. We recognize that all peoples and all governments must work together for the benefit of all. This is why Inuit and other aboriginal peoples have entered into land claim negotiations.

[English]

We start from the premise that we are the rightful occupants and owners of the land. The government should be asking us for permission to occupy our lands and use our resources and should negotiate with us on that basis. Instead the government takes the position that it owns the land and it believes it is being generous by sharing some of our land with us.

[Translation]

The government has never even admitted that the Inuit have aboriginal title to Nunavut. The preamble of the Nunavut claim bill begins with the following statement:

• (1045)

[English]

Whereas the Inuit of the Nunavut settlement area have asserted an aboriginal title to that area based on their traditional and current use and occupation of the lands, waters and land-fast ice therein accordance with their own customs and usages;

I want to say for the record that Inuit do not just assert title to Nunavut. Our title is real. It is the Government of Canada that has asserted title to Nunavut. Our title predates any claim by the government whether the government recognizes it or not.

[Translation]

The government would not be negotiating land settlements with us and with other aboriginal people if it did not believe we had aboriginal rights and title. I do not know why the government refuses to acknowledge this.

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[English]

I also cannot discuss this land claims settlement without repeating my objection to the extinguishment clause. The clause appears in the Certainty Section of the claim agreement as clause 2.7.1:

In consideration of the rights and benefits provided to Inuit by the Agreement, Inuit hereby:

(a) cede, release and surrender to Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, all their aboriginal claims, rights, title and interests, if any, in and to lands and waters anywhere within Canada and adjacent offshore areas within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of Canada; and

(b) agree, on their behalf, and on behalf of their heirs, descendants and successors not to assert any cause of action, action for a declaration, claim or demand of whatever kind or nature which they ever had, now have or may hereafter have against Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada or any province, the government of any territory or any person based on any aboriginal claims, rights, title or interests in and to lands and waters described in Sub-section (a).

I repeat the words: "if any" from part (a).

This comprehensive extinguishment of rights was a government demand and condition for settlement. Inuit did not and do not want to extinguish their rights but this was the price the government asked us to pay.

[Translation]

The government made sure it exacted a heavy price for rights that it was not even sure we had. It did so in the name of certainty.

This land claim settlement is a good deal for the Government of Canada in another way. There is a perception that Inuit are getting the bulk of the land they claimed. That is not the case.

[English]

It is true that this is the largest land claim settlement in Canada but this is because the Northwest Territories represents about one-third of Canada and the area claimed by Inuit covers a large portion of it.

The Inuit claim encompasses two million square kilometres within the Northwest Territories. Under the land claims settlement, Inuit will have surface title to 350,000 square kilometres. Inuit will have subsurface title to about 36,000 square kilometres within the 350,000 square kilometres.

What this means is that the Government of Canada is getting title to about 82 per cent of the land claimed.

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Inuit are getting title to about 18 per cent of the total area claimed. If we look at the area to which Inuit are getting subsurface title, the percentage drops to about 2 per cent.

[Translation]

The government ended up with so much land because it set preconditions at the outset. The government said the Inuit could only have a certain amount of land in total. Inuit were prohibited from making land selections in certain specific areas. The government had the power to do this because it was bigger and stronger.

• (1050)

[English]

Canadians should understand the tremendous power imbalance that exists in land claim negotiations between aboriginal peoples and the federal government. The federal government makes the rules. It changes the rules. It breaks the rules. It has the money and all kinds of high-powered expertise at its disposal. It has armies of bureaucrats and relies on legalese.

Aboriginal negotiators do not have the same resources. They are also communicating with government representatives in a language that is not in their mother tongue, and then they have to try to explain to their people government terms and concepts that simply do not exist in aboriginal languages. In addition, there are totally different decision-making processes involved.

While some revisions to policies and practices have been made from time to time, the system and the policies are still heavily weighted in the federal government's favour.

There are other matters in this agreement that continue to cause me some concern.

[Translation]

I still think \$580 million is a small price for the government to pay for the extinguishment of Inuit rights and for 82 per cent of our territory. Nevertheless that sum could be of significant benefit if invested wisely. We will have to be very vigilant and cautious.

I am also worried about the number of boards and institutions that will be set up under this claim. We are headed into a very complex system of administration and

I hope we do not find ourselves overwhelmed and overburdened.

I also want to touch briefly on implementation. Previous claim settlements, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Western Arctic Inuvialuit Agreement have experienced serious implementation problems. Since an entire section of the Nunavut claim agreement is devoted to implementation, we hope to avoid the implementation problems of the past.

[English]

In this context I want to urge the government to be forever mindful of the spirit and intent behind this agreement.

[Translation]

As I said earlier, what Inuit have tried to obtain in this agreement is a better future for our children. The right to harvest wildlife on lands and waters throughout Nunavut is a major component of this agreement. In addition, Inuit will have equal membership with governments on institutions established to manage the land, water, offshore and wildlife of Nunavut and to evaluate the impact of development projects on the environment.

As well, Inuit will get a share of the royalties the federal government receives from oil, gas and mineral development on Crown lands. On lands where Inuit have surface title, Inuit will be able to negotiate with industry for economic and social benefits from non-renewable development.

[Translation]

The agreement also specifies an amount of \$13 million for a training trust fund and includes measures to increase Inuit employment within government and to increase access to government contracts.

[English]

There is much promise here. There are opportunities to be seized. There are challenges to be faced.

[Translation]

This agreement must benefit all us Inuit. This agreement is for us. We must make it work for all. We must never forget the people in the communities.

We must focus on our education and training needs. We must encourage and support our youth so that we can benefit from their talents and energies. We must

integrate the wisdom of our elders. Together with the co-operation of government and all the people of Nunavut we will utilize this agreement to build the better future we envision.

[English]

I would like to complete my remarks by acknowledging again the support and hard work of the people of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, as well the countless number of people who have had to endure a lot of travel time or being away from their families. They spent a lot of time not quite knowing what was going to happen next but they always had the intent to get the best deal for the Inuit of Nunavut.

With that I am very confident that the Inuit of Nunavut have embarked on a future that will be beneficial not only to the Inuit but to the people of Canada.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee and reported.

• (1325)

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Siddon moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

NUNAVUT ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Before I get to my comments I would also like to acknowledge the support of people like Raymond Ningcocheak, Pauloosie Keyootak, Joe Allen Evgotailak, Rhoda Inukshuk, the former President of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada whom I omitted for no reason but forgetfulness. They have worked very hard toward the negotiations.

I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support I received from my family who is in the audience from our smallest to the oldest. I acknowledge their support.

I want to comment on the minister's comment can we afford not to. It reminds me of the commercial can we afford not to? I think that is the question. I cannot remember which commercial, but can we afford not to? Canadians should be asking themselves that in getting Nunavut as part of the Canadian federation.

As I said earlier, it is a real honour to be here today to speak on the Nunavut bill, Bill C-132. This is the bill that will create the new territory of Nunavut. This bill flows from the land claim agreement. Article 4 of the agreement in principle signed in April 1990 committed the parties to the political development of Nunavut.

The article committed the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, on behalf of the Inuit of Nunavut, to the creation of a Nunavut territory, and the financing of a Nunavut government, outside of the claims agreement, as soon as possible.

It is important to note that the commitment to create the Nunavut territory is outside of the claims agreement. Government policy would not allow the Inuit to negotiate the political development of Nunavut within their land claim agreement.

[Translation]

Nevertheless, the government support for Nunavut, even though outside the land claim agreement, was a key victory for Inuit. Without this commitment to Nunavut, Inuit were not prepared to settle their land claim. Settlement of the land claim depended on obtaining the commitment to Nunavut.

[English]

Article 4 of the agreement in principle also committed the parties to a territory-wide plebiscite on a boundary for division, and an agreement on the division of powers.

That plebiscite was held, a boundary was approved and the Nunavut political accord was signed.

Flowing from all these prior decisions and agreements is the bill before us now, Bill C-132, the act to establish the new Nunavut territory. This is a proud and historic moment for me and for all the Inuit of Nunavut.

• (1350)

As I noted in my earlier speech on the land claim bill, I do not believe that ever before in this House has a member of Parliament spoken in such a capacity, both as a representative for the region concerned and as a beneficiary of the land claim agreement to which this bill is tied. It is a very special feeling for me and today is a very special day. This is a proud and historic moment for the people of Canada.

What we are doing here today is welcoming a new partner into the Canadian federation.

[Translation]

I want to congratulate and thank the people of Nunavut for their vision and for their determination to achieve that vision. I also want to thank all the people of the Northwest Territories who supported our aspirations by voting with us in the plebiscite a year ago. The dream of Nunavut, of getting recognition of our Inuit homeland, and recognition of our right to participate in the government and development of that homeland is a dream that goes back many, many years.

I remember a meeting of the Inuit Tapirisat in 1975 in Tuktoyaktuk at which we were discussing a name for our new territory. I moved the motion at that meeting to call the new territory Nunavut. In English, Nunavut means "our land". That motion was adopted, and now here I am today, 18 years later, speaking on the bill that will recognize the Nunavut territory.

[English]

For the benefit of non-Inuit, Inuit means "the people" and I repeat that Nunavut means "our land".

I want Canadians and members of this House to understand that Nunavut exists now and has always existed in the minds and hearts of Inuit. We know Nunavut is our land. What we have been seeking throughout the years is the acknowledgement by the Canadian government that this was, and is, our land and that we have the right to control what happens to that land, our homeland.

This bill, the Nunavut act, does not give us Nunavut. However this bill does give us Canada's acknowledgement and Canada's legal recognition of the reality we have always known. It also gives us the opportunity to participate in the government of our land on terms we have helped to develop. This is very important.

[Translation]

When the non-Inuit arrived in our homeland, when Canada was confederated, no one asked us for our opinion. No one asked for our consent to the terms of union. No one asked us for our advice. No one asked us how we felt.

Foreign governments and foreign laws and foreign regulations were imposed on us. For years we have lived with the burden of an alien system.

With the establishment of Nunavut, we hope we will finally be able to get out from underneath what has been imposed upon us. For Inuit, the Nunavut political accord and this Nunavut bill are essentially our terms of union, the framework for our entry into the Canadian federation.

[English]

We want to be able to control our destiny by making our own laws and regulations. We want the chance to make our own mistakes and learn from them.

• (1355)

We want to contribute our unique knowledge, skills and talents to the building and strengthening of this nation. The creation of the Nunavut territory gives us the opportunity to do this. I want to talk for a short while about the history behind this bill and the concept of two territories instead of one in the Northwest Territories.

It seems to be the fate of the Northwest Territories to be continually divided. The province of Manitoba was created from the Northwestern Territory in 1870. The Yukon was established in 1898 and the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were carved out in 1905. The current Northwest Territories is what remained after the creation of all those other jurisdictions. However it is still a huge area. It encompasses fully one-third of the land mass of Canada.

Further division of the existing Northwest Territories is not a new idea. It is an idea that has been around for a long time. It is an idea whose time has finally come.

For the record this is not the first time this House has seen a bill to divide the Northwest Territories. In 1963 the federal government of the day tabled a bill to divide the Northwest Territories but it did not get passed.

[Translation]

The people of the central, eastern and high Arctic have always felt isolated from the western part of the Northwest Territories. There are very real differences between east and west that can only be appreciated by the people who live there.

As I mentioned earlier, the Northwest Territories is one-third of the land mass of Canada. If one looks at a map of Canada, east of the border with the Yukon and south of the 60th parallel, five provinces fit under the same area covered by the Northwest Territories. The difficulties and complexities involved in administering one-third of Canada as one single jurisdiction are enormous. Variety, differences, and distance characterize the existing Northwest Territories.

The Indian and Inuit peoples of the Northwest Territories are different peoples. Their histories, cultures and languages are different. The Dene homeland, Denendeh, is in the western Arctic, whereas the Inuit of Nunavut live in the east and along the coasts. The geography is different between east and west, the wildlife is different and the lifestyles are different. As a result of these many differences, there has always been a strong push by the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories for governments that are closer to and more responsive to them and for governments that respect and reflect their cultures.

[English]

Numerous proposals for division and political development have been put forward over the years by Inuit, Dene and non-aboriginal people. The existing government of the Northwest Territories has been involved in many of these efforts. The people of the N.W.T. have also been fully involved.

On April 14, 1982, 56 per cent of N.W.T. voters in the territorial plebiscite supported division. In May 1992 N.W.T. voters supported the boundary line for division, which is reflected in this bill. It is the land claim boundary line.

I want Canadians to get a good understanding of how far away the seat of the existing territorial government is from the people in the eastern Arctic.

• (1400)

Currently, if people live in the Baffin region, say in Broughton Island or Pangnirtung they live north of

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Montreal, Quebec but their territorial capital is in Yellowknife, north of Edmonton, Alberta. No other Canadian citizen has to deal with a capital city that is the equivalent of four or five provinces away.

With the establishment of the Nunavut territory we hope to establish a capital and a government that are closer to the people.

That is just part of the hope of Nunavut. There is much more promise here but there is also much challenge.

[Translation]

I want now to turn my attention to the substance of this bill. This bill provides a framework for the establishment of the Nunavut territory. Much hard work is yet to come.

Under this bill, Nunavut will not be created tomorrow. The government of Nunavut will be established over time, gradually taking over powers, programs and services at a pace it is to determine itself. In 1999 the first legislative assembly of the new Nunavut territory will be elected. Assumption of the full range of territorial powers is not foreseen until the year 2008.

Initially, the Nunavut government will look very much like the existing Governments of the Northwest Territories and Yukon. It will have an elected legislative assembly, a cabinet and a territorial court.

[English]

The government of Nunavut will be a public government, open to the participation of all residents, Inuit and non-Inuit. The legislative assembly will be elected by all residents. So it is not aboriginal self-government in the sense of a government exclusively for and by aboriginal peoples.

Bill C-132 contains five parts, 79 clauses, and three schedules. Seventy-six other acts of Parliament are amended as a consequence of this bill.

Part I of the bill deals with the establishment and government of Nunavut. It covers matters such as the seat of government, the commissioner of Nunavut, the executive council of Nunavut, the legislature of Nunavut, legislative powers and judicial powers.

Part II of this bill deals with official languages, the Nunavut consolidated revenue fund, territorial accounts, lands and cultural sites and property.

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Part III deals with the Nunavut implementation commission.

Part IV involves transitional provisions, expenditures and the interim commissioner of Nunavut.

Part V includes the coming into force dates and the consequential amendments.

[Translation]

I regret that we have not had more time to study this bill. This bill and the land claim legislation were only tabled in this House last Friday. Exactly one week has passed. This is hardly enough time to absorb all the details, and consider all the consequences.

Nevertheless, because of the importance of these bills to the people of Nunavut and to the people of Canada, all parties have agreed to fast-track them.

I hope we have not missed or overlooked anything major. I am reassured by the fact that 'Inuvik was involved in the drafting of these bills. If there was anything out of the ordinary, I am sure it would have been picked up.

[English]

In terms of the details of the bills, I want to raise a couple of areas of concern. The first involves the transition process and implementation, the second involves the funding and the third involves education and training.

Probably the most significant part of this bill is the Nunavut implementation commission. This commission will determine the face of the future government of Nunavut.

It will consist of a chairperson and nine other members. Three members will be nominated by the Government of the Northwest Territories, three will be nominated by 'Inuvik, and three will be nominated by the federal government. At least six of the members must be ordinarily resident in Nunavut.

The mandate of the commission is to advise the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and 'Inuvik on the establishment of Nunavut.

• (1405)

The mandate includes: (a) The timetable for the assumption by the Nunavut government of responsibility for the delivery of services; (b) The process for the first

election of the Nunavut legislative assembly, including the numbers of members and the establishment of electoral districts; (c) The design and funding of training programs; (d) The process for determining the location of the capital of Nunavut; (e) The principles and the criteria for the equitable division of assets and liabilities between Nunavut and the Northwest Territories; (f) The new public works necessitated by the establishment of Nunavut and the scheduling of the construction of the works; (g) The administrative design of the first Government of Nunavut; (h) The arrangements for delivery of programs and services where these are to be phased in; and (i) Any other related matter referred to it by the minister.

[Translation]

This is a heavy, loaded agenda. These negotiations, particularly the financial negotiations, are going to be difficult and lengthy. All parties to these negotiations, naturally, will be looking to protect their own interests. The representatives for Nunavut will have to be very vigilant. The new territory must be able to start out on the best possible footing.

I also want to deal for a moment with the transitional provisions of this bill that could establish the office of an interim commissioner of Nunavut. This individual, under the provisions of this bill, could wield a great deal of power. The bill says the federal cabinet can appoint an interim commissioner until the first commissioner is appointed.

[English]

The interim commissioner is to act according to written directions given to him or her by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The minister will be able to determine the manner in which these directions are made public.

The powers of the powers include: (a) Recruiting persons for employment by the Government of Nunavut; (b) Prescribing the duties and conditions of employment such persons; (c) Establishing systems and processes for the Government of Nunavut, including the organization and administration of the territorial courts; and (d) Carrying out any other functions as the federal cabinet may determine.

Agreements regarding employment that are entered into by the interim commissioner will be binding on the Government of Nunavut.

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The Government of Nunavut will, however, be able to alter, revoke or replace any systems or process of government put in place by the interim commissioner. We hope this will not be necessary.

The interim commissioner, with federal cabinet approval, will be able to enter into agreements with the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the government of any province or any other body for the carrying out of programs previously carried out by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The interim commissioner will also be able to enter into agreements with the Government of Canada or the Government of the Northwest Territories for funding in respect of Nunavut.

The interim commissioner will be able to enter into agreements with the Government of the Northwest Territories for the division of its assets and liabilities between Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Nowhere in these sections is there any requirement for the interim commissioner to consult with the Tungavik and the people of Nunavut.

I should point out that the commissioner of Nunavut is required under this bill to make any instructions he or she receives from the federal minister or the federal cabinet available to the Nunavut cabinet. They are, furthermore, also to be given to the Nunavut legislative assembly.

Since the legislative assembly will not be constituted during the time period envisaged for the interim commissioner, the federal minister gets to decide how the instructions to the interim commissioner will be made public.

There seems to be a bit of a vacuum here. I would like the government to give some assurance of consultation with the people of Nunavut during this very important transition phase. I would like to know more about the relationship between the interim commissioner and the Nunavut implementation commission.

[Translation]

The second area I want to deal with concerns funding. The interim commissioner, as I just pointed, will have authority to enter into agreements with the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories for funding during the transition period. The funding agreements he or she negotiates will terminate

two years after the establishment of Nunavut on April 1, 1999, unless there is provision for an earlier termination.

Following the establishment of Nunavut, different financial arrangements will be put in place. A backgrounder prepared by the federal government indicates that as services now provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories are transferred to the new Nunavut government, there will be a proportional transfer of federal funds and government positions from the Government of the Northwest Territories to the Government of Nunavut.

The government backgrounder points out that a number of studies have estimated the possible costs of establishing the new territory and Government of Nunavut, but that since the exact form and structure of the Nunavut government is yet to be determined these studies have been based on probable scenarios and assumptions.

• (1410)

[English]

The most recent study, by the firm of Coopers and Lybrand, has estimated the cost of setting up the new government in the period from 1992 to 2008 at an average of \$50 million per year, a 7 per cent increase above the 1990-91 federal formula funding grant to the existing Government of the Northwest Territories.

According to the government backgrounder, this figure includes operating costs for the Nunavut implementation, operating costs for the new government starting in 1999, as well as one-time costs for training and for the construction of government facilities. The determination of final costs for the establishment of the Nunavut government will be based on the work of the Nunavut implementation commission.

[Translation]

The third area I want to focus on is education and training. Success in this area is critical to the success of Nunavut. Nunavut offers great opportunities but the people of Nunavut must be in a position to take advantage of these opportunities.

Inuit education levels have improved over the past couple of decades, but we still have a long way to go. It is a sad fact that right now there are very few Inuit graduating from high school. If we do not improve further our education levels we risk being left out of the

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development of Nunavut. If we do not increase and upgrade our training we risk being on the sidelines.

Nunavut will generate significant employment opportunities, but Inuit must be qualified to fill these jobs. If we are not, the majority of these jobs will simply go to outsiders as they have in the past. We cannot permit this to happen. All of us must work together to ensure that the people in the communities of Nunavut benefit from the establishment of Nunavut.

We are embarked upon a long journey. Today is but a milestone along the way. We are far yet from our destination.

Passing this bill today does not change the world for us tomorrow. The lives of the people of Nunavut will not be suddenly different tomorrow or the day after or even a year from now.

[English]

The bill before us sets out a path to follow. It sets out a transition process, the importance of which cannot be overemphasized. Major mistakes during the transition process could prove to be serious impediments for the new government of Nunavut.

The work of the Nunavut implementation commission, as I mentioned earlier, is the key to the smooth and equitable establishment of Nunavut. I have already noted the complex and heavy mandate of this commission. The representatives of Nunavut will have to be cautious, vigilant and forward-looking.

We know that when the Government of Canada transfers powers to other jurisdictions it usually does so without handing over enough resources to carry out the tasks.

A prime example that comes to mind is the health transfer agreement between the federal government and the existing Government of the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories is presently suing the federal government for non-payment of health bills.

Another funding problem involves housing. For the past several years the federal government has chipped away at the social housing funds it transfers to the provinces and territories. In the case of the Northwest Territories cutbacks have been imposed over the past couple of years and recently Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation decided to altogether eliminate its

cost sharing program for new social housing starting in 1994.

• (1415)

[Translation]

Yet there is a housing crisis in the Northwest Territories as 25 per cent of NWT households are in need and this need is growing as the population growth rate is twice the national average. Some 41 per cent of NWT children under the age of 12 are living in overcrowded housing. There is a backlog of almost 3,600 units. About half this backlog is in Nunavut.

Health and housing are major areas of concern within Nunavut. If adequate funding is not provided to deal with these needs, Nunavut will be starting out with a serious handicap.

[English]

In other areas, the federal government has broken financial commitments. I am thinking here of the formula financing agreement that the federal government had with the existing Government of the Northwest Territories. Several years ago the federal government unilaterally changed the formula and the Government of the Northwest Territories has received less than it should have for the past several years.

Another example involves grants in lieu of taxes. Last December the Minister of Finance announced that he was freezing these payments to municipalities. Municipal budgets had already been prepared on the assumption that the federal government would be contributing its expected share. This freeze has affected the municipality of Iqaluit.

I want the federal government to realize that when it comes to funding Nunavut, Nunavut is not like an already developed province with its own large and stable source of revenues. We are just starting out and our population is small and our people do not earn much income. Unemployment reaches 80 per cent in most communities. Nevertheless we pay taxes.

Our economy is underdeveloped. Distances between communities and from major centres in southern Canada are vast. There are no roads. Transportation costs drive up the cost of everything. Our cost of living is several times higher than the southern Canadian average, as was pointed out by my colleague from Davenport.

We lack the community infrastructure and services that other Canadians take for granted. We do not have control over our resources and the Nunavut bill does not give us that control.

We need a break. We need the federal government to invest in us and our future. Give us a chance. Have faith in us. Give us the tools to manage our affairs and we will do it and we will do it well.

Invest in us and Canada will get a return that will be of long term benefit.

[Translation]

Together, in partnership, we can build a better Canada for our children in which all peoples are respected. It would be a Canada in which all children have the same opportunities and where our elders can feel secure and at peace in the knowledge that the land, the people, the culture and the language are strong and will survive.

What will make Nunavut work is the people. All the people of Nunavut need to participate in the establishment of Nunavut. Everyone must get involved. Everyone must feel a part of Nunavut.

Nunavut's representatives on the Nunavut implementation commission will be carrying a very heavy burden of responsibility. They will need the help and advice of the people. It is important for the people of Nunavut to talk to them, assist them in their work and tell them what needs to be done.

For the next few moments I want to speak directly to the youth of Nunavut. I want first to express my regrets to the graduating class in Broughton Island. I had promised to be at their graduation yesterday but had to cancel so I could deal with these bills in the House today. My next words are for them and for all the youth of Nunavut.

Nunavut needs you, all of you.

I want to recognize the achievements of all the students who are graduating this year. I want to recognize the tremendous obstacles many of you have overcome to get this far. You have coped with poverty and sometimes not enough food to eat. You have coped with overcrowded housing conditions with no quiet place to study. Many of you have struggled with family responsibilities in addition to your studies. You have struggled through sickness, possibly the deaths of family members

and friends, some to suicide and some of you may have even attempted suicide yourselves.

However, through it all you have kept going despite all the hard times and often without any support at all you have achieved your goal.

To those who have been discouraged and dropped out I say that they should not give up. Go back to school. Nunavut needs its own people to run it. We do not want to import all the expertise from elsewhere. We need the people of Nunavut to run the Government of Nunavut.

• (1420)

[English]

In closing I would just like to say that when we talk about Nunavut we speak in reverential poems about the area of Nunavut. I would just like to read a poem on how we feel about Nunavut. It is entitled "Nunavut You Hold Such Promise". I will read it:

My father died believing in you—
That you already were—that you had always been.
He thought that he had known you all along
That you had looked after him and his people since time began.

Nunavut you hold such promise.
My mother spoke of you as she sewed
And told the stories of long ago
That taught us young ones
That we would be protected

Nunavut you hold such promise.
My grandmother spoke of you
In her soft, lilting voice
As she sang us to sleep
Content to know of you

Nunavut you hold such promise.
My uncle smiled as he spoke of your bounty
On the trail, near the coast, in the hills
As he drew on his old pipe
And captured our imagination

Nunavut you hold such promise.
My small ones spoke of you too
Curiously, asking what you were
And why we all spoke of you
In quiet, respectful tones

Nunavut you hold such promise.
And I must ensure that all that I know—
All you are—must be known as I know it
So that the ones that spring from me
Will grasp your gift of wonder

Nunavut you hold such promise.
Guide me as you have guided many.
Comfort me, lead me, show me
What it is I must come to know
I shall listen, watch and learn

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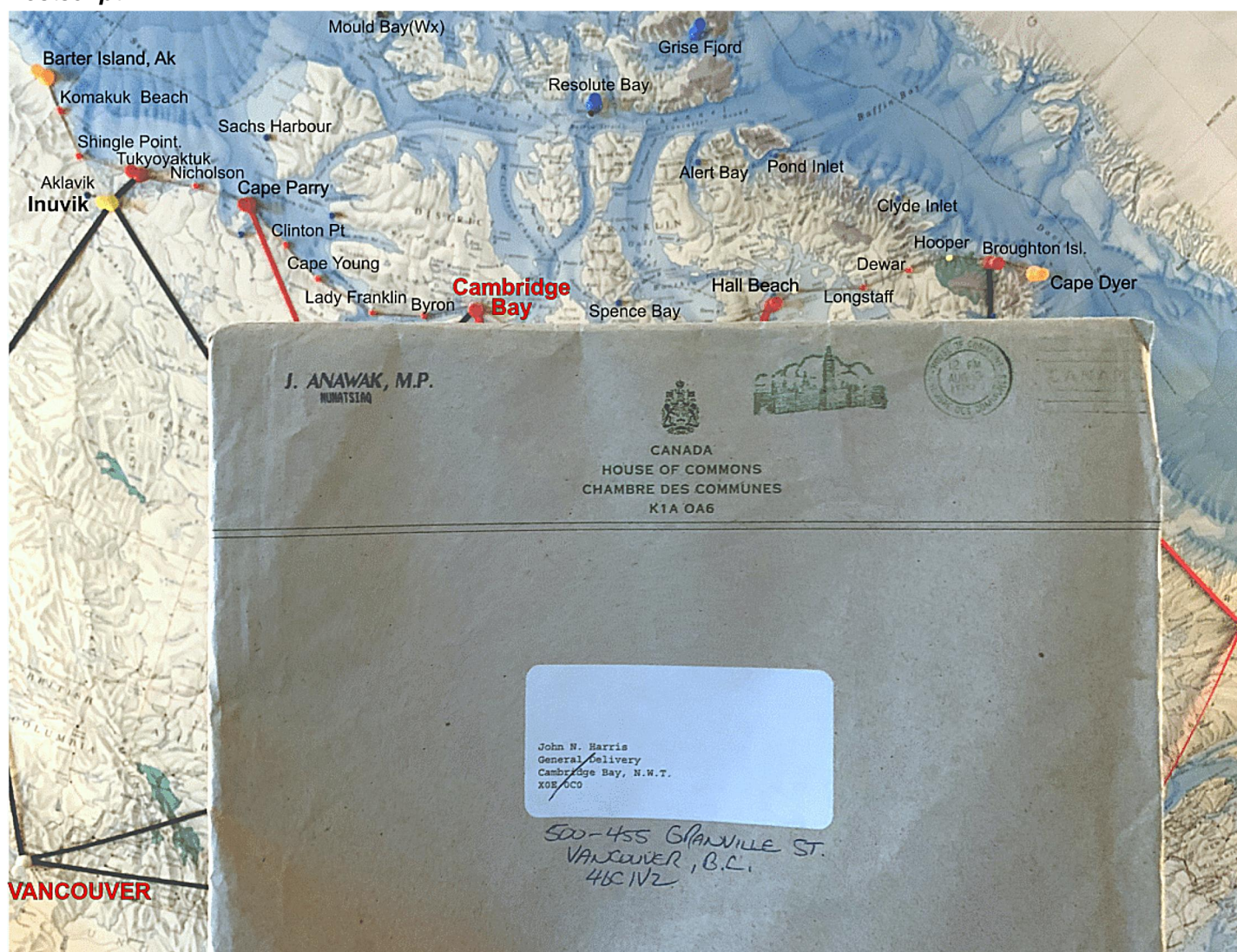
Nunavut you hold such promise.
My family knew you and knew you would provide
My memories of you are many
As my memories of them are precious
And now I speak of you as they did

Nunavut you hold such promise.
If we we could only remember the lessons
Entangled with the memories
And take care of the stories
And pass on the Wisdom

Nunavut you hold such promise.
For you are something that has been
A part of us for so long
We cannot remember when we first met
But I know you will walk with us tomorrow.

* * *

Postscript



This unexpected copy of the 1993 Nunavut Agreement was forwarded to my Vancouver address in the same year I returned to the South when the venerable DEWline finally closed. I was employed in the Arctic regions for almost twenty years, interrupted primarily by full-time attendance at the University of Manitoba (BA 1973) and Simon Fraser University (MA Communication 1981). There was no accompanying letter or note with this copy of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, nor was any needed. In my 1980 M.A. Thesis - National Development and Northern Development: The Establishment of the DEWline in the Canadian North - I had supported Inuit land claims from a distinct and positive viewpoint. I was most pleased to receive this document 13 years later; it meant far more to me than any academic praise or criticism.

Nevertheless, it was the closing paragraph of the thesis concerning the inherent problems that arise from exceeding the carrying capacity of the land that troubled me most. This is already a major issue exacerbated by growing populations, rising food, fuel and habitation costs all rendered worse by unemployment and limited opportunities in far too many regions of the World.

In Canada's Arctic these disturbing trends are more apparent now than ever before, and it would seem (40 years later) that sadly, we have not paid sufficient attention to this dire early warning from the North and its almost inevitable consequences.

John Nicholas Harris, (jnh), February 2020 / Spirasolaris.ca.

In conclusion I would like to say the following to our guests today.

[Editor' s Note: Minister spoke in Inuktitut.]

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sure all members of the House will concur in whatever the hon. minister said.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I can safely say there were no derogatory remarks.

I would like to close by saying as I mentioned earlier that this has been a very humbling experience. It is a very proud day for the people of Nunavut as represented by the people in the gallery from Nunavut area.

I am very proud to have been part of the deliberations on the two bills: on the land claims bill and on the bill dealing with the creation of Nunavut.

Along with my colleagues from the north we are able to say that June 4, 1993 is a very important day for the people of Nunavut. It is a day to remember and tell our grandchildren about.