

**NUNAVUT LANGUAGE POLICY CONFERENCE:  
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**IQALUIT, NUNAVUT  
MARCH 24-26, 1998**

**Nunavut Implementation Commission**

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Nunavut Hivumukpalianikhaagut Katimayit  
Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Commission d'établissement du Nunavut

Letter to the Reader

June 30, 1998

Nunavut is fortunate to be one of a few jurisdictions in Canada in which the day-to-day use of an Aboriginal language remains widespread throughout the general population. Because so many of our people still speak Inuktitut, it provides the Nunavut Government with a rare opportunity, in a world increasingly dominated by the use of English, to promote an Aboriginal language as a functional and official language of government and society. Doing so, though, requires making sensible policy choices; ones that successfully marry the linguistic needs of the population with the practical realities of communication and the fiscal limitations of the modern world.

It was with this problem in mind that the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) recommended in **Footprints 2**, that the three parties the **Nunavut Political Accord** "... jointly convene ... a special *Developing a Language Policy Conference*, as a necessary step in pulling together an adequate societal consensus on the place of language in the future of Nunavut, with particular attention to the preservation and promotion of the Inuit language". It was hoped through a conference of this nature, enough sound policy advice would be provided, to enable decision makers to institute a balanced language policy.

Nunavut at its outset, will be home to three official languages; Inuktitut, English and French. English and French under the federal **Official Languages Act** are the official languages of Canada, with the language rights of all citizens protected under the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**. Inuktitut, which includes Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun, is currently an official language of the Government of Northwest Territories under its **Official Languages Act**. Because of the "grandfathering" provisions of the **Nunavut Act**, Inuktitut will automatically become an official language of Nunavut.

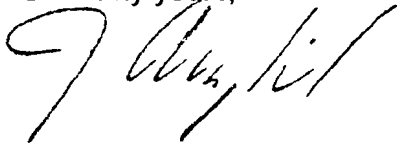
Developing a suitable language policy for Nunavut will not be simple. Inuktitut in Nunavut encompasses the use of seven regional dialects, 17 subdialects, and two systems of writing. These dialects and writing systems are exclusive of those used by Inuit in other parts of Canada and the circumpolar world. Efforts of several previous language commissions and language policy conferences to bridge many of the language differences, failed to find across the board solutions acceptable to the public. And today, if Inuktitut is to survive as a primary language of communication in the electronic age of communication, we must find solutions to problems associated with the need for standardized linguistic practices required for use with new information technologies.

Policies regarding the day-to-day use of language in the governance of Nunavut, including such matters as; language use in the work place, government communication practices, language use in service and program delivery, language use and instruction in schools, official regulation of language use in the private sector, and a range of other language issues must all be integrated into a language policy that is linguistically sensible, socially progressive, and fiscally responsible.

The findings of the conference appear as 50 recommendations at the end of this report. They are offered as a mix of language policy recommendations on a range of language issues, including, objectives, solutions and practices that the Nunavut Government might wish to consider.

In the spirit of promoting and enhancing the use of Inuktitut in the work of the Nunavut Government and in its general usage throughout Nunavut society, while at the same time being cognizant of minority language rights and being fair in the application of a language policy for Nunavut, this report is offered to the reader.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Amagoalik', written in a cursive style.

John Amagoalik  
Chief Commissioner

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Papers prepared for the Nunavut Implementation Commission and presented at the Nunavut Language Policy Conference, Iqaluit, Nunavut, March 24-26, 1998.

- A. Status of Syllabic Writing System, Language and Culture: Its Impact on Society and the Youth and Incompatible Languages. James Arvaluk.
- B. Discussion Paper on Education & Communication. Prepared by Alexina Kublu and Mick Mallon (March 1998). Presented by Alexina Kublu.
- C. Inuit Writing Systems: A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Kenn Harper.
- D. Discussion Paper: Status and Issues of the Inuinnaqtun Language of the West Kitikmeot. Millie Kuliktana, Kugluktuk, NT.
- E. Nunavut the Wonderful Challenge. Mémoire presented to the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Association des francophones du Nunavut. March 1998.
- F. Inuktitut and Information Technology: Discussion Paper. Prepared by Lorraine Thomas (March 19, 1998). Presented by Roberta Roberts.
- G. Language Policy and Business: A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Kenn Harper.
- H. Recommendations about Language and Culture from the Nunavut Education Symposium, April 1997.

## DEFINITIONS

Terminology used in this report.

### **Dialect**

A dialect is the way a group of people speak a language that differs from the way another group of people speaks the same language. Speakers of different dialects usually understand each other to a certain extent, but they may use a few different sounds, different words for certain things or they may have different meanings for the same word.

### **Dual Orthography**

This is the name given to the standardized writing system, in both Roman and syllabics, that was proposed by the Inuit Cultural Institute's Language Commission and adopted at a language conference in Iqaluit in 1976. It is also referred to as "the standard orthography" or the "ICI orthography".

### **Finals**

Finals are the small syllabic characters that are used to represent a consonant at the end of a syllable. In Inuktitut, they are usually called "naaniit". (See "Syllabics" for the two exceptions to this rule.)

### **ICI Orthography**

See "Dual Orthography".

### **Interpret**

This is usually taking a message spoken in one language and converting it to a spoken message in another language. (See "Translate" and "Transliterate".)

### **Inuktitut**

The word "Inuktitut" means all of the dialects of the Inuit of Nunavut, including all those in the Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut), Baffin (Qikiqtaaluk) and Keewatin (Kivalliq) regions. Occasionally, the words "Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun" are used together for further clarity.

### **Inuinnaqtun**

"Inuinnaqtun" is a dialect of the Inuit language spoken in Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk (Qurluqtuq), Umingmaktok (Bay Chimo), Bathurst Inlet, and by some of the people of Holman Island. In English, it is sometimes referred to as the "Copper" dialect.



## **Inuit Cultural Institute**

This is the body established by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) in 1974 to oversee language and cultural matters. It was located in Arviat until it moved to Rankin Inlet in the early 1990's.

## **Language Commission**

This was a group established by the Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) to review the two orthographies used for Inuktitut. In 1976 the Commission proposed a standard "dual orthography" for the Inuktitut language in Canada that has been adapted to varying degrees in all Nunavut communities.

## **Languages Commissioner**

This is an individual appointed by the Legislative Assembly of the NWT under the NWT **Official Languages Act** who independently and impartially investigates complaints about language rights not being respected by institutions of the Legislative Assembly and Government of the NWT. She/he must table an annual report in the Legislative Assembly describing the activities of the office and the language issues that were dealt with.

## **Natsilingmiutut**

This is the Natsilik dialect found in the eastern half of the Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut) region.

## **Official Languages Act**

There are two Official Languages Acts (OLAs). One applies to the federal government and its institutions. It designates English and French as the Official Languages of Canada. The other OLA applies to the institutions of the Legislative Assembly of the NWT and the Government of the NWT. It designates eight Official Languages in the NWT - English, French, Inuktitut (including Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun), Cree, Chipewyan, Dogrib, Gwich'in, and Slavey (including North and South Slavey). This is the Act that Nunavut will inherit unless changes are made to it, or it is replaced by a different Official Languages Act for Nunavut.

## **Orthography**

The word "orthography" means writing system or script. There are two different writing systems or scripts used for Inuktitut - syllabic orthography, "Qaniujaaqpait" , and Roman orthography, "Qaliujaaqpait" (a, pa, ta, ...).

## **Qaliujaaqpait\* ~ Qaniujaaqpait\***

Qaliujaaqpait is Roman orthography. (It is also the script used to write Qallunaatitut, which also has the letter "l"). Qaniujaaqpait is syllabics. (It has an "n" like "Inuktitut"). (\*Name(s) suggested by the late Abe Okpik.)

## **Roman Orthography**

Roman orthography is a writing system that uses letters like those in the English alphabet - a, b, c. For the most part, one symbol represents one sound (although there are numerous exceptions). In Inuktitut, it is called "Qaliujaaqpait".

## **Standard Orthography**

(See "Dual Orthography".)

## **Syllabary**

The table of syllabic characters used to write Inuktitut. It contains main characters and small characters, or diacritics, usually called "finals". (See "syllabics".)

## **Syllabics or Syllabic Orthography**

Syllabics is a writing system in which each symbol represents a syllable usually made up of more than one sound. Inuktitut syllabics also uses smaller characters, or "finals", to represent the sound at the end of a syllable. (There are two exceptions in Inuktitut syllabics where the small character or "diacritic" goes before the main character - qi, qu, qa and ngi, ngu, nga.)

## **Translate**

This usually means taking a written document in one language and producing the same written document in another language. (See "Interpret" and "Transliterate".)

## **Transliterate**

This is the process of taking a document written in one script and changing it to another script in the same language. The revised Qaniujaaqpait can easily and accurately be transliterated into Qaliujaaqpait and vice-versa. (This does not involve translating into another language or dialect.)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Conference**

The Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) held a three-day Language Policy Conference in Iqaluit, March 24th to 26th, 1998, in order to determine what language issues need to be addressed by the Nunavut Government. Delegates were not asked to make decisions about how the government should proceed, but rather, to provide information and make recommendations that would assist the new government in making decisions about language policy and legislation for the new territory.

About sixty delegates from across Nunavut attended the conference, as well as numerous individuals from a range of organizations. Several guests were invited from Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Labrador, the territorial and federal governments.

The Co-Chairs, John Amagoalik and Peter Ernerk, opened the meeting with an overview of the purpose of the conference. Fourteen individuals then made presentations over the three days, as indicated below. Some of these people were asked to prepare a paper for distribution so that delegates would have some ideas for discussion. The recommendations in these papers were only suggestions to generate debate. They did not represent the preferences of the Nunavut Implementation Commission nor any other body. After each presentation, there was a question and answer period. At the end of the conference, discussions were summarized and delegates proposed recommendations. There were no motions made to amend, adopt or reject any of the recommendations.

Generally, delegates felt that the issues raised were complex, and that a body, such as a "Language Commission", should be established to follow-up on the meeting and provide advice to the new government about language on an ongoing basis.

This report will be submitted to the Deputy Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and the Office of the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut.

It is hoped that the report will be of assistance in the development of an official languages policy for Nunavut.

Information in the report is organized under specific subject headings - Orthography, Information Technologies, etc. Points made by several presenters and comments made by numerous delegates are combined. NIC also has notes and tapes from each presentation and discussion.

The presentations listed below are in the order in which they were made. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the order of the presentations did not in all cases follow the original agenda, and the agenda presented below reflects such changes. (An asterisk indicates that a paper accompanied the presentation, a copy of which can be found in the appendices.)

## 1.2 Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcoming Remarks: Mayor of Iqaluit, Jimmy Kilabuk
3. Overview of Purpose of the Conference: Co-Chairs, John Amagoalik, Chief Commissioner, NIC, Peter Ernerk, Commissioner, NIC
4. Looking Back - The ITC Language Commission of 1974-76: Jose Kusugak, President of NTI
5. A Language Policy for Nunavut - Setting the Stage: \*James Arvaluk, Consultant, Coral Harbour
  - a) Challenges Faced by Youth: Jason Putumiraqtuq and Simon Nuqingaq, Youth Delegates
  - b) Challenges Faced by Elders: Elijah Erkloo, Elder, and Chair of Nunavut Social Development Council
  - c) Education Language Policy: \*Alexina Kublu, Instructor, Interpreter/Translator Program, Nunavut Arctic College, (co-author/co-presenter, Mick Mallon, was absent) both of Ittukuluuk Consulting
6. Official Languages Challenges: Part 1
  - a) Government Programs and Services
  - b) Communications with the Public
  - c) Legislative Requirements
  - d) Financial Costs: Judi Tutcho, NWT Official Languages Commissioner, and Shannon Gullberg, Legal Counsel
7. Practical Working Language Challenges
  - a) Syllabics and Roman Orthographic Systems: \*Millie Kuliktana, Language Consultant, Kitikmeot/Qitirmiut Divisional Education Council; \*Kenn Harper, Iqaluit Businessman and Consultant; James Arvaluk, Consultant, Coral Harbour
  - b) Use of Information Technologies: \*Roberta Roberts, Nortext Multimedia, and Ooleena Nowyook, Baffin Divisional Board of Education
8. Official Languages Challenge: Part 2
  - e) Interpretation and Translation: Andrew Tagak, GNWT, Iqaluit

f) Minority Language Issues: \*Daniel Cuerrier, Francophone Association of Iqaluit

g) Private Sector: \*Kenn Harper, Iqaluit Businessman

h) Current GNWT Language Initiatives:

i) Interpreter/Translator Certification Process: Bob Galipeau, Language Services, GNWT, Yellowknife

ii) Proposed Transfer of Aboriginal Languages Funding to Language Communities: Margaret Niego, Cultural Affairs, GNWT, Yellowknife

9. Wrap Up: Co-Chairs, and Betty Harnum, consultant

10. Recommendations: Individual Delegates

## **2. ORTHOGRAPHY/WRITING SYSTEMS/SCRIPT**

The following summary is based on presentations made by Jose Kusugak, President of NTI; Kenn Harper, an Iqaluit businessman and linguist; Millie Kuliktana, Language Consultant, Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut) Divisional Education Council; and James Arvaluk, Consultant, Coral Harbour. Harper, Kuliktana and Arvaluk provided papers.

### **2.1 A Very Brief History**

The most important thing to keep in mind throughout this discussion of writing systems is that, even if one common orthography is chosen, it does not mean that one dialect is chosen as a standard. Any dialect can be written in either Qaniujaaqpait (Roman) or Qaliujaaqpait (Syllabic) scripts - or even with some other writing system altogether. A writing system is just a tool to record a spoken language, and it is wise to choose the tool that will best preserve, develop and enhance the use of the language it represents. This tool should work well for as many people as possible, and for as long as possible, so that changes can be minimized. Ideally, it should make it as easy as possible to learn the language that is recorded, and to record and maintain the language as it is spoken.

Looking at Nunavut, we find two different orthographies used for Inuktitut. "Qaniujaaqpait", or syllabic orthography, is used in Baffin, Keewatin and the eastern part of the Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut) region. "Qaliujaaqpait", or Roman orthography, is used by Inuinnaqtun speakers in the western part of the Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut) region. Some people can use both orthographies. Neither of these writing systems were developed by Inuit, although they certainly played a major role. They were developed mostly by missionaries so that they could teach religion to Inuit. Each religion had a slightly different writing system.

There are still some differences between the Roman orthography used in Alaska, the western NWT, the west Kitikmeot (Qitirmiut) region, Labrador and Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland). There are also minor differences in the way syllabics are used in Nunavut and Nunavik (Northern Quebec).

Syllabics were borrowed from Cree and Ojibway in the late 1800's. They were easily adapted to represent the sounds of Inuktitut. Cree and Ojibway, however, have more than three vowels, while Inuktitut has only three. In syllabics, you indicate the vowel in a syllable by turning the symbol in a certain direction. For Cree and Ojibway, the syllabic characters have to be turned in all four directions. Since Inuktitut only uses three vowels, the "fourth column" was not really needed. It was included because it was part of the syllabary borrowed from Cree and Ojibway. It did, however, work very well to represent one English sound found in some Biblical names, like "Abraham" and "Isaiah", so some people became accustomed to using it for this purpose, and later for writing the sound "ai" as in aiviq.

In the 1970's, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) became involved in land claims research and established the Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) to oversee language and cultural matters. They, in turn, set up a Language Commission, led by Jose Kusugak, with six representatives from the various regions of the NWT. Both of the writing systems,

Qaniujaaqpait and Qaliujaaqpait, were reviewed. Although the federal government had previously suggested that Inuit adopt one common writing system, the Commissioners, after consulting with Inuit across the NWT, and with language experts, proposed a "dual orthography" which standardizes both Qaniujaaqpait and Qaliujaaqpait.

In this new system, no matter whether you use Qaniujaaqpait or Qaliujaaqpait, there is only one way to write a sound, and only one way to pronounce a symbol (although there are minor pronunciation differences between dialects). The revisions included syllabic symbols which distinguish qi, qu, qa from ki, ku, ka; ngi, ngu, nga from gi, gu, ga, and i, u, a from á,li, lu, la, as well as finals for use at the end of syllables. In the revised Qaliujaaqpait, only the three necessary vowels are used - i, ú, a - (e and o were dropped) and the letters q and r were added to represent the important distinction between k and q and between g and r. The digraph (two symbols) ng is also used to distinguish this sound from g.

This revised orthography has been adopted in Nunavut communities more by younger people than by elders, although some elders have found little difficulty making the switch. In fact, in 1985, in Hall Beach, delegates at an ICI Elders' Conference approved the use of the "dual orthography". There are, however, people who still want to use the "fourth column" of the syllabary because they feel that "something is missing" without it.

Of course, there is nothing to stop them from using these old symbols, but there are certainly issues that have to be considered carefully before formally approving their reintroduction to the syllabic table.

In the west, the revised Roman system has not been welcomed as much as the new syllabic system has in the east. Many people still refuse to learn the revised version. Some people use the old Qaliujaaqpait when they write for elders and the new Qaliujaaqpait when they write for young people who have had the opportunity to learn it in school, and for language specialists who require more precision in the written form. When the Inuit Cultural Institute's dual orthography was adopted in 1976, they recommended that it be reviewed in 10 years time. More than 20 years later, a review has still not been done, and certain issues still remain with regard to both orthographies. For example, there is no standard sort order - that is, it is not clear in what order words should appear in a dictionary or wordlist. This is discussed in more detail under Information Technologies in section three.

Further, some additional or alternative symbols might be needed or useful in one or both orthographies. These symbols could be taken from any existing script or created especially for Inuktitut. It may be beneficial to examine some other symbols to see if they could better represent some of the sounds of Inuktitut. Generally, new symbols are not necessary unless a difference in sound makes a difference in meaning and this sound difference is not yet represented by the writing system. Before adding, dropping or changing any symbols in Qaniujaaqpait or Qaliujaaqpait, however, the pros and cons of each option should be carefully examined.

At present, then, there are actually four different ways of writing Inuktitut in Nunavut communities - an old Qaniujaaqpait (syllabics) and the revised version, and an old Qaliujaaqpait (Roman) system and the revised one. Approximately 95% of the Inuit in Nunavut use Qaniujaaqpait; 5% use Qaliujaaqpait (mainly for Inuinnaqtun).

With regards to the spoken language, it appears that more people from the west attempt to learn to speak and understand an eastern dialect, and fewer eastern residents learn a western dialect. On the contrary, with regards to writing the language, it appears that more people from the east learn the Qaliujaaqpait that is used in the west, and fewer from the west learn Qaniujaaqpait used in the east.

## **2.2 Comments by Delegates**

Some people think it would be wise to drop one orthography or the other. Others feel that there is no need to do this, since an excellent tool for accurately representing the sounds of Inuktitut in either Qaliujaaqpait or Qaniujaaqpait already exists - the standard "dual orthography". They would suggest that, if any change is to be made, it is simply to get everyone to use this standard.

Many of those who use Qaniujaaqpait do not feel a need or desire to learn Qaliujaaqpait, and vice-versa. Many of those who use one of the old writing systems do not feel the need or desire to learn the new one. It was suggested, however, that if everyone were asked to switch to the new Qaliujaaqpait, almost everyone in Nunavut, east and west, would be learning a new system. This seems, to some people, fairer than asking only one group to learn the other group's orthography - if a single common orthography is desired.

It was suggested at the meeting that, out of respect for other dialects, people should attempt to learn other dialects and both writing systems.

Two areas where there are complex issues about spelling are: surnames, which were created and given to Inuit by the federal government under "Project Surname" in the 1970's; and place names, which even today are often written in the older orthography. Some people want to revise the incorrect or old spelling in many of these names, but it is more difficult to make changes here than in other areas. It was suggested that the government should assist individuals, free of charge, to make changes to their names if they were recorded incorrectly by the government during "Project Surname". (See additional comments under; Language Learning, Language Teaching, and Culture, in section four.)

Further, it was noted that, although the government has a policy of supporting the use of the new orthography, it also has a policy that states that a non-standard spelling of a place name can be used if the community so wishes.

People felt that there is no sense in developing a writing system that people refuse to employ. It is not really reasonable to think about adopting a policy or a law that forces people to use a certain writing system. Even if there is a law about language and about the writing system(s), people have to want to learn it and use it. People generally react more positively to encouragement and assistance than to being told that they must do something.

Delegates at the conference agreed that all of the orthographic issues need to be dealt with, on an ongoing basis, by a group of people who have the required linguistic and technical expertise. They acknowledged that the group that deals with these issues



must be given the freedom to explore options that may be unpopular or difficult to accept at first, because they will have to think of what is best for the future of Nunavut.

They said that research needs to be done to evaluate the efficiency of each writing system (e.g. Do people read better and faster in syllabics or in Roman orthography?).

No matter what decisions are made about the writing systems for Inuktitut, they must be made after Inuit of all ages in Nunavut are thoroughly consulted, and they must take into account that it will be the young people who take the language into the next century, where there will be enormous challenges.

Some people feel that concentrating too many resources at this time on solving the dilemma about writing systems is not a wise decision. A perfect writing system is only a tool; there are many other measures that would improve the chances of the survival of the language more than orthographic reform.

It was noted that the Nunavut Social Development Council just recently made a recommendation to keep both orthographies.

### **2.3 Decisions/Advantages/Disadvantages**

What are the decisions that have to be made about orthography?

What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each decision?

Do Inuit in Nunavut want to adopt one common writing system – syllabics or Roman? The consensus was – "Not at this time". Such a change will affect almost everyone in Nunavut and many outside of Nunavut. People need time to meet, discuss the matter and fully understand why a change might be needed, what change would be best, and what impact any change might have. They need time to plan properly before any process of change might begin and they need time to gain support - both human and financial - for any new initiative.

#### **a) Some Advantages of Switching Entirely to Qaniujaaqpait (Syllabics)**

- Using syllabics for Inuktitut reflects the uniqueness of Inuit, especially of Canadian Inuit.
- People are less likely to use English pronunciation for Inuktitut words. (In Qaniujaaqpait, many of the same letters are used in English and Inuktitut, but the pronunciation should be different.)
- Inuktitut might be less vulnerable to other influences from English, (such as using the English alphabet to sort words instead of using i, u, a, pi, pu, pa.
- If people used only Qaniujaaqpait for Inuktitut, there might be less of a tendency for them to make the switch and develop a preference for reading in English (which often occurs).

- There are other languages, such as Cree and Ojibway that also use syllabics, so some developmental costs (for such things as computer programs, printing and publishing) can be shared with these other language groups.

#### **b) Some Advantages of Switching Entirely to Qaliujaaqpait (Roman)**

- The writing systems used in Alaska, Labrador and Kalaallit Nunaat are Qaliujaaqpait, and, even if they are all slightly different from the Canadian Qaliujaaqpait, it might be easier for people to read materials from these other regions if they could read Qaliujaaqpait.
- Although the dialects are different, people who know Qaliujaaqpait might be able to use materials in Yup'ik from Alaska or Kalaallitun from Greenland, to learn these other dialects.
- It will be easier for people who read and write in another language that uses Roman orthography, (like English, French, German) to learn Inuktitut.
- Less effort and money would be required to develop resources such as computer programs. (Special programs have to be developed for syllabics, but a lot of progress has already been made.)

Should Inuit use the old writing systems, or the newer revised versions?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the older writing system and the newer ICI standard "dual orthography"?

### **2.4 The Old Version**

#### **a) Some Advantages**

- It is mostly elders who are unilingual. They can only get information if it is in Inuktitut/ Inuinnaqtun. Using the old system allows elders to understand written materials.
- Teaching younger people to read in the old orthography allows them to read what elders write and to read other things that were written in the past.

#### **b) Some Disadvantages**

- There are some letters that are used to represent more than one sound, and some sounds may not be represented at all, so a reader has to figure out from context what the word might be. If a person can't speak Inuktitut, or isn't sure what the document is about, it isn't always possible to figure out what word is intended.
- A person can't tell from the spelling how to pronounce a word correctly. This leads to a lot of mispronunciation; words are often pronounced as if they were English words.

- A person is never sure how to spell a word. This can make it difficult to find words in a dictionary or glossary.

## **2.5 The New Version (ICI standard)**

### **a) Some Advantages**

- The standard orthography provides a true representation of the spoken word. A symbol is always pronounced the same way, and a symbol is written for every sound, so a person can accurately write a word, or correctly pronounce any written word.
- It is easier to learn a language if the writing system is logical. (English spelling is not logical; think of the many ways of pronouncing "ough".) If there's only one way to pronounce a symbol, a person does not have to memorize the way each word is pronounced. It is very easy to learn new words. For these reasons, the new orthography is used in schools and in teaching Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun as a second language. (It was pointed out that at least one person had become fluent in Inuinnaqtun by studying the written language first; by reading the language in the new Qaliujaaqpait, this person was able to accurately pronounce every word.)
- The Qaniujaaqpait and Qaliujaaqpait match perfectly - each symbol has only one counterpart in the other writing system. This makes it easy to transliterate from one form to the other. Although this does not provide a "translation" into another dialect, it will usually allow the reader of the transliterated version to know basically what the document is about. It would also allow a person to easily learn the other dialect, even if it were written in the other standard script.

### **b) Some Disadvantages**

- Some people simply feel that "something is missing" from the new Qaniujaaqpait (the ai, pai, tai column), and from the Qaliujaaqpait (the vowels e and o). (There is an emotional attachment to the older orthographies which cannot be denied.)
- Many elders find it harder to read in the new writing system, and they, for the most part, are the unilinguals who rely on materials written in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun for information.

Is there another orthography that would be even better than the ones currently in use (perhaps one used in Alaska or Kalaallit Nunaat)?

At present, Inuit in Nunavut and Nunavik are the only ones to use syllabics. Alaska, Labrador and Kalaallit Nunaat all use Roman orthographies, but they are all different and none of them, at this time, is a preferred option. More research would be needed to determine whether or not any of these is better than the ICI standard. The sound system in each of these regions is somewhat different, so it would not be possible to simply borrow any of the other existing orthographies without changes.

Should the Inuit of Nunavut try to develop a common writing system that would be shared by other speakers of the Yup'ik/Inupiaq/Inuit language outside of Nunavut?

A few years ago, when the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) proposed the possibility of a universal writing system for the Yup'ik/Inupiaq/Inuit language, language specialists who examined the matter said that, at that time, there was little advantage to adopting one common orthography, and that it would require a considerable amount of time, energy and funding to accomplish such a task.

**c) A Note of Thanks**

Jose Kusugak acknowledged some of the people who have been involved in orthographic reform over the years are: Mark Kalluak, Armand Tagoona, Elijah Erkloo, Mary Panegoosee, Joanassie Salomonie, Abe Okpik, Elijah Menarik, Eric Anoe, Rose Jeddore of Labrador, Mick Mallon, Gilles Lefebvre, Raymond Gagné, Father Didier, Robert Petersen of Greenland, Edna MacLean of Alaska and many others. (Apologies to those who are not mentioned here.)



sounds are represented by more than one letter. (There are actually more than 20 vowels in English, but they are represented by just 6 letters - a, e, i, o, u, and y.) Some people think, however, that the English alphabet is the only alphabet and that these symbols are the only ones you can use in a Roman orthographic system. This is not true. It may be beneficial to examine some other symbols to see if they better represent some of the sounds of Inuktitut.

The English alphabetical order is based on sorting words by the first letter of a word. Words in syllabics, on the other hand, are sorted by the first syllable, not just the first letter. In Nunavut, syllabics are most often sorted in the order: i, u, a, pi, pu, pa. However, in Nunavik, the order is a little different - a, i, u, pa, pi, pu.

Until a common sort order is established, it will be difficult for people from one area to easily use documents on the computer, like dictionaries and glossaries from another area. Imagine for example, if English dictionaries made in England, Canada, and the United States all used a different alphabetical order; it would be really inconvenient. It is important to note that the international standard sort order for syllabics will be decided very soon, and if Inuit want to be considered in this process, they will have to act quickly.

In Nunavik, there has also been, apparently, a request for a new set of syllabic characters for hi, hu, ha which would replace the use of the Roman "H" plus a vowel symbol. Obviously, this is one more matter for discussion.

### **3.2 Comments by Delegates**

A number of delegates admitted that they are intimidated by computers. They do not understand them at all and are afraid of the influence they might have. It was suggested that people who understand computers assist others, especially elders, to become familiar with this technology so that they can provide educated comments about areas where they have concerns.

One delegate mentioned that it is important to ensure that adults know how to block access to such things as pornography on the Internet if we are going to let our children and young people use these communication tools.

### **3.3 Decisions**

What decisions have to be made about information technologies?

What is the best way for Inuit to provide advice to developers of information technologies so that their linguistic needs are properly respected?

There is a committee (called the Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics Encoding Committee) that is currently involved in the Unicode project. At this time, it is probably best if Inuit with technical and linguistic expertise work with this committee to achieve their goals. This work must be done immediately or decisions that affect Inuktitut might be made without Inuit participation.

What things do Inuit need to consider when they make decisions or provide advice about information technology?

Inuktitut experts from all the regions need to work together so that they are aware of how their decisions will affect each other. This is essential whether they continue to use two different orthographies, or agree to use one. They also need to make decisions that will work in the future. This won't be easy because technology is changing so quickly.

The Nunavut Government will have to stay abreast of these developments and carefully consider whether there are any implications for Inuktitut. Some technological changes may affect decisions about orthography. The Nunavut Government should also keep the international standards experts informed about any orthographic reform in Nunavut.

Inuit also need to know that it is almost impossible to prevent people from having access to information technologies, so they should become informed and active in directing its development to ensure that it has positive effects for Inuit and their language and culture.

#### 4. LANGUAGE LEARNING, LANGUAGE TEACHING, AND CULTURE

This section is based on a paper presented by Alexina Kublu, co-authored with Mick Mallon; a presentation by Jason Putumiraqtuq and Simon Nuqingaq, Youth Delegates; and a presentation by Elijah Erkloo, Elder and Chair of the Nunavut Social Development Council. Some comments of other presenters, as well as delegates' thoughts, are also included. (It is also important to note that there was a Nunavut Education Symposium in April, 1997, which focused more specifically on education issues.)

##### 4.1 Comments by Delegates

Almost every delegate that spoke said that Inuktitut must be taught in school for a much longer period each day. In some cases, it appears that Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun is only taught for 15 minutes a day - or even less! Some delegates were shocked to learn this; they had assumed it was used much more. This is something that the community has the authority to determine.

They also said that children need more time and assistance to make a smooth transition from Inuktitut to English as the language of instruction, which occurs, frequently, in grade four. (In the old **Education Act**, there was a section that said communities had the authority to choose the language of instruction up to grade three. This is perhaps why many communities have considered it necessary for students to make the abrupt transition to English in grade four. Communities need to be better informed about their powers under the **Education Act** and other legislation affecting language and culture.)

Concern was expressed over the fact that, after all these years, there still is no curriculum or materials for kids in the higher grades to learn Inuktitut and to learn different subjects in Inuktitut.

Generally, people feel very concerned about the language. They feel that young people are speaking Inuktitut less, and that they are not speaking it well; they constantly mix English and Inuktitut. There does not seem to be adequate concern about the quality of Inuktitut that is spoken.

Sometimes when elders try to correct younger people they are told, "That's not the way we say it anymore." Some elders in fact, even start to imitate the way younger people are speaking Inuktitut.

Young people said that they often stop trying to speak Inuktitut or to improve their language skills because they are mocked when they make mistakes. They were advised that teasing is one of the traditional Inuit ways of teaching. People tease you so that you will become stronger and so that you learn to laugh at yourself. The youth did not seem to be aware of this and the elders did not seem to be aware that the youth found this discouraging.

Young people cannot be blamed for the loss of language that is occurring today. There are many factors that are affecting the situation.



It seems that some individuals do not have good skills in any language. They try to speak two languages, but "neither one is firmly anchored".

Teachers cannot be blamed for the loss of language or the deterioration of language skills. Language teachers are often given few resources and little time to teach many children at all different levels. In addition, many parents do not speak Inuktitut to their children at home, so the parents are also responsible.

Some people do not seem to be aware of the importance of maintaining a language. They see little use for Inuktitut today or in the future. They do not see that a great deal of culture and knowledge is passed on through language. (Think of kinship terms for example, or knowledge about wildlife.)

It was suggested that language be taught in a more culturally appropriate setting, like a camp out on the land. At present, students are "excused" from school if they go out to participate in traditional activities with their families. This should be part of the education system, not something a child is "excused" for.

Elders must be recognized as experts and given the appropriate accreditation. They should be teaching the language teachers on a regular basis.

A lot of old vocabulary is being lost. This is partly because the related cultural practices are also disappearing. In the past, Inuit rarely called each other by name; they would use a term that indicated their relationship. There were a lot of specific terms, like mother's brother (uncle), father's brother (uncle), and mother's sister's child (cousin) or father's older brother's child (cousin). In English, these distinctions are not reflected in the kinship terms "uncle" or "cousin", but in Inuktitut there are different words for each of these relations. Some elders felt that by teaching these words to young people, they would get a better understanding of their own culture.

For some people it appears to be a losing battle; they feel Inuktitut is not going to survive so they have just given up. They need encouragement. There are some that feel like they are just too busy trying to "stay alive, feed the family, keep a roof over their heads, etc.", and that they have no time to devote to language preservation.

It was mentioned that when people do not speak the dialect of the community or group they are in, they often switch to English instead. Sometimes this is because their dialect is considered "baby talk", or because it takes more effort to be understood if they use their dialect. Delegates agreed that more respect should be shown for other dialects and that people should make a bigger effort to understand each other or learn other dialects so they won't be tempted or forced to use English instead of Inuktitut. One delegate asked if it would be possible to have a program so Inuit could learn different dialects.

Several delegates mentioned that the Nunavut Government should seek out learning opportunities that specifically target Inuit language and culture. Two delegates, Kenn Harper and Joe Kunuk, described a culture-based school in Greenland, (which accepts students from the NWT each year), where the students spend a few months studying only language, culture, and traditional knowledge by living in a traditional way (such as hunting from a kayak).

## 4.2 Decisions

What decisions need to be made about the role of language in education in Nunavut?

Is the Nunavut Government willing to make major changes to the education system in order to better preserve their language and culture? If not, how can the current system better support linguistic and cultural goals?

Perhaps language should be taught in a special school - a cultural school or camp - where students learn traditional skills in a traditional manner. Or, perhaps it would be better to choose only certain students to become the language experts, to concentrate the resources instead of spreading them so thinly. Should language perhaps be taught to each group of students only at certain times of the year when they can be immersed in it and have the opportunity to concentrate on developing their skills in a more intense program?

How can Inuktitut be strengthened in the home? In the community? In the school?

The Nunavut Government has to undertake a public information campaign that will make people more aware of the value of preserving Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. They have to find ways to help students, parents, and teachers work together and support each other. They need to find ways to get support from the whole community for the language initiatives in the education system.

What is the aim of teaching Inuktitut in the schools today? Is this aim being met? Is there a better way to meet this goal? Is there another goal that would be better?

One of the elders asked if those who are involved in education are only thinking of today's elders as the unilinguals. He wanted to know if people have considered the possibility that there may be, and perhaps should be, unilingual Inuktitut speakers in Nunavut for many years to come. He noted that the goal of education today seems to be to ensure that children know English and that, hopefully, they will learn some Inuktitut. He suggested the possibility that schools could turn out fluent, well-educated unilinguals - fluent only in Inuktitut, or perhaps in many dialects of the Inuit language. If the goal of the education system is to foster fluent bilingualism, it is failing for many students.

There are so many questions to be asked about education. It is not possible to address them all here. It is enough to say that the delegates at the conference all seemed to want Inuktitut to survive and be a part of the education system.

It is interesting to note that the recommendations from the Nunavut Education Symposium of April, 1997, are very similar to the ones made by this group. (They are provided as an appendix to this report.)

## 5. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES CHALLENGES: PART 1

This section of the report summarizes the topics discussed in part six of the agenda.

- a) Government Programs and Services
- b) Communications with the Public
- c) Legislative Requirements
- d) Financial Costs

### 5.1 Summary

The following summary is based on a presentation made by Judi Tutcho, Languages Commissioner of the NWT and her legal counsel, Shannon Gullberg. They distributed a number of documents: the NWT **Official Languages Act**, a booklet about the Act, a copy of the GNWT **Policy and Guidelines on Official Languages**, and a map of the languages in the NWT

The Languages Commissioner of the NWT made a presentation about her role and about the laws and policies that govern language in the NWT. She said that Inuktitut still appears to be quite a strong language, and that the people of Nunavut are fortunate to have a common vision about their language. She said they are on a journey and they have to cross a bridge.

The elders are the strong foundation; (they are like walking encyclopedias); the parents are at each end, and the youth are the bridge itself. She encouraged them to work together towards their goal.

She then explained her role as Languages Commissioner. First, she said she is not a government employee; she is appointed by a vote of the Legislative Assembly and is independent. She is not responsible for providing language services or running language programs. She monitors the GNWT, the Legislative Assembly and all of their institutions to make sure they respect people's language rights. She will investigate a complaint when someone complains to her that a language right has been denied, or whenever she thinks there is a problem within her jurisdiction. For example, at this meeting, she has heard that there is not enough time or resources allotted for teaching Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun in the schools. When she investigates a problem, she follows certain procedures to make sure everyone is treated fairly, makes recommendations about how the problem can be resolved and follows up to ensure something is done. She reports to the Legislative Assembly every year. As a last resort, she may appear in court if a case is not resolved. She also makes presentations across the NWT that promote the use of the Official Languages and an awareness of language rights.

Next, she explained a bit of history. In 1984, the federal government proposed an amendment to the federal **Official Languages Act**, which would have made French and English the Official Languages of the NWT. This happened because someone challenged the English-only laws in the Yukon. The federal government said that the

NWT and the Yukon are federal institutions, so the **Official Languages Act** of Canada applies to them. The NWT government challenged this by stating that language and culture are the responsibility of the territorial government. As a compromise, in 1984, the NWT Legislative Assembly adopted the **NWT Official Languages Act**, which recognizes English and French as well as the Aboriginal languages of the NWT. In 1990, amendments gave equal status to all eight Official Languages and created the Office of the Languages Commissioner. Inuktitut is an Official Language; it includes Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun.

Shannon Gullberg, lawyer for the Languages Commissioners office then gave an unofficial summary of the **NWT Official Languages Act**. It was adopted to preserve, protect and enhance the Official Languages of the NWT. This means that people of the NWT have certain language rights in the Legislative Assembly, the courts, in GNWT departments, (including schools, health centres, hospitals, airports, etc.), and in any dealings with boards or agencies created by them (e.g. school boards, health and social services boards, appeal boards, etc.) The Act does not apply to municipal governments, (like Hamlets), or to private businesses. It may not apply to contractors who do work for the government unless their contract says it does. In the Legislative Assembly, anyone can use any Official Language.

Acts and journals have to be in English and French, and in Aboriginal languages if the Commissioner of the NWT recommends it. Papers filed for court proceedings can be in English or French, but any Official Language can be used in the court proceedings. In Justice of the Peace Court, for example, everything can be in Inuktitut. The Judge can make simultaneous interpretation available for the audience attending if a court case is important to the public. Orders, decisions and judgments are issued from courts and court-like bodies in English, and in French if French was used in the proceedings.

She explained that the government has to serve the public and communicate with them in Official Languages. This means that normally, the government, board, or agency has to find an employee who speaks your language, or find and pay an interpreter/translator if they want to communicate with you or if you want to communicate with them. Of course, there are some exceptions; for example, it might not make sense to have interpreter services for Dogrib in Iqaluit. English and French services have to be available in head offices. In regional offices, services have to be available in any Official Language if there is a significant demand, or if it is reasonable that the office should be expected to communicate in that language. In the case of an Aboriginal Language, services have to be available for the language(s) spoken in that region or community.

She then mentioned a number of laws and policies that relate to language. The highest law in Canada, the **Constitution Act 1867-1982**, makes English and French official. Part of this law, the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, Section 14, gives witnesses and other parties the right to an interpreter in court. It does not, however, say who pays - the federal government? Nunavut government? How much will the interpreter be paid? Who can interpret? These are basically policy decisions.

The **Nunavut Act**, Section 29, says that on April 1, 1999, all laws of the present NWT will be inherited by Nunavut. Section 38 says that if Nunavut wants to change the NWT

**Official Languages Act**, they will need the consent of the Federal Parliament, unless they are increasing rights and privileges.

The federal **Official Languages Act** says that federal and provincial Parliaments have certain powers, but the territorial legislatures aren't mentioned. Since the NWT and Nunavut are created by federal Acts, are the NWT and Nunavut just federal institutions? (This is the same question that brought about the NWT **Official Languages Act** in 1984.) The federal government will, no doubt, insist on certain English and French rights in the Nunavut Legislature.

In 1997, after years of consultation and revisions, the GNWT released its **Official Languages Policy Guidelines**. These are rules that determine, for example, which languages have to be on signs, on forms, or in newspaper ads for jobs or contract calls. It says the government will actively offer services in Official Languages; that is, they will tell people they are available if they need them.

As long as the government bodies do this, they are meeting their obligation, but not spending a lot of money on things people don't ask for. There must be money available, however, when people do want service and have a right to it. The Guidelines also say that the service can be provided by a bilingual employee who is responsible for that service, by another employee whom receives a bilingual bonus for providing occasional interpretation and translation, or by an interpreter or translator hired specifically for this task. The Guidelines have to be followed in a way that ensures peoples' rights are respected.

The questions for Nunavut are: Do you want language legislation? Binding whom - private businesses? municipal bodies (Hamlets)? How will services be offered? Will there be a Languages Commissioner or maybe a group of Commissioners? If so, what powers will the Language Commissioner(s) have? Will they make orders telling government bodies that they have to obey, or will they make recommendations which encourage people to cooperate instead of trying to force them? Will all Acts be translated? In all dialects? Or will summaries be enough? This leads to the next topic: How will all this be paid for?

Judi Tutcho explained that she is not involved in the negotiations with the federal government for the Official Languages funding agreement, (which has been in place since 1984). It is a government responsibility to plan, justify their plan to the federal government, secure and spend the funds. About \$45 million has been spent on Aboriginal languages since 1984 under the **Canada-NWT Contribution Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT**. It would be more appropriate to ask Bob Galipeau, another delegate, for details. He is with the Department of Education, Culture & Employment and they just recently took over negotiations of the language agreement with the federal government and overall responsibility for language services.

## **5.2 Comments by Delegates**

In response to a question, Ms. Tutcho clarified that she can start her own investigation of any matter, but she prefers that issues be identified by individuals in the communities if services are denied. She invited them to call her anytime.

One delegate asked her how hard it would be to monitor a policy that Inuit employees be encouraged to speak Inuktitut on the job and non-Inuit be encouraged to learn some Inuktitut. She replied that it is only hard if you let it be. You can do it if you are determined. You have to decide you'll do it and cooperate. She said she thought it might be easier in Nunavut because there won't be so many languages to deal with. Having an Inuktitut Language Commission(er) would also help.

One delegate said he was proud that our language seemed so strong to the guests. He said we have rights in the Act, and we can go to the courts to enforce them, but that rights are not set in stone. He said in Nunavut, they can always make better laws if they want to.

With regard to the costs of language programs and services, if \$45 million has been spent on Inuktitut one delegate asked how much had been spent on English in that time? The frustration of always being told there is no money for language and cultural programs and for services in Aboriginal languages was evident many times during the meeting. It appears that there is a lot of money spent, but it isn't always being used on things people feel ought to be the priorities.

Ms. Tutcho said that for this year, 1997-98, there is \$2.5 million available to be shared between all the Aboriginal language communities; and \$2.5 million for 1998-99. For French, there is \$1.6 million this year, and \$1.6 million for 1998-99. This is only the funding from the federal contribution agreement, which expires in March 1999. (Aside from this, the GNWT also contributes a lot of money to language programs and services, but this is a little harder to identify. (The GNWT would have to provide that information.)

## 6. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES CHALLENGES: PART 2

This section of the report summarizes the topics discussed in part eight of the agenda.

- (e) Interpretation and Translation
- (f) Minority Language Issues
- (g) Private Sector
- (h) Current GNWT Language Initiatives

### 6.1 Interpretation and Translation

Andrew Tagak of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Language Services section explained that the GNWT had recently closed its Language Bureau, where the full-time interpreter/translators (I/T's) worked. They provided interpretation and translation services to the Legislative Assembly, the courts, all government departments, and to boards and agencies when possible. If a unilingual Inuk needed to talk to someone in the government, or attend a meeting with government officials, the Language Bureau would provide I/T services. The individual did not have to arrange for these services or pay for them. However, now that there are no I/Ts on staff, Andrew explained that it is up to the government bodies themselves to hire freelancers to meet all of their needs. He said he doesn't see unilinguals approaching the government for information or services now. When he is asked, he tells people that it is not his job anymore to find Interpreters/Translators.

A few delegates asked whether or not the Language Bureau would be reinstated in the Nunavut Government. John Amagoalik agreed there is a need and said that, in **Footprints 2**, they indicated that they wanted the interpreter/translator positions reestablished.

Peter Emerk reminded delegates that the Languages Commissioner had told them they have language rights and that it is up to the government body to find and pay for the interpretation or translation in most cases. He read out Section 14 of the **Official Languages Act**.

One delegate told Andrew Tagak that it is still his job to find the I/T because he is still a government employee and the government has to obey the law. She said maybe he or some other Inuk employee could provide the service, which is also what the policy says.

The delegates from Nunavik thanked the NWT Interpreter/Translator Program for their help in setting up their program. They encouraged people to learn other dialects because they realized that after hearing the NWT dialects more frequently, they could now understand them better. Another delegate asked if it would be possible to have a program where students could learn other dialects. (She was not told that such a course exists in the Interpreter/Translator program.)

## 6.2 Minority Language Issues

Daniel Cuerrier of the Francophone Association of Iqaluit spoke briefly about the needs and aspirations of French-speaking Nunavut citizens. He said that, as a Canadian, he is proud of two things: that we have two Official Languages across Canada, which are basically equal, and also that the rights and contributions of Aboriginal Peoples have finally been recognized in the Constitution.

Francophones can understand how Inuit feel in their attempts to maintain their language and culture he said, because they too have had to fight for all they have. They know the struggles a minority group can have; perhaps their experience can be of some benefit to the people of Nunavut. Although there is an **Official Languages Act**, it is not always respected, he said. It is often up to the minority groups themselves to make sure the government is aware of and respects their rights. Laws alone cannot preserve languages, however, so the linguistic groups must be given real support in the form of financial resources, power to make decisions, and real understanding.

In his paper, Mr. Cuerrier says it would be wise for Inuit to develop stronger ties with Quebec because they often have less expensive goods, and they have a northern expertise in areas like construction because of their own northern region. They represent a large market that is interested in visiting Nunavut and learning more about it, and they are also part of the larger Francophone community around the world.

In determining language legislation and policy, it will be important for the new government to be aware of the benefits of a multilingual territory and to be aware of any rights that Francophones, Anglophones or any other language groups have. The relationship will have to be built on mutual respect and support.

## 6.3 Private Sector

Kenn Harper, an Iqaluit businessman, made a presentation about the role of language in the private sector in Nunavut. He said that at the very least, people who are dealing directly with the public should be able to speak Inuktitut. This is good for business as well as for the Inuit of Nunavut. Although part 23(1) of the **Nunavut Act** gives the Nunavut Government the power to make laws regarding the preservation, use and promotion of Inuktitut, he feels that it should not make laws to force businesses to provide language services. He suggested that measures which encourage business owners to incorporate the language into their business would be more successful than trying to force them. Small subsidies or grants, for example, might help businesses put up signs or have business cards or product information in Inuktitut. He said that advertising in Inuktitut not only helps the Inuit, but also adds a more Nunavut impression to the community, which is important for residents, visitors, and tourists.

One delegate felt that it was not too much to ask of business owners to use Inuktitut because many of their customers would be Inuit and they would be spending their money in these places. He wondered if Iqaluit businesses are prepared for this, and Mr. Harper replied that they may not be ready, but that the members of the Iqaluit Chamber of Commerce are certainly forward-looking.



It was suggested that if signs are to go up, the spelling be in the standard dual orthography. Non-standard spellings are too common, and it wouldn't take much time to check and get the correct spelling. Items that are frequently used, such as menus, should be in Inuktitut.

#### **6.4 Current GNWT Language Initiatives**

Two Yellowknife employees of Education, Culture and Employment, Bob Galipeau, Languages Services, and Margaret Niego, Cultural Affairs, then made a short presentation about language initiatives currently underway.

##### **a) Interpreter/Translator Certification Process**

Mr. Galipeau talked about the process they are working on to certify interpreter/translators (I/T).

Since the Language Bureau closed, there has been some concern expressed by people not knowing how to judge the quality of work they receive from I/Ts. Language Services has therefore started to develop a process to set up certification exams. They are working first on a description of the skills required, and then they will ask the industry to set the standards. The language communities will provide an indication of what language skills a person should have in order to be an I/T. After the standards are set, it will be up to each I/T to perform adequately.

He said he is aware there is an I/T Society in Nunavut and that a number of people have already been certified through their examination process, which includes recognition at a national level. He said the GNWT will recognize this certificate and will probably ask the Society to assist in setting up and administering exams.

The GNWT certification will be done under the **Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupations Act**. At the moment, training is still with the Colleges, although the I/T Program in the east has been much more successful than the one in the west.

This process will only go as fast as the language communities want it to, he said.

##### **b) Proposed Transfer of Aboriginal Languages Funding to Language Communities**

Margaret Niego administers the funding that goes annually to communities for language enhancement projects. Currently, the GNWT is trying to establish a process for turning some of this funding over to the language communities. They would like to propose giving each language group a certain number of dollars to develop a language plan during the 1998-99 fiscal year, if possible. They are undertaking this initiative because they have been told through several studies that communities want to be more involved in language programs and services, and they want more control. The GNWT is suggesting that, after each group develops their plan, it will then provide some of the funding to the communities to carry out the work.

The GNWT has to maintain adequate funding to provide language services and programs that meet their obligations under the **Official Languages Act**, but there are a

number of programs that could be handled by the communities. The GNWT will also continue to negotiate the federal funding agreement on Official Languages and will do promotion. She said that by 1999-2000, the GNWT hopes to see the communities making their own decisions about language preservation, research and development.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a) Orthography**

1. Before any legislation or policies are adopted which affect the writing systems to be used for Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun in Nunavut, round-table discussions must be sponsored to give residents, especially elders, an adequate opportunity to understand, discuss and debate the issues surrounding:
  - a) the use of two different Roman orthographies, (the old and new), (especially in the Kitikmeot/Qitirmiut region); and
  - b) the use of syllabics (both old and new).
2. A major public information campaign should be undertaken to explain:
  - a) the need for a standardized orthography in both syllabics and Roman; and
  - b) the legitimacy of the existing standard dual; orthography approved by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the Inuit Cultural Institute in 1976.
3. The two writing systems, syllabics and Roman orthography, must not be placed in competition with one other - the dual orthography (both syllabics and Roman), as recommended by the Inuit Cultural Institutes Language Commission in 1976, should be recognized and used consistently.
4. Both writing systems, Roman and syllabics, should be taught in the schools throughout Nunavut to assist students to develop respect for other dialects.
5. The names of the two writing systems "Qaniujaaqpait" (syllabics) and "Qaliujaaqpait" (Roman orthography) should be used as much as possible. (Its easy to remember which is which - Qaliujaaqpait has an "l" like the word "qallunaat"; Qaniujaaqpait has an "n" like the word "Inuit".)
6. Young people must be involved in the debate about the writing systems because they are the ones who will have to use and teach these systems and deal with the future implications.
7. Community names should follow the standardized writing systems.
8. Before any attempt is made to eliminate one writing system, either Roman or syllabics, a thorough consultation process must be undertaken with the people of Nunavut.
9. People whose names were recorded incorrectly by the government or other agency in the past (as in Project Surname), must be assisted by the government to file a "Change of Name" application, and must be allowed to do so free of charge.

### **b) Language Learning**

10. People should be encouraged to use proper Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun, and

should be supported rather than mocked when they make mistakes.

11. A permanent language school should be established so that language courses can be delivered on an ongoing basis.

### **c) Language Teaching**

12. Elders must be acknowledged as experts in the fields of language, culture and traditional knowledge, and they must be given the appropriate formal recognition in Nunavut (such as teaching certificates, interpreter/translator accreditation, honorary degrees, etc.).
13. Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun must be used and taught more in schools. This use should be defined in concrete terms to ensure that it is completely and clearly understood by everyone in the school system as well as by parents and students.
14. All language teaching should involve eloquent speakers of Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun so that people hear proper fluent speech while they learn.

### **d) Language of Work**

15. Public servants should be encouraged to learn the language of the Nunavut community in which they serve.
16. Nunavut Government employees must be able to use Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun in their place of work, and this should be encouraged and guaranteed through legislation. These rights, as well as the rights of the public, must be clearly defined.

### **e) Language Services**

17. When speakers of Inuinnaqtun and Natsilingmiutun are participating in gatherings such as conferences, interpretation must be provided in these dialects. (Organizers should always be aware of the need for services in other dialects as well.)
18. A Language Bureau should be reestablished in the Nunavut Government to ensure that the needs and rights of the public are adequately met and to ensure open, clear communication between the government and the residents of Nunavut.

### **f) Training**

19. Interpreter/translator and teacher training must all be made available in the Kitikmeot/Qitirmiut region with course materials that reflect the specific dialects of this region.
20. Teachers of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun must be given further ongoing language training, especially by elders.

## **g) Resources**

21. Adequate resources must be made available immediately for the development and completion of language teaching and learning materials such as stories and dictionaries (some of which have remained unfinished and unpublished for years due only to lack of funds - e.g. dictionaries by Emile Imaroitok of Iglulik and Elisapee Ootoova of Mittimatalik).
22. A dictionary that includes all dialects of Nunavut should be developed.
23. Funding must be made available for language materials to be published and distributed once they are developed.
24. People in the communities, especially elders and parents, should be encouraged to go into the schools at any time to demonstrate their interest in language, to assist in teaching, and to observe and make suggestions that might improve the system. In turn, they should be recognized for their expertise and contribution.
25. Funding and other support should be made available for people who want to write original literature in Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun since there is very little interesting material available to readers, and therefore, there is no great incentive to become literate.
26. Elders should always be involved in the development of materials to be used for teaching in the schools, adult learning centres and any other language and cultural programs. They should always be encouraged to share their knowledge and be respected for it.
27. Further research should be undertaken to determine the effects of using Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun in electronic media such as the Internet. People should also be made aware of the dangers of using electronic media (e.g. pornography) and how access can be controlled.

## **h) Media**

28. More funding must be made available to provide for TV and radio programs and interesting reading materials, like magazines and newspapers, in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.
29. All existing materials should be used in as many ways as possible for teaching and learning the language and culture (such as using radio programs like "Sinnaksautiit" in the school, or making books from such programs).

## **i) Culture**

30. Culture and language camps should be established and supported as a priority in Nunavut in order to allow Inuit (and others) to learn or relearn their language in a real-life situation, rather than in an artificial environment.

31. Young people should be taught the naming traditions of the Inuit culture and be encouraged to use and respect traditional naming practices and related customs.
32. A school where people, especially young people, can learn traditional skills, (e.g. customs, legends, language etc.), should be established and given the same type of recognition as the schools in the existing education system.
33. The Nunavut Government must ensure that young people are given the opportunity to learn traditional skills and the traditional language that goes with this lifestyle.
34. The Nunavut Government should actively seek to find opportunities, especially for youth, to be involved in educational exchanges such as the one that now exists between the NWT and Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat).

**j) Nomenclature**

35. Clarify what "Inuktitut" means whenever it is used in policies and legislation. Make it clear that "Inuktitut" includes "Inuinnaqtun", and other dialects, or use the names for these dialects as required.
36. Inuinnaqtun should be recognized as a dialect, and referred to as a dialect, not a writing system.

**k) Legislation and Policy Making**

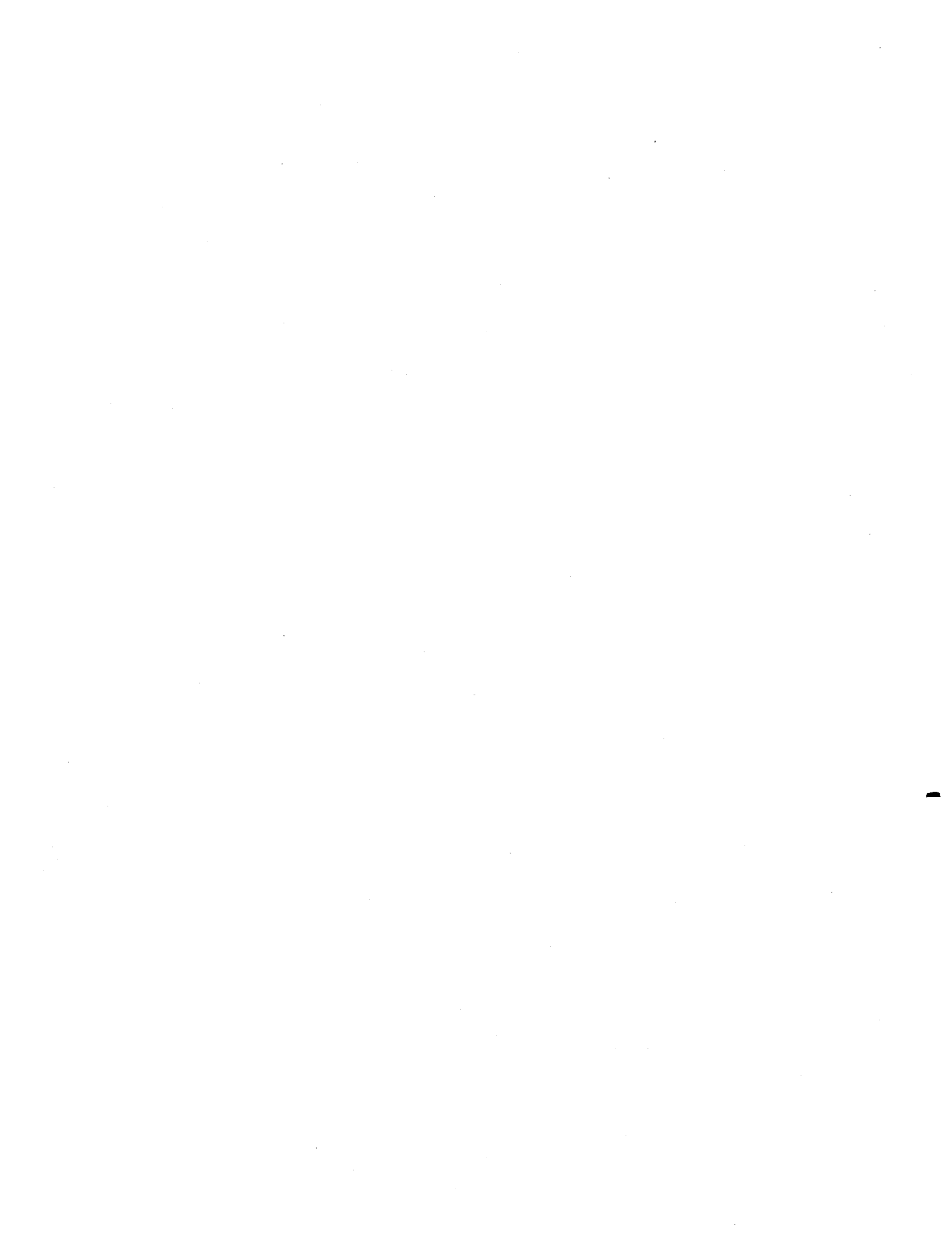
37. Language preservation, promotion, and use, must be given a very high priority in all areas of the new government.
38. An Inuktitut Language Week should be declared and celebrated across Nunavut every year to encourage the preservation and use of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun by all residents of Nunavut.
39. Each community should be allowed to preserve and use their own dialect(s).
40. Before policy or legislation concerning language is adopted, all the implications should be carefully considered to determine whether it is necessary and advantageous to adopt formal measures, or whether less formal methods of encouragement and support might be more effective in achieving the goal (such as small grants to businesses to assist them in making signs in Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun, or to churches to assist them in converting to the revised orthography.)
41. There must be incentives to encourage people to abide by the laws and policies on language in Nunavut.
42. The words and terms of the Inuit language (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun) and the symbols of Inuit culture should be protected in some way from misuse by those who do not understand them.
43. The needs of Francophones as a linguistic minority in Nunavut must be carefully

and respectfully considered.

44. Existing language policies and laws affecting Nunavut must be collected and carefully studied in order to ensure that people clearly understand all of the current provisions and are prepared for the debate about what language laws and policies will be adopted in Nunavut.
45. There should be a Languages Commissioner in Nunavut with strong powers to ensure that rights respecting Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun are well-known to the public and to government employees, and that these rights are fully respected and promoted.

#### **l) Research and Follow-up**

46. The Nunavut Implementation Commission should establish a working group to deal with the recommendations from this conference.
47. A Language Commission should be established to continue the necessary research on language issues and act as an advisory body to the new Nunavut Government.
48. If a Language Commission is established, it must be given the authority to explore all language issues and alternatives without restraint in order to ensure that all matters are properly and thoroughly examined.
49. The Nunavut Implementation Commission, or Office of the Interim Commissioner or the Office of the future Deputy Minister of Language, Culture, Elders and Youth, whichever is the more appropriate, must look at and deal with these issues and recommendations immediately.
50. There should be more conferences on language to address the issues, as many of them are complex and there are widely varying opinions that must be properly considered before decisions are made.





## **APPENDIX A**

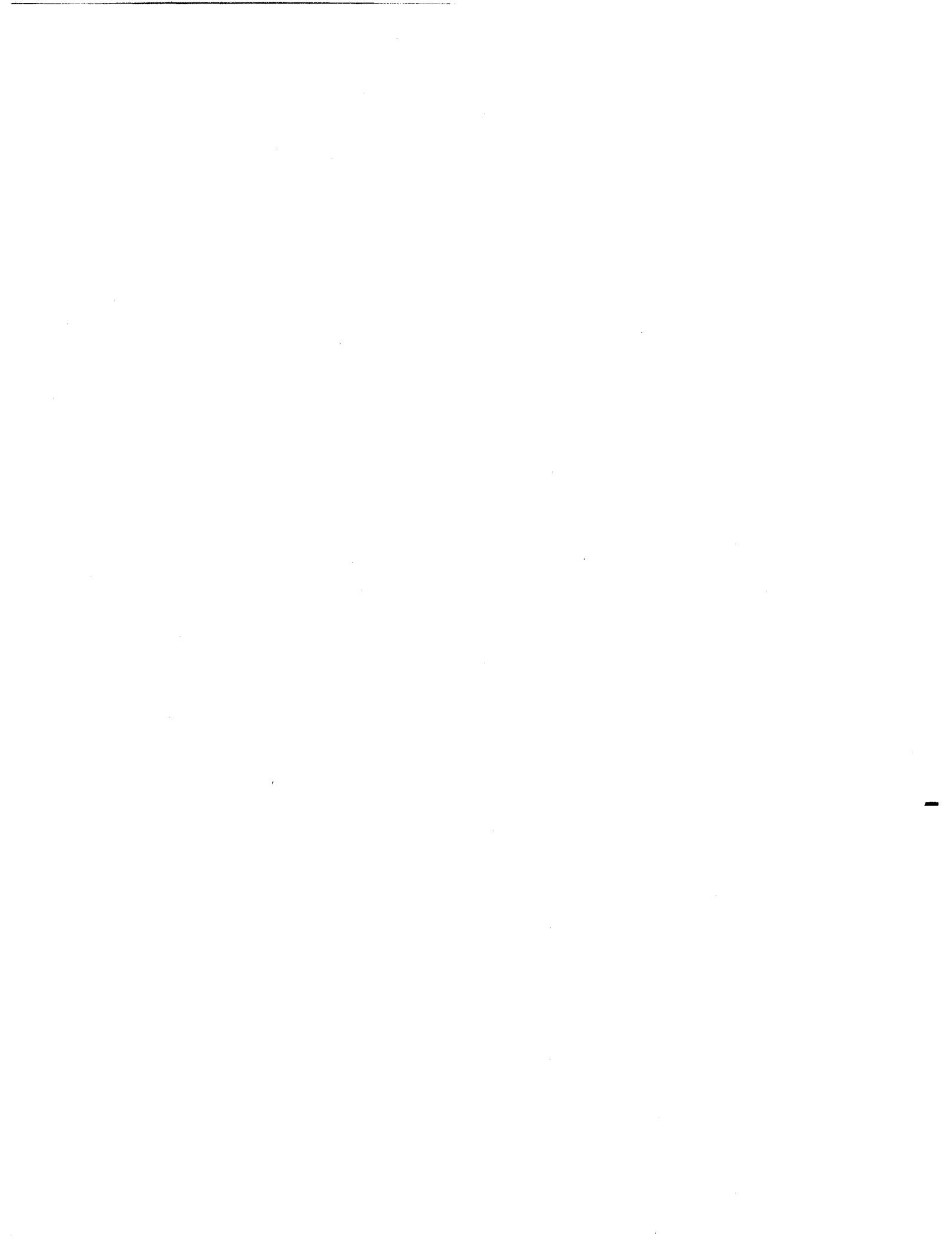
**Status of Syllabic Writing System, Language and Culture:  
Its Impact on Society and the Youth and Incompatible Languages  
James Arvaluk**



Language Policy Submission

**Status of Syllabic Writing System,  
Language and Culture: Its Impact on  
Society and the Youth  
and  
Incompatible Languages**

Submitted by: James Arvaluk



## Language Policy Study Paper

### Preamble

This paper has been written without any restriction of opinion regarding existing policies. In other words, it was written as if there are no existing policies or programs, especially in *Inuk ti tut*, as to allow the Nunavut Implementation Commission a freedom to express and recommend without prejudice to the existing language policies. This does not mean that there will not be any comments about the past developmental practices and policies on the language issue especially the syllabic writing system. Rather it simply means that there will be comments and suggestions that may be considered bazaar or contradictory to existing policies when recommending for the new Nunavut Government.

These approaches are not a hindrance but rather an advantage for number of reasons:

1. Language policy initiatives have been put in place with political force from popular opinion and religious leadership.
2. The old fear of "do away with syllabics", may contribute to loss of cultural identity of the Inuit; and that the continued use of syllabics will not give reassurance of uniqueness of Inuit.
3. Baffin Region Education Society Conference in the early 1980s decided that the *Inuk ti tut* would be the language of instruction in Kindergarten to Grade Three.

4. Joint (ITC and Federal) Language Commission report contains comments from the community meeting participants desiring to continue the syllabic system for the Eastern Arctic.
5. Another reason for unrestricted comments is to allow the new Nunavut Government to have a freedom to review the present language policy; observe present situation of the *Inuk ti tut* language and to look at the language issue in a bigger and wider perspective in order to make interim policy with a scientific and common sense approach rather than being hindered by clichés.
6. Furthermore any Language Policy discussion will be a very contentious debate for it focuses on the very fibre on Nunavut's unique culture. The leadership must be challenged on their personal language acquisition and their own romantic attachment to their respective writing system.

#### **HISTORY OF SYLLABICS:**

The syllabic writing system was created for the Cree language by the Anglican Church in Northern Quebec and was subsequently adopted for the Nunavik and South Qikirtani Inuit (uqqung miut). Because the introduction was initiated by the Church rather than Government; the application and usage only made partial coverage of the Inuit of Nunavut. Qiting miut were excluded due to lack of Government policy and non-involvement of them in the syllabic introduction and usage.

Later, the Roman Catholic church adopted the syllabic writing system for their own followers but omitted most of the finals. This modification

created many inconsistencies and disagreements thereby nullifying the use of syllabics in the classroom and work place. The only exception was in the classroom bible studies.

In the early 70's the Government of the NWT started issuing information and other flyers in syllabics. Any one who was reading in *Inuk ti tut* in the 70s will remember the *propaganda* advising Inuit that one should not eat seal and caribou meat raw and that the meat should be cooked thoroughly. Other "flyer" information instructed Inuit as to how to create our own local Government (Settlement Council and Housing Association) and be a voice to the Government and local initiatives.

ITC's Language commission made recommendations to standardize the syllabic writing system in the mid-70s. Although the Government adopted as a policy for standardizing the writing system, including roman orthography; a very weak attempt was made to enforce the policy. In fact the policy states that the new writing system will be used for all the new place names except where local majority deems otherwise. The Government's *lasse-faire* attitude towards standardizing the writing system across Nunavut has complemented the utilization of the 2 writing systems.

Only at the government's leisure or convenience did *Inuk ti tut* become an official language. But how official has the language been? *Inuk ti tut* will not stand in court; only its translation holds any legal bearing in the courts. Government documents that has been translated into *Inuk ti tut* have been patronizing. In other words; only some documents with no or very little

significance to the majority of the Inuit but are legally and ritually important to Euro-culture are translated.

This illustration shows that the Syllabic writing system policy and practice lacked long term vision not by the missionaries but by the Government who adopted it for schools and its public relations scheme. Inconsistency and partiality of the syllabic system has been good for the Government who did not want a unified Inuit voice. It is now a perfect tool to cause mistrust, animosity and conflict amongst the citizens in different parts of Nunavut if the present policy is grandfathered. Therefore one can not re-iterate enough that leadership of Nunavut must be challenged on their personal writing system acquisition and romantic attachment to it.

### **Two Writing Systems or One?**

If the syllabic system is to be continued to be used in the work place after 1999; it must be standardized and enforced in all areas of Nunavut both in schools and in all levels of Government. A standardized syllabic writing system will create a unwanted dilemma whereby the parents in west Qiting miut will not be able to help their school children with their homework until the students themselves become parents.

The ITC Language Commission Report had to deal with very large geographical and population diversity and popular notion of the regional diversity in dialects and writing systems. It must be recognized now that the area will shrink after 1999 and that the writing system in one area is



not recognized by the then Commission and subsequently by the NWT Government.

The syllabic writing system is only use in the Eastern Nunavut and Nunavik which will ultimately become hindrance to circumpolar exchange and interchange both in academic expertise and cultural exchange. It must be understood not only as a traditional Inuit writing system as explained previously.

With a small population and therefore a small budget, the Nunavut Government can not afford two writing systems or syllabics alone for that matter. But will the leadership of Nunavut will be strong enough to have and enforce one writing system?

Note: It is recognized and appreciated that there will be scarifics and hardships to both populations but it would be more efficient for the retention and enhancement of language and culture in a long run. It would undoubtedly be less costly for the Government of which will have a small tax revenue base to work with for many years to come. In other words, it is better to take care of the financial resources needed to do overhauling now rather than to bandage a major dilemma in the future.

It is also worth to note that the majority of Nunavut's population under 35 uses Roman orthography of some form on a daily basis while minority uses syllabics mainly for study and practice of religion.

Other benefits would include that it is easier to word process Inuk ti tut documents and e-mail information via roman orthography.

One would have the ability to communicate internationally (circumpolar nations) in *Inuk ti tut* regarding trade, governments programs and policies, professional expertise research and namely to share our language if roman orthography was used.

Literacy would improve because the resource pool of *Inuk ti tut* literature would be expanded if standardized roman orthography was used.

**Recommendations or Considerations:**

1. It is recommended that West Qiting miut old writing system be dropped immediately and that the syllabic be phased out with a ten year sunset clause; and
2. that ITC Language Commission Roman Orthography be remodeled to create word form of writing system i.e.; instead of:  
'tikiqatauniarasugilaursimangmijaraluarattaunginna' 'for I too thought that he was going to arrive with the others who have already here' to: tiki qa tau nia rasu gilaur simang mijara lua rattauq nginna.  
(NOTE: This is unrefined example) and;
3. that comprehensive grammar texts and references from K to 12 be produced and implemented as soon as possible for both academic and for adult education.

4. and that the Nunavut Government make major financial allocations for the process, production and implementation for it, now.

### **Language and Culture: Its impact on Society and the Youth**

This is not a small note for we have been experiencing a ricocheting effect in a last thirty years whereby a very high percentage of school dropouts and/or failures have occurred in some cases due the parents' inability to participate and appreciate their children's struggle with their homework and in school.

It must also be noted that if the syllabic system is to continue to be used, children will be given the responsibility not only to learn three official languages but also to learn very different writing systems at the same time. In later years they will realized that syllabics appear only in patronizing materials and that the same material is also available in English or French. It is natural and instinctive to go for the most popular and easier to read writing system (for now it is in English). (Lets call this: human being's reaction to common practice and common sense syndrome).

It is being observed that the young adults are speaking *Inuk ti tut* without due regard for proper grammar. This is a result of lack of observation and respect of the elders' use of traditional Inuk it tut form of speech. It is also due to lack of daily contact with parents and grandparents. Some of the contributing factors are working in wage economy and replacing traditional evening activities with watching TV, participating in organized

sports, and other introduced social activities. But it should be remembered that this is a choice of each parent.

The following observation will illustrate as to how the Inuk ti tut language has diminished in usage, predominance and eventual deterioration:

Up until 1970s the students were well rooted in Inuk ti tut language and those who went to residential school were still going home to very strong Inuk ti tut speaking communities. This allowed them to retain and use the language without hesitation. But after 1970 due to the baby population explosion in Nunavut; the grandparents are not in a position to see all their grandchildren to provide a strong role model for them on daily continuous basis. The schools lacked organized and grammar materials and the qualified staff to deliver enriched *Inuk ti tut* programs.

Although the previous paragraph is a simple argument regarding lack of interaction between older parents or grandparents and young adults. It must be noted that young middle age people who not only had to go south for high school or college but also had spent great deal of their childhood in residential schools are surprisingly articulate and grammatically accurate in Inuk ti tut as well as in English. Is there then a correlation between being better educated the better speaker he/she is? Or was he/she was already so well rooted in his/her Inuk ti tut language at the age of six that he/she never lost the language mechanics while attending residential schools or later in southern high schools and colleges? Or do more

educated young adults have greater pride and are able to discriminate better about his/her usage of Inuk ti tut grammar and vocabulary.

The question still remains: what were the influences and causes that had lead to the improper and grammatically incorrect use of Inuk ti tut? Allowing poor grammar and inaccurate vocabulary to flourish, has deteriorated our cultural knowledge and identity.

The external influences that baited us into the communities were too great and our elders and leaders at the time had no mechanism to validate the value of our language, traditional knowledge and culture. In addition our elders, parents and leaders had been so well entrenched in the traditional philosophy that one did not for example question the Shaman's actions or words. This believe was carried over after the missionaries and settlement managers arrived. The academic world has documented our passage into the 20th century as being one of the greatest transitions in human history. This phenomena could be compared to that of the European Industrial Revolution. And we wonder why have our peoples and ways remained such a curiosity to outsiders?

The elders and the leaders of Nunavut fought hard for the retention and enhancement of the culture and the use of Inuk ti tut which was immortalized in the Land Claims Agreement. Do we want that document to be used as a benchmark by future generations whereby it was the last time Inuit culture and its language were prominent and valued.

Little vision was used by the powers to be of the time for nurturing the youth's cultural and first language growth. Southern methodologies were applied to the learning environment in direct contrast to Inuit ways. This action has created a generation of Inuit who are very ignorant of their culture and language affecting their ability to think critically and make discriminating observations and analyzes.

Too often we use generalized terms e.g. angunasuktuq or maqaijuq when it should be nanursiurtuq or nanniartuq for polar bear hunting only; and over generalization about the different heads and uses of harpoons. How often do we search for the right word but realize it has been lost and we settle for a less precise word or even resort to an English explanation. With the loss of vocabulary so goes the vast knowledge that has only now been embraced by many of academic world.

We have few formal resources or references to consult. Nunavut has not produced a dictionary for general use or even for the education system. Many elders and scholars have recorded or have been recorded. Their valuable knowledge lies resting on countless cassette and video tapes, in personal studies, in unpublished books, and in faraway archives collecting dust. Has ICI lost its focus of its founding principles, mission statement and goals? Why do the great philanthropy societies of the global community still hold large collections of Inuit history, culture and knowledge?

## **Recommendations or Considerations**

The new Nunavut Government must take the tuktu bull by the antlers and make decisions:

1. as to how to retain and enhance the vocabulary and grammar of Inuk ti tut Uqausiq;
2. what mechanism should be used to access the international (circumpolar) material (i.e.; Kalaaliit history and culture and likewise with Inupiat etc., etc.). We could only share this with our using a global standard writing system?
3. how important is high quality *Inuk ti tut* and how many speakers are required to make *Inuk ti tut* thrive and evolve?
4. how to prevent the inevitable loss of our language if a standardized writing system is not adopted. This observation is from other Canadian Regions and other parts of the world that already have lost not only their language but also their culture when a standardized writing system was not in place. We only have to look to the Western Arctic and the Yukon.
5. how much do we value our language?
6. has the syllabic and Kitikmeot old orthography impaired our ability to effectively use *Inuk ti tut* as a written communication? For

example: it is mainly the elders and the church goers who are avid *syllabic* readers.

7. many Inuit reach for English version of any material because it is too tedious and inefficient to read syllabics and old Kitikmeot orthography!
8. how will the volumes of recorded history, science, culture be catalogued and exposed to the people of Nunavut. This wealth of reference material has to be brought back to life. Thus the Nunavut leadership must prioritize the publication of this material. A huge financial and human resources commitment must allocated to this activity as early as possible.
9. and to consider that the majority of the population is under 35 (i.e. 63% has been quoted recently) thus who should be the main target of our policies? The policy must provide comfort and ease of use by the majority of the population. Youth must be involved in the decision making on policy guidelines if we wish to have any hope of continuity in our language and culture. They will be the users and enforcers of tomorrow.
10. and that the before mentioned conditions will only diminish if the leadership is challenged and forced to invest in an extremely effective planning and implementation regime for the retention and enhancement of the culture.



11. lastly, we must all remember that culture and basic language development of a child starts at home in the company of an extended family. Parents and elders alike must take an aggressive stance with their own family's state of *Inuk ti tut* and cultural pride.

### **INCOMPATIBLE LANGUAGES (culturally)**

*Inuk ti tut* is a specific language requiring specific words in order to state a specific idea or thing and can not be easily translated from English or French in the same manner. In other words: in order to interpret a general broad word an *Inuk ti tut* interpreter must hunt for a word that will express the closest specific interpretation.

For an example: If Mr. Hero tells his father that he has passed his grade twelve final exam and his father replies: Congratulations!!!! Mr. Hero's friend's mother asks what the commotion is all about in *Inuk ti tut*.. He would have a problem of literally translating it into *Inuk ti tut*.. Or he could simply say that Mr. Hero told his father that he walked er...skidoed er ...run by his grade twelve that he had to try for the last time. His father would reply: I am happy for you...or..I am proud of you...or alianait...uakallangaa...qujannamiik...upigivagit...ajunngimmiik...something along that line.

Here we will recognize immediately that *Inuk ti tut* words must be standardized categorized for use in Government and legal documents if the

*Inuk ti tut.* is to be used in a work place or for instructional purposes. One can learn how Greenlandic is used and applied in schools, Public Service and the courts.

No matter what pro-active and positive decision is made regarding *Inuk ti tut* usage within the Nunavut; there is a lot of work ahead for leaders and civil service to design a workable solution for a sound implementation and continuance of the language.

*Inuk ti tut* has been bastardized too much already only to accommodate English, just look at our meeting agendas and minutes as an example. Many translated documents are too cumbersome and nonsensical to read because of the literal translation ignored the cultural connotations.

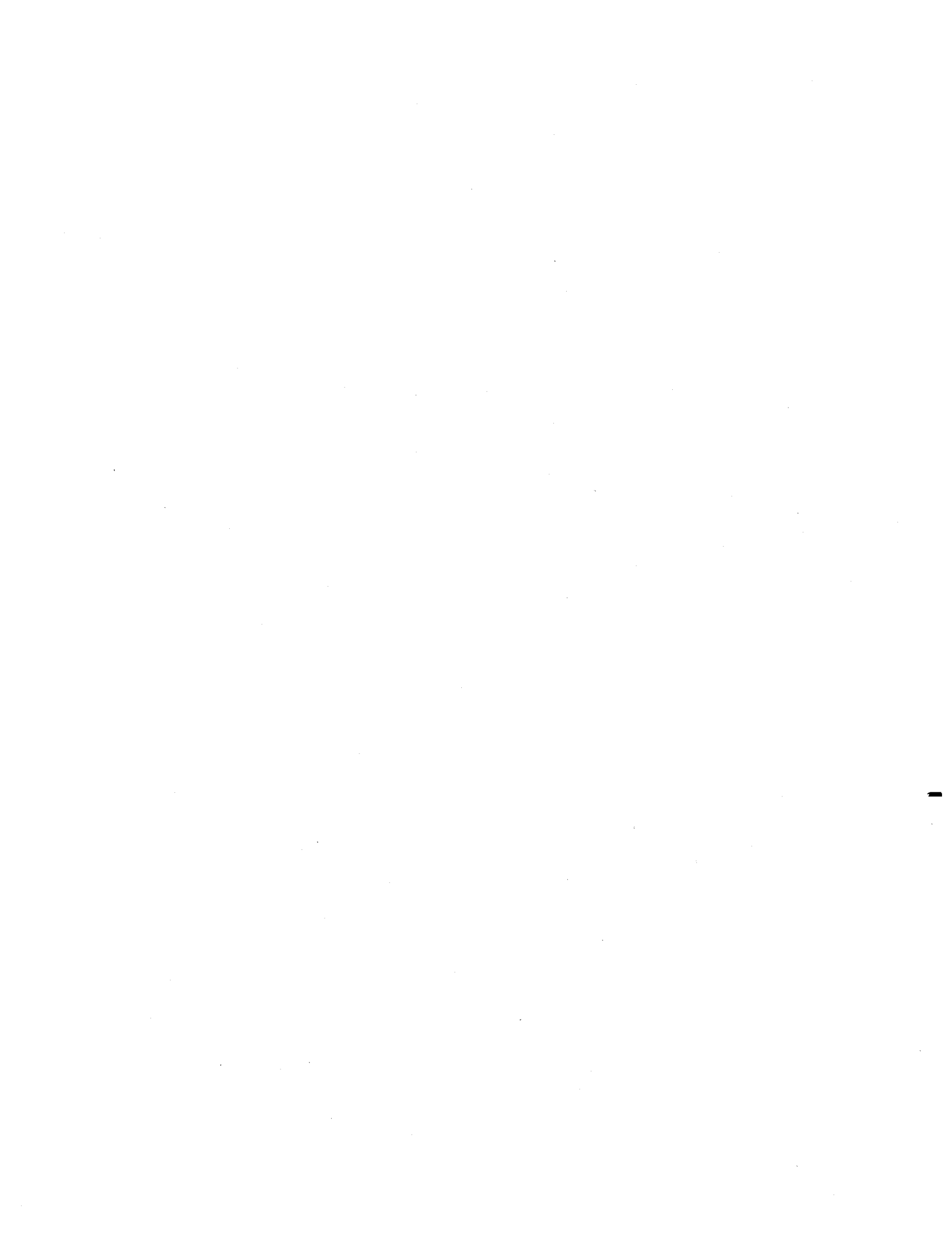
### **Recommendations or Considerations**

1. The leaders and policy makers within Nunavut must direct the authors of Nunavut's legislation, policies, directives, etc. to compose in manner that respects *Inuk ti tut*'s very specific orientation and that the majority of government's audience uses *Inuk ti tut*. Thus the authors must have highly specialized skills. Secondly, the current civil service should be immediately orientated and trained in this new methodology.
2. This is not to say that the Government documents must be simplified for the general public. Rather, the policy makers and the civil service who have decided to communicate in English first must recognize and respect mechanical and cultural differences involved.

3. Language Policy must be universally acceptable across Nunavut.  
There will have to compromises made by many groups. A universal system has to be affordable.
  
4. The language of the Government communications both internally and externally must no longer be vague. Factual, concrete, and precise writing means that you are accountable and responsible. Written communication must be meaningful and useful. "No more ukpatiik wall paper." Remember that *Inuk ti tut* is very task orientated language as compared to English.

### **Summary**

- An accountable and responsible government must deal with these issues using vision, wisdom and courage.
- Policy makers must stifle their personal insecurities and romantic attachments to fully participate in intelligent discussions that will allow Inuktitut to thrive for many, many generations to come.
- Lastly; leaders, the workforce and people of Nunavut will have to endure hardships and make sacrifices for the benefit of all giving our culture and language its rightful and honourable place in history.



## **APPENDIX B**

**Discussion Paper on Education & Communication.  
Prepared by Alexina Kublu and Mick Mallon (March 1998)  
Presented by Alexina Kublu**



The Nunavut Language Policy  
Conference  
Iqaluit March 1998

*Discussion Paper on*

*Education  
&  
Communication*

Nunavut Implementation Commission

## *How this Discussion Paper is organized.*

*This paper contains a discussion of the chief issues facing the Inuktitut language today, on the verge of the establishment of Nunavut, and a set of suggested recommendations.*

*The discussion is laid out on the right-hand pages, while the suggested recommendations are laid out on the left-hand pages, like this:*

<i>Suggestions</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
<p><i>22 The recommendations are laid out in numbered boxes.</i></p> <p><i>Some recommendations have extra comments attached.</i></p> <p><i>24 The recommendations are only suggestions.</i></p>	<p><i>The discussion is on the right-hand pages, a set of ideas for you to think about, discuss, disagree with, modify as you see fit.</i></p>

*There are 22 suggested recommendations. Remember that they are only suggestions to start you thinking, nothing more. You can accept them, ignore them, change them as you like. It's up to you.*



# INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE POLICY IN NUNAVUT

## Where are we?

The next few years will be important ones for Nunavut, but they will be vital ones for Inuktitut. The territory (or province) of Nunavut will likely be here a century from now, but will the language?

As we look back over the last decades of this century, we see some incredible changes in the situation of Inuktitut. On the one hand we now have schools where Inuktitut is a presence, from posters on the walls to a developed curriculum, with many Inuit teachers holding degrees from one of Canada's leading universities. We hear Inuktitut on the radio, we can find it on TV, we can read it in the local newspaper. Citizens have access to Inuktitut interpreters in the critical areas of health and justice.

But on the other hand the language is disappearing rapidly in the West. Even in the East we are finding more and more young people lacking fluency in what should be their mother tongue. The first stage in the loss of the language is when people do not realize what is happening. The last stage is when they don't care.

This may be in some respects the most important meeting to be held regarding the future of Nunavut, simply because there are no second chances in keeping a language. There are second chances in setting up a justice system, an economic base, a science curriculum. But when a language goes, it goes forever.

This is the crucial time, and this is the crucial conference.

We have looked carefully at the situation of Inuktitut in education, and in communication with the public. We have spent more time asking questions than giving recommendations: that will be your job.

# Some Suggested Recommendations

*Our first suggested recommendation is not a very strong one, but we think it fits the present situation.*

- 1 Given that Inuktitut is one of the official languages of Nunavut, and that Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada where Inuktitut is the majority language, we recommend that the use of Inuktitut be encouraged in the workplace wherever possible. Inuktitut-speaking employees should be encouraged to communicate with each other in Inuktitut, and all non-Inuktitut-speaking employees should be encouraged to gain some fluency in the language, to the limit of their abilities.

*The first part of this recommendation is simple enough ...*

- 2a Given that the present language policies of the GNWT towards service to the public are adequate for the time being, we recommend that they be continued in Nunavut ...

... however ...

*... but you may not agree with the second part.*

- 2b ... given the immense cost and labour of translating every act of the legislature, we also recommend that the consideration be given to not translating all the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, or all the Acts passed by the Assembly. We suggest that summaries would be sufficient

# 1 **GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Here is the present Statement of Policy of the GNWT:

*"It is the policy of the Government of the Northwest Territories that members of the public have reasonable access to its programs and services in the official languages."*

*Obviously the power of that policy depends on the definition of "reasonable" in the statement above. But before we look at service to the public, maybe we should take a look at the place of Inuktitut in the government workplace. Right now, or in the immediate future, is it reasonable to expect that Inuktitut should be, or even can be, a working language at every level of government, in every office?*

## **What degree of Inuktitut in the government workplace?**

*Is it practical to set a policy about oral communication among fellow-workers in the government workplace, or is that something impossible to legislate? Should we leave it to occur naturally? Should we attempt to encourage it? How?*

*As for written communication, at the moment general announcements are provided in Inuktitut, as are communications addressed to anyone who is considered functionally unilingual, but communications among employees literate in English are permitted in English only. Is this common-sense ... is it acceptable?*

## **What degree of service to the public?**

*The present situation seems to be that all citizens of Nunavut can expect face to face service in Inuktitut when they visit a government office (although sometimes an on-the-spot interpreter has to be found, usually a bilingual employee without any training in interpretation).*

*General announcements, posters, office signage, letters addressed to Inuktitut speakers are also almost always provided in Inuktitut.*

*Is this present situation acceptable for Nunavut. or does it need improvement? If so, what improvements are possible, practical and affordable?*

### **Translation of territorial laws**

*Do we really need every word of every act of the legislature to be translated into Inuktitut? Could we get by with summary of the act, and with a service that would explain relevant portions of the act in Inuktitut if a citizen make a specific inquiry? An act that did arouse widespread public interest could be translated, but we think there would be very few of those in practice.*

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

- 3 Given the need for professional interpreter/translators in Nunavut we recommend that the I/T training program be expanded to include a third year, with further expansion as the program matures.
- 4 Given the need for interpreter/translators to be kept in touch with the roots of their language, we recommend that a position be established in the I/T training program for an elder, one who is considered an authority in the language.
- 5 Given the difficulties faced by casual interpreters and translators in the communities, we recommend the provision of upgrading materials and courses for such people, possibly involving recent technical advances in distance education.
- 6 Given the critical need for fully professional medical and legal interpreter/translators in Nunavut we recommend that the Departments of Health and Justice reinstate the funding they have recently cut.

## Translation & Interpretation in general

We must realize the heavy burdens we place on our interpreters and translators in the Arctic. Across the developed world in the south professional interpreter/translation training is provided only at the graduate level. Potential interpreter/translators must first get a regular university degree; then they enter a two-year master's program. None of our northern I/T students have degrees; a few have grade 12; some have less scholary. However it should be pointed out that in the Interpreter/translator program at Nunavut Arctic College, fluency in Inuktitut is valued higher than scholary. The students need to be trained in both directions, forward into the demands of modern society, and back to the roots of their own language. They have benefited from the occasional visit of knowledgeable elders: we believe that a position in the I/T program should be established for such a person. (We should also note that 3 of our interpreter/translators hold a national level certificate through the Canadian Association for Interpreters and Translators.) The criterion for entrance into the I/T program is a test of language facility in English and Inuktitut. These comments refer to professionally trained I/T practitioners, not the many people pressed into service in the communities, who also need upgrading.

The surprising fact is not the occasional news story about problems in interpretation or translation: the surprising fact is the generally high level of performance of our experienced interpreter/translators.

With this in mind, we can ask the following general questions.

- Are the present standards of interpretation and translation acceptable?
- Are the present levels of entry and training adequate?
- If we increased the entry levels would we get enough students?
- Can we afford to upgrade the present training system?
- Can we afford not to?

### Special cases: Health and Law

Health and law are special cases where errors in translation can be disastrous, leading to danger to life, or injustice. The human cost of errors in these fields is horrendous. When we look simply at the financial costs of such errors there would seem to be an argument for providing stringent professional training ... and a professional salary at the end of it. And yet funding for I/T training from the Departments of Health and Justice has been cut back,

Is there indeed a need for improvement of the present situation in the training and employment of legal and health interpreters?

Once again, can we afford to improve the system? Can we afford not to?

## Some Suggested Recommendations

*Recommendations 7 and 19 are very similar. Recommendation 7 focusses on parents and their responsibilities at home, while Recommendation 19 deals with everyone's sense of pride in language.*

7 Given that the basis for children's language skills is established at home, long before they come to school, we recommend that the government of Nunavut conduct a permanent campaign to educate and encourage parents in the use of Inuktitut at home.

8 Given that Nunavut needs a strong Inuktitut program throughout the education system, we recommend that the Department of Education and the Teacher Education continue to develop and improve their present programs, and also expand their efforts:

- a: to ensure a smooth transition from Inuktitut as language of instruction to English as language of instruction.
- b: to produce a curriculum, with appropriate materials, for Inuktitut as a subject in the higher grades.
- c: to produce and run training programs for teachers of Inuktitut as a first language in the higher grades.

## **2 EDUCATION**

Our educators can be proud of the progress made in the last twenty years or so. Compared with the situation in 1980 we have a corps of teachers trained to teach in Inuktitut. No Nunavut Inuk had a B.Ed degree back then. The latest figure is 70, with 17 more in the B.Ed program right now.

We now have an improved language arts curriculum from Grade One to Grade Three, and a stockroom in the Baffin Divisional Board of Education with a wide selection of professionally produced, attractive, colourful readers.

But education is always under scrutiny in Canada, and there are always criticisms, hopefully well-intentioned and positive ones. This is a good point to ask some hard questions about our educational system on the eve of Nunavut. But we should not direct these questions only to educators. If Inuit parents and public want their language to survive and to thrive, then they also have a heavy responsibility. In these days there are children coming to school without an adequate command of their mother tongue: teachers can accept no blame for that. So when we look at education we should also look at people outside education.

### **how successful at the moment?**

- Is our present performance satisfactory?
- Do we have a fully detailed curriculum, the equal of the English curriculum?
- Do we have adequate materials, geared to the curriculum?
- Is our training program producing fully competent professionals?
- Are we satisfied with the situation in the higher grades?

### **how far and how wide should we go?**

At the moment, if the community so desires, Inuktitut is the language of instruction from Grade One to Three. After that English is the language of instruction, with Inuktitut occasionally offered as a subject.

Do we wish to retain this policy into the next century? Would we prefer some of the options listed below? Do we have the resources to achieve these options?

# Some Suggested Recommendations

*These recommendations are directed towards the needs of adults to improve their language skills and their understanding of their culture.*

*The obvious place to do this is Nunavut Arctic College.*

*The Literature Bureau mentioned in Recommendation 11 could be an independent body, or it could be an offshoot of the college.*

- 9 Given that in Nunavut there are many adults keen to improve their Inuktitut literacy, we recommend:
- a: that Nunavut Arctic College be funded to continue and expand its present innovative efforts to teach literacy throughout Nunavut.
  - b: that a needs survey be conducted in the Qitirmiut region to discover if a literacy program would be welcome there, and if so, what shape it should take.

- 10 Given that one of the responsibilities of Nunavut Arctic College should be the study of Inuit culture, we recommend that the present Inuit Studies course become an integral part of the college program, securely funded.

- 11 Given the lack of reading material in Inuktitut for adults, we recommend the establishment of a Literature Bureau to produce original fiction and non-fiction in Inuktitut, and to produce translations of selected works of world literature.



Should Grade Four remain the transition year?

Do we want to introduce Inuktitut as a language of instruction in any of the subjects in the higher grades?

At present, Inuktitut teachers in the higher grades feel they receive little support.

Are they justified? Do we have the intention, the commitment and the resources to improve this situation?

## **transition**

Over the years several teachers, Inuit and non-Inuit, have expressed concern about the lack of a planned transition from the use of Inuktitut as a language of instruction in Grade Three, to the use of English in Grade Four. The children are switched abruptly from one system to the other.

What reasonable suggestions can we offer to improve this situation in Nunavut?

## **Literacy and Inuit Studies**

Considerable effort has gone into literacy programs in the east over the last few years, at college campuses and in the communities. Texts have been written, and instructors trained. In fact, at Nunatta Campus Inuktitut literacy up to Level 130 is compulsory for all students below that level. Non-Inuktitut speakers take Inuktitut as second language courses.

The Nunatta Campus of Nunavut Arctic College has also, on its own initiative, and without base funding, established an Inuit Studies program, designed to assist young Inuit to discover the depth and strength of their culture. Surely a program such as this should be an integral part of a college in Nunavut.

- Are the present programs adequate?
- What improvements can be made?
- Should literacy programs be given the same priority and attention in the Keewatin and Qitirmiut regions?

One thing lacking is an adequate number of books written for adults.

- Do we need a subsidized program to encourage, and train, Inuit authors who want to write in Inuktitut, and to publish their work?

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

- 12 Given that there are many Inuit students with substandard language skills in Inuktitut, also that there are many non-Inuit students who would welcome and benefit from lessons in the majority language of Nunavut, we recommend that the Department of Education and the Teacher Education program expand their efforts:
- a: to produce a curriculum, with appropriate materials, for Inuktitut as a second language throughout the system.
  - b: to produce and run training programs for teachers of Inuktitut as a second language in all grades.

## **Second Language**

### **for Inuit?**

As well as the situation in the Qitirmiut, where many children come to school speaking only some English, we also have an increasing number of Inuit children in the East who for a variety of reasons have a poor command of Inuktitut. Some of these students, especially as they grow older, make a valiant effort to regain their language. Others remain apathetic, often with minimal skills in both languages.

So, if we consider this situation to be a problem, we are faced with two questions.

What can we do to foster a pride in language, and a desire to master it?

For Inuit students who are committed to improving their skills, what kind of second language teaching approach is most suitable, and what resources are needed?

### **for qallunaat?**

Do we want qallunaat children in our schools to take second language classes in Inuktitut?

Do we have enough potential teachers to spare for this task?

Can we produce an ISL (Inuktitut as Second Language) training program, and the materials to go with it?

## Some Suggested Recommendations

*The language situation in the Inuinnaqtun area is very sensitive.*

*You may prefer to make a more general recommendation than this, or to leave the decision to be made in the conference mentioned in Recommendation 15.*

*Notice that we have used the word "suggest" rather than "recommend".*

- 13 Given the disagreement that exists in the Inuinnaqtun area over which roman system to use, and the fact that many young Inuinnaqtun need as much help as possible in learning Inuinnaqtun, we suggest that:
- a: the older writing system be used in translations for adults.
  - b: the ICI roman orthography, (with certain minor modifications) be used to teach Inuinnaqtun in the schools.
  - c: after school children become comfortable with the language, they be introduced to the older system for reading purposes only.

*If Recommendation 14 is accepted we can produce a system as efficient for the Natchilingmiut dialect as for all the other eastern dialects.*

- 14 Given the existence of unique sounds in the Natchilingmiut dialect, we suggest a meeting of Inuit and linguists, especially those who have worked in this area, to make the necessary additions to our present Dual Orthography.

### **3 Orthography**

It is nearly twenty years since the ICI dual orthography was established in syllabics and roman. In parts of the Canadian Inuit world the system has been accepted, in parts rejected. Basically Labrador and the west have not been enthusiastic, and in both of those regions non-phonological spellings abound. The consequences for educating the young Inuit of those regions have not been happy. In the east, Nunavut and Nunavik use practically the same system,

In the East, the present high standard of spelling, whether in official documents, published school books, or even commercial signage, although not uniformly perfect, is much better than it was two decades ago.

However, this is the obvious time to take a second look at the orthography, and see what changes should be made, if any.

#### **Roman Orthography in the West**

As mentioned above, Inuinnaqtun speakers for the most part have rejected the ICI standard orthography, even though that orthography is more precise and accurate than the old way of writing. The same reluctance to use the roman version of the ICI orthography exists even in the syllabic areas of the Qitirmiut region.

Given this rejection, it is doubtful whether any suggestions made at this meeting will have any effect in the west. There is a suggested recommendation on the opposite page, but you may prefer to ignore it.

#### **Problems with the present syllabic orthography**

There is one major problem with the present orthography. The original dual orthography was developed before we knew all the variations of the Natchilingmiut (Natsilingmiut) dialect. There are several sounds and combinations of sounds that our present system cannot represent. We really should have a meeting of Inuit and linguists to suggest necessary changes to the present dual orthography to make sure we have correct representation of the phonemes (major sounds) of Natchilingmiut.

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

*This recommendation is a very sweeping one. If it is accepted by the government of Nunavut, then the work recommended in Recommendation 14 should be automatically carried out under the terms of Recommendation 15.*

- 15 Given the developments that have occurred since the original Language Commission did its work, we suggest that another Language Commission be formed, consisting of Inuit with linguistic skills, assisted by elders and invited linguists, to make suggestions for the improvement of the present orthography:

## Technical Problems

There have been some technical problems with the development of different Inuktitut fonts for use with the computer. At the moment there is a committee working on these problems, while another group is attempting to develop fonts suitable for use in the Internet.

## The Key Question

Because writing systems are very complicated, this meeting might be content to discuss the writing system in general terms.

Are people more or less content with the present orthography, at least in the east?

Would people like to see a technical committee set up to deal with orthographic matters, consisting mostly of trained Inuit? Or is the present situation satisfactory enough that we can save our energy for the time being?

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

*It may be possible to discuss this situation fully during the present conference, in which case this recommendation would be unnecessary. However the situation may be complicated and serious enough to warrant a separate meeting.*

- 16** Given the unique language situation in the Qitirmiut region, we recommend that a separate conference be set up to discuss what modifications to the overall Nunavut language policy may be needed to meet the needs of the Qitirmiut.

*Iqaluit has been chosen as the capital of Nunavut. It would be better to have the capital as a place where Inuktitut is strong, rather than a place where it is weak. That means there is a lot of work to be done,*

- 17** Given the unique language situation in Iqaluit, we recommend that the Department of Education investigate the special problems affecting the teaching of Inuktitut in that community, and develop workable solutions.



## 4 **Special Cases in Education & Training**

There are a few special cases involving education and training where we should ask ourselves some questions. The answers may cause us to make exceptions or additions to our language policy.

### **Qitirmiut Region**

What do the people of the Qitirmiut want out of a language policy? Are the majority committed to the survival of Inuinnaqtun, or are they prepared to accept the continuation of its present decline in their region?

There are two dialects ... are there two sets of attitudes?

Do we need a special policy for the Qitirmiut?

If the Qitirmiut does want Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun taught in school they will need a special kind of language program.

Is there a commitment to such a program?

### **Iqaluit**

What is the language situation among young people in Iqaluit?

How many of them are truly fluent in Inuktitut?

How many are truly concerned about their language?

Given that this is a tri-lingual situation, what is the present situation in the schools for each of the three languages: Inuktitut, English and French?

What needs to be done?

Is there the commitment to do it?

## Some Suggested Recommendations

*Everyone at this conference knows that there is a problem with the language skills of young people, but we also know that very little work is being done to face up to the problem.*

- 18 Given that a significant number of young Inuit are not fully fluent in their language, we recommend that the Department of Education and the Nunavut Teacher Education Program study this problem, and develop programs to remedy it.

*Inuktitut is a difficult language for qallunaat. Not every qallunaaq is able to learn it: not every qallunaaq wants to learn it. But should we not do all we can to help those who can and will learn something about the language, and culture, of the people whose land they are in? And the work done here will also be useful for the young people we have mentioned in Recommendation 17.*

- 19 Given that it would be beneficial for the efficiency and morale of the Nunavut civil service if a larger proportion of the non-Inuit staff were more familiar with the Inuktitut language, we recommend that the Government of Nunavut establish a clear policy as to the rights of their employees to receive Inuktitut language training to the limits of their abilities.  
We also recommend that supervisors and staff be made fully aware of the extent of these rights.

## **Inuit in the East who are not fully fluent**

How many young Inuit in the East are unskilled in Inuktitut?

Why?

How do they feel about this?

Do they want to improve?

If they do, how can we help them?

If there is the commitment to help them what form(s) will it take?

## **Qallunaat**

Do we want qallunaat to learn something about our language and culture?

How much can we expect them to learn?

(For qallunaat, Inuktitut is a very difficult language, much more so than most European languages)

Should all those working for the Nunavut government and other Nunavut organizations be expected/required to take courses?

For those who have trouble learning languages, should we provide courses about Inuktitut?

How much are we prepared to help them?

with materials?

with courses?

with time off work?

Do we want a strong policy in the government workplace?

**Will we make the supervisors follow it?**

Is there the commitment to carry out the policy we suggest?

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

*What we are looking for here is a series of striking, maybe humorous, posters and radio or television sketches that will catch the attention of Inuit, make them pause and think about the value of their language, and the danger of it disappearing in the next century. In order to compete with all the commercial advertisements seen in the media, this campaign should be created by highly skilled professionals.*

- 20 Given that there are indications that some young Inuit (and their parents) do not appreciate the value of their own language, we recommend the funding of a skilful and witty publicity program to foster such an appreciation.

## 5 Attitudes

This part of the discussion paper is more nebulous than what has gone before. Before we were dealing with facts, and professional opinions. Now we are dealing with people's attitudes ... not the statements they make when someone asks them an official question, but the attitude that comes across in their daily actions.

These are the crucial questions to ask about the attitude of Inuit parents:

If Inuit really are committed to their language, why do so many of them not use it at home?

Why is English the language of communication between so many parents and children?

And these are the crucial questions to ask about the attitude of Inuit young people:

Why are so many of them uncommitted to their own language?

What is the deadly attraction of English?

We know that English is the most powerful language in the world today. We know that Francophones are worried about the health of French. We know that around the world, let alone in North America, indigeneous languages are dying, unable to withstand the power and gamour of a language that intrudes into every activity and culture, from rock songs played on CDs in the jungle to air traffic control in the desert.

Knowing that, what can we do to defend Inuktitut?

Do we need a massive propaganda campaign? ... brief but skillfully produced "commercials" on radio and TV ... attractive and appealing comic-strip messages in the paper ... colourful posters that kids will want on their walls ... songs by Susan Aglukark and Lucy Idlout.

That's maybe where we should start, with an effort to give Inuktitut the glamour usurped by English.

## *Some Suggested Recommendations*

*We want a language commissioner with the freedom to speak out to all the citizens of Nunavut at any time, not simply a civil servant who reports only to the assembly once a year.*

- 21 Given that Nunavut is determined to maintain and develop Inuktitut as an official language, we recommend the establishment of a Language Commissioner, charged with the responsibility of monitoring the language situation, and reporting to the people of Nunavut whenever necessary. We want a commissioner with a more active mandate than that of the language commissioner of the NWT.

*We need a centralized institute closely in touch with the communities, one that can help co-ordinate all the various efforts, so that they work together with one aim, to maintain and strengthen Inuktitut in this modern age.*

- 22 Given that the present system of distributing grants for language enhancement in the NWT is confusing and lacks overall planning, we recommend that a Language Institute be created with the responsibility of distributing any territorial funding available in a simple coherent fashion, bearing in mind the responsibility to encourage community initiatives.

## **6 ADMINISTRATION**

### **Monitoring and encouraging**

A language policy needs to be monitored, and encouraged. The GNWT has a language commissioner. We assume that the commissioner will be addressing this conference on her responsibilities, and her powers. Do we want a similar position established in Nunavut? ... with similar powers, or with greater powers? Maybe we would prefer a commissioner with a more active mandate than that in the GNWT.

### **Administration of funding**

Under the present government, there are a confusing number of sources for funding language projects, with confusing, restrictive, and time-consuming procedures for proposing and disbursing grants. The intentions are laudable, to encourage community initiatives, but the results are twofold: the lack of overall direction leads to duplication of efforts, and the insistence on local sponsorship often merely creates another bureaucratic layer. Surely a more organized yet simpler approach could be more efficient and still safeguard the principles of community empowerment,

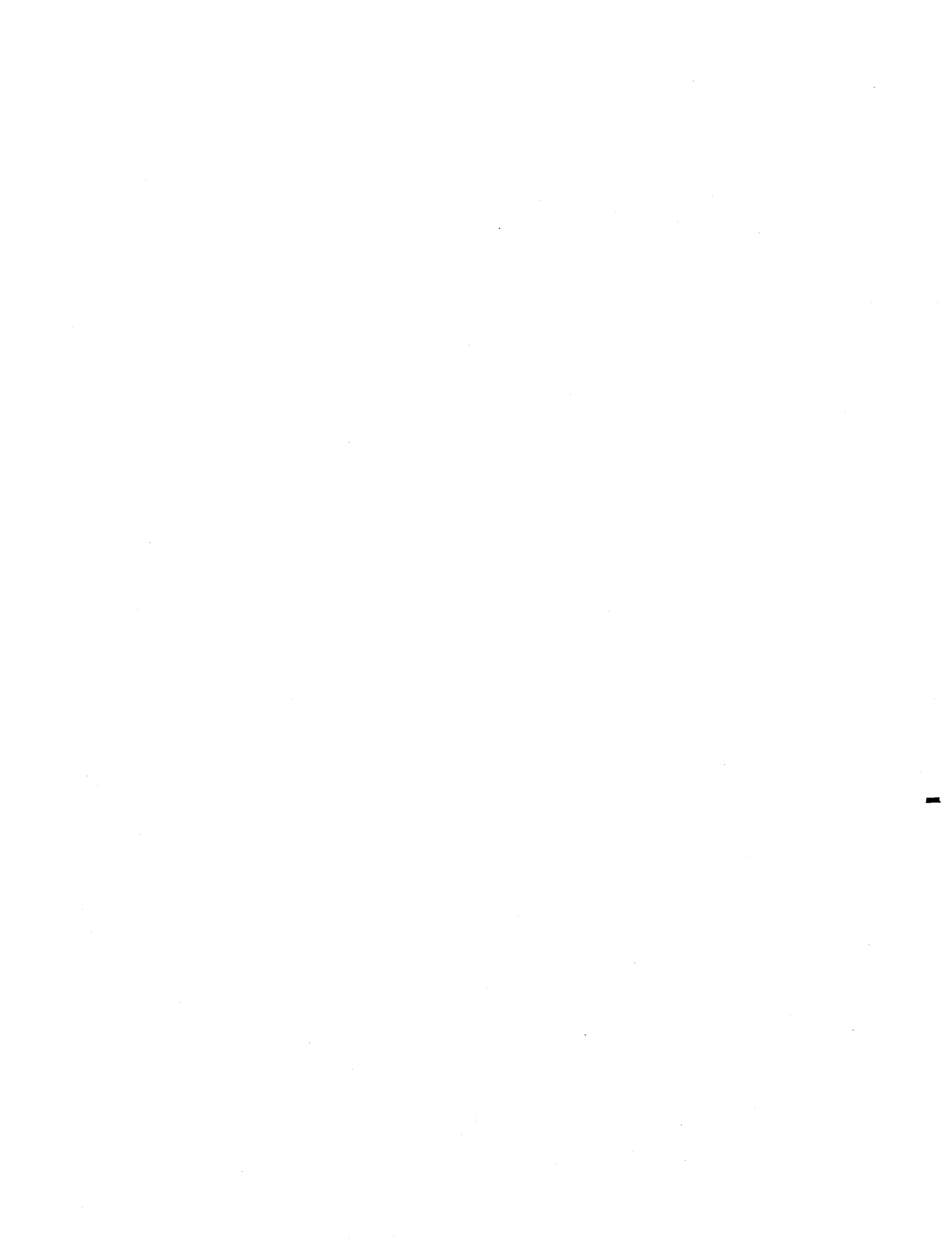
- Do we want one centralized Language Bureau in Nunavut to supervise territorial language grants?
- If we do, how much independence should it have?
- Should it report directly to the executive?
- Should it be part of the Department of Education?
- Should it be part of Nunavut Arctic College?





## **APPENDIX C**

**Inuit Writing Systems:  
A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Kenn Harper**



# INUIT WRITING SYSTEMS

## A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission

Kenn Harper

### 1. BACKGROUND

Inuit had no traditional writing systems. After contact with non-Inuit, various writing systems were developed for Inuit, usually by missionaries, whose purpose was to translate the Bible and encourage literacy for religious purposes. Missionaries did not see a writing system as a way of allowing Inuit to communicate with one another, although that was obviously a result.

Today, some Inuit leaders perceive a need for a change from the use of the Syllabic writing system to a system using the Roman alphabet. This would be a major change, which would profoundly affect the lives of most adult Inuit. It should not be undertaken without serious study to determine whether, in fact, a change is needed. If a need for change were indicated, it could still not be undertaken without general public understanding and acceptance of that need. In Nunavut, there is also some discussion of the need for standardization of the non-standard Roman orthography used in the Kitikmeot Region.

To begin any such study, we need some understanding of orthographic reform and of the position of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun as used and written in Nunavut.

#### 1.1. INUIT WRITING SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

In Greenland, the missionary Poul Egede translated and published the New Testament in Greenlandic in its entirety by 1766. In 1794 Otto Fabricius published a new translation, in an orthography which was a revision of that of Egede. A third translation was published in 1822 by Johan Conrad Kleinschmidt, again in another revised orthography. In the mid-1800s Samuel Kleinschmidt revised and standardized the Greenlandic orthography; like his predecessors he used the Roman alphabet. His innovations became the standard for written Greenlandic for over 100 years, and were used consistently in books, newspapers and all official publications.

In 1973, the Greenlandic orthography underwent a major reform, to change from the Kleinschmidt orthography to the Roman alphabetic orthography we see in use there in all publications today.

Moravian missionaries from Greenland established missions in Labrador in the late eighteenth century. Their arrival pre-dated Kleinschmidt's work on the standardization of Greenland, so the Moravian orthography used in Labrador differs considerably from Greenlandic.

In the western Canadian Arctic, Roman orthographies were used also, although no standard form developed, each writer being very much on his own to develop his own system.

In Alaska there are 3 examples of Eskimos (Yupik and Inuit) attempting to develop their own writing systems. The most well-known was developed around 1900 by a Yupik-speaker named Uyaqoq, more commonly known by his English name "Helper Neck". These were all picture writing systems, and they were developed only after contact with missionaries, and were not intended to be used for communication among Inuit but only as memory aids to assist in preaching on Biblical texts. Other than these unsuccessful attempts, the Roman alphabet has been used to write Alaskan Yupik and Inupiaq.

The Roman alphabet was also used in Siberia to write Yupik, before a system using Russian Cyrillic characters was imposed by the Russian government.

In the eastern Canadian Arctic, excluding Labrador, Inuit use a Syllabic writing system. This non-alphabetic system was developed first for the Cree by a missionary, James Evans. It was adapted to the Inuit language by two missionaries, John Horden and E. A. Watkins, but the major work in promoting its use among Inuit was done by the Anglican, Rev. Edmund James Peck, still remembered by his Inuktitut name, Uqammak. He worked first in Arctic Quebec for almost two decades before establishing a mission in Baffin in 1894. His efforts, and those of the Inuit catechists he trained, notably Luke Kidlapik, Joseph Pudloo and Peter Tooloogakjuak, resulted in Syllabics being used by all Inuit of the Baffin and Keewatin; when the Roman Catholic church established its first missions in the Keewatin region, they too used Syllabics.

## 1.2. INUIT WRITING SYSTEMS IN NUNAVUT

Linguists generally divide the Inuit language into 4 groupings of dialects (Alaskan Inupiaq, Western Canadian Inuktun, Eastern Canadian Inuktitut, and Greenlandic). Of these, 3 are spoken in Canada, and 2 in Nunavut. Those spoken in Nunavut are Eastern Canadian Inuktitut (North Baffin, South Baffin, Aivilik, Kivalliq, and Arctic Quebec dialects) and Western Canadian Inuktitun (Inuinnaqtun and Natsilingmiut dialects). Two orthographies are used in Nunavut. Syllabics is used for all Eastern Canadian Inuktitut dialects and Natsilingmiut dialect; Roman orthography is used for only one dialect, Inuinnaqtun, usually described in English as the Copper dialect. The situation can be summarized in the following chart:

<b><u>Nunavut Inuit Dialects and Orthographies</u></b>				
<b><u>Group</u></b>	<b><u>Dialect</u></b>	<b><u>Orthography</u></b>	<b><u>Region</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
<i>Eastern</i>	North Baffin	Syllabics	Baffin	Inuktitut
<i>Canadian</i>	South Baffin	Syllabics	Baffin	Inuktitut
<i>Inuktitut</i>	Aivilik	Syllabics	Keewatin	Inuktitut
	Kivalliq	Syllabics	Keewatin	Inuktitut
	Arctic Quebec	Syllabics	Baffin/Keewatin	Inuktitut
<i>Western</i>	Natsilingmiut	Syllabics	Kitikmeot/Keewatin	Inuktitut
<i>Canadian</i>	Inuinnaqtun	Roman	Kitikmeot	Inuinnaqtun
<i>Inuktun</i>				

An extrapolation from census records for 1986 indicate that the numbers of community residents in Nunavut identifying an Inuit dialect as their mother tongue, re-arranged by orthography used, is as follows:

<b><u>Orthography</u></b>	<b><u>Population</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>
Syllabics	12,840	95%
Inuinnaqtun	660	5%
Total	13,500	100%

### 1.2.1. TWO VERSIONS OF SYLLABICS

When Catholic missionaries established missions among the Inuit in the early 1900s, they used a Syllabic orthography which differed in some respects from that used by Anglicans. The main difference was in showing vocalic length. There were other minor differences.

### 1.2.2. NON-STANDARD ROMAN ORTHOGRAPHIES

A Roman orthography is used in the Inuinnaqtun communities of the Kitikmeot region. The orthography historically used was an inconsistent Roman orthography devised by Anglican missionaries. Very little written material, other than church literature, was ever produced in it. This orthography [I'll refer to it as "Old Roman"] does not differentiate between "k" and "q", using "k" for both; does not differentiate between "g" and "r", using "g" for both; and uses "y" instead of "j". These consonants are used consistently. All five vowels are used, but "u" and "o" are often used interchangeably, as are "e" and "i". The inconsistent use of vowels makes for an inconsistent orthography, although many of its users claim it is not confusing.

## 2. ORTHOGRAPHIC CHANGE

In the 1950s the federal government attempted to initiate orthographic reform among Canadian Inuit. A linguist, Gilles Lefebvre, was hired "to discuss the possibilities in the field of a unified standard orthography for the Canadian Eskimo language." [Harper, 1983, p. 36] Lefebvre rejected the syllabic system, and proposed a gradual phasing out of syllabics as a new Roman alphabetic writing system would be introduced. The government considered his recommendations premature, and they were never implemented. In 1960, however, they hired another linguist, Raymond Gagne, giving him the goal of establishing "one system of writing for *all* Canadian Eskimos." [Harper, 1983, p. 40] Gagne worked with Inuit such as Elijah Erkloo, Mary Panegoosho, Elijah Menarik, Abe Okpik and Joanasie Salamonie, and in 1961 published "Tentative Standard Orthography for Canadian Eskimos." Gagne concluded that "the only solution rests in presenting a new orthography in Roman letters." [Harper 1983, p. 43] Once again, the suggested reforms were not implemented.

## 2.1. THE I.C.I. LANGUAGE COMMISSION

By the 1970s Inuit and educators recognized the need, not for an abandonment of the syllabic writing system, but for a reform. Mark Kalluak and Armand Tagoona were among the first Inuit to push for reform. In 1974, at the insistence of Tagak Curley, the federal government funded Inuit Tapirisat of Canada to establish an Inuit Language Commission; the second of its seven objectives was to “study the present state of the written language and recommend changes for the future.” The project was later transferred to the Inuit Cultural Institute. The director of the commission was Jose Kusugak.

The result was the development of a dual orthography. A Roman orthography was devised, built on an analysis of the language and the application of scientific principles. The Syllabic system was standardized - differences in style between Catholics and Anglicans were abandoned - and made compatible with the Roman system. Because the Roman and Syllabic versions were both based on the same analysis of the language and its orthographic needs, it was in fact one system with two orthographic forms. The dual orthography was ratified by ICI in 1976, for use by all Canadian Inuit.

## 2.2. THE NAMES CHOSEN FOR THE DUAL ORTHOGRAPHIES

Each form of the dual orthography was given its own name - Qaliujaaqpait for Roman orthography, and Qaniujaaqpait for syllabics. [The former was suggested by the late Abe Okpik.] Although seldom used, these are the official names.

## 2.3. USE OF STANDARDIZED SYLLABIC ORTHOGRAPHY

The standard Syllabic orthography was accepted by all Inuktitut speakers [not Inuinnaqtun-speakers] in the NWT. At an conference of Inuit elders from all regions of the NWT, held in Hall Beach in 1985, elders endorsed the use of the “new” writing system in both its Syllabic and Roman versions. [Harper, 1992, p. 7]

The Syllabic standard is used by government and Inuit organizations in official publications. Indeed it is used in all “official” writing except by the Anglican church, where it has been partially adopted.

## 2.4. USE OF STANDARDIZED ROMAN ORTHOGRAPHY

The official Roman orthography - Qaliujaaqpait - is almost never used. Although it was designed to be a mirror image of the ICI Syllabic standard, and therefore capable of easy transliteration, almost nothing is ever published using it. It is used only as a teaching device in teaching Inuktitut as a second language, and sporadically as an aid in teaching Inuktitut as a first language in senior grades.

When ICI introduced its standard Roman orthography in 1976, it was meant to apply to the Kitikmeot region, as well as to the rest of the Canadian Inuit area. It has, however, been consistently rejected by most adults in the region; attempts by educators to use it in the schools have often been met with hostility. In 1982-83, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association initiated its own language commission; unfortunately funding was not provided and the commission folded. Non-standard and inconsistent versions of Roman orthography are still the norm among adult speakers of Inuinnaqtun.

## 3. THE DREAM OF A PAN-INUIT ORTHOGRAPHY

Mention was made earlier of the federal government's initiative for orthographic reform in the 1950's. When Gilles Lefebvre was asked to explore "the possibilities in the field of a unified standard orthography for the Canadian Eskimo language", he was also asked to explore "the delicate question of this unification along the lines of the Greenlandic (Kleinschmidt) system." [Harper, 1983, p. 36] Indeed, Lefebvre's 1957 publication, *A Draft Orthography for the Canadian Eskimo* was subtitled "Towards a future unification with Greenlandic." [Harper, 1983, p. 36] He saw Greenlandic as the model to emulate, and rejected syllabics because it was incompatible with this model.

Perhaps Lefebvre's efforts were the only tangible results in Canada of an initiative of the Provincial Council of Greenland which proposed in 1952 that there should be closer contact between Greenlanders and Canadian Inuit. They hoped that this initiative might result in "collaborative publication of books and of radio broadcasts." A delegation of Greenlanders visited Canada in 1956, and the visit was reciprocated two years later. But the Greenlanders reached the conclusion that "in the course of centuries each language had



developed in its own way. Obviously there could be no question of joint publications.” [Kleivan, p. 242]

In 1978, Edna Ahgeak MacLean proposed the development of an auxiliary Inuit writing system. It was assumed that this system would use the Roman orthography. She wrote:

“An auxiliary writing system is not intended to replace the existing major writing systems. I believe that the Inuit groups are not ready to consider, much less accept, any writing system which proposes to replace the existing major writing systems.

“The auxiliary writing system can be used by linguists (Inuit and non-Inuit) in the preparation of comparative dictionaries and possibly grammars. It can also be used by journalists and linguists in the publication of Inuit texts in linguistic journals and circumpolar newsletters...

“The auxiliary writing system should not be designed to replace those in regional use, but to provide a tool for use in comparative studies and in international communication in the Inuit language.”

She also suggested:

“But if any one group... should have any desire to revise their writing systems, the auxiliary writing system can serve as a model for change.”  
[Maclean]

At an ICC Conference in Sisimiut in 1989, a motion was passed to develop an international writing system for the Inuit language. ICC set up a working group on the subject; Greenlandic members were Robert Petersen and Pujo Olsen. In 1992, however, Robert Petersen reported that to date there had been no meetings. He reported to me as follows:

“We [Petersen and Olsen] both recommended that a paper presented by Edna Ahgeak MacLean at a symposium in Aarhus on an auxiliary Inuit writing system might be used as a model, as we both doubted that any group would be eager to drop their own system. We feel both that other Greenlandic supporters of the idea wanted to export the Greenlandic orthography both to Canadian and Alaskan Inuit. Their reason was that there exists a Greenlandic

literature and in this way they disregard that Greenlandic phonology probably is insufficient to cover the more westerly needs.”

Michael Fortescue, one of the most respected academics working in Inuit linguistics today, concurs with Petersen’s impression that it was probably the desire of some Greenlanders to export their orthography and literature to the rest of the Inuit world that led to the suggestion of a common Inuit orthography, and that the suggestion is inappropriate.

In research I did for the Government of NWT in 1992, many in the Keewatin saw the initiative for a common writing system as a Greenlandic initiative, and suggested that if Greenlanders wanted an auxiliary system, they should learn Syllabics!

Robert Petersen, a Greenlandic linguist, prepared a report on the feasibility of a common writing system for the Greenlandic Home Rule parliament. In it he pointed out the non-linguistic aspects to the development of a common script, describing the historic reasons for the various scripts in use among Inuit in Alaska, Canada and Greenland. In considering the linguistic aspects to the question of a common Inuit orthography, Petersen concluded that “...while it is not an easy matter to try and create a common orthography, it is not entirely impossible...” [Petersen, quoted in Harper, 1992, p. 61] However, he concluded that, for linguistic reasons, “Greenlandic is probably the worst starting point for a common Inuit orthography.” In commenting specifically on Canada, he felt that “There is no dialect or language of common communication, and as long as this is the case, the question of a common script will be a problem in Canada even though this means that yet another symbol of common identity is in a weak position.” [Petersen, quoted in Harper, 1992, p. 59]

The consensus is that the inter-dialectal differences in phonology are large enough that any common orthography would be an auxiliary one, not meant for use of the general public, but meant for use by linguists and scholars; and that the inter-dialectal differences in vocabulary are sufficiently large that, even if a common orthography existed, it would not create access by Inuit of one dialectal area to the literature of Inuit of another dialectal area geographically far removed. More specifically, the existence of a common orthography would not automatically allow Canadian Inuit access to the rich

literature in Greenlandic. Moreover, no progress has been made on the development of an auxiliary common writing system for all Inuit.

#### 4. SYLLABICS VS. ROMAN ORTHOGRAPHY IN EASTERN NUNAVUT

The elimination, for practical reasons, of the consideration of a common writing system for all Inuit, leads us directly back to the situation that exists in Nunavut, and the realization that we need a made-in-Nunavut solution to the orthographic dilemma, if indeed there is a problem at all.

##### 4.1. PERCEIVED NEED FOR ORTHOGRAPHIC REFORM

The situation is this: 95% of Inuit in Nunavut use the Syllabic orthography; 5% (Inuinnaqtun-speakers) use a non-standard Roman orthography.

Some Canadian Inuit leaders perceive that the Syllabic writing system, the system of the majority, is holding Canadian Inuit back, that it is preventing them from joining the modern world. Some, like John Amagoalik, recommend the abolition of Syllabics and an adoption of a standard Roman orthography, a standard that has already been created but never used.

In the Kitikmeot region, educators (and few others) see the need for a greater public awareness of the deficiencies of the non-standard “old” Roman orthography in use there, and the promotion of the ICI Qaliujaaqpait standard orthography.

It will be helpful to understand how orthographic reform has been handled elsewhere.

#### 5. EXPERIENCES OF ORTHOGRAPHIC REFORM

Many languages have undergone orthographic reform. However, this is usually a matter of spelling reform, rather than of a change of script. The Greenlandic reform of 1973, although major, was not a change of script; it was a “radical spelling reform” motivated by “the wish to make it [Greenlandic] easier to spell - to get written and spoken language in greater accord with each other...” [Jacobsen, p. 119] Even so, at its outset it was controversial and aroused much opposition.

Within Nunavut, the spelling reform that resulted in a standardization of Syllabics in 1976 was accepted, although not without some quarrel, especially from the church. This spelling reform can be considered major in that it eliminated 25% of the syllabary, through the elimination of the former first column of symbols.

Much rarer are orthographic reforms in which the type of script, the writing system itself, is changed. Only one insignificant example exists in the Eskimo world; in the 1950s a Roman alphabet devised by Russian researchers and teachers in the 1930s for Siberian Yupik was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet.

### 5.1. EXAMPLES OF SCRIPT REFORM ELSEWHERE

Elsewhere in the world, the best known example of script reform is Turkey. In 1928, the nationalist Turkish leader and social reformer, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, decided to abolish the Arabic script, which Turks had used for a thousand years, and replace it with the Latin alphabet. He asked experts how long they thought it would take to replace Arabic with Latin script, and was told it would take at least five years. "We shall do it," he said, "within five months." This script reform, combined with education programmes, enabled children and adults to read and write in the Roman alphabet within a few months, and to study other languages written in Roman orthography with greater effectiveness. Ataturk stated that "The cornerstone of education is an easy system of reading and writing."

In the past few years, script reform has been initiated in the Turkic-speaking former Soviet republics. Many of them, including Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, signed an agreement in 1993 in Ankara on the adoption of a 34-letter Latin alphabet. The 34 letters form an inventory of all the letters needed for the various languages, and individual languages from the Turkic group will pick the letters they need - like selecting from a menu; thus Turkish will remain as it is with 29 letters, Azerbaijan will use 32, and so on. [This approach may be one that can be used for the Inuit languages if ever an auxiliary common writing system is developed.] In some of the republics, however, actual implementation of the changes has been given a low priority. One Uzbek expressed his reason for the "go-slow" approach in this way: "Having been rendered illiterate by fiat three times in

this century, we're not at all eager to relive such a cultural trauma." [Linguist List]

These examples are brought forward here so that conference participants will realize that Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun speakers are not unique in being asked to contemplate major orthographic reform which, for Syllabic users, would also constitute script reform.

## 5.2. SPEED OF REFORM

The script reform which occurred in Turkey under Ataturk was swift and undemocratically imposed. It was, however, effective. The reform underway in some of the former Soviet republics is happening at varying speeds; one must wait to see how effective the changes become.

In Greenland, the 1973 spelling reform was phased in, in a planned and coordinated way, and has been effective; the new Greenlandic orthography is used for all official purposes in Greenland.

By contrast, the dual orthographies - Qaliujaaqpait and Qaniujaaqpait - adopted by ICI and ITC in 1976 have had varying degrees of acceptance. The Syllabic standard has been generally accepted in the Syllabic-using area. Its Roman counterpart has been totally ignored in the Inuktitut-speaking communities, and almost completely ignored in the Inuinnaqtun-speaking communities.

## 6. IS ORTHOGRAPHIC REFORM NEEDED IN NUNAVUT?

This is really two questions: Should Syllabics be abandoned? Should Inuinnaqtun be standardized?

At the outset, let's recognize that we don't have a situation in Nunavut like Ataturk had in Turkey, or even like Kleinschmidt had in Greenland, in which orthographic reform was simply imposed on the population.

### 6.1.1. SYLLABICS

Before the advent of modern computer technology, Syllabics was a costly system to maintain. Today, however, there is probably little, if any, cost premium to publishing in Syllabics. No matter what orthography is used, translation costs will remain constant.

An international effort has been made in the standardization of syllabic characters for computer use. A local communications company, Nortext Multimedia, is developing what they describe as “a revolutionary online news and information service that will provide free and easy access to a virtual world of northern information - in your choice of Inuktitut or English.” [Nunatsiaq News]. The boards of education in Nunavut have published hundreds of texts for school children in Inuktitut syllabics. [Hundreds more have been published in Nunavik.]

Clearly, initiatives have been made to help Syllabics live and thrive.

But has enough been done?

For adults, there is little other than government handouts and religious literature to read. The cultural periodical that was a mainstay of a previous generation of Inuktitut readers, Inuktitut magazine has turned itself in recent years into a podium for expressing Inuit political aspirations. There is almost no culturally-relevant literature in book or magazine form for adult readers of Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun.

Studies need to be undertaken on speed and ease of reading syllabics, and of learning to read syllabics compared with speed and ease of reading Roman orthography in a language like Inuktitut in which words are very long. Certain studies undertaken in Greenland on the difficulty of learning to read in Greenlandic, where words are also very long, have concluded that “word length is considered to be a problem especially for readers who use an alphabetic reading strategy.” [Jacobsen, p. 127]. I do not know of comparable studies for Inuktitut.

### 6.1.2. EMOTIONAL ISSUE

One cannot underestimate the emotional attachment that Inuit have for syllabics.

Consider the following statements, a small sample of many similar statements:

“When I became fully familiar with the use of syllabics, I became, as it were, in love with them, even so far as to defend their use if someone wasn’t pleased with the way I write, or hinted I was wrong... Some Inuit do not want to give up syllabics simply because they’re different and it makes them appear to be genuine Inuk; some perhaps even think that syllabics was invented by Inuit.” [Mark Kalluak, quoted in Harper, 1983, p. 46-7]

“Personally, I am in favour of those who wish to retain the old system of syllabics, because I feel it’s their possession.” [Simeonie Amagoalik, quoted in Harper, 1983, p. 47]

A professor of northern studies, Bob Williamson, noted:

“Obviously the syllabics, in this era when the Inuit feel their culture to be so deeply threatened, have assumed a symbolic significance over-riding any considerations of ‘efficiency’...” [Williamson, quoted in Harper, 1983, p. 48]

Robert Petersen has noted that some elders have “no desire to change the way of writing in which ‘God’s words’ were written” and commented that “Such is the way that love for one’s language works. In itself it is something important and valuable, but it hinders both unreasonable and reasonable changes. Love for one’s mother tongue is not always easy to distinguish from ordinary intolerance.” [Petersen, quoted in Harper, 1992, p. 66]

In 1989 at a board meeting of the Inuit Cultural Institute, a motion was passed as follows:

“Whereas Inuit Circumpolar Conference wishes to introduce an international one writing system in Roman Orthography... and whereas the syllabic is being taught in schools and is widely accepted by the general Inuit population, and whereas we wish to retain this form of communication

(writing Syllabics), so be it resolved that a poll be conducted amongst Nunasiak (sic) residents asking whether they wish to keep Syllabics as it exists or change to Roman Orthography...” [Harper, 1992, p. 26-7]

The suggested poll was never taken.

## 6.2. INUINNAQTUN ROMAN ORTHOGRAPHY

In the Kitikmeot Region, there is a need for a major public education campaign on the need for a standardized Roman orthography and the legitimacy of the Qaliujaaqpait orthography that has been endorsed for use by Canadian Inuit.

## 6.3. BOTH ORTHOGRAPHIES

Students above the primary level are increasingly bored with the way Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun are taught in school. In the larger communities, this is a crisis. Boards of education have paid lip service to the development of curricula at the higher grade levels for over a decade, with little to show for it. Indeed, what they have to show for it are frustrated language teachers with no resources, expected to “wing it” every day in the classroom; and students who are either disrespectful of the teachers’ efforts to teach the language in the absence of the necessary resources, or motivated students who are frustrated by the lack of curricula which would allow their attempts to study the language to be successful.

There is almost no secular literature of other than a government nature to read in Inuktitut (Syllabics) or Inuinnaqtun (Roman) above the primary school level. It is imperative that concrete encouragement be given to the development of culturally-relevant literature in both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun for older students and for adults.

The Government of Nunavut must adopt a subsidy program to encourage the publication of literature in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. The market is simply not large enough, in either dialect or orthography, for publishing as a business venture to succeed without subsidies.

The forces that would mitigate against the longterm survival of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun are massive. Foremost among them is the ubiquitous television



with its preponderance of English language stations. Aboriginal language programming must compete against big-budget television from the south. A continuing commitment of funding to aboriginal organizations to produce high-quality programming in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun is a must, for the language must be supported and promoted through all media if efforts to promote literacy and reading through print media are to be successful.

In short, a major effort to promote adult reading is necessary. This is not the same as promoting literacy. Most adults are literate in that they have the ability to read in Inuktitut Syllabics or in Inuinnaqtun Roman orthography. **But there is nothing to read!** Active literacy can only be promoted if material to read is produced.

Only after such an effort is made, over a long period of time, would one be able to decide whether or not Syllabics will be an appropriate orthography over the long term. It is premature to sound its death knell now. It hasn't really been given a chance.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Nunavut needs to make a major commitment, including the commitment of financial resources, to the production of culturally-relevant material for readers of all ages, including adults, in Inuktitut Syllabics and Inuinnaqtun Roman orthography.

The Government of Nunavut should conduct a major campaign of public education in the Kitikmeot Region to inform adults of the merits of the Standard Roman orthography, and should teach Inuinnaqtun consistently in the standard Roman orthography in schools in the region.

The Government of Nunavut must continue the GNWT's admirable approach to the production of reading materials for the primary grades.

The Government of Nunavut must develop appropriate curricula for intermediate and senior grades, produce reading and other support material for the teaching of these curricula, and train teachers of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun for these grade levels to a level of competency and professionalism that one would expect of teachers in other subjects.

The Government of Nunavut should use the official names for the Syllabic and Roman orthographies - Qaniujaaqpait and Qaliujaaqpait - endorsed by ITC and ICI.

The Government of Nunavut should work with the Anglican Church to ensure that materials produced by the church use the appropriate official orthography consistently.

The Government of Nunavut should undertake a public education campaign to instill pride in the use of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun.

The Government of Nunavut must adopt a subsidy program to encourage the publication of literature in Inuktitut Syllabics and Inuinnaqtun Roman orthography, for readers of all ages.

The Government of Nunavut and the Government of Canada must increase their funding to aboriginal organizations to produce high-quality television programming in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.

The Government of Nunavut should undertake, or encourage, the publication of a periodical in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun which will avoid political themes and, instead, focus on culture, language, history, poetry and creative fiction.

When Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun place names are officially adopted, their spelling should be that of the official orthography.

The Government of Nunavut should undertake studies on the speed and ease with which readers are able to acquire reading skills in both Syllabics and Roman orthography, and study the implications of the results for language teaching methodologies.

The Government of Nunavut should establish, within its Department of Culture, Language and Youth, a "Language Academy", in which the language bureaucracy will draw regularly on the expertise of language scholars to ensure that the promotion and use of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun remain priorities of the Government of Nunavut, that the results of linguistic scholarship are known to bureaucrats and policy-makers, and that evolving language policies are linguistically and pedagogically sound.

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## APPENDIX D

**Discussion Paper:  
Status and Issues of the Inuinnaqtun Language of the West Kitikmeot  
Millie Kuliktana, Kugluktuk, NT**



*Discussion Paper*

**Status and Issues  
of the  
Inuinnaqtun Language  
of the  
West Kitikmeot**

***Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Nunavut Language Policy Conference***

**Submitted By: Millie Kuliktana  
Kugluktuk , NT**

# History of Inuinnaqtun

Being Inuit of Inuit dependencies, we Inuit of Nunavut understand that Inuit were united through an oral language from east to west, as well as the circumpolar regions from Siberia to Greenland.

As evolution took place, the once nomadic Inuit became regionalized and modernisation set in. With modernisation came the dialects and the written form of Inuit language.

Dialects of the Inuit became recognizable to the areas of Inuit habitat amongst the Inuit groups. These dialects today are recognizable to be Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun. Inuktitut being known as the dialect of the Eastern Inuit, Inuinnaqtun known as the dialect of the West Kitikmeot region, and Inuvialuktun as the dialect of the Mackenzie Delta.

While there are three main dialects of the Inuit language there are two writing systems. One known as syllabics and the other as Roman orthography. Syllabics is used from the East Kitikmeot across to Baffin Island, while Roman orthography is used from the West Kitikmeot to the Mackenzie.<sup>1</sup>

The written language was introduced in the early 1900's by Missionaries who established posts in the north. Syllabics were originally introduced, which is originally a Cree language. Roman Orthography was then introduced by Anglican Missionaries, adapting the English alphabet to symbolize the Inuinnaqtun sounds. Unfortunately the English Missionaries could not at the time properly pronounce certain sounds such as the q and r, as harder sounds of the k and g. This today causes differences between the Elders, and the Middle Aged.

As for the French Missionaries who were Catholic Priests, they were able to capture the sounds of q and r, as their French dialect allowed them to pronounce the sounds. As the Missions grew in the north, so did the syllabics written form of Inuktitut. Syllabics then became the written language of the people from the Kitikmeot East region to the Baffin. The written syllabics captures all sounds of the Inuinnaqtun language.

Today in the 1990's, Inuinnaqtun speakers have had differences over the written form of Inuinnaqtun, as many of the Mid- Aged were taught the way the Missionaries had introduced the written form, which was the way the Elders were taught to read the Inuinnaqtun. The younger generation since the mid 1980's have been taught the written form with changes that reflect all sounds of the Inuinnaqtun. These changes that were recognized by Educators as the best way to preserve our Elders language. This being done with the use of Q's and R's, as an addition to the old written form. The standard form of written Roman orthography was improved by the Inuit Cultural Institute.

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## **Inuinnaqtun Language Status of the West Kitikmeot**

The following data is taken from the report 'TOWARDS BILINGUAL EDUCATION'. A document from the Kitikmeot Board of Education. Researched and written by Lynn Alyward, Rosemary Meyok, and Millie Kuliktana.(1996)

The following data are results of two main questions used in the research on the status of the language in the Kitikmeot Region:

### **A) What is the nature of Inuinnaqtun language in the Kitikmeot Region?**

#### **Oral Language Proficiency:**

1. What is the oral language proficiency level of Inuinnaqtun in elementary school children and their parents/guardians in the Kitikmeot Region?

#### **Results**

- The majority of each community sample scored a rating of 2 or poor in their level of speaking and understanding Inuinnaqtun.
- Overall , 97 elementary participants out of the total of 183 students, representing 53% of the sample, were rated at a level of 2 in their receptive and expressive Inuinnaqtun language skills as assessed using the conversation tasks.
- 22% of the total sample, or 40 students, rated a language total of 3. ( passive language)
- The remaining 46 students representing 25% of the sample were rated as fluent speakers with a language total of 4,5, or 6.

#### **Language Use:**

2. What language(s) is / are used by parents/guardians and their school-aged children in the homes of the Kitikmeot Region?

#### **Results- Table 4**

- For the two of the communities except Cambridge Bay, the inter-parental language use was fairly evenly distributed across the language choices of Inuinnaqtun only, English only or both English and Inuinnaqtun. In Cambridge Bay the majority of parents and guardians interviewed reported English as their language of communicating with each other.

### **Results - Table 5**

- Overall the more common language(s) used in the home, with the elementary students, identified by parents, was both Inuinnaqtun and English - 43% of mother / guardians and 47% of father / guardians.
- English language use only, placed second to the use of both languages with 38% of mothers / guardians and 32% of the fathers / guardians.
- A minority of parents / guardians , 16% of mothers / guardians and 21% of fathers / guardians, reported using Inuinnaqtun only with their elementary aged child.

### **Results - Table 6**

- In Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk the largest pre-school language use reported was English.
- After starting school the number of students reporting the use of English only, decreased and there was an equal amount of increase reported in the category indicating use of Inuinnaqtun and English.
- All communities had some secondary students that were unilingual when they started school and 8 students reported that they have used only Inuinnaqtun in school.
- Overall , 58% of the sample reported English as their home language before starting school.
- 25% reported use of both English and Inuinnaqtun.
- 10% reported use Inuinnaqtun only.
- The languages used in school data showed an increase in the Inuinnaqtun and English category to 47%, the English only category dropped to 43% and approximately 3% of the secondary school students reported having used Inuinnaqtun only in school.

### **Results - Table 7**

- The secondary students of all communities reported using Inuinnaqtun only, with their grandparents, almost four times as often as with their parents.  
For each community, excepting Cambridge Bay, the English and Inuinnaqtun language use category, with both parents or guardians, was the largest.
- Overall, it is important to note that 54% of the secondary students in the Kitikmeot Region reported using Inuinnaqtun only or English with their mothers / guardians and 45% reported using Inuinnaqtun only or Inuinnaqtun and English with their fathers / guardians.
- 62% of the secondary student population reported using Inuinnaqtun only or both English and Inuinnaqtun with their Grandparents.

Comments during interviews can be found in the report 'Towards Bilingual Education' See Appendices #2

B) **Is there community support for bilingualism?**

**Language Choices:**

3. What language(s) do parents/guardians want their elementary school aged children to be able to use fluently as adults?

**Results - Table 8**

- The English only choice by parents or guardians represented on 5 % of the 171 person parent / guardian unit sample.
- The majority of parents, 51% of the sample, reported that they would like both English and Inuinnaqtun as languages their child would use fluently as an adult.
- 40% of the parents and guardians indicated that they would like their child be unilingual Inuinnaqtun as an adult.

4. What language(s) do secondary students want to be able to use fluently as adults?

**Results- Table 9**

Secondary students of all communities reported a strong wish to be able to use both inuinnaqtun and English as adults.

- The bilingual language choice category accounted for 77% of the secondary student sample.
- 13% of the secondary respondents indicated a desire for inuinnaqtun only skills as an adult.
- 8% of the students wanted English only language skills as an adult.

**Table 10-**

- 7%of the secondary students still tried to not make a choice by indicating both languages or listing a third language.
- 59% of the secondary students chose Inuinnaqtun as their one adult language.
- 35% of the secondary students chose English.

## Language Importance:

5. How important do parents/guardians and secondary students think Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtut is in their community?

### Results - Table 11

- Inuinnaqtun was ranked as a 4 in the community, by 80% of all parents / guardians interviewed.
- 92% of the total sample gave Inuinnaqtun an importance ranking of 3 or 4.
- 60% of all community respondents ranked English as a 4.
- The number of parents / guardians that ranked English as a 3 or 4 represented 88% of the sample.

Further information on the results can be found in the report 'Towards Bilingual Education'.

Today's use of inuinnaqtun amongst the younger generations is known in education terms as, "*passive users of inuinnaqtun*". The understanding of that statement is, '*can understand at a good level of inuinnaqtun when spoken to, but cannot reply back in inuinnaqtun*'. A positive effect from the "passive" situation is that, although you could not reply back orally it is common that, the non inuinnaqtun speaker is usually good at writing the inuinnaqtun language using the ICI standard form of writing. Then being able to read, capturing all sounds that are differentiated between the q's and r's from the k's and g's. This situation shows that, accepting the ICI form of written inuinnaqtun is a beginning towards language preservation.

With more education on properly using the ICI form of writing, students and employees will properly use the inuinnaqtun language.

***The Educators in the region recognize that the oral language and it's purity are on the decline very rapidly. As, the Elders decease, so does the purity of the inuinnaqtun. Todays society in the Kitikmeot West is moving towards a non-inuinnaqtun speaking future. English is being spoken as the functioning language in most of the homes and all workplaces. Thus, leaving Education to be only avenue for language preservation and instruction, other than, Interpreter / Translator services in the region. Who are mostly found in Regional Offices. As Inuinnaqtun becomes less used in the region, as it is already on a rapid decline, we as Inuit of inuinnaqtun speaking decendents, must prepare and work together to preserve the language .***

## ***The need for the recognition of the Inuit Cultural Institute Standard Roman Orthography.***

The ICI written inuinnaqtun when transliterated into, or from syllabics, all sounds are captured. With proper transliterations, it allows for educators of the Inuit language to be able to teach all youth and adults both forms of writing. The future users of the language will be able to read and write both syllabics and Roman Orthography.

*As parents ,we speak too much English and that causes the children to speak English. We need to speak more inuinnaqtun.* TBE report

*Children need to learn both languages as they are needed in todays society and work force.* TBE report

***Myth Native languages are obsolete.***

Inuktitut is on its way in, not on its way out. ***Will Inuktitut and English be the official languages of Nunavut?***

Therefore there is a need for a formal commitment to maintain the status of the language. Equal billing with English leads one to believe that there is a strong desire for Inuktitut to increase in importance not decrease.

***The Inuktitut importance rankings reported in the study TBE support the view that Inuktitut is valued by the Kitikmeot community members.***

# Existing Language Preservation Initiatives

## *Arctic College*

### Basic Adult Education Programs

The Arctic College has mandated that all programs being offered in the Kitikmeot Region be taught with a components of Inuinnaqtun / Inuktitut 110, 115, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140 & 145 in all the Basic Adult Education Programs.

### The Nunavut Teacher Education Program

The language use of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun is also a very large component of the Teachers Education Program courses. This initiative recognizes the need to educate the Teachers to become Bilingual Speakers of the Inuit & English languages. Through proper modelling of the oral and written Inuit language in RO and Syllabics the children and youth of the future will be able to practise the proper way of speaking the traditional way of the Inuit language.

## *Nunavut Bilingual Education Symposium* (April 1997 Rankin Inlet)

These following highlights were taken from the Nunavut Education Symposium which was attended by Youth, Elders and Educators.

Inuit language and culture central to and integrated in all programs and activities: staffing, budget, materials, equipment, facilities, etc..

- truly bilingual programs with the appropriate staff, resources and materials
- opportunities for southerners to learn inuktitut / inuinnaqtun
- better recognition and compensation for cultural instructors
- use of media to promote language and culture, and encourage parents to teach them at home

During the symposium there was discussion about healing those who have had to forget their inuit language during the days of Residential School. Ideas for an "All Immersion School Year", for youth and adults was also mentioned. This immersion year could be based on the land during the spring, summer and fall for oral language instruction and a classroom setting be used for the written components of language development during the winter. There must be a program for residents of Nunavut to become confident bilingual speakers, culturally sound in mind and body, and able to practise the cultural way of life on and off the land. Skills developed on the land will help our Inuit residents to succeed in life!

*A father blamed residential school for the weaknesses in his language abilities. He felt it would be good for children to be able to speak to their Grandparents. He suggested :*

*Children should speak half inuk and half English in schools.*

TBE Report

## *Book Publishing Initiatives*

The Kitikmeot Board of Education has been publishing books towards meeting the needs of the language delivery programs. Books that are published through the Board represent the two major dialects of the Inuit in the Kitikmeot. Published books are printed in RO and Syllabics texts in the same book. This initiative has cost the Board approximately \$40 thousand dollars on average in the 1990's. These published books model the standard ICI form of writing and truly capture all sounds made in the inuinnaqtun / Inuktitut language.

The NWT Literacy Council has also published a collection of stories using the standard ICI form of writing with the assistance of Educators in the region. This initiative again included the participation of Elders. During the workshop Elders discussed how they can no longer talk the same language as their grandchildren. Excepting the fact, that they will probably never have a unilingual conversation with them. And excepting the fact, that their language is falling on "deaf" ears amongst the youth. They recognize that through properly preserving the oral language with proper spelling it will allow capable speakers to properly use the oral language of our ancestors through written print.

Writers Workshops are held as language preservation initiatives in the region. These workshops have had participation from youth, mid-aged and elders. Through these initiatives the people are preserving the stories and legends of the Elders for use in the future, as the youth recognize the fact that with each passing on of elders, we bury the language and the stories of our ancestors with them.

*" We must stop thinkin about ourselves and think about the best methods for the future for when we are deceased"*

*- Elder , Alice Anablak*

Preparing and planning of Initiatives toward language preservation proposals should continually be written seeking funding for language development programs. And, the Nunavut decision makers should support language preservation initiatives and recognize the best methods for Inuit language preservation.

Appendixes 1.

**Examples of the Written Inuinnaqtun differences of the  
K and Q sounds and of the G and R.**

ki  
kivyaq = to cut with scissors  
kiliuq = to scrape

qi  
qivyaq = rope  
qitauyaq = a dress

-gi-  
agiaq = a coarse file  
aqilgiq = ptarmigan

-ri-  
ubluriaq = a star  
apiriyaa = he asked her

ku  
kumak = a bug  
kublu = a thumb  
Kugluktuk = formerly Coppermine

qu  
qumaq = tape worm  
qupanuaq = a bird  
qugluktuk = two people got startled  
Qurlu = water fall  
Qurluqtuq = state of moving water

-gu-  
putuguq = a toe  
algumut = with the wind

-ru-  
ulruyuq = he fell down  
qupilruq = a worm

ka  
katak = to drop  
kalaq = a raven

qa  
qattaq = a pot  
qaluraut = a ladle

-ga  
algak = a hand  
algaak = a glove

-ra  
uyarak = a rock  
atira = my name

K's and Q's in word endings also provide information as to how many there are.

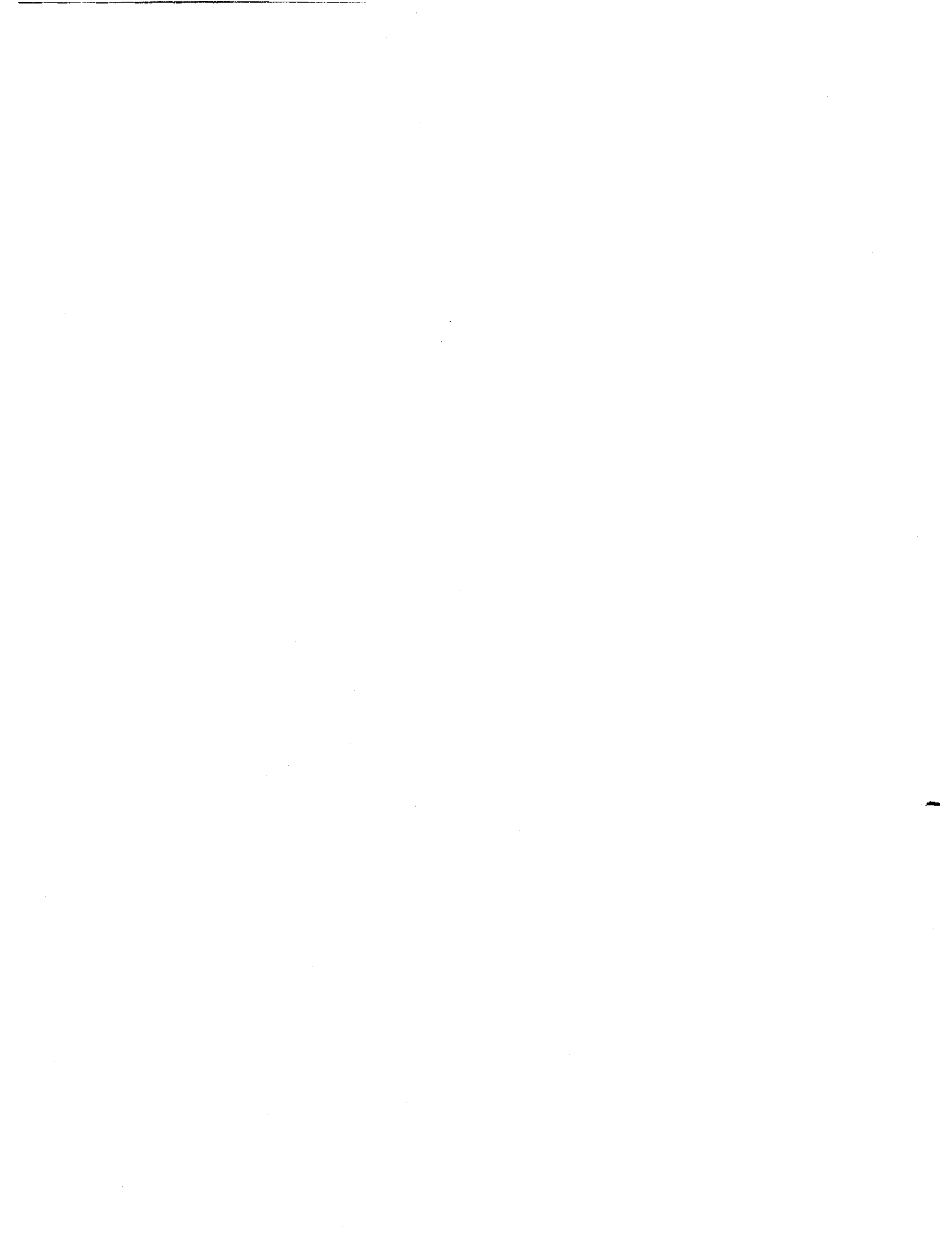
ex. nattiq = one seal  
nattiik = two seals  
nattiit = more than two

qulliq = one lamp  
qulliik = two lamps  
qulliit = more than two



## **APPENDIX E**

**Nunavut the Wonderful Challenge:  
Mémoire presented to the Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Association des francophones du Nunavut  
March 1998**



**Nunavut,  
the wonderful challenge**

**Mémoire presented to the  
Nunavut Implementation Commission**

by the

*Association des francophones du Nunavut*

for the

Language Policy Conference

March 1998

## Nunavut, the wonderful challenge

The history of the Northwest Territories begins in 1870, several months after the Hudson's Bay Company handed over to the newly formed Dominion of Canada the territories then known as the Rupert's Land.

This was the time when the Metis of Red River, the majority of whom were Francophones and Catholic, made a claim for constitutional protection in order to preserve their language and culture. The province status they negotiated with the Ottawa Government was to insure protection of their heritage. The Federal Government finally agreed to their demand and the Province of Manitoba was created. The Manitoba Act made provision for the protection of Metis' land and, also, for the protection of the French language and the Catholic religion. In those days, the Metis accounted for the majority of the population living within the boundaries of this newly formed province.

The turn taken by history prove to be totally different than the one provided for in the legal documents. 20 years after the establishment of the province, the Metis population of Manitoba had dropped to a meagre 7% of the total population. The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba then declared English to be the only official language of the province, and also made sure to lock the doors of the French catholic schools and threw away the keys.

In the Yukon and the Western portion of the Northwest Territories, history basically followed the same scenario, but this time, it turned itself against the First Nations people. The arrival of Euro-Canadian immigrants from Central Canada, mainly in Whitehorse and Yellowknife, has marginalized the First Nations on their own territories. Treaty 8 and treaty 11 basically officialized this expropriation by confining the Aboriginal people onto reserves.

If the history of Nunavut has not, so far, reproduced this ominous tendency of the Canadian history, i.e. the assimilation or marginalization of the minorities, it is only because there has not been any goldrush or oilrush in this corner of the country.

Under the constraint of surviving as a minority, the Francophones of Canada can only be extremely sensitive to, and be deeply sympathetic to the historical challenge that the Inuit People of Nunavut have taken upon themselves. Indeed, the Inuit will need to find original answers to a question that all of the Francophone communities from coast to coast have been asking over and over again: can a minority people survive within the Canadian Confederation?

The political leaders of Nunavut can always rely on the enthusiastic support fo the Canadian Francophones towards the Nunavut project. More specifically, the Francophone Members of Parliament, wether they be of autonomist or federalist allegiance. This being the case because, for obvious reasons, the Francophones, from everywhere in Canada, are deeply aware of the problems and the struggles the minority groups are faced with.

### A little history

The implication of the Francophones in the Nunavut region dates back to the beginning of the century, when the Oblates set up missions in the Keewatin. Most of these missionaries came directly from France. With the help of meagre subsidies from Ottawa, they were able to establish a hospital in Chesterfield Inlet. At the end of the Fifties, the Oblate missionaries became increasingly involved in the development of the cooperative movement in various northern communities. This effort helped put an end to the stifling monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company over the Inuit communities.

At the beginning of the Sixties, this co-op movement was strongly supported by the Gouvernement of Québec, more specifically by René Lévesque, then Minister of Renewable Resources in the Cabinet of

Premier Jean Lesage. His department got actively involved in the development of the Puvurnituk co-op and the marketing of Inuit sculpture in partnership with *the Mouvement des Caisses populaires Desjardins* from Lévis. The blossoming of the Puvurnituk co-op seems to have contributed to the general development of the co-op movement throughout the North.

Although the story of the Francophones' contribution to the history of Nunavut has yet to be written, one can notice that quite a number of them have played an important role in the development of the region. In general, these individuals are not known to be Francophones since they all speak English or Inuktitut. If we go back into time, we can remember Captain J.E. Bernier, Captain of the Arctic Ship and leader of the first patrols to navigate in the Eastern Arctic waters, starting in 1922. Father André Goussaert was one of the first founding pioneers of the co-op movement in the NWT. Father Guy Marie de Rousselière, *ataata Marie*, on the other hand, has made major archeological discoveries and significantly contributed to the filmed series on the Netsilik produced in Pelly Bay. Louis-Edmond Hamelin, founder of the *Centre d'études nordiques* at Laval University, was the last appointee to the NWT Council. Pierre Baril was the director of CBC North in Iqaluit at the time when the various communities in Nunavut were given their community radio equipment. You certainly remember, Andy Thériault, who until he retired a couple of years ago, was director for the Eastern Arctic region for DIAND, and also Mayor of Iqaluit for a time. Yvon Blanchette, another Mayor of Iqaluit during the 1980s. One cannot go without mentioning Louis-Jacques Dorais of Laval University, director of the Inuit Studies Magazine, and specialist of the Inuit language; one must not forget, also, Bernard Saladin d'Englure, the internationally renowned anthropologist. But enough enumeration for the time being.

What about all of these unknown individuals who have come from Québec and have taken part in the development of the Arctic? A large number of them have contributed to the construction of major projects like the military bases during World War II and, later, the DEW Line in the '50s or even the construction of the town of Frobisher Bay as it was called, then. Even today, quite a sizable number of them are working in the mines of Nanisivik and Polar.

And this is without mentioning the many Francophones who have established, mainly in Iqaluit, prosperous enterprises which contribute to the economic development of the town, and the region.

### A little geography

The Nunavut region is located directly to the North of the Province of Québec, in the immediate neighbourhood of close to 7 million Francophones. Montreal, the economic heart of the province, has a lot to offer. Among other things, a labour force which is altogether abundant, affordable and highly competent when compared to that of other cities in Canada. Furthermore, the costs of commercial spaces are among the less expensive in Canada.

Over the past twenty years, Montreal has become the most important port of the Atlantic coast in its ability to handle marine containers. All of Newfoundland marine supplying is done from Montreal. The same goes for most of the Eastern Arctic communities.

Because of all the above mentioned factors, and also because of the proximity of the New England markets, the Province of Québec, and more specifically Montreal and its neighbouring regions like La Beauce, have raised to an enviable position in the field of exportation of goods and services to the other provinces and territories of Canada (21% of GDP), but also to international markets (33% of GDP). In a nutshell: it is in Montreal that one can expect to find the best dollar value for the purchase of goods and services.

### Qualified labour for the mining industry

When looking at a map of Canada's North, one can only say that the mining industry is booming in the region. There are major investments being made at Voisey's Bay in Labrador, at Raglan Mine in Nunavik near Salluit, and at Lac de Gras not far from Yellowknife.

If so many rich deposits circle Nunavut, it is more than reasonable to say that a major expansion of the mining industry will soon take place within this new territory as the mining companies will invest in prospecting. Again, one can assume that any major development of the mining industry in Nunavut will heavily rely on qualified Francophone labour as it is already the case for Little Cornwallis Island, Nanisivik, Raglan and, even the Yellowknife area.

### Proximity of the Nunavik

In Canada, the most important Inuit population, after Nunavut, resides in Nunavik, on the South shore of the Hudson's Strait. Many communities of Nunavut and Nunavik have close ties. One can only think of the family ties, especially those of the exiles of 1950s, who were forced to move to the Northernmost settlements of Nunavut.

The further the idea of self-government shall develop, the stronger the ties are likely to become between the inhabitants of the territories on each side of the Hudson's Strait. Firstly, at the level of Inuit organizations like the ITC, ICC, TVNC, etc. But also at the level of common undertakings in the field of economic development like the halibut and shrimp fishing ventures of the Davis Strait. It is easy to imagine a wide variety of mutually beneficial exchanges between the two territories in the domains of Health services, Justice or Education.

Since the Nunavik is located in the Province of Québec, the Inuit of Nunavik are more attracted to French than those of Nunavut. Surprisingly enough, more than half of the students in the Nunavik schools are registered in the French program, nowadays.

### Francophone community of Nunavut

In Iqaluit, the Francophone population numbers to approximately 500 persons. Some of these families have been living here for more than twenty years. Other individuals come here for shorter stays, for example some construction workers and taxi drivers. Others still, come here under contracts for several years, like the members of the RCMP or employees of the Federal or Territorial Governments.

Year in, year out, the *Association francophone d'Iqaluit*, and now, the *Association des francophones du Nunavut*, has a membership of more or less 125 to 150 members. The association was first founded in 1981 by a group of Iqaluit residents who were requesting from the CBC the transmission of the French TV signal. Although the CBC has the mandate to promote the dual linguistic and cultural reality of the country, it refused to agree to their demand. Further to this refusal, the young association decided to raise the necessary money, purchase the required equipment and applied for a re-transmission license to the CRTC; license which it obtained. Since that time, and through the association the signal is available in Iqaluit.

Once this first task taken care of, the association began representations at the Territorial level in order to obtain a French First language program for the students. In 1985, the GNWT agreed to a meagre one hour of teaching in French for the approximately 25 Francophone students. It will have taken 13 years, i.e. in 1994-95, before Department of Education and the BDBE finally accepted to implement a full time French First language program at the elementary level.

13 years after the adoption of the Official Languages Act of the NWT, there were not even guidelines on how the services should be delivered in the NWT. Such guidelines have been made available only

this year, i.e. end of 1997, and do not represent a satisfactory solution to the provision of services in the official languages. As far as we can tell, of the hundreds of positions in the GNWT offices in Iqaluit, there is not even a single one which is designated as bilingual, French/English or French/Inuktitut. Most departments wouldn't even know where to refer a citizen should he ask for services in French. At the Iqaluit Town Hall, the very municipality which is to become the Capital of Nunavut in less than 13 months, it is still impossible to have services in French. The heart of the matter and real drama in all this is that the assimilation rate is astonishing among the Francophones of the NWT; the highest rate in Canada!

How can anybody imagine a Francophone community of any importance in Iqaluit if access to proper education or any other services in French is not appropriately organized and made accessible. Since no adequate (we should say none whatsoever) service is offered, many families are under pressure to leave Nunavut once their children are ready to move to high school.

We're in the situation of which came first: the hen or the egg? On one side we are being told that there must be sufficient numbers first in order to offer the services. On the other side, our citizens are discouraged to contribute anymore to the development of Nunavut because they are denied the services they should be entitled to.

### The Canadian Act on Official Languages and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Act on Official Languages was first adopted in 1969 by the Canadian Parliament. Its intent is to formally recognize the linguistic duality of our country. The Act was later updated in 1988 in order to adapt it more closely to the needs of the communities. This Act guarantees every Canadian citizen, whether he be French or English speaking, the right to be able to communicate in his language and to obtain services from Canadian institutions, in his own language: institutions such as the RCMP, Canada Post, Revenu Canada, also from other Canadian services like immigration, customs, etc.

In other parts of Canada, Québec, New-Brunswick, Manitoba and Ontario, for example, are subject to bilingualism regimes in their parliamentary, legislative and judicial affairs, regimes which resemble the one that governs the Canadian Government. On the other hand, their own provincial legislation in the matter of official languages are such that the linguistic rights of their linguistic minority are drastically different in many aspects. Except for the Province of Québec which, since the inception of the English Regime, has always offered a complete line of services to its Anglophone minority, services governed by the community itself, no Anglophone province has willingly accepted the implementation of this piece of Canadian legislation; it has always taken years of difficult and fastidious judicial challenges. This, even if Ottawa is making transfert payments in order to provide the provinces and territories with adequate funding to deliver such services in French to their minorities. For example, it is only since last year that all of the provinces and territories have put in place measures aimed at providing their Official language minority with some kind of governance over their school institutions, as it is specified in Section 23 of the Canadian Charter adopted in 1982. It will have taken 16 years to the various provinces and territories to implement, in many cases only partially, this requirement of the Canadian Charter (Constitutional Act of 1982).

During this time, the rate of assimilation was devastating among French Canadian. A phenomenon almost inexistant in Québec for the Anglophone minority. In all the provinces and territories, except for Québec since the adoption of Bill 101, the Francophones had to fight and argue for each and every insignificant interpretation of the law that could represent some kind of a concession from their governments. Over and over, the negotiations would take years and finally end up in Court, often in the Supreme Court of Canada, before rights are recognized. And it seems that this endless battle will never end.

## The language policy in Nunavut

Our hopes for this new territory of Nunavut go far beyond the strict legalist interpretation.

We are convinced that the blossoming of the French language and culture in Nunavut will prove to be one of the key elements to the development of the territory. As a matter of fact, this is an avenue that the Gouvernement of New-Brunswick, and to a lesser extent that of Manitoba in the latter years, have chosen to adopt. A bilingual population, or trilingual in our case, will more than likely foster economic development opportunities that could never take place otherwise. The unusual concentration of call centers established in New-Brunswick, and also in Manitoba are a good example of what qualified, multi-lingual labour have to offer.

1. As a minority people in Canada, the Francophones readily understand that a minority needs to fight in order to survive. They know how to recognize the dangers and threats of assimilation. They know about the necessary struggles in order to keep the language and culture alive and vibrant. We believe that this expertise pertaining to the linguistic and cultural struggles can prove useful to the future Government of Nunavut if it wants to attain its goal of preserving both the language and the culture of the majority of the population of Nunavut.
2. No matter what some powerful political and financial lobbies may be pretending, it is in the best interest of the Nunavut Territory to strengthen its ties with Québec. For one reason, the goods and services acquired in Québec are, almost systematically, less expensive. Furthermore, Québec represents a large reservoir of qualified and competent human resources, and millions of consumers who are curious about Nunavut and willing to learn more about it.
3. Over the course of the last fifty years, Québec has developed a tremendous Northern expertise in such domains as housing, transportation education, health services and research.
4. A wide variety of medias from the international Francophone community, for example papers and magazines like *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *l'Express*, *Le monde diplomatique* et TV shows like *Thalassa*, contacted the *Association des francophones du Nunavut* in order to learn more about Nunavut. Often those contacts were made through the Web sites the association has developed and is maintaining. The international Francophony represents a tremendous market, whether it be tourism or marketing of media and cultural products. The presence and the participation of the Francophones in the everyday life of Nunavut can only be beneficial to the development of those segments of the economy.

We can only wish that the future Government of Nunavut will recognize the fact that a strong Francophone community can only contribute in an essential manner to the betterment of this new territory, and is in no way a threat to its cultural integrity.

## Conclusion

Two main conclusions can be drawn here. First of all, we must understand that, if legal and constitutional protection is essential to the survival of a language and a culture, it can in no way guarantee such survival. In order for a language and culture to survive and thrive, whether it be Inuit or French, they need to be given the appropriate environment to do so. Furthermore, such language and culture need to be nurtured with love and dedication by those who have inherited them from their ancestors so that, in turn, they will be passed on to future generations as part of the magnificent heritage of the human race.

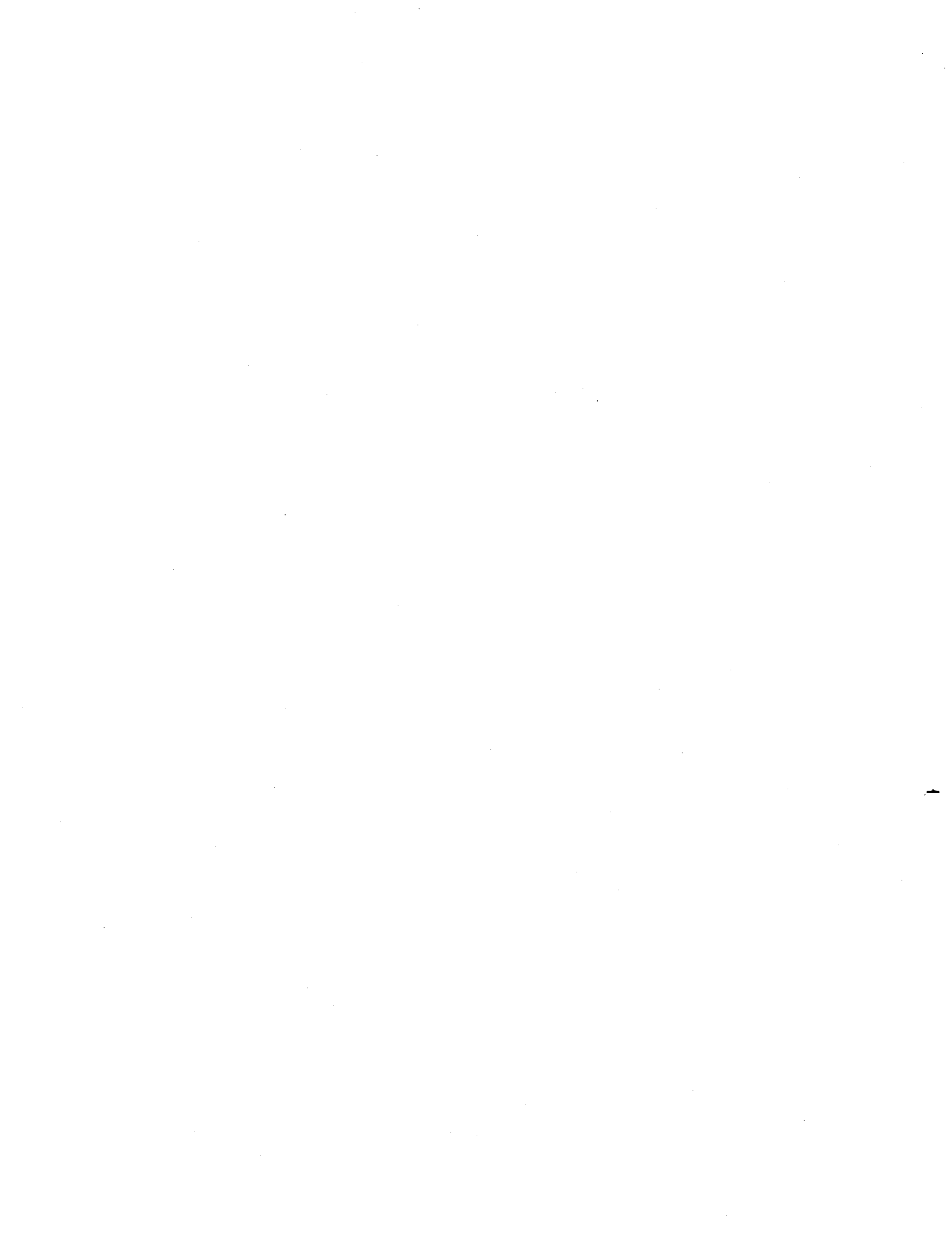
The second conclusion reads as follows: it is with great hope and pride that the Francophones of Nunavut want to contribute to the development and prosperity of Nunavut. Are we naive in believing that Nunavut represents a unique opportunity for the Canadian history to rectify some of its wrongdoings against the first inhabitants of this country?



Nunavut has already become a laboratory of the Canadian history. Last offspring of the Northwest Territories, it once again brings about the question put forward by Louis Riel and the Red River Metis: is there room for a people to be different in this country? To answer yes to this question, and to make it happen, is to give back their hope to thousands of people who have been lead to believe that their life is worthless.

To answer yes to this question is also to demonstrate that the Canadian Governement can be something else than an instrument used by a certain ethnic group to dominate and assimilate all the others. The succes of Nunavut shall be symbolic of the fact that Canada has come out of its adolescence and has reached political maturity.

This is the answer the Francophones from all over the country have been waiting for since 1759.



## **APPENDIX F**

**Discussion Paper:  
Inuktitut and Information Technology  
Prepared by Lorraine Thomas (March 19, 1998)  
Presented by Roberta Roberts**



# Inuktitut and Information Technology

A discussion paper for the  
Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Language Policy Conference

Prepared by Lorraine Thomas  
March 19, 1998

## Inuktitut and Information Technology

### Computers for Communicating: A New Role

In the past 10 years, computers have become much much more than a machine to write documents or develop budgets.

Today, computers have become an important communication tool that allows people to communicate. Computers are two-way tools that allow people to do all the things we traditionally use other communication tools for.

For example, two computers in two different locations, hooked up to the Internet, can act like a telephone, allowing people to talk to each other. It can act like a mini-television, allowing people to see each other while they talk. It can act like the post office -- allowing people to send each other letters that take only seconds to arrive. Computers can still act like computers too, as people continue to use them to make documents...with one added feature -- people can share the documents they have created, so that many people can read the documents, and immediately share their own ideas with others.

Imagine -- people can send x-rays in seconds through this technology -- no more waiting for one week until the plane can deliver the x-rays to the regional hospital. Speeches, ideas, radio shows, databases, budgets, pictures, dictionaries -- virtually anything that we now think of as "information" can be stored, and shared between people in seconds, even if they are thousands of miles away from each other.

Some people believe that changing a computer into a communication tool is the greatest revolution in communications since the invention of the printing press. They believe it will change the way we work, live and play in the future.

In Nunavut, because of the huge distances between communities, using computers for communicating has caught the imagination of many people, and as people slowly start to get access to information technology tools, they are using it in all kinds of imaginative ways. From Inuktitut chat groups on the Internet through Nunavut Arctic College, and Nortext's nunavut.com project, to videoconferencing between Igloolik's Inullarit Society and the Museum of Nature, and the Baffin Regional Health Board's telemedicine trials.

## Nunavut Communication Challenges

Everyone remembers when television was introduced in Nunavut. There were fears that all the English television would have a negative effect on Inuit language and culture.

But just as Inuit took television technology and began to create their own television, there is an opportunity to use this technology to benefit Nunavut residents. Just like Inuit adapted television, HF Radios, radio broadcasting and the fax machine for their own particular way of communicating, Inuit can adapt new information technologies too.

It is not easy to take an information technology like the Internet, and invent made-in-Nunavut applications. After all, the people who invented computers and Internet technology set it up to work in English, and did not think about other languages in the world. They also did not think about how people in Arctic Canada might take this technology and use it for their own purposes.

### What Decisions are Required?

As information technology continues to develop around the world, there will always be questions about how Inuktitut will be used with these tools. At this language conference there is an opportunity to decide the best way for Inuit to advise technicians developing information technology applications now and in the future.

There are and will be questions about appropriate ways to use text, audio and video. Questions such as who develops these technologies, how they are developed, and for what purpose? As well, questions about the impact of decisions on Inuktitut usage are of great importance, that cannot be left to technicians.

### Unicode: An example

To illustrate the importance of developing a process for Inuit participation in these decisions, this section looks at a current technical example that requires guidance. Right now, there is a rather urgent question about Inuktitut syllabics and computers, that requires input from Inuktitut syllabic users from all regions.

There is a new system that has been developed called Unicode, that allows computers to recognize many different languages -- not just English. Unicode

includes Inuktitut syllabics, and many other scripts, such as Cyrillic (used in Russia) and pictographic languages (such as Chinese) that are not recognized in older computer font systems. Unicode will allow users to switch easily between languages, develop databases, search, and sort information easily in Inuktitut, regardless of whether they are using a Mac or PC, a government database, or the Internet. Unicode provides a technical solution to some of the problems people have faced using Inuktitut syllabics on computers up to today.

But with this Unicode solution, there are some new problems that have arisen, that need guidance from Inuit. Specifically, there is a need for a common sort order for Inuktitut syllabics so computer software developers can develop Unicode in Inuktitut that meets users' linguistic needs.

This sort order will have an impact on dialects, spelling, organizing and retrieving information in Inuktitut.

## Sort Order: The Issue

In English, there is an agreement for all English language users to start with A and end with Z -- this is the sort order. So when computers automatically sort all the names in a phone book, everyone knows to look for Adam near the beginning, and Zachary near the end.

The same holds true for big government databases, that organize who is on the payroll, what community they live in, and other specific information that the computers are good at organizing. It is all based on a common agreed-upon way to sort names, words, and phrases from A to Z, so that people can find the information they need quickly and easily.

The same principle applies to the Internet to search for words and phrases that help people find information, people, and events they are looking for.

Right now, there is an Inuktitut syllabic sort order used in Nunavut, and a slightly different sort order used in Nunavik. There are linguistic implications to deciding what the final sort order will be. If no sort order is proposed, the manufacturers will end up using a default sort order that people may not be happy with.

The problem that faces computer Unicode software designers is that they can only include one final sort order when they manufacture software, so that all computers can communicate effectively in Inuktitut syllabics. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) requires a final sort order to present to international manufacturers. Microsoft has already requested a sort order for



Inuktitut. The new Nunavut government systems will require an agreed upon sort order. Internet software manufacturers will also require a common sort order. Any decisions on sort order today will affect how people store and retrieve information for possibly generations to come. So today is the time to decide on the best possible sort order to meet everyone's needs.

A proposal from a member of the Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics Encoding Committee, Dirk Vermeulen, proposes that a team be created to do the following:

1. define the general principles of a sort order standard
2. define linguistic rules and requirements
3. establish sort order rules
4. publish the sort order and gain support
5. present the proposed sort order to CSA for approval and the processing into a standard.

The proposal requests that all regions in Nunavut and Nunavik be included in the decision making process.

## Conclusion

The question of how computers and information technologies can and should be used in Nunavut is not a technical question. It is a social, linguistic and political question. Technical developers require guidance from Inuit.

What is the best way for Inuit to advise information technology developers so that linguistic needs are respected and controlled by Inuit? What is the best way for all regions to be included? What is the process that should be used today to solve today's Unicode questions, and what is the process for tomorrow's technical questions -- which will inevitably come up.

There are many opportunities for Nunavut to use information technology for communication, for sharing information, and promoting the use of Inuktitut between communities and regions. And there are opportunities to control the ways in which this technology is developed to best suit Inuit aspirations in using these tools to achieve their objectives.

This language conference comes at an important time in technology development. The use of Inuktitut syllabics is only one question on the technical table right now. There will be more questions, and more decisions to be made in the future. The language conference provides a wonderful opportunity now to decide how best to deal with these questions today, and tomorrow.

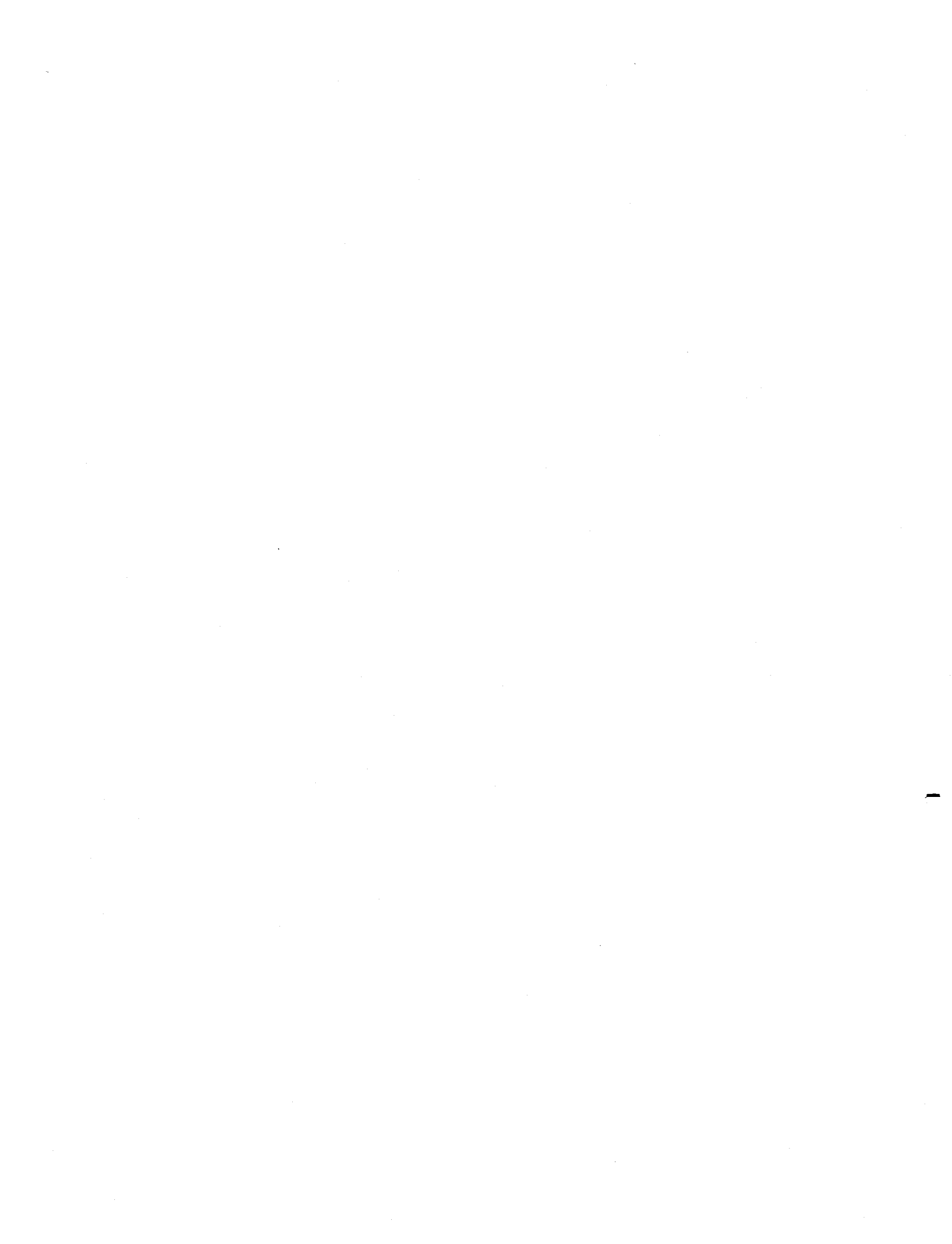
## About the Author

Lorraine Thomas has worked in northern communications since 1987. Starting as a television trainer for OKalaKatiget Society in Labrador and then for the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, she gradually moved into working on a full range of issues on information technology in the north, starting with the "Connecting the North" conference in 1994.

In 1997, Ms. Thomas joined Nortext, a communications agency with offices in Iqaluit and Ottawa. Nortext has been involved in font development for Inuktitut syllabics since the early 1980's. In a recent Internet project entitled [nunavut.com](http://nunavut.com), Nortext has been working to find technical solutions so that Inuktitut syllabics can be supported on the Internet.

## **APPENDIX G**

**Language Policy and Business:  
A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission  
Kenn Harper**



Language Policy Submission

## Language Policy and Business

A Report to the Nunavut Implementation  
Commission

by Kenn Harper

## Language Policy and Business

### A Report to the Nunavut Implementation Commission by Kenn Harper

I have been asked to explore the implications of language policy to be developed by the Nunavut Government on private business in Nunavut.

NIC's report Footprints 2 is almost silent on this issue. It points out that Section 29 of the Nunavut Act "grandfathers" the NWT Official Languages Act, meaning that "there will be no break in the status of languages in Nunavut in the period following division..." (page 202). English, French and Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun will all have official status. The report goes on to state that the real issue will be to determine "what practical steps to take to 'preserve and promote' the Inuit language as a working language..." (page 204) It states eloquently that "a satisfactory and secure place for the Inuit language in Nunavut depends on weaving together a thoughtful, do-able and affordable combination of government, private sector and personal decisions and initiatives that address the use of the Inuit language in a wide range of relevant societal circumstances..."; the list of circumstances contemplated includes "in stores and other places of business" (page 205)

Thus Footprints 2 anticipates increased use of Inuktitut in business.

There is an assumption by Inuit and non-Inuit alike that Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun will be working languages of the Nunavut Government, that monolingual speakers of those languages will be able to be served in their native language by Nunavut Government workers, and that bilingual speakers of those languages will be able to be served by Nunavut Government workers in the language of their choice. However, it is already apparent that service in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun will not extend to all levels of government in all departments because the Nunavut Government will have many employees in all departments who do not speak Inuktitut. Indeed, it was never the expectation that Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun service capability would reach all levels of the Nunavut Government in its early stages, although it remains an ideal. It remains to be seen what level of service will be provided in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun, but it is safe to assume that at least the "front lines" of

government workers serving the public directly will be able to do so in both English and Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun.

Businesses all serve the public to some extent, but their interaction with the public may be direct or secondary. An engineer living in Nunavut and developing plans for a sewer line will have little need to speak Inuktitut; he might find that his personal life was enriched if he could do so, but it is unlikely that his lack of ability will impact his job performance at all. The same cannot be said of a store clerk; although the inability to speak Inuktitut may not prevent him from doing his job, the ability to speak Inuktitut would probably help him to do his job better.

At present, in the communities of the Baffin, Keewatin and eastern Kitikmeot regions, excluding the regional centres of Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, most businesses employ “front line” workers who speak Inuktitut. In these communities, the Inuktitut language is strong, local hire of “front line” employees is the norm, and these employees are usually bilingual in Inuktitut and English. The same cannot be said of the larger communities of Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, and the Kitikmeot communities of Cambridge Bay and Coppermine; in these communities, the language is not strong, many local employees of business, although Inuit, are not fluent in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and are able to provide service only in English. In these larger communities, a larger proportion of the front line work force is non-Inuit. At the same time, a mitigating factor is that a larger part of the population is bilingual or English-speaking.

The guiding principle must be that customers of a business should be able to receive service in the language of their choice, be it Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun or English. Given that all communities in Nunavut, with the exception of Nanisivik, have a population predominantly Inuit, the conclusion is obvious that workers serving the public directly should be bilingual in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English.

Presumably, all businesses which deal directly with the public recognize the desirability of employing “front line” workers who are capable of serving the public in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English. The difficulty arises in turning this goal into practice.

## Language-Use Legislation

Paragraph 23 (1) of the Nunavut Act states: “Subject to any other Act of Parliament, the legislature may make laws in relation to the following classes of subjects:

...(n) the preservation, use and promotion of the Inuktitut language, to the extent that the laws do not diminish the legal status of, or any of the rights in respect of, the English and French languages...”

The question arises: Is language legislation necessary, to compel businesses to provide service in Inuktitut? The question raises the spectre of Quebec-like language legislation, and “language police” to enforce it. Indeed, Footprints 2 compares the approach of the Quebec government with that of the Republic of Ireland, as being two approaches to the promotion of their relevant languages: “...the Republic of Ireland has policies promoting the Irish language as an official language but has avoided government intrusion into the language of business; in contrast, the government of Quebec has introduced a succession of measures aimed at presenting a “French face” to commercial activities in Quebec.” The report asks the question: “Whither Nunavut?” (page 206)

I believe that the public in Nunavut would not support such legislation, nor is such legislation desirable. I believe, instead, that two factors will cause the amount of front line service in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun to increase:

### 1. Competition

The problem of inadequate front line service to the public in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun is most severe in the larger communities. Those communities are expected to grow, and competition will increase in most business sectors. More and more Inuit are starting businesses of their own. One should expect that the public will patronize the businesses that provide the services that they want and in a manner in which they are comfortable receiving them. The public, I should restate, is predominantly Inuit. Monolingual Inuit, or bilingual Inuit who prefer to be served in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun, will patronize those businesses that provide service in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun. As a more competitive business environment develops, the business owner who realizes this will be more successful than a competitor who does not.



## 2. Incentives

The second factor that will cause the amount of front line service in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun to increase is government encouragement and incentives. This means, quite simply, that the Nunavut Government should provide encouragement to businesses to provide business services in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun. That encouragement could take many forms, some of which will be outlined below.

### (a) Language Training

Language training in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun should not be seen as something that is provided only to the non-Inuit worker. It has already been noted that many young Inuit in the larger communities are not bilingual. It is also no secret that many young Inuit workers who are bilingual prefer to speak English in the workplace. Language training should be available to both Inuit and non-Inuit workers.

Similarly, such language training should not be restricted to only front line workers. It must recognize that management staff, who may never deal directly with the public, manage employees who do deal directly with the public, and manage employees who may be more comfortable working in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun. Management has to understand the working conditions at the front line, including the requirement for bilingual service; this understanding, perhaps synonymous with an empathy for the front line worker, is best achieved by management employees also becoming familiar with the languages in question.

At its simplest level, language training for business could start with the provision of word lists providing translations of the vocabulary most commonly used in business, organized thematically by type of business. This allows the worker to identify commodities in the workplace in a bilingual manner, things like rifles, sugar, pencils, computers, carvings, carpeting, etc. This is, of course, hopelessly inadequate. But it is suggested only as a starting point, and, although inadequate, is more than we have at present, which is nothing.

It could include a simple step-by-step course of self-study for learning Inuktitut in the workplace.

It could include an intensive full-time course, off-site, in a classroom setting, to give students a more thorough understanding of the language, an understanding which they will put to practice when back in the workplace. Such courses could be of varying durations, from one to three weeks.

The employer will point out that he cannot afford to pay his employees for not working - that he cannot pay their salaries while they attend a course. The employer is right. The employee will state that he cannot afford to take leave without pay to take the course. The employee is also correct. The government of Nunavut should provide financial incentives to private sector employees to take language training - this means full salary; this does not differ from what is presently done at Arctic College courses, in which most of the students are from government and academia.

Language courses can also be delivered part-time, in the evenings, when employees can take them on their own time. These courses must be interesting, upbeat and snappy, because the student in this case is an unpaid volunteer - indeed he may be a paying volunteer - who can drop out as easily as he dropped in.

A short business-specific course will need to be developed. It must be remembered at the outset that much of the vocabulary used by Inuit in business today is vocabulary borrowed from English, whether it is technical vocabulary usable in the business office or commodity-oriented vocabulary used to describe the business product. But this does not lessen the need for a business-specific language course, or for the provision of language courses for business employees, because that borrowed vocabulary must be used within a grammatical context that is purely Inuit. Without the grammatical context in which to use one's vocabulary, one is not "speaking" Inuktitut; one is merely reciting Inuktitut words. Thus, the need for a course, rather than just a vocabulary list.

The Nunavut Government should experiment with new and innovative approaches to language training. Indeed, the establishment of a small, private language training school may be a valid business opportunity in Nunavut.

## (b) Signage and Advertising

The business by-laws of many municipalities address signage. Often they say that signage should not exceed a certain percentage of the size of the face of a building; other times that signage must simply be attractive.

The Nunavut Government should provide one-time incentives for small businesses to provide exterior bilingual signage. Perhaps small businesses below a certain size should be eligible for grant funding to purchase appropriate signage. Larger businesses presumably can afford to purchase their own, but they should be encouraged to do so by an official appeal from the Nunavut Government. Bilingual signage will also make our communities more attractive to visitors from outside Nunavut, including tourists. It will give an Inuit “flavour” to each business.

The language of advertising should be determined by the language of the audience to which the advertising is directed. Obviously a brochure encouraging tourists to visit Nunavut need not be in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun; indeed it might be better off in German or Japanese. But an advertisement designed to encourage customers to shop in a certain store should be in the language of the customers, and management already knows this, or should. In a competitive atmosphere, those businesses which realize this will be more successful.

## Conclusion

The Nunavut Government will need to establish a co-operative, rather than a coercive, approach to the encouragement of increased use of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun in business. It should communicate with business, in an inspirational manner, what its hopes and expectations are. Such a public relations campaign directed to business could include language-related news bulletins, mailed out with other regular territorial business mailings, perhaps by the WCB, the payroll tax department, or NTPC. These should be mailouts to all registered businesses. They should be non-threatening. They should strive to build a recognition of the desirability and the need for businesses to provide increased levels of service in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun. Above all, they should stress that this is not a legislated approach but one in which government and business are partners, working co-operatively for the betterment of the community.

The announcement of a policy of encouragement for Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun language use in business will be an important step in signalling to the public that the use of Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun in the workplace is a goal, not only of government, but of business as well.

February 1998

## **APPENDIX H**

**Recommendations about Language and Culture  
from the Nunavut Education Symposium  
April 1997**



**Recommendations about Language and Culture  
from the Nunavut Education Symposium  
April 1997**

- Inuit culture and language must be central to and integrated in all programs and activities: staffing, budget, materials, equipment, facilities, etc.;
- truly bilingual programs with the appropriate staff, resources and materials;
- more art, music, drama, crafts programs in schools;
- ongoing cultural orientation for new southern teachers;
- opportunities for southerners to learn Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun;
- develop a northern high school curriculum instead of using Alberta's curriculum and exams;
- better recognition and compensation for cultural instructors;
- more recording of elders;
- use seasonal calendar to drive school curriculum and provide more land-based activities;
- use media to promote language and culture and encourage parents to teach them at home.
- computer systems and software programs in Inuktitut;
- use of technology to bridge traditional ways with contemporary ways (navigation by stars using GPS);
- school environments that are welcoming and inviting, traditional, invigorating, attractive;
- more positive reinforcement from elders, teachers, parents, community members;
- more opportunities for sharing, especially between elders and youth.

