

Routine Proceedings

The material we examined leads us to a different conclusion, namely that the project which was conscientiously planned, was carried out in a reasonable effective manner and that the Inuit participated in it voluntarily, in their own search for a better life, and benefited from the experience.

We do not see the grounds for an apology by the government for the manner in which the relocation project was conceived, planned and carried out.

In our view, to apologize for a wrongdoing it did not commit would constitute a deception on the part of the government.

That is not a government quote. It is the report of an independent firm that looked into the facts of the situation.

I sincerely sympathize with any family or family member still wishing to move back to Inukjuak and I hope that they will be able to do so promptly.

We will assist them to do so.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will continue to work with natives and northerners in attempting to reach mutually acceptable and desirable changes in programs and policies.

Before closing, I would like to balance these unhappy recollections of the past with the happier reality of the present.

The people of Canada's north, both native and non-native, are making great strides in achieving their aspirations, and the government is helping them to do so.

Foremost among our efforts is our commitment to enter into fair and reasonable land claims settlements. Recent milestones in land claims settlements in the Yukon and Northwest Territories are pointing Canada's north in a new and promising direction.

Over the course of the past year, major agreements have been reached in the north which will enhance economic, social and political development for first citizens and the northerners who came after.

The most notable, for its sheer size, was the agreement in principle of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut Land Claim in the Eastern Arctic, the area where Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord are located.

The riches of the north will be enjoyed in greater measure than ever before by the 17,500 Inuit whose home territory covers the 350,000 square kilometres of land covered by the TFN land claim.

In addition to a land mass about half the size of Saskatchewan, Inuit will receive some \$612 million in financial compensation, a share of resource royalties, guaranteed harvesting rights and participation in decision-making processes which deal with the land and environmental management.

This is a fair and just agreement.

In signing it, the Government of Canada has clearly said that we respect the historic rights of Inuit who have inhabited these territories for countless centuries.

It recognizes and supports their desire to sustain their traditions and shape their own future. It is that future that we and they must now concentrate on.

It is that future which will see the building of a new relationship between native and non-native Canadians, the relationship which the Prime Minister of Canada promised to work toward when he announced the federal government's new native agenda on September 25.

That is where our efforts should now be focused, and I count on the members of this House to let us get on with the building process.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion that was put forward for concurrence.

I would like to say that the motion that we put forward has much merit. I cannot understand how the government can come back with a counterproposal refuting the essence of what these people have stated to the committee when they appeared before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on March 19. At that particular meeting we had a number of representatives from ITC and from the group termed as the High Arctic exiles, people who were actually involved in this relocation.

• (1200)

I believe that fancy reports and fancy documents from politicians and from governments do not speak as well as people from Canada who experience their own problems and who recognize the truth of their own lives better than we do.

One such individual was Mr. Allie Salluviniq, a Resolute Bay representative from the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. He said: "I am Allie E9-1860. I am identified as such although I am Allie Salluviniq. All these other people also have numbers, E9 numbers. I was very small when we moved from Inukjuak to the High Arctic, but I