

to head representative native associations scared many people in Yellowknife and Ottawa. The newly heard native leaders were perceived as a threat to the status quo, a status quo which may have satisfied Ottawa and the Yellowknife bureaucracy but which was less than satisfactory to the people whom it governed. Thus, late in 1977 the federal government faced the problem of what to do about land claims negotiations when the native peoples involved insisted on talking about political development as well as ownership of the land and resources.

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The federal government tried to resolve this problem with the appointment of Mr. Drury as special representative for constitutional development in the Northwest Territories, thereby deferring questions of political development until completion of the report. At the same time, Dene and Inuit leaders were informed that matters of political structure brought up during land claims negotiations would, in the words of personnel employed at the office of native claims, be a "non-starter". This 1977 policy has resulted in a three-year impasse in negotiations between the federal government and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, commonly known as the Eskimo Brotherhood of Canada, and the federal government and the Dene nation.

It is apparent that land claims negotiations in the north have been delayed by the Drury process. With this in mind, I would like to review the major features of the Drury report.

The report contains a wide range of recommendations with respect to the discharge of government services in the Northwest Territories. Many of these recommendations, particularly ones regarding the transfer to local government of as many functions as can be effectively handled at that level, are commendable. The report's concentration on the nitty-gritty of government services, however, is at the same time its chief strength and chief weakness. While the report contains many comments and conclusions about the need to build an existing experience and success with local self-government, these comments and conclusions were equally germane to any outcome of the debate on division.

The tone and substance of the report is based on Mr. Drury's acknowledged premise that the manner in which government programs are administered is more important to the people of the north than the nature of the political structure. This premise is totally at odds with reality. It is at odds with the events which have taken place in the north during the last few years. It is at odds with the position of the Dene and Inuit organizations that speak for the majority of residents of the Northwest Territories. It is at odds with the position endorsed by the eighth legislative council of the Northwest Territories, and at odds with the statements made by members of the ninth legislative council in seeking to formulate a consensus position on political change. It is at odds with the pronouncements made by all candidates for the ridings of Nunatsiag and Western Arctic during the last federal election campaign.

#### *The Address—Mr. Ittinuar*

People in the north have disagreed, sometimes bitterly, about the proper direction of political change and the kind of political structures that should be set into place, but seldom has there been disagreement on the fact that the political questions framing the north go far beyond tinkering with the provision of government services.

In his report Mr. Drury recognizes that the question of division is a serious one; nevertheless, he recommends that wide-ranging powers, including full or partial control over Crown lands and resources, should be transferred to Yellowknife. Following this he suggests that a debate should be initiated in the north to determine whether powers should have been transferred to Yellowknife or whether the Northwest Territories should have been divided.

This is an obvious case, we believe, of putting the sled before the dog team. The report suggests that the people living north of the tree line should suspend their age-old commitment to a new political unit called Nunavut, watch impassively as the Yellowknife bureaucracy is strengthened, and then question the appropriateness of this bureaucracy. The implementation of this report would be totally unacceptable to the people of Nunavut.

The Government of Canada committed itself to the settlement of native claims through a process of negotiation with the office of native land claims of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All aspects of claims—political, economic and cultural—must be considered in those negotiations. The federal government's appointment of the special representative for constitutional development, Mr. Drury, in 1977 bypassed this legitimate process by demanding that the political aspect of claims be channelled through his office and not through these legitimate negotiations.

This was and still is unacceptable to the Inuit and is somewhat discouraging. Any attempt at a just and honourable settlement of native claims is impossible while the process has been compromised in this way. I believe that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro), who unfortunately is not here, in his submission to cabinet on this report, will be aware of this shortcoming and act accordingly.

As Canadians, we are only too aware that regional disparity is not exclusive to the north. Canada is large, and regions have settled historically with their own character and their own perception of participation coming into play in the Canadian mosaic. Perhaps—and I speculate, Mr. Speaker—these diametrically opposed forces are directly attributable to the British North America Act, and these strains only point out the need for constitutional reform and development to meet the realistic needs of Canada's many groups. If this is true, and I believe it to be, then my people are not alone in their aspirations as Canadians.

In this context the people of the north are proposing a settlement with the government which will be negotiated fairly and justly. Although we applauded the Alaska and James Bay agreements, and more recently the Greenland home rule agreement with Denmark, we feel they were variations on what were fairly straightforward real estate transactions. That