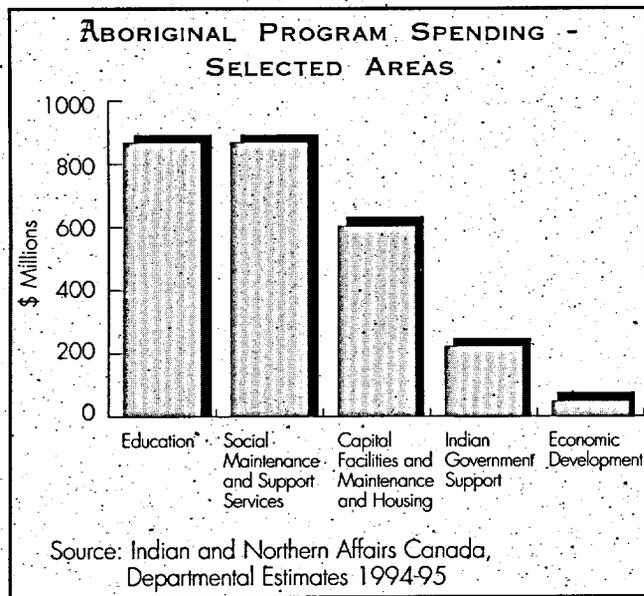




As previously stated, the Government of Canada is prepared to act on the premise that the inherent right of self-government is an existing Aboriginal or treaty right within the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Government is currently developing a process for discussions on self-government with Aboriginal people and the provincial/territorial governments. It is anticipated that many more Aboriginal communities will achieve self-government in the future, to their benefit and the benefit of all Canadians.



NUNAVUT

In June 1993, an act of Parliament was proclaimed providing for the creation by April 1, 1999, of a new territory called Nunavut (an Inuktitut word for "our land") in what is now the eastern part of the Northwest Territories. This was a key provision of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut land-claim settlement agreement. In this region of Canada, 85 per cent of the population is Inuit. As a result, the Inuit will effectively control their own form of public government in Nunavut, a government that over time will have powers in such areas as justice, finance, economic development, education, health and social services, resource development and capital works.

A Nunavut Implementation Commission has been established to advise governments and Nunavut Tungavik Inc., the Inuit organization established to administer the land-claim settlement agreement, on such issues as capital infrastructure needs, selecting a capital, the design of the new government and a process for the first election of the new territorial assembly.

The new territory will face many challenges, including a young work force with high levels of unemployment, low education levels, low average incomes and high

costs for goods and public services. Nevertheless, the creation of Nunavut will give residents greater control over decisions on how to meet these challenges. The formation of a new government and settlement of the Inuit land claim will also help stimulate the region's economy and create public-sector jobs.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Since April 1992, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has been examining the economic, social and cultural situation of Aboriginal people in Canada through a process of extensive public hearings and the most in-depth research program ever undertaken on Aboriginal issues.

"(The Royal Commission's hearings) will contribute to the reconciliation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; a reconciliation that must occur if Canadians are to build a new relationship between First Peoples and those who have joined them in this land."

Georges Erasmus,
Cochair, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
April 21, 1992

The Royal Commission is unlike any other commission of inquiry into Native issues in that a majority of its members are Aboriginal. It is being co-chaired by one of the most prominent Aboriginal leaders in Canada — Georges Erasmus, a Dene Status Indian — and has representatives of Inuit, Métis and off-reserve Indian people. The Commission is expected to report in late 1995 or early 1996.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Much work remains to be done to correct the wrongs of the past and to build a new partnership between the Government of Canada and Indian, Inuit and Métis people. At the same time, all parties have demonstrated a sincere commitment to work together to achieve these goals. For that reason, continued progress is anticipated in the months and years ahead. ■

