

Government Orders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[*Translation*]

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

funding agreements he or she negotiates will terminate two years after the establishment of Nunavut on April 1, 1999, unless there is provision for an earlier termination.

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

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

• (1410)

[*English*]

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

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

[*Translation*]

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

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