

Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

We have already seen in the James Bay Agreement the establishment of various institutions, controlled by Indian and Inuit groups, for governmental and developmental purposes. We have seen that Indian and Inuit peoples of the James Bay area are to have ensured representation on governmental bodies concerned with such key matters as land use, environmental protection, and game management.

The government is not wedded to any particular model for achieving and ensuring native self-government along those lines, but it is committed to ensuring that effective native participation is brought about. This is an essential and central element in our approach to comprehensive land claims in the north, in both the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Since the Berger report emphasizes the significance of native claims, it may be helpful if I summarized the status of the various claims arising in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

In the Yukon, representatives of the council for Yukon Indians, the federal and territorial governments, have established a co-operative planning process which is providing a new and effective framework for discussion and negotiation, and serves as well to inform all Yukoners about claims developments as they occur. This process functions under a Yukon planning council, which has reached agreement on the goals of settlement, and set up several working groups to examine the issues and prepare mutually agreed solutions. If the current rate of progress were to continue, an agreement in principle could be reached before the end of this year.

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The Inuit of the Northwest Territories, represented by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, submitted in February of 1976 their proposals, entitled "Nunavut", for the settlement of Inuit land claims in the territories. A number of clarification meetings were held before September of last year when the Inuit representatives decided to consult further with their communities on the claim. The government is expecting to receive a revised proposal later this year.

The Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, representing the Dene, presented its proposals to the government last October. Among other things, the brotherhood seeks to establish an Indian territory in the Mackenzie Valley. Since last October there have been several meetings with the brotherhood aimed at clarifying various elements of the Dene position, including the issue of an Indian territory. The questions that have emerged are very complex and relate very directly to the future political evolution of the Northwest Territories.

The Metis Association of the Northwest Territories has prepared a discussion paper concerning its land claim in the Mackenzie Valley, which is now being reviewed by native communities in the valley. The association has indicated that it will submit its claim to the government by July 1.

Finally, I have just received settlement proposals from the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement, known as COPE, which represents 2,000 Inuit people in the Mackenzie

[Mr. Allmand.]

Delta. COPE is particularly concerned about the increasing pressures of population and resource development in this area, and it has expressed a wish to work out an agreement in principle before a decision is made on a northern pipeline. We shall be studying COPE's proposals and discussing them with COPE in the months ahead.

The effective presentation of these complex native claims proposals is the product of research and other claims development activity which has been directly funded by the federal government, through our department. Since 1972 nearly \$7 million have been provided to native northern associations for these purposes, including \$1.6 million to the Indians of the Yukon, \$1.7 million to the Indians and Metis of the Mackenzie Valley, and \$3.3 million to the Inuit.

The political responsibilities, economic and social benefits, and practical working arrangements that the various native groups do achieve through patiently negotiated claims processes are to be incorporated in enabling legislation, including, above all, special enactments of the federal parliament. This procedure has been contemplated from the outset in the government's policy on comprehensive claims, enunciated in August, 1973.

It is intended to give Indian and Inuit rights and interests in this country precise definition, lasting effect, and the full protection of Canadian law. The basic aim of the government in this regard is not to diminish or dilute the identity and culture of these native peoples, but to safeguard them. It is also to promote their self determination within Canadian society to the extent that this is possible in contemporary circumstances. Judge Berger's report is much concerned with self determination for native peoples in the north, and it refers to several aspects, some of which I have already mentioned. In our Indian and northern policies at the present time we are concentrating on goals and measures that improve the prospects for political self determination and economic self-reliance in native communities. The two go hand in hand.

The Berger Report refers at some length to the native economy in the Mackenzie Valley, and particularly to the traditional pursuits of hunting, fishing, and trapping. I am largely in agreement with what it has to say about the importance of these pursuits to the native peoples and about the related questions of surface land use and environmental protection.

The report also lays heavy emphasis on the need to diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories. It suggests that more reliance be placed on modernizing the methods used in native pursuits, encouraging small industries and promoting tourism. These are among approaches that have been considered from time to time and that are being pursued by the federal and territorial governments, but not always with great success.

Far from ruling them out in the future, I believe that we need to renew such efforts with greater energy, innovation, and commitment on the part of all concerned. It goes without saying that the various sectors of the rather fragile economy that exists in the northern territories are closely interdepend-