

Routine Proceedings

and a large part of the rest of the Northwest Territories. To further entrench the sovereignty claim, the government relocated Inuit people from northern Quebec to the Arctic Islands in the mid-1950s.

These were the statements made in this paper by a federal minister who had the same kind of resources to examine the issues. These claims are being made also by the aboriginal people who appeared before us in March 1990.

These people would like a public apology. The independent consultant that was provided for the Makivik Corporation was one of three consultants. The other two were not acceptable. I do not feel that the Inuit people had much choice about who the independent consultant was.

During the years 1953, 1955, and 1957 approximately 17 families were moved from Inukjuak and Port Harrison, Quebec and were relocated by the federal government to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in the High Arctic. The primary stated purpose by the Government of Canada for this relocation was to reduce the hunting pressure on the resource base Inukjuak. I cannot understand why it is that for political expediency and for their own selfish means the government always uses the aboriginal people, either by relocating them or by capitalizing on the fact that they occupy a certain territory and can be induced to do that or can be used to profile a certain issue.

Let us take, for instance, the Spicer commission. Just recently it said that it would make a meagre foray into the Arctic to go where it all started. I think that is real political opportunism. If we want to make a statement about the issue and the essence of aboriginal people and their first nation status, we should entrench that in the Constitution. We should recognize the contribution these people have made to Canada and support the \$10 million the Makivik Corporation has recommended for a heritage fund. That would be the best \$10 million investment the government could make for the Inuit. Under the harshest of circumstances and under an extension of the federal government, because the territories is not yet a province, out of 53 language groups the Inuit people have managed to be one of the three languages that have been able to survive. Aside from Cree and Ojibway, the Inuktitut language is still strong and thriving.

• (1210)

Why is this? Is it because the government has poured millions into maintaining the strength of these languages? Not really. It is because the perseverance and the survival skills of these people are the essence of who they are. They have survived under the harshest of circumstances. They have been economically marginalized in an attempt to alleviate the pressure on resources, the hunting and traditional trapping resources in that area. These people have been through the downfall of their sealing industry and they still survive.

What are they saying to Canada? "Canada, listen to us. We have suffered. We want compensation. We want \$10 million to help us survive. We want \$10 million to profile who we are and what we are about, what our essence, what our language and what our heritage are about".

They are the ones who have allowed their languages to survive. They are the ones who have stayed in the territories in the north, actually in Nunavut, for all practical purposes, in the High Arctic regions. They have made a place for themselves within Canada that no other Canadian would dare to experience. They have been very brave and generous in the kind of hospitality they have extended to people coming into that area.

People ask why they waited that long, why they waited 37 years. Why come back now asking for compensation? When you live in a colonialized mentality, when one lives with cession by law, when you live with imposing governments coming forward and telling you that this is the way it should be, you would have to wait 37 years to engender the leadership you need and to have the growth in community spirit you need to come forward and be able to put forth your case.

Makivik Corporation has put forward a very substantive case. With regard to the pressure that is present to assist Inuit people, the case the Makivik Corporation has put forward is very convincing.

I for one could not understand three or four nights ago when I watched the Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development debate the relocation issue for the purposes of protecting Arctic sovereignty or Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. That Mr. Van Loon, Assistant Deputy Minister, would refute,