

*Government Orders*

force. Of those who are in the labour force 30 per cent are unemployed. The average income in Paulatuk is about \$17,000.

The fourth community is Tuktoyaktuk. It is the final community which will be added to my riding. Tuktoyaktuk means resembling a caribou. Legend has it that when caribou were plentiful a woman looked on them as they waded into the water and the caribou were petrified. Reefs resembling caribou have been seen at low tide.

Tuktoyaktuk was traditionally the home of the whale hunting Mackenzie Inuit. This community is the largest of the four communities and the most ethnically diverse, although the Inuvialuit make up almost 90 per cent of the population.

Tuktoyaktuk is now the sea edge base for oil and gas exploration in the Beaufort Sea. I have many fond memories of Tuktoyaktuk. As a young teacher in the early seventies I spend three years teaching there. Over half of the population, 15 years and over, have not completed secondary education.

These communities are diverse. The land around those communities is awesome, serene and wonderful. The sea life, the animal life and the marine make-up and the ecosystem of that area are a tourist's dream. It is actually an eco-tourist dream. It is something that people from all around the world pay a lot of money to see. It is worth every penny.

● (1535)

In winter and late fall we can see the aureole borealis that everyone talks about. In the summer we can stand in some of the communities and see beluga whales from houses facing the Arctic Ocean. It really is quite a sight to behold. In winter the land is covered with snow and people go out throughout that season to enjoy the community.

The member of Parliament who represents the area, the hon. member for Nunatsiak, has been very honoured and very gracious in representing the area. I look forward to having these additional communities added to the western Arctic riding once the whole issue of redistribution and readjustment has been completed.

Historically the electoral boundaries were drawn without any consideration of how they would impact on the aboriginal communities in the area. The western Arctic was no different. The Inuvialuit who lived in the most northwestern area of Canada were split between two federal electoral districts. In 1984 the Inuvialuit became the first aboriginal group north of the 60th parallel to sign a comprehensive land claim agreement.

However, the Inuvialuit who reside in the six coastal communities remain split in two different federal electoral districts. After recently having celebrated the 10th anniversary of the

signing of the historic final agreement and the passage of Bill C-69, the Inuvialuit will finally all be included in the same electoral district.

There is a very interesting point in the documents put forward about the impediments to electoral participation. They noted the Inuit did not receive the right to vote until 1950. No ballot boxes were placed in Inuit hamlets until 1962. That was unfortunate. It is unthinkable in this day in age that any citizen of this country would not be able to exercise the right to vote in a democracy such as we have, in future elections. However, that was the case.

These communities will provide a positive contribution to the already diverse riding of the western Arctic. Now the Inuvialuit people from Inuvik and Aklavik will be together with the other four Inuvialuit communities of Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Holman Island and Tuktoyaktuk. They will be together in one federal riding of the western Arctic.

In years past we had the Lortie commission look at a number of issues regarding electoral reform. One I was much seized with, along with some of my colleagues, was in the names of Senator Len Marchand, former member of Parliament Gene Rheaume, and someone who is very capable and who has helped us, Mr. Marc LeClair, who worked with the aboriginal Liberal commission in looking at the impediments that faced aboriginal people systemically and structurally in terms of the districts and the distribution of seats in the House, and in looking at some of the historical impediments. It made for a very interesting exercise.

We undertook a subcommittee for the royal commission and were successful in meeting a number of groups across the country that spoke to the issues. It was quite extensive.

In the world wars aboriginal people were able to fight for their country. They loved this country and wanted to contribute. They made a great sacrifice. Upon their return to this country they did not have the right to vote until the 1960s. They could lay their life down for their country, they could honour their country, but they were not given the opportunity as other Canadians to exercise their democratic right to vote.

● (1540)

That was a great inequity. These were some of the things we dealt with. It should be of interest to some of the people in the House that there have been 13 self-identifying aboriginal people elected to the House of Commons, including myself, the member for Nunatsiak and the member for Churchill.

These 13 out of over 11,000 members have been elected since Confederation. Ten of the aboriginal people were elected this century. Only three have been elected in districts where aboriginal people do not constitute a majority.