

## **THE BAKER LAKE AFFAIR: CASE STUDY OF A CANCELLED TRAINING WORKSHOP**

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### **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

A 1977 attempt by personnel of the Department of Local Government of the N.W.T. to clarify Territorial policy concerning their role in community workshops, led to a major bureaucratic reorganization, the firing of one officer, and the resignation of six others. This paper details these events, discusses the alternative policies in the climate of the time, and illustrates Federal, Territorial, Inuit and Dene perspectives on political development.

En 1977, une tentative de la part du personnel du Ministère des gouvernements régionaux des Territoires du nord-ouest, pour tirer au clair la politique territoriale en ce qui regarde le rôle de ce personnel dans les ateliers communautaires, a abouti à une réorganisation bureaucratique importante, au licenciement d'un administrateur, et à la démission de six autres d'entre eux. Cette étude examine les événements en question, révèle les diverses politiques qui étaient alors possibles, et illustre les perspectives de développement politique dans les gouvernements fédéral et territorial, ainsi que chez les peuples inuit et déné.

At noon on Friday, March 25, 1977, Stuart Hodgson made one of the most serious political blunders of his ten year career as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. He postponed a municipal government training workshop scheduled to begin that weekend in the Inuit community of Baker Lake.

His action touched off a five week political confrontation which pitted the combined forces of the Inuit and Dene against the Commissioner and the Government's Executive Committee. At issue was the right of the aboriginal people of the N.W.T. to political self-determination.

Involved in the controversy were nine public servants from the Research and Development Division (R&D) of the Department of Local Government. As a result of their actions, six of the nine felt obliged to resign and one was fired.

I was the one who was fired. Unlike the others, I was an employee of the University of Alberta, assigned to the Department of Local Government on a six-month renewable contract. I was paid with Donner Canadian Foundation funds which were channeled into the N.W.T. municipal government training program through the University's Boreal Institute for Northern Studies. The Institute's function was to provide academic support and guidance to the northern training program. My job was to assist with curriculum development and to help the Government's short-staffed training section carry out their workshops.

I had spent the previous year examining northern training programs for Frontier College and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC)<sup>1</sup> and was convinced that R&D's program was pedagogically sound and responsive to many of the training needs expressed by Inuit at the community level. I was however, somewhat apprehensive about my new assignment. Although the training program was supported, albeit cautiously, by senior government officials, the Research and Development Division as a whole was the target of criticism from the Government's executive Committee.

Criticism was not new to the Division. Since the early 1970's R&D had had a mandate to develop political and social awareness, as well as administrative skills, in the native communities. However, their interpretation of this mandate had, more often than not, placed members of the Division at odds with the Executive Committee. In December, 1975, the Commissioner had sent a memo to R&D stating that the Division's prime program responsibility need no longer be based on the notion of expanding political awareness, because, in the opinion of the Executive, political awareness had now been adequately developed. Although the Commissioner was said to have reappraised his position as a result of a later meeting with Ray Creery, then Director of Local Government, the issue had never been clarified to the satisfaction of Division members.

By the time of my arrival in January, 1977, steps were being taken to ensure tighter Executive control over the activities of the Division. Creery had been replaced by Larry Elkin, a young engineer, who, unlike his predecessor, showed little support for the progressive elements in the Division. As well, the Territorial Council had recommended that a member be appointed to the Executive to oversee the Department, in particular, the R&D Division. This suggestion had been made partly in response to the activities of Des Sparham, R&D's head of Research and Planning, whose long-standing personal campaign in

support of aboriginal rights had begun to take on a higher profile. At the opening of the 61st Session of Territorial Council on the weekend of January 22nd, the silver-haired Sparham had marched outside the council building brandishing a placard which read:

Political Self-determination is an Aboriginal Right. Inuit and Dene, take notes from the Welsh, Scots, Basques, and Bretons. Survive!! Inuit and Dene, Be Masters in your own Homelands.

The placard incident brought demands from the Speaker of the Territorial Council, David Searle, to clean up the "riffraff" in R&D once and for all.

Under Larry Elkin's management, the supportive working environment which had once characterized the R&D office begun to deteriorate and most of the staff turned to the field for support.

Daryll Sullivan's development staff chose to spend most of February working with community councils in several of the outlying regions. Dave Molstad, the Division's chief, left on a well-deserved vacation. Howard McDiarmid, head of the Division's training unit, Lois Little and I conducted a series of workshops in the Keewatin and Central Arctic regions and consulted with academic advisors at the University of Alberta.

Our workshops were being well received by native people involved in municipal government affairs. They focused almost entirely on management concerns, covering such topics as communication skills, interpersonal relations, accounting and the organization and functions of municipal government. They also provided a convenient opportunity for native people to get together during the evenings to discuss the important political events affecting their community life.

These were exciting times in the Northwest Territories. The Berger Inquiry hearings were over and pipeline fever was in the air. The Dene had submitted a proposal to the federal government calling for the recognition of their right to self-determination and the establishment of a Dene-controlled political jurisdiction in the Mackenzie Valley. The Inuit were working on a land claim proposal which promised to be equally as challenging to the political status quo. Throughout Canada there was talk of constitutional change and in Ottawa, The Honourable Warren Allmand, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, was preparing a policy paper on the future political development of the Northwest Territories. Although the Territorial Government's position on political development was unclear, it was not secret that it too wanted more control over the resource-rich, frozen northland.

By the first week of March, rumours were circulating in Yellowknife about a proposed reorganization of Local Government, a reorganization which would have major implications for R&D. There was no indication that the Division's staff was to be consulted. With the political future of the N.W.T. at a critical turning point and the role of the Division once again in question, Molstad, McDiarmid and Sparham decided to force Elkin and the Executive to put their cards on the table.

## THE BAKER LAKE AFFAIR - GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, 1977

Warren Allmand, Minister  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

\*Stuart Hodgson, Commissioner  
\*Gary Mullins, Assistant Commissioner  
\*John Parker, Deputy Commissioner  
Arnold McCallum, Education  
Peter Ernerk, Economic Development  
Dave Nickerson, Social Development

### TERRITORIAL COUNCIL

David Searle, Speaker

(15 elected Members)

### TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Department of Local Government

Larry Elkin, Director

Dave Molstad, Chief, Research and Development Division (R&D)

Kristine Rome, Secretary

Howard McDiarmid, Head  
Training Section

Daryll Sullivan, Head  
Development Section

Des Sparham, Head  
Research and Planning Section

Lois Little  
Training Officer

Alethea Foster  
Development Officer

Gary Vanderhaden  
Research and Planning Officer

Mark Stiles  
Training Consultant  
on contract through the  
Boreal Institute,  
University of Alberta

Ed McArthur  
Development Officer

For R&D, there were two issues at stake: one was the nature of the rumoured reorganization; the other was the need for a written statement of policy on whether or not, in carrying out their mandate to develop social and political awareness, members of the Division were now to operate on the principle of a "guided democracy" or one of a "self-determining democracy". For R&D, the latter operating principle had at its roots the recognition of and support for the aboriginal right to political, self-determination.

Friday, March 4th. A five-page memo was sent to Elkin outlining the Division's concerns. It was drafted by Sperham and went out under Molstad's signature. Elkin refused to respond in writing. Instead, he invited several members of the Division into his office at different times, hoping, presumably, to discover whether the views expressed in the memo were shared by everyone in R&D. Molstad, spokesman for the Division, was one of the last to be called in. Elkin told him that he could not differentiate between the two operating principles as outlined in the memo and asked that Molstad provide him with two brief definitions. When asked when R&D could expect a written response to their memo, Elkin replied, "possibly in a couple of months" and added that he was very busy.

Sparham drafted the following definitions:

10 March 1977.

DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT.

*Development Programme . "Self-Determining Process"*  
*"Guided Democracy Process"*

The "self-determining process" means that the worker (Development Officer) approaches a community on the basis that the community will "determine" what purposes the community will serve, what institutions will be set up to pursue those purposes; and who will be elected or appointed to lead or manage the institutions. The worker's role is to enable the community, through its own instruments (Councils chiefly) to function in this way.

In the particular circumstances of the Northwest Territories, it follows as a matter of logic, that the "self-determining process" must lead a worker serving native communities to help his "client community" to achieve a degree of political awareness which will put the client on a basis of political equality with non-native people. In the self-determining process, the native people, being the original people of the land and not yet having formed or agreed to a constitutional government, will be enabled to make proposals, and secure arrangements, which will give them the same entrenched political rights to cultural survival in a land (province? territory?) of their own as are presently enjoyed by the "non-original" people of English and French language and culture in the southern provinces.

The "Guided Democracy Process" on the other hand means that the worker will approach the community with a set of goals pre-determined (not self-determined) by a government not constitutionally formed by nor agreed to by the (native) "client community". The aim is not to "enable" the community to achieve an equal political awareness so as to be able to negotiate constitutional political development with non-native southern people; it is, rather, to "guide", "train", or "educate" the native community to carry out functions which have already been determined as "Canadian" so that the community may play an "appropriate" part, or a "full" part, or simply a "part" in a "Canada" already constituted by the English and French as a "bilingual and hi-cultural country".

In a nutshell, the issue is between those who believe that aboriginal rights include the right to form a constitutional political jurisdiction and those who believe aboriginal people ought to fit themselves into a French-English Canada or live on a Reserve. The latter need the "Guided Democracy" process; the former need the self-determining process.

R.D. Sparham,  
Head, Research and Planning Section,  
Research and Development Division.

Eight days passed without a word. Then, not one, but two memos came from Elkin's office. The first, which was addressed to Molstad, attempted to negate the issues the Division had raised:

Now to Sparham's second letter titled "Self-Determining Process - Guided Democracy Process". I have carefully gone over his comments and must say I found them very interesting indeed. Of course that was my reason for asking to have him state precisely what he means. Naturally, I realize that these are his own interpretations of his own concept, and I would imagine that if you hadn't raised it with me that's where the concept would have stayed...

Perhaps I should briefly explain that while we have been exchanging viewpoints, pleasantries and correspondence, it seems much work and discussion has been going on between the Minister, his Department, the Legislative Assembly, the Brotherhoods, and possibly members of the Berger Inquiry, and while I don't know all the details I do know a number of important decisions have been made and agreements reached.

Elkin went on to say that the Minister, Warren Allmand, had "unequivocally stated that he recognizes the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories as the principal body of the Territories" and that the work of the Assembly would "likely result in decisions that will define clearly the direction

of government in the Northwest Territories". The Division's request for written direction regarding its operating principles had been completely brushed aside.

The second memo was brief and to the point. It confirmed the hatchet-job the Division had feared. Sparham was now to report directly to Elkin and no longer to Molstad. He was to devote his energies to program in Town Planning, Lands and Municipal Affairs. Elkin would be arranging new office space in "an appropriate location" for Mr. Sparham. A few days later, carpenters moved into the windowless photocopier room directly across from Elkin's spacious corner perch in order to construct office space for one.

Friday, March 25. The R&D office was humming with activity. Lois Little and I were completing last minute details for a workshop that was to begin on Sunday in Baker Lake. Thirty-seven mostly Inuit delegates had been selected from across the Arctic and an elaborate system of chartered aircraft and commercial flights was in the process of transporting them to the Keewatin settlement of Baker Lake. Halls had been rented, entertainment planned, and the local hotel had ordered in extra food supplies for the week-long event. All that remained for us was to pack up the flip charts, pencils and audiovisual materials and await a chartered flight that was to leave Yellowknife early Sunday morning.

This particular training session promised to be one of the most spirited in the series. It was to focus on problem solving, conflict and conflict resolution at an interpersonal and managerial level. The details of the workshop had been worked out with the help of Lawrence Norbert, a native councillor from Arctic Red River and Dr. Bill Stewart, an academic advisor from the University of Alberta. Stewart, a professional human relations trainer, was to accompany us to Baker Lake.

Two of the workshop delegates from the host community were in town. David Samailik, the settlement secretary of Baker Lake and Hugh Unganai, the vice-chairman of the community council, had come in from a conference on native land claims in Edmonton. They were to fly on to Baker with us on Sunday. While in Yellowknife, they took the opportunity to have a close look at the tentative workshop agenda. Both approved of the content and saw no need for major adjustments.

There was a festive atmosphere in the streets of Yellowknife that morning. It was the beginning of the annual spring Cariboo Carnival and all civil servants were to have the afternoon off. By noon, the bars were filled; most were getting a head start on the weekend's celebrations.

The mood in R&D was less jovial. Molstad drafted a curt memorandum to Elkin requesting a simple "yes" or "no" to the Division's question: did he or did he not support the self-determining process in the Division's work? Lois Little and I followed with one of our own entitled, "The Principle of Self-Determination on Which the Training Program is Based". Its conclusion read:

. . . despite the lack of clear direction we will proceed with the upcoming Training Event (outline attached) with the principle of self-determination as the operating dynamic until we are directed otherwise.

A workshop agenda was attached which made reference to confrontation tactics from Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals as part of the workshop content. The Alinsky content was to have consisted of a list of confrontation tactics and, time permitting, two National Film Board movies depicting the work of the late U.S. civil rights organizer.

At 1:00 p.m. Dave Molstad informed us that he had just been advised by Elkin that Commissioner Hodgson had ordered the workshop "postponed". R&D was to take all necessary action to inform those who were to have been involved, both participants and resource staff. No explanation for the postponement was given.

Lois Little spent the afternoon telephoning the regional offices and sending telegrams to the delegates' home communities and to the Inuit organizations that had sent participants. Most of the delegates were already in transit. When Lois phoned to cancel the chartered aircraft she discovered that Larry Elkin had already done so. I tried to get in touch with Dr. Bin Stewart in Edmonton but learned that he was already en route to Yellowknife. Molstad called Howard McDiarmid who had been enjoying a brief holiday in Vancouver. Howard caught the next plane to Yellowknife.

The workshop delegates in Yellowknife from Gjoa Haven, Pelly Bay and Baker Lake were stunned by the news. Those from Baker Lake felt personally slighted; they had put weeks of preparation into the hosting of this event, even having gone so far as to have invited the best drum dancers from the Keewatin region to entertain the delegates.

Saturday, March 13th. Hugh Unganai, spokesman for the Baker Lake participants, telephoned the Commissioner at his home in an attempt to arrange a meeting with him that day. Hodgson was committed to Cariboo Carnival festivities and would not be available until Monday. When asked if he could reinstate the training event, the Commissioner replied that it was not immediately possible. When asked why the workshop had been cancelled, Hodgson replied that the Executive feared that delegates were being taught "things that they shouldn't be taught". With that, Hugh Unganai told the Commissioner that as far as he was concerned, the Baker Lake council would host no more government workshops in their community. The Commissioner called an emergency Executive Committee meeting.

On Sunday afternoon, Lois Little received a phone call at her apartment from Larry Elkin. The Commissioner had changed his mind and the workshop was on again. Elkin and the regional director from Rankin Inlet were not to attend and one day was to be chopped from the session. All was to proceed as if nothing happened. Elkin had already chartered a Monday morning flight out of Yellowknife, re-booked the hotel in Baker Lake and advised the regional directors. He had also called Bill Stewart who by this time had just got back to Edmonton. He instructed him to catch the 7.00 a.m. flight to Yellowknife the next day in order to make the charter connection to Baker Lake!

Lois was told to deliver all the training materials to Elkin's home, immediately.

That night Dave Molstad was called to a meeting of the delegates staying

at the Explorer Hotel. The meeting was conducted in Inuktitut, David Samailik interpreting for Molstad. Molstad told the group that R&D would support whatever decision they made with respect to the fate of the workshop. In Hugh Unganai's words, the Inuit felt they were being treated "like yo-yos" and therefore would neither meet with the Commissioner on Monday nor host the training session. The other delegates agreed. All decided to return to their communities on the first available flights in order to further discuss the situation with their councils.

Monday, March 28. By 8:30 a.m. the R&D phones were ringing. Reporters from the local press and the Edmonton Journal were after information.

Sitting outside Larry Elkin's office was Bill Stewart, travel-worn and weary. This was his second trip to Yellowknife within the last forty-eight hours. He was reluctant to enter into a conversation with us and our communication was reduced to an occasional nod each time a member of the Division visited the photocopier room across from Elkin's office.

Within R&D, there was now little doubt that to persist on our present course would jeopardize our government careers. However, for Molstad, McDiarmid and Sparham, who together had more than thirty years of experience in the Territorial public service, there was no turning back. Lois Little and I and the three staff members from the Development section felt the same. Having typed the controversial memos over the past few weeks, the Division's secretary, Kristine Rome, felt that she could no longer remain a passive observer. Vanderhaden, a new employee and a recent Queen's University graduate, begged out.

Huddled around a reception table in the office, we developed a strategy that was to prove very effective over the next few weeks. We would be good civil servants to the letter. Rather than leak information to the press, we would refer all inquiries to the Commissioner. It was he who had postponed the workshop without an explanation; and would have to provide some answers. We would document in detail all meetings with our superiors and tape-record any public statements they might make in order to hold them to their word. And, it was agreed, we would step up our campaign to get a written answer to our original question regarding the operating principles for civil servants engaged in native community development work.

As the Cariboo Carnival drew to a close, attention turned to the Explorer Hotel where the Territorial Council was in session. The Baker Lake affair had surfaced and the Commissioner was under fire.

When the Council session broke for lunch, the radio news director from CBC Yellowknife moved in on Hodgson. The Commissioner, "umingmak" (the musk-ox) as the Inuit described him, explained that the Executive was disturbed by the reference in the workshop outline to Saul Alinsky's Rules /or Radicals. This was not, however, the reason he gave for the workshop postponement. It seems there had been "a complaint".

CBC: Who complained?

Hodgson: Well, I'm not in a position to say right now.

CBC: Now, what do they mean by "tactics for radicals"?

Hodgson: I don't know.

CBC: Have you seen the course itself?

Hodgson: No, I haven't seen the course. All I've seen is the outline.

CBC: What are you going to do now?

Hodgson: First thing, I'm going to ask them to bring the course material in and I'll have a look at it and I guess well ask for a full report on the whole thing. And based on that, those courses that are appropriate - fine, and those that aren't - we'll just drop them and substitute with something else . . . If people in the communities know what the courses are and the Executive doesn't know what the courses are, then I think that there is something wrong somewhere. . . because, after all, it's a \$200,000 program.

CBC: Well, if it's a \$200,000 program, do those programs just go along being taught in the communities, and you don't know and no one else in the Executive knows what they are teaching?

Hodgson: Well, this is just what I'm trying to explain to you. When this whole program was approved last October, I would assume that those who were responsible for it would see that members of the Executive were made aware of what is being taught.

CBC: Who approved it last October?

Hodgson: The Executive approved it.

The settlement council of Baker Lake met the moment Hugh Unganaia and David Samailik reached home. On Tuesday they issued the following press release which was picked up by the CBC radio and the Yellowknife papers:

. . . There are many side issues in this controversy but we believe that the overriding factor in the cancellation of the workshop is a deliberate political attempt by the Executive of the Territorial Government, namely the Commissioner, to ensure that native people in the Northwest Territories learn and are taught only what the government wants to teach them. This completely rules out the right to self-determination of the native people of the N.W.T. It is obvious therefore, that the Territorial Government has a fixed concept of the political future of the north and that only if native people go along with it then will they assist us in any training.

The Inuit of Baker Lake had nothing to lose. They were surrounded by mineral exploration and development activities and they faced prospects of a

massive gas pipeline project on their front doorsteps. Now, once again, their lives were being affected by the arbitrary decisions of the power elite in Yellowknife.

In response, David Samalik and his staff set up an elaborate tape-recording system in the Baker Lake council office which enabled them to record and transcribe all incoming phone calls and radio broadcasts. With their two-way radio and the telephone, they were able to rally support from every community in the Keewatin region. The first Inuit political leader they turned to was Michael Amarook. Michael was President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and a respected Baker Lake leader. He agreed to throw all his energy into the struggle from the vantage of his Ottawa office. The Keewatin Inuit Association (KIA) also agreed to provide full support, despite its past differences with ITC.

Next to be contacted was the Inuk who, more than any other, held the key to the political future of the Inuit. This was John Amagoalik, Director of the Inuit Land Claim Commission for ITC in Frobisher Bay. John was already well aware of the situation, having spoken with a dozen workshop delegates from all across the Eastern Arctic who had spent the weekend in the Frobisher Bay hostel en route to the workshop while government officials in Yellowknife vascillated. John took the opportunity to extend the conflict beyond that of a cancelled workshop to the larger issue of political self-determination. He was interviewed by the CBC on Tuesday evening:

Amagoalik: The issue is whether or not the Territorial Government is willing to work on the principle of self-determination for the residents of the N.W.T.

CBC: But hasn't the Territorial Government already taken a stand on that? In a memo to the Director of Local Government about a year ago, the Commissioner said that Local Government shouldn't get involved in developing political awareness but should teach people in the settlements administrative skills - how to run government on a day to day basis...

Amagoalik: I did work for the Territorial Government a little more than a year and a half ago and I am aware of the goals and objectives of the Territorial Government's departments . . . (they) state very clearly that the guiding philosophy for that Department is to create political and social awareness.<sup>2</sup>

CBC: What do you think the Government has to lose..., by having these workshops?

Amagoalik: Well, they really have nothing to lose because you cannot really keep a group of people from realizing these rights as a Canadian citizen.

CBC: Surely the Territorial Government is not objecting to people being informed of their rights as citizens. The book, Rules for Radicals by Saul Alinsky was one of the subjects being taught in the course. People were objecting to that.

Amagoalik: Well, I think the reason why they were objecting to that certain book is because of the word "radical". You know, I don't think they really understand what is involved in the reading material which was suggested, the book *Rules for Radicals*.

CBC: Can you explain what's involved?

Amagoalik: I haven't read the book myself, but I understand that Mr. Saul Alinsky is probably the best authority about people running their own affairs.

Back in Yellowknife, R&D received daily calls from David Samailik. Since Baker Lake did not receive all of the news broadcasts originating from Yellowknife, we were able to furnish him with this public information. At his request, we made transcripts of the CBC newscasts and mailed them to workshop participants and to the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada.

Wednesday, March 30th. The Baker Lake affair was beginning to heat up. The Edmonton Journal carried a story entitled "Radical Material Cancels Meet" and the following day the Yellowknife printed an editorial which singled out those in R&D as the troublemakers:

It is unfortunate that the Territorial executive has not yet learned how to cope with dissident or destructive forces on its own payroll and even more unfortunate that innocent people in the settlements must be the victims.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, ITC sent a strongly-worded telex to Warren Allmand in which the Territorial Government officials were referred to as "bumbling incompetents" determined to hinder the political development of native people. ITC called upon Allmand to make a clear policy statement on the rights of native people to political self-determination. The story was picked up the following day by several southern newspapers, including the Montreal Gazette, the Ottawa Citizen and the Vancouver Sun. However, in all three papers it was buried in the back pages.

In the north, the protest gained momentum as individual communities aired their views through the more receptive northern news network. From the Keewatin community of Repulse Bay, Jack Anawak, the Inuit settlement development officer, defended the Local Government training officers in a lengthy press release. He stated that community representatives, not the training officers, were responsible for the content of the training session and challenged the Yellowknife senior officials: "If Mr. Hodgson or Mr. Elkin want to confront anybody, let them deal with us, not the very Division that was sincere enough to serve us according to their Department's own goals and objectives".

In an attempt to deflect the attention from R&D and to keep the pressure on the Commissioner, Molstad sent a memo directly to Hodgson and attached thirteen inter-office memos documenting the Division's correspondence with Elkin over the past few weeks. The message stated that the attached correspond-

ence contained the information which native organizations and the press had been hounding R&D for and that, if released in the proper manner, that is. by the Commissioner himself, it would "dispel the doubts that have been publicly expressed about the professional integrity, or the faithfulness to public service principles" of the Division's staff. Copies of the memo, without the attachments, were sent to the local press, native organizations, several community councils and to Mr. Elkin.

That same Wednesday morning, the Division's chief, Molstad, and the two remaining section heads, McDiarmid and Sullivan, were called before the Executive. Elkin was conspicuously absent. There was an atmosphere of strained cordiality throughout the meeting as the Commissioner struggled to contain the animosity of several Executive members. Deputy Commissioner John Parker, mining engineer and former mayor of Yellowknife, was one of the more outspoken critics of R&D's actions. He demanded that the Division drop its efforts to stimulate political and social awareness and limit itself to the development of administrative and managerial skills.<sup>3</sup>

According to the notes made by Molstad immediately after the meeting, Hodgson, at one point, had referred to Sparham as a "nice old man" whose intellectualizing on political self-determination was more appropriate to a university common room than to the Government of the Northwest Territories. In his ten years of exhaustive travel in the north, Hodgson said he had never once heard native people use the term "self-determination". The Commissioner had assured the three from R&D that his Government was working towards local government "through a dynamic, democratic and responsible process of decentralization and devolution".

Molstad, Sullivan and McDiarmid were given instructions to prepare a comprehensive report and assessment of the training program, including details on what had been taught to date and who had participated.

Late that afternoon, Molstad's memo to the Commissioner with the thirteen inter-office documents came back like a hot potato with the message that they were no longer necessary in light of the morning's meeting. Molstad dashed off another memo to the Commissioner suggesting that it was wrong to assume that the issue of political self-determination had been cleared up and he attached the thirteen documents again.

Thursday, March 31st. The Commissioner's side of the story was revealed in a press release issued by the Department of Information:

The issue developed over the weekend when the Commissioner received a complaint about material being taught at the workshop. Mr. Hodgson explained that he was unaware of the content of the subjects being taught, as he had not personally seen any of the material. Because of this he asked that the workshop be postponed, but after receiving representation from the Baker Lake Council Members, decided to recommend at a specially convened meeting of the Executive Committee, that the workshop go ahead. However, upon being advised of the Executive's approval, delegates

to the proposed workshop asked that the course be postponed....

During yesterday's Executive meeting, it became apparent that certain officials of the Department of Local Government have created for themselves a problem. Their problem centres on the difficulty that they find in choosing between self-determination and what they have called a "guided democratic process". The Commissioner explained at some length that the Department could only operate within the established constitution and legal framework of the country."

Although the press release went on to say "self-determination is, of course, part of that legal framework", the implication that members of R&D might have been promoting unconstitutional forms of government remained.

Since the Alinsky material had proved to be a red herring with respect to the workshop cancellation, Hodgson attempted once again to vindicate senior government officials on this point. The press release explained that the Commissioner had received a "very suspicious complaint" in the form of a letter from the Keewatin Inuit Association (KIA) which stated that at a previous workshop, representatives of the Territorial Government had been "injecting themselves into matters that the Association felt were solely its business". KIA countered the same day by releasing the letter which clearly showed that they had not criticized the training staff of Local Government, but rather, two other Government officials in a dispute that had long since been settled. KIA followed up with a strong press release accusing the Commissioner of "deliberately trying to foster an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility between communities and Inuit associations" by implying that a complaint from KIA had cancelled the Baker Lake workshop. KIA had, in fact, planned to send one of its own field workers to the workshop. Following ITC's example, KIA demanded the release of the thirteen memoranda in the Commissioner's possession.

On Thursday evening, the CBC quoted Commissioner Hodgson as saying that there was nothing to hide in the thirteen documents but that they had to be released by the proper bodies, the Executive and the Territorial Council. The next Council session was months away.

I had been trying to get in touch with Robbie Jamieson of the Boreal Institute in Edmonton to see if any support would be forthcoming from the University of Alberta. So far, he had not returned any of my calls. I thought Jamieson might be interested to know that in R&D's estimation, the funds wasted as a result of cancelling the workshop amounted to about \$35,000.00,<sup>4</sup> much of which was Donner Canadian Foundation money. I decided to phone person to person.

I got through but Jamieson did not seem particularly pleased to hear from me. I pressed him on the need for Boreal's support only to be told that he had taken Deputy Commissioner John Parker's advice to stay clear of the affair as it was "strictly an internal dispute".<sup>5</sup>

Jamieson's response prompted me to write a letter to the Edmonton Journal

that evening wherein I postulated that the University of Alberta was under the thumbs of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. The letter was published the following week at about the same time as Howard McDiarmid learned that Jamieson had held two emergency meetings of the training program's advisory committee without informing him. McDiarmid was one of the committee members.

April Fools' Day began with a memo from Elkin to Dave Molstad. Elkin had dictated the memo from his home where he had come down with a sudden illness. It indicated that "further work and visits to the field" by R&D's development staff "should be delayed at least until the fall".

By noon, the Native Press was on the streets with a front page article entitled "Commissioner and Council under Fire" and CBC radio carried a report from Fort Franklin where the Dene Assembly had thrown their full support behind the people of Baker Lake.

In Ottawa, Dr. J.R. Holmes, the Conservative caucus critic on Indian Affairs rose in the House of Commons and presented a motion calling for a full-scale investigation into the Baker Lake affair to allow "responsible and responsive local government to be developed according to the needs and wishes of the native communities."

Although the motion was defeated, CBC Yellowknife featured the story on its evening news along with a report that Allmand was once again on his way to the Territorial capital for private meetings.

Monday, April 4th. Two more communities joined the protest. Eskimo Point criticized the Commissioner and his "elite advisors" for denying Inuit the rights enjoyed by other Canadians "such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and self-determination". They said that the Commissioner's intentions to delete certain training materials was evidence of the "colonialism" practiced by his administration. Gjoa Haven, a Central Arctic community that had rarely spoken out before, proclaimed that the Commissioner had gone back on his word to support self-determination for native people and that they had lost confidence in the Government over the issue.

Late that afternoon, CBC Yellowknife announced that the Commissioner was going to release the thirteen memos the next day and also that three Yellowknife-based Government employees had "privately conceded that they too had sided with the 'Group of Nine' "

The following day the memos, which comprised more than forty single-spaced pages, were distributed by the Department of Information. An accompanying press release from the Commissioner ended by stating that the government was "committed to a course of decentralization, democracy and social, political and economic self-determination". Our Government was committed to everything.

The documents made lively copy for the press which took particular delight in describing the verbal sparring between Elkin and members of R&D. Native groups were intrigued as to just what decisions had been made as a result of the "discussions between the Minister, his Department, the Legislative Assembly, the brotherhoods and possibly members of the Berger Inquiry" alluded to in

Elkin's memo of March 24th.

Interviewed from Frobisher Bay that afternoon, John Amagoalik of the ITC Land Claims Commission said that nothing really new could be gleaned from the documents. As far as he was concerned, the Inuit were still without a clear government policy position on political self-determination. He promised to keep pressing the Minister for a formal statement. Meanwhile, Hodgson left Yellowknife for what was described as a "promotional trip" to the Okanagan Valley in B.C.

In his absence, Assistant Commissioner Gary Mullins was interviewed by Elizabeth Hay on the CBC radio program, "Focus North". Mullins, who had been sent to the north from a senior position with Treasury Board, did his best to diffuse the situation:

CBC: The Commissioner is saying he thinks all of this can be straightened out. How?

Mullins: I think it can be straightened out by just sitting down and coming to some agreement as to where we're heading. I like to do as much orally as I can for a period of time and only when the consensus emerges to put that in writing...

CBC: Why was it (the workshop) cancelled, then?

Mullins: It was cancelled, I believe, because the Executive is very firmly in favor of operating as constructively as possible and as forward. thinking and positively as possible. Our whole concept of government is based on a co-operative model of democracy and that is the basic principle that we're trying to get through. The information on which the Commissioner acted, as I understand it, is based on concerns from reputable sources that that was not, in fact, the case...

CBC: This whole issue of who complained is of course important. The Commissioner said it was the Keewatin Inuit Association. The KIA has said that is, in fact, incorrect . . . A memo that was released today says that Larry Elkin complained, the Director of Local Government. Now what's the story?

Mullins: The story is that neither Larry Elkin nor the Keewatin Inuit Association complained . . . The complaint was received by the Commissioner from individuals whom he respects, whose judgement he respects, who had a knowledge of the situation as it was developing in Baker Lake.

CBC: So you won't say then who complained?

Mullins: No. I personally don't know.

CBC: Are the members of Local Government politically worrisome to you?

Mullins: I don't understand, I don't understand the question.

CBC: Politically worrisome. Do you feel that they're unreliable, politically speaking?

Mullins: No, I don't understand the question. I really don't.

CBC: Can you clearly state for me, because I am still feeling rather confused about it, what you consider to be the real issue here: if indeed the real issue is self-determination. Can you explain where the differences of opinion are between Research and Development and the Executive of the Territorial Government?

Mullins: Well, Research and Development seem to be talking about self-determination in a more restrictive sense than we're talking about. Self-determination as I understand it, involves the exercise of democratic rights in order to achieve objectives. The structures that are in place for that are very simple. The structure also involves the establishment of a Council of the N.W.T. and a respect for that institution.

Wednesday, April 6th. A memo from Elkin greeted Molstad on his arrival at the office. In answer to a directive from Deputy Commissioner John Parker, an evaluation of the entire training program was to be carried out by the Department of Planning and Evaluation, the Department closest to the Executive, with "appropriate input" from R&D. The report was to be ready within two weeks. In the meantime, a scheduled training event for Fort Providence was to be "temporarily delayed".

My letter accusing the University of hiding under the skirts of the Territorial Government appeared in the Edmonton Journal that day. A call from ITC in Ottawa brought news that letters of protest from southern-based native support groups and a few individuals were beginning to trickle into Warren Allmand's office.

At noon, Yellowknife's News of the North was on the streets carrying a scathing editorial which condemned senior government officials for reaching people at the community level such things as "how to repair water trucks and file proper reports to their higher ups" without giving them "real control over how their government and communities develop". In the words of the newspaper's editor:

They (senior government officials) seem to have forgotten how a democratic political system develops, probably because the one they are used to has been around so long, and suits them so well.

A call from the Baker Lake council brought news that the three largest Keewatin communities were preparing a joint telegram to the Minister in Ottawa. At Fort Franklin, the Dene Assembly had just ended and a press release was issued inviting the Inuit Tapirisat to join the Dene in their battle for self-determination. This marked the beginning of a potentially powerful new native alliance.

Before the day was out, Michael Amarook, President of ITC responded to the Dene invitation by attacking the Territorial Government as it had never done before. He telexed the following message to Warren Allmand:

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories has issued a press release in which he says that his government is committed to the principle of social, political and economic self-determination. We would like to believe that this is true. Unfortunately, however, the evidence is all to the contrary. The actions of the bureaucrats in the Local Government Department of the Territorial administration indicate all too clearly that they are not committed to the principle of self-determination, but to imposing their own ideas of southern style structures on the native people of the north.

We are forced to conclude, regrettably, that what the Commissioner says about the principle of self-determination is patently untrue. The cancellation of the Local Government training workshop in Baker Lake and the suspension of future Local Government training workshops convinces us that the Territorial bureaucracy is committed to the traditional colonial approach, i.e., teaching the local people only what their colonial masters believe they should be taught about local administration. In practical terms, this would appear to mean that the Territorial Government is in favour of local community administrators learning about such things as awarding garbage collection and snow removal contracts•

But, when it comes to real political self-determination, these bureaucrats are afraid to teach the people about their rights as Canadian citizens. This fear is perfectly understandable, of course, because it represents a threat to the colonial empires these bureaucrats have worked so hard to build.

- .. The Territorial administration is an artificial creation of Ottawa which was imposed upon us without our consent and a body which we have never recognized as representing the native people of the Arctic.

Obviously, there is no point in asking the Territorial bureaucracy to back up with solid evidence and concrete examples the Commissioner's statement about his government's commitment to the principle of self-determination. What they say and what they do are two entirely different things.

We are still awaiting an unequivocal statement from you on federal government policy concerning the principle of political self-determination for native people in the north.

Despite major differences with the Inuit Tapirisat over land claims strategy, COPE, the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement, the fiery voice of the Western Arctic Inuit, rallied to the Dene and ITC position. On Thursday afternoon, Sam Raddi, the leader of the Inuvik-based association, issued an equally vehement press release. COPE claimed that Inuit were "consulted to death with a never-ending series of government committees" but that all really important decisions affecting their livelihood were made "arbitrarily by senior Territorial bureaucrats":

... when they go away and make their reports and recommendations, we find that our views are not considered and our words misinterpreted. Inuvialuit in the Western Arctic have seen it all before... The government says that its devolution plan will allow communities to take over control of the programs they want. What the government does not say is that the Commissioner and his staff will decide what control and how much shall be allowed.

Less than two weeks had passed since the Commissioner's decision. Now every major native group in the N.W.T., with the exception of the Metis Association, was united against the Territorial administration.

The Government's Executive members were steaming. They took their frustrations out on Dave Molstad who was called before them almost daily to answer to accusations about members of his Division and about his style of management. With encouragement from the Division, he remained steadfast, despite mounting pressure and the continual strain of Divisional strategy meetings that went late into the evenings.

Towards the end of the week of April 11th spirits were flagging. The week had passed without incident and native leaders feared that a prolongation of the government's silence would diffuse the issue at the community level.

Thursday, April 14th. Finally the silence was broken. Awaiting me at the post office was a registered letter from Robbie Jamieson, Acting Director of the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, informing me that "effective immediately" I was fired: no reason given, other than reference to the fact that future workshops had been postponed. According to the terms of my contract, I was entitled to one month's written notice prior to any dismissal. I quickly sent Jamieson a note to remind him of this.

A terse memo from Elkin came to me the next morning. I was to be out of the building by 5:00 p.m. and I was not to take any documents belonging to the Government or the Boreal Institute. My colleagues were incensed. An equally terse reply condemning my dismissal was signed by each member of R&D and sent to Elkin with copies to the Commissioner and the Executive. Had the Executive had its wish, the entire R&D would have been fired. However, as a contract employee, I was the only one easily disposed of. We suspected the Executive had ordered my removal and, in fact, Jamieson himself later confirmed this in writing.

Since no one in the Territorial Government had responded to our request

for a policy statement on the issue of the Division's operating principle, we decided to go one step higher and write to Allmand. Our letter was straightforward. It asked the Minister whether or not, in carrying out our development function, we should base our actions on the assumption that the aboriginal peoples had the same right to political self-determination as do Canadians of French and English origin. We urged the Minister to issue a statement of principle which would provide all public servants with the direction required to work in harmony with the native people of the N.W.T. Each member of the Division signed the letter.

Late that afternoon, Sparham received a letter from the Commissioner stating that the Executive had demanded his resignation. Sparham spent most of the weekend composing his rebuttal. He would not resign because the Commissioner was, in effect, asking him to resign for publically advocating principles of equality which all of Canada upholds. In Sparham's words:

Has the Executive considered that if it asks me to resign for articulating the principles under discussion it might as well put out a public statement that no well-known native leader - e.g. George Erasmus, James Wah-Shee, Sam Raddi, James Arvaluk, John Amagoalik, Michael Amarook, need apply for the vacancy I would create by complying? For they too support the principle of political self-determination for aboriginal peoples... The Executive appears not to have the political wit to see that in inviting somebody of my views and bearing to resign it is confirming the views of those native people and organizations who hold that the Territorial Council is inimical to their interests. I cannot bear to see the culture that I come from, and the parliamentary democracy that I believe in, discredited in the eyes of the native people. I hope you can see that it is my survival - not my departure - that might prove that the English-speaking culture is civilized and its institutions just.

The Commissioner could not afford to fire Sparham.

Monday, April 18th. I was now free to speak to the press which was hungry for our side of the story. I spent most of the day at CBC and in the offices of News for the North. I stressed that we had simply been seeking clarification of the Government's policy with respect to the principle of political self-determination for native people. I made it clear that the application of that principle was entirely up to the native political leaders and, as such, was, and never had been, a part of our community work. I also indicated that the present evaluation of the training program would show that the workshop had focussed on the nuts-and-bolts of municipal administration and not on political issues such as the land claim proposals put forward by the various native organizations. I suggested that perhaps the Commissioner was as much a victim as I in that he had lost control to some of the more reactionary members of his Executive.

Meanwhile, my colleagues faced a new round of constraints ordered by the

Executive. McDiarmid discovered that some of the mail we had sent through regional offices for distribution to workshop participants had been opened and returned to Larry Elkin. The correspondence contained nothing more than transcribed CBC news reports and clippings from Yellowknife newspapers. Next, the phone numbers in the Division were changed and members of R&D were barred access to the photocopier. Then, in the middle of the week, Commissioner Hodgson decided to send the entire Division home until he had finished the investigation into their work. This left Sparham, who was officially no longer a part of the Division, the sole occupant of our office. He was instructed not to answer the Division's phones, and the office partitions were pulled back so that Larry Elkin's personal secretary could see all who entered.

On Tuesday, the CBC carried a report that Warren Allmand had agreed to the idea of native-controlled political units as long as these units recognized the rights of the non-native minority.

On Thursday, the three largest Keewatin communities, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet and Eskimo Point released a joint press statement which had been more than a week in the making. They demanded that Warren Allmand investigate the Territorial Government's position on political development and outlined six areas of conflict with the Territorial administration among them, the unexplained cancellation of the Baker Lake workshop, the breakup of R&D and my dismissal. The three communities, which represent more than 3,000 Inuit, called upon Allmand to provide funds to the Inuit Tapirisat so that it could develop its own political development training program.

The Yellowknife newspapers and the CBC had been trying to get Robbie Jamieson in Edmonton since the day I was fired. Jamieson, however, had left town and could not be reached.

The media turned to Deputy Commissioner John Parker:

Parker: I think it's quite clear that there's a difference of opinion, a difference in philosophical approach to the development of local government. The Executive feels that we have clear policies in this area and I suppose that we feel a concern that the members of the Development Division are not necessarily following those policies or perhaps don't subscribe to some of those policies.

CBC: Now what are those policies? Can you be specific on that? . . .

Parker: . . . It's not so much the policies themselves, as it is the interpretation of the policies and the application of the policies. It does come down to the question that they put to the Executive . . . of self-determination. A very basic question. The definition, of course, is the definition of members of the Development Division. We don't necessarily agree that that definition that they use fits. But, they seem to be saying that, their belief is that the people of the Northwest Territories, particularly, or specifically, the native people have a right to political self-determination which might be considered to be exclusive. And I guess what we're saying

is that the people of the Northwest Territories, and again, specifically and particularly, the native people, have a right to social and economic self-determination as they should have, as all the people of Canada should have within the limits of the Canadian constitution and the finances that are available. But, where the Development Division staff seem to be going a step farther is in the matter of political self-determination on an ethnic basis. And thus far, nowhere in Canada do we have that position nor is it subscribed to...

CBC: . . . Basically you are afraid that people in R&D are political activists: people who are sort of shaping the thoughts of people they are supposed to be serving?

Parker: That's a conclusion that could be drawn. I think that they are being influenced to some extent. Now that's a very difficult thing for me to say because perhaps that strikes to the heart of the issue that we're trying to deal with and solve right at the present time. And I, I would be the last person to want to be, or, in fact, I don't think I am, partonizing towards any of the residents of the Northwest Territories . . . I'm not saying that the people of the Northwest Territories can't make up their own minds as to what's happening. But, at the same time, there are some things that keep coming back to us that would lead us to believe that there's a good deal of influence.

Friday, April 22nd. Exactly seven weeks after R&D's first memo, the document that we had all been waiting for came. It was fourteen pages long and addressed to each member of the Research and Development Division.

It was unlike any of the previous memos from the Commissioner's office: it was authoritative and composed and had obviously been sanctioned by the highest offices in the country. The section dealing with the aboriginal right to political self-determination contained the same careful sophistry used by the Trudeau government to counter Quebec nationalism:

- . . this Administration does not believe that aboriginal people or any other racial or ethnic group in Canada should have the right to form its own constitutional political jurisdiction or racial political unit, as these are incompatible with our constitution, particularly with universal franchise. There is no political unit in Canada for English Canadians, there is no political unit in Canada for French Canadians: we see no reason why Canada should ever consider creating one. As political units along racial lines involve denial of minority political rights, their advocacy or development are not supported by this Government or any of its policies or programs. As aboriginal political self-determination represents an ethnic political unit rather than a geographically defined political unit•

this Government does not support this basic feature of political self-determination.

In Canada, political units are defined geographically, and in any political unit all residents have equal political rights without regard to race, colour or religion.

The section continued with a series of quotes from Trudeau, quotes which rejected all notions of self-determination based solely on ethnicity whether it concerned Quebecois or "certain Eskimos who want a nation of Inuit or certain Indians who want a nation".

The document made it abundantly clear that political change in the Northwest Territories would come about only through existing political structures:

Our job has been and must continue to be to make not only local government structures work, but all programs and policies of Council and the Administration, and to seek through well-established channels internal to the Government of the Northwest Territories, only those changes to structures which the Council of the Territories has the authority to make.

The Commissioner left no doubts about the change in emphasis of the Department of Local Government "from that of creating political awareness to working within the structure of government already set up". He was even more specific about the future role of R&D:

. . . the Division is to concentrate on the mechanisms of making local government work and provide services, advice and assistance to the communities and councils...

The public activities of civil servants such as those practiced in the past by Des Sparham would no longer be tolerated:

. . . a public servant must not take a public stance on political matters if that person is to maintain credibility with the public and avoid placing himself in a position of conflict of interest.

Monday, April 25th. Six members of R&D resigned. Each met privately with the Commissioner in his office: Dave Molstad, Howard McDiarmid, Daryll Sullivan, Alethea Foster, Lois Little, and Ed McArthur all submitted letters of resignation. Des Sparham, who had been asked to resign and refused, awaited a "special assignment" from the Commissioner. Kristine Rome, the Division's secretary, requested a transfer out of Elkin's department. In her letter to Hodgson she declared that she would not compromise the position she shared with other members of the Division.

R&D's final memo, dated Sunday, April 24th was sent to the Commissioner

under Molstad's signature. It served as an epitaph for the Division which, within the bounds of its liberal mandate over the past ten years, had upheld the primacy of native rights in the development of the north:

We are a group of English-speaking Canadian fairly typical in our origins and backgrounds and we had been very reluctant to believe that we were so far from understanding the true feelings, the basic principles, and the ultimate intentions of our country and government in the matter of the right of aboriginal people to political self-determination.

... But now we have the truth and there is no mistaking it. Indeed, your letter is an excellent exegesis of the position that is briefly defined in the Divisional memo of March 10th as "Guided Democracy".

... The increasing weight of opprobrium under which the Division has operated in the past three years has occurred because we have sought to insist that a given principle was an accepted principle of government when in fact it was not; when in fact the Prime Minister himself, did not subscribe to it. So be it.

... How much better it would have been to have had a firm statement of principle at the beginning - not at the end. It is plain to be seen that any government authority which seeks to avoid painful questions by trying to silence the questioners is bound to get into difficulties.

... But political positions are not eternally fixed. If nothing else, the events of the past few weeks have surely helped to raise the political awareness of many people in both native and non-native communities. Many important events and discussions are to take place in the next two months. The issue of political self-determination for native people is certainly not dead forever.

At Molstad's insistence, the Commissioner provided copies of the memo to the press.

News of the resignations spread rapidly. Again, the issue was raised in the House of Commons, this time by the NDP and on April 28th, the *Globe and Mail* carried a special report on the story. The story dominated the *Yellowknife* newspapers and generated a number of letters-to-the-editor. In one such letter, Father Rene Fumoleau, a respected northern historian, drew parallels to the plight of oppressed indigenous peoples of South America and was moved to conclude:

Inuit and Dene, you will be given everything - schools, medical

care, houses, airstrips provided you never dream of those luxuries: intelligence and freedom.

The day after the Commissioner's position paper became public, ITC's John Amagoalik made a much-publicized trip to Yellowknife to discuss a united front with George Erasmus, leader of the Dene Nation. Together they accused the Government of maliciously misinterpreting their land claim positions by equating their demands for political self-determination with ethnic exclusivity. Erasmus said that the real "ethnic group" of the north was the non-Dene minority:

The Dene are a Nation. Ethnic groups are immigrants that have left their own homeland. The non-Dene minority of the Northwest Territories constitute the true ethnic group of the north - they have left their homeland and are now living in our homeland.

Within a Dene territory, rights of the ethnic minority will be protected. Long-term non-Dene residents would be given immediate consideration. New-comers to a Dene territory would be subject to a residency requirement, as is common in the rest of Canada. Minority rights will be protected as long as they do not over-ride or infringe upon the essential right of the Dene to survive as a people and as a nation within Canada.

In a CBC radio interview, John Amagoalik stated that in seeking the establishment of a new political jurisdiction north of the treeline, his people were attempting only to gain a measure of equality with French and English speaking Canadians. He denounced accusations that white people would be denied democratic rights in the new territory if Inuit were to impose a required residence period for voting. He explained that without a residence requirement, the transient, highly aggressive, non-native minority would dominate northern government. For Amagoalik, only by enshrining Inuit rights in the constitution and by making Inuktitut the working language of all government institutions in the north could Inuit hope to stave off the hegemony of English and French Canada: "Aboriginal rights", he argued, "must include political rights if the native people are to survive".

Although the Baker Lake affair was over, the controversy surrounding native political rights showed no signs of letting up. Berger's report was expected within a few weeks; the details of Allmand's policy paper on political and economic development in the N.W.T. were to be made public before mid-summer and a new and tougher Inuit land claim position was to be ready by fall.

The affair had moved Inuit and Dene one step closer to direct confrontation with the established political powers in the constitutional debate.

## SUMMARY COMMENT

Perhaps the most ironic twist to the Baker Lake affair was the fact that a cancelled workshop which was to have provided training in problem solving and conflict resolution actually took place. Commissioner Hodgson's decision to postpone the training event paved the way for a real conflict situation and a considerably more radical learning experience than could ever have been simulated. In fact, it was a confrontation right out of the early '60's, an anachronism anywhere but in the north. It brought together native groups spread over thousands of miles. It gave them the opportunity to challenge existing authority through the media and it heightened their need for stronger organization and alliance.

## NOTES

1. Eskimo Brotherhood of Canada, the national Inuit organization based In Ottawa representing more than 22,000 Inuit.
2. Amagoalik was referring to page 36 of the *Employee's Handbook* of the Government of the N.W.T. which reads: "Department of Local Government - Objective to develop political and social awareness and administrative capability at the community level."
3. John Parker was to become the new Commissioner of the N.W.T., a federal appointment, replacing Hodgson in the Spring of 1979.
4. This figure takes into account the cost of cancelled food and accomodation reservations, travel, salaries, translation contracts and equipment rental.
5. Jamieson, a personal friend of John Parker, had been a senior bureaucrat with the Government of the N.W.T. before moving to the Boreal Institute.