

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 41ST SESSION**

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 21-41

TABLED ON JANUARY 28, 1970

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MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS: Jean Cretien and Bud Orange and Territorial Gover't Officials
January 2, 1970
Taken by Joe V. Catholique, Vice-President, Snowdrift, N.W.T.

PARK; Mr. Cretien, said; he will never change the ways of Indian way of life, even though the National Park is put up in that area.

Mr. Joe Lochart; asked the Minister, why he wants to put the park, so much in this area. I was told if we agreed to have the park, there would be no hunting in that area, that is why, I want you to tell me, if this is how you are going to treat the Indians in this community. Because all the people from this community, know that country very good, and hunt and trap around that area. That is the best area for hunting and trapping, the moose and caribou are plenty in that part of the country, where you want to put the park.
We would like you to make plans about the park with us not behind our backs.

Mr. Cretein; also said; I am the boss of the National Park and I' will never change the Indian way of life.

Mr. Parker; Assistant Commissioner of N.W.T.
A tractor will be send here to Snowdrift on the first barge that will come into Snowdrift this coming summer, for clearing the air-strip, also to clean around the community, and for general purposes in the community.

Also there will be three young men will be trained for heavy duty equipment training course.

Mr. Cretien, also siad; He will look into the housing situation. Chief P. Catholique told them, how come when anything like housing buildinh or jobs for the town starts it just stops all of a sudden, Chief Catholique told him, it seems like the govern't does not care about this community, or what happens to it. The present houses that are sitting here right now were build last fall in Sept. 1969, and still nothing has been done on them, or is there anybody living in them, why?.

Mr. Cretien, also said; he will look into the wiring of the houses.

Mrs. Lochart, asked about the Handie-Craft, since there has been a visit by members of that department once.

HOUSING IN SNOWDRIFT

January 24, 1970, Saturday.

Arrived in Snowdrift from Yellowknife NWT. Saturday morning at 11:00 AM. We went over to Chief Pierre Catholique and found that he did not receive our message we sent him Monday January 19, 1970, he had left for his hunting trip, so we went over to Joe V Catholique who is the Representative for the Chippewans on the Indian Brotherhood of N.W.T.

We spent some time talking to him about various issues and the present situation in Snowdrift, then we toured the village of Snowdrift. The settlement consists of one Roman Catholic Church (Father) a Hudson Bay Store, School grades from 1 to 6 , school children () a school principal who also acts as Area Administrator (Mr. Curny). One Indian employed at the Bay Louis Bell.

The first issue that was discussed the conditions of the old and new houses also the services for the houses. We take several pictures on the houses inside and out.

The first house we visited was, Joe Lochart's house and this is what he has to say.

1) These houses are not built properly, why I know is because I helped build these houses. The siding and insulation for these houses are not put in properly. The houses are damp and cold, there is lots of frost and the wind blows through the crack on the wall where the plywood joints, the floors are very cold and the ceilings are always frosty and damp. The layout of the house where heat should distribute to other rooms is not good, the heat does not distribute properly. We had to take some walls out for the heat to go to other rooms.

The floors are very poor they are warping right in the centre of the kitchen and living rooms, the tiles are cracking because of the floor warping.

We have to buy paint ourself to paint our houses.

A government person told me I had to pay rent, but he also said that I should not tell the government, the government had to come and ask for the rent which would be \$500 per year.

I was told I had to pay for the electric lights but was not told how much. The electricity was hooked up last fall in Sept 1969 we had not received any bills since.

My major concern is to have the house fixed even if the government could supply the material for me, I would fix the house. These houses are very cold and in need of repair. It is hard to live in these houses in the winter time because of the cold.

No government person has checked these houses since they were built.

My wife is always sick was in the hospital for 6 years for T.B. The first year she came ou she received rations and six months later they cut the rations without telling us why. I am 47 years old and it is hard for me to go out hunting or trapping because of my wife who is always sick. My boy who is 14 years old helps me to hunt and cut wood as much as he can, but we can't go on like this all the time. I do not have a job and there is no jobs around here, all we can do is hunt and leave our family at home, that is not good at all.

Joe Busher

"These houses are very cold and damp and windy it is hard to heat these houses, we need to fix there houses the government should supply us with material.

The insulation that is used for this houses is plastics, it has one plywood siding outside and inside one layer of plywood. The wind comes through the walls through the joint of the plywood and cracks created by the cold. There is one flooring with plastice layer between the wood floor and tiles, but still the wind comes through. There is lots of frost inside the huse especially where the wind and cold comes through and around the plug-ins too. In the bedrooms there is lots of frost and the rooms are very cold, the heat does not go throgh to the bedrooms because of the structure of the house inside. We did not get storm-windows when we moved in these houses, so there are storm windows missing. We were told that we had to buy our own point, to paint the house, but how are we to be able to buy paint when we do not have jobs or money to buty paint with. We were told that we had to pay our light bills. The electricy was hooked in Sept of 1969 sc we haven't received no bills since. A government person told us that we had to pay for our electricity at 3 different prices.

First was \$7.00

Second \$17.00

Third \$57.00

That is what the governemtn person told us. No light meters were put in when we received our lights. These houses are only good for the summer not for winter, we would like log houses better and they are warmer too.

I get no help from the welfare and the Area Administrator said no to me when I asked him for help from Welfar. We are seven in the family presently my wife is in the hospital in Yellowknife N.W.T. I have some children at home who I have to look after while my wifeis in the hospital. I can not go out hunting or trapping.

I have two children going to Smith school too. I hope that something could be done for our houses right away.

Able Nitta 67 years old
receives pension of \$109.00 per month
4 children
3 school children
a baby
Wife

We received these houses 4 years ago and there has not been any government people checking these houses, to see if the houses were warm enough or being serviced.

The houses are very cold and damp and windy the wind comes through the cracks created by the warping and lots of houses are like this one, right across the room of the kitchen and living room floor there is at least 1/2 inch crack extending from one end of the house to the other end.

We haul our water from the lake which is about 1/4 mile away. I don't hunt or trap, my grandson does the trapping and hunting for me. The reason I can't go hunting is my eyes are very bad, I can't see to well and I am 67 years old.

I get a pension of \$109.00 a month and I have to support my family with these we are always in need of food and wood to support 6 people with the amount of money I get is very hard.

There are storm windoes missing we did not get any when we moved in this house I went over to the Area Administrators to get me some windows and he said no. He does not visit the homes to check the houses.

I cannot get credit from the Hudson Bay because I already used up my pensions, they will not give me any credit, at the moment we have no food in the house, we always run short of food and there is no work here so there is no other way of making a living, I can't go hunting because I can't see too well.

John Titchi
Both husband and wife gets old age pension of \$109.00 each per month totalling their income of \$210.00 per month.

Housing:

The house does not look in good condition it is very cold and drafty from the floor. The house has 5 fairly large windows but no storm windows so there is only single windows on all the five windows.

The house is made of logs and it has 3 rooms the house is about 16 by 16 feet. The old people seem very active and don't complain so much for themselves but for the people in

Snowdrift for the living conditions.

Eight years ago he had a house that he built himself, which was warm, but the priest asked him to move to a different area because at that time the Hudson Bay Company was moving in, so he is now living at the present site where he built a new house. The priest promised him material if he moved away from the original site he built his house, his present house he says is not as good as his old house, he says it is cold and drafty, he does not have material to fix his home. We spent at least three hours talking to him in his home and felt the draft and the cold in his house and felt the draft even though he had his wood stove heater going full blast yet the house was still cold.

The government people that go there to Snowdrift never visit any of the houses or talk to the people or take notes of the living conditions of the people.

Four people presently in Snowdrift own their house, in which they built themselves and the rest are government houses, yet these houses are not very warm or built right.

There are presently three people in Snowdrift get Welfare Assistance, who are Marie Casswag, Harry Lochart and Liz Bazin.

Pension: John Batiste Catholique states: There are three people that are the same age and I am the only one who does not receive pension, I am presently about 70 years old, My father's name is Maise Bugne and my mother's name is Helen Catholique. The people that are the same age as me are these people; Joey Bouleau and Susie King, Father Maqua that's in Fort Rae should be the priest that knows our age.

Mr. J. Cretien said that he just came here to visit and talk about a few things here. Mr. Parker the Assistant Commissioner promised that we would get a Tractor on the first barge that came this summer.

The Treaty was discussed and the promises that were made that time and the Treaty went as such. As long as the River flows front wards and not go backwards, and the sun rises from the east and not go backwards that's what the treaty promised.

National Park:

The people don't want the park, because that is breaking our treaty and that is the best hunting and trapping grounds that we have. The people of Snowdrift refuse to have the Park where the government wants to put the park which is their hunting ground.

Chief Drygeese signed the Treaty for us and asked for this land for us in Fort Resolution.

Chief Murphy and Chief Drygeese had a meeting to discuss the land boundary that they wanted to keep for their people for hunting and trapping and this the land they agreed on.

The park that we are talking about is not only for the old people but for the young people also, they will need it just as bad as the people long ago.

The Chief and Councilors had a meeting about the park the government wants to put here in Snowdrift, and we decided not to accept the park and if the government goes ahead with the park we are going to take action with the park issue. We are going to ask for support from the Indian Brotherhood to support us to fight this government move.

Like we said we do not want the park to be put here, the people are all together about not wanting the park. The land where the park is trying to be put is the best land for hunting and trapping, If we let the government put the park where they want to put it, then we would be giving away the land that we make a living on.

When the whiteman came here to make Treaty with us, he promised not to break the treaty and the land that we asked for would always be ours to hunt and trap and the five dollars that we get was not for the land or will they stop giving the five dollars to us. Now he is trying to take away our land and the five dollars too. The land is ours it is our traditional hunting and trapping grounds and we intend to keep this land.

Don Stewart came here one time and he talked about this land, he said that we needed this land and we should keep this land for our use. He also said if we needed help to contact him and he would help us get things or do things for us.

The Area Administrator does not help us here, when we go to him to help like getting shells he say no to us. He never comes and visits the people and looks at our houses to see of the houses need repair.

The Area Administrator that was here last year was good and was able to know and understand the people here, we all like him very much because he did things with us and when we went hunting he went with us but the Area Administrator that is here now does not do anything, all he does is talk and never visits us.

People talked about the cost of things in that area such items as, shells, food, material for houses.

cost of items are such: \$81.00 per drum for fuel oil
fuel oil \$1.60 per gal
Shells 30 - 30 per lot \$6.70

Price of food eggs \$1.20 per doz.
 2 cans beans and wieners
 oranges 25¢ each \$1.00 for 4
 Apples 25¢ each \$1.00 for 4
 Flour 25 lbs. \$3.75

Income into Snowdrift

Family Allowance
Pension
Other income - nil
Trapping - hunting - fishing
Jobs - nil

Population 300

Mrs. Marie Cassway - widow - one child - income: Welfare assistance
\$45.00 per month
for food and
wood

Mrs. Cassway has a log house which is about 8 by 12 feet - one room only. The ceiling has no insulation, it has an open ceiling, there seems to be no tarp paper between the roof covering and plywood, the house has two small windows with no storm windows to keep the draft out the old log house is three years old and is in need of repair badly.

The house is very drafty and cold she has only one air-tight heater in which she had to buy the present heater she has from her little boys allowance, she had asked the welfare to get a heater and told her now, at the end she had to move out from her house because she couldn't buy the stove right away and she ran out of wood, if she wants wood she has to go about 3 miles to get wood, she went one day and her little boy followed her and the little boy nearly froze, wood costs \$5.00 per sleigh load which isn't much, one sleigh lasts over night, of wood that is. She approached the Area Administrator several occasions and was refused help to get help for wood.

When the Welfare woman goes to Snowdrift she does not visit the people and the houses.

She gets some money for clothing every four months or so. She has no dog team to get wood with so she has to walk about 3 miles.

She seems to think she should be getting old age pension or disability pension because she says she is about 65 or more years old, nobody has made an attempt to help her find out if she could get pension, to live on \$45.00 per month is not enough for her to live on if she has to get wood and food for herself and her little boy.

Mrs. Liz Bozil - Widow age 65 or more income: \$30 Welfare Assistance per month.

She only gets this Welfare Assistance when she is in Snowdrift, otherwise she doesn't get welfare assistance. She lives in an old log house and says that the house is very cold and drafty.

She runs out of wood and has to pay for wood at \$5.00 per sleigh load which only lasts for one nights when very cold.

The welfare she gets last for 2 weeks she says and again she pays for wood from this welfare money she gets.

She never receives clothing from the Welfare help. Her health is not very good, the doctor told her not to lift heavy things or work too hard.

Eddy Catholique

Crippled has wooden leg was getting help from Welfare one time but was cut off, he got \$25 per month, this person should be getting disability pension for his leg. There are four government houses that were started last fall and are not finished. The government people said that money had run out for these houses so the houses are just left standing there with no work being done on them.

The people in Snowdrift are wanting something done about the present situation that exists in Snowdrift and jobs should be created for them to make a living on.

There has been several promises made at the time of the Minister's visit to Snowdrift, and I feel that steps should be taken to upgrade the present situation in Snowdrift.

Submitted by:

Roy Daniels
Treasurer of the
Indian Brotherhood
of the Northwest
Territories

SOCIAL AND HOUSING CO-ORDINATOR
LATHAM ISLAND, YELLOWKNIFE AND SNOWDRIFT
MISS ELIZABETH PETROVITCH
MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1969

SNOWDRIFT

(one day and one night)

My first entry into the settlement of Snowdrift was as a passenger on a charter by Ptarmigan Airways on Tuesday and Wednesday November 25th and 26th, 1969.

I immediately went to Chief Catholique's house after asking for instruction on how to get there. School was in, and the teachers were working. Nevertheless I thought, if only out of respect, I should visit into the Chief's house first.

I had only that afternoon and evening to get as much information as possible that had to be cleared up in their minds. I told them this trip, that when I came back again, soon, it will be for a longer stay. Next time, I will also visit the Acting Area Administrator and teachers.

My Yellowknife commitments have kept me here, for with the houses still uncompleted and the Housing Association getting involved with speaking up and asking questions, I felt my presence, when needed, should be available.

Chief Pierre Catholique mentioned many things and I copied everything down, for further clarification with Area Administrator Murray Petrie. The present Acting Area Administrator Kierney has been in the settlement for approximately 2 months so I thought my immediate contact should be Mr. Petrie. People told me it's better I didn't speak this trip with the teachers. I complied to their wishes, for which I am not clear about yet. It is too soon to get a true picture of the situation.

During my visit, I let it be known that my work will be with people's views, good and bad, and with tape recorder - to later on be copied on paper for my report at the end of my contract.

December coming up starts the long cold winter, bringing of course, much time being spent hauling water and ice from the lake. A time consuming occupation especially with many

children and some big houses.

The four new houses that are in the process of being built, are standing untouched. Interior wiring was stopped because I am told no money is available to complete the houses this year. So these homes stand, unfinished, and of course unoccupied. A familiar story; no money.

These houses are a neater looking building. The work seems more professional, and of course, not being set on muskeg they sit strong, not needing alterations like falling apart and placing together again - I speak of stairs, balconies, and jacking up of whole structures.

Snowdrift houses seem to have not run into complications like Latham Island (e.g. muskeg) but suffer their own set back. Not completed because of money shortage from OTTAWA?

Many older people came to speak to me through the Chief. Ambiguities were in the welfare line of questioning. One particular case of an old woman on old age welfare had in her possession one of these modern wood stoves that lasts only one year and should be replaced. It's life expectancy is 1 year and its cost is \$12 at the Bay.

Now, this old lady's stove was 1 year old, the bottom had fallen out and she had live coals on her floor, but nothing else could be done to keep the house warm, but to burn her wood in same. She went to Acting Area Administrator for a new stove. She was refused, so out of necessity, she purchased one out of her pocket money (\$12). She and the Chief thought this was not right, so they asked me to look into the matter. I said I would speak to the Area Administrator, and as I stated in the return letter to the people, to write to P. Gaudette in the Yellowknife Welfare Department.

I told the people that my job is not welfare, but I promised to speak to Mr. Petrie to find out who they could contact by writing. Copy of letter (unbusiness-like) attached.

The Ladies of the Handicraft are at a loss.

The gentleman who was there, Mr. Reinhart, was their helper and leader, so to speak. When he left, so did the working of the "business" of handicraft sale and shipping, etc., and all it entails. Many question marks here too.

1. Can't get in.
2. Who has the main key to handicraft shop room?

No money is coming in since the leaving of Mr. Reinhart, but people (ladies) continue to sew and bead, in hopes that "some word from outside" gets to them as what to do next.

Several people came to Snowdrift taking 2 boxes of work and say they will be back ;in 3 weeks but that was a long time ago. Ladies are lacking payments for their work, and money is needed to sent "outside" to purchase beads, wool and materials to continue "banking" their work.

Christmas is near, too bad the "whole" system is not working well. "Impetus" is dampening; too bad. The work is good. These ladies would like the assurance that they can do it alone, so they can make sure that their "work" is fully recognized as "Indian" because as I, Elizabeth saw in July, 1969, a store in Ottawa, having Snowdrift mukluks and necklaces there on sale having the "Eskimo" tag on them and "Made In Snowdrift".

The school, I was told, has school films shown on the premises, but it is too bad that every child has to pay 25¢ to see the show. But it's OK, because if they don't have a quarter, they can bring a "fish" for admittance. Adults, too, pay 25¢ but they wish they didn't have to see the same film four times over.

The settlement of Snowdrift has no other community hall, although one nice log one is being built. The walls are up, anyway.

Chief Catholique spoke saying, "he used to show films years ago". He used to run the show, so to speak.

Well, my arrival came smack in the middle of many absentees who were in the Barren Lands for carribou. There are many in the "proposed Park" area, North East.

I spoke at length with the Chief, and he told me of Mr. Chretien's promised visit to his settlement at Christmas time.

He asked me to write down some letters as he dictated and I helped in this way.

I did recommend that he should not hesitate to use a local person for this purpose, because I would not always be around. Just thought that the copies to other people directly involved should also be sent and further to acknowledge the receipt of a past letter or letters.

He is a proper worker and wanted to have the letters typed; so I did this for him. (Out of the settlement, here at Yellowknife Headquarters).

I spoke to 3 small groups of ladies, encouraging them to keep up with correspondence and to contact people with whom they are finding difficulties re welfare, handicraft.

My next trip to Snowdrift, as I stated earlier, will be a more lengthy one. At that time I will get down to the business of the Housing Association forming, if, in fact, there is one; and also go over their responsibility as to correspondence through the correct line of communication for quicker results. I will also look into the matter of them complaining amongst themselves. Nothing gets done this way!

I am sure the people will listen and follow advice, as there are many who are quite proficient with the pen, and bilingual, having English as their second or third language.

There in Snowdrift, as in Yellowknife, I will deal with the foundation of Adult Education, correct letter writing and addressing; also the importance of keeping receipts and copies for oneself.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of water in cleanliness; for the ladies are limited, not with water and ice, but limited in the footage needed to obtain same. There are no water services for the native people.

Much time is needed (during the day, between hunting and trapping for most men) to cut wood for burning and to care for their dogs.

I slept in the Chief's house which was built in 1968, approximately, and it is extremely cold. Our talks all centered around the burning wood stove in order to keep comfortably warm, even with my parka on.

May I state here, that I listened to people complaints as soon as I met them. If it comes I let it. It's no use at the very beginning saying: "no, I don't want to hear that".

I know it's not my department, welfare and handicraft, but I figure it this way. If people think I don't want to listen to them when they speak freely, then they won't listen when I want to speak about my business. It has to be give and take. I listen, take notes, give them my stand and say I will try and get the Area Administrator viewpoint, then tell them what they should do, and who to write to personally.

Chief Pierre Catholique
Snowdrift, N.W.T.
Nov. 26th, 1969

Mr. W. McKim
Reginal Director

Mr, McKim,

I received your letter dated July 31 st. 1969,
and although it is it is a long time ago, I want to answer.

I know what a park is, and what it will mean to
my people and their hunting and fishing and trapping. You
have heard me before and you have heard my people and
their Chiefs.

No, is still my answer, for the parks, and for
the visit.

I am available to talk to if you come to Snow-
drift to talk more, but it would only be to educate you,
about carribour, fox and moose, and all the other things, and
what would happen to this part of the country if this park
business spreads.

Maybe we'll hear from you.

Signed,

Chief Pierre Catholique
Snowdrift, N.W.T.

Copies to ;

Mr. Bud Orange M.P. Ottawa
Commissioner Hodgson Arthur Laing Bldg, Yellowknife, N.W.T.
Mr. Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs Ottawa
Mr. Harald Cardinal Native Indian Brotherhood Edmonton, Alberta
Miss Mona Jacobs President, Native Indian Brotherhood, of
N.W.T. F. Smith.
Mr. Wally Firth Indian Eskimo Association, Yellowknife N.W.T.

SNOWDRIFT VISIT

As a member of the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories in which I am a Vice-President. I would like in my report to outline my visit to Snowdrift, my observations and discussions with the people in Snowdrift. I would like to say, how I felt after seeing the situation clearly after having spend two days in Snowdrift. My conversations with several families, who put forth their concerns strongly regarding the conditions as they exist in Snowdrift today. The Government services in Snowdrift are far from satisfactory. And the standard of living and the social environment that the people have to live in, is sad to find in our present day society, especially when scores of Government people have visited that general area in the last few months. It is very sad to find a person running such a service who has no interest in working with the people that he is living with. The trip to Snowdrift was a short visit. But the information that was gathered from the people in Snowdrift, gives us an overall picture and hopefully the report will be acted on by the Government people that are suppose to give services for communities like Snowdrift. The report from our trip will be released as it was intended for. To me the trip to Snowdrift was not just a visit, but it brought back people's concerns and comments about the lack of Government's responsibility to the people that they should be servicing as they promised. I think the Government is forgetting to serve the people in Snowdrift, but they do not forget the proposed "Park" which is to be near Snowdrift. There is only one settlement through out the Territories and there is a lot more settlements like it to be found in the Territories. In the near future; the type of problems that exist in each settlement and the poor Government services in the north will gradually be seen more clearly.

The people of Snowdrift said they do not want the National Park to be located where there is the best hunting ground, to be found. I can not blame them and certainly I agree with them totally. It is our job being members of the Indian Brotherhood of Northwest Territories to give all the support to the people of Snowdrift against the proposed park. The Government people should think of their services to the people first before they attack these poor people about the land. I do think people from Snowdrift are smart and fighting bravely for their objective, Today the people in Snowdrift have the support which means they will not lose their battle.

To them, the land means a livelihood, the land keeps them in the needs of food. They can hunt caribou, moose and what they need for a living from day to day. And also they can trap for various fur bearing animals which brings them a small income to be able to buy things they need every day. Which the Government fails to do. The land keeps the poor alive. What the Government is doing to the people of Snow-drift, is not hard to figure out, All they are doing and saying to the people is as follows:

"You people are poor, but give us what is valuable to you and in return we will give you the cheapest service as possible in return just to keep you people alive.

Submitted by Charlie Charlo, Vice-President of the
 Indian Brotherhood of N.W.T.