

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
9TH ASSEMBLY, 3RD SESSION**

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C O P E INVK

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NELLIE COURNOYEA, MLA
WESTERN ARCTIC
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE N W T

P R E S S R E L E A S E

INUVIK (NOVEMBER 6, 1980) . . . THE PRESIDENT FOR THE COMMITTEE FOR ORIGINAL PEOPLES ENTITLEMENT, THE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THE 2,500 INUVIALUIT OF THE WESTERN ARCTIC REGION IN THEIR LAND RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE YUKON TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO CHANGE ITS GAME ORDINANCE TO CORRECT THE OUTLAWING BY THE YUKON GOVERNMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL HUNTING AND TRAPPING BY INUVIALUIT ON THEIR HOMELAND IN THE NORTHERN YUKON.

IN NOVEMBER 1979, THE YUKON TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT CHANGED THEIR GAME ORDINANCE AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION OF WILDLIFE TO TRY TO KEEP INUVIALUIT FROM TRAPPING AND HUNTING FOR FOOD AND POLAR BEAR WHERE MANY INUVIALUIT HAVE TRADITIONALLY LIVED AND MADE THEIR LIVLIHOOD. COPE HAS MAINTAINED THAT THIS ACTION BY THE YUKON GOVERNMENT IS A SERIOUS BREACH OF THE AGREEMENT THE INUVIALUIT SIGNED IN OCTOBER 1978 WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF INUVIALUIT LAND RIGHTS CLAIM.

MR. RADDI SAID, "I HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT THE YUKON TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT WILL CHANGE ITS GAME LAWS TO PERMIT THE TRADITIONAL HUNTING AND TRAPPING THAT THEY OUTLAWED AFTER OUR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WAS SIGNED. IT IS NO SECRET THAT OVER THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE HAD A CONTINUING BATTLE WITH THE YUKON TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT OVER INUVIALUIT HUNTING AND TRAPPING IN THE YUKON. DURING THIS YEAR THE YUKON REPRESENTATIVES HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE YUKON GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THE INJUSTICE OF THEIR LAWS, WANTED TO MAKE A DEAL WITH RESPECT TO THE INUVIALUIT LAND RIGHTS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AS IT APPLIES TO THE YUKON. THEY HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY THINK THE INUVIALUIT GOT TOO MUCH FOR THEIR SETTLEMENT AND THEY WANT TO SEE IT REDUCED."

*Statement by the
President of Cope
regarding the
Recent agreement
the Yukon Govt
Ordinance or at
relates to the Inuvialuit*

MR. RADDI SAID, "I WISH TO ASSURE THE INUVIALUIT THAT COPE AND THE YUKON TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT HAVE "NOT" MADE A DEAL. WE HAVE NOT TRADED THE INUVIALUIT LAND RIGHTS SETTLEMENT FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS FOR A CHANGE IN THE YUKON GAME LAWS TODAY. WE HAVE ALWAYS APPROACHED THE QUESTION OF THE INJUSTICE OF THE YUKON GAME LAWS ON THE MERITS AND WE TRUST THE YUKON HAS RECENTLY DONE THE SAME."

"I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THE APPRECIATION OF THE INUVIALUIT WHO HAVE SUFFERED OVER THE PAST YEAR UNDER LAWS THAT TOOK AWAY THEIR LIVELIHOOD, FOR THE PROMISED ACTION OF THE YUKON TO CORRECT THE SITUATION. IN PARTICULAR I WISH TO CONNEND THE EFFORTS OF MR. CHRIS PEARSON, YUKON GOVERNMENT LEADER AND MR. MARK HOFFMAN, CHIEF OF ENFORCEMENT IN THIS MATTER,"

HOWEVER, MR RADDI CAUTIONED THE YUKON, "I AM ALWAYS SUSPICIOUS OF SUDDEN CHANGES OF HEART. THE PROMISED CHANGES TO THE YUKON GAME ORDINANCE, WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE VOLUNTARILY ARE NO MORE THAN PART OF OUR HISTORIC RIGHTS THAT ARE TO BE QUANTIFIED UNDER OUR LAND RIGHTS SETTLEMENT. THESE RIGHTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN AGREED TO IN THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AND THE YUKON GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE RECOGNIZED THE FAIRNESS OF THESE RIGHTS WHICH THEY TRIED TO TAKE AWAY LAST YEAR,"

"HOWEVER, I SUSPECT THE YUKON GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE EXPECTING LARGE CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE FROM COPE IN TERMS OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE. IN PARTICULAR, THE YUKON MAY BE SEEKING TO REDUCE THE OTHER INUVIALUIT HUNTING RIGHTS AND SEEKING TO ABOLISH IMPORTANT LAND AND WILDLIFE PROTECTIONS PROVIDED FOR IN THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS AREA ON THE NORTH SLOPE. I WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE INUVIALUIT ARE NOT PREPARED TO COMPROMISE THEIR RIGHTS OR THE PROTECTIONS ON THE NORTH SLOPE BEYOND THOSE AGREED TO IN OUR AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH CANADA,"

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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