

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
9<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY, 6<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 3-81(3)**

**TABLED ON NOVEMBER 13, 1981**



OCT 28 1981

Mr. Bob MacQuarrie, M.L.A.,  
Government of the Northwest Territories,  
P.O. Box 2895,  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.  
X1A 2L9

Dear Mr. MacQuarrie:

Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying to your letter of July 22, in which you expressed your concerns over the way in which the Federal Government might deal with the political aspirations of the Dene Nation.

Your own open-mindedness about the political and cultural needs of the Dene as a distinctive people is well known to me. You confirm your sensitivity to this issue by the care you have taken in your letter to distinguish the process of deciding upon political structures from the substantive issue of what political structures might best accommodate the aspirations of all residents of the Northwest Territories. Your chief concern, as I understand it, is that the process of land claims negotiations with the Dene Nation is not appropriate for deciding upon constitutional issues and political structures which would affect all residents of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to reassure you with this letter that neither Mr. David Osborn, who is the Federal negotiator in our discussions with the Dene Nation, nor any other negotiators on Northern Claims, has a mandate to decide upon constitutional or political change of a fundamental nature.

The Dene Nation will certainly be welcome to raise constitutional issues in the context of the claims negotiations if it wishes to do so. Indeed, the processes of land claims negotiations and political development are so interrelated that a discussion of constitutional issues in the land claims negotiation is unavoidable. The Federal Government hopes to benefit from such a discussion by acquiring a clear understanding of what political structures the Dene Nation

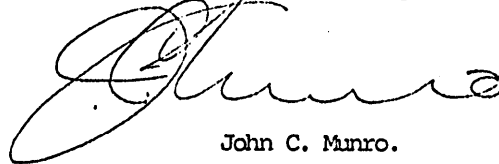
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would prefer to see throughout the Northwest Territories, and of how the Dene Nation would see those structures working. I am pleased that the Territorial Government, which has representation on the Federal negotiating team through the Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development Secretariat, will share in this very important learning experience.

The process of deciding upon actual changes to the form and style of the government of the Mackenzie Region will, however, as is the case in the Eastern and Central Arctic, be separate and distinct from the process of negotiating land claims on the basis of Aboriginal Rights.

I trust that my reply addresses your concerns, and I share your hope that the current process of land claims negotiations will help to secure for the Dene Nation a positive role and a continuing identity within Confederation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'John C. Munro', written in dark ink on a white background.

John C. Munro.