

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
9<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY, 10<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 13-83(1)**

**TABLED ON FEBRUARY 22, 1983**

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# INUIT IN THE SOUTH

Tabled Document No. 13-83(1)  
Tabled FEB. 22/83



# INUIT IN THE SOUTH

by Marsha Kaplansky  
Inuit Tapirisat of Canada

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Inuit Tapirisat of Canada  
Inuit Tapirisat of Canada

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"Inuit in the South" was researched and produced by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. ITC wishes to thank the Government of the Northwest Territories for funding the research and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for producing this publication.

A great number of people in the North and in the South helped with this project. Without their interest and co-operation, such a project could never have been undertaken. The author and the production staff extend their thanks to these people.

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Indian and Northern  
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes  
et du Nord Canada

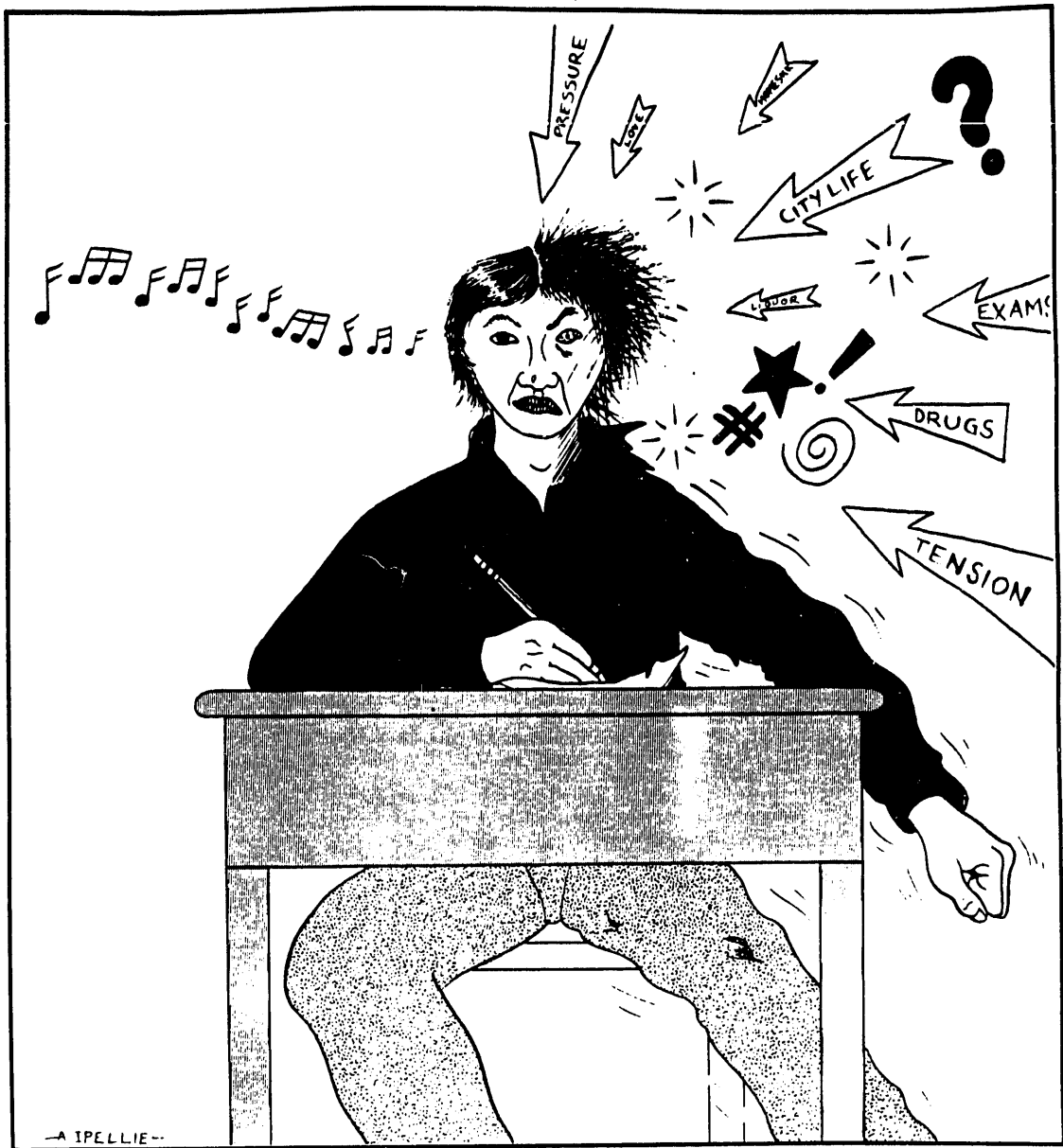
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Publication No. QS 8252-040-KE-A1





### *What city living can be to an Inuk*

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What Helps the Most  
 ᑦᑕᑎᓂᑦ ᑭᑦ ᐃᑲᑦᐱᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ

Inuit Non-Inuit Total  
 ᐃᓂᐃᑦ ᐃᓂᑦᑕᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑲᑎᓂᑦᑕᑦ

Inuit House  
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11 3 14

Professional resource people  
 (counsellors, chaplain)  
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Applying yourself to school and  
 having a sense of purpose or goal  
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Orientation counselling  
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Good boarding homes  
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not knowing how members of their families are doing, missing the moral support of close relatives and feeling that they should really be back home helping their families. Some people feel that parents don't really understand that in the South the quality of education is much better and that the choice of courses is much larger than in the North. If parents had a clearer understanding of the real importance of school or training for their childrens' careers, and for the future of the North, then they would encourage their children more to stay in school, study, try harder to make new friends, and learn new things during the few years they spend in the South. More encouragement from home would really help.

Counsellors, former students and other resource people all agree that Inuit students coming South in recent years have much less difficulty getting used to city life for a few years than they did 15 years ago. Some of the reasons

for this are that the quality of education is much better and that the choice of courses is much larger than in the North. If parents had a clearer understanding of the real importance of school or training for their childrens' careers, and for the future of the North, then they would encourage their children more to stay in school, study, try harder to make new friends, and learn new things during the few years they spend in the South. More encouragement from home would really help.

Mr. Ralph Ritcey, a counsellor at the University of Toronto, says that many Inuit students who come to the South in recent years have had a much easier time adjusting to city life than those who came 15 years ago. He says that one of the reasons for this is that the quality of education is much better and that the choice of courses is much larger than in the North. He also says that many of these students have had a clearer understanding of the real importance of school or training for their childrens' careers, and for the future of the North, than those who came 15 years ago. He says that more encouragement from home would really help.



are: more English is spoken in the North now, television in the North has introduced Inuit to trees, tall buildings and crowds. This has softened the initial shock of environmental differences. More new students have friends or relatives who were in the South or are still there by the time they arrive. Some have seen cities through a youth exchange program. Also, everyone agrees that Inuit House in Ottawa has really helped the new students to feel more at home.

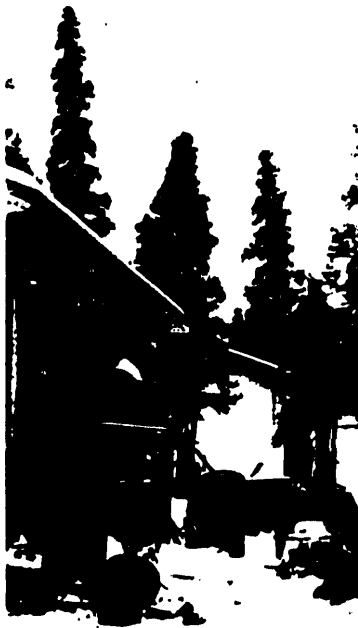
There is a general agreement among counsellors, other education authorities and some former students that a number of Inuit students have difficulty at school in the South because the school system in the North is quite different (that is - the academic standards - as well as the size of classes). Because a Grade 9 level in some northern schools can be equivalent only to a Grade 6 or 7 level here, Inuit students are often placed in southern classes with children who are quite a bit younger than they are. This can be very discouraging. Ralph Ritcey, Superintendent of Vocational Education at DIAND, who has been involved with Inuit education through and even before the years of the Churchill Vocational Centre, saw lack of academic preparation as by far the main problem of Inuit students in the South. He considered problems associated with "culture shock" to be "way over-rated by some people". Homesickness, in his opinion, is not really as much a problem as it was years ago.

Several people commented that too many students come South for the wrong reasons - to escape family problems or to have a great adventure instead of coming to get an education. Others don't try to do well at school because they don't really know why they should, why school is important to their future i.e. how it can help them get a job they'll like back home which can help them help their families in the long run. Some just don't have the discipline required to do homework and go to classes.



È q̄ CΔL̄a ΔPL̄r̄ī q̄ D̄P̄L̄L̄F̄ Δc̄σ̄N̄-  
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σ̄ΔP̄N̄ō Δr̄ōσ̄ΔȲD̄c̄.



A number of people, including the school principals in Eskimo Point and Frobisher Bay, pointed out that Inuit students at school in larger northern centres such as Frobisher Bay, Yellowknife, Inuvik, or Fort Smith, face many of the problems that Inuit students face in the south. These problems are connected with being far from home at a larger school in a strange, larger place where people behave differently; also with studying and not finishing school.

Don McNeill, former Adult Education Program Director for the Baffin Region, Dick Smith, vice-principal in Eskimo Point, and Ralph Ritcey, among others, pointed out that Ottawa might be easier for Inuit students to adjust to than Yellowknife or Frobisher Bay because more services and personal attention for their education are available specifically for them here. Ottawa also has a smoother social climate and more (healthy) activities to offer students than Frobisher Bay, Yellowknife or Fort Smith. Parents appear to be more comfortable about the idea of their kids going to Ottawa for these reasons than one of the large northern education centres.

Louis Bourgault, formerly with the Kativik School Board, in a study of northern Quebec students over a five-year period, pointed out that the drop-out rate among Inuit students in the South was far higher than it has been for southern students. Malcolm Farrow, principal of the Gordon Robertson Education Centre (GREC) in Frobisher Bay, said that there is a high drop-out rate there too, particularly among the students

*Northern Comparison*

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	Inuit ᐃᓄᐃᑦ	Non-Inuit ᑲᓄᐃᑦ	Total ᑲᐅᐅᑦ
<b>Physical ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ</b>			
Financial - handling new Expenses ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ - ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	21	5	26
Discomfort with the environment itself - i.e. confusion, claustrophobia with density, size, speed, crowds, noise. Just not feeling at home ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	17	4	21
Transportation access to services, people; logistics of access ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	17	2	19
Housing - finding a good place to live ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ - ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ	12	3	15
Discomfort with weather ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	7	1	8
<b>What Helps ᑲᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ</b>			
Taking initiatives, applying yourself ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	11	5	16
Other Inuit who know the city and the experience ᐃᓄᐃ ᐃᑲᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ	8	6	14
Inuit House and Inuit Drop-in Centres ᐃᓄᐃ ᐃᑲᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	7	6	13
Professional resource people (including employers) ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	5	5	10
Personal/social involvement general ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	7	3	10
Knowing what you're here for (goal) ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ	3	4	8
Other places where Inuit socialize ᐃᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᐅᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ	4	3	7





everyone else. You can just walk a few steps and be at a friend's or relative's home. You can walk into just about anyone's home at any time and feel welcome.

Leaving this home environment to go South, families and dear friends become too far away, even too far away to phone because calls to the North cost a lot of money. Going home to visit more than once a year is usually out of the question because travel costs are so high. The further you get from home, the more isolated and detached you can get, as you have less and less access to home due to distance and cost. You are no longer with the people you know, and it can be difficult to develop new friendships.

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**Wives' Problems**

Q: I am a woman who has been married for 15 years. My husband is a migrant worker. He works in the South for most of the year and only comes home for a few weeks. I feel very lonely and isolated. Can you help?

Quite a few people, some of them concerned husbands, mentioned that problems of loneliness and isolation are by far the hardest for the few wives of the working people who come South, especially for wives of men who travel often on the job, and for wives who aren't fluent in English. While their husbands are busy with people and business during the day, wives are often alone in their homes, not knowing anyone to visit. Several people commented that as there is much less work for Inuit women to do at home in the South than in the North because of automatic dishwashers, supermarkets, etc., wives get very bored as well as lonely and isolated. These same

problems are also experienced by wives of men who work in the South but are not migrant workers. These women often find themselves isolated from their families and friends, especially if they are not fluent in English. They may also face language barriers when trying to communicate with their husbands or other people in the community. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, particularly if they are not able to find a supportive community in their new location.





**Impersonality, Formality,  
"No sense of Community"**

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 መኖራቸውን ያሳያል

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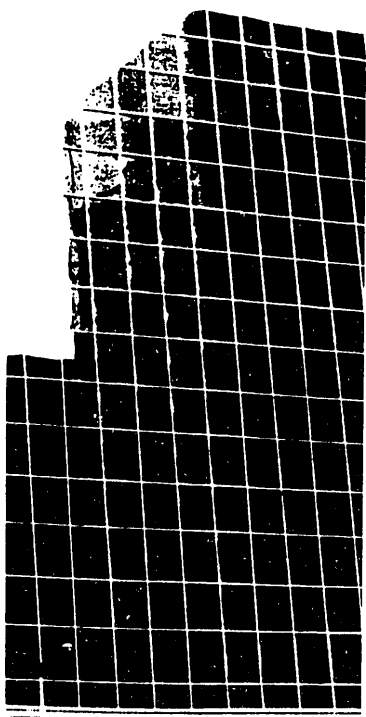
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problems are faced by wives of government people who live in another country. Wives are on their own much more than anyone else; to find a hobby such as craft work; to find a job if they have enough skills; find a course they would like if they have no children to take care of; or to seek out other wives in the same situation.

In the cities, most people are not just strangers to Inuit; they are strangers to each other. Cities are far too big to know everyone in them. In fact, most city people don't know their neighbours and can't just go next door if they need something.

Friends and relatives can live far across the city from each other, behind locked doors which protect their homes from the high risk of robbery. They must telephone each other before going to visit. It's a good idea to find out if someone will be home first rather than go a long distance to visit an empty house.

Inuit often find city life to be ordered and subdued; on the streets, people walk quickly and don't often smile at each other. As they have been brought up not to talk to strangers, there's an impersonality and a formality about most city people. City people who are not personally acquainted usually relate to each other strictly for business; to get or give information, to get or give a service, to sell something, or buy something, find something or fix something. They don't just go up to anyone on the street and strike up a conversation. There is no general feeling of friendliness or togetherness. In the city you read the birth and death column in the newspaper; people are being born or dying every day who you don't know. There's no feeling for what's going on with everyone. In a small place, each birth, death or accident affects everyone. Not so in a city - a large place full of strangers. Inuit find no sense of community among city people as a whole; this can be found only inside the smaller political, religious, social, interested,



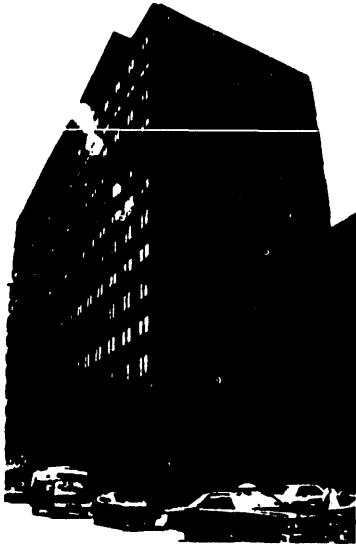












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Some Inuit adapt quite easily to all these differences and get to like city life, others don't. Some still have the personal feeling that it just isn't their environment even when they know how to get around.

A number of people agree that all the differences discussed between the North and the South can be difficult to get used to, but are not serious problems in themselves. According to some people who have been through the adjustments and have seen many others come and go, most of the things people start having serious problems with come from within. It is personal problems and individual ways of dealing with these problems that start to affect work, people you associate with, the way you look at everything and everyone around you no matter who or where you are.

*What Helps*  
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When people know exactly what they've come South for, and are happy with their job or their course, they can cope more easily with everything else in the city itself, letting new things gradually fit into place. This includes interest in what you've come South to do, really wanting to do it and applying yourself to it. A person's attitude is one of the most important things. It also includes accepting the new environment while you're part of it, then looking among the city's many options for things and people that interest you.



Other people are considered to be another key; finding people who you have things in common with, whether they are Inuit who have lived in the South for a while or non-Inuit; whether they are people at work or school or people you see afterwards. It also helps very much to speak and understand English well; without English everything else is much more difficult.

Inuit House, the drop-in centre set up by DIAND, helps some people. It is a very comfortable house which often has a freezer full of country food. Inuit working in Ottawa also visit each other and visit people they work with. Reverend Briggs, Ottawa's native chaplain, who lived in the







Patients who are too sick to travel by themselves are escorted to all stops along the way to the hospital by nurses or doctors. Other escorts can be provided to accompany patients who aren't that sick.

Inuit patients who travel from Frobisher Bay to Montreal are given a written explanation about their trip in Inuktitut and English before they get on the plane. Patients travelling from other places in the North do not get anything in writing. They are told where they are going, how they will get there, and what to do by the Medical Services driver who takes them to the airport, by the northern government transportation coordinator, or by the doctor, nurse or other escort who travels with them.

When they arrive in the South, patients are met by an ambulance or another Medical Services driver. Escorts and/or interpreters accompany them to the hospital or clinic. Patients who have to wait to get into the hospital are provided with boarding homes. Special foster homes are made available for children. Whenever an Inuk patient in the South has to travel to and from boarding homes and hospital or clinics, an escort or interpreter can take him.

Reading material in Inuktitut is available in some hospitals. In Montreal, Inuit patients are given an eight page booklet - "Phrases in English and Inuktitut" - to help them communicate in the hospital. Both the Northwest Territories Department of Health and the Medical Services Branch or the federal Department of Health and Welfare try to provide interpreter/translators for Inuit in the hospitals.

In Montreal, the Montreal Native Friendship Centre tries to get in touch with Inuit patients and to help them out when required. Social workers are also available to help in both the Montreal General and the Montreal Children's Hospital. There is a patient referral unit in the Quebec region for Inuit patients and their relatives in the North. This twenty-four hour service ensures that the hospital regularly passes on news of the patient's condition to his

torial Hospital and the Montreal Children's Hospital (369 St. Germain St. W. Montreal, P.Q.)

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relatives through the nurse in the  
 patient's home community.

Relatives and patients can also  
 phone each other, but they have to  
 pay the telephone bills them-  
 selves. Medically recommended  
 visits by relatives to Inuit in  
 southern hospitals may be arranged  
 through the NWT Department of  
 Social Services. Also, doctors and  
 nurses from southern hospitals can  
 be brought up north in special  
 circumstances; for example, to  
 instruct parents from the South if  
 the nurse in their home community  
 does not know how.

Hospital bills are covered by  
 provincial or territorial health  
 insurance, depending on where the  
 patient comes from. Medical bills  
 - that is bills for medicine and  
 other health care aids are taken  
 care of in the same way.

The quality and exact nature of  
 services varies from hospital to  
 hospital and city to city.

The Moose Factory Hospital, in  
 Northern Ontario, held a meeting

# NORDAIR

TICKET PURCHASES  
 AND INFORMATION  
 ACHATS DE BILLET  
 ET INFORMATIONS

TICKET PURCHASES  
 ACHATS DE BILLET

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER



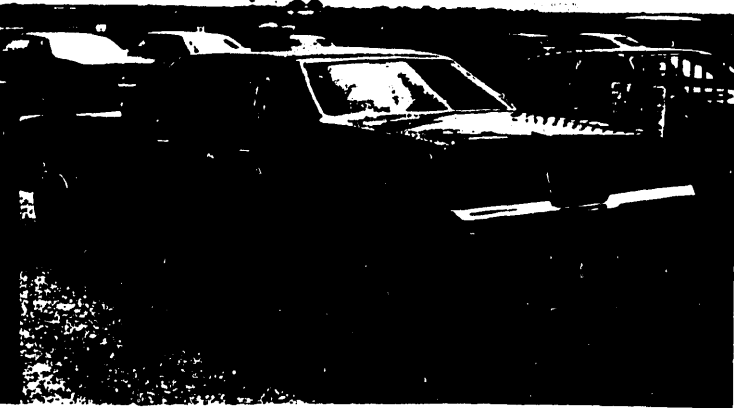
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to me about patients' problems,  
 most of the general "problems"  
 with life in the South coming from  
 the change in environment are  
 experienced by Inuit patients, but  
 patients come to the South involun-  
 tarily and in pain. Often they  
 are older people who cannot speak  
 or understand English. Not knowing  
 the main language of the city  
 (English or French) adds to their  
 loneliness, isolation and general  
 discomfort in hospital or in the  
 convalescent boarding and foster  
 homes. The change to a hospital  
 diet is particularly unpleasant  
 for Inuit patients. Also, some  
 don't have enough cash to buy  
 things they need every day such as  
 cigarettes and toothpaste.

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All patients in hospital are quite  
 helpless. Often they can't even  
 feed themselves or wash them-  
 selves. Large city hospitals have  
 all kinds of rules and regulations  
 to keep the hospital running  
 smoothly and to protect patients.  
 Patients often aren't allowed to  
 walk about the hospital by them-  
 selves. Sometimes they aren't  
 permitted to smoke cigarettes in  
 their rooms; only in a small room  
 on each floor which has been set  
 up for that purpose. Telephone  
 calls home usually have to be paid  
 for by the patients themselves.  
 Meals are served only at specific  
 times. Television sets and other  
 special services have to be re-  
 quested and paid for. To call a  
 nurse, there is usually a little  
 button to push on the side of the  
 patient's bed. Often the nurses  
 don't come right away because they  
 are busy.

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The only practical things that  
 could help Inuit patients right  
 now are more visitors who can  
 speak Inuktitut and more calls  
 from home. If anyone you know is  
 going to be in a southern hospital  
 for a long time, packages from  
 home - of food, reading materials  
 in Inuktitut, and other things to  
 keep them busy, would be welcome.

It is essential to remember that  
 Inuit are sent to southern hospi-  
 tals because, despite all the  
 discomforts, the actual medical  
 care is far better in the South.  
 City hospitals have far more doc-  
 tors, nurses, equipment, hospital  
 beds, and medicine than northern  
 nursing stations or hospitals.



