Paliisikkut: Policing in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Thematic Reports and Special Studies

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Inuit of the Qikiqtani Region. May our history never be forgotten and our voices be forever strong.

About This Report (2024 Edition)

This report was originally produced by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) from reports drafted by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) in 2010 and published by QIA in 2013. In 2024, QIA updated the reports by reinstating footnotes, correcting official place names, making minor corrections to grammar and syntax, correcting maps, and changing some images. The Inuktitut versions also added footnotes.

Foreword and Introduction texts from the 2013 edition are found at the end of the 2024 report to provide context about the work of the QTC.

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Introduction

This report considers the relationship between Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Inuit in the Qikiqtani Region[i] from the 1940s to 1975. The RCMP's history as a colonial force was intended, in the jargon of the 19th and 20th centuries, to enforce peace and order, establish sovereignty, and allow good government[ii] to follow. The organization, originally known as the North–West Mounted Police (cited at RCMP in this report in all eras), set out in 1873 to police Canada's western territories, but soon expanded its operations north. At every step, the RCMP's actions came into conflict with First Nations, Inuit and Métis laws and knowledge.

A standard pattern can be seen across time and place each time the RCMP opened a new detachment, all of which were located on Indigenous territory whether covered by treaty or not.[1] Relations between RCMP and Indigenous communities were promising at the start, especially when newcomers were primarily interested in trade, but deteriorated very quickly as more newcomers arrived and police enforced laws on behalf of governments to support the permanent occupation of non-Indigenous people on Indigenous lands. In the west, the occupiers were railways, developers, farmers, and ranchers. In the Qikiqtani Region, most newcomers—bureaucrats, military personnel, contractors, teachers, and welfare workers—were transient but their roles were permanent. The transition from autonomy and self-government to a colonial system in the region was just as harsh as on the Prairies, but it was much quicker. In one decade, between 1955 and 1965, many Inuit were enticed or forced to move from ilagiit nunagivaktangit[2] into settlements created by government. In the following decade, the move was all but complete, with the RCMP supplying the power necessary to impose permanent Canadian-designed institutions over Inuit legal, social, political and cultural structures.

Tensions between RCMP and Indigenous people were aggravated by racism, the lack of a coherent justice system, and poor intercultural communications. Many conflicts were sparked by the reality that Inuit carried the weight of their many responsibilities concerning families, livelihoods and culture, while the RCMP and other government official wielded great power and no direct responsibility for the well-being of Inuit. Resistance by Inuit ranged from micro-actions, such as refusing to assist RCMP with dog teams or ignoring requests to participate in the census, to large political manoeuvres that eventually led to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

i This report uses current geographical place names, with Inuktitut place names added.

ii This report uses the term "government" to include all the bodies that existed under Canadian federal legislation to serve and control people, mostly Inuit, in the Qikiqtani Region.

Inuit also faced the reality that the policemen (and they were, without exception, male officers who were posted in Qikiqtani Region before 1975) themselves were transient; very few officers chose to stay in the Arctic for more than one or two postings. When combined with the fact that RCMP exercised considerable discretion in their work, Inuit found police to be unpredictable. One missionary complained that they were "involuntarily erratic, inconsistent and even blundering."[3] An action by an Inuk that might be ignored by one officer could be deemed by another officer as an offence warranting charges or time spent in a lock up. Furthermore, Inuit were expected to help care for the RCMP. Elijah Panipakoocho of Pond Inlet told the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC):

> *Without the help of the Inuit, [RCMP] would not have survived, they would have been dead. … They tell stories of being heroic but they had to be housed, clothed, fed. It was looking after a five or a six year old. They … would start suffering immediately when they were alone. Those Inuit really had a really hard time, they had to look after themselves and the RCMP.*[4]

RCMP were also responsible for doing the bidding of government on a much wider range of powers. As examples, they ordered Inuit to relocate to other places, including the high arctic, and they threatened families to send their children to school. In many cases, individual officers may not have been aware that Inuit were unhappy, angry or confused. An important concept in the relationship between Inuit and RCMP is ilira, an Inuit term that means a sense of fear and uncertainty tinged with awe. In customary contexts, ilira was a positive method of social control, but in relationships between RCMP and Inuit the feeling of ilira stopped Inuit from speaking out against injustices.[5] The police were the most intimidating out of all qallunaat they came into contact with. If Inuit failed to listen to RCMP, or didn't adequately understand the police, they could be taken away and imprisoned. Hugh Brody recounts that Simon Anaviapik of Pond Inlet told him, "Those Whites were fantastically powerful. They were frightening—yes, we were very afraid of them. We did whatever they told us to—even things that were against our own customs."[6] In explaining why his family relocated from Inukjuak, Quebec to Resolute, John Amagoalik explained:

> *I think it's also important for people to understand that when the RCMP made a request to you in those days, it was seen as something like an order. You are ordered to do this. The RCMP officers had a lot of power. They could put you in jail. That's the way they were viewed in those days. A request from the police was taken very, very seriously.*[7]

Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta, 1920–1945

The term "Taissumani nunamiutaultilluta" means "when we lived on the land." This is the period when most Inuit only visited government enclaves to trade or access services.

INUIT JUSTICE

When the RCMP began patrolling the Arctic in the 1920s, Inuit laws and legal mechanisms were already in place, albeit using systems that were very different than Canadian ones. Inuit had their own means of exercising justice and encouraging social adhesion. As described by Inuit, interdependence on the natural world and on each other necessitated certain strong, but largely social, means of influencing behaviour to ensure survival and happiness.[8] Inuit were cautious and respectful of nature. Trusted wisdom gained from previous

generations was a framework for Inuit actions and rationales, with control and leadership localized in a kinship-based community. Each group had leaders "whose influence and authority equipped them to make decisions that affected both the community as a whole and their own families within it."[9] Joshua Idlout told the QTC "Each clan had its own land, a governance system, and Elders. Elders were the primary decision makers of that camp."[10] Social control was normally executed by the family and by the community more generally. Families placed a strong emphasis on self-control, since rash decisions or actions could endanger the entire community.

Mechanisms to control and punish all but the most serious of transgressions were psychological in nature, and included gossip, mockery, avoidance and ostracism. Storytelling was central for teaching children about dangers—both in terms of the environment itself and behaviours. Humility was seen as a positive means of minimizing direct conflict. If problems persisted, angakkuit (shamans) and recognized leaders could address them individually or during feasts or religious rites. They could then call upon those involved to reconcile with the community. In some places, conflict resolution could also take place through a singing duel (iviutit), or through physical challenges, such as a fighting competition called tigutijut.

Harsh punishment appears to have been rare. Banishment and execution likely occurred only in situations where a person was deemed to be too dangerous to live with the group. Canadian scholar Shelagh Grant describes various means of keeping individuals and groups from harm, including taboos and demonstrating a capacity to take control over emotions. She also highlights the rich language used to describe emotions and motivations that individuals could experience in relationships and actions associated with maintaining order and control in groups. She writes, for example, that "in North Baffin an adult was expected to refrain from showing anger and instead show isuma, meaning 'the capacity for a sense of reason'." Taking a life without prior consent or provocation—inuaqsiniq—was the most serious crime "because of the adverse effect it would have on a group."[11]

While Inuit were still living on the land and trading entirely by choice, the RCMP generally recognized Inuit groups as autonomous for the purposes of law enforcement and justice. Social scientist W.C.E. Rasing explains that in Igloolik, which was one of the last areas where Inuit moved into a government-sponsored settlement, "[Inuit] were hardly affected by Canadian law enforcement … only (annual) police patrols reminded people of the presence of the law. Preserving order in the camps in fact remained in [Inuit] hands, although the Inuit were officially subjected to the laws of Canada."[12]

Inuit methods of justice and control were challenged as soon as Inuit began interacting with and living among qallunaat (non-Inuit). Missionaries, traders, and police arrived first, with each group playing their own roles in undercutting customary Inuit beliefs and strategies regarding individual and group behaviour, punishment and rewards. Further changes came when Inuit attended school and came into contact more regularly with nurses and social workers.

Arrival of the RCMP

BACKGROUND: THE RCMP AND CANADA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The RCMP (as named after the merging of the North-West Mounted Police and Dominion Police in 1920) was established in 1873 to impose a Victorian legal code onto the vast tracts of the Northwest Territories that had recently been sold to Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company.[13] The government's failure to consult with Indigenous groups on this territorial transfer inspired mistrust and resistance. It was part of the Force's unofficial mandate to set these relationships right without compromising any government plans.[14] As police, judge, jury, and jailer, as well as occasional postman and medic, an RCMP officer became a jack-of-all-trades for the government and held an immensely concentrated amount of power in the communities he served.[15] Historian Walter Hildebrandt points out, the entire "goal of the Mounties could eventually be described

as a cultural one—to gain the trust of the Natives and then wean them from their customs and beliefs by enforcing laws intended to diminish the Native culture."[16] To facilitate the establishment of the Force's jurisdiction in an area, First Nations and Métis men (and later Inuit) were hired as special constables, a role that combined the jobs of guide, interpreter and cultural mediator. This was a subordinate and highly vulnerable role that could include enabling the arrest of one's own family members. For many special constables and their families, social ostracism always possible.[17]

The Force also worked directly on treaty negotiations beginning in the 1870s.[18] Relations between the police and bureaucrats were at times tense, but the organizations also worked as allies in support of the government for most of their institutional histories.[19] Police helped Indian Agents enforce provisions of the Indian Act, scooped children up for residential schools, enforced liquor laws and restrictions on Indigenous cultural practices and laws, and ensured that settlers remained undisturbed by any actions, such as hunting or removing fences, that might have been done or contemplated by First Nations and Métis. The Mounted Police were a force of cultural assimilation, as well as mediators between other groups and Indigenous peoples in the northwest and in Canada's Arctic.

Racism in words and deeds, as well as the role of the RCMP in the dispossession of Indigenous People from their lands and culture, caused a multi-dimensional and intense distrust of the RCMP by many Indigenous people, in spite of the Force's highly publicized acts of heroism and support. During the 1970s, when the RCMP became embroiled in scandal for performing illegal activities, one national Aboriginal periodical wrote:

> *The irony of the present outrage and scandal directed at the RCMP is painful. For a century the RCMP have been victimizing Native people … Predictably, little attention was paid to the plight of the Native people who fell victim to the harsh brutality of the RCMP racism. The public can remain oblivious to the Native suffering for 100 years, but let the word get out that a few telephones have been tapped and a few offices broken into by the RCMP and the public is incensed. Suddenly the public feels the RCMP is out of control. To tens of thousands of Canada's Native people it has never been any other way.*[20]

EARLY RCMP INVESTIGATIONS AND DETACHMENTS IN THE REGION

The Force already had almost fifty years of experience policing among Indigenous peoples in Canada before its first criminal investigation (1920) and first detachment (1922) arrived in the Qikiqtani Region. In 1920, following reports of a killing of an Inuk by relations the year before, two police were sent to the Belcher Islands to investigate, but only after Quebec reminded the federal government that the area was within the boundaries of the Northwest Territories and federal responsibilities. Following an investigation and in consideration of the evidence, no charges were laid in part because the victim "was killed for the common good and safety of the Band." The RCMP officers recommended, however, that "a responsible representative of the Government be sent amongst these people to instruct them in the laws of the country."[21]

The first permanent police presence in the region came in 1922, primarily for sovereignty purposes. As historian William Morrison explains, "the Canadian government sent the police to bring law to the Inuit not out of concern for their welfare or a desire to regularize their society, but rather to demonstrate that these people and their land belonged to Canada."[22] Without a means to monitor borders effectively in such a remote and difficult environment, Canada was limited to counting and observing its own population, consisting entirely of approximately eleven thousand Inuit and a few missionaries and traders. The secondary reason,

which was always emphasized in RCMP lore, was that the RCMP would bring law enforcement and other services to the region. RCMP and government officials believed a police presence was needed in the Arctic, but also that Inuit should be left alone to sustain themselves. The first permanent detachment was set up at Pond Inlet in 1922 where a trial was to be held for Inuit accused of murdering a trader. In the following year, after investigations and finding the accused, the RCMP led a widely publicized murder trial followed by journalists through radio communications. For decades, the arrival of Inspector A. H. Joy in Pond Inlet as a police officer (he had previously been assigned to the Belcher Islands for the 1920 trial), as well as "magistrate, coroner, customs officer and postman," served as a foundational myth for the RCMP and its work in the Arctic.[23] His name has been attached to several geographic places in Nunavut.

Community Name	Detachment name (at opening)	Dates of Operation	Comments
	Alexandra Fiord	1953–1963	
Arctic Bay			
	Bache Peninsula	1926–1932	Replaced Craig Harbour
	Cape Christian	1954–1970	Moved to Clyde River
Kinngait	Cape Dorset	1965–	
Clyde River	Clyde River	1970–	
	Craig Harbour	1922–1926, 1933–1956	Moved to Bache Peninsula in 1926; to Grise Fiord in 1956
	Dundas Harbour	1924–33, 1945–1951	
Grise Fiord	Grise Fiord	1956–	
Sanirajak	–	–	
Igloolik	Igloolik	1964–	
Iqaluit	Frobisher Bay	1945–	
Kimmirut	Lake Harbour	1927–	
Pangnirtung	Pangnirtung	1923–	
Pond Inlet	Pond Inlet	1922–	
Qikiqtarjuaq			
Resolute	Resolute	1953–	
Sanikiluaq		1977	

Table 1: RCMP Detachments in The Qikiqtani Region

Official policy dictated that law enforcement was the foremost concern of the RCMP, but the police were also tasked with collecting taxes and duties, delivering the mail, and distributing first aid supplies and other necessities to Inuit and traders. The low numbers of police investigations meant that most members spent a significant portion of their time preparing for patrols, keeping their quarters tidy, and conducting interviews with Inuit coming into settlements to trade, participate in religious services, and meet supply ships. The impact of policing on Inuit was never considered; officials assumed that the impacts would be positive when traders were made to behave. They also believed Inuit were not really in need of policing as a method of controlling behaviour.[24] The RCMP were also expected to send information back to Ottawa to help officials make decisions related to the well-being of people in the region. In practice, however, three types of concerns were top of mind among officials, namely, keeping the cost of administration low, keeping trading posts active to off-set costs of administration, and demonstrating Canada's presence in the area.

RCMP RECRUITS

The RCMP officers who served in the region were drawn from a select pool of individuals who were required to be British (later Canadian) citizens who met education and physical requirements, including a minimum height. The stories of RCMP living in the Arctic—traveling by dog team and assisting with everything from first aid to mountain rescues—contributed greatly to both the myth the Force and the attraction it held for potential recruits.[25]

For almost the entire period under study, the RCMP received almost no training was provided on either northern work or the environment. As late as 1962, out of a total of 1,256 hours of training, a recruit spent 140 hours learning to ride horses, another 70 hours taking care of the stables, and only 25 hours on criminal code.[26] In 1953 or 1954, the RCMP began to offer a short course in Edmonton that introduced recruits to northern conditions. The course included lectures at the Camsell Hospital in Edmonton that specialized in tuberculosis treatment for First Nations and Inuit, lectures on acts and ordinances enforced in the Yukon and Northwest territories, and films about "police life at isolated places, … members going on patrol by dog team, attending to dogs, handing out Family Allowance to Eskimos and numerous views of isolated detachments." Recruits that ended up working in places like Whitehorse and Iqaluit, where most of the work was done physically within the community and were likely to involve more non-Aboriginal transients and settlers, were disappointed with their more urban experiences.[27]

The reason or motivation for a posting had bearing on the quality an officer provided and the relationship that developed between him and the community. An officer might anticipate that a posting in the north could lead to higher wages, adventure, promotions, opportunities to work independently, and a chance to see one of the most unique landscapes in Canada. Others went north to escape financial or personal problems in the south. They were often rotated out after their two years of service, sometimes sooner. In the film *Qimmit: Clash of Two Truths*, former RCMP officer Hugh Fagan recalled:

> *Those guys didn't come back North when they went out. They served their time maybe or maybe just part of it and we weeded them out and got rid of them and they didn't come back. All the people around this table I'm sure were all repeaters. We were sent outside after a length of time and we volunteered to go back because we liked the north, we liked the people, we liked working with the people and we felt that we were doing something worthwhile.*[28]

Some men, like Constable R.D. Van Norman, who served at Iqaluit and along the eastern section of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in the 1950s, were very interested in Inuit perspectives and customs, and demonstrated respect for Inuit as individuals.[29] In contrast, more than a few RCMP tended to write about Inuit in broad, racist strokes.

In between, each community found that the majority of RCMP served their northern tours of duty with little or no interest in Inuit culture beyond collecting anecdotal stories as reflections of themselves.

The policy of keeping postings to two or three years, and of never serving the same community twice, stemmed from the belief that becoming too involved with a community weakened an officer's ability to maintain order. There was also a common feeling among officers interviewed in the RCMP's Policing the Baffin Region that an officer's role was to "protect ... the community ... without trying to change or alter it."[30] This perspective ignored the fact that simply by entering a community, let alone policing it using external laws and policies, a policeman was altering that community.

The most interesting part of RCMP life remained patrolling by dog team or boat with assistance from Inuit special constables. The patrols brought officers into close contact with Inuit. While special patrols were carried out to explore new regions, investigate allegations of crime, treat the sick, or provide food relief, the most common form of patrol was the annual rounds made to visit ilagiit nunagivaktangit to collect information for the annual "Conditions amongst the Eskimos" and "Game" reports. Both types of documents listed information under standardized headings, such as health, morale, clothing, general activities and pursuits, hunting equipment and dogs, population in relation to resources, percentage of males and females, intermarriage information, and suggestions for improving economic conditions. Some observations were routine, such as stating the number of qimmiit[iii] estimated to be healthy in an area; others were insightful about conditions and critical of government management of programs and supplies. In Constable T. Kushniruk's annual report for Pond Inlet in 1960, for example, explained that a "short-stay cabin" had been set up in the community but "the only difficulty" was that it was equipped with electric heating. Since there was no power source, he curtly stated that "Until, such time as this is rectified, the short stay Cabin at Pond Inlet cannot be utilized for the purposes mentioned above."[31]

The game laws caused hardship for Inuit and were a consistent point of friction between Inuit and RCMP for several reasons. The RCMP were required to work with other government agencies to the laws, specifically the Northwest Game Act (1917) and the Migratory Bird Protection Act (1932). The rules, especially as they applied to Inuit who relied on game and birds for sustenance, made almost no sense in the Arctic context. The regulations were based on best guesses, as much as on scientific fact. The authorities charged with enforcing them knew that they were unreasonable and inappropriate, often choosing to use the laws as a method of control over Inuit through threats of fines and even prison.

INUIT SPECIAL CONSTABLES

The capacity of RCMP to communicate with Inuit and to survive in Arctic conditions required help from Inuit, as employees and simply as neighbours providing support in times of need. All regular police detachments were staffed by at least one Inuk employee, normally serving with his wife and children. Beginning in 1936 and continuing

RCMP Officer Mort Doyle and Special Constable (RCMP) Joanasie Arreak, who was an interpreter, navigator and guide with numerous responsibilities for the RCMP at multiple detachments in the Qikiqtani Region for about 20 years. ***Credit:*** *RCMP photographs provided to the QTC, Image 070112-HZ-0138.*

iii Qimmiit means *Inuit sled dogs* (singular version of the Inuktitut word is qimmiq).

until at least 1970, patrol reports submitted to Ottawa officially referred to Inuit staff as "special constables", an official rank and employment status within the RCMP.[32] Since RCMP received no special training on northern survival, navigation, or travelling, they were entirely reliant on Inuit special constables who hunted food for qimmiit, built shelters, navigated and translated. Inuit special constables also maintained equipment and did chores around the detachment, and their families often offered valuable assistance to the RCMP without compensation.[33] Women and children would make and mend the trail clothing, do household chores, and prepare meals. Inuit special constables were usually compensated with a salary, although some reports indicate that some Inuit were given accommodations and rations instead. By the 1960s, they were finally provided with housing that was of the same standard as the quarters provided to regular members, and at the same cost.[34]

Testimonies to the QTC by RCMP and Inuit special constables described roles and relationships between RCMP and Inuit special constables. A former RCMP officer interviewed for the film *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths* explained that:

> *you have to trust these guys explicitly, because you are putting your life in their hands. One accident at 45 below; if he can't make an igloo, you are dead in the water. … He was the guy you could trust. He would whip up these igloos and we would sort of watch with amazement.*

Another officer said, "I would depend upon him for my life and have." He continued, "We were faced with a charging polar bear once and he killed it without a blink. Now, that was not an easy thing for him to do. He had no intention of wanting to kill that bear, but it was a 'have to' situation."

Special Constable (RCMP) Arreak and a family member loading an RCMP sled for patrol by qimmiit from Clyde River to Cape Raper, [1964].
Credit: *RCMP Archives, RCMP-090623-HQ-0129.*

Inuit were fully aware that RCMP officers, especially new recruits, could not survive without Inuit assistance. Some Inuit special constables described the RCMP as child-like, clumsy or unskilled. Mosha Akavak told the QTC in 2008 "I have never seen the police having their own dog team … they couldn't do it."[35] In 1994, historian Shelagh Grant interviewed many Elders about the RCMP as part of her research for the book *Arctic Justice*. Sam Arnakallak told her:

> *[RCMP officers] were just like kids, when they were having tea outside and they weren't able to grasp the cup with their hands, the cup would be held for them exactly like children because they were from a warm climate. … The Inuit would have to dry their mitts and Kamiks. Once they stopped for the night, the [guides] would have to hurry and build and igloo as if they had small children. Once they put them in, they'd have to light the stove to get them warm. Then they [the guides] would have to stay outside to feed the dogs.*[36]

Inuit man and young boy speak to an RCMP officer on the steps of a post office in winter, Northwest Territories [Nunavut]. More information: Photographs like this one, with an RCMP Officer in full uniform, were set up for promotional purposes by the National Film Board of Canada, which took many still images to promote Canada, tourism, and industry. The intention of this image appears to be to show the RCMP as helpful teachers for parents and their children.
Credit: *Chris Lund / National Film Board of Canada. Phototheque / Library and Archives Canada / e010949321.*

Timothy Kadloo told Grant that:

> *The RCMP told us that they weren't actually sure what to do, that they would need help. Like children, they would watch you before they actually knew what to do. But once they found out what to do, they would start helping out. They would end up helping a lot after that. They were a bit clumsy because they were qallunaat—because they were not used to this kind of activity. That's what we had to do, we had to help each other. We'd learn different things from them. They would help us sometimes.*[37]

As Kadloo points out, it took time for an officer to become competent in land-based skills, but some men eventually became proficient at handling dog teams and travelling over snow and ice.

There is little evidence that the RCMP anticipated that special constables might eventually chose to become full RCMP officers. Inuit staff members were not offered any training or duties that might have led to better pay or new positions. The RCMPs use of qimmiit was essentially finished in 1969; as soon as the RCMP no longer needed Inuit to help them travel by dog team, Inuit special constables were largely assigned to the role of interpreter.[38]

Sangussaqta-uliqtilluta, 1945–1960

The term "Sangussaqtauliqtilluta" means "the time when we started to be actively persuaded, or made to, detour or switch modes." Combinations of both externally driven and local pressures detached individuals, families and kin groups from life on the land and moved them towards government-directed settlements.

The RCMP were key facilitators in the period Sangussaqtauliqtilluta. As the sole representatives of government in most places in the region, RCMP were responsible for enforcing laws and promoting services in almost every sphere of life. They continued to register births and adoptions, collect people for medical check-ups, inoculate qimmiit, and assist with medical emergencies. It was during this period, however, that the government set out to deliver national programs—family allowances and old age pensions—and become more active in getting Inuit to send children to school.

The militarization of the Arctic in the Second World War and the first decade of the Cold War brought tumultuous change as Canada turned its gaze more frequently north.[39] Thousands of Americans arrived

in the 1940s to build the Frobisher Bay airfield (now Iqaluit). The Cold War and the construction of the DEW Line in the mid 1950s was a major catalyst for changes in Inuit life and, in many ways, to the duties of the RCMP. DEW Line contracts brought thousands of qallunaat military personnel and civilian workers, as well as millions of tons of building materials into the Canadian Arctic. All the activity also attracted Inuit to construction sites, where they might be able to get some temporary employment and access discarded supplies. The attraction of building activity and the potential for work was particularly strong in Iqaluit.

Military police operated on the bases themselves, but the RCMP was responsible for the policing of all civilians, including contractors, suppliers and Inuit. Terry Jenkin, a retired RCMP officer, told the QTC that "The military were not allowed fraternization. One of our duties was to monitor such activity to ensure that there was no collusion between airmen and young Inuit girls. If we did find that, we took the Inuit girl back home and reported the airmen to the authority."[40] Sexual relations between military contractors and personnel were known to be taking place, some of which were certainly against the law, either because the girls were not of age or because they were sexual assaults. In 1958, for example, a Canadian worker at a military station (FOX-3 on the DEW Line) felt compelled to write an anonymous letter to the Minister of Northern Affairs, saying:

> *Eskimos are getting a raw deal on the Dew Line. In one instance a Federal Electric officer is currently taking advantage of his position as Station Chief of Fox-3 to rape Eskimo woman. This man should be banned from Northwest Territories if law and order are to be maintained in this country. Apparently Federal Electric is aware of this fact because it is known to everybody on the Line.*[41]

It is unknown if action was taken. In 1959, RCMP officer Van Norman also spoke out against what he saw as the sexual and emotional exploitation of Inuit women by DEW Line employees. The RCMP shifted its work to policing the increasing number of qallunaat who were working and settling in the north.

By 1960 many of the tasks historically undertaken by the RCMP were in the hands of civil servants, most notably area administrators and northern service officers. Many Inuit had moved, often under pressure, into government-run settlements that offered basic schooling, medical services and housing. The effect of life on Inuit was profound, as described in more detail in other QTC histories. The ways that Inuit governed themselves and chose options for the future changed, and the RCMP was a key player in the changes. In his autobiography, Inuit leader John Amagoalik succinctly explained:

> *When Inuit families were out in their seasonal camps they were in control of their lives. But once they moved to communities where the RCMP, the missionaries, and the Hudson's Bay Company were, they had no more say. The qallunaat decided what was going to happen in those communities, and nobody else had any input.*[42]

RCMP DUTIES AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE NORTHERN SERVICE OFFICERS

Through most of the era RCMP spent a major portion of its time on duties that would have been the responsibility of other agencies in other parts of Canada. The Force did this work "not by choice or because they were trained to do so, but for the usual reason—because they were on the scene" and it was cheaper than creating a separate administrative unit.[43]

In 1954 the position of Northern Service Officer (NSO) was created to administer programmes, "improve economic, social and cultural conditions," and "supervise and development Eskimo participation" to "diversify the economic basis of Eskimo life."[44] The tension between government officials and RCMP in being the "authorities to whom they should look and listen" crept into much of their correspondence. Into the early 1960s, there were obvious overlaps in the responsibilities of various government agents, to the extent that confusion about roles was common. Initially, NSOs were expected to travel widely to visit Inuit wherever they lived, leaving the RCMP at detachments to do minor administrative duties and law enforcement. Within a few years, however, NSOs were spending most of their time in settlements where most Inuit lived.

TWO VIEWS—RCMP AND INUIT

RCMP and Inuit perceptions of the relations between police and Inuit during the patrols to ilagiit nunagivaktangit offer contrasting perspectives. Although some RCMP officers recalled feeling isolated and ostracized by Inuit, they generally recall positive experiences.[45] Calvin Alexander, who served in Pangnirtung, described how communities went out of their way to welcome and honour RCMP officers:

> *We would pull in to a camp and everybody would turn out. After you got done shaking hands with everybody from the camp boss to the baby on the mama's back the men unhitched the dogs for you. They fed them for you. It was protocol. You always stayed at the camp boss' home. Mama first kicks the kids out to go live with grandma or auntie. John and I were given the children's sleeping platform for the duration of our stay. We would feed the family while we were staying with them and leave them with what goodies we could spare depending on what camp it was and how far we had to go yet. On the trail, Joanasie was the boss and I was the junior man. When you pulled in to a camp Mama took your furs, if you had to wear them that day, and beat the frost out of them and hung them up to dry. She took your kamiks and put them over the qulliq. In one instance, she patched the hole in my duffle socks.*[46]

Alexander took this special attention as a sign of affection and welcome, and assumed that the relationship was based on reciprocity and mutual aid:

> *You never went in to a camp where you weren't welcomed with open arms and after you got settled and had a bite to eat, you went over to visit other homes and asked how the hunting was, how their health was. If anybody was sick you got told about it real quick when you got in to camp. In the joint society there were parameters that we did our best to look after the administration side (welfare, family allowance) for the people. We looked after things that were strange to them and when we got out on the land and it was relatively strange to me they looked after me.*[47]

Inuit often felt quite different about the relationship. For many, the warm greetings and hospitality expressed in ilagiit nunagivaktangit masked their discomfort. Joe Tikivik told the QTC in 2008, "We were so scared of the police we couldn't even look at them." He continued to recount how Inuit reacted to news that RCMP would be arriving, saying "We used to check to see if we had done anything wrong just before the police came in, just thinking 'maybe I did something wrong' … because we didn't know any better." The RCMP and Inuit represented 'two solitudes in a single land,' and experienced a deep cultural disconnect that RCMP did not always comprehend.

HIGH ARCTIC RELOCATIONS

One of the critical episodes in the relations between Inuit and RCMP concerns the High Arctic Relocation, a subject that has been covered in previous studies that include information from Inuit about their experiences. These histories describe the RCMP's role in the relocations in detail, including the choosing families that would move, choosing their destinations, gathering them for the move, accompanying them, acquiring goods for them, and even managing money on their behalf. Individual officers provided support to the families and "at times circumvented the illogical rules through their own initiative", but they were also clearly attached to the government and its objectives.

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtilluta, 1961–1975

The term "Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta" means "the time when we were actively (by outside force) formed into communities." Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta conforms to the period when the population the Qikiqtani Region was overwhelmingly concentrated in 13 communities where people worked with little or no continuous time living on the land

In the 1960s, almost the whole population of the Qikiqtani Region lived in centralized settlements, with outside forces shaping them into the present 13 communities. R. Quinn Duffy, in *The Road to Nunavut*, describes the Euro-Canadian political framework that was systematically installed in Nunavut in the late 1950s and 1960s as a "total social system".[48] It encompassed "the legal system, land tenure, resources ownership regulations, communications networks, military organization, and system of individual rights and privileges."[49] This period—called "Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta" for the QTC histories—was marked by increased specialization among government agencies, the pushing of the RCMP into a more traditional policing role, and the arrival of many more qallunaat into the region.

Both police and Inuit were forced to adapt to a new relationship once RCMP officers' duties became increasingly focussed on enforcing both new laws and laws previously unenforced. This led to confusion over the role of RCMP and Canadian law in communities, with no forum available for Inuit to speak their minds or contribute to solutions due to language and to the lack of democratic institutions where their voices would matter. No evidence was found that would show that Inuit were told the limits of police power or their rights in the cases of arbitrary arrest, seizure of property or perjury. Important English words had no equivalent in Inuktitut, including the word "guilty". In 1962 an official explained:

> *[Inuit are] quite confused about many of the white man's ways and one of the spheres of misunderstanding particularly relative here is the white man's law … It was suggested to me from several quarters that considerable education 'in the law' should accompany law enforcement. (The R.C.M. Police contend that their role is to enforce the law and that it is not their responsibility to interpret it or explain its ramifications.)*[50]

Inuit were confused, but they also sought a solution. Kinngait petitioned for an RCMP detachment in that same year because "it is felt a representative of Law and Order should be present to assist and teach our young people about these matters."[51]

During the whole era, Inuit never had an opportunity to adjust their own social and cultural beliefs and structures to the new system; as Duffy writes it was just "grafted" on to them.[52] The RCMP were only one part of the new system, but the most visible and powerful on the ground. When Inuit moved into settlements, they became part of a collective to which more laws and rules applied, such as ordinances concerning loose dogs and liquor consumption. More mechanisms were also in place to ensure that rules were not broken. Police exercised their powers of arrest, fined people and held sway over potential employers and the distribution of social benefits. July Papatsie recalled that his father forced him to go to school after the RCMP warned his father "if your son doesn't go to school, you are not going to get family allowances, and you are going to lose your job. And, also if you get sick, you will not be allowed to go to the hospital."[53]

The qallunaat who most commonly moved to these settlements were transportation engineers, nurses, teachers, government employees, church officials and others. This meant that RCMP could relinquish their official social welfare duties to new administrators sent north by another arm of the government, which narrowed their responsibilities to strictly enforcing laws as much as possible.

The RCMP still maintained responsibility for delivering social services in some of the communities. The Force was very reluctant to give up these duties to other agencies, since it provided steady work for officers and allowed them to go into the community and speak to people for reasons other than crime. Detachments were very aware of the impact of the changes in their duties on their position in communities.

In 1971, the renewed Agreement for Policing the Northwest Territories dealt with significantly narrowing the range of duties the RCMP was to perform. The new agreement required the RCMP to perform "such duties and render such services as are ordinarily performed or rendered by peace officers in aiding the administration of justice and in carrying into effect the laws of the Northwest Territories." This no longer included issuing licenses, collecting taxes or fees associated with licenses, impounding dogs, carrying out inspections related to health, sanitation or fire related by-laws or any other "laws of a similar regulatory nature which … are not suitable for enforcement by the Force." This change was designed to keep a "policeman's role in its proper realm and generally restrict him from performing non-police duties." In 1976, the force instituted a cross cultural education course to be taken by new recruits. The course was designed to create "an awareness of cultural and individual differences existing in a multicultural country, with the Canadian natives being used as a focal group to sensitize the student to their desires, attitudes and heritage." By 1977, the police were no longer responsible for prisoner transfers, runaway juveniles, collection of fines, collection of fur export tax, enforcement of non-police orientated by-laws, guarded or escorted or serving jury summons or a wide range of other activities. The police were now only responsible for the duties expected of community police anywhere in Canada.

IQALUIT

The further growth of settlements in the 1960s added to the strains in the relationship between the RCMP and Inuit, as did the increasing amount of alcohol available in communities. The influx of qallunaat as contractors, teachers, traders, prospectors, government administrators and transport workers meant that RCMP officers were now responsible for maintaining order within and between Inuit and qallunaat groups.

The impact was most acutely felt in the rapidly growing centre of Iqaluit where the police presence was strengthened, rules were more strictly enforced, and fewer opportunities existed for informal cultural contacts between the RCMP and Inuit. As the regional transportation hub and administrative centre, it attracted a large population of qallunaat and Inuit from all over the Arctic looking

for work. Everyone (academics, qallunaat and Inuit) agreed that modernization forces in Iqaluit in the late 1950s and early 1960s were having severe impacts on Inuit residents. Anthropologist Toshio Yatsushiro, who conducted field work in Iqaluit in 1958 and 1959, wrote "The incidents of theft, marital discord, deviant sexual behavior, ... gambling, and drinking is causing considerable anxiety" to Inuit Elders.[54] The police, now surrounded by more qallunaat, more crime and more Euro-Canadian amenities, stayed near their detachment, rather than undertaking regular patrols. For Inuit, life in the settlement included more frequent contacts with qallunaat and activities that could lead to legal infraction, including accusations of theft, charges under the Liquor Ordinance and exposure to the affects of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs (hereinafter cited as the "Dog Ordinance"). At the same time, RCMP became less dependent on Inuit for survival, which meant that the job of Inuit special constable was more closely aligned to the day-to-day activities of the police and other authorities.

In 1961, the head of the Frobisher Bay detachment described the impact on RCMP work:

> *It would be well to mention that in the eyes of the local Eskimo the Force at this point is associated with the ills of the transition period of the Eskimos adapting to a new way of life. The active enforcement of liquor and criminal law, a departure from our traditional role of benefactor and protector as in smaller Eastern Arctic settlements, cannot be rationalized by the Eskimo. Consequently, there is no particular desire to associate themselves with the Police; Eskimos who actively aid the Police are viewed with disfavour among the Eskimos.*[55]

For detachments other than Iqaluit, the lack of criminal activities also made it increasingly difficult to justify keeping RCMP in many communities. T.E.R. Lysk, Inspector in Charge of the Criminal Investigations Branch, wrote in 1964 that "It should be clear to our members that if we had to rely strictly on police work to justify our existence, then all our detachments would probably be closed with the exception of one or two."[56] Officers continued to provide maintenance, plumbing, heating and even tax help alongside their policing duties in communities into the late 20th century.

INTERCULTURAL INTERPRETATION—THE BURDEN ON INUIT SPECIAL CONSTABLES

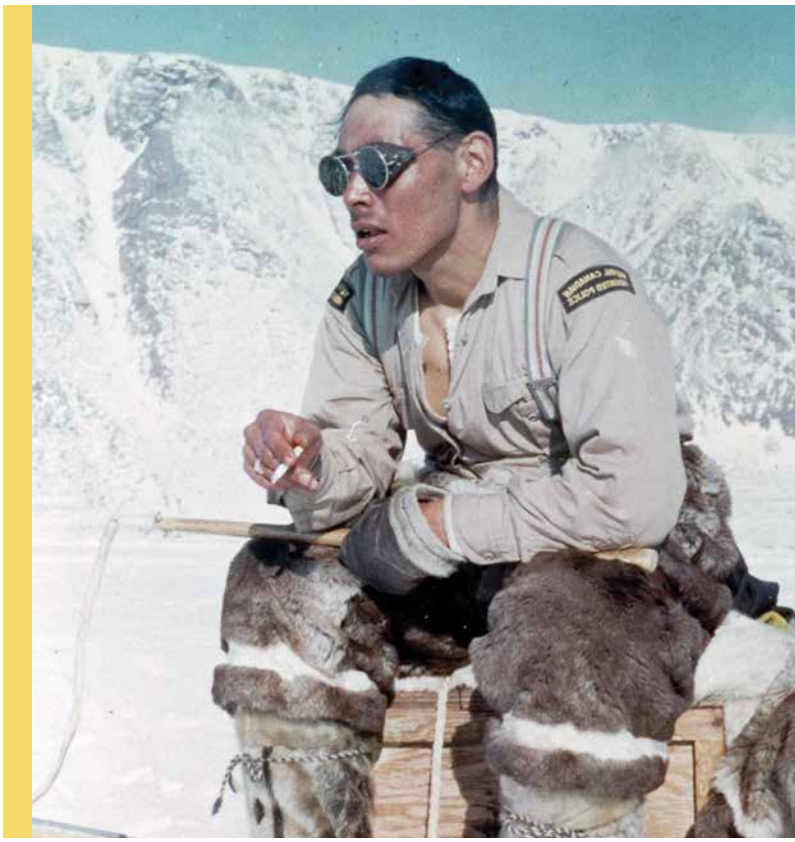
The duties of Inuit special constables in the era also narrowed from general guide and aide to the important role of translator and intercultural mediator. The goal of the RCMP was in many ways a cultural one, helping Inuit to shift from one cultural legal framework to another. Despite this, the force's central responsibility to accurately convey information between the government and Inuit was passed on to Inuit special constables because the RCMP did not deem learning Inuktitut to be necessary, and so it was acquired informally at the officer's discretion, if at all. Retired RCMP officers who had served in the Arctic considered the lack of language training was a serious problem for them. In any case, pressure was placed on Inuit special constables to be translators, both linguistic and cultural, for the RCMP. As Mosha Akavak told the QTC in 2008, part of his father's role as a special constable was "to try to inform the people of Kimmirut about what the RCMP was doing in the area."[57] Inuit special constables were vulnerable in the community because of this role as cultural intermediary, and sometimes ostracized for their involvement with RCMP; as one government memo states, Inuit "who actively aid the Police are viewed with disfavour" by other Inuit.

The quality of translations provided by Inuit varied, since they too received little formal training. Mosha Akavak explained to the QTC that his father was not an official interpreter.

> *He only spoke a little bit of English but he could understand. And I remember him doing that, interpreting. For more technical messages that were to be conveyed to the people they had interpreters like store clerks or ministers. When there was a good interpreter available, they would use interpreters. My father was not an official interpreter. My mother understood more English than my father. … My mother used to help with interpretation.*[58]

The quality of interpretation, translation and therefore intercultural communication varied widely in different communities and over time, translators were often faced with trying to translate terms that had no equivalent expressions in the other language. For example, even in 2012 there was no Inuktitut word or expression meaning "guilty" or "not guilty." Ejesiak Padluq told the QTC in 2008 that one Inuk special constable he remembered from his youth was a "very bad interpreter and wouldn't really relay information."[59] The opportunities for special constables to miss intentions or meanings were plentiful in contexts where rules were never properly translated and regulations and expectations of government and police changed quickly.

Lack of institutional support for translation training for either Inuit special constables or RCMP severely impeded the force's performance in the Qikiqtani Region, although individual RCMP officers did not always realize the extent of this impediment. Other times, the RCMP blamed their interpreters, whether trained or informal, for any miscommunications.



Inuk RCMP Special Constable Ningiuq Killiktee from Pond Inlet (Miittimatalik) wearing skin clothing and sunglasses, sitting on komatik. Killiktee was stationed in Grise Fiord, photo taken likely close to Alexander Fiord, [c. 1956-7].
Credit: *NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 2292.*

The RCMP and Inuit Sled Dogs Report states:

> *Unfortunately, many members were not fluent in the Inuit languages and dialects, and therefore had to rely upon interpreters, who often were special constables. Many former members reported instances where they gave a lengthy explanation to the Inuit for a decision being made, only to witness the interpreter reduce it to several sentences. The assumption by the members was that the interpreter conveyed only the decision, not the explanation.*[60]

RCMP headquarters was aware of ineffective translations services but did little to change it. In Iqaluit in 1961, for example, the position of Inuit special constable stayed vacant for almost a year because the RCMP was not willing to increase the salary for the position to be on par with other departments that were hiring translators and interpreters. The lack of interpreters "affects practically all investigations as well as some administrative duties," stated Sgt. E.G. Forrest, of the Iqaluit detachment. In one case, an Inuk suspected of stealing a rug had been held for 17 days before the police could get a statement from the accused because there was no interpreter available.[61] This issue still had not been solved by 1973, when the officer commanding "G" Division reported:

> *Several of the Eskimo leaders raised the matter of lack of direct communication between our members since very few of our people speak the Eskimo Language. Our special constables act as interpreters but this is not always satisfactory since there is often a loss in the translation which lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding ... I feel that it is very important that more of our members learn to speak the Eskimo Language inasmuch as our role in the North is quickly changing ... Our police role with all its manifestation is not clearly understood by the Eskimos because they do not understand the intricacies of the various laws and ordinances.*[62]

This sentiment was echoed by retired RCMP constable Terry Jenkin who explained to the QTC the difficulties he faced in communicating with Inuit: "I got some basic understanding and ability to speak Inuktitut. You don't know how well you are communicating. It was with great difficulty."

Recognition of Inuit special constables has been scarce. One constable, Lazarus Kyak, was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for his "service to his fellow Eskimos as a Special Constable in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for nearly thirty years."[63] Deceased special constables at Cambridge Bay have recently been recognized by the placing of RCMP markers at their gravesites. Inuit special constables, who contributed so much to the RCMP northern history, have yet to be recognized as a group. This omission seems particularly inappropriate since the RCMP chose to recognize in 1973 the contribution of qimmiit to the Force's northern work.

An RCMP report from 1961 complained that it was becoming very difficult to hire "competent Eskimo interpreters", especially in Iqaluit, because the pay for special constables was relatively low compared to the salaries offered by other federal, military and private employers. The RCMP also admitted that they had reduced the number of people interested in the job due to its own actions, stating that a large group of potential bilingual candidates "have been involved with the Police—principally in infractions of the NWT Liquor Ordinance. Numerous enquiries have not located any suitable person in this group who is interested in joining the Force as a Special Constable." The detachment was so severely affected by the lack of interpreters that it even opened the possibility of using a female Qallunaaq stenographer, noting that the potential candidate "is fluent in Eskimo and English, and has good experience in stenographic duties. She would perhaps, have limited use in serious crime."

RCMP officers with experience in the Arctic expressed dismay over the many changes that affected the Force in the 1950s and into the 1960s. The emphasis on the enforcement of laws, without the benefits of a full justice system consisting of courts, lawyers, interpreters and laws made by the people most affected by them, meant that many Inuit were even more likely to view the RCMP as threatening authority figures, a power dynamic that has permeated ever since. In the process, ilira was replaced by resentment.

Game Laws and related rules meant that the police could dictate to Inuit where to go, what to hunt, and how to behave. Under the Liquor Ordinance the police repeatedly imprisoned and punished people; under the Dog Ordinance they killed qimmiit. In numerous places, RCMP had sexual relationships with Inuit women that resulted in both anguish for the women and lingering hurt for children who never met their fathers and were physically different than others in their community.

Additionally, Inuit actions which had traditionally been acceptable were now coming into conflict with Canadian law, which had been in place for decades but which was now being more strongly enforced. For instance, with Regina v. Amak, Avinga, and Nangmalik (1963), three Inuit were charged with assisting in Arrak Qulitalik's suicide.[64] Bob Pilot, the RCMP officer assigned to the case, was hesitant about proceeding but was told from "higher up" that this was a case worth prosecuting in order to demonstrate the "evolution" of the police and to show "that the police are not just givers of welfare."[65] The three pleaded guilty, but their sentence was suspended by Judge Sissons on the advice of Pilot who pointed out that punishing the men with incarceration would remove three important hunters from their ilagiit nunagivaktangat and families.

Some RCMP, like Bob Pilot, attempted to bend the laws to conform to traditional Inuit practices, but in the 1960s, in particular, more laws were being introduced and police were increasingly being called upon to enforce them more vigorously as a demonstration of both authority and the inevitability of future development. While Inuit had no option but to comply with laws, they did not accept these laws as their own. With respect to game laws, for example, Qanguk told Hugh Brody that "When we knew that the police were coming our way we knew that we were going to be asked all kinds of questions. And we began to get our answers ready." In some cases, Inuit moved away from the police to avoid contact with them, because "We knew that we were going to be asked about the animals we had killed … We were not allowed to kill too many. This was against their rules. So we decided to move further away, and to go and live beyond the policemen's journeys, because we were scared."

A report to the Commission of the NWT in 1978 about new policing agreements provides a helpful summary of the RCMP's perceptions about the challenges that it faced in performing "non-police duties" over the previous decade. The duties addressed in the report included, among others, acting as prosecutors; collecting taxes; issuing licenses; impounding dogs; and enforcing municipal by-laws. The section on serving as prosecutors revealed the extent to which many officers were uncomfortable with the role. The report stated:

> *One final tension point revolves around the fact that the RCMP are required to prosecute cases coming before the Justices of the Peace Courts. Mixed feelings were expressed to the Committee about the RCMP assuming this role. Some individuals thought that the conflict was so fundamental that they should restrict their role to traditional policing work; others enjoyed the experience; others felt they should receive more detailed training to handle such responsibilities, few saw any real alternatives to the present system. This can and occasionally does have unfortunate results. Individual RCMP can be called upon to provide policing, prosecutorial and defence counsel services and, in addition, to provide guidance to a lay Justice 09 the Peace on the laws. Such tripartite conflicts in a court situation can affect community perceptions of the role of the RCMP.*[66]

FLASH POINTS

Throughout the period under study in the QTC histories, several issues emerge in both the archival record and QTC testimonies that shed light on Inuit perceptions about the role of the RCMP as an institution, their frustration and anger over the actions of individual officers, and the changing role of the RCMP. Two issues are discussed in this report: the killing of qimmiit, and RCMP involvement with Inuit women. The history of game management and Inuit practices and rights is presented in the authoritative study Kiumajut (Talking Back): Game Management and Inuit Rights, 1900–1970 by Peter Kulchyski and Frank James Tester.

DOG ORDINANCE AND THE KILLING OF QIMMIIT

As discussed in other QTC reports, a recurring point of conflict between Inuit and RCMP was the handling of qimmiit.[67] For decades, RCMP were entirely reliant on qimmiit for their work, especially for the multiple patrols they made each year to visit ilagiit nunagivaktangit or to check up on traders and missionaries where there was no detachment. RCMP were responsible for inoculating qimmiit against rabies and doing whatever was needed to stabilize qimmit populations. As an example of RCMP actions to help keep qimmiit healthy, after the qimmit population in Cumberland Sound was almost destroyed by disease in 1959, the RCMP transported qimmiit from other regions into Pangnirtung; RCMP officers even tried to establish a qimmit breeding program in the community. In the same period, however, RCMP were invoking the Dog Ordinance to kill loose qimmiit in places like Iqaluit where Inuit were likely to stay for extended periods of time and where many qallunaat were also living.

As of 1950, all RCMP officers officially became dog officers and could and did shoot qimmiit not tied up or otherwise in violation of the Ordinance.

In his autobiography, Inuit leader Paul Quassa of Igloolik described an incident in Igloolik:

> *The RCMP said that the dogs had distemper or rabies or some kind of sickness, but they weren't sick at all. The community was growing but the dogs weren't everywhere. The dogs were in one place. Perhaps the RCMP constables were scared of them and they slaughtered them. Sometimes they didn't even tell the owners.*[68]

In effect, enforcement was both a result of the conditions of the time and place, and the inclination of specific officers. In some cases, a single qimmiq was shot, while in other cases entire teams were destroyed. In two particularly excessive examples, the police shot more than 250 qimmiit in both Iqaluit and Pangnirtung, according to the QTC Qimmiit chapter. Other authorities were allowed to shoot qimmiit, but in most cases, the shootings would have been done with RCMP knowledge and in many cases, with RCMP involvement either by officers or by Inuit special constables.

As discussed in more detail in the QTC Qimmiit chapter, the manner in which qimmiit were killed proved very painful for Inuit. Jacopoosie Peter's family's qimmiit were killed by the RCMP in 1966. In 2006, he told the QTC:

> *That year in the summer, I had the fright of my life. I was nearing three years old. My mother shouted "the police are shooting the dogs!" We all went outside. My mother went outside and was screaming and yelling. My grandfather chained the dogs … I remember shots being fired and an RCMP officer running. I was very scared that time. I always had nightmares over it.*[69]

For Mosesee Qiyuakjuk, the RCMP officers shooting qimmiit was representative of their broader disrespect for Inuit. He told the QTC in 2006 that:

> *The RCMP used to mistreat us badly those days when they considered themselves superior to Inuit. The RCMP considered Inuit as though we meant nothing in their eyes. The mistreatment of Inuit and their actions were inconsiderate of Inuit welfare those days. They did not have the audacity to inform or warn us that they would shoot and kill off our dogs. The RCMP had no concern of Inuit rights then and they are more considerate now and inform the owners prior to killing dogs now. In those days the RCMP did their own thing without informing Inuit of any of their actions. In those days I remember their actions and what they did to Inuit were unforgiving and deliberate as if trying to scare the Inuit by their actions.*[70]

Witnesses who spoke to the QTC recalled that it was difficult for Inuit to kill qimmiit, but that they were compelled to do what they were told by the police while trying to keep Inuit safe from the mayhem. Joshie Teemotee Mitsima spoke of an incident during his childhood in the late 1960s when the RCMP were shooting qimmiit in Apex in Iqaluit. Inuit special constable, Paul Idlout (also known as Ullatita), "was ordered by the RCMP Constable, a white guy" to untie the family's qimmiq named Pualu. The dog immediately ran toward young Joshie, who described the situation:

> *[Paul Idlout] was yelling to the other policeman 'Don't shoot!' Because I was in the way. The other policeman shot the dog anyway. Just as it was between me and the policeman he shot the dog. It looked like he was shooting right at me. It was like in slow motion I could almost see the bullet coming down and hitting the dog. It was so strange.*[71]

The perception that RCMP were largely responsible for the killings, and the poisonous relations that were being created was captured by anthropologist Toshio Yatsushiro who quoted an Inuk in 1958 as saying, "Maybe the police will kill Eskimos then, just like the dogs."[72]

RCMP AND INUIT WOMEN

The RCMP held a policy throughout the study period that condemned romantic or sexual interactions between officers and Inuit women, whether due to racist tenets, a fear of compromised policing, or a concern for abandoned illegitimate children once officers returned south. Despite this policy, sexual interactions were well known, according to Inuit and historical records. The relationships were common enough that liaisons between Inuit women and RCMP were referenced in a cartoon in the RCMP veteran's magazine *The Quarterly* in 1950. Romantic relationships followed a spectrum of interaction, from brief, consensual relationships to long-lasting marriages, but it is also certain that some RCMP used their position of authority to coerce Inuit women into sexual acts.[73]

July Papatsie, from Pangnirtung, described the RCMP's power over women to the QTC in 2008:

> *With that much power, they could do anything they wanted to do. Anything. … the RCMP could do anything they wanted with any woman that was living up north. Anything. Now that woman who was forced sexually by this officer cannot talk back, has nowhere to go and complain. Her husband knows but cannot do anything, is powerless.*

He also explained that the RCMP took advantage of Inuit customs:

> *Inuit used to live a simple life. Adultery was not accepted but swap was allowed. RCMP exploited it to the extreme. Once they found out they could trade husbands and wives freely. … people were forced for sexual favours. If the DNA of RCMP officers were to be looked at, they would be found everywhere because people were forced for sexual favours. We Inuit know that. When they accepted, the child was told what happened in tradition but with the RCMP, the child would not be able to talk to the father.*[74]

July Papatsie linked the "negative energy" from RCMP sex with Inuit women to problems within families, including abuse.

Some Inuit told the QTC about their experiences as children of Inuit women and qallunaat RCMP officers. Elisapee Ootoova told the QTC in 2008 "I have an RCMP father. I am different from my sister. I am an illegitimate child. And it is embarrassing. I was so close with my [non-biological] father and when I started learning about this that I have a white father, when I started going older, I was very agitated by it." Joshua Idlout told the QTC that his mother getting pregnant by his RCMP father had severe repercussions for his family: "my mother's husband … was out for TB recovery [and] came home to find his wife pregnant. This was one of the biggest painful experiences he went through. She had me for nine months although her husband tried to have me miscarried. I heard a lot of bad stories about it."[75]

Conclusion

> *"Our ancestors survived without a formal court of justice by following traditional and appropriate laws for peace. People shouldn't say that our traditional laws are outdated; they worked. If people think our traditional laws didn't work, they should consider today's much higher rate of crimes and disputes."*
> *– Mary Anulik Kutsiz*[76]

Inuit and RCMP share a history, in the sense that many of the events that shaped their pasts unfolded at the same time and place, even though the impacts and experiences were personal and singular. Both groups were being bombarded with messages that the north was destined for major development and that they needed to either move aside or take positions in support of new, comprehensive economic and political agendas. For the RCMP, this meant that officers were expected to focus on law enforcement near military bases and other places where Inuit were arriving in growing numbers. For Inuit, who found themselves suddenly living year-round in settlements, this meant continuous exposure, without any support, to dozens of laws in a justice system that was both new and complicated.

In their long history in the Qikiqtani Region, the RCMP viewed themselves as guardians of Inuit, enforcers of Canadian laws and values, and interpreters of a new political, economic and cultural system that was always believed to be just around the corner. For Inuit, however, police in the local detachment or on patrol embodied an outside world that was imposing strange and inappropriate laws and practices on Inuit life. Individual officers, who rotated in and out of detachments every two or three years, could be sympathetic, mean, reliable or unpredictable.

Some officers caused great distress in communities and families due to personal actions and behaviours. Inuit were unable—or afraid—to challenge the RCMP directly. Also, as the RCMP admitted in its report, RCMP and Inuit Sled Dogs, many officers were paternalistic in their attitudes and behaviours; they acted as though they knew what was better for Inuit than Inuit themselves.

As Inuit memories and written records show, many RCMP officers shared a strong admiration for Inuit skills, knowledge, and culture, and, in many instances, individual officers lobbied the federal government on behalf of Inuit. Police officers requisitioning supplies, traveling great distances to get medical help, and stretched rules to issue relief. In general, however, paternalism, coupled with immense authority and the power to enforce laws that made no sense in the cultural and environmental context of the region, created an imbalance in the relationship between Inuit and RCMP. As a result, Inuit ended up doing things they did not want to do, or resisted and ignored laws. The RCMP found it very difficult, for example, to hire special constables when other jobs were available, noting that Inuit exhibited "some reluctance" to take jobs with the RCMP.[77]

As the longest standing relationship between government and RCMP, a more thorough examination of this history is called for. The history is needed both for the sake of RCMP serving in the north, so they can better understand how their predecessors' actions have affected Inuit.

APPENDIX: GENERAL COMMENTS ON HISTORICAL SOURCES

Despite the voluminous amount of material written on Inuit of the Qikiqtani Region, no single work addresses the functions and roles of the RCMP and relationships between RCMP and Inuit in post-war period. The 700-page report and compilation of documents *titled RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs (Nunavut and Northern Quebec: 1950–1970*) report (hereafter referred to as the RCMP and Inuit Sled Dogs Report) produced in 2006 by the RCMP contains information about roles, responsibilities, and policing conditions in Baffin communities. The report's narrow focus on dog killings, however, precluded a more complete history of the force's northern service from emerging. Other RCMP sources have been helpful, especially the 1995 *Policing the Baffin Region, N.W.T.* report (hereafter referred to as the Policing the Baffin Region Report) created as part of the Eastern Arctic Crime and Justice Study. The report was based, in part, on interviews with 157 officers who served in the Qikiqtani Region between 1940 and 1994. While the report does not examine or present Inuit perspectives on the RCMP, it serves as a useful source about the working conditions of officers serving the region during the second half of the 20th century and presents regional and individual "experiences, perspectives, and opinions on a wide range of issues related to crime, criminal justice, and policing in the Baffin Region." The RCMP also provided the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) with access to files held at both RCMP headquarters and Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The research team focused efforts on material about training and personnel policies of the RCMP between 1950 and 1975. Additional archival records were searched within the Department of Northern Affairs fonds at Library and Archives Canada, the Northwest Territories Archives and, to a lesser extent, other collections, such as the Deschâtelets Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

QTC and QIA testimonies and other records by Inuit of their experiences provide important insight into how the RCMP was perceived and remembered by Inuit, and the deep impact of police actions on daily life for Inuit. Despite invitations made to individual officers and a general call for participants made in the RCMP veteran's magazine the RCMP Quarterly, only one retired member of the force chose to participate in the QTC hearings.

ENDNOTES

1 For the role of the RCMP in treaty negotiations, see Andrew R. Graybill, *Policing the Great Plains: Rangers, Mounties, and the North American Frontier, 1875–1910* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 38–41; and Walter Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford: constructed visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1994), 37.

2 The Inuktut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate name for places called "camps" in the historical record created by ethnographers, bureaucrats and police. Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game.

3 Archives Deschâtelets [Oblates of Mary Immaculate], HR6903.C73R2, "Notes by Roger B. Buliard, re: Matters to be discussed at the General Meeting on Eskimo Affairs to be held May 19th, 1952." Describes the inconsistency by the RCMP in enforcement. [The Archives Deschâtelets was located in Ottawa when research was undertaken for this report. The current (2022) disposition of the record has not been confirmed.]

4 Elijah Panipakoocho, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.

5 "Ilira is a word that speaks to the subtle but pervasive result of inequality. Through the inequality it reveals, the word shapes the whole tenor of interpersonal behaviour, creating many forms of misunderstanding, mistrust, and bad faith. It is the fear that colonialism instils and evokes, which then distorts meanings, social life and politics." Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers and the Shaping of the World* (New York: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000), 43.

6 Hugh Brody, "Colonialism in the Arctic—four reminiscences," *History Workshop*, No. 1, Spring 1976, 245.

7 John Amagoalik and Louis McComber, *Changing the Face of Canada: The Life Story of John Amagoalik* (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2007), 19.

8 For a discussion of Inuit justice and leadership, see: W.C.E. Rasing, *Too Many People: Order and Non-Conformity in Iglulingmiut Social Process* (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit, Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid, 1994), 105–14, 142–44 (quotation from 105). See also John Bennet and Susan Diana Mary Rowley, eds., *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 95–105; and R. Quinn Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit since the Second World War* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 197.

9 Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut*, 197.

10 Joshua Idlout, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, n.d.

11 Sheila Grant, *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 20.

12 Rasing, *Too Many People*, 144.

13 The term "North-West" denotes a cultural hinterland, as does any name containing a cardinal direction that implies a name imposed from the outside. For a further discussion of this, see William H. Katerberg, "A Northern Vision: Frontiers and the West in the Canadian and American Imagination," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 33 (2003), 554–56.

14 David Ross and Robin May, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1873–1987* (London: Osprey, 1988), 5; Sydney L. Harring, "There Seemed to Be No Recognized Law," *Laws and Societies in the Canadian Prairie West, 1670–1940*, edited by Louis Knafla and Jonathan Swainger (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 93.

15 Graybill, *Policing the Great Plains*, 30; Ross and May, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, 6. Sydney L. Harring points out that this type of concentrated power would be unheard of in Ontario or Quebec. See Harring, "There Seemed to Be No Recognized Law," 120.

16 Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford*, 36.

17 R. C. Macleod, *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976), 148–49; Royal Northwest Mounted Police, *Report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police 1907* (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1908), 64; Harry Hampton Aimé, *Overalls, Red Serge, and Robes: Life and Adventures in the Great Canadian North* (Red Deer, AB: Hampton Press, 2004), 77; "Few Indians Join RCMP," *Kainai News*, 1 December 1971, 12; and "Indian Group Claims To Have Damning RCMP Evidence," *Kainai News*, 1 August 1976, 12. The role of Special Constable was eventually integrated into the regular constable stream under the Aboriginal Policing Services Directorate; see Solicitor General Canada, *Annual Report 1989–1990* (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990), 28.]

18 The government of Canada department responsible for Aboriginal programs evolved throughout the period under study. For ease of reading, this essay will use the term Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), when referencing the various manifestations of the department including: Department of the Interior, Department of Indian Affairs, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Deane R. Burton, *Mounted Police Life in Canada; a Record of Thirty-One Years' Service* (Toronto: Coles Pub, 1973), 81.

19 See Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Report of the Royal North-West Mounted Police 1902* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1903), 71 (help "keep the Indians in order"); *Report of the Royal North-West Mounted Police 1903*

(Ottawa: King's Printer, 1904), 60 (praise given for all the work the Department is doing); also *Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police 1914* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1915), 188 ("The work in connection with this department is rapidly increasing"); *Report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police 1917* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1918), 108; and *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1928* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1929), 25 (the involvement with Indian Affairs is "close and friendly"); *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1930* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1931), 39 (the work with DIA is "considerable"); and *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for the eighteen months ended March 31, 1934* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1934), 31–32.

20 Leanne Mckay, "Maintain the Right?", *Kainai News*, 31 October 1977, 4.

21 Grant, *Arctic Justice*, 45, fn 89.

22 William Morrison, *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894–1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), 2.

23 See, for example, "The World's Farthest North Policeman," *Oakland Tribune*, 21 July 1929, 31.

24 For more information on this, see the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, *Official Mind of Canadian Colonialism*, (Iqaluit: InHabit Media Inc., 2013).

25 For officers' reasons for going up north, see Curt Taylor Griffiths, et al., "Policing the Baffin Region, N.W.T." Findings from the Eastern Arctic Crime and Justice Study, (Simon Fraser University, 1995); also Library and Archives (LAC), RG 18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/574, Volume 4, File G-15-1-G (1960), Memorandum from L.A. Gibbs, Whitehorse Detachment to Officer Commanding, RCMP, re: familiarization course for RCMP members going north, 24 January 1955.

26 For a breakdown of RCMP training hours, see Dale Sheehan, *Behind the Badge: History of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "Depot" Division* (Regina: Dale Sheehan and Redd Oosten, 2006), 312.

27 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/574, Volume 4, File G-15-1-G (1960), Memorandum from L.A. Gibbs, Whitehorse Detachment to Officer Commanding, RCMP, re: familiarization course for RCMP members going north, 24 January 1955.

28 Hugh Fagan quoted in the film *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, Directed by Ole Gjerstad and Joelie Sanguya (Montreal, National Film Board of Canada, 2010). Found online but requires subscription or payment at: www.nfb.ca/film/qimmit-clash_of_two_truths/. The film features edited interviews with selected former RCMP officers about the killing of qimmiit.

29 Constable R.D. Van Norman showing interest in and respect for Inuit. See, for example: LAC, RG18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/048, Volume 57, File TA 500-20-10-7, "Eskimo Welfare—Frobisher Bay," 1 June 1959.

30 Griffiths, "Policing the Baffin Region."

31 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/048, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Pond Inlet, Conditions Amongst Eskimos Generally, by T. Kushniruk, 14 January 1961.

32 For details on special constable duties and remuneration, see: Constable R.D. Van Norman, "Life at an Eastern Arctic Detachment," *RCMP Quarterly* (October 1951), 110–118. See also Griffiths, "Policing the Baffin Region," especially the section on Inuit special constables. For housing of special constables, see: LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/574, Volume 4, File G-15-1-G (1968), Memorandum from E. Brakefield-Moore, Acting Commissioner, Director of Services and Supply to Adjutant, RCMP, re; organization, procedures and functions of G Division, 01 September 1965.

33 For compensation of special constables, see: LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series F-1 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Records, Volume 3713, File G-284-10, Memorandum from J.T Parsons, Inspector for Officer Commanding G Division to Commissioner, RCMP, re: attached report addressing the problem of the need for interpreters in the Frobisher Bay Detachment, 19 December 1961.

34 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series 1985–86/574, Volume 4, File G-15-1-G (1968), Organization, Procedure and Functions—"G" Division, Memorandum from E. Brakefield-Moore, Acting Commissioner, Director of Services and Supply to Adjutant, RCMP, re; organization, procedures and functions of G Division, 01 September 1965.

35 Mosha Akavak, *Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission*, July 2008.

36 Grant, *Arctic Justice*, 232.

37 Grant, *Arctic Justice*, 232.

38 The need for translators was acute. In 1961, for example, an accused was locked up for 17 days waiting for interpretation. See: LAC, RG18, RCMP, Series F-1, Volume 3713, File G-284-10, "Regulations re: Pay of Special Constables in 'G' Division", memorandum from J.T. Parsons, Inspector for Officer Commanding, G Division, to Commissioner, RCMP, 19 December 1961.

39 For further information see: P. Whitney Lackenbauer and M. Farish, "The Cold War on Canadian Soil," *Environmental History*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (October 2007), 920-950.

40 Terrance (Terry) Jenkin, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 26 November 2008.

41 Fox-3 quote from: LAC, RG 22, Indian and Northern Affairs, Series A-1-a, Volume 833, File 40-8-24, Part 1, Eskimo Women (Relations With), "Letter to Minister of Northern Affairs from A. DewLiner, re: Eskimos on DEW Line," 1 October 1958.

42 Amagoalik and McComber, *Changing the Face of Canada*, 36.

43 Morrison, *Showing the Flag*, 152.

44 NWT Archives, 263, Alexander Stevenson fonds, Series N-1992-023, Box 42, File 5, Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1949–1973, "Letter to Nick Nickels from C.M. Bolger, re: Igloolik, 24 November 1961.

45 Griffiths, "Policing the Baffin Region."

46 *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths* [video] (2010).

47 *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths* [video] (2010).

48 Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut*: 196.

49 Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut*: 197.

50 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Series 1884–85, Volume 1951, File A-1000/169, part 1, "Report on Trip to Frobisher," by F.H. Compton, Frobisher Bay, NWT," 31 January 1962.

51 Quoted in: Peter Keith Kulchyski and Frank J. Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back): Game Management and Inuit Rights 1900–70* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), 262.

52 Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut*: 197.

53 July Papatsie, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 27 November 2008.

54 Toshio Yatsushiro, "The Changing Eskimo," *The Beaver* (Summer 1962), 23–24.

55 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, F-1 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Records, Volume 3713, File G-284-10, Regulations Re: Pay of Special Constables in "G" Division, Memorandum from J.T Parsons, Inspector for Officer Commanding G Division to Commissioner, RCMP, re: attached report addressing the problem of the need for interpreters in the Frobisher Bay Detachment, 19 December 1961.

56 LAC, RG18, RCMP Series 1985–86/048, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-5, Memo to Officer Commanding, Frobisher Bay, from E.R. Lysk, 5 June 1964.

57 Mosha Akavak, *Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission*, July 2008.

58 Mosha Akavak, *Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission*, July 2008.

59 Ejesiak Padluq, *Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission*, 24 January 2008.

60 Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs (Nunavut and Northern Quebec: 1950–1970)* (2006), 45–46. The 1973 report: LAC, RG18, RCMP, Volume 3642, File G-232-21-6, "Inspection Report by A.M. Cart, Chief Superintendent, Commanding Officer, G Division to Commissioner, re: inspection of G Division," Commanding Officer, G Division, 1 May 1973.

61 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, F-1 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Records, Volume 3713, File G-284-10, "Regulations Re: Pay of Special Constables in "G" Division, Memorandum from J.T Parsons, Inspector for Officer Commanding G Division to Commissioner, RCMP, re: attached report addressing the problem of the need for interpreters in the Frobisher Bay Detachment," 19 December 1961.

62 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Volume 3642, File G-232-21-6, "Commanding Officer, 'G' Division, Inspection Report by A.M. Cart, Chief Superintendent, Commanding Officer, G Division to Commissioner, re: inspection of G Division," 01 May 1973.

63 "Lazarus Kyak, Officer of the Order of Canada," *Governor General of Canada* website, online at https://www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipients/146-2716.

64 Dorothy Eber, *Images of Justice: A Legal History of the Northwest Territories as Traced through Yellowknife Courthouse Collection of Sculpture* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997): 131–35, quotes at 133–134.

65 Qanguk is quoted in Brody, "Colonialism in the Arctic," 246.

66 RCMP Archives Management Section, Volume 1, File T-125-1, Supp A, Territorial Policing Agreement—Non-Police Duties, Memorandum from A.H. Buttler, Chief Superintendent, G Division to Commissioner, re: attached letter regarding Territorial Policing Agreement, 2 June 1978.

67 For more details about the RCMP and the killing of qimmiit as examined by Inuit see: *Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs* (Iqaluit: Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2013); and *Analysis of the RCMP Sled Dog Report* (Iqaluit: Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2013).

68 Paul Quassa and Louis McComber, *We Need to Know Who We Are: The Life Story of Paul Quassa* (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2008), 38.

69 Jacopoosie Peter, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 18 June 2008.

70 Mosesee Qiyuakjuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, April 2006.

71 Joshie Teemotee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

72 Autry National Centre, Institute for the Study of the American West, Braun Research Library, MS 212, Yatsushiro Toshio, Box 1, manuscript for "The Changing Eskimo", 20–21.

73 Examples of RCMP and Inuit romantic and sexual relationships in the early 20th century in other parts of the Northwest Territories can be found in Morrison, *Showing the Flag*, 150–52.

74 July Papatsie, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 27 November 2008.

75 Joshua Idlout, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

76 Mary Anulik Kutsiz, as quoted in "An Elder Offers Advice," *Inuktitut* 79 (Fall 1995), 12.

77 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, F-1 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Records, 3713, G-284-10, Regulations Re: Pay of Special Constables in "G" Division, Memorandum from J.T Parsons, Inspector for Officer Commanding G Division to Commissioner, RCMP, re: attached report addressing the problem of the need for interpreters in the Frobisher Bay Detachment, 19 December 1961.

Foreword (2013)

As President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, I am pleased to present the long-awaited set of reports of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

The *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Community Histories 1950–1975* and *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies* represent the Inuit experience during this colonial period, as told by Inuit. These reports offer a deeper understanding of the motivations driving government decisions and the effects of those decisions on the lives of Inuit, effects which are still felt today.

This period of recent history is very much alive to Qikiqtaalungmiut, and through testifying at the Commission, Inuit spoke of our experience of that time. These reports and supporting documents are for us. This work builds upon the oral history and foundation Inuit come from as told by Inuit, for Inuit, to Inuit.

On a personal level this is for the grandmother I never knew, because she died in a sanatorium in Hamilton; this is for my grandchildren, so that they can understand what our family has experienced; and it is also for the young people of Canada, so that they will also understand our story.

As it is in my family, so it is with many others in our region.

The Qikiqtani Truth Commission is a legacy project for the people of our region and QIA is proud to have been the steward of this work.

Aingai,

E7-1865

J. Okalik Eegeesiak, President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Introduction to the Work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission

This work began with the breaking of a long silence. In the 1990s, Inuit made great strides in taking charge of their own affairs through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the creation of Nunavut. They were then ready to examine the past, including the harm done during the period of greatest change, from 1950 to 1975. They wanted to understand more about their own lives and those lived by their parents, grandparents, and siblings in an era that was profoundly marked by game laws, residential schools, medical evacuations, substantial population movements, and broken promises about housing and jobs. One especially sensitive source of anguish and disturbing memories was the government's campaign to eliminate qimmiit (Inuit sled dogs) from the settlements. Qimmiit were often shot without warning by the RCMP and others, leaving many people without any means of winter transportation. In a culture where qimmiit were vital to hunting and travel, and valued as companions, this campaign struck very close to the well-being of every Inuit family. The history is still a painful wound for many Inuit in the Qikiqtani Region.

For a long time, many Inuit grieved in silence. Others spoke out in anger, aware that their experiences seemed to follow a pattern that was hard to decipher, but was important for understanding the problems in communities today. These feelings led the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) to interview Elders in 2004 about various issues related to moving into settlements. In 2007, the QIA created the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC), a forum where Inuit could speak openly about difficult events in the decades after the Second World War and understand more about how communities took shape and the true costs of the changes. The QTC's investigation had two closely related activities. The first was to gather testimonies about events between 1950 and 1975 from Inuit who had lived through this difficult period, as well as from their children who continue to remember the suffering of their parents and other relatives. Commissioner Igloliorte and QTC staff travelled to all thirteen communities in the Qikiqtani Region between January 2008 and May 2009, and invited all interested residents to share their memories and feelings about how their lives had changed. They also held hearings for the Inuit community in Ottawa, and paid return visits to all communities in early 2010 to report on findings and ask for comments on proposed recommendations. Including interviews that the QIA had already conducted in 2004, the QTC had testimonies from approximately 350 individuals. Hearings were conducted with more flexibility than normal legal proceedings, but to emphasize the seriousness of the task, Commissioner Igloliorte asked all witnesses to affirm that they would tell the truth to the best of their knowledge. He also respected the decision made by a few individuals to keep their experiences private.

In addition to learning about events and impacts through testimonies, the Qikiqtani Truth Commission also completed an extensive archival research program and interviewed Qallunaat who worked in the region during this period. Among the people interviewed were several retired RCMP officers, government officials, and academic researchers.

The Evidence

THE WITNESSES

The QTC is indebted to the many men and women who attended meetings and opened their homes to give their testimonies. People welcomed the commission warmly into their communities and spoke freely and honestly about their lives. Without their testimonies, the commission would not have been able to fully appreciate what happened to Inuit during this period of immense transition. They also provided very thoughtful and constructive feedback and suggestions regarding the kind of recommendations that would promote reconciliation between Inuit and government. A full list of individuals is included in the List of Witnesses on the QTC website.

ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

The QTC's research team collected and reviewed accessible archival and secondary sources for the period in focus, 1950 to 1975. This included examinations of relevant records from Library and Archives Canada, as well as the Archives of the Northwest Territories, the RCMP, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies. Thousands of documents were digitized for the QTC's research database.

MAPS

Maps provide important details about how Inuit lived and used the territories surrounding their present-day communities. These maps reject a common idea in the south that the Arctic is "empty." In addition to showing the sites of ilagiit nunagivaktangit, details on twentieth-century maps include place names indicating how Inuit knew and utilized the land, along with their travel routes, and the best places for hunting. This kind of information began to be set down on paper before 1840. However, some of the most thorough maps are those created by Inuit for the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project (1976) and the Nunavut Atlas (1992).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (2024 EDITION)

The reports drafted in 2010 for the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) were prepared under the direction of James Igloliorte, Commissioner, and Madeleine Redfern, Executive Director, QTC. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) project managers in 2013 were Bethany Scott, Navarana Beveridge, and Sandra Kownak.

The primary authors of most reports were Julie Harris, Contentworks Inc. and Philip P. Goldring, Ph.D. Writing and research support was provided by Joan Bard Miller, Francis Levésque, Ryan Shackleton, Frank J. Tester, Anna Gilmer, Alice Glaze, Teresa Iacobelli, Natascha Morrison, Linda Radford, Dr. Yvonne Boyer, and Brian Cameron.

The translation team for the reports produced in 2013 included Jay Arnakak, Mali Curley, Julia Demcheson, Veronica Dewar, Elisapee Ikkidluak, Emily Illnik, David Joanasie, Leonie Kappi, Pujjuut Kusugak, Nina Tootoo, and Blandina Tulugarjuk. Additional translation for the 2024 editions was provided by Ruth Kadlutsiak.

The work of the QTC would not have been possible without the financial support of the following organizations: Qikiqtani Inuit Association; Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; Makivik Corporation; Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation; First Air; Air Inuit; Unaalik Aviation; Kenn Borek Air Ltd.

The 2024 editions of the QTC reports were prepared by Julie Harris, Augatnaaq Eccles, Zarina Laalo and Anne Brazeau of Contentworks Inc. under the direction of Inukshuk Aksalnik, Jennifer Ipirq, and Simon Cuerrier of QIA.

For many years, Inuit Elders in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) Region have been haunted by a deep sense of loss as they remember how their lives changed in the decades after 1950. The thematic reports and special studies in this collection explore themes that emerged during the work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission. What started as an inquiry into the slaughter of sled dogs quickly grew to include other experiences of profound colonial change.

Commissioner James Igloliorte's Final Report, titled *Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq*, and 22 companion thematic and historical reports published by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in Inuktitut and English weave together evidence from testimonies and documents collected during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission about the consequential 1950–1975 period.

QTC Report Collection

Aaniajurliriniq: Health Care in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Achieving Saimaqatiqiingniq: Final Report of the Commissioner of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Analysis of the RCMP Sled Dog Report

Igluliriniq: Housing in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Illinniarniq: Schooling in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life in the Qikiqtani Region to 1975

Paliisikkut: Policing in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Pivalliajuliriniq: Economic Development in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

The Official Mind of Canadian Colonialism

Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk) Community History, 1950–1975

Clyde River (Kangiqtugaapik) Community History, 1950–1975

Grise Fiord (Ausuittuq) Community History, 1950–1975

Igloolik Community History, 1950–1975

Iqaluit Community History, 1950–1975

Kimmirut Community History, 1950–1975

Kinngait Community History, 1950–1975

Pangnirtung Community History, 1950–1975

Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik) Community History, 1950–1975

Qikiqtarjuaq Community History, 1950–1975

Resolute Community History, 1950–1975

Sanikiluaq Community History, 1950–1975

Sanirajak Community History, 1950–1975

Qikiqtani Inuit Association
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Qikiqtani Truth Commission