Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Thematic Reports and Special Studies

1950–1975

Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life

Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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Errata

Despite best efforts on the part of the author, mistakes happen.
The following corrections should be noted when using this report:

Administration in Qikiqtaaluk was the responsibility of one or more federal departments prior to 1967 when the Government of the Northwest Territories was became responsible for the provision of almost all direct services. The term "the government" should replace all references to NANR, AANDC, GNWT, DIAND.

Dedication

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

Foreword

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
Iqaluit, Nunavut
2013

Nuutauniq

Moves in Inuit Life

Mobility has always been part of Inuit culture. Anthropologist Hugh Brody explains that "hunting families travel familiar routes and reoccupy sites that have been important to their people for generations. The seasonal rounds occupy grooves of cultural history, and draw upon archives of experience and knowledge." For the Qikiqtaalungmiut, the seasonal cycle of harvesting that naturally took advantage of weather conditions, animal migrations and cultural linkages continued into the mid–twentieth century. After that, the nature of Inuit mobility changed dramatically.

This chapter is focused on government-supported or -directed relocations and migrations between 1950 and 1975. Some moves were coerced, and others were voluntary. The chapter draws on the archival record to describe many of the dates, policies, and objectives of government programs that expedited moves. The human dimension—the effects of these moves on peoples' lives—is told in the words of witnesses appearing before the QTC,

statements collected by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), and from various research studies.

Moves between 1950 and 1975 affected all Qikiqtaalungmiut. Every Inuk who appeared before the QTC experienced a long separation from family members because of relocations, medical evacuations, or schooling. The QTC heard about the lingering effects of unexpected moves by a previous generation. Each move added to the harmful impact of individuals being separated from family and from the cultural practices that were central to a worldview rooted in their land and its resources.

This chapter examines three types of events: the moving of groups, the moving of individuals, and the closing of communities. Within each event type, the moves can be categorized in terms of motives. Relocation describes the planned movement of people to a location that has been chosen by an external agent. Migration refers to moves carried out by Inuit themselves in a manner that appeared to be voluntary or motivated by enticements. Dislocation refers to coerced moves undertaken by Inuit who felt pressure from Qallunaat, usually government representatives, to move either permanently or for a specific reason. Evacuation refers to the temporary movement of people by government in real or perceived emergencies.

Concepts

CONSENT

To consent means to agree to something. As a legal concept, consent can be either expressed or implied. However, it is real consent only if it is given voluntarily and with a full understanding of the proposed action and its possible effect—the greater the risks or impacts, the greater the need to obtain real consent.

Cross-cultural challenges affected consent, which explains why officials often thought a pressured "dislocation" was a voluntary "migration." Yet it is also clear that many Inuit chose to move off the land from their ilagiit nunagivaktangit because they believed life in the settlement would prove to be a positive experience, as they were repeatedly told by government and by some Inuit already working in settlements. In the words of Gene Rheaume, active as both a civil servant and a politician in the period, "It was [sometimes] a subtle pressure, but it was coming at you from everywhere." People on the move expected any sacrifices they made to benefit their families. Inuit were explicitly promised access to housing, health care, schools, and wage employment. The reality, however, was often much harsher than they could have imagined, especially during the first years in a settlement. Even over time, improvements were slow or not fully realized.

Southern agents, such as government staff, RCMP, missionaries, nurses, or ship stewards, involved in moves might have believed Inuit consented because they never said, "No, I will not go." Inuit sometimes expressed disagreement with silence or by withdrawing, and this may have been mistaken by Qallunaat as compliance. Inuit consent, however, was likely a culturally determined way of dealing with Qallunaat. To an Inuk, Qallunaat appeared to be demanding consent, not asking for it. During the QTC hearings, Commissioner Igloliorte asked Gordon Rennie, a former HBC Manager, "Did anybody ever question you personally or did anybody ever question the dog laws in those days at the time when the dogs were running loose?" Rennie replied, "They wouldn't dare." He went on to explain, "Nobody questioned me . . . I was a person in authority then." This obedience happened within an established power relationship and psychological context Inuit call "ilira." Ilira can be explained as powerful social fear or inhibition caused by inequality in power. In her 1993 essay, Rosemary Kuptana explained that a generation or two earlier "a challenge to the authority of the Qallunaat or defiance of their requests was almost unthinkable."

The capacity of government to obtain consent was complicated by ilira, other cross-cultural non-verbal factors, and by the difficulty of delivering services in Qikiqtaaluk. For a variety of reasons, administrators could not adequately predict all the possible outcomes of their plans. Instead, they usually made optimistic forecasts that failed to come true. Qikiqtaalungmiut were geographically isolated from decision-makers, and those who planned the moves neglected—or were ignorant of—Inuit cultural practices that would be harmed. Language barriers and other intercultural communication challenges also made it very hard to get valid consent before moves. After interviewing many Elders in 2008, anthropologist Ann McElroy explained that "it is difficult at times to reconstruct whether a family's move should be categorized as relocation or as voluntary migration." In addition, she noted, the reasons people moved to a town were often not the same as the reasons they stayed there.

KINSHIP AND PLACE

In order to understand how all types of moves affected Inuit, we need to first understand the importance of both kinship and place in their worldview. Inuit kinship systems are different from those in European/Western cultural traditions. As explained by Christopher Trott, the concept of ilagiit (kindred) is based on the root ila, which simply means "to be with" or "accompany." For Inuit, families are the combined result of birth, circumstance, and choice. Kinship has practical implications for security, psychological well-being, hunting, sharing food and material resources, intra- and intergroup relations, education of children, and leadership.

The interconnectedness of kinship and place is central to the Inuit worldview. Cultural geography professor Robert Williamson explained to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) how difficult it must be for an Inuk to leave the places associated with his or her kin:

> Every geographic feature . . . has names and the name is a metaphor for the totality of the group remembrance of all forms of land relatedness, of the successes and failures in hunting, it recalls births, deaths, childhood, marriage, death, adventure. It recalls the narrations and the ancient sanctified myths.

As Inuit travel across the land, sea, and ice, they strengthen their relationships with each other and deepen their understanding of their own pasts and kin.

Qallunaat often mistook and continue to mistake the semi-nomadic history of Inuit as evidence of a lack of attachment to place. In fact, the ability to move to follow game while also maintaining connections with kin who live over a wide geographic area is the result of an intimate experience of place. Williamson insisted, "The attention to this habitat is as strong as the attachment of kinship. It is a love of a very profound kind."

COMMUNITY AND MOBILITY

In 1950, Qikiqtaalungmiut inhabited over one hundred ilagiit nunagivaktangit seasonally. By 1975, almost all were concentrated in the present twelve hamlets and one city. This revolution in where and how Inuit lived has been called by various names, including relocation, in-gathering, settlement, and centralization. Inuit reasons for moving from a nomadic pattern that was a thousand years old to an experiment with modern living are often debated. Some observers argue that the change was necessary and beneficial, and was embraced willingly. Others emphasize the cultural loss, disappointment, and coercion that marked this period of disruption and tarnish its legacy.

Today, almost all Nunavummiut live in hamlets of 130 to 1,459 people. The city of Iqaluit has a current population of 6,699, and is growing by

almost 300 each year. Even the smallest of these communities is more populous than the biggest year-round settlements before 1950. There are both local and external reasons for the locations of these communities. Ten of the thirteen present-day community sites in Qikiqtaaluk were chosen before 1950, mainly by RCMP, missionaries, and trading companies. These became administrative centres for regional management and delivery of services. Each place is on saltwater and is accessible by ships or large boats at least once a year. From 1909 onwards, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), with a near monopoly, aimed to have a single trading post in each productive hunting area. Inuit dispersed as widely as possible from each post, while leaving no gaps for competing traders to exploit. The RCMP and missions followed the HBC, so that when modern centralized communities emerged, they were reasonably convenient for both water transport and availability of game. Today game remains dispersed, but people are concentrated in a few places.

Before 1950, there were many different types of inhabited places. Official reports usually referred to "settlements" and "camps," but both terms are debatable. What Qallunaat called settlements were the places where outside agencies, always including the HBC, maintained a few small wooden buildings to provide lodging and storage space for the handful of Qallunaat who lived there. These settlements could more correctly be called enclaves. While a few employed Inuit and their families may have lived there, these enclaves were surrounded and heavily outnumbered by Inuit. Although dispersed, Inuit were much more permanent and continuous in their use and occupancy of the land than Qallunaat.

In 1944, a semi-official map of "Eskimo Camp Sites" by geographer J. Lewis Robinson, noted the "White Settlement" as his first category of inhabited places. The map outlined the different ways in which multi-family Inuit hunting groups lived on the land in "usual" or "occasional" summer ilagiit nunagivaktangit and winter ilagiit nunagivaktangit.

Robinson did not include weather stations and small defence establishments, where a handful of Inuit families settled temporarily and were

paid for domestic labour and other chores. These were neither true settlements nor communities. However, they did sometimes provide a range of services coupled with hunting opportunities, and they did give some Inuit an experience of the cash economy for a limited time.

The rich expression ilagiit nunagivaktangat communicates the importance of kinship among people who share a community, and the permanent relationship they have with the land. Both of these values were threatened by centralization, which gathered into larger communities large numbers of people who were almost strangers to each other, far from the places to which they were most attached.

When Inuit moved into modern communities or hamlets, they also lost the flexibility and purposeful seasonal movements that were part of their culture until the middle of the twentieth century. Robinson's list of seasonal settlement types partially describes Inuit mobility and seasonal rounds. However, it does not illustrate the social dynamics within extended kin groups, which could form, dissolve, and re-form over time within their distinct but overlapping hunting territories. Movements in periods of disruption were also purposeful, though risky. A Scottish writer stated in 1841, early in the whaling era, that Inuit from Cumberland Sound migrated long distances to meet the ships, "impelled by curiosity, and animated by the hope of traffic [i.e. trade]." This was essentially the same explanation that an Iqaluit Elder offered for why her family came to Iqaluit in the 1950s: "When someone finds plentiful amounts of something, like work or food, they come to get it." Qallunaat in the twentieth century often misunderstood such Inuit movements. Their hasty observations suggested that Inuit were not especially attached to their local surroundings and that they were so adaptable they could easily move from a familiar place to a strange and distant one. These mistaken prejudices and beliefs gave rise to the government policy of moving Inuit around, which sometimes led to distress and injustice.

In this report, we use the conventional word "settlements" for the small enclaves around trading posts before centralization occurred. The term

“community” is used more flexibly. Before centralization, it describes all the members of multi-family hunting groups in a region. After centralization, we use “community” to describe the places where pre-1950 “settlements” had grown into larger service centres with mostly Inuit populations. The relationship between present-day communities, the settlements where they were founded, and the people of the traditional territories that surround them, differs from place to place.

Moved Groups

THE DUNDAS HARBOUR RELOCATIONS

The Dundas Harbour relocations (1934–47) are early examples of government-directed moves of Inuit. While the relocations fall outside the QTC’s time frame, they appear in this chapter because they demonstrate a pattern of government practice. Inuit were moved because the government generalized that all Inuit were semi-nomadic hunters who could live anywhere in the Arctic. It neglected the subtle nuances of regional identity, differing seasons, terrain, linguistics, wildlife, geography, food preferences, technological adaptations, and survival strategies. Despite the specialization of culture within specific regions, the government transferred Inuit to areas where they had inadequate knowledge of animal patterns or environmental conditions.

In 1934, Dundas Harbour was an abandoned RCMP post located on the southern shore of Devon Island, in the High Arctic. It lies within a region set aside in 1926 by the Canadian government as the Arctic Islands Game Preserve (AIGP) for sovereignty and wildlife preservation reasons. The HBC wished to establish trading posts in the southern parts of the Preserve, while the government wanted to experiment with inducing Inuit to

occupy more northern areas, including Devon Island. The HBC agreed to operate a trading post at Dundas Harbour, importing Inuit to hunt and trap there, in exchange for government permission to re-open a post at Arctic Bay. The government's motives were complex. Reopening Dundas Harbour made a sovereignty statement at little or no expense to Canada, and also brought Inuit to an unpopulated area from more southerly locations that were considered to be overhunted. Crucially, the agreement made the HBC responsible for the welfare of any Inuit it relocated. Additionally, the agreement stipulated that "in the event of the company withdrawing from Devon Island the company agrees to return the natives to their homes at its own expense or to transfer them to such other trapping grounds as may be designated by the Department."

In August 1934, the HBC ship R.M.S. *Nascopie* picked up fifty-two people and one hundred and nine qimmiit from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet, along with a seasoned HBC clerk, Chesley Russell. The different parties were transferred together to Dundas Harbour, where they were expected to trap and trade for at least the next two years. The relocation was a failure. The harbour was choked with rough ice and proved exceptionally difficult to navigate in the small boats available. The HBC post closed after two years and the *Nascopie* returned to pick up the relocatees. The families from Pangnirtung were returned home (the last port of call for the homebound *Nascopie*), but the others were transferred to Admiralty Inlet. In 1937, some of these people were moved southwestward to the HBC's new Fort Ross post on Bellot Strait. This also proved difficult to resupply, and the group was moved yet again in 1947, south to Taloyoak on the Boothia Peninsula. In a dozen years, these people were relocated four times. Some eventually returned to Arctic Bay.

Years later, a senior official, R.A.J. Phillips, remarked that the "thirteen-year-long resettlement project was a heavy burden to the Hudson's Bay Company." Phillips called the whole experience a "tragedy" and said that the Inuit were in theory volunteers, but "the story of free will and Eskimo

decision-making could not withstand careful examination." Ethnographer David Damas, using official HBC records, documented an unsuccessful effort by the Fort Ross hunters to migrate to Kimmirut in the 1940s, evidence that not all was entirely well on Somerset Island. These opinions (of an official and an academic) conflict with that of Ernie Lyall, who helped organize the 1934 migration for the HBC and married into one of the Cape Dorset migrant families. Lyall emphasized that people were very willing to go to Dundas Harbour and that they were generally satisfied with Arctic Bay, Fort Ross, and Taloyoak. With no agreement among those involved directly in the move and a researcher looking critically at the historic record, it is particularly important to consider the testimony of a survivor and of certain descendants.

Susan Singoorie of Pond Inlet, now living in Ottawa, is one of the still-living Dundas Harbour relocatees. She accompanied her parents to Dundas Harbour when she was eight years old. More than seventy-five years later, she shared her experiences with the QTC:

> We set camp on the other side. We experienced a lot of cold. We were just in a tent. There was no snow to build iglus there. It became very windy. Before the ice melted, we would move by dog team and my mother walked well. They were not hungry because there was lots of wildlife up there. Once, the tent was drooping from the cold. We used only qulliit for heat and light. Once it became very windy. We could not keep the camp because it was so windy in the tent. We started walking, my father tied up ropes around our waists. We would stand for a long time. It was very painful. I wanted to share my experience with you. When we got to the RCMP shed, we were brought to the HBC store and we all stayed in there. It was crowded. Once ice set in we started moving again. Once we got an iglu built, it seemed to be so much warmer.

Others testified about the Dundas Harbour relocation on behalf of deceased relatives. Rhoda Tunraq told the Commission about her parents' move to Dundas Harbour and about her mother's feelings for Devon Island:

> They were living in Arctic Bay when they were moved to Devon Island. Then they got used to Devon Island. After a while they were happy there as a family. When they moved back to Arctic Bay, the families were dying off even while they were living here. There is a saying in Inuktitut that they "cut off the life" so I feel that they were cut short in their life. My mother used to say that. [Interviewee too emotional to talk] My mother was never happy because she always spoke about being homesick for Devon Island.

Those who were moved and their descendants felt the effects of the relocations for generations. Some longed for the rest of their lives for their families and ancestral lands. Tagoona Qavavouq told the Commission that her mother-in-law Ajau went "insane" after the relocations and died prematurely. She explained to Commissioner Igloliorte:

> When the Elders are moved to a different area, when they return home, they can heal and feel better when they return home. Because they came from Cape Dorset, they were like orphans here. They were different, being different people from a different land, people did not really communicate with them in the same way. We always feel it, those of us who are the wives.

Others, like Pauloosie Kaujak, who spoke to their children and grandchildren about one day returning to Cape Dorset, have since passed away.

The Dundas Harbour relocations were the first example of a Canadian government relocation program. It is striking that the government partnered with a private company, putting all the risk on the HBC and the Inuit.

As a result of the relocations, the relocatees became increasingly dependent on the HBC. With no way home and no strong kinship support network in place, the relocatees had no choice but to adapt and accept their situation. The legacy of the relocations continues on both the northern and southern coasts of Baffin Island, especially in Cape Dorset, Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet, and Resolute. The children and grandchildren of those relocated, while closely connected to their current communities, want to learn more about family members living in other communities and experience the land that sustained their ancestors.

THE HIGH ARCTIC RELOCATIONS

While the QTC's mandate excludes investigation of the High Arctic Relocations, the events cannot be ignored in a report on the history of mobility and Inuit life. Inuit were expected to be adaptable, but insufficient resources provided for the relocation and poor planning created further hardships for the relocatees. Additionally, Inuit were insufficiently informed about the moves and the possible consequences.

Planning for the move started in 1950. The plan originally developed with the dual purpose of moving Inuit from regions thought by government to be short of game, especially in Nunavik, and strengthening Canada's claim in the Arctic Islands. Families from Nunavik would be relocated to the established present community of Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island, where game conditions were thought to be better. The plan was also considered an experiment to determine whether Inuit could actually be induced to live on the northern islands. Throughout the planning stages, there was concern that the "experiment" might not work and that Inuit from Inukjuak might not be able to thrive so far north.

Alexander Stevenson, an experienced officer with the department responsible for northern affairs, sought to confirm that people had volun-

teered and that they were satisfied with the conditions. In her detailed study of the High Arctic Relocations titled *A Case of Compounded Error*, Shelagh D. Grant writes, "Arriving at Inukjuak long before the departure date, [Stevenson] sought reassurance that the Inuit fully understood the situation. He was only able to find 'two hunters,' but was satisfied that they were fully cognizant of the details." Grant's careful analysis of the relocations includes her important observation that "there is no mention of questioning women or children." It was assumed that the men could speak for everyone.

During the summer of 1953, seven families from Inukjuak, Nunavik, and three families from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island were sent to Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands aboard the Arctic supply and hospital ship *C. D. Howe*. Upon arrival at Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island, the groups were broken up. Some were to be offloaded at Craig Harbour, while others were to be moved to Alexandra Fiord or the military weather station at Resolute. The first warning that they would be forcibly separated came aboard the *C. D. Howe* when they were already in High Arctic waters. Samwillie Elijasialak, who was relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953, testified before RCAP about the forced separation. His "mother was told that her children were going to go to Alexandra Fiord. She was not happy at being told that her children would have to go where the government people told her they would go." Family members successfully resisted this splitting of a seventeen-year-old from his parents, but years later Elijasialak recalled feeling "that the separation of the people was as if the government people were separating dogs." The forced separation of families demonstrated to the relocatees that they were pawns in the government's relocation plans. The plan to distribute some at different points in the High Arctic shows that the welfare of Inuit was not the government's primary concern. Instead, the government was concerned with populating the High Arctic and providing workers to the base at Resolute.

After disembarking some passengers at Craig Harbour, the *C. D. Howe* met up with the icebreaker C. G. S. *D'Iberville*, which was to transfer some

people to the RCMP post at Alexandra Fiord. However, ice prevented the vessel from reaching that harbour. Two families were dropped off at Craig Harbour to join the relocated group while the remaining families were delivered to Resolute.

By this point, the relocatees had been on board the ship for weeks in substandard living conditions. Martha Flaherty was eight years old when she and her family were relocated to Craig Harbour. She spoke to the Commissioner about her experiences on the *C.D. Howe*:

> I had nightmares for years because of the ship experience we had. It was dark and rainy. We wore life jackets. That was scary. I used to be picked up by an RCMP officer and he would hang me in the water. I kept that memory for years. I had nightmares about that. I fought so that they would not brush-cut my hair because they thought we had lice. I ran upstairs and locked myself with my mother and I don't remember after that.

From Craig Harbour, people soon moved approximately 60 kilometres west from the RCMP post to the Lindstrom Peninsula, on the west side of Grise Fiord. A government official said the move was to reduce the tendency to look for handouts. In 1956, the RCMP detachment moved to the site of the current community, where only two families lived at the time. The rest remained at the camp west of the fiord on the Lindstrom Peninsula, until the arrival of the federal day school in 1961.

Living conditions at both Resolute and the Lindstrom Peninsula were exceptionally harsh. It must be remembered how different the High Arctic was from Inukjuak, Nunavik. The distance between the two locations was approximately the same as between Toronto, Ontario and Miami, Florida. The High Arctic has a three-month period of darkness, much colder temperatures, completely different landscapes and ice formations, and different animal habits. Additionally, cultural and language differences created

difficulties between the people of Pond Inlet and Inukjuak. Anthropologist Milton Freeman observed that "indifference, ridicule, and even hostility were not uncommon features of intergroup relations." At Resolute, Inuit received inadequate supplies, substandard housing, and a broken boat. The Craig Harbour Inuit had limited building supplies and no access to goods and services. In 1955, thirty-four more people were relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Resolute, while another family of four was relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord.

The High Arctic relocations also affected the families left behind, as well as succeeding generations born in the High Arctic. The RCAP final report, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report of the 1953–55 Relocation*, discussed some of these effects:

> The relocation had an immediate impact on some people and a longer-term impact on others, leading to depression and despondency. Family relationships were disrupted in various ways. Families were broken up as a result of the initial departure from Inukjuak. There was further disruption when the families were unexpectedly separated onto different ships and sent to different places. These separations continued for years and were compounded by the departure of people to hospitals in the South for treatment of tuberculosis. Young people had great difficulty finding spouses.

RCAP condemned the government for its handling of the relocation in its report:

> The Department proceeded with the High Arctic Relocation without proper authority. The relocation was not voluntary. It proceeded without free and informed consent, there were material misrepresentations, and material information was not disclosed.

> The true nature of the relation—that is, a rehabilitation project—and the inherent risks were not disclosed . . . Moreover, many Inuit were kept in the High Arctic for many years against their will when the government refused to respond to their requests to return.

Fundamentally, RCAP found in its final report that "the government was negligent in its planning and implementation of the relocation. It did not keep the promises made to the relocatees." Shortly after, on March 29, 1996, the government signed a memorandum of agreement with Makivik Corporation (working on behalf of individuals relocated to the High Arctic). The Memorandum acknowledged the contributions of the relocated Inuit to a "Canadian presence" in the High Arctic and the "hardship, suffering, and loss" encountered during the initial years. $10 million was awarded to the individuals, and Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan gave an apology on August 18, 2010.

The High Arctic relocations stand out in the history of Qikiqtaaluk partly because of the recognition earned by the RCAP investigation, but also because of the sheer magnitude of the experiment and its lasting effects. Relocatees were moved to far-off and isolated locations, creating a dependency on government for the provision of services and travel. The moves stand out vividly in Inuit memory and history.

THE CUMBERLAND SOUND EVACUATIONS

In the winter of 1962, most of the inhabitants of a dozen ilagiit nunagivaktangit surrounding Pangnirtung were evacuated by federal authorities who feared they would starve during the course of a highly contagious disease among their qimmiit. The department responsible for northern affairs was concerned that Inuit would be unable to hunt, and believed that only two support options existed. One option was to fly or otherwise transport food

and fuel to people in their familiar surroundings. The other option was to withdraw them temporarily to Pangnirtung, where shelter was not available but food and fuel could be found or brought by air until the qimmiit population recovered. The decision to evacuate could be interpreted as either a sound precaution or a sign of panic. Whatever the motives, officials soon found themselves administering a settlement of over four hundred people with an infrastructure designed for one-quarter that number. Other challenges included the wide dispersal of the many small settlements, poor weather, and a shortage of qimmiit to transport emergency supplies. Officials also fretted over the notion that providing Inuit with relief on the land would cause many people to lose interest in hunting. Harold Zukerman, the regional welfare chief said:

> Although several of the camps close to Pangnirtung are in no danger of starvation they have suffered seriously through the depletion of their dogs. This has reduced both their meat procurement and their cash income through the sales of the skins. This situation is going to last for several years until the dog population again approaches normal. During this time many of the camp members will be idle as their hunting activities are restricted. We could provide relief assistance to the camps, however, it is felt by the people at Pangnirtung that this would not be appreciated as relief during a crisis. There would most likely develop a dependence on relief assistance, which would be hard to terminate. Rather than have the camp members idle in their camp and receiving relief issued, we feel it is preferable that they move to Pangnirtung where they can take part in the work programme now in progress. They can also participate in the crafts programme, which is now getting under way. Such a programme, if successful, would enable them to return to their camps and supplement their hunting by the production of crafts.

Zukerman's explanation is confusing. The make-work program drew Inuit into an artificial and unsustainable cash economy. While the government supported dependency through a make-work project, it was not willing to support the ilagiit nunagivaktangit with emergency relief. The quote also demonstrates a lack of cultural understanding. Zukerman's concern about relief neglects the importance of hunting for Inuit—country food is nutritionally rich and culturally important. Additionally, the use of the term "idle" connotes unproductive time. It fails to acknowledge important cultural activities that were occurring during seemingly idle times, such as socialization, storytelling, and preparing skins. Despite the large number of qimmiit lost to disease, people could pool their remaining qimmiit to make teams, as others did a few years earlier around Kimmirut. In Cumberland Sound, some could have walked to nearby polynyas or the floe edge. Qimmiit disease was prevalent throughout the region during this period, but Inuit from the ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the Cumberland Sound area were the only ones evacuated. It is possible that the availability of a police aircraft in 1962 explains the more aggressive action.

The decision to evacuate anyone willing to move to Pangnirtung came in March 1962, and went ahead under the direction of Peter Murdock, Superintendent of the Rehabilitation Center at Iqaluit. Inuit living close to Pangnirtung were moved using the remaining dog teams; the ilagiit nunagivaktangit further afield were evacuated by aircraft. The authorities left rations behind for those who refused to move. By the end of April 1962, only eighty-three people remained on the land; four hundred and sixty had either been evacuated by the government or had voluntarily moved into the settlement. The three ilagiit nunagivaktangit that remained in May 1962, Kingmilksoon, Ikaloolik, and Avatuktoo, each still had enough qimmiit to make up a team. According to official records, almost a fifth of the population of Cumberland Sound decided to remain on the land.

Many Inuit at the QTC hearings in Pangnirtung spoke about the evacuations of 1962. In many cases, they stated there was no need to be evacuated.

Some qimmiit had survived, and a number of hunters could reach the floe edge on foot. The rushed evacuations resulted in the loss of personal property, such as boats, motors, skins, and clothing, which could not be replaced in the settlement. It also led to temporary separation of families. Norman Komoartuk was thirteen when he was taken ahead of his family from Illungayut (Bon Accord Harbour) to Pangnirtung. He was loaded on top of the cargo and flown to the settlement. Arriving in Pangnirtung without his parents, he recalled, "I had no relatives here then. I didn't know where I could stay because my mother was never picked up. I had no parents. I was going through a struggle because it was over a week and my parents were not here."

Pangnirtung did not have the needed infrastructure to accommodate the large influx of Inuit arriving from the ilagiit nunagivaktangit. While the Department of Native Affairs reportedly "worked out plans for housing, employment, community hunting, relief, welfare, etc.," the plans for housing were wholly inadequate. The government planned to house people in:

> Accommodation now occupied by the [Inuit] who reside permanently at Pangnirtung. Houses will be constructed for the new arrivals using a snow wall with a duck [canvas] roof. It is considered by the [Inuit] at Pangnirtung that this type of dwelling is mot [sic] suitable for March and April. When the warmer weather comes they will be moved to tents.

Inuit who agreed to be evacuated had to live in overcrowded houses and were cold in the temporary shelters. The organizers of the evacuation ignored the significant differences between a summer tent and a well-insulated qarmaq. Leah Evic shared with the QTC her memories of arriving in the settlement in March 1962:

> We had to leave in March. The weather was very cold. We arrived with just our bedding. We were told that we had to come here.

> The plane came and we had to pack very quickly. It was very hard. My older sister was living in Pangnirtung because we didn't have anywhere else to go. There was a lot of people staying there. We had to stay on the floor. Because there were so many people we had to get help from social services. We had to get canvas and to pitch our tents. In our camps, we had qarmaqs, but they're winterized. It was now hard to keep the children warm. There was only a Coleman stove. We put up a frame. We put some cardboard inside. It was very cold. We were brought here but back in our camp we had everything. We had food. But the only meat that was provided was Klik meat in cans . . . when you are not used to it, it wasn't easy to eat.

The government's primary concern was not shelter but work programs to lessen the likelihood of Inuit becoming reliant on relief. Some Inuit were employed to build houses and public works, while others produced carvings and handicrafts. The organized community hunting project transported men who were judged to be "better hunters" to the floe edge using the community's sole autoboggan or the remaining dog teams. The hunters were paid $20 per week with their catch distributed to Inuit gathered at Pangnirtung.

For most, the evacuation to Pangnirtung was temporary—most were back on the land in ilagiit nunagivaktangit within the year. The government did not initiate the Cumberland Sound evacuations to centralize Inuit in settlements, or to have them abandon traditional practices. Rather, the government undertook the evacuations to stave off threats of disaster. The government was anxious to avoid anything similar to the tragedies the Kivalliqmiut faced in the famine of 1957–58. Because it lacked confidence in its ability to provide services in ilagiit nunagivaktangit, the government temporarily intensified services in the settlement so that it could control conditions among the Inuit of Cumberland Sound. Inuit expected when they relocated that they would be adequately housed and fed, but in many cases, these expectations went unfulfilled.

Moving Individuals

The QTC heard from students and families moved for schooling and medical treatment, or simply because they wanted to live in a settlement. Because of the importance of kinship in Inuit culture, and the vital role each person played in ensuring survival of the group, every move had an impact on a family. While a more detailed history of government-sponsored health care and education is described in other QTC thematic reports, this report considers moves made for medical and educational reasons.

MEDICAL MOVES AND EVACUATIONS

Most communities in Qikiqtaaluk had negligible or substandard medical facilities during the 1950–75 period. Initially, the government relied on RCMP, missionaries, and traders to deliver first aid. Evacuations for medical care are emphasized in Inuit testimony, historical literature, and popular culture. Until air travel became more common in the late 1960s, a significant number of the sick were moved on the long, uncomfortable voyages of the *C.D. Howe*. After 1950, the annual patrol sailing aboard the *C.D. Howe* stepped up the battle against TB, conducted dental and medical surveys and immunization programs, and repatriated former patients. The majority of evacuations occurred in response to TB, which ravaged Qikiqtaaluk from the 1930s to the early 1960s. Between 1953 and 1964, almost five thousand Inuit from the Northwest Territories (almost half the Inuit population) had been institutionalized for varying periods. The majority of Inuit from Qikiqtaaluk went to southern sanatoriums, while some were treated in Pangnirtung at St. Luke's Mission Hospital.

The Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP) patrolled to accessible points where Inuit had already been instructed to gather each summer during the 1950s

and early 1960s. Each visit was short, but was looked upon with great trepidation by Inuit. Author Pat Grygier tells us, "Sometimes a priest would connive at hiding people who were afraid they would be sent south, and sometimes Inuit in outlying camps would flee when they saw the ship coming or when they heard the helicopter." In a case near Arctic Bay in 1958, a helicopter flew to an ilagiit nunagivaktangat where sick Inuit were trying to avoid evacuation. It picked them up and flew them to the ship.

Once on board, Inuit were hastily examined by teams of doctors, dentists, radiologists, and nurses. Those suspected of having tuberculosis were identified and marked. Gene Rheaume was aboard the *C.D. Howe* in 1958:

> It was so primitive even when I was on there. They marked a red arrow on his [an Inuk's] hand right after he had been X-rayed. That meant he wasn't allowed off the ship. So they got to learn. They tried to erase that ink because they knew. They took the parents—mother and father—and the ship would pull away and the kids were left standing on the beach.

Some evacuees had just a few hours to gather their belongings and to say goodbye to family before boarding the ship to the mainland. Others were given no time. They came aboard where they were tested, and the sick were immediately sent down into the hull of the ship. Walter Rudnicki, one-time head of the Welfare Division of the Department of Native Affairs, recounted to the QTC, "If it was a mother with a baby in the hood, the radiologist would pick the baby up and give it to whoever was standing closest." Robert Williamson also vividly described the conditions:

> The ship was deep in misery. It was terrible because it was the ship which carried the Inuit away from their homes to the sanatoria in the south. And they were herded together in the [bow], in the hold of the ship in three-tiered bunks, mass-fed, mass-accommodated. In

> the stormy seas they were sick, they were terrified, they were demoralized. They were frightened of what was happening to them, of what was likely to happen to them.

Patients were kept aboard for the remainder of the long journey and then transported by air or rail to a sanatorium in Manitoba, Ontario, or Quebec. Jonah Apak shared his childhood memories of the *C.D. Howe* with the QTC:

> I was one of the people sent out on the *C.D. Howe* for TB. I did not want to leave my parents behind but we had no choice but to go for medical purposes . . . There was a section up front where they segregated Inuit to the section where it was the bumpiest. It was like we were treated low class, were put there where there was a lot of movement.

Bryan Pearson, a long-time resident, business owner, and politician in Iqaluit, spoke to Commissioner Igloliorte about the coercive nature of the evacuations. When the *C.D. Howe* arrived in Iqaluit in the early 1950s, Phyllis Harrison (a social worker) was visiting the qarmaqs in Apex. In one of the houses, she visited Nutaraaluk and his wife. Their two-year-old son Aatami was sick with tuberculosis. Aatami's father refused to send his son aboard the *C.D. Howe* "because he knew he would never see him again." Harrison told Nutaraaluk and his wife "that it was compulsory, that he had no choice. The kid had to go. He had TB and that was it." Nutaraaluk still refused. Harrison then threatened that if Nutaraaluk refused she would fetch the RCMP. Eventually Nutaraaluk capitulated and Pearson carried Aatami out to the car.

Some witnesses who spoke before the Commission spoke of loved ones who had died in the South. Thomas Kublu spoke of his father's death. "It was the most emotional and difficult time for me. One of the major hardships

I've had in my life." His father had been sent to a hospital in Quebec for tuberculosis treatment. There, he was confined to a bed. "He was emotionally very unhappy being confined and with the loss of freedom of movement. It bothered him emotionally and he became very depressed. He died shortly after . . . in the spring of 1952." No one informed the family that he had died. When the *C. D. Howe* returned in August, Kublu and his family expected to welcome back their father but "there was no sight of [him] but [the] belongings [that] were handed over to [them]." Thomas explained that not being informed about his father's death was "disheartening and you feel minimized as a human being because they do not bother to follow up or inform you about death in the family, your own father especially." He went on:

> It makes me realize that we Inuit were not important enough to be given the courtesy [of being] informed about the death of our father. I began to realize that the authorities, the Qallunaat, did not value us as worthy human beings. This was very hurtful to us to be lied to and waiting my father's return home. The shock of learning about his death when we expected to welcome him home is one of my painful memories; it is one of the first experiences when the colonizers treated us very poorly as human beings. I began to see that there was no respect or concern for us as human beings.

Many evacuated Inuit eventually did return north, but some were too weak to ever return to the land. The Department of Native Affairs established rehabilitation centres at Iqaluit, Hall Beach, and Rankin Inlet to help Inuit adapt to post-sanatorium living, and specifically to become more self-sufficient in the modern economy. Trades, money management, home economics, sanitation, and business skills were taught. These centres played a necessary role in caring for returning patients, but they also tried to play an important role in integrating Inuit into the wage economy.

Other people who were returned to Qikiqtaaluk from southern sanatoriums were sent to the wrong communities instead of being sent home. Often the misplacement of Inuit was a result of language difficulties, haste, and even bungling. With Inuit who spoke little to no English and Qallunaat in hospitals and vessels who spoke no Inuktitut, there were many opportunities for things to go wrong. Inuit were labelled with tags that they could not read. So although their homes were in Cape Dorset they might have been tagged for delivery to Clyde River. They would have been unable to explain or protest their own misplacement. Grygier reported that one man committed suicide after being delivered to a place he did not know and with no way to get home.

The QTC has heard more stories about the misplacement of Inuit. Martha Flaherty was part of the High Arctic relocations. She and her family were moved to Grise Fiord while her sister, Lucy, was in a southern sanatorium receiving treatment for tuberculosis. Lucy was returned to Nunavik, but no one realized that her family was no longer there—they were in the High Arctic. Lucy was then shipped to Resolute. It was not until the following year that Lucy, Martha, and the rest of the family were finally reunited in Grise Fiord. These mistakes caused anguish for her father.

Temela Okpik's story is equally disturbing. Okpik told the QTC that he had been sent from his ilagiit nunagivaktangat near Kimmirut in 1956 to a southern hospital for treatment of tuberculosis. He spent the next three years down south before finally boarding the *C.D. Howe* to be sent home. A measles outbreak occurred in southern Qikiqtaaluk that year and passengers destined for Kimmirut, including Okpik, were diverted to Resolute, over 1,600 kilometres away. The following winter Okpik was again transferred, this time to Iqaluit. He was finally returned to his camp when an Inuk leaving Iqaluit by dog team agreed to bring Okpik home. Temela Okpik had been away almost six years—his journey home from the sanatorium alone had taken more than two.

SCHOOLING

By the early 1950s, the government abandoned earlier erratic attempts to provide schooling in the ilagiit nunagivaktangit and started building and staffing schools in the settlements. Some Inuit moved to the settlement so their children could attend school and work towards a job in the wage economy. To accommodate unaccompanied children in the settlements, the government built hostels. These were meant to be a gentler alternative to sending young children to far-off residential schools, and were sometimes supervised by Inuit.

Not every parent wanted their children to abandon traditional learning for western schooling; many were coerced into sending their children to settlement schools. This affected almost all Qikiqtaalungmiut, prompting one witness, Ruth Sangoya, to lament, "Our children were disappearing." Inuit felt they had no choice but to send their children into the settlements when the social worker, teacher, or RCMP officer came to their ilagiit nunagivaktangat and told them attendance was mandatory. Both the written record and Inuit testimony demonstrated that some Inuit were threatened with the loss of family allowance if they did not send their children to school. Gordon Rennie, long-time HBC post manager and a resident of Nunavut, told the QTC:

> When the Federal Government was here they encouraged all of the people in the camps. Or the word I had was that they were "encouraging" the people in the camps to move into town so that their children could go to school with the idea, I think, of learning English. You know, I don't have that word for word, but we assumed that. Then there was sort of an unspoken indication that if these people didn't follow directions well then they could have their family allowance rescinded.

Government records reveal that the threat of the suspension of family allowances was an accepted method of deterring truancy, albeit a largely unsuccessful one. In some cases where this did not work, people were threatened with prison. Annie Shappa's father was one of these people:

> When we were moved to Arctic Bay, we were picked up by Ski-Doo . . . I remember being taken to the community to go to school. My father was advised that if there was any social assistance, they would be charged or sent to jail, if he didn't comply with us going to school.

At Clyde River, Thomasie Panniluk told Commissioner Igloliorte how dislocations and evacuations tore his family apart. Panniluk and his stepfather were sent south for tuberculosis treatment in 1956. Although Panniluk was sent home a year later, his stepfather was not. Panniluk was too young to support the family at that point, so the government moved his family to another settlement where they would have easier access to social programs. Panniluk's mother was then evacuated in 1959 for medical reasons and Thomasie was sent to live in Qikiqtarjuaq so that he could attend school. The impact on his family was devastating:

> That was a hard time for me because I didn't have my parents with me. I had to go to school, stay in some sort of hotel. It was called residential school at the time. So, not too long after that there was another incident during which my brother and my step-brother Noah died in Cape Dyer. His place burned down. It was burned down with the fire of course. I was without my parents, my brother was gone. My real father had died. Those kinds of things . . . it was so hard.

On returning north, many Inuit found members of their family had been removed for schooling or for health reasons. The close kinship groups that

defined many ilagiit nunagivaktangit were ravaged by the relentless removal of family and friends. Removing even one member of the small kin-based camp could be devastating for the whole family or ilagiit nunagivaktangat.

VOLUNTARY MOVES

Similar to other voluntary migrations that have occurred around the world, some moves were undertaken by Inuit searching for a better life for themselves or their children. They were attracted to settlements for a variety of reasons, including schools, family members who had already moved, employment, health services, and government offers of permanent housing. In many communities, promises were made to Inuit about what they could expect if they lived in the settlements. When Moses Kasarnak was asked by QIA interviewers if he was "forced" to move to a settlement he replied, "We were never told to move. Since we were coming back here often, we decided to stay here." He went on to say: "We were just very happy that we were going to get a house here . . . We were directly told that if we moved we would get a house and that it would have a table and dishes. It was like Christmas that we were going to get all these things."

For some Inuit, the relative ease of settlement life was appealing compared to the difficult conditions that could exist in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. On the land, periods of plenty were contrasted by times of hunger—the economy was dependent on the volatile fur markets, and health care was hard to access. Peter Akpalialuk told Commissioner Igloliorte about the challenges of subsistence living in camps. "When food was scarce it was stressful times worrying when the next food will come from and when. It was how we lived and it was a hard life but we did not know any other lifestyle so it was still a satisfactory life for us." People admit that ilagiit nunagivaktangat life could be hard, though they also recall the sense of belonging and connection to the land that was part of everyday life.

Some Inuit who voluntarily moved into the settlements might have initially believed their moves to be temporary, but they found themselves living there for more extended periods, and then permanently. When their qimmiit were killed or when they could not afford to maintain a snowmobile for long-distance hunting, a further barrier was placed between them and a return to the land. In the northern Foxe Basin, the number of year-round ilagiit nunagivaktangit had been reduced from eleven in 1950 to only five in 1970. There were, however, seven seasonal ilagiit nunagivaktangit, places where hunters who were not steadily employed in the settlements took their families to hunt and fish in the summer. For these Inuit, and almost everyone else, the decision to move into the settlement was not a choice to abandon traditional practices, but rather a way to relieve some of the pressures of life on the land by taking advantage of settlement services. Inuit did not accept or intend the impact that settlement life had on their culture, language, or nutritional intake.

Perhaps the greatest difference in the experience between those who voluntarily moved and those who were coerced or forced to move is the lingering feeling of powerlessness. One witness, Juda Taqtu, told the QTC, "The government had already prepared our future. That is why life is completely different from what life used to be."

Closing Communities

Occasionally the government withdrew services from places where Inuit were already established, and pressured people to migrate to another nearby community. Noteworthy examples of how communities ceased to exist come mainly from the south of Qikiqtaaluk. Killiniq (Port Burwell) was a substantial settlement on an island where the boundaries of Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut met. It was difficult to supply by air and lost its ser-

vices and population in the 1970s. Inuit, whose kin connections were with Nunavik and not with Qikiqtaalungmiut, were relocated to nearby Nunavik communities. Further west on Nottingham Island, not far from Cape Dorset, closure of a weather station in 1970 led to the breakup of a small community of Inuit, mainly station employees, which had existed there since the 1940s.

Paallavvik (Padloping Island) and South Camp (Belcher Islands) were the sites of government-constructed schools and homes prior to the closings. The closing of these communities and the centralization of services in larger settlements eased the government's administrative burden and reduced the cost of delivering services. In the case of Paallavvik, the government had pressured people to move for several years, but finally made the decision for them by terminating all services there in 1968. In all closings, people's ties to places where they had deep connections, knowledge, and better access to the land's resources were severed or diminished.

PAALLAVVIK (PADLOPING ISLAND)

Inuit along the Cumberland Peninsula had been in contact with Qallunaat since 1824 when whaling vessels began to cruise the eastern shore of Davis Strait. A trading post operated at Kivitoo north of Qikiqtarjuaq from 1912 to 1927, and there was another, more poorly supplied post near Paallavvik about the same time. During the Second World War, the United States Air Force (USAF) established a weather station at Paallavvik, and it became a focal point for settlement by Inuit who hunted in the general area. Beginning in 1955, the Qallunaat presence and impact in the area greatly expanded with the construction of several DEW Line facilities along the Cumberland Peninsula. The biggest of these Inuit habitations was an auxiliary site at Qikiqtarjuaq. The government was anxious to prevent Inuit from becoming dependent on unreliable short-term employment in the area, so

it actively discouraged "loitering" by any of the families except those directly employed on the DEW Line. On one hand, the policy of dispersal still encouraged Inuit to pursue traditional activities and to stay away from Qallunaat settlements. On the other hand, the DEW Line needed Inuit workers and the government helped identify suitable individuals.

The DEW Line site at Qikiqtarjuaq was a terminal for transportation to and from Iqaluit and became the administrative centre for the north coast of Cumberland Peninsula. The government erected a school there in 1960 and a school hostel in 1962. The HBC was a late arrival, opening its post on the island in 1962. From the police point of view, Qikiqtarjuaq was an isolated responsibility of the Pangnirtung detachment, but from this point forward, Qikiqtarjuaq developed as the administrative centre for the Davis Strait coast.

At this time, a small group of thirty-four Inuit lived at Paallavvik, 100 kilometres south of Qikiqtarjuaq. The community had a one-room schoolhouse, a generator, and seven low-cost houses. According to Kenn Harper, who arrived there as a teacher in 1967, the government had been intent on closing the community that year. A group of government representatives arrived in the spring of 1968 and met with the community to explain that the school was to be closed and the generator shut down. Residents were advised to move to Qikiqtarjuaq. According to the government representatives, they would have better housing, a store, better medical care, and easier transportation outside of the community. After the summer hunting season, the families moved to Qikiqtarjuaq. Harper described the moves as coerced, not voluntary, and people who spoke to the QTC agree. Jacopie Nuqingaq told Commissioner Igloliorte:

> They came in to ask us and pressure us to move. They used to have someone come from Qikiqtarjuaq to encourage us to move to Qikiqtarjuaq. They had an Inuit who was the middleman. He was there to encourage us to move on behalf of the Qallunaaq. I real-

> ize that we were passive. We were scared of Qallunaat so we did whatever they said. We are passive. We are not retaliating people. We were scared of the Qallunaaq. We didn't want to move because we had no plans to move here. When we got here, our dogs were slaughtered and we had no choice. My father had a Ski-Doo at a later time.

Joshua Alookie said his parents were promised running water, good housing, good schooling, and employment opportunities in Qikiqtarjuaq. Alookie's parents had to wait almost twenty years after relocating before they had indoor plumbing.

SOUTH CAMP IN THE BELCHER ISLANDS

Sanikiluaq (formerly known as North Camp) is located on Flaherty Island, one of the larger of the Belcher Islands. In 1959, a school opened at the southern end of Flaherty Island at the site that became South Camp. More than a dozen children were enrolled in the school by 1960–61, many of whom were moved to South Camp from ilagiit nunagivaktangit even though the government was uncertain about whether it wanted to continue providing services in the Belcher Islands or establish a single permanent settlement. At one point, in an effort to keep people away from enclaves, it proposed putting the school in one place and the HBC in another.

In 1967, a newly arrived area administrator encouraged members of his adult education group to meet to discuss local governance, including the controversial issue of centralizing services in one community. He reported that Inuit "unanimously" agreed that the "creation of one larger community from the present two would solve many problems and hasten progress." In 1968, Don Bissett, an area survey officer, reported that the existing school site, South Camp, lacked the abundance of marine mammals that a unified

settlement would need. A meeting was held in Ottawa in March 1969 to determine whether the development of the Belcher Islands would occur at Sanikiluaq or at South Camp, and to identify the priorities for development. Without explanation, the memo concluded that the meeting decided, "All future expansion of facilities would be carried out in the northern settlement."

People in Sanikiluaq spoke to Commissioner Igloliorte about meetings held to determine which community would be developed. Sanikiluaq was preferred as a location by the government and more people lived near there than around South Camp. In 1969–70, the people near South Camp came under enormous pressure to move quickly to Sanikiluaq. Mina Eyaituq told the QTC, "The government officials came to us, social workers came to us. We were living in a tent. Every time I think about it, I shiver. He told us that we were being relocated to North Camp and that if we didn't the government was not going to assist us in any way."

People also recalled that the government provided no assistance for the relocations—people moved on their own by boat, snowmobile, and dog team. Some groups became separated while others became stuck in the ice or had to carry a boat over land. With no radios, limited rations, and crowded boats (including Elders and young children), the move was dangerous. Upon arrival in Sanikiluaq, promised housing had not arrived. Many of the relocatees had left what little possessions they had behind, expecting the necessities of life to be provided for them in Sanikiluaq. Lottie Arragutainaq told the Commission about her experience:

> I was almost the last one in South Camp. Everybody had moved here [to Sanikiluaq] but I refused to move. On the way here we ran out of supplies because of the fog during the day we tried to move here . . . We left our houses with only our clothes that we were wearing; we left everything else behind . . . thinking that we were coming back. When we moved here there was no assistance

> of any kind. We just walked out of our houses. It was a very sad event for me.

Other residents also testified about the inappropriate and insufficient number of houses in Sanikiluaq. Annie Appaqaq-Arragutainaq, who had already been moved to South Camp in 1962, was with the first group that was moved to North Camp. She told the Commission, "We were going to be boarding with other people when we came here it turns out . . . The houses had not been built yet."

Emily Takatak experienced great uncertainty and confusion about the details of the move.

> We didn't even know we were relocating here, we just thought we were coming here for a short time. We didn't take any belongings. Even my babies didn't have anything; nothing to comfort them. During the night, my children were cold. We thought we were going to go home right away and then we realized we were moving here. They didn't give us any sort of transportation to pick up our belongings. We were put in a homemade shack. In the evening, in that house, we didn't even have a pillow to sleep on, we didn't carry anything. All our belongings we left behind. We took only necessary clothing, changes for the children. We thought we were going back home right away, we didn't know how long we were going to be here, nobody informed us how long we were coming here or why. I felt very poor here. In the evening, when they realized we didn't have anything to sleep on, people gave us stuff to sleep on.

Appaqaq-Arragutainaq also recalled the sadness of seeing families with children arriving in Sanikiluaq:

> Early spring they were coming here by boat and they got no assistance from anyone. And no wonder children were hungry and had no energy because of hunger. One infant was still being breastfed. One lady breastfeeding would breastfeed other children. They were surrounded by ice so they ended up walking here. I remember that, it was in 1970. They had gone through great hardship; children were hungry and had no more energy.

Conclusion

Qikiqtaalummiut experienced a mix of voluntary, pressured and forced moves between 1950 and 1975, usually in response to government priorities. The federal government's primary goals were often contradictory. One the one hand, it wanted to keep Inuit self-sufficient through hunting or wages. At the same time, it wanted to ensure that they lived in government-created permanent settlements where it would be cheaper to provide education, health and other government services. When Inuit chose to move, they were often given assurances that they would find housing, proper schooling, income support and health care. Some people misunderstood what they were told, but others were given empty promises.

Qikiqtaalummiut suffered what scholars have called "domicide" (the killing of one's home) when they left the land. For Inuit, the loss of home is more than the loss of a dwelling; it is a disruption of a critical relationship of people with the land and animals. It represents the loss of independence and replacement of a way of life.

"Powerlessness" was a common theme in what Inuit told the QTC. At one QTC workshop, participants agreed that the government took advantage of the fact that Inuit lived in a difficult environment. Transportation and

communications in Qikiqtaaluk were limited and remained in the hands of Qallunaat. As a result, Inuit were left with few, if any, opportunities to return to ilagiit nunagivaktangit after moving into the settlements. The mass dislocations, removals and evacuations of people for health, education, or economic reasons made Inuit dependent on government and diminished their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and personal autonomy.

The impact of movements on Inuit society is closely linked to Inuit sense of place and kinship. An entire generation of youth lost contact with the land and, as a result, lost a fuller understanding of Inuit culture, language and practices. The government failed to address the social and psychological impact of multiple moves or traumatic moves on people in this period. This paper has not dealt with current problems facing the Qikiqtaalummiut. Emerging scholarship on trans-generational trauma clearly demonstrates the strong linkage between events in the past and problems in the present. It is hoped that a better understanding of these linkages will be a starting point to remedy current problems born out of the relocations, evacuations and dislocations the Qikiqtaalummiut experienced.

Endnotes

Introduction

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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.

Commissioned by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, this book and the companion volume of community histories weave together testimonies and documents collected during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission in the hopes of achieving Saimaqatagiiniq, peace between past opponents.