
From: Tapardjuk Sr., Louis

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2009 12:04 PM

To:

Cc:

Greetings everyone, and Happy New Year to you and your staff;

I would like to take this opportunity to express my best wishes to you in the third assembly of Nunavut Government. Though, I have had a few discussion with you since the Premier assigned me two important portfolio in the Social Envelope of the Nunavut Government. You, no doubt have read my thoughts and heard my words about my position in the development of out fledgling government when it comes to culture and languages.

I wanted to refresh my commitment to the people that elected me to the office of the legislator, an honour I take seriously. I would not serve you justice if I was not to share my refresher thoughts on IQ issues in the government, especially, if my expectations from you on departmental policies will be realized.

Every now and then, I need to remind myself how and why IQ became the defining framework for the Nunavut governance. Nunavut has adopted the concept of IQ as a guiding principle in public policy and institutional practice.

It was hoped that if and when IQ is assigned a more comprehensive and central rôle in Nunavut, it would counter the endemic social ills, as traditionalist like me, believe that these problems are seen as having their root cause in rapid social change and disruption, and the formulation of IQ policies and programs would restore harmony by slowing down and reversing the linked "loss of cultural traditions, sense of pride and dignity, which in turn restores self esteem.

IQ The definition chosen reflect Nunavut's desire for self government as well as the commonly shared stance among Inuit that their knowledge can be defined. It aims primarily at convincing outsiders of the value of TK, but rather at underscoring the point that Inuit culture will be the underlying principle of governance. In defining IQ as encompassing "all aspects of traditional Inuit culture," the problematic involved in formulating definitions was circumvented by referring it to a definition of what is traditionally Inuit. Although traditional Inuit culture is said to include certain aspects, it is said to exclude anything, other than everything non-traditional. Since tradition itself is problematic concept in that it is always changing, nothing has really been said, besides subtle message that defining IQ is the business of those who versed in and living Inuit traditional culture. By extension, running Nunavut's public affairs becomes an operation that should be carried out by Inuit themselves, and especially by, or at least in close cooperation with, those individuals who know the most about Inuit tradition.

Some, members of the Nunavut Legislature, (Polar Bear Quotas, for instance) has questioned and see IQ as an entity that is not guaranteed to have a prominent role simply because Inuit are governing themselves. I perceive a need to differentiate between Inuit participation in government and adequate incorporation of IQ. But this conceptualization of IQ is not intended to create a certain abstract framework with an existence and justification independently of the

people it is supposed to serve. rather, the goal is to involve those individuals –Elders- in the social life of Nunavut, who could contribute to counteracting the effects of rapid social change and disruption by providing cultural and social cohesiveness.

In traditional Inuit life, people's response to an antisocial behaviour were flexible, primarily based on judgement of the person involved and the circumstances of the case. As in the Canadian system of social control, the basic aim was to maintain or restore order and peace. However, the method used to reach this purpose differed. The important principle of justice through punishment found within the Euro-Canadian legal system, was never an aspect of Inuit social control. Inuit responses to antisocial behaviour aimed at re-socialization on the individuals by pointing the adverse consequences of their non-social behaviour on others, and providing an example of proper behaviour through display of showing care to others.

In the present Canadian judicial system leaves too little room for reconciliation and that it takes months, even years, to resolve conflicts in courts, usually at great cost. During this time, the conflicting parties are forbidden to have any contact. The person who is facing a charge is under great stress waiting for an outsider to resolve the conflict for them. It is a known fact, that many cases facing charges have committed suicide. The Canadian justice system has killed more of our young people, through suicide, than were ever murdered, in any given period.

Inuit way of handling conflicts emphasize reconciliation, knowing that the people involved must remain in the community. However, serious offenders must be incarcerated.

Often, in cases of domestic disputes, both parties share the blame but, according to the criminal code, the person who gets physical is charged, even though the other party may have initiated the conflict. Often, the male is charged even though the conflict may have been initiated by the female partner. In the Inuit way of handling disputes, both parties would be quizzed about the problem. When one party is able to admit fault, reconciliation begins immediately, with no fines, or punishment imposed. The involvement of social services and police in marital problems is contributing to a growing number of divorces. Parental and Elders' was better than interference by social workers or other qallunaat.

In defining and using the term IQ – the cultural distinctiveness of Inuit knowing is emphasized. Once the concept is in place, it has values attached to it. IQ becomes a symbol for, among other things, cultural, environmental, and humanitarian values and concern, which can be furthered defined, to Inuit Societal Values.

Thus, the importance of ISV project comes into play. In my opinion, Nunavut Government should strive for a government that is for the people and by the people, that it governs.

Lastly, I remind myself that may have and will continue to question the accuracy of the term currently known as "IQ", since it embraces as many definitions as there are people, but whatever term used refer to our distinct characteristics as Inuit, it needs to be used as a guiding principle. Your challenge to my thoughts are most welcome as we enter a new era in our Government.

Louis Tapardjuk