

# Circumpolar Conference begins in June

By JEFF RICHARDSON

A friend dropped by recently to remind us that the Inuit Circumpolar Conference is coming up soon. Beginning June 13, an international delegation of Inuit Eskimos will gather in Barrow to

discuss mutual problems. The conference is the brainchild of North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson.

Mark Gordon, newly appointed Executive Director of Inuit Taparistat of Canada (ITC), recently travelled to Barrow to discuss plans for the 18-man Canadian Inuit delegation to attend the conference.

"Our friend" is Greg Fisk, who is helping ITC prepare for the conference. He said Gordon, 24, was formerly the senior negotiator for the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, which led the fight for a Northern Quebec and James Bay land claims settlement.

Fisk described the talks between Gordon and Hopson as "very positive. He said the

Canadian delegation will consist of six at-large representatives from ITC, and two representatives each from Labrador, Northern Quebec, Baffin Island, Keewatin, the Central Canadian Arctic and the Mackenzie River Delta.

In addition there will be 18-man delegations from Greenland, Alaska and, it is still hoped, the Soviet Union.

Jon Buckholdt, assisting Hopson with conference preparations said the chances of a Soviet Inuit delegation are decreasing.

"Eben went to the Soviet Embassy last year and we haven't heard from them since," Buckholdt said.

Fisk said the purpose of the conference is "to talk about being Inuit people living under four flags. High on the list is coastal zone management throughout the Arctic."

He said some of the environmental problems facing Inuit are offshore oil leasing in the Beaufort Sea, oil and gas exploration in the high Arctic islands, hydro-electric problems in Quebec, and offshore drilling off Labrador and between

Baffin Island and Greenland.

Buckholdt said the conference is being viewed as a charter or constitutional convention for an international Inuit

Assembly. He said the delegates hope to form a permanent organization to promote cooperation and communication between Inuit by the end of the conference.