



DRAFT CHARTERS CICULATE – North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson (right) raises a point at the meeting of the Inupiat Circumpolar Conference's Executive Resolutions Board meeting held in Inuvik, NWT, July 16 and 17. Former Barrow pastor, the Rev. Charles White is on the left. See story page six.

ICC charters produced

When NSB Mayor Eben Hopson hosted the first organizational meeting of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)

in Barrow two years ago, his hope was for the 52 delegates (18 each from Alaska, Canada and Greenland) would draft and adopt a constitutional charter for the organization so that the ICC could immediately begin work on the international environmental problems posed by Arctic offshore oil and gas operations.

It didn't work out that way.

Alaska and Greenland were willing, eager even, but the Canadian delegation, led by the Inuit Tapirisat (Eskimo Brotherhood) of Canada, balked. The Canadian Inuit, negotiating for

land claims settlements at a time when the Province of Quebec was talking separatist politics, knew Prime Minister Trudeau's government was nervous about the Native land claims movement, and suspected it of being yet another brand of separatism.

The rhetoric of the Dene Declaration issued earlier by Canada's Dene seemed to support these suspicions, and Canada's Inuit delegates to the ICC were cautiously trying to avoid unnecessary provocation. And they felt their participation in Barrow in drafting an ICC

charter would cause political provocation both in Ottawa and Montreal.

The only Canadian Inuit supporting immediate charter development were the Inuvialuit delegates from the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement (COPE) in the Canadian Western Arctic, but even they understood and sympathized with the reluctance of their fellow delegates from the Eastern Arctic. So a compromise was struck. The assembly would establish the Inuit Circumpolar Conference as a continuing organization, and a 12-person Interim Committee was established with four members from each nation to pound out a charter document for ratification at the next general assembly.

Progress was made on this project, but with great difficulty. After two years of effort, two proposed drafts emerged out of a July 16-17 meeting of the Executive Resolutions Committee meeting in Inuvik, NWT held at the invitation of Sam Raddi, COPE president and long-time leader of the Inuvialuit land claims movement.

The twelve persons Interim Committee proved to be too unwieldy and expensive, and after meeting twice, the last time in January, 1978, failed to meet again. Work on charter drafting had been led by Greenland's Dr. Robert Petersen of the University of Copenhagen's Institute of Eskimology.

After waiting for a year, ICC Chairman Eben Hopson called a meeting in early 1979 of the three man Executive Resolutions Committee in New York City to discuss what should be done to get the stalled charter drafting back on track. This Committee, consisting of Alaska's Willie Hensley Labrador's Bill Edmunds, and Professor Petersen, decided to produce their own charter draft proposal, and to begin organizing the second General Assembly of the ICC. After meeting with U.N. officials who urged them to continue their efforts to produce a charter, they agreed to meet again in Greenland during its home rule inaugural in late March. A single document emerged from that meeting in Nuk, and

it was agreed another meeting would be held in Inuvik, NWT in July.

Political differences between COPE and the ITC had apparently caused COPE's suggestions for charter language not to be forwarded to Edmunds for the New York meeting. ITC wrote to suggest charter drafting should be delayed, and did not forward COPE's suggestions to the Committee. Hopson was anxious to confer with the Inuvialuit leadership before charter drafting was completed. He was also anxious to confer with Raddi and his people about the text of the U.S.-Canadian Caribou Convention released in early July by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and talk about cooperation between COPE and the NSB to survey and monitor the impact of Beaufort Sea offshore operations. Convention released in early July by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hopson chartered to Inuvik with a party of 13. As soon as he arrived, he met with COPE leadership and learned their earlier efforts to influence the charter had somehow gone awry. And Bill Edmunds, unable to come to Inuvik, appointed Raddi's assistant, Nelson Green, to serve as his alternate on the Committee. Over the next two days, modifications were made to the draft produced in Greenland, and it was decided the Committee would now circulate two drafts for comment and review: both the Committee's draft, and COPE's draft. The Committee agreed to meet again in September to consolidate these two drafts with any other language that might be submitted to the Committee by then after the two drafts were reviewed by the regional leadership in Alaska and Canada and by the Greenland government.

Hopson and Petersen were anxious to circulate these drafts now so as to give Greenland's landsting members time to consider them before they held their first meeting in September when it is hoped they will vote to host the second General Assembly of the ICC in July, 1980.

After discussing the proposed text of the Caribou convention, it was agreed the NSB would support Inuvialuit opposition to the convention as it is now written. Recognizing the treaty will have to be rewritten to overcome the objections of the opposition of Native hunters and the State of Alaska, it was agreed COPE and the NSB

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would join to organize an Inuit Caribou Habitat Commission, and planned to conduct an organizational planning meeting in Barrow in late August, 1979.

At the suggestion of Mayor Hopson, NSB Health Department Director Else Patkotak sent her representative Bob Worl to discuss a cooperative community health surveillance program for villages being impacted by Beaufort Sea oil and gas

operations. Unlike Alaska land claims organization which depended in the early days upon income gleaned from the operation of health and social service programs, COPE has not become involved in such services in their region, and has very little influence upon the delivery of health, education, and social services in their region. These are still controlled by the Canadian Federal Government, and COPE officials were not sure their Government officials would be interested in cooperating in the long-term community impact surveillance project proposed by the NSB. It was agreed Worl would work up a written proposal with the communities of Nuiqsut and Kaktovik for consideration by the NSB Health Board and the COPE board of directors. It was also hoped the Beaufort Sea operators on both sides of the border would participate, especially Dome/CANMAR's Beaufort Sea Community Advisory Committee and SOHIO-BP's newly-organizing village community relations program operating at Kaktovik and Nuiqsut.

Hopson was accompanied to Inuvik by his wife, Rebecca; Kotzebue's Willie Hensley; Kaktovik's Archie Brower and Alice Ageak; NSB staffers Emily Nusunginya, Flossie Hopson, Jerry White, Jon Buchholdt and Vern Metcalf, and ICC consultants Jens Lyberth and Rev. Charles White. Greenland's Robert Petersen flew from Copenhagen to Anchorage where he boarded the NSB charter flight to Barrow and Inuvik. They met with Sam Raddi, Nelson Green, Peter Green, Bob Delurie, Nellie Courniyea.