



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

**Election of the Speaker and a Member of the
Executive Council**

Official Report

Thursday, November 4, 2010

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Members Present:

Honourable Eva Aariak, Honourable James Arreak, Mr. Moses Aupaluktuq, Honourable Tagak Curley, Mr. Ron Elliott, Mr. Adamee Komoartok, Honourable Lorne Kusugak, Mr. John Ningark, Mr. Johnny Ningeongan, Mr. Paul Okalik, Honourable Keith Peterson, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Mr. Fred Schell, Honourable Daniel Shewchuk, Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, Honourable Peter Taptuna, Honourable Hunter Tootoo, Ms. Jeannie Ugyuk.

Prayer

Chairman (Mr. Ningeongan): Members, I call this meeting to order. Before we proceed with today's agenda, I will call upon Member Jeannie Ugyuk to deliver the prayer. Jeannie.

>>Prayer

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. In front of members are copies of today's agenda and the procedures for the leadership selection process which were agreed to by Full Caucus. Do members agree to adopt today's agenda and procedures?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Members, I am pleased to convene today's proceedings of the Nunavut Leadership Forum for the selection of one Member of the Executive Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

As members are aware, Mr. Arreak has resigned as Speaker of the Legislative

Assembly in order to be able to participate in today's selection process.

I will now open the floor for nomination for one position on the Executive Council. I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination. The floor is now open for nominations. Mr. Curley.

Nominations for Cabinet Position

Hon. Tagak Curley: Mr. Chairman, I would like to nominate Mr. James Arreak for the Executive Council member. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Arreak, do you accept the nomination?

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I accept the nomination.

Chairman: Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Mr. Chairman, I would like to nominate Jeannie Ugyuk. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Ms. Ugyuk, do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept the nomination. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Ms. Ugyuk.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): I would like to nominate Cape Dorset's MLA Fred Schell. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Schell, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Schell: Yes, I accept.

Chairman: The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk: I would move that our nominations cease.

Chairman: There is a motion to the close the nominations. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you. There being no more nominations, we will now proceed to the candidates' remarks. Each candidate has up to ten minutes to make remarks. We will proceed in an alphabetical order by surname. Member James Arreak, you may rise in your place and proceed.

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also wish to thank my nominator, Mr. Curley. I am also very grateful to my colleague, sitting on my right, as he nominated me to the position of Speaker. I had the privilege of serving as the Speaker of the House and I appreciated the members for having entrusted me to serve as Speaker this time and for that privilege, I am extremely grateful to all the members.

At this time, I accepted the nomination to stand as a candidate for the Executive Council due to my past experiences both in serving as a committee member and as an employee of the government. In 1974, or thereabouts, up to today, I

started to work with my fellow Inuit in various capacities. If selected to this position, I will not be sitting in a totally strange environment when dealing with the Executive Council.

I initially started in the position of the settlement secretary in the era immediately prior to the GNWT incorporating the settlements as hamlets. When our community of Clyde River was incorporated as a hamlet, I became the SAO. Furthermore, I have served in the capacity of mayor. At one point, I was the mayor and the MLA for our riding during the GNWT era, which was possible in those days.

I have operated my own business in our community for quite a few years. Additionally, here in Iqaluit, in our community of Clyde River, as well as in the Baffin region, I have been involved in various committees and councils ever since I was able to join the labour force as a young adult from 1974 onwards.

As part of this government, I was proud of your actions, especially since the result from yesterday's leadership forum was the same cabinet members. It shows that the government is operating in a manner acceptable to the members and that a working relationship exists that will allow this government to continue its progress.

Mr. Chairman, as we all are aware of today, we did experience a problem that occurred here in Nunavut with the \$50 million and \$60 million cost overruns, which we lowered by making some adjustments in the operations and maintenance budgets.

Additionally, we hear many stories of issues and problems that exist here in Nunavut, especially those related to a non-healthy lifestyle. We have a lot of areas where we can make improvements, especially those issues related to our present lives. Examples I can cite include alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and a related facility in that field which has been long awaited by our residents and that is a treatment centre. This would alleviate some issues, especially for people who want to move on to a better lifestyle.

The government was able to pare down departmental budgets to the tune of a 3 percent cutback. I believe that in order to assist our people, we can make a difference with a much smaller cutback or even for an amount that would not impact our budgets for the departments. This would be for a treatment centre which the people of Nunavut are looking forward to and one that is closer to our homes.

It's also within the *Tamapta* Mandate. It states that this government will open a treatment centre and community-based healing circles. Residents from both communities in my riding, including most Nunavummiut, are hopeful in seeing those types of services made available in Nunavut. The people look forward to seeing such a facility and one of the reasons is that they want healthier communities.

Mr. Chairman, when reports surface, the focus or blames is usually laid on our youth, such as illegal drug abuse, alcohol abuse, amongst many other problems. However, with respect to our youth, I imagine we have some abusers, but we also have many young people who do

not take these substances. There are more abusers in the middle-aged group, including those who peddle in bootlegging and drug dealing here in Nunavut. Many of these issues have spurred our youth to oppose these practices here in Nunavut. The youth of our territory are not the sole group to be blamed for our current situation.

For those of us who are in the older generation, we have to be leading role models to our young people in order to create healthier environments in our communities. Just as there are positive role models, it is also possible to be a bad role model. It's something that I look forward to seeing resolved in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is something that has become a popular term both here in the House and in everyday practice. I was born at a time when Inuit largely lived in camps and my first memories are of growing up in a non-white society in what we now term as outpost camps. Whenever legislation is passed, including draft bills, there is always reference to *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and that they form part of the legislation. However, it is usually not much more than a passing reference, with no thought of actually incorporating *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* into the legislation.

From my personal perspective, I have great faith in *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, especially as it relates to the environment, stewardship, dominion, proper management of wildlife, and respect for our people. Furthermore, in order to incorporate IQ, we have to include all of these areas in order to resolve the issues that surface related to

the environment. This principle would apply to everyone, both in this present day as well as our descendants in the future.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the *Child and Family Services Act* which is mentioned often in this House, I believe it is important to implement this Act because many families have had children sent out of the territory. This is not the only alternative available in this day and age, and we believe that there are better ways to resolve these issues. The children are sent out without any support services provided to the parents and they are the forgotten victims, at least in my opinion, since they never seem to try and provide counselling or corrective actions. It seems that they are treated like an afterthought since they are not advised about their options. Their children are just sent out of the community.

In my riding, both communities are smaller, non-decentralized communities and there are neither GN offices nor any staff. I want to emphasize that I would give more support to the non-decentralized communities as we have quite a few here in Nunavut. When a large project is allocated to a smaller community, it can really impact a community. When our community of Clyde River was chosen as the site for the new cultural centre, I was extremely pleased and proud for that choice. It also showed that Clyde River was not on the backburner because it created jobs and positions for the local people. It also gave a higher profile to the community of Clyde River. I would like to emphasize that I will work hard to make sure that the non-decentralized

communities are included so that they do not feel forgotten here in Nunavut.

When I was a youth, my mother used to advise me about treating everyone equitably and, in that phase of my life, I felt I could do anything, possibly due to this sense of invulnerability youth have. My mother always chided me to treat people equitably. Equality can have many meanings, especially when one is less capable than one's peers and when we are talking about leaders. You have to be able to treat everyone equally, irrespective of their position, and to provide the same level of respect to all of the people. This is one of my basic foundations.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I want to state that irregardless of whether I am selected or not, I promise to treat all of my colleagues equitably. Since Nunavummiut respect this institution, I believe that I can state that the population also respects your representation. I thank you in advance for your chosen candidate for the Executive Council. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. We will proceed to the next candidate, Member Fred Schell. You may rise in your place and proceed.

Mr. Schell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Premier, Ministers, fellow MLAs, and my constituents. I can stand here today to tell you that I accept the decision that members have taken and we have to move on to solve the problems. All members have spoken and

the decision is for this government to move on.

Many government departments have been stripped of budgets in order to carry out their tasks. Hopefully, in the future, the Department of Health and Social Services will properly budget in order to avoid supplementary appropriations. It is not fair that other departments have to take budget cuts for some of the mismanagement in certain departments.

Some of our corporations are in need of help. The Nunavut Business Credit Corporation has just been reorganized and restructured. The Power Corporation has to be examined for efficiency and accountability for the recent request for a 20 percent increase.

Many of our communities are in financial trouble, and without leadership and willing to take responsibility for the health and well-being of the community. We need, as a government, to help all of the communities become self-reliant and spend within their means. The government has been busy dealing with the affordable housing issue in all of Nunavut and didn't have the resources to deal with a lot of the problems in the community.

I will commit to listening and providing answers to the questions and be as transparent as possible. I also pressed our leadership on several other issues, such as liquor control, accountability, transparency, and equity in the capital improvement for all of our communities. I stand before you to make one very serious and clear statement: we must do better. We will take responsibility for

our failings and take necessary corrective action.

Two years ago, I was elected by a large majority of residents in the two communities I represent, Kimmirut and Cape Dorset, to safeguard their interests in this legislature. Three years prior to that vote of confidence from these two communities, I have elected to lead the whole community and council as Mayor of Cape Dorset. During those three years, I was critical of the job our legislature was doing, especially the Housing Corporation.

In all thus far, I spent five years serving my residents and trying to make sure that our territorial government behaves in a responsible and professional manner. The last time I asked my fellow members to consider me on the leadership team of the government, I also made a promise that regardless of what side of the legislature that I sit on, I will work hard to make sure that our government stays the course and provides solutions to the very serious issues affecting our communities. I believe I have kept the promise.

Every chance I had as a regular member, I focused on one of our most important promises and also one of our largest failings, the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Time and again, I brought serious and concerning information to the attention of all of you regarding the corporation's shortcomings. I am here now. The mismanagement of housing trust funds has resulted in the loss and trust of all Nunavummiut and our federal counterparts. We are not finished dealing with this issue.

I believe in our territory. I believe in our ability to address our shortcomings. We are northerners. We are used to adversity, and we have a long history of being fair and just in coming together to overcome all obstacles. My conviction of the success of our territory and our community is backed up by my conviction to communities and residents and local businesses, which are the backbone of all of Nunavut, second only to the health and well-being of family.

In the light of supporting family, my wife and I have committed to the principle when we had our first child, our first daughter, and I stand before you today to say that we are still committed to this ideal and commit to this by deciding to have another child. My wife is currently pregnant with our second child and I am very proud to have the support and conviction of my family in all of my endeavours.

We, my family and the community I represent, are all determined and promise to be part of the solution. I hope that you will give me the opportunity to carry out this promise. I can and will commit to upholding the vision and the direction of our Premier while, at the same time, providing her with the benefit of my commitment to openness, transparency, and good government.

I hope my actions and words of the last two years have shown you the kind of person I am and that you know where I stand on all of the major issues. I know that even now, many of the members on the other side of this legislature agree that my views on some of these issues and I can say this because they have told that to me themselves. If I am chosen to

serve in the leadership of this legislature, I say to you all, "We will do better."

Thank you for listening to me on this one, one more time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Schell. We will proceed to the next candidate. Ms. Ugyuk, you may rise in your place and proceed.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept this nomination. I believe that I can help the people of Nunavut and to help enhance Nunavut. Mining and oil companies are looking at development opportunities in Nunavut. Such development will have to be orderly in such a way that it benefits our lives and help bring self-sufficiency. I believe that isn't often the way development is viewed and I believe I can assist in that way.

I know all of you are aware that I have worked as a social worker and that is one of my strengths which I would take with me if I am elected. I have seen many of those who have looked for assistance and those who do need assistance. That is where my strength is if I am elected.

I also want to turn to another source of strength: our elders. We need elders to have a participatory role in the government and ensure that we accommodate them. Elders have little voice in the legislature here. It is for that reason that, out of respect for our elders, I have accepted this nomination.

We have no healing centres in Nunavut. Right from the day I was elected, I keep

hearing about the need for healing centres with the public asking when we are going get healing centres. Nunavummiut don't want to sit and wait for healing centres. I know that for a fact and I can use it to fight for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. As a matter of fact, there are other addictions we need address as well, such as gambling. We need to be open to everybody, not just for one social ailment.

It seems we are leaving smaller communities behind. As the member had said, the public expects programs and services. It is my wish to take into account the interests of smaller communities if elected. We cannot ignore the smaller communities and cater only to the larger centres in Nunavut.

Also, another issue that I think of is with the private sector. When Nunavut was created and we had a land claims agreement, there initially was great deal of activity but has since slowed down. There seems to have been an increase in barriers to the private sector. If I am elected, I would try and help the private sector.

A common problem with people who want to get into the private sector is in start-up issues, such as qualified bookkeepers. A lot of businesses would succeed if they had adequately trained bookkeepers.

I have discussed this with my husband at length and he fully supports me on this. I thank you for providing support to me and also my family members.

I don't much else to add, so I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Election for Cabinet Position

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. We will now proceed to balloting. The Table Officers will distribute the ballots. I ask all members to proceed to the voting table in an orderly fashion, in the same manner that we did yesterday. Mr. Ningark and Mr. Arreak will be the first ones and then we will go down the line.

>>Meeting recessed at 13:54 and resumed at 14:06

Thank you, Members. The forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that Mr. James Arreak has been chosen to serve on the Executive Council of Nunavut.

>>Applause

Thank you. The appropriate motion will be moved in the House later this afternoon to confirm the selection. I will now ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. Mr. Tootoo. Thank you. The ballots will be destroyed. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Nominations for Speaker

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We will now proceed to the selection of the Speaker. I will now open the floor for nominations for Speaker. I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Paul Okalik for the position of Speaker. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Okalik, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Okalik: I have to. (interpretation) Yes.

>>*Laughter*

Chairman: Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk: I wish to move the nominations close.

Chairman: There is a motion to close the nominations. Mr. Schell.

Mr. Schell: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Ms. Ugyuk for Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): There was a motion to close the nominations. I recognize Mr. Schell for his nomination. Ms. Ugyuk, do you accept?

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Yes, I accept the nomination.

>>*Applause*

Chairman: Are there any other nominations? Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I will try again. I would like to close the nominations.

>>*Laughter*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. Are we in agreement?

Some Members: Agreed.

Election of Speaker

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Members, (interpretation) we will be distributing the ballots; the Table Officers will distribute them. We will proceed in the same manner and we will have the ballots counted. Thank you.

Thank you. The ballots will now be counted. Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. You will be summoned back to the Chamber at the ringing of the bells. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 14:19 and resumed at 14:24*

Chairman: The forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that Member Okalik has been chosen to serve as Speaker.

>>*Applause*

I will now call for a motion to destroy the ballots. Mr. Tapardjuk. (interpretation) Are we agreement?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: I would like to also remind the members that the House convenes at 3:00 p.m. this afternoon. These proceedings are concluded. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

>>*Meeting adjourned at 14:24*