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UQAUHILIRINIRMUT HAVAGVIK NUNAVUNMI
OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF NUNAVUT
BUREAU DE LA COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES DU NUNAVUT

2003

Annual Report

Rapport Annuel

2004



Languages
Commissioner
of Nunavut

2003

Annual Report

2004



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Message from the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut

This Annual report marks the final year of my term as Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, which officially expired December 31, 2003. I will remain in the position until the Legislative Assembly's Ajauqtiit Committee makes a subsequent appointment. The past few years have been a fascinating journey and I would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly for granting me this privilege. Since my appointment in 1999, I have watched with pride and interest as the fledgling Government of Nunavut has continuously innovated to deliver government services that respond to the specific needs of Nunavut.

I have grown to count on the determination of Nunavummiut to keep the government accountable to their language rights. During visits throughout the territory during my term, I have found that Nunavummiut in every region are passionate about their languages. They value their culture and language as essential parts of the overall health of their families and communities. Families I have met with during my term have expressed concern that not enough effort is given to Inuit language policy for children. Many have noticed a marked erosion of Inuit language skills among youth, and attribute this to lack of Inuit language instruction in Schools beyond grade 3 or 4. We are all hopeful that the Department of Education's efforts toward Inuit language curriculum at all grade levels will help to slow this decline.

Throughout this report, you will find notes congratulating people and organizations that have done some exemplary things in advancing their language within the territory. While the Government of Nunavut has made strides each passing year to enhance the use and protection of the Inuit language, English and French, it is the efforts of an involved public that reflect



Congratulations to the Arviaqpaluk Radio Society for their quality Inuktitut radio broadcasts which are involving listeners with creative word games.

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the spirit of Nunavut's rich and multilingual society. We are happy to note that CLEY is continuing the Inuktitut terminology development process, as this activity is essential if any of the Government of Nunavut's language goals are to be realized.

During my term, I participated in a review of Nunavut's inherited *Official Languages Act*, and made several submissions on how I feel the new Act could promote and preserve the Inuit language while continuing to ensure the rights of French and English speakers in the territory. These also included a series of recommendations for a separate *Inuktitut Protection Act*. The Special Committee to Review the *Official Languages Act* concurred with most of my recommendations. I trust that the work of my office and of the Committee will prove valuable to legislators as the new acts are drafted.

I am particularly looking forward to the realization of the development of an Inuktitut Language Authority. A body of experts such as this will be able to approve word lists for government and professional-sector use, enabling Inuktitut to be a working language with all the legal clarity of English or French. This body will also be in a position to make sound decisions on long-term protection of Inuktitut. Our office is working on its final document on the matter; a detailed paper on the model we recommend after our rounds of consultation and study.

I made recommendations regarding the *Education Act*, which has also been undergoing a review process. The first draft of the new Act fell off the order paper; I know this office will continue to keenly monitor the progress made in reviewing and ultimately redrafting this important Act. Language skills begin in infancy and the way our schools hone the language abilities of our children is of unparalleled importance to maintaining the strength of Inuktitut in our territory. Ensuring our children also have a command of English and French will allow them to participate in a more global society. This is paramount to healthy social and commercial growth.

I would like to close this year's message with a thank-you to my staff. Their diligence and passion for the mandate of our office has made my job a pleasure. Thanks also to the staff of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, who provide administrative support to our office. I can trust them to make sure our logistical needs are met, which allows my staff and me to focus on the legislated duties of this office.

Lastly, I would like to thank members of the public who have kept our office busy during my term. It is because the people of Nunavut care so passionately about their language rights that I found it so easy to carry out the duties of this office since 1999. This passion of Nunavummiut for their languages has brought many inquiries, suggestions and comments to us, as well as numerous invitations to visit formally and informally. It has been rewarding to respond to them all, and I have made it a priority to increase the profile of the representative role of this office in order to encourage further communication from the public at large. Thank you again, people of Nunavut, for your continued activism.

Language is culture. Nunavummiut have made it clear that this is a priority for them; the Government of Nunavut was, after all, founded on this principle. It is this enduring belief in Nunavut that gives me hope for the continued health and advancement of our official languages.

Eva Aariak
Languages Commissioner of Nunavut



About Nunavut's Official Languages

Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun

Inuktitut is the largest language group in Nunavut. Seventy percent of Nunavummiut speak Inuktitut as their first language.

Inuktitut is divided up into a number of different dialects, including Inuinnaqtun, which is spoken in the western-most parts of the territory. In this report, whenever the term Inuktitut is used it should be understood to include the Inuinnaqtun dialect, unless Inuinnaqtun is specifically mentioned.

There are two different ways people in Nunavut write Inuktitut: *Qaliujaaqpait* (or Roman orthography) and *Qaniujaaqpait* (syllabics). Most Inuktitut speakers in Nunavut use syllabics to write their language. This writing system is made up of about 60 characters, most of them representing complete syllables. Thus “NU” in Roman orthography is written with one character in syllabics: “ᓃ”. The Roman orthography writing system uses the same letters that are used to write English or French. Many people who normally use syllabics will also use Roman orthography, especially for writing e-mails or when working on computers. Inuinnaqtun speakers almost always use Roman orthography, rather than syllabics.

French

Nunavut's capital, Iqaluit, is home to a thriving Francophone community. The French speaking population is served by a school, a daycare, a community radio station, and a cultural centre that stages various events almost every week of the year.

English

English is also very prevalent in the territory. In the larger centres, English usage is as widespread as Inuktitut usage, especially among Qallunaat (non-Inuit). There are still many unilingual Inuktitut and Inuktitut-first-language speakers in Nunavut, although the number of people with better English than Inuktitut skills is on the rise. English is the de facto language of government and industry. In its *Pinasuaqtavut* document of 1999, the government of Nunavut promised to work toward educating children in our schools to be fully bilingual with strong skills in both languages. This is a strategy they are hoping will achieve another *Pinasuaqtavut* goal: Inuktitut as a working language of the government by the year 2020.

The dedicated efforts of the French-speaking community of Iqaluit should be recognized for their success in developing the French-language education facilities Ecole des Trois Soleils, and Garderie les Petits Nanooks. This School and Daycare provide their children from the age of 2 with the French-language instruction they are entitled to under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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Roles and Responsibilities of the Languages Commissioner

The Languages Commissioner is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, appointed by Nunavut's elected representatives to a four year term. The Languages Commissioner has a number of responsibilities, which are detailed in the *Official Languages Act*, and include:

1. Monitoring

The Languages Commissioner and her staff monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress toward meeting its obligations to Nunavut's official languages under the following documents:

- The *Official Languages Act*
- *Pinasuaqtavut* (the *Bathurst Mandate*), which commits the Government of Nunavut to
 - i. making Inuktitut its working language
 - ii. encouraging bilingualism in Inuktitut and English
 - iii. respecting the needs and rights of French speakers
- The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA), which requires the Government of Nunavut to attain a level of Inuit employment that is representative of the overall population of Nunavut.
 - i. It is to achieve this partly by removing existing barriers to Inuit employment. In negotiations with the Government of Canada regarding the implementation of the land claim, the Government of Nunavut has affirmed that the use of English as its working language constitutes a barrier to employment for the majority of Nunavummiut who speak Inuktitut as their first language.
- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which guarantees that the English and French speaking minorities in Nunavut have the right to have their children educated in their languages.

2. Advisory role of the Languages Commissioner

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is the only institution in Nunavut dedicated entirely to language issues. Through on-going contacts with communities throughout the territory, research activities, and policy work, the Office is able to provide the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the GN with comprehensive recommendations on the best responses to language issues facing the territory.

3. Language Promotion

The Languages Commissioner has an important role in bringing language issues to the public's attention and participating in language promotion activities throughout Nunavut. The Languages Commissioner fulfills this duty by:

- Consulting with communities about the language issues they face and encouraging them to learn and use our official languages: Inuktitut, French and English
- Attending language events organized by communities
- Participating in the organization of the annual *Inuktitut Uqauttin* (Inuktitut Week)
- Maintaining a website with information about Nunavut's languages, language rights and the role of her office
- Participating in interviews with the media
- Addressing conferences on various language issues

The Government of Nunavut has promised to make Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun its working language while respecting the rights of Nunavut's English and French speakers. The Languages Commissioner is monitoring the government's progress and makes recommendations on how to achieve these goals.



4. The Role of Ombudsman

The Languages Commissioner receives, investigates and reports on complaints from the public regarding violations of the language rights contained in the *Official Languages Act*. These include:

- The right to use any of the official languages in Nunavut's courts.
- The right to communicate with and receive services from all head offices of Government of Nunavut (GN) departments and organizations in English and French.
- The right to communicate with and receive services from any regional or community office of the GN in Inuktitut.
- The right to use any of the official languages in the Legislative Assembly.

If a member of the public feels that language rights contained in any piece of Nunavut legislation have been violated, they may launch a formal complaint with the Languages Commissioner. The Office of the Languages Commissioner will then investigate the complaint, and may make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly regarding any actions needed to correct the situation.

How can we help you?

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is here to make sure the Government of Nunavut follows its own laws that deal with language. The *Official Languages Act* contains a number of language rights that the Government of Nunavut is required by law to respect. If you believe that the GN is breaking any part of the *Official Languages Act*, or going against any of its own language-related policies, you can send a complaint to the Languages Commissioner and she will try to resolve the problem.

About Complaints:

We rely on the public to inform us if a GN organization isn't living up to its obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. Infractions that aren't reported to us could continue, and each complaint we receive helps us to identify problems and work with departments to improve Government of Nunavut services in all of our Official Languages.

Although the idea of "complaining" is often considered contrary to Inuit culture, we believe that the idea of contribution to the betterment of society as a whole is fundamental to Nunavut. We conduct our inquiries and make recommendations in the spirit of respect and cooperation with the complainant and the agencies involved.

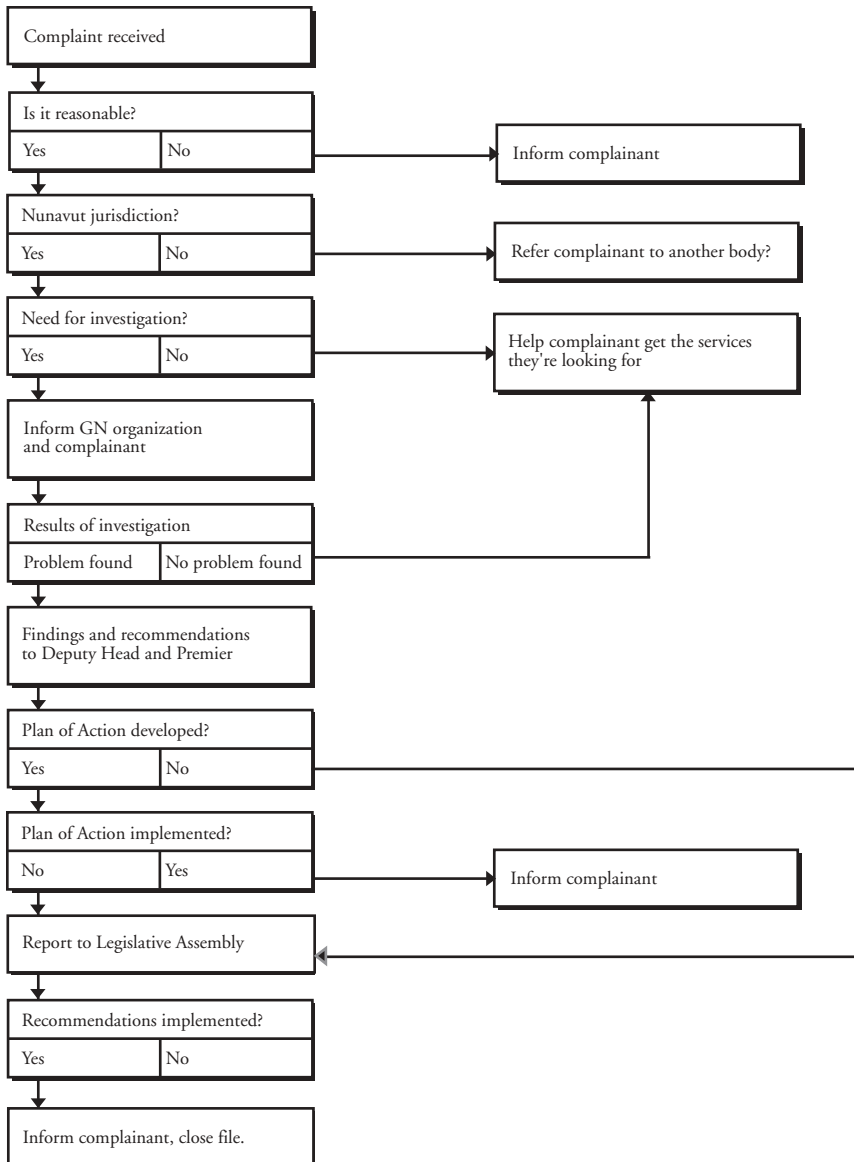
The following flow-chart outlines what we do with a complaint when it's received.

RCMP V division in Iqaluit has begun producing its periodical community newsletters in Inuktitut as well as English. They are to be commended for taking this initiative.

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Complaints Process Flow Chart



If you have a complaint regarding your language rights, or if you have a question about anything in this report, please contact us. You can reach us by mail, telephone, email, or by filling out a simple form on our website. If you are in Iqaluit, please feel free to come by our office and we will be happy to help you.



Activities

Hiring New Staff

The Languages Commissioner continued to complete the staffing of her office in 2003-2004. The position of Policy Analyst replaced the position of Research Officer and was filled as a three-year term in July, 2003. The newly created, indeterminate position of Public Affairs Officer was filled in September. The Commissioner expects the vacant Executive Secretary position to be filled early in the following fiscal year 2004-2005.

Shauna-Leigh Wright moved over from the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to the position of Policy Analyst. A Mi'kmaq originally from Nova Scotia, Shauna brings extensive Aboriginal issue and policy experience. Her background includes study at the Institute of Indigenous Governance and research and policy positions with tribal councils in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. She advises the Languages Commissioner on language policy issues in support of the activities of the Languages Commissioner.

Jonathan Dewar joined the Office as Public Affairs Officer in September 2003. Jonathan brings several years of professional and academic experience in Aboriginal issues and public relations and is responsible for the Office's communications, public awareness, research and education activities. He is of Huron-Wendat and Métis heritage and is also a PhD candidate in Aboriginal Literatures, with specialization in language, literacy and education issues.

Community Visits and Travel

April 2003

- The Commissioner traveled to Kuujuaaraapik, Nunavik, for an Avataq cultural Institute terminology workshop

- The Commissioner was a guest speaker at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

May 2003

- The Commissioner traveled to Cape Dorset for the PGI Literacy Golf Tournament



Tasiuqtigit/Hand in Hand/ Main dans la Main society of Iqaluit has done an exemplary job of running preschool programming in both English and Inuktitut streams, and has family resources available in English, French and Inuktitut.

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January 2004

- The Commissioner traveled to Quebec City with her Policy Analyst and Public Affairs Officer for a series of meetings with members of the Office québécois de la langue français and representatives from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (Ministry of Culture and Communications) to research models for an Inuktitut language Authority



February 2004

- The Commissioner was the keynote speaker at Saint-Paul University's Inuuqatigiit Forum on Conflict Resolution: "Language and Resolution" in Ottawa
- The Commissioner and Public Affairs Officer visited Igloolik to participate in Inuktitut Uqauttin activities, which included meetings with elders, community leaders and students at Attaguttaaluk School, and participation in community radio programming

March 2004

- The Public Affairs Officer traveled to Ottawa for ITK's two-day National Inuit Languages Committee (NILC) meeting on Canadian Heritage's *Aboriginal Languages Initiatives* funding program, among other language issues

Promotional Materials

The OLC produced new promotional materials, which include:

- Two new information brochures for distribution to the general public;
- A poster called "So much to Talk About" featuring the Germaine Arnaktauyok print of the same name for distribution to dignitaries, government departments, schools and learning centres;
- The creation of a bi-annual newsletter in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English and French. Paper and electronic copies will be distributed to the Government of Nunavut and the general public and will be available on the Office website. The first edition will be Summer 2004.

Website Development

In September 2003, the Public Affairs Officer began an extensive evaluation of the existing Langcom website at www.langcom.nu.ca.

The site was found to be deficient in a number of areas. The information was out of date site-wide, with Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and French pages significantly out of date. Information from one language section did not necessarily correspond to others. This was due in large part to the Office having been short-staffed for several months, as well as the inability of staff to update the site in-house; the content at that time was managed by a local service provider.



The site was also technologically out of date and did not reflect recent innovations in Inuktitut computing. The most obvious element was the use of non-Unicode Inuktitut fonts. As the Commissioner is an active proponent of Unicode fonts, particularly the Pigiarniq font developed by the Government of Nunavut, she felt the website should reflect these developments. A simple font conversion to Pigiarniq was not adequate, though. Although widespread, use of Unicode compliant systems is not yet universal in Nunavut. Many users may have to rely on older hardware and software for the foreseeable future. That, coupled with the many Nunavummiut new to computers, meant the downloading of fonts to enable browsers to view Inuktitut content created yet another technological hurdle that affected accessibility and ease of use of Inuktitut on the web.

To overcome these deficiencies, the Commissioner recommended that the site be rebuilt around two Inuktitut-friendly services provided by Iqaluit's Attavik.net – a content management system that will allow OLC staff to maintain the site in-house and the Attavik.net server which enables users' computers to view syllabics without having to download fonts. The site will also be redesigned for increased ease of use and navigability to better suit the significant increase in language-related information available on the site.

The work is expected to be completed for Fall 2004.

Inuktitut Language Authority

The Office of the Languages Commissioner has committed to present a detailed study to the Standing Committee Ajauqtiit on the concept of an Inuktitut Language Authority. We have been developing an idea of how the Inuktitut Language Authority will function within the territory and what kinds of issues it will address.



This Language Authority would be empowered to make decisions about new words being introduced, and other issues related to Inuktitut. During this fiscal year, consultations were conducted to gather feedback on the priorities of Inuktitut language professionals and government employees for the advancement of Inuktitut within Nunavut. The Languages Commissioner and her staff also traveled to Quebec City to consult with officials from the Office Québécois de la Langue Française and representatives from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

In March of 2004, we hosted the first of two key consultation sessions in Iqaluit, which included a panel of Inuktitut language experts, interpreter/translators, and others in the field of language preservation and enhancement. We asked each to name their priorities for an Inuktitut Language Authority and how they see the Authority helping them to do their jobs. Presentations were made by OLC staff, CLEY, NTI and people who work with similar authorities in other jurisdictions like Nunavik and Greenland.

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Our office will be concentrating over the next fiscal year on continuing with consultations and research, and producing a comprehensive report with our detailed recommendations for the Authority.

Departmental Visits

The Languages Commissioner and her staff met with department heads and senior staff of all GN departments and other government agencies during the fall of 2003, including Nunavut's crown Corporations and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. This was in support of her efforts to maintain a close relationship with public service providers in the territory, providing her with first-hand knowledge of the challenges and successes each agency experiences related to official languages.

During the 2000-2001 fiscal year, our office conducted an in-depth survey of the state of Official Language use and services within the government by meeting with the heads of the Government of Nunavut's departments, boards and agencies. We reported our findings in our annual report for that year and made a number of recommendations intended to address the shortcomings brought to our attention. Our more informal meetings this year indicated that there have been some improvements in services that had previously been poor, but that the biggest problems and challenges remain.

While most departments brought up some challenges unique to their activities, several very common themes developed that were repeated in almost every meeting. These were:

Communication

- Decentralized offices sometimes experience communication problems. Other community offices, however, do not experience the problem as commonly because they can utilize more local expertise.

- Even with significant concentrations of Inuit employees, the tendency amongst staff is still to communicate in English
- In conversation, in person or over the phone, Inuktitut speakers generally understand and accept dialectical differences, but written communication often precipitates more debate over terms. In response to this concern, Sustainable Development has presented written documents orally in Inuktitut for group discussion, and this seems to lessen the debate over terms.
- Most departmental offices in Iqaluit have French-speaking staff available to serve the public.
- Some departments are beginning to have senior management committee meetings in Inuktitut as well as English.
- Deputy Ministers generally encourage Inuit staff to speak Inuktitut in meetings and, when necessary, accommodate English speakers by bringing in translators.
- The Pigiarniq font is installed in most new computers, but some people are not in the habit of using it. There are still some Inuktitut speakers who don't have Pigiarniq installed in their systems, either because their computer's operating systems are too old to support Pigiarniq, or because of oversight in the set-up of new computers.

Translation and Interpretation

- Several departments noted that they would love to have one or more interpreter/translators working solely for that department for consistency and expertise in context, subject matter and terminology.
- Legal or technical documents, such as Legislation, are difficult to understand in any language, so translators *and* readers need a specific knowledge set.
- Some forms to be logged into registries are difficult to process in Inuktitut, and impossible (for now) in syllabics if they're national registries.
- All GN departments should go through CLEY for translations, but sometimes CLEY is too busy to meet deadlines so departments have to contract out to private translators.



- Almost every department head we met with noted that more resources for translation at CLEY are necessary. Limited translation staff are overburdened and not compensated competitively. They pointed out the need to look at compensation for interpreters/translators. Many suggested classifying interpreters/translators as professionals and compensating them accordingly. Compensation for GN Translator/Interpreters is not comparable to the private sector.

Quality Control

- There is a need for consistency in terminology; translations can sometimes be too literal or inconsistent. Standardization of terms is absolutely necessary. Terminology workshops are a functioning example of how to develop terminology in a specialized field.
- When we visited departments who had held a terminology workshop hosted by CLEY for field-specific terms, they all felt they were very useful.
 - New terms seem to be working; people are using the terms
 - Once developed, departments can send a list of terms along for translators to use.
- Sometimes sections of large documents are done by different translators using different terms.
- Some people within departments are relied on to proofread important work. Because there are still some poor quality translations being released, proofreading by skilled readers is necessary.
- Many people we met with stressed the importance of TV, Radio and newspapers using proper terms and translations in context because they are modeling terminology to communities.
- Overworked translators and short timelines can lead to literal translations “just to get it done” without really considering the context.

Human Resources

- Government recruitment and retention policies must value Inuktitut language ability/ cultural abilities in the HR structure.
- Some departments said they would like to see Inuit internship programs for the mid-management level.
- Some also noted that the problem with recruiting Inuit from Nunavut is educating the future government workforce in schools, and the low number of people pursuing post-secondary education.

Inuktitut Language Training

- Individuals need to take the initiative to learn Inuktitut or improve existing skills
- Most Deputy Ministers would like to see employees able to continue their training - not just once a year at a beginner level only.

Community Elders' Societies are active across the territory in promoting the Inuit Language and their local dialects. Each society is unique in the activities they plan, but they all meet and host activities to pass language and cultural knowledge on to young people. These groups are finding innovative ways of getting their communities involved, for example the Igloodik Inullariit Society holds an annual language week and they go on the local radio to talk in Inuktitut and bring up old terminology. The Sivulinut Society of Arviat and Whale Cove Elders' Society are also notably active in this way.

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- Many people pointed out that if more people take language training, more will use Inuktitut in the workplace.
- We were told that there is a need for Inuktitut language training for all levels of competence, and not just for Inuktitut as a second language. Many young Inuit in the workforce need Inuktitut enhancement training.
- Inuktitut language training should include a writing component for all employees, and offer Inuktitut keyboard training.
- The workforce is often too strained to spare people for extended training periods. The situation is the same for classroom time; departments can't do without employees for long.
- Managers are generally not willing to commit time and energy to training someone unless they know that person is committed to staying. The following question arose: Should the government invest in training for employees in term positions? It should be noted, however, that sometimes term employees end up staying on for other contracts, or move into permanent positions.
- Some alternate models for language training were suggested, including:
 - Inuktitut speakers paired with non-Inuktitut speakers
 - Putting civil servants in Unilingual homes for a few weeks to live and interact (billeting programs)
 - Some communities have "adoptive Elders" for teachers to go and visit.

The Languages Commissioner and Policy Analyst visited the Department of Human Resources in Iqaluit in the fall of 2004. We discussed Inuktitut language programming and the challenges HR faces in meeting the needs of the GN. Because most of the other departments identified Inuktitut language training as one of their own challenges, we wanted to find out first-hand what HR needs to offer the necessary programming.

The most significant problem with offering Inuktitut language courses, we were told, is finding qualified teachers. Having even one permanent teaching position here in the capital would be very helpful. Currently, instructors are hired on a contract basis with no benefits, job security or housing. One permanent instructor could run 3 courses at once: 2 short sessions in the mornings and an intensive class in the afternoons. The regions have similar problems finding teachers for courses, especially for Inuinnaqtun instruction in the Kitikmeot. Since the Government of Nunavut has stated its goal remains making Inuktitut the working language, it would make sense to reinforce this conviction with the commitment of resources for at least one permanent Inuktitut Instructor position.

The Nunavut Literacy Council deserves recognition for their increasingly visible efforts to promote literacy in our communities and for their support of literacy initiatives in the four official languages of Nunavut - Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English, and French.



Complaints

This year, the Languages Commissioner received four complaints. Two were within our jurisdiction to investigate.

1. We received a complaint in January 2003 that Verification notices sent out for the Nunavut Health Care Plan included forms in English, French, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, but that the forms instructed users to fill out the forms in English only. We contacted the department immediately and informed them that the health forms were in violation of the *Official Languages Act of Nunavut*. During our investigation, we received polite and concerned responses from department staff, explaining the difficulties of logging other language entries into an English-only national database; the department has limited internal abilities to translate such detail-sensitive material. Although we understand the pressures on the department to address other critical issues, we cannot overlook violations of the *Official Languages Act*. Nunavummiut must be able to convey vital health information to the department in the language of their choice. The Department of Health and Social Services must find a way to overcome these barriers and allow Nunavummiut to respond in any of our Official Languages. Despite a series of letters from our office throughout this year, addressed to the Deputy Minister of the department, we have to-date received no official response.
2. It was brought to our attention that a notice sent out July 18 2003 by GN Helpdesk on behalf of the Language Bureau of the department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY) had flaws in the Inuktitut version. Our office sent the Deputy Minister of CLEY a letter notifying the department that we had received a complaint from a member of the public, as well as the nature of the complaint. Upon notification, CLEY conducted an internal review of the events that led to the complaint. They concluded that although the Inuktitut

text as it was sent out contains a number of problems with syllabic finals, it was still understandable. CLEY acknowledged that the quality of the translations produced is a serious concern. The Department suggests that significant improvements in the situation will depend on a restructuring of the Language Bureau to include a comprehensive system of reviewing and correcting publications before they are sent out to the public. CLEY is currently looking at the financial and human resources that will be necessary to build that capacity within the Bureau. Our office feels that senior management and staff of CLEY have been very cooperative and proactive regarding this complaint and the issue of quality control in general.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2003 Government of Nunavut Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun Language Awards. The public was invited to nominate people from their community who they felt contributed greatly to the preservation and promotion of the traditional Inuit languages. This year's winners were: Gwen Ohokak of Cambridge Bay for her work on developing an Inuinnaqtun dictionary and Eelee Higgins of Iqaluit for her work in teaching Inuktitut.

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We often receive complaints that turn out to be outside of our jurisdiction to investigate. I have made recommendations to expand the reach of Nunavut's *Official Languages Act*, and consequently the authority of the Office of the Languages Commissioner, but ultimately implementation of my recommendations is up to the Legislators. I would encourage the public to contact my office now and in the future for any concerns they have regarding their language rights. Even if the issue involves agencies that will remain outside of our authority, such as a federal government agency, our office plays an important advocacy role. We will make every effort to help the public address their issues with other agencies.

Nunavut's *Official Languages Act* grants the Languages Commissioner the authority to conduct and carry out investigations on her own initiative and report and make recommendations with respect to her findings. Our office has been carrying out one such investigation over the last year.

The Languages Commissioner noticed that Nunavut Power Corporation (NPC) was issuing invoices in English only to households throughout Nunavut. In informal and written communications with officials at NPC, the Office of the Languages Commissioner was repeatedly informed that bills including Inuktitut were forthcoming, and the latest letter from NPC's President and C.E.O, Robert Gunn, assures us that translated invoices will be issued prior to the Legislative Assembly sitting in November 2004.



Recommendations

- 1) One of the biggest obstacles to reaching the Pinasuaqtavut goal of Inuktitut as a Working Language is training government staff to be proficient in Inuktitut. I feel this will take quality curriculum and consistent instruction by talented and well-trained instructors. I recommend that funds and appropriate support be put in place within the Department of Human Resources to provide for one full-time indeterminate Inuktitut Language Instructor. Qualifications and compensation for this position should be at an appropriate level to attract candidates with skill and experience to teach quality Inuktitut at all levels of proficiency. A full time instructor would be able to run beginner, intermediate and advanced Inuktitut courses simultaneously throughout the fall-spring seasons, with a planning and development period allocated during the summer.
- 2) I recommend that the department of Health and Social Services take all steps necessary to bring their communications practices into compliance with the *Official Languages Act of Nunavut*. They must take appropriate measures to ensure that Nunavummiut can communicate to them in person, in writing or by any other means in the Official Language of the citizen's choice. I further recommend that the department assign one of their Assistant Deputy Ministers to oversee the adherence of the department's communications to the *Official Languages Act*, thus ensuring that the department does not ignore its obligations under the Act in the future.
- a) I recommend that Cabinet direct each Government of Nunavut department to inventory all forms sent out to the public and ensure all are made available in Inuktitut (and/or Inuinnaqtun when required), French and English as outlined in the Official Languages Services Guidelines written by CLEY, and that the government accept forms completed by members of the public in any official language.
- 3) I have found that there are occasions when Inuktitut-speaking officials of Nunavut speak in English to address the public or the press at public events. I would like to suggest that GN officials take these opportunities to communicate in Inuktitut. As a general rule, to promote the vision of Nunavut as a truly multilingual society, public speakers should speak their first language first.

My congratulations to the volunteers of the Nunavut Bilingual Education Society for their efforts in producing teaching material for the territory over the past few years. They deserve recognition especially for the release of Taiksumani ("Long ago"), an illustrated book of Inuit myths and legends, printed in Inuktitut and English.

4) Members of the public should be able to access services in person or by phone in Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun, English, and French. The Department of CLEY has written a set of Language Service Guidelines stating that headquarter offices must be able to serve the public in all official languages, and that community offices must be able to serve the public in any official languages for which there is a significant demand. I am pleased to note that most departments we met with had employees with these language skills available to respond to members of the public. Merely identifying employees with a given set of language skills, however, does not guarantee a department can properly serve the public. I would like to recommend that employees designated to serve the public in any official language be given the training necessary to properly discern what services are needed, and then direct members of the public to where they may be accessed.

A recommendation from previous years that I would like to re-iterate:

In two previous years, I have made recommendations similar to this. I would like again to recommend that training be offered in the use of Unicode Inuktitut fonts and taken advantage of by anyone in the GN who works in Inuktitut syllabics. I further recommend that the GN place a priority on upgrading the hardware, operating systems and/or any necessary software used by GN employees who use or wish to use Syllabics but are forced to use older fonts because their outdated systems will not support Pigiarniq.



2004-2005 Workplan

Inuktitut Language Authority

Consultations will continue on the Inuktitut Language Authority during the next year. The second session will include senior bureaucrats within the Government of Nunavut and will focus mainly on developing a model that fits within our current government structure and resources, and the avenues to take in forming an effective Inuktitut Language Authority.

We will then begin to write our special report on the need, process and logistics for instituting an Inuktitut Language Authority for presentation to the Standing Committee Ajauqtiit in the fall of 2004.

Dialect Study

We will send out a request for proposals in April 2004 for a research study on best practices and suggested innovations for the identification and preservation of distinct dialects of threatened languages. This research paper will speak specifically to ways of identifying and preserving distinct dialects of Inuktitut that are within the powers of the Government of Nunavut to implement.

The study will involve research into the practices of other jurisdictions that have made efforts to identify, preserve and rejuvenate distinct dialects of a given language, such as the governments of Greenland, Spain and any other governments or organizations with relevant examples. The study will also incorporate these best practices examples (and any arguments for innovations that the researcher can suggest based on his/her research and experience) into a section on recommended actions for the consideration of the Office of the Languages Commissioner and, ultimately, by the Government of Nunavut.

My best wishes for the continued efforts of
The Kitikmeot Heritage Society which preserves,
promotes and celebrates the history, culture,
language and diversity of the people of the
Kitikmeot region.

2003

2004

Monitoring of legislative process of *Official Languages Act* and *Education Act*

We will continue to watch the progress being made on the completion of these two new pieces of legislation. We will remain particularly interested in the progress of the new *Education Act*, as education plays an important role in producing truly bilingual students, able to read and write with confidence in Inuktitut and English. This will be the determining factor in meeting the GN's *Pinasuaqtavut* Inuktitut as a working language goal. We will also continue to offer our support and expertise to the involved departments during the consultation and drafting processes.

Intergovernmental / Interdepartmental Relations

We will make efforts to maintain our contacts with all Government of Nunavut agencies, and those representing official language groups in the territory. The Languages Commissioner remains a member of the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsmen and will continue her dialogue with her colleagues in other provinces and territories.

OLC Website

The redesign and updating of the new OLC website using Inuktitut-friendly application services is expected to be completed during the summer of 2004, with a launch scheduled for September 2004.



Budget and Expenditures from April 1 2003 to March 31 2004

Office of the Official Languages Commissioner
Budget Report for the period ending March 31, 2004 third report June 21/04

Budget year 2003-2004

Summary	Budget	Spent	Committed	Balance
Permanant Salaries	407,000.00	288,117.87		118,882.13
Casual Wages		11,833.10		(11,833.10)
	407,000.00	299,950.97		107,049.03
Travel	40,000.00	20,960.51		19,039.49
Materials & Supplies	40,000.00	11,692.93		28,307.07
Purchased Services	10,000.00	16,008.85		(6,008.85)
Utilities		918.77		(918.77)
Contract Services	60,000.00	46,373.29		13,626.71
Fees and Payments	5,000.00	8,328.51		(3,328.51)
Other Expenses	5,000.00	10,131.58		(5,131.58)
Tangible Assets	5,000.00	10,724.90		(5,724.90)
Computer hardware & Software	5,000.00	4,150.00		850.00
	170,000.00	129,289.34	-	40,710.66
	577,000.00	429,240.31	-	147,759.69

2003**2004**