



GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Labrador Regional Office
215 Hamilton River Road
c/o Elizabeth Goudie Building
Happy Valley/Goose Bay, LB
A0P 1E0

1992-01-17

Mr. T. Stapleton
Director
Child Welfare

And

Mrs. S. Callahan
Director
Youth Corrections
Department of Social Services

RE: SERVICES TO THE INNU COMMUNITIES OF SHESHATSHIT & DAVIS INLET

Please find enclosed a copy of a contract and terms of reference which have been developed in conjunction with the Innu Nation to facilitate the completion of a review of our service delivery system in both Sheshatshit and Davis Inlet. As you will note, the contract involved three parties which includes Mrs. Lyla Andrew as researcher/consultant.

The development of this joint project follows a meeting with representatives of the Innu Nation in early December, 1991 by Mr. Brown, Mr. Hayden and I, and, as well, various discussions held with our Deputy Minister. The agreement to review a different method of service delivery recognizes the aspirations of the Innu to assume greater control of services to their people and as well the department's limited ability to provide appropriate services to these communities. Service delivery to both communities remains a struggle. This especially applies to Davis Inlet.

Despite our best efforts and our sensitivity to the very real needs of Davis Inlet we have not been able to recruit and retain social work staff for this community on a consistent and meaningful basis since Sister Barb Lamb resigned in June, 1989. Every alternative has been explored and the prospects of recruiting an experienced and qualified social worker to deliver our services in Davis Inlet remain extremely bleak. As present we are utilizing, to the best of our ability, other offices to provide emergency services in the areas of Child Welfare and Youth Corrections.

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Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities continue to be delivered through local native staff.

Although we have been more fortunate in Sheshatshit in terms of staffing, the delivery of services is certainly becoming more and more challenging. The leadership and residents of this community are becoming less and less accepting of outside social workers having such an influence on so many families in their village. Local staff are increasingly aware of the fact that without their support and participation we would be forced to drastically change our delivery system. More and more they are feeling used by our system. Meaningful change is seen as being essential in the not too distant future.

I view this project as a real opportunity to explore avenues for change. Mrs. Andrew is familiar with our system and our programs and, as well, Davis Inlet and Sheshatshit. As the terms of reference indicates, her focus is intended to address the interim measures which we can explore in a co-operative way to improve our ability to service these communities. The broader issues of self-government and actual control of programs and services will be addressed at another level over a much longer period of time.

It is anticipated that the proposal will be finalized in the next week or so and Mrs. Andrew will actually commence work on this report by the first part of February, 1992. Her report is scheduled to be completed by March 20, 1992.

I am sure you agree that Child Welfare and Youth Corrections will remain the focus of Mrs. Andrew's report. I have no doubt as well that her report, which will be submitted jointly to this Department and the Innu Nation, will challenge our system to respond in new and unique ways.

There is no question in my mind that we must explore and encourage a new arrangement for service delivery in these two communities. The limitations of our present system demands that we involve the community in developing these new approaches.

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I look forward to your support and co-operation as we earnestly pursue opportunities to improve our ability to service these communities.

Yours truly,



Wayne Penney
Regional Director

WP/ld
Enclosure

cc Mr. Noel Browne
Assistant Deputy Minister
Client & Community Services

cc Mr. R. Hawco
Intergovernmental Affairs

cc Mr. Ed Hayden
District Manager
Sheshatshit District office