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Final Report:

RCMP Review of Allegations

Concerning Inuit Sled Dogs

Operational Policy Section
National Contract Policing Branch
Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services




Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

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Foreword

This final ministerial report is submitted to the Honourable Stockwell Day, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, and constitutes the response of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to a request that originated from the former Minister responsible for the RCMP, the Honourable Anne McLellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. This request took the form of correspondence, dated April 28, 2005, to Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli, and included the following statement:

As you are aware, on March 11, 2005, the Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development reported to the House of Commons a motion calling on the federal government to inquire into the alleged slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970.

Therefore to address the Committee's concerns, I am requesting that you conduct a comprehensive review of RCMP actions regarding sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970. The review should include a chronology of events, a history of the issue, and an examination of all relevant RCMP records as well as current and previous RCMP reviews on this issue.

Recognizing that this review will present a number of challenges due to the passage of time, I request that you provide me with a written report with respect to the results of your work within the next four months, so that I can respond to the Committee. You may wish to consult with other federal departments who were active in the North during this period, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

I look forward to receiving your report and tabling it in the House of Commons.

An interim report was submitted to the Minister in September 2005 with the commitment to provide a final ministerial report with complete findings by May 2006.

There are a number of important issues for the reader to be aware of, both in terms of the process that was involved in compiling this report and in relation to its contents. Given the serious nature of the allegations by Inuit Elders first made public in about 1999-2000, of what amounts to a deliberate mass slaughter or cull of Inuit sled dogs by the police, which they allege occurred between the 1950s and the 1970s, it is critical to clarify what this report contains.

What this Ministerial Report contains:

First, this is a summary of a RCMP internal report, on what was found in reviewing RCMP files concerning these allegations. Secondly, it summarizes the oral history of surviving former members of the RCMP who worked in these communities during the time in question, and who were asked to provide their memories based on their first hand experience of what occurred at that time. Thirdly, there is also the oral history of other, non-RCMP officials and community representatives, such as Hudson Bay Company employees, nurses, clergy and teachers, who were also willing to share their memories of their time in these communities, and still are able to do so. Finally, the report, derived from a RCMP internal report, also contains references to a number of published sources - from academic studies, books, and from the mass media, which were relevant to the purpose of addressing these allegations.

It is estimated that some 42,000 pages of records, and other historical and documentary material were reviewed in order to prepare the RCMP internal report. In addition, over 180 people were contacted and interviewed. It is important to remind the reader that the views and opinions expressed by the former members and others who lived and worked in these communities are entirely their own, and may not represent the views of the RCMP.

Cover-up Allegations and Government Records Management Policy

In the course of previous Parliamentary Committee hearings into the allegations of the Inuit elders, some individuals further alleged or suggested that the RCMP destroyed historical records in order to cover up the truth in some way. These allegations of a further conspiracy need to be addressed at the outset.

The government's records management policy is based on the principle that the national archival authority (currently Library and Archives Canada under their Act), and not the RCMP, makes a determination that a given file or files should be retained for archival (historical) purposes or not. Using a scheduling process, Archives Canada independently selects which files are to be retained indefinitely for historical purposes. Remaining files are scheduled for destruction once their operational usefulness is at an end.

The principle of archival value drives the process of scheduling selected files for retention and routinely requires all government institutions, including the RCMP, to destroy a portion of their record holdings. It is a reference to the outcome of this records management process which appears to have led to the unfortunate misunderstanding by some persons, as referred to above

who, in the context of alleged slaughter of Inuit sled dogs, ascribed other motives to the destruction of some RCMP records.

The Challenge of Dealing with Allegations of Conspiracy

Disproving the allegations of a mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs at the instigation of either the Government or the RCMP, as part of a widespread conspiracy to deny the Inuit people their ability to live on the land, and so force them into living in fixed settlements and a culture of perceived dependence, is particularly difficult based on the documentary record, since it essentially requires the report to prove a negative. Regrettably, the authors of this report did not obtain access to the transcripts of the detailed allegations of the Inuit elders related to the unlawful destruction of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members, although representatives of the RCMP did meet with leaders of the Makivik Corporation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to request such access be provided to the review team. Consequently, only those general allegations or particular statements placed on the public record could be taken into account in the review leading to this report. However, as the report demonstrates, despite the thousands of pages reviewed, there is no documentary evidence, or any anecdotal or oral history other than that of certain Inuit elders, to support these allegations. The mere absence of records, or statements to the contrary of those who also lived in these communities, and who agreed to be interviewed by the RCMP, may not satisfy those Inuit elders who believe that what they remember seeing some 35 to 55 years ago, or being told of by their families, was evidence of such a conspiracy. The RCMP is acutely aware of this possibility, considers it regrettable, and would wish to engage those affected in the Inuit community in some form of dialogue aimed at bridging this gap in understanding and achieving reconciliation.

Executive Summary

This final ministerial report has been derived from a RCMP internal report that is 725 pages in length. The purpose of this report is to present the findings concerning allegations that the RCMP is responsible for a mass culling of Inuit sled dogs in Nunavik and Nunavut between 1950 and 1970, which is alleged to have been carried out at the direction of the Government, or on the RCMP's own initiative. Since the Spring of 2005, the RCMP review team, with resources from RCMP National Aboriginal Policing Services and researchers at RCMP National Headquarters, has been conducting a comprehensive review into these serious allegations.

The main goal of the RCMP review team was to ensure all possible sources of information relevant to this matter were located and reviewed objectively to determine if any evidence exists to support the allegations of an organized and systematic mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs in the Eastern Arctic between 1950 and 1970. Other goals were to depict a chronology of events, to ensure that key people from northern communities were located and interviewed, and to consult with other federal departments that were active in the Eastern Arctic during this period. Understandably, the review team faced challenges in terms of unearthing details from 35 to 55 years ago.

Approximately 42,000 pages of historical documents, from the RCMP and other government departments, were obtained and reviewed by the team. Also, the team contacted more than 120 former RCMP members, as well as over 60 other witnesses, including nurses, members of the clergy, teachers, Hudson's Bay Company employees, and government officials. These former RCMP members and witnesses were interviewed to obtain their account of events, which was then written down for the first time. The review team met with executives from the Makivik Corporation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to obtain access to their statements, that related to the unlawful destruction of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members, and to discuss the specifics of their complaints. A meeting was held, but the statements were not provided. The RCMP review team, therefore, was not able to interview Inuit witnesses who provided statements, related to the unlawful destruction of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members, to the Makivik Corporation or to the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. A final outreach was made to the Inuit population in the Arctic communities by the review team, by requesting that RCMP "V" Division canvass their detachment commanders to determine if there were any Inuit elders who might want to provide their accounts or express their views for inclusion in this report. The witnesses did not believe the allegations and were unaware of any evidence that would support the allegations. An extensive media and literature review of academic papers, publications, articles, and books on

this subject was conducted to gain more insight into the Inuit way of life in the Eastern Arctic during the time period in question.

The review team did not uncover any evidence to support the allegations of an organized mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members in Nunavik and Nunavut between 1950 and 1970, which is alleged to have been carried out at the direction of the Government, or on the RCMP's own initiative. However, the review team did find evidence that some Inuit sled dogs were destroyed by members of the RCMP. The destruction of Inuit sled dogs, and other dogs, was undertaken by RCMP members for public health and safety reasons, in accordance with the law, to contain canine epidemics, and at times, at the request of the dogs' owners. There was also a startling drop in Inuit sled dog populations, particularly during the 1960s; this decline can be associated with a number of factors, including devastating canine epidemics, the collapse of the fur trade, the introduction of the snowmobile, the migration of the Inuit people into settlements, and the participation in the market economy rather than living on the land.

Introduction

According to the President of the Makivik Corporation, the allegations in relation to the sled dogs' killings first surfaced in Nunavik in 1999. At that time, the RCMP conducted a rudimentary scan of its files and had found no evidence to support these allegations. Following the request by Minister McLellan, the RCMP review team was created, in the Spring of 2005, to conduct a comprehensive review of RCMP actions concerning Inuit sled dogs in the Eastern Arctic between 1950 and 1970. The team was made up of resources from the RCMP National Aboriginal Policing Services and various researchers at RCMP National Headquarters to ensure adherence to qualitative and quantitative research methodology standards.

RCMP research concerning the context of life for the Inuit and their sled dogs, in the time period in question, shows that the Inuit sled dogs fulfilled a key role in the Eastern Arctic, in terms of transportation, hunting, homing instincts in blizzard conditions, search and rescue, warmth and companionship, and even as a food source, when the harshest conditions prevailed. The health of the Inuit sled dog was always a concern in the Eastern Arctic particularly when the dogs were afflicted with canine distemper, canine hepatitis, rabies, and starvation, or when the dogs were left to scavenge for themselves during the summer months; this had a serious effect on the livelihood and safety of all of the people in Northern communities. Inuit sled dogs also played a role in the Eastern Arctic which was spiritual in nature. It is clear, from the many documents that the review team examined, that the Inuit sled dogs were integral to the Inuit way of life half a century ago.

The geographic and socio-economic issues of Northern Quebec and Baffin Island in the 1950s to 1970s was also researched by the review team. The physical environment was often harsh and unforgiving, and at times presented enormous challenges to those who remained in these isolated regions from one generation to the next. The Inuit people faced socio-economic changes resulting from the introduction of new technologies and the increasing number of non-Inuit influences in the Eastern Arctic. The introduction of the snowmobile, for example, had a considerable impact on the traditional way of life for the Inuit people, and on the role of sled dogs in their daily lives.

What is clear is that the dog population declined precipitously, especially during the 1960s. What is disputed is the cause or causes of the decline. It is also a fact that, in accordance with the law, RCMP members destroyed sled dogs for reasons of both public health and public safety. Such destruction of sled dogs for lawful or humane reasons did not constitute an organized

and/or systematic slaughter, but it may account for some of the recollections of the Inuit about the destruction of their dogs.

The following are significant events that occurred between the 1950s and 1970s:

- 1940s Collapse of the fox fur trade (effects felt in the 1950s and the 1960s)
- 1959-1961 Sûreté du Québec becomes the police of jurisdiction in three detachments in northern Québec (replacing the RCMP)
- 1960s Introduction of the snowmobile in the North
- 1950s-1970s Periodic canine epidemics (over many years - e.g. in the 1960s, in Pangnirtung, 80 per cent of the dogs died, representing hundreds of dogs)
- 1950s-1970s Inuit movement into settlements - government schools, nursing stations, housing, and family allowance
- 1950s-1970s Dog Ordinance of NWT (originally enacted in 1929) authorized the catching or destruction of loose dogs proving to be a danger to public safety

Methods and Procedures

The RCMP team conducted a review of RCMP files, as well as files held by other federal and territorial government departments. Former RCMP members, who served in the North during the time period in question, were interviewed as well as civilians, such as, nurses, members of the clergy, teachers, Hudson's Bay Company employees, Inuit elders, and federal government employees. The literature review focused on the media, internet searches, books, and academic research papers relating to life in the North.

Review of RCMP Records

The research team searched existing RCMP documents for any material pertaining to the alleged mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs in the Eastern Arctic. The following is a list of the type of documents and files that were reviewed:

- Misconduct files (Grise Ford and Resolute Bay - 1953)
- Regulations (Sleigh Dogs and Care and Supervision of Eskimos - 1969)
- Animal Contagious Diseases Act (1953)
- Patrol reports (1950s and 1960s)
- Annual reports (1950s and 1960s)
- Miscellaneous reports (1950s to 1970s)
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal People
- Confidential monthly reports (1950 - 1969)
- Conditions amongst Eskimos (Various Northern Locations)

Review of Other Government Records

The Government of Canada's legislative records provided an important insight into the framework within which its agencies, such as the RCMP, conducted their activities. The review team covered the following legislation and documents:

- *The RCMP Act* - outlined expectations of members in the performance of their duties.
- *Government Archival Policy* - dictated which RCMP records were to be retained and which were to be destroyed (formerly a Treasury Board policy which was replaced by the *National Archives of Canada Act* in 1985 and repealed in 2004 by the current *Library and Archives of Canada Act*).
- *The Privacy Act* - determined what information could be published concerning any cases of misconduct by RCMP members.

- Statutes, ordinances and by-laws applicable in the region - during the time period in question there were ordinances that any dogs roaming free in a community were to be captured or destroyed.
- *The Inquiry regarding the Administration of Justice in the Hay River Area of the Northwest Territories* - a Royal Commission held in 1968 provided, among other findings, a general insight into the way the RCMP interacted with Aboriginal communities during this time period.
- *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* - 1991-1996, described, among other findings, events regarding the Inuit people, such as the relocation to the High Arctic.

Many federal departments, whose mandates included Northern issues, and their respective documents, now held at Library and Archives Canada, were consulted by the review team. They include: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), and what was then known as the Department of the Solicitor General, now Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC).

Sûreté du Québec Records

The RCMP consulted the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) for any information, historical documents, or complaints in relation to the allegations of a slaughter of Inuit sled dogs during the period of time in question. The RCMP had policed Northern Québec (Nunavik) for a part of the period between 1950 and 1970 because the Québec government had not deployed the SQ in the North before 1961. The RCMP had three detachments in Northern Québec: Great Whale River (Kuujuuarapik), officially closed on July 14, 1959; Fort Chimo (Kuujjuaq) officially closed on January 20, 1961; and Port Harrison (Inukjuak), officially closed on October 31, 1961.

Interviews of Former RCMP Members

The review team located and interviewed 121 former RCMP members who served in the communities of Nunavik and Nunavut during the 20-year period in question.

Interviews of Civilians

Clergy

Due to their presence in the community and their closeness to the Inuit people, the RCMP interviewed clergy in relation to these allegations.

Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources

The Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources (DNANR), now known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), had representatives in many Arctic communities. It was the lead federal government agency responsible for Arctic affairs and governance. In the absence of DNANR officials, the RCMP assumed their duties. During the period being reviewed, the numbers of Northern Service Officers were greatly increased, relieving the RCMP of the added responsibility of administering government programs, such as relief, pensions, family allowances, etc. The DNANR employees administered the programs and legislation sponsored by the federal government. As such, they would have had knowledge of any government plan to direct the RCMP to slaughter Inuit sled dogs to force the resettlement of Inuit into communities.

Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had stores in many of the Inuit communities in the Arctic. The HBC trading posts were more numerous than RCMP detachments, and the HBC manager was a person of great importance in the Arctic communities. In the absence of the RCMP, the HBC manager often represented the government. Consequently, the RCMP review team located and interviewed former employees of the HBC.

Nurses


The RCMP located and obtained statements from nurses who were stationed in many of the larger permanent Northern communities. In many settlements, for many years, RCMP members had been responsible for the routine medical care for the Inuit people. During the time period in question, more and more nurses were stationed in the North as employees of Indian and Northern Health Services. As professionals, they would be aware of public health concerns. Their primary interest was in community health, which relates to the allegations, as dogs were, at times, destroyed as a public health measure.

Teachers

The permanent Northern communities had schools and teachers. The RCMP located and obtained statements from teachers.

Inuit Elders

To ensure all details of the alleged events concerning the Inuit sled dogs were captured, the RCMP review team requested copies of statements of Inuit elders that related to the unlawful destruction of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members. Much of this material rested with the Makivik Corporation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. One meeting was held between the RCMP review team and the aforementioned groups, but the statements, related to the unlawful



destruction of Inuit sled dogs, were not shared. The review team did analyze the Inuit statements as depicted in “Echo of the Last Howl”, a video produced for Makivik Corporation by Taqramiut Productions Inc., just over 54 minutes long, which dramatizes allegations of a mass slaughter with re-enacted scenarios interspersed with segments of recollections by Inuit elders. These were translated from the original Inuktitut into English and heard as voice-overs in the video.

A final outreach was made to the Inuit population in the Arctic communities by the review team, by requesting that RCMP “V” Division canvass their detachment commanders to determine if there were any Inuit elders who might want to provide their accounts or express their views for inclusion in this report.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which was created by the federal government in 1991, submitted a report in October 1996. In part, it dealt with Aboriginal relocations in the High Arctic, including those in Northern Québec and Nunavut, as well as the broader issues including centralization of the Inuit into settlements. Excerpts of witness statements from the Royal Commission were reviewed to determine if there were any references made concerning the allegations being addressed in this report.

Literature Review Focused on the Media and Internet Searches

Extensive web searches were conducted for media reports of any investigations that may have been undertaken with respect to the allegations of an organized slaughter of the Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP or other government officials. In addition, media articles dealing with possible health or public safety issues caused by the Inuit sled dogs were reviewed. There has been considerable, but sporadic, media interest in this issue.

The review team consulted a number of books, reports, and academic papers and publications that focused on the Inuit population and their lifestyle, and also on Inuit sled dogs.

Findings

Inuit Sled Dogs

- The Inuit sled dog is a large and aggressive animal that can pose a danger to public safety, particularly when diseased or starving. The Inuit sled dog populations were seriously impacted by epidemics and socio-economic factors during the period of time in question.
- Inuit culture, prior to the introduction of the snowmobile and settlement in permanent communities, was deeply connected with and dependent on the Inuit sled dog. The Inuit sled dogs were used to hunt, to relocate, and to transport.
- The introduction of the snowmobile in the 1960s was a significant factor in the demise of the Inuit sled dog and the culture based upon them. Snowmobiles were fast, modern, and did not need the care and attention of a dog team. Trips that would have taken up to a week by dog sled could be made in a day on a snowmobile.

Destruction of Inuit Sled Dogs

- No evidence was found of any policy decision to conduct a mass cull or killing of sled dogs, either as an internal RCMP policy or from the Government.
- There are no records to account for shipments of RCMP ammunition in the necessary quantities to the Eastern Arctic to support the allegations of a systematic cull of 20,000 sled dogs, which is the number cited in the allegations.
- The RCMP did shoot stray and loose dogs, in accordance with the law, as well as starving and sick dogs, that posed a public health or safety hazard. In addition, dogs were destroyed when the owner requested that the dog(s) be put down.
- The review team was unable to validate the exact number of Inuit sled dogs that died in the time period in question, whether by disease, starvation, shooting, or other causes. The *Edmonton Journal* reported that Professor Frank Tester, who conducted extensive research on the subject of Inuit relocations and government policies, opined that given the Canadian Inuit population at the time, the total number of dogs in the Eastern Arctic could not have been higher than 10,000.

The RCMP and Sled Dogs

- RCMP members who worked in the Eastern Arctic, during the time period in question, owned and cared for sled dogs. They also cared for other sled dogs in their communities. Between 35 to 55 years have passed without any RCMP members' statements indicating that a systematic slaughter took place.
- RCMP members administered rabies, distemper, and infectious hepatitis inoculations, and provided Inuit families with RCMP sled dogs pups, when disease or starvation had partially or completely wiped out their dog team.
- By 1969, only four RCMP detachments had sled dogs and these were ordered destroyed when the final decision came to no longer use them. Some of these were given away. The RCMP performed one Last Patrol to mark the end of an era and to demonstrate the great respect in which sled dogs were held by the RCMP.

Inoculations

- The RCMP review team discovered documentation in RCMP internal reports from the Eastern Arctic that members routinely administered inoculations for sled dogs during the time period in question. The canine vaccines that were administered were received from Agriculture Canada. Reports indicate that RCMP members inoculated their own sled dogs and they also inoculated thousands of Inuit sled dogs in an attempt to preserve the dogs from decimation by disease.

Epidemic Outbreaks of Canine Disease

- Epidemic outbreaks of rabies and canine distemper occurred between 1950 and 1970. These outbreaks of canine disease often made it necessary for RCMP members to destroy infected and dying dogs for humane reasons and to contain and control the epidemic.

Socio-Economic Factors

- The Inuit population went through social changes during the time frame in question. Factors such as,
 - ▶ social benefits to which the Inuit people had access for the first time, including government education, health care, government housing, and government family allowances within settlements,
 - ▶ the collapse of the fox fur trade in the late 1940s, and,
 - ▶ the introduction of the snowmobile,contributed to a reduced need for the Inuit sled dogs.

The Media

- The media reports that were located and reviewed by the review team are predominantly focused on the accusations made by certain Inuit people. Many stories are sympathetic to the Inuit regarding the allegations of the sled dog slaughter.

Publications and Academic Reports

- Books, reports, and academic papers and publications were consulted and used as reference throughout this review. They provided a historical and cultural overview of the Inuit way of life in the Eastern Arctic and were used as reference material for facts on Inuit sled dogs.

Overview of Statements and Records

RCMP Internal Reports

- The RCMP review team located and reviewed routine RCMP internal reports from the Eastern Arctic including all RCMP discipline files and public complaints. One discipline report, indicating that a regular RCMP member was informally disciplined for the inappropriate manner in which he destroyed two Inuit sled dogs, was found.
- In the Pangnirtung Detachment 1966 Annual Report regarding Conditions Amongst Eskimos, Cpl. Grabowski stated in paragraph 17:

The dog population decreased rapidly over the past year. Some Eskimos disposed of their own dogs when they were able to purchase ski-dogs, while a good number were destroyed in contravention to [sic] the Dog Ordinance. Referring to the latter, numerous requests were made by myself and members of this Detachment to the Eskimos to keep their dogs adequately tied, or penned. When these requests went unheeded I gave instructions that all dogs at large were to be shot, and in the period of slightly over one year, I would estimate that some 250 dogs have been shot. This too, does not seem to have the desired effect, as almost daily, dogs are still seen at large. A new approach to the apparent passive resistance of the Eskimo has been taken, whereby the owner will be sought out, and he will be prosecuted. There are at present, an estimated 400 dogs in the Pangnirtung-Cumberland sound [sic] region, with an estimated 200 in the Broughton Island-

Padloping Island area. Dog teams are used in Broughton Island only as a last means of transportation.

A “G” Division memorandum of note, dated February 28, 1967, from Supt. A. Huget Officer in Charge of Criminal Investigations Branch to the Officer Commanding Frobisher Bay regarding Conditions Amongst Eskimos Generally - Annual Report - Pangnirtung Detachment, 1966, noted:

- 1. Reference paragraph 17 of [the] Pangnirtung Detachment report dated 31 JAN 67, we are somewhat concerned about what appears to be ‘indiscriminate shooting of dogs’ by our members in Pangnirtung and surrounding areas. Our members must bear in mind that Sec. 9 (1) of the Dog Ordinance authorizes a Dog Officer to destroy a dog only if he is unable to seize it.*
- 2. The problem that loose dogs can create in the North is appreciated and we realize that strict enforcement of the Dog Ordinance is essential. However, the instructions contained in “G” Division Operational Manual DOG-NWT are to be strictly adhered to. It is imperative that our members only act in the absence of an appointed Dog Officer. If there are no appointed Dog Officers in the Pangnirtung area, then recommendations for the appointment of suitable persons, who are willing to act, should be made without delay.*
- 3. Eskimos should be encouraged to destroy their own dogs when they are no longer have any use for them or if they are unable to keep control over them. If certain Eskimos simply ignore the provisions of the Dog Ordinance, then they should be prosecuted accordingly.*

A related statement of note on this particular situation was given by Jim Cumming who was a manager for Hudson's Bay Company and director of the NWT Energy Conservation Service in Igloolik, NWT from 1951 - 1987. He stated that he was in the same community [Pangnirtung] when Cpl. Jack Grabowski shot probably five dogs. He stated that Cpl. Grabowski couldn't get out of his house at one point because of the dogs. He concluded by saying that the notion that 20,000 dogs were slaughtered over 20 years is ridiculous; the Inuit got rid of their dogs because of the introduction of the snowmobile. He also noted that the RCMP was very active in vaccinating dogs and he personally helped at least one officer to vaccinate dogs. In the midst of epidemics, he stated that dogs were shot since they were diseased, but this was no mass destruction. He considered that the introduction of the snowmobile was the beginning of the end for sled dogs.

- There was no reference to a systematic cull of Inuit sled dogs in the Eastern Arctic in any of the RCMP records and files that were reviewed.

Sûreté du Québec

- The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) investigation into the allegations in question did not turn up any evidence to suggest that the SQ was involved in the systematic destruction of Inuit sled dogs in Northern Québec in the 1960s and later. The SQ did destroy dogs that posed a threat to public health or safety. Sled dogs were killed at the request of the Council, at the request of the dog's owner, or when a complaint was received. In addition, loose dogs were killed to protect public safety. SQ members were aware of the importance of the sled dogs to the Inuit population.
- The SQ did not find any record of complaints against the RCMP relating to the allegations that RCMP members had engaged in the systematic destruction of Inuit sled dogs prior to the assumption of policing services by the SQ in Nunavik in 1961. The SQ advised that it has no record of an organized slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by its own members, or by the RCMP.

Statements of Former RCMP Members

- The former RCMP members who served in the North during the period of time in question provided their recollections of events. Some members had no knowledge of any dog killings, some members had refused to kill dogs even at the request of owners, and some members did have recollections of having to kill diseased, starving, dangerous, and unwanted dogs. Several members provided full written statements, whereas others verbally responded to questions in person or by telephone.
- Superintendent Clare Dent (retired), a member with extensive Arctic experience dating back to 1953, provided the review team with a 17-page letter about the life of the Northern RCMP member in this time period and also the conditions faced by both the RCMP members and the Inuit people. The following are segments of his letter:

...The RCMP had a well established system of regularly purging files. Unsolved Murders - remained open. Criminal Code files, of the more serious nature were kept open for five years, Territorial matters, other than missing persons, every three years, and so on. And, for someone now, half a century later, to claim RCMP destroyed dogs to stop Eskimo from being able to return to the land is absurd. The philosophy from the Commanding Officer 'G' Division down was

exactly the opposite. From the hundreds of 'G' Division members I have come to know, their attitude and actions were to do all possible to help Eskimo remain on the land.

The nursing station was built. Schools were built. The HBC constructed 'heated stores.' Shopping could then be done comfortably rather than in well below zero unheated stores. Each year more and more housing was built, not just for the NSO, but [for] teachers and Eskimos and assistant administrative staff as well. The population of settlements understandably grew.

But what happened to the Eskimo dogs? If a family had difficulty feeding dogs or themselves 'on the land', how could they possibly maintain dogs within the community. At Baker Lake, the Special Constables (S/Cst's) had the support and admiration of the community, and, when these underfed dogs were found running loose, one warning was enough. And, gradually, most of the dogs faded into history. And on came the onslaught of skidoos and all terrain vehicles...

- The following two segments of statements demonstrate how former members of the RCMP recall their posts in the Eastern Arctic, specific to the allegations concerning the Inuit sled dog.

Superintendent Lauren McKiel (retired), who had many postings in the Arctic between 1959 and 1986, said,

I have never...in all my northern service...heard of any systematic shootings of sled dogs in any northern community by the police, RCMP or by-law officers...I spent many an hour in camp and in the settlements with the elders, and had there been such an activity they would have been the first ones to discuss the matter.

Staff Sergeant, Mort Doyle (retired) who had several Arctic postings between 1962 and 1968, said,

Yes, members were forced to shoot loose sled dogs at Frobisher Bay in the interests of public safety. The owners of the dogs could not be identified and the dogs could not be caught. The loose dogs (one to three was not uncommon) were shot under authority of the dog control bylaw. It was not a pleasant task. Discharging a firearm (12 ga., 30 30 or .308) was always a safety issue within the community. It was unpleasant as the first shot very rarely killed the dog outright. Yes, I was forced to shoot some dogs at Frobisher Bay. These incidents were

always subject of an Occurrence Report. I have no idea as to numbers of animals destroyed; it was not high... At the request of Inuit in other areas, I have shot sick or unwanted dogs. My linguistic skills were not good but one Inuit implied that many of his people felt it a bad omen to shoot your own dogs under any circumstances. Police sled dogs were also culled by shooting when the dog was unsuitable or ill and were removed from the Inventory.

Civilian Statements

- The richness of oral history widely recognized in the Inuit community is also found in non-Inuit people who lived in the Eastern Arctic. Much of this information was recorded in the RCMP review for the first time in RCMP history. Members of the clergy, government employees, Hudson Bay employees, nurses, and teachers have histories and recollections which provided insights from a non-Inuit / non-RCMP perspective.
- Father Charlie Choque, a Roman Catholic priest who lived in Chesterfield Inlet, Baker Lake, and Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, from 1947 to 1974, said in part, that a few loose dogs were shot as a result of injuries to the public, and more were shot that were infected with rabies or distemper. He has spoken to other retired priests on this subject and they confirm that not only did a mass culling of sled dogs not happen, but that they had never heard any such talk during their service in the Arctic. In his opinion, the cultural change that took place in the Arctic over the years was caused by many factors, which resulted in the loss of dogs for many reasons. He feels this loss could not be attributed to the police shooting them.
- Georges W. Porter III, a DINA employee who lived and worked in Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven from 1957 to the present, said,

In 1957, I was working for the government - for Indian and Northern Affairs [sic]. I was based out of Cambridge Bay. By my position, I was aware of pretty much all the issues around the Northwest Territory [sic]. I never heard nothing about the RCMP killing dogs, not up here. The only place I heard about it, not too long ago - it was on T.V. and it was north of Québec.

- Wulf Tolboom was a HBC Manager in Port Harrison, Frobisher Bay, Cambridge Bay, and Pangnirtung, Nunavut between 1941 and 1951. He provided a statement and said,
... it is the RCMP that contributed to the success of the Eskimos during those years, as without their constant dog team patrols to small settlements many would

not have survived. Dogs were shot by the RCMP on very rare occasions; only diseased or dangerous dogs were destroyed.

In those days Eskimos without dogs would not survive and those who were good hunters had good dogs. Most of the population in his areas lived on the land, and were encouraged to do so, particularly by the HBC and the police. There was some movement to have schools in major settlements and to have families to move into town so the children could attend. This did cause problems due to sickness in the settlements and movement away from the good hunting grounds.

Things moved too quickly in the north over the past few years, the biggest change being the adoption of the ski-doo rather than dogs. This enabled the native to live in the settlement but tend his trap lines in a quicker manner. They now live in small clusters of houses and in more civilized circumstances. This is good and bad. The old way of life is no longer there.

...the accusation that the RCMP destroyed the native dogs to force the Eskimos into settlements is absolutely ridiculous. It did not happen. If the policy was there, it would have been common knowledge right across the Arctic.

- The RCMP review team received an unsolicited letter from Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ross, who were both nurses in the Ungava Bay area from 1956 to 1964. They had seen television coverage of Inuit people who claimed that the Government conspired to force them to live close to settlements by destroying their means of transportation and their livelihoods. *“In the TV program the Eskimos said that they were encouraged to stay at the post, there were a number of reasons why [they] came to live at the post but they were not encouraged by any of the Department officials as the opposite is the truth.”* They go on to describe the fear with which they walked about in their community where half-starved sled dogs threatened, and sometimes succeeded, to attack adults and children without warning. *“I made medical visits with a walking stick club,”* the letter relates, and *“my wife did not make medical visits to homes without another adult with her on account of the dog situation.”*
- Kenn Harper, a teacher, businessman, writer, and historian, lived in Broughton Island (1966); Padloping (1967 - 1968); Broughton Island (1968 - 1969); Panguirtung (1969 - 1971); Arctic Bay (1972 - 1984); and, Iqaluit (1985 to present). He said that any dogs that were shot by the RCMP were running loose and a danger to the public, and were destroyed only after the owner had been warned to tie up the dog. The first dog he saw

shot had its head stuck in a can and people were unable to get it out. The dog was shot for humane reasons, with the approval of the elders of the community in Clyde River.

Inuit Elders

- The Makivik Corporation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association did not provide the RCMP with statements of Inuit elders and other Inuit people that related to the unlawful destruction of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members. It should be noted, however, that the eight Inuit statements that were independently obtained by the RCMP review team revealed no information of a mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP.
- RCMP “V” Division made enquiries with Inuit and non-Inuit people in the communities within its jurisdiction. The witnesses did not believe the allegations and were unaware of any evidence to support them.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

- No reports were found that referred to the alleged mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP.

Conclusion

The RCMP review team did not uncover any evidence to support the allegations, within the large volume of information collected, of an organized mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members in Nunavik and Nunavut between 1950 and 1970, carried out at the direction of the Government, or on the RCMP's own initiative.

The review team did find evidence that Inuit sled dogs were destroyed by members of the RCMP, as authorized by law. The destruction of Inuit sled dogs, and other dogs, was undertaken by RCMP members for public health and safety reasons, in accordance with the law, to contain canine epidemics, and at times, at the request of the dogs' owners. There was a startling drop in Inuit sled dog populations, particularly during the 1960s; this decline can be associated with a number of factors, including canine epidemics, the collapse of the fox fur trade in the late 1940s, the introduction of the snowmobile in the 1960s, the migration of the Inuit people into settlements, and the participation in the market economy rather than living on the land.

There is clearly a collective mourning for the loss of the traditional Inuit way of life that was independent and worthy of great respect. The demise of the Inuit sled dog has come, for many, to symbolize the cultural loss of identity and dignity.

In the 2005 autumn issue of *The Fan Hitch*, a northern periodical focusing on sled dogs, the editor updated readers on contacts with the RCMP review team and concluded by stating:

Regardless of what investigations may yield and what action those may generate in the future, right now is the time for both sides to come to the table and move towards reconciliation. Rather than spending more manpower, time and money on fact finding commissions to determine guilt or innocence, harmony between the two cultures can be achieved by creating fences for dog breeding pens instead of reinforcing emotional barriers between Ottawa and the North. New medicine to cure an old lesion is long overdue.

The RCMP has completed a thorough review on this matter, as requested by the former Minister, with the results summarized in this report. It is important to note that the relationship between Inuit people and the RCMP in "V" Division today is positive and cordial. However, there would be great value to Canada and the RCMP to explore the possibility of some form of dialogue with the Inuit community aimed at reconciling any differences the alleged sled dog issue may have



highlighted and strengthening the relationship with a community whom the RCMP is proud to serve.

