

88-49-115

First Inuit Circumpolar Conference PT. 2

June 13-17, 1977

Moses Wassillie, moderator

Barrow, Alaska

Series: Potlatch series

Moe Wassillie said the 54 delegates of the convention adopted resolutions after they met together in workshops. Some of the resolutions called upon the governments of Canada, Greenland and the United States to provide housing, transportation and healthcare for the Inuit of circumpolar nations. Financing for these programs were not discussed. Some were related to oil development, relationships with government and support for other Inuit organizations' efforts.

Eben Hopson said – that all Inuit support efforts to achieve a fair and expeditious settlement of the Inuvialuit claims and all Inuit support post-efforts to process Inuvialuit rights prior to an achievement of a just settlement of those rights. There should be a single set of rules governing all onshore and offshore Arctic resource development and the Inuit community has a basic right to participate in this rule making. It is further resolved that the rules for Arctic resource development should specifically provide for Inuit controlled technology assessment programs. Be it further resolved that rules of Arctic resource development should specifically provide for the determination of safe technology, arctic population policy, a locally controlled wildlife management, Arctic military use policy, conservation of traditional use values, access to government information concerning the Inuit homelands, the development of an inter-Arctic coastal zone management program, and a cooperative environmental impact assessment protocol detailing participation of the Inuit. Be it resolved that this Inuit Circumpolar Conference calls upon the government of Canada, Newfoundland, and Quebec to acknowledge their responsibility to uphold the aboriginal rights of Labrador Inuit and to indicate their willingness to enter into negotiations with the Labrador unit for a just settlement of their claims. Be it resolved that the Inuit have participation and voice in help planning health care and a center for health care be established and inform each other about how Inuit health problems are solved and that the best medical care be made available to all Inuit people. Be it resolved that through the Inuit Circumpolar Conference take all steps to ensure and translate into Inuit if necessary through legislation in the respective states and provinces involved that the Inuit of Greenland, Alaska and Canada have access to all the relevant government information concerning the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, their homelands. Be it resolved that money for housing be distributed to the Inuit themselves for materials, housing design and labor. That control and planning of utilities and communications be given to the Inuit user. That the Inuit have control of money for management and maintenance of utilities to determine priorities in their village. That all necessary resources be made available to the Inuit to solve their high fuel costs and transportation problems and that transportation to and from Inuit villages be made adequate to serve the needs of the villages.

A song by a Sami group

Moe Wassillie said one of the most debated resolutions passed at the conference calls for the demilitarization of the Arctic. Eben Hopson continues speaking. That the Arctic shall be used for peaceful and environmentally safe purposes only and there shall be prohibited any measure of a military nature such as the establishment of military bases and fortification, the carrying out of military maneuvers and the testing of any type of weapon and the disposition of any type of chemical, biological or nuclear waste. That a moratorium be called on nuclear weapons. That all steps be taken to promote the objective of the above mentioned.

Hopson said while he supports the principle in this resolution he would hesitate to get involved with matters dealing with foreign policy which is the common practice of all of their governments.

Moe Wassillie said Etok, Charles Edwardson, Jr., supports a measure creating a nuclear free zone in the Arctic. Etok said they have forgotten another experience. The United States government was going to develop a harbor at Cape Thompson. They would like to have a nuclear free zone in the Arctic. He wanted to be sure that the Inupiaq humanity does not get damaged because of arguments with other countries. He urges the passage of this resolution.

Moe Wassillie said Eben Hopson talked about the relation between the military and the protection of their environment. He said if they do not permit military establishments or any weaponry needed to protect them then not only will they have problems with the environment they won't have any. He said lets re-cooperate with their governments to continue the provision of military protection from other countries. He said because their government has embarked on these types of programs he doesn't think the establishments of military units are intended to spoil or damage their environment. They are here because it is felt they are needed to protect them.

Song by Sami group

Moe Wassillie said one of the concerns is common problems among the Inuit including mutual exchange, trade, land resources and the right to hunt and subsist on the land. Eben Hopson said be it resolved that the delegates call upon the governments of Canada, the U.S. and Denmark to cooperate with the ICC to establish mutual exchange programs. The delegates assembled call upon the governments to negotiate an agreement that will protect for all Inuit unrestricted trade and travel between the U.S. and Canada. They call upon the United States to expedite conveyance if all appropriate land titles to Alaska regional and village corporations. Be it resolved that the delegates call upon the U.S. and Canada delegates to the forthcoming meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Australia to defend the Inuit aboriginal rights to hunt the whale in the Arctic. Be it resolved that the governments of the United States and Canada are called upon to revise the migratory bird's treaty to decriminalize spring hunting in Alaska and Canada for all Native people. Be it resolved that the delegates call upon all Inuit to behave as hunters in no way that will create scandal and endanger their subsistence hunting rights, to conserve their game as they would conserve their homeland and protect the future generations of their people.

Moses Wassillie said when all of the resolutions had been resolved and accepted by all those at the conference the Greenlandic delegates dressed in their white outfits and broke out in song.

Eben Hopson officially adjourns the conference.

Songs by Charlie Panganeak and Sami singers