

President's Report

June 4, 2003

Early in May 2003 the Kativik School Board (KSB) requested a meeting with representatives of both the QESBA and the FCSQ to discuss the current state of the negotiations between the Federal government, the Quebec government and the negotiating unit for the Nunavik region, the Makivik Corporation. A meeting of the three parties took place on June 3rd at the offices of the QESBA.

The original negotiations in Nunavik culminated in the signing of, what has become known as, the Political Accord (P.A.). The P. A. was intended to be the framework for an agreement leading to the formation of a new form of local government for Nunavik. Within the original P. A. were some "safeguard" arrangements ensuring the long-term existence of the Kativik School Board, which would retain governance rights for educational matters in Nunavik.

The Kativik School Board serves approximately 3,000 students in the 14 villages of Nunavik. The region covers about 1/3 of Quebec's geographical area, north of the 55th parallel. There is no road access between villages and the only way to travel from village to village is by air.

In the past several years the Makivik Corporation has entered into, what the KSB considers, illegal negotiations, outside of the terms of the P. A. Part of those discussions included the possible elimination of the KSB and eventual inclusion of all educational matters within the native government structure. That has led the KSB to seek protection through the courts and the KSB has sought an interlocutory injunction at the Quebec Superior Court, to halt the negotiations. The hearing on this matter is scheduled for late in 2003.

The KSB has several concerns. One being that a form of local government is being done away with. The Commissioners of the KSB are elected, for three-year terms, by the local population. Second is the concern that people who are not elected with the specific and specialized mandate of education will be making the decisions for and about schools, programs, and the educational infrastructure. In addition, they are concerned that funding earmarked for education will go to the general Nunavik Government fund with no assurance that the full amount will be put to educational needs.

The 90-minute meeting was interesting and informative. The KSB is requesting that QESBA and FCSQ support their demand for the maintenance of a locally elected school board to represent citizens in educational matters across Nunavik. Both the QESBA and the FCSQ asked for additional information from the KSB. Both the QESBA and the FCSQ representatives agreed to bring the issue to their respective Boards of Directors after the summer break, for appropriate action.

Present at the meeting were:

QESBA – Marcus Tabachnick, President Jeff Polenz, Executive Director

FCSQ – André Caron, Président Réjean Morel, directeur général Robert Pleau, conseiller

KSB – Sarah Aloupa, President Annie Grenier, Director General
Rita Novalinga, Secretary-General Alain Gauthier, Associate Secretary-General
Gilbert Legault - Conseiller