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Chair

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell

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• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.)): Good morning. *Uplaakut*.

I'd like to call the meeting to order, meeting number 23 for Thursday, March 10. As orders of the day, we're still doing the slaughtering of the Inuit dogs, so I would like to get this meeting under way.

I also have a housekeeping note to the members. At the request of some of the members, we've put off future business for today because some of the members had to be in Alberta for the funeral services today. I'd like to take this time to also pass on our condolences to everyone. I know it's going to be a very difficult day, and our hearts are all with everyone who has to be in Alberta today.

This morning we have witnesses from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, which is the Inuit organization for Baffin Island. On Tuesday we heard from people in northern Quebec, from my riding. I'd like to welcome everyone to this room today, and again to everyone who is here with us today—the Nunavut Sivuniksavut students and other people who are here from Nunavut—welcome to our committee meeting.

I'd like to acknowledge that this morning we have with us at the table Senator Charlie Watt. I noticed was at the meeting on Tuesday also and he's here to join us again this morning.

We have with us Thomas Alikatuktuk, president of Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Joanasie Maniapik—it doesn't say on here but I know he's from Pangnirtung—and Alisee Joamie from Iqaluit, and with them is Julia Demcheson as interpreter. We'll do the same as we did at Tuesday's meeting. There'll be translations following the interventions from the elders, so I ask for your patience. We'll have to wait for the English or the French translation after their interventions.

So without further ado, I'd like to start with the president.

Mr. Cleary.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Cleary (Louis-Saint-Laurent, BQ): On a point of order, Madam Chair.

At our last meeting, I asked that representatives from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs be present. We have learned—Ms. Barnes told me this yesterday—that this department is no longer handling this file.

I have here a letter dated August 26, 2002 that I'm going to table. It points out that someone from the department met with the Solicitor General and the latter decided to take responsibility for the file. As far as we are concerned, the department has always handled the file and the voluminous correspondence related to it. That is why we will not accept—do you see what I mean?—that a decision was made at a small meeting of officials that this file would be transferred from the representative of aboriginal affairs to the Solicitor General.

Madam Chair, I'm therefore tabling this letter to support our demand that someone from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs come and meet with us, and particularly to meet with the Inuits to give them some explanations and answer people's questions.

Personally, I will not let the department duck its responsibilities in this way.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cleary. We will take your intervention.

Now back to Mr. Alikatuktuk. I know I never pronounce your name right, I'm sorry. Excuse me again.

Mr. St. Amand.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Madam Chair, we all wish to hear from the witnesses, so I'll be brief, but this is, as I understand it, a series of allegations levelled against the RCMP. The workings of the RCMP fall clearly within the ambit of a department other than the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. That's why this file has been for some considerable period of time now within the exclusive purview of the Solicitor General's department.

The Chair: Thank you, but I don't want to debate this issue, because that's not what we're dealing with now. I'd like to get on with the witnesses if we can. We can debate which department is the appropriate one.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Cleary: This is not a debate, Madam Chair. The interpretation is that the RCMP was involved in this matter, not the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. That is completely false. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has been involved in this issue since the beginning and will continue to be involved. We simply said that they will not change that fact any time soon, just because they were not taking any action on this matter. In my opinion, the comment that was just made to me is false.

•(1115)

[English]

The Chair: We can deal with which department will appear before the committee if you so wish. We did try to speak with both departments, but due to unfortunate events that are beyond our control today, we were not able to get anyone to appear before us even in the public safety area.

I would like to get on with the witnesses this morning, and I apologize for the delay.

Mr. Alikatuktuk, please feel welcome to start your presentation.

Mr. Thomas Alikatuktuk (President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association): [Witness speaks in his native language]

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am happy to be invited here and to be in front of you today to speak on this very important matter. I would also like to recognize Makivik Corporation for inviting us as well. I will give a brief background and then introduce you to the elders who are here with me today.

I am president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. Our organization represents Inuit in 13 communities in the Baffin region. In February 2004 our organization appointed a committee to look into the dog slaughters from 1950 to 1975, into relocations where Inuit live from camp to camp, and then eventually into what are now the 13 communities in Baffin. Our executive member from Iqaluit is Joshua Kango, who is with me here today before the committee.

Up to today we have interviewed 150 Inuit, and we do expect to cover more over the next few months. We are hoping, like the Makivik Corporation, that the Government of Canada will appoint someone to hold a public inquiry into how Inuit were assimilated and that the results of the interviews will be used towards a public inquiry.

Before I introduce our elders, I would like to say that this issue is very important to us, and we will continue to look into the slaughtering of dogs by non-Inuit during that time. We hope to document this part of our Inuit history so that it is not forgotten and to help better understand how our culture was affected. Some of you might ask why this was not brought to anyone's attention until now. My answer is that we Inuit are humble and do not like confrontation. It has always been a part of our oral history, but the persons responsible were people not of our culture and very hard to approach.

I now introduce you to Joanasi Maniapik from Pangnirtung and Alisee Joamie from Iqaluit, and they will tell you of their own experiences.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

I imagine we're going to start with Joanasi.

Mr. Joanasi Maniapik (Elder, Qikiqtani Inuit Association) (Interpretation): Thank you for inviting me, and I'd also like to thank Makivik for inviting me to the committee. I will not go into further details, but for a long time I haven't talked about this, so I'm happy that I'm finally able to start talking about my experience.

Back in 1965 my dogs were killed, around March 13—I'm not sure of the exact date. I had gone to buy supplies using my dog team. My wife was back at the camp, and I was going to go back to my camp the next day. Because I was going to leave the next day, I went to buy supplies right away. As I was buying supplies, someone approached me and said my dogs were being shot.

•(1120)

I went down to see what was happening and I saw two police officers. There was an officer and an assistant, and all my dogs were dead. Their rifles were placed against the rock. I took one of them and I wanted to break one of their rifles. I don't know the reason why I didn't do that. I regret to this day that I didn't break their rifles.

I was in so much pain. My life was destroyed. I tried taking their harnesses off. As I was trying to take them off, I was crying. It was a very painful experience.

I couldn't go back to my camp. My family was back at the camp. Inuit are very helping people, so I was able to use a dog team from one of the Inuit. The RCMP had their own dogs too, but they didn't offer any of their dogs. I want to help other Inuit, and that is why I'm here to tell my story.

I don't want to talk for too long, but there was a place where you could put your dogs when you went there. It was a fenced-up area. They got out somehow and because they got out, they were shot during the day, not during the night.

I am not the only one to speak here, so I will say again that it was a very painful experience. Sometimes those memories come back. I cannot forget that experience. One of the biggest things that I thought about was my family back at the camp. My daughter, who was a child at the time, had come along with me. It was very painful. We had a really hard time that time.

In Pangnirtung I didn't have anyone to help me. There were no social services, and the RCMP, who we looked up to, had just shot my dogs and I wasn't able to receive any help from them. So that was very hard.

•(1125)

I don't want to go on and on, so if you have any questions I will try to answer them.

The Chair: We'll hear from all the witnesses and then we'll do a round of questioning right after that.

If we want to go on to the next witness, I believe it's Alisee Joamie.

•(1130)

Ms. Alisee Joamie (Elder, Qikiqtani Inuit Association) (Interpretation): Thank you.

I am very proud to be here. Although this is a very difficult task, I have been waiting for this moment for a long time, and I am very happy to be here today.

Because this was a very difficult experience, when I tell about the experience that we went through I start to get emotional. My husband and I went through a very difficult time.

My husband at the time had to go down to Toronto for a TB treatment, and he didn't come back, so his grave is there. We went through a very difficult time when our dogs were slaughtered.

Around 1958-59 we lived in Pangnirtung, and we had to move because the government was relocating people. We had to move to Iqaluit. There were many sick people with TB who had to be relocated. Because my in-laws had to move, and because my husband wanted to stay with our in-laws, we also had to relocate to Iqaluit by boat.

• (1135)

My in-laws needed help and we needed to provide them food. We were travelling in the fall, when the water was just freezing up. We had three children. We had no way of travelling by plane, so in order to help our in-laws, we travelled by boat in the fall.

We moved to Iqaluit in the fall. In the springtime, we usually go camping outside of the community. We had been out camping with other Iqaluit residents and had gone back to pick up supplies and bullets. We travelled in the nighttime because in the springtime, when we are travelling, we usually travel in the night. That was June 22, and I will not forget that day.

We had already bought our supplies and we were preparing to leave. One of our children, who was eight years old at the time, came running to us to tell us that our dogs were ready to go, and without anyone consulting with us, they were being shot and there were only three left.

• (1140)

When that happened, my husband and I went down. There were only a few left. There were an Inuk and a *kablunap* who had shot them. Our son was hitting his father's back, crying and telling him to stop them. When all the dogs were shot, everyone outside was crying.

I was pregnant at the time when all the dogs were shot. We had to clean up the carcasses and cover them up with sand, and I was in much pain and my stomach was hurting that night. I couldn't stop crying because they were our only source of transportation to go hunting. That night I started paying out blood, maybe because I was going through so much hardship. It turned out that I was going to get better.

• (1145)

We couldn't really do anything after that time because our camp was very far and we weren't able to ask anyone for help. My husband and I walked to our camp, and we would walk with him when he went out looking for food. Because Inuit are very helpful people, we received some help.

This really changed our lives. We didn't seem to get along so much any more, maybe because it was so hard on us.

Because he went through a very painful experience, my son is bitter, and his life has not always been stable. You can tell that this was really epic in his life because he remembers that experience. He wanted us to stop the killing. He has been really hurt.

We didn't really have anyone to talk to about this, so maybe this will help me in some way lift the burden. Those were the only people

we looked up to for help, and they were the ones who shot all the dogs. The officer who just shot the dogs touched me and smiled when I felt most unhappy. He seemed to make fun of me as he touched me on the shoulder. He seemed to find it funny, what we had just experienced.

• (1150)

They really hurt us. In the springtime after that fall, the *qammaq* had to be taken. Our *qammaq* was going to be demolished by a bulldozer, and the driver had come to check inside to see if there was anyone in there. I was sleeping in there with my children at the time, and here they were going to bulldoze our *qammaq*.

I was pregnant at the time, and had a baby and a toddler. I put my baby on my back and went out of the *qammaq*. I watched our *qammaq* being demolished.

I apologize for being emotional when I tell this story.

In 1968 we had another experience. Our dogs were tied up near our house, and our blind father was living with us. My father's dog was tied up just outside of the house, and the dog was shot, as well as the side of the house. When I see that man today I remember that time. When he shot the dog, he also shot the side of the house.

This should really be looked into while the people who experienced this are still here.

I will end it now. If you have any questions, I will be able to answer them.

The Chair: *Qujannamiik*. Thank you.

I don't know if anyone else has an intervention. Otherwise we'll go to the round of questions.

[*Chair speaks in her native language*]

We'll start with Jeremy Harrison from the Conservative Party.

• (1155)

Mr. Jeremy Harrison (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would very much like to thank our witnesses for being here today. I know they've travelled a tremendous distance to tell a very difficult story. I thank them for coming.

I must say, Madam Chair, the stories we heard today are very disconcerting; it's a very serious issue. I think we do need further inquiry to get to the truth of this and how this could have been allowed to happen. I have to say, too, I'm a bit disappointed that we don't have any representatives from the government today to ask questions of. If it is indeed because of jurisdictional squabbling, or whatever the issue is, I must say I'm quite disappointed that nobody is here from the government to answer.

I'd particularly like to thank Mr. Cleary for bringing this before the committee and to thank Mr. Guy St-Julien, who had previously made this an issue and put it on the radar screen in Parliament. I know this is an issue that Mr. Cleary feels very passionately about and has spoken about extensively in the past. Because of that, I feel that he could probably use the time more effectively than I could, and I will cede the remainder of my time to Mr. Cleary.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Cleary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Cleary: Thank you, Jeremy.

I have a question for Mr. Maniapik about something I am having difficulty understanding. What do you think about the fact that in all the time we have been discussing this matter, government representatives—and I'm thinking mainly of the RCMP—have refused to come before us and have cast doubt not only on the testimony we have heard, but also on the film that was screened the other evening? How do you react to the fact that people claim nothing happened, and that the incident involving the dogs is almost a story that was made up? They say that these were anecdotal accounts. How do you react to the fact that so much doubt is being cast on your testimony that there is a refusal to do anything whatsoever about this matter?

Mr. David Smith (Pontiac, Lib.): Excuse me, Madam Chair, I would like to raise a point of order. Representatives from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were here on Monday, and they did say that something happened. Mr. Cleary's interpretation is not an accurate reflection of what was said at the committee on Monday. The RCMP representative said at that time that something had happened. Perhaps the problem lies in the explanation regarding what happened. I think Mr. Cleary's comments distort the information we heard on Monday.

[*English*]

The Chair: Maybe you would like to rephrase your question, Mr. Cleary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Cleary: I do not have to rephrase my question, but I will add something to it. Even if it were said that something had happened, what is meant by the word “something”? We heard testimony that the dogs were killed. The “something” people do not want to mention is that we invited some witnesses to come and talk to us about this incident. The Inuits came here and they all told us that some dogs were killed. The “something” that happened was that their dogs were killed, and that threatened their lifestyle and caused them tremendous suffering.

The two people I have just heard spoke about all the suffering this had caused. I will not withdraw my comment because a man, who is probably reading a document written by your lawyers, was not to say too much about this subject. I prefer to rely on what I heard here from the people who spoke to us. They are the ones who lived through this experience. The RCMP officer knows nothing about it. He simply read a text he had been given. Despite the fact that the RCMP representative's comment was correct, I am less than impressed by his testimony.

I therefore repeat my question. I would simply ask the people who experienced this event to tell me what they think about it. I have already formed my own opinion. What do they think about coming here to testify before their government about a terrible time in their history only to be told that “something” happened at that time?

I would like to hear the response of these people.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Joanasie Maniapik (Interpretation): Thank you for your question.

That is the experience we went through. Those people who lost their dogs went through so much hardship. The documentary you mentioned, I watched it too, and that's exactly what happened. That's what we experienced.

There should be documents somewhere on the experience that happened. If there are no documents, then maybe it's because they didn't look after them well; they didn't do their job right if there are no such documents. The government knows about what they did.

As I said before, this is exactly what happened, as it was in the documentary.

I know I'm not exactly answering your question, but I don't think about the experience I went through all of the time, but when I am travelling to my old camp I think about that time and those memories come back.

Maybe I didn't really answer your question, but thank you.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Cleary: Madam Chair, in light of the fact that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is trying to duck its responsibilities, I have no choice but to present a motion immediately and to call for a vote on it.

I tabled the motion on Monday, March 7, and I wanted it to be discussed. I propose that that be done immediately and that we vote right afterward. I will read you the motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development undertook a study on the slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970; that to get to the bottom of the matter, the Committee request that the government appoint, before April 15, 2005, a Superior Court judge to inquire into the matter; and that this individual submit a report to the government, the Committee and the Speaker of the House of Commons three (3) months following his or her appointment.

I wish to call for the vote on the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Senator Charlie Watt (Quebec, Lib.): Before the actual vote takes place, I want to say a few words.

The Chair: Just a moment. I have to get unanimous consent to allow you to speak because you're not a member of the committee, unfortunately.

Do I have unanimous consent to allow Senator Watt to speak?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead.

Senator Charlie Watt: Thank you.

Colleagues, I think what we heard today and two days ago is the evidence of what actually happened. I don't think we should be questioning that, and I don't appreciate the fact that it is being dealt with as a partisan issue. This is not a partisan issue.

We're talking about the lives of the people, what happened in the past. I think it's important to make sure that this matter is moved forward and that we get to the bottom of it; otherwise it's not going to disappear.

There is another recourse for those people, and if you don't want that recourse to be taken, we should look at it from the standpoint that it is not a partisan issue. I'm talking to my colleagues on the other side to make sure that this is acknowledged properly, because it's not in our favour as a government to deny what happened. We all know that back in the 1950s and 1960s, and even a little later than that and a little earlier than that, the government of the day, whether it was Conservative, whether it was Liberal, or whether it was NDP, had a policy. The system in the country had a policy to slow down the ability of the nomadic people to move around in the country in order to bring their kids into the community to be educated. We all know that. That was one of the big factors as to why dogs were slaughtered.

I'm not new. I've been around here for quite a number of years and I have been involved with government activities over the years. I know for a fact that was the policy at that time. There is no political party we can point a finger at and say they did this. I don't think anybody is finger pointing. It was a system—how it was conducted and carried out in daily activities. That's what we should be concerned with here.

• (1210)

The Chair: Do I have any other speakers to the motion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Smith: Madam Chair, I do not question what happened, because I'm neither judge nor jury. I saw the video cassette like everyone else. I have the greatest respect for the people who came to testify before us, and I have no bias in favour of either side. I was not even born in 1950 or even in 1960.

I know that the comments made by my colleague opposite were emotional, and I thank him for raising this matter. However, I would not like the process to be carried out and the results of it to be presented to the wrong committee. Often, as politicians, we have to do things that do not come under our jurisdiction. That is very commendable. I would just like to ensure that if a study is done, we have the authority required to ensure that there is some follow-up to it.

I have no legal background and I therefore cannot tell you whether this come under provincial or federal jurisdiction. We can have very different interpretations here around the table as to the right people to be analyzing what happened, and that is the question I raise in good faith. The group of people who undertake this study or analysis will experience a great many emotions. It is therefore important that the individuals involved in hearing the information have the authority to make a decision about it. I am wondering whether this motion has been presented to the right place, to the right committee.

I am a Quebecker and a Canadian. Is this a matter of provincial jurisdiction? That is what I am wondering about. I do not have the answer, and I don't think there is anyone here at the table who can answer the question either. I would have liked to have had some assurance that this committee is the right place. That is my question.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: I have Mr. Martin next on the speaking list.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): I will be very brief. I don't plan on commenting on the witnesses, other than to say thank you to them for their very moving testimony.

I would like to speak to Mr. Cleary's motion specifically, and I urge my colleagues to listen to the wisdom of Senator Watt when he implores us to please deal with this as a non-partisan, non-judgmental issue, and when he says that of all committees in the House of Commons, this one should be able to rise above partisan bickering to address the very human, very real issue that's been brought to our attention here.

I, for one, am very moved by the testimony we've heard. I'm very grateful to my colleague Mr. Cleary from the Bloc Québécois for making it a matter of debate at this committee, a matter of study at this committee. I urge my colleagues to carefully read the motion Mr. Cleary has moved. He asks simply that this committee request that the government appoint a judge to look into this matter.

This is not a binding thing that our government-side colleagues should feel threatened by. There is no cost factor associated with this. It is the opinion of this committee that the Government of Canada should appoint a judge to do a proper inquiry into this matter.

I urge—I do more, I plead with—my Liberal-side colleagues to make a show here of a unanimous consensus to this motion, and in that way demonstrate to the people who have bared their souls to us here today that we hear them, we care, and we want justice, even if it's 50 years too late on this issue.

Having said that, I'd like to move the question that we vote on Mr. Cleary's motion.

• (1215)

The Chair: There is another speaker on the list that I have to give a chance to speak. Mr. St. Amand, go ahead please.

Mr. Pat Martin: When someone moves the question, you test the floor to see if the question should be called. You ask, "All those in favour?"

The Chair: Bear with me while we go through the routine motions. Just give me a chance. This is on advice from the clerk.

Mr. Pat Martin: My understanding is, Madam Chair, that when someone calls the question, we then put the question to the table: shall the vote be held now? That itself is voted upon. I may be wrong.

The Chair: My clerk is advising me that in the committee we vote when the committee is ready to vote. We obviously have another speaker on the list.

Mr. St. Amand was on the speaking list to speak on the motion.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand: I have just a few comments, Madam Chair.

We on this side do not wish to descend into partisanship. It's unfortunate that Mr. Cleary saw fit to, in his phrase, immediately ask for this motion to be considered, immediately upon two colleagues from one of the opposition parties entering the room. I'm not sure what the sense of immediacy was all about, except for the presence now of five members across the floor. Indeed, it's also unfortunate that Mr. Cleary wants us to consider the motion without giving Mr. Martin, let alone ourselves, an opportunity to question the witnesses.

Apart from that and what I would respectfully categorize as partisan attempts to manipulate this proceeding, I don't want this matter to be dealt with in a partisan fashion. These good people have come from some distance and have told their stories to us, but as important as anything is some procedural fairness.

I've heard nothing yet from any witness that would allay my concern that we as a committee should not be dealing with this motion. That's my concern. If we, as a committee that shouldn't be dealing with this matter, decide to deal with it, what's to stop us then from, frankly, bringing a motion with respect to a health issue, a foreign affairs issue, or a transport issue?

We've heard nothing as to why this committee should be dealing with it. In fact, we've heard from an RCMP officer who obviously is answerable to another ministry. Apart from that, we've heard nothing whatsoever as to previous efforts by federal governments in the past, be they Liberal or Tory, to deal with this very matter. However, we are asked to, *carte blanche*, spend however many dollars of taxpayers' money to pursue an inquiry, the limits of which are not set forth and the repetition of which, for all we know, may be a component of it.

So I don't wish to be partisan, but we need much, much more information before we can go down this slippery slope.

●(1220)

The Chair: I also have Mr. Harrison wishing to speak on the motion.

Mr. Jeremy Harrison: Very briefly, Madam Chair, there's a reason in the House rules for why we don't comment on the absence or presence of members, and I would just like to point out for the record that all the Liberal members weren't here at the start of this meeting either.

The Chair: I don't know if that adds anything to the debate, but I was told that is the rule of the House of Commons. That is not necessarily the rule at the committee level.

I think Mr. Cleary now wants to give his closing remarks on the motion before we vote.

I understand where Mr. St. Amand is coming from, and I understand all of your comments. As Mr. Martin was saying, I don't think it's binding the committee beyond its jurisdiction. That was the advice I was given.

I don't know whether or not Mr. Valley has something to add to the motion before Mr. Cleary gives his closing remarks.

You do?

Mr. Valley, and then Mr. Cleary.

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I do apologize to the witnesses. I would have been here, but I was kept away by my own whip. Other government business kept me, and I apologize for that. My job was to be here to hear your testimony, and I regret that I wasn't.

Mr. Cleary's motion has a lot of value, but at this time we need more information. We've had two days of testimony. That testimony has raised an awful lot of questions. The other side has pointed out very clearly that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered. I think we could do with another day to bring some more witnesses in. We could develop a list and get all the information we need, in order to decide if this is the right thing to do at this time.

In their own letter from the corporation, they mention the province quite a number of times. There are more questions here than there are answers. We may get to the day when Mr. Cleary's motion is supported by all parties, but I think we have some more questions to ask of people inside our own government.

The Chair: Mr. Cleary, now, for your closing remarks on the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Cleary: My concluding remarks will be brief. I too call for the vote.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bellavance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): I would like to request a recorded vote, please, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: I didn't get that translation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: I would like to request a recorded vote, please.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, a recorded vote is requested. I will just turn it over to the clerk.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4)

The Chair: I was just checking to see if we have some questioners still on the list.

I don't know if you want to pursue it, Mr. Martin. You are next to ask questions of the witnesses. My clerk tells me that we would continue with the process, unless you feel the matter has now been taken care of with the motion.

Mr. Martin.

●(1225)

Mr. Pat Martin: Well, then, given that opportunity, I would welcome a chance to ask one or two brief questions, seeing as my time was interrupted by the motion.

Speaking on behalf of my party, the NDP, we are very moved by the very powerful testimony we heard. To help me understand the personal stories you've told, I have one specific question for you, Mr. Maniapik.

Were your dogs sick or dangerous when the Mounties shot them?

Mr. Joansie Maniapik (Interpretation): No, definitely not.

I was not a resident of Pangnirtung at the time. For your information, I was living at the camp outside of Pangnirtung. I had gone to Pangnirtung to pick up supplies, and I was going to leave as soon as I bought my supplies.

No, my dogs were not harmful and they were not hungry. I had just gone to pick up supplies when they were shot.

Mr. Pat Martin: I have a second question.

What style of harness do you use for your dogs in your part of the country, the fan-shaped harness or the all-in-a-line harness?

Mr. Joansie Maniapik (Interpretation): We used to use Inuit harnesses made out of caribou skin, for people who mainly had caribou. Canvas was also used; they were store-bought. I didn't prefer those ones, so I mainly used seal skin for harnesses.

Mr. Thomas Alikatuktuk: Madam.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Thomas Alikatuktuk: I think we can get more answers from Joshua.

The Chair: Okay, Joshua.

Mr. Joshua Kango (Qikiqtani Inuit Association) (Interpretation): Thank you, Chairperson.

We still keep our traditions alive. I have dogs myself that I use in a dog team. I have traditional harnesses, and they are in a line. The best dogs have longer harnesses, longer ropes, and the ones that aren't the best have shorter ones. So they have their own harnesses. I use bearded-seal skins for all the harnesses, ropes, and whips.

• (1230)

Mr. Pat Martin: Thank you.

My reason for asking that was my final question.

When the RCMP caught up with your dogs, they were still in their harness. So if the RCMP only wanted to catch those dogs, couldn't they have taken them by their harness and put them back in the compound, instead of killing them?

Mr. Joansie Maniapik (Interpretation): My dogs had been in their harnesses without being tied to the ropes, and whenever the RCMP saw loose dogs they would try to shoot them right away. I've even heard that they've shot dogs that were tied up. We were very

watchful of our dogs when we went to pick up supplies, because we knew if they were loose, they would shoot them. I was just trying to finish buying my supplies at the time they were shot.

So whenever we went in to buy supplies we would try to leave right away so that our dogs wouldn't be shot.

The Chair: I think Mr. Alikatuktuk wanted to add to that.

Mr. Thomas Alikatuktuk: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

I think we can get a better answer from Alisee Joamie. As she was saying, her dogs were tied to the *komatik*. Maybe she can answer the question.

Ms. Alisee Joamie (Interpretation): I would like to answer briefly about the dogs I talked about that were shot. Because we were going to be leaving they were all harnessed and tied to the *komatik*. None of them was loose. They were all shot. There was only one dog that had puppies that was loose. That was the only one that was not shot, and we did look after that one well because it had puppies. The rest that were shot were tied to the *komatik*.

• (1235)

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, please, Mr. Bellavance.

[Translation]

Mr. André Bellavance: I apologize, Madam Chair. I would just like to ensure that the motion moved by my colleague, Mr. Cleary, which is just being passed, will be tabled as a report to the House of Commons.

[English]

The Chair: Are you moving that as a motion? Mr. Bellavance has moved that this motion passed be reported to the House as a report from the committee. Is there agreement?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

This will bring a close to this morning's meeting; it is afternoon now. I very much want to thank the witnesses for coming here.

[Chair speaks in her native language]

I know we went a little over our one hour, but I know that when people come from a long way and we have to do translation and interpretation, sometimes we have to work out of the norm.

I thank the committee members for their patience in listening to the witnesses, the witnesses for appearing before us, and all the people here for listening.

The committee is adjourned.

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