Jose Kusugak of Rankin Inlet, then a director of the Inuit Language Commission, seen here leading a discussion on Inuktitut writing systems. The Commission ran from 1973 to 1976 and studied many aspects of contemporary Canadian Inuktitut.

Photo Credit: Inuit Cultural Institute.

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Are you Moving? Vous déménagez?

Name: ____________________________
Nom: ____________________________

Old Address: ____________________________
Ancienne adresse: ____________________________

New Address: ____________________________
Nouvelle adresse: ____________________________

Mail to address above.
Expédier à l'adresse ci-dessus.

Table of Contents

September, septembre, 1983
No. 53

2 Introduction

3 Part 1: Writing in Inuktitut: An Historical Perspective

33 Footnotes/Part 1

36 Part 2: Inuktitut Writing Systems: the Current Situation

79 Footnotes/Part 2

85 Part 3: Inuktitut interpreting and translating

The Roman orthography Inuktitut in this issue has been "transliterated" from the syllabics by computer, using the dual orthography writing system designed by the Inuit Language Commission.

L'orthographe inuktitute moderne utilisée dans le présent numéro a fait l'objet d'une transcritération informatique à partir de l'orthographe syllabique, grâce au système d'écriture double mis au point par l'Inuit Language Commission.
Introduction

Ever since the building of the great tower of Babel, humanity has been trying to bridge communication gaps among the many languages of the world. It is therefore satisfying to learn about the inventiveness of certain individuals, such as those early Europeans who laboured among our people to come up with a workable written language. Syllabics in particular has become a unique writing system for many Canadian Inuit. Evidently though, as the system became widely used, some people became aware of the need to make improvements to include certain Inuktitut sounds not covered by the old system. Inuit Tapirisat of Canada was fully aware of these needs, and in 1974 set up a Language Commission, to bring about the solution—the dual orthography—that is in use today.

This well documented special Inuktitut supplement by Kenn Harper covers a lot of the important events and developments in relation to Inuktitut writing system, interpreting and translating.

Mark Kalluak
Eskimo Point, NWT
Part 1

Writing in Inuktitut: An Historical Perspective

by Kenn Harper

“We were stupid. We should have thought of writing on sealskins!” So said Peter Pitseolak, commenting on his forebears’ failure to leave a legacy of written records.

Throughout the North, Inuit had no traditional writing systems. No attempts were made to develop writing systems for Inuit until after contact with whites. When that contact occurred, it was white missionaries who made the first attempts to reduce the Inuktitut language to written form.

Early Greenlandic Writing

The earliest attempts to develop an orthography for the Inuktitut language were the attempts by Lutheran ministers to develop a written form for Greenlandic. Poul Egede, son of Hans Egede, the first missionary to Greenland, was the pioneer in this work. He drew on the earlier work of his father and other missionaries in translating the New Testament, which was published in its entirety in Greenlandic in 1766. By 1760 Egede had also published a grammar of Greenlandic. In writing Greenlandic for Greenlanders, Egede used Roman orthography. In 1794 Otto Fabricius published a new translation of the New Testament using a Roman orthography, but one which differed in some points from that of Egede. In 1822 a third translation of the New Testament was published, this one by the German Moravian missionary, Johan Conrad Kleinschmidt; it too differed orthographically from the previous translation. The aim of these early attempts...
was usually not to produce an Inuktitut orthography for Inuit, but rather "for use of other white people, and possibly for the student from amongst the Eskimo people who has been trained by white scholarship."  

By the mid-1800s it was obvious that there was a need for a standard method of writing in Greenlandic. If not, people would continue to write Greenlandic in a way which seemed best for each individual but which, together, would be very confusing to the readers.

Greenland was fortunate at that time to have a remarkable man working in its Moravian priesthood. He was Samuel Kleinschmidt. The son of a missionary, he had been born in Greenland and had grown up speaking Greenlandic. His interests were wide, but his most important contributions were to the cultural life of Greenland, through the publication of his Greenlandic grammar and dictionary and his contributions to the newspaper, Atuagagdliutit. Kleinschmidt worked on Greenlandic orthographic reform for many years. As a linguist he was far ahead of his time. In 1850 he wrote:

> It is a serious fault when different sounds are indicated by means of one letter, or one sound by means of different letters, and the fault is doubly grave in a language which is so thoroughly regular as that of Greenland.

By 1871 Kleinschmidt was satisfied with his revised orthography and used it consistently in the dictionary he published that year. His innovation became the official standard for written Greenlandic for the next century, and was used consistently in books, newspapers and all official publications.

**From Greenland to Labrador**

The first missionaries to Labrador were Moravians with Greenlandic experience. They established a mission in Labrador in the late eighteenth century. Most of these missionaries were fluent in Greenlandic already, and found few differences between Greenlandic and Labrador Inuktitut. This tradition was continued by Conrad Kleinschmidt. His contributions to the newspaper, Atuagagdliutit, were instrumental in promoting written records. In 1850 he wrote:

> It is a serious fault when different sounds are indicated by means of one letter, or one sound by means of different letters, and the fault is doubly grave in a language which is so thoroughly regular as that of Greenland.

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**Du Groenland au Labrador**

Les premiers missionnaires au Labrador étaient des frères moraves du Groenland. Ils ont fondé une mission au Labrador à la fin du XVIIIe siècle. La plupart de ces missionnaires par-
Greenlandic and the Inuit dialect of Labrador. From Greenland they brought a Roman orthography to Labrador, but their arrival pre-dated Kleinschmidt’s work on the development of standard Greenlandic orthography by almost a century, so the Moravian orthography introduced in Labrador and used to this day differs in many points from Kleinschmidt’s Greenlandic. In 1899 a writer made this comment about Labrador Inuitut:

Unfortunately the orthography of Eskimo which we usually use is still very imperfect, in itself varied and inconsistent.4

The difficulties, in the opinion of a linguist, were “largely due to the fact that the Labrador dialect had never been independently analysed. The orthography was based on Greenlandic, which was demonstrably different from Labrador Inuitut.”5

The earliest detailed grammar of Labrador Inuitut, written in German by Bourquin, relied heavily on Kleinschmidt’s analysis of Greenlandic and its presumed similarity to Labrador Inuitut.

Roman orthographies were used too to write Inuktut in the western Canadian Arctic, although no standard form developed.

Alaskan Picture Writing

The only place where Inuit attempted to develop their own systems of writing was Alaska. The most well-known innovator there was Uyaqoq, a Yupik-speaker from the Kuskokwim River, better known by the name Helper Neck (“neck” being the English translation of his name), a helper at a Moravian mission station. About 1900 Neck, who could neither read nor write English, began to develop a system of picture-writing. Other Inuit, working at the mission station and inspired by Neck’s innovation, developed their own picture-writing systems, most of which could be read only by themselves. Meanwhile Neck continued to work on his system, adding extra symbols and eventually developing a syllabic writing system, that is, a system of writing in which one character represented one syllable; it was composed of Yupik

Samuel Kleinschmidt has been credited with the development of a standard Greenlandic orthography used for over one hundred years in Greenlandic publications.

C'est à Samuel Kleinschmidt que l'on attribue la mise au point de l'orthographe standard du groenlandais qui est utilisée depuis plus de cent ans dans les publications groenlandaises.

En Alaska

Ce n'est qu'en Alaska que les Inuit ont cherché à mettre au point leur propre système d'écriture. Le plus connu de ces pionniers est Uyaqoq, un Inuit de langue yupik de la rivière Kuskokwim. Uyaqoq était surnommé Helper Neck («neck» est la traduction anglaise de son nom), et travaillait comme assistant à la mission morave. Vers 1900, Neck, qui ne savait ni lire ni écrire en anglais, a commencé à mettre au point un système de pictogrammes. D'autres Inuit de la mission, inspirés par cette innovation ont entrepris d'élaborer leur propre système de pictogrammes, qu'ils étaient souvent les seuls à pouvoir lire. De son côté, Neck a poursuivi ses travaux, complétant son système par de nouveaux symbo-
A sample of Alaskan picture writing by Edna Kenick from Nunivak, Alaska. During the 1950s Edna Kenick wrote 49 passages from the Bible in picture writing like that pictured here. The manuscript for this material is now kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. Credit: The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.
Pages from an Eskimo-Russian dictionary compiled by E.S. Rubtsov under the editorship of G. A. Menovskikov and published in Moscow in 1971. Note the cyrillic Russian script.


Origines de l'écriture syllabique inuit

Dans l'Arctique de l'Est, à l'exclusion du Labrador, la situation a évolué quelque peu différemment, et cela à la suite des travaux effectués vers le milieu du XIXe siècle chez les Cris de Norway House.

En 1840, un missionnaire méthodiste, le révérend James Evans, a été muté du sud de l'Ontario à Norway House, qui faisait alors partie du vaste territoire de la Compagnie de la baie d'Hudson. En Ontario, Evans s'était efforcé de trouver un moyen de transcrire en caractères romains les sons de la langue sauteuse, mais avait dû finalement élaborer sa propre méthode. Grâce à ses connaissances de la sténographie selon la méthode Pitman, il avait su mettre au point une écriture syllabique. Il avait inventé neuf symboles, chacun d'eux pouvant être représenté dans quatre positions différentes, ce qui était suffisant pour transcrire toutes les combinaisons de voyelles et de consonnes de la langue sauteuse. Toutefois, le conseil de mission dont relevait Evans n'était pas en faveur d'une telle innovation et lui avait refusé la permission d'utiliser sa méthode.
The Cree syllabarium from which the Inuktitut syllabic writing system was derived.

It is significant that all of these developments, occurring independently of each other, were made by Inuit associated with missionary work. Further, they were not intended to be used in writing to other Inuit, but only as memory aids to assist the innovators in their preaching on Biblical texts.

The Alaskan picture-writing is a thing of the past. No-one uses it today and the originators of the various systems have all died. Save for these unique attempts by Inuit of Alaska to develop their own writing systems, the Roman alphabet has been used to write Alaskan Yupik and Inupiaq. It was also used in Siberia, before it was eventually supplanted by a system using Russian Cyrillic characters.

Inuktitut Syllabics: the Origins

In the eastern Canadian Arctic, excluding Labrador, the situation developed quite differently, and it took its cue from the work done in the mid-nineteenth century among Cree Indians at Norway House.

In 1840 the Reverend James Evans, a Wesleyan missionary, transferred from southern Ontario to Norway House, then part of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s vast territory. In Ontario, Evans had struggled to devise a means of recording accurately the sounds of the native Ojibway speech in the Roman alphabet, but had finally given up and developed a method of his own. He knew Pitman shorthand and turned this knowledge to

### Invention of the Syllabic Characters

**The Cree Syllabic Alphabet.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIALS</th>
<th>SYLLABLES</th>
<th>FINALS</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

The dot over any syllable lengthens the vowel sound.

Thus, Lο ={Manito, the Indian name for the Great Spirit, or God; L L = Mama; << = Papa.

Près de vingt ans plus tard, à Norway House, Evans a appris à parler cri, mais il éprouvait des difficultés à transcrire cette langue en caractères romains. Il a donc cherché à modifier son système pour l’adapter aux particularités de la langue crie. Il a ensuite enseigné ce système aux Indiens de Norway House, leur donnant à lire des documents religieux. Les résultats ont été étonnants. Le système était si
good advantage in creating a syllabic script. He created nine symbols, each of which could be written in four different positions; these were sufficient to represent the vowel and consonant combinations of Ojibway. The mission board to which Evans reported, however, did not favour innovation of this nature and refused him permission to use his creation.

Almost two decades later, at Norway House, Evans learned the Cree language but again faced difficulties in reducing it to writing in the Roman alphabet. Here he re-examined his syllabic system, modifying it somewhat to suit the peculiarities of the Cree language. He taught the simple system to the Indians at Norway House and produced religious material for them to read. The results were amazing. The system was so simple that it could be mastered and literacy acquired within a few hours. More-
Indians with James Evans reading syllabics written on birch bark.

James Evans, en compagnie d'indiens, lisant des textes rédigés en écriture syllabique sur de l'écorce de bouleau.

over, every Indian who mastered the system became a teacher of it, and use of the system spread rapidly as far as the Rocky Mountains. Even on the trail, Indians were able to communicate by leaving messages drawn with charred sticks on birchbark sheets. One writer at the time noted:

All accounts represent the diffusion of the syllabic characters among the Indian camps of the vast interior occupied by the Cree tribes as extraordinary.

Over, every Indian who mastered the system became a teacher of it, and use of the system spread rapidly as far as the Rocky Mountains. Even on the trail, Indians were able to communicate by leaving messages drawn with charred sticks on birchbark sheets. One writer at the time noted:

All accounts represent the diffusion of the syllabic characters among the Indian camps of the vast interior occupied by the Cree tribes as extraordinary.
Adapting Syllabics to Inuktitut

Edmund James Peck is usually given credit for the adaptation of Evans' Cree Syllabics to Inuktitut, but this is not strictly correct. The adaptation was actually made by John Horden and E.A. Watkins, missionaries sent from England to the Diocese of Moosonee.

Edmund James Peck

Adapting Syllabics to Inuktitut

C'est à Edmund James Peck que revient l'honneur d'avoir adapté le système syllabique cri d'Evans à l'inuktitut, mais ce n'est pas tout à fait exact. Cette adaptation a été réalisée par John Horden et E.A. Watkins, deux missionnaires envoyés d'Angleterre dans le diocèse de Moosonee.

Dès 1856, Horden, à Moose Factory, et Watkins, à Fort-George, publiaient des documents en caractères syllabiques à l'intention des Inuit. Le 19 juin 1856, Watkins notaït :

Ce matin, j'ai passé une heure et demie avec un jeune Esquimau venant de ... la région de la Petite rivière de la Baleine ... Il m'a paru très désireux d'apprendre les caractères syllabiques.

Cette année-là, Horden écrivit qu'il avait reçu des morceaux choisis de la Bible en inuktitut qu'il avait envoyés à Moose Factory pour les faire imprimer en caractères syllabiques.

Toutefois, il apparaît bientôt que les caractères syllabiques s'adaptent difficilement aux exigences de l'inuktitut et qu'un certain nombre de révisions seraient nécessaires si l'on voulait que les Inuit s'en servent. Horden n'était pas persuadé de la part de l'utilité d'une révision mais il n'en rencontrait pas moins Watkins à Londres en 1865, sur les instructions de la Church Missionary Society, afin de transposer le système cri en inuktitut.

Une des améliorations apportées par Horden et Watkins au système syllabique n'était pas de leur cru mais emprunté à Robert Hunt. En 1849, Hunt, un missionnaire de la Church Missionary Society dans la terre de Rupert, avait fondé Stanley Mission, près du lac La Ronge (Saskatchewan). En 1853, il avait proposé d'apporter un certain nombre de modifications au système syllabique établi par Evans pour les Crus, mais l'on n'avait pas...
John Horden (above) and E.A. Watkins, two missionaries from England, adapted Cree syllabics to suit Inuktut.

Ce sont John Horden (en haut) et E.A. Watkins, deux missionnaires anglais, qui ont adapté l’orthographe syllabique cri à l’inuktut.

By 1856 Horden, working at Moose Factory, and Watkins at Fort George, were producing material in syllabics for Inuit. On June 19, 1856, Watkins noted:

This morning I spent an hour and a half with an Esquimaux youth, who had come ... from Little Whale River ... He seemed very

Robert Peck (1840-1901) a été le premier missionnaire de la Church Missionary Society à établir une mission dans la région de la baie d’Hudson.

1840-1901 (Reverend James Evans), Edmund James Peck, et Theodor Bourquin, étaient deux missionnaires qui ont travaillé chez les Indiens et les Inuit avant l’arrivée d’autres missionnaires.

Diffusion des caractères syllabiques

Les travaux faits en inuktut n’ont pas été diffusés avant l’arrivée d’un missionnaire envoyé spécialement chez les Inuit. Cela ne s’est produit qu’en 1876, date à laquelle Edmund Peck a été appelé à ce ministère. Il lui revenait la tâche de traduire des documents bibliques en inuktut selon la méthode d’écriture syllabique et d’encourager l’usage de cette écriture.

Peck est né en Angleterre en 1850. Après une brève carrière dans la marine, il a étudié la théologie pendant un an, puis il a été envoyé en 1876 par la Church Missionary Society dans la région de la baie d’Hudson. Là, il a établi une mission dans le secteur de la Petite rivière de la Baleine à l’intention des Indiens et des Inuit, mais s’intéressait surtout aux Inuit. Au début, il s’en tenait à une traduction morave du Nouveau Testament, dans le dialecte inuktut du Labrador, qu’il s’était procurée à Londres avant son départ. Il avait étudié ce document pendant sa traversée de l’Atlantique et s’en était servi pour prêcher dès son retour à la mission. Il écrivit qu’à son arrivée : « Je leur ai lu le Livre de Dieu et, à ma grande joie, ils l’ont compris. »

Peck se référant surtout à l’étude du dialecte du Labrador préparée par le révérend Theodor Bourquin, ainsi qu’à celle du groenlandais de Samuel Kleinschmidt, qu’il qualifiait de « trésor linguistique », mais il avait remarqué que le dialecte du bas de la baie d’Hudson s’en écartait quelque
In the same year he mentions having received back from Moose Factory some Bible selections which he had prepared in Inuktitut and sent down to Moose Factory for printing in syllabics.

It was soon evident, however, that the syllabic characters were being severely “strained” by the demands of Inuktitut, and that some revisions would be necessary if Inuit were to learn and use the system well. Horden himself was not convinced that a revision was desirable, but in 1865 he met with Watkins in London, under instruction from the Church Missionary Society, to modify the Cree system to the Inuktitut language.

Interestingly enough, one of the improvisations that Horden and Watkins brought to the system was not their own but one that they had borrowed from the legacy of Robert Hunt. Hunt, a Church Missionary Society missionary who had gone to Rupert’s Land in 1849, established Stanley Mission near Lac La Ronge in what is now Saskatchewan. In 1853 he proposed some modifications to Evans’ Cree syllabics, but his suggestions did not catch on and were never formally adopted. The method used today of representing syllable-final consonants and vowel length were Horden’s and Watkins’ adoption of Hunt’s suggestion.

It is clear that the adaptation of Cree syllabics to the Inuktitut language was made by Horden and Watkins. Why then is Edmund James Peck usually credited with this accomplishment? The answer is probably that Horden and Watkins were primarily missionaries to the Indians and lived among Indians. The Inuit work was a side-line for them and neither was able to devote much time to it.

The Spread of Syllabics

The Inuit work would not flourish until a missionary was recruited to labour permanently among the Inuit. That did not happen until 1876 when Edmund Peck was called to the ministry. His task was to translate Biblical material anxious to acquire a knowledge of the syllabic characters.

In 1884, he made a long voyage which I have mentioned of the petite Rivière de la Baleine to the baie d’Ungava where he has passed three years to teach the Inuit. Quinze ans plus tard, he received a letter of the évêque morave La Trobe who, citing a missionary morave having visited Fort-Chimo some years after the visit of Peck, wrote:

... John Melucto and Adam Lucy m’ont beaucoup aidé à m’aider, ce dont je leur suis très reconnaissant. Chaque jour, je recueille en moyenne 80 à 100 mots. Je les apprends dès que je peux. Je connais maintenant quelques milliers de mots, pour la plupart esquimaux, que j’ai pu recueillir en étudiant le Testament et en consultant divers amis.

Peck estimaient connaître suffisamment l’inuktitut après y avoir consacré six heures de travail par jour pendant sept ans. C’est ainsi qu’il a réalisé son nom inuit: Uqammak, ce qui signifie celui qui sait bien parler, nom qui lui est resté jusqu’à ce jour.

En 1877, il écrivait:

J’ai réussi à apprendre à plusieurs Esquimaux à lire les caractères syllabiques; ils avaient une grande soif d’apprendre.

En 1884, il a fait un très long voyage qui l’a mené de la petite rivière de la Baleine à la baie d’Ungava où il a passé trois années à enseigner aux Inuit. Quinze ans plus tard, il recevait une lettre de l’évêque morave La Trobe, citant un missionnaire morave ayant visité Fort-Chimo quelques années après la visite de Peck, et il écrivait:
Peck had been born in England in 1850. After a brief career in the navy, he took a year of theological training before coming to Hudson Bay with the Church Missionary Society in 1876. He established a mission at Little Whale River where he ministered to both Indians and Inuit, but his particular love was work with Inuit. Initially Peck relied heavily on a Moravian translation of the New Testament in the Labrador Inuktut dialect, which he had gotten in London before his departure. He studied that material on his Atlantic crossing and preached from it on his arrival in Little Whale River. He wrote that, on his arrival, “I read to them the Word of God, which, to my great joy, they understood.”

Peck relied heavily on Reverend Theodor Bourquin’s study of the Labrador dialect and Samuel Kleinschmidt’s study of Greenlandic, which he called “this mine of linguistic treasure,” but he was aware that the dialect of lower Hudson Bay differed somewhat in getting a grip on those differences. He wrote:

... in finding out how far the Moravian Brethren’s translation of the New Testament was understood in the Little Whale River dialect, both John Melucto and Adam Lucy proved most valuable helpers.

Peck set himself a rigorous schedule for the study of native languages. In his diary for November 1876 he noted:

My plan is to write down some simple words and sentences. I then get the corresponding In-Indian or Esquimaux words ... I find all very willing to help me, for which I am indeed thankful. My daily collection averages from eighty to a hundred words. These are learned the following day, and brought into use as soon as possible ... I have now got some thousands of words, mostly Esquimaux, which I gathered by study of the Testament, and from different friends.
Peck considered himself to have mastered Inuktitut only after six hours of study daily for seven years. In this way he earned his Inuktitut name—Uqammak—the one who speaks well—by which he is remembered to this day.

Almost as soon as Peck arrived at Little Whale River, he began working in the Inuktitut language, and in 1877 he wrote:

> I have succeeded in teaching several of the Eskimos to read in the syllabic character; they were very eager to learn.  

In 1884 he made a long journey from Little Whale River to Ungava Bay where he spent three weeks teaching the Inuit there. Fifteen years later he received a letter from the Moravian, Bishop La Trobe, who passed on the comments of a Moravian missionary who had visited Fort Chimo some years after Peck’s visit:

> All the Eskimo, even the old people, are learning to read and write in the syllabic character, and your extracts from the Bible and the Catechism are highly prized.  

In 1894 Peck established a Church Missionary Society mission at Blacklead Island in Cumberland Sound, the first permanent mission on Baffin Island. He spent four periods of two years each at Blacklead, spending one-year furloughs in England between periods, where he attended to such matters as seeing the four gospels through the press and supervising the production of other church literature.

Even before missionaries had reached other areas of the Arctic, Peck was active in proselytising, sending copies of church literature with expeditions, traders and Inuit travellers. In 1903 the gospels reached the Pond Inlet area when Inuit from Cumberland Sound travelled there on a small trading vessel, the Albert. Peck sent manuscript copies of some portions of the gospel on the vessel. He wrote:

> I also had copies of some of the books of the Old Testament and the Epistles written out by the Blacklead scholars, and these...

Missionary Society. It y a fait quatre séjours de deux ans, entrecoupés de séjours d’une année en Angleterre où il supervisait la publication des quatre Évangiles et d’autres documents religieux.

Avant même que les missionnaires ne parviennent dans d’autres régions de l’Arctique, Peck faisait beaucoup de prosélytisme, confiant de la documentation religieuse aux explorateurs, aux négociants en fourrure et aux voyageurs inuit. En 1903, les Évangiles étaient parvenus dans la région de Pond Inlet, apportés par des Inuit de la baie Cumberland ayant fait la traversée sur un petit navire de commerce, l’Albert. Peck avait mis sur le bateau un certain nombre d’exemplaires de l’Évangile. Il nous dit :

> J’avais aussi des copies de certains livres de l’Ancien Testament et des Épîtres des Apôtres qui avaient été rédigées par des étudiants de l’Île Blacklead; elles m’ont été très utiles ... Je les ai expédiées plus au nord pour que les Esquimaux non évangélisés en tirent profit.

En 1914, un des successeurs de Peck à la mission de l’Île Blacklead, E.W.T. Greenshield, nous parle d’un voyage effectué sur un baleinier dans le nord du détroit de Davis :

> Nous avons rencontré deux hommes, deux Esquimaux de la pointe de terre la plus au nord de l’Île Baffin, où ils n’ont encore jamais vu de missionnaires ... Tous deux possédaient certains fragments des Écritures et ils se sont approchés avec leur femme pour me demander de leur expliquer de nombreux passages.

De son côté, Therkel Mathiassen écrit au sujet des Inuit d’Iglulik lors de la cinquième expédition de Thulé qui eut lieu de 1921 à 1924 :

> L’écriture syllabique de Peck est largement répandue chez les Esquimaux d’Iglulik, les mères l’apprenant à leurs enfants qui l’enseignent à leur tour; la plupart des Esquimaux d’Iglulik sont en mesure de lire et d’écrire cette langue très simple mais plutôt imparfaite et ils envoient souvent des lettres entre eux;
Peck considered himself to have mastered Inuktitut only after six hours of study a day for seven years.

Ce n'est qu'après avoir étudié l'inuktitut pendant sept ans, à raison de six heures par jour, que Peck considérait avoir maîtrisé la langue.

Les crayons et les carnets sont en conséquence très appréciés. 17

Une observation surprenante trouvée dans une lettre envoyée en 1907 par un négociant de l'île Baffin à l'un de ses concurrents nous laisse entendre que, la diffusion des caractères syllabiques a pu s'étendre à certaines régions du sud du Groenland. On peut lire, dans cette lettre d'Osbert Clare Forsyth-Grant :

Vous serez peut-être intéressé d'apprendre que je transporte régulièrement des lettres écrites sous la direction de prêtres danois par les Esquimaux de l'ouest du Groenland aux Esquimaux de la côte ouest du détroit de Davis et que je rapporte les réponses rédigées à l'aide de symboles qui représentent non une lettre mais une syllabe. Ces Esquimaux séparés entre eux par des centaines de milles d'océan sont en mesure de se comprendre et de s'intéresser véritablement à ce qui se fait ailleurs. 18

Enseignement des caractères syllabiques

L'église anglicane a réussi à évangéliser une région aussi étendue que l'Arctique en grande partie parce que l'orthographe syllabique était facile à apprendre. Les Inuit se l'enseignaient entre eux. Grâce à des assistants autochtones, qui voyageaient beaucoup et qui avaient travaillé avec Peck, Bilby et Greenshield dans l'île Blacklead, et avec Bilby et Fleming à Lake Harbour, un grand nombre d'Inuit n'ayant jamais rencontré un missionnaire ont pu se familiariser avec la Bible et la lire en caractères syllabiques. Luke Kiklapik et Joseph Pudloo sont les assistants autochtones les plus connus.

Encore enfant, Joseph Pudloo a appris les caractères syllabiques dans la classe avancée du révère Fleming de Lake Harbour. Plus tard, en tant que conducteur du traineau de Fleming, il a transporté le missionnaire sur des milliers de milles afin de rendre visite aux camps inuit. Par la suite, il a travaillé pendant deux ans avec le
were of great use to me ... These copies I have sent away far up north to the completely heathen Eskimo. In 1914 E.W.T. Greenshield, one of Peck's successors at the Blacklead mission, wrote about a trip he made in a whaling vessel well north into Davis Strait:

We also met two men, Eskimo from the northernmost point of Baffin Land, where they had never seen a missionary yet ... Both had some portions of the Scriptures, and with their wives they came to me asking to have many passages explained.

Similarly, on the Fifth Thule Expedition from 1921 to 1924, Therkel Mathiassen noted of the Iglulik Inuit:

The Peck Syllabic Writing has spread widely among the Iglulik Eskimos, where the mothers teach it to their children and the latter teach each other; most Iglulik Eskimos can read and

Peck established a mission at Blacklead Island in Cumberland Sound near Pangnirtung in 1894. This photograph shows Inuit reading in Inuktitut. The books were published in England by Peck when he went back there on holiday.

A page from Peck’s notebook, showing vocabulary notes, later used as the basis for a dictionary. These notes also helped him translate the Bible into Inuktitut.

Page d’un carnet de Peck comportant des notes de vocabulaire qui furent utilisées par la suite pour la préparation d’un dictionnaire. Ces notes l’ont également aidé lors de la traduction de la Bible en inuktitut.

A page from Peck’s translation of the Bible. Note the corrections Peck made to his rough draft.
write this fairly simple but rather imperfect language and they often write letters to each other; pencils and pocket-books are consequently in great demand among them.\(^{17}\)

A tantalizing bit of information contained in a letter from a free trader on Baffin Island to a competitor, in 1907, suggests that some knowledge of Inuktitut syllabics may even have reached certain areas of southern Greenland. The letter, from Osbert Clare Forsyth-Grant, says:

It may interest you to hear that I am in the habit of carrying letters written under the supervision of the Danish priests by the Eskimo of West Greenland to the Eskimo of the West Coast of Davis Strait and of taking back the answers written by the West Coast natives in what looked to me symbols, each symbol representing not a letter but a syllable, and that these Eskimo with hundreds of miles of sea between them can understand one another and take a genuine interest in hearing from the other side.\(^{18}\)

### Teaching Syllabics

The Anglican Church was able to proselytize successfully over such a wide area of the Arctic largely because the syllabic orthography was so easy to learn. Inuit taught each other. With the assistance of well-travelled native assistants who worked with Peck, Bilby and Greenshield at Blacklead Island, and with Bilby and Fleming at Lake Harbour, a large number of Inuit who had never met a missionary nonetheless had access to the Bible and were able to read it in syllabics. Two of the best-known native assistants were Luke Kidlapik and Joseph Pudloo.

As a boy Joseph Pudloo had learned syllabics in Reverend Fleming’s senior class in Lake Harbour. Later he became Fleming’s sled driver, taking the missionary thousands of miles on visits to Inuit camps. After that he spent two years working with the Reverend B.P. Smith at Baker Lake, the first native assistant to work in a dialect markedly different from his own.

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Peck and a man from Blacklead Island looking over Peck’s Inuktitut word book.

Peck en compagnie d’un homme de Blacklead Island qui consulte le vocabulaire inuktitut de Peck.

An early map drawn by Netseapik. Peck’s note says, ‘‘Route of journey from Blacklead Island to Signia, in summer of 1902. 36 days pushing through ice.’’ This is one of the earliest known maps to be drawn giving place names in Inuktitut.

Carte très ancienne dessinée par Netseapik. Le commentaire de Peck dit ceci: «Tracé du périple de Blacklead Island à Signia, été 1902. Trente-six jours de lente progression dans les glaces.» Il s’agit d’une des plus anciennes cartes connues qui donne des noms de lieux en inuktitut.
Les plus vieux Inuit de l'île Baffin se souviennent encore aujourd'hui du révère Peck. Alookie Kilabuk se souvient d'avoir été bercé sur ses genoux dans la petite maison de la mission pendant que le missionnaire chantait des hymnes. Peter Pitseolak, l'historien inuit de la région de Cape Dorset, mort en 1974, écrit :

Lorsque je suis né, le christianisme était déjà parvenu à l'île Baffin. Je n'ai jamais aimé notre vieille coutume parce que les shamans tuaient les gens qu'ils n'aimaient pas. Lorsque les missionnaires sont arrivés, les shamans ont cessé de tuer. Le révère Peck, est le premier ministre du culte qui ait répandu la parole de Dieu dans l'île Baffin. Il était très aimable et aimait tout le monde, et tout le monde l'adorait.22

Enseignement des parents

Les premiers missionnaires tels que Peck ouvraient souvent des classes pendant la journée, qu'ils mettaient à la disposition des enfants des missions ou des camps qu'ils visitaient. Mais il est vraisemblable que la plupart des Inuit aient appris leurs caractères syllabiques par cœur, grâce à l'enseignement de leurs parents. Le soir, l'enfant s'asseyait avec eux et, le livre des prières ouvert devant lui, apprenait par cœur les symboles syllabiques en psalmodiant : « ai, i, u, a, pai, pi, pu, pa. » Peter Pitseolak se souvient :

Avant même d'avoir appris à parler, je connaissais tous les sons de l'alphabet à force d'entendre les gens les chanter. Peck enseignait l'alphabet par le chant. Lorsque les gens du goup...
In 1914 Reverend Greenshield wrote that there were at that time 12 Inuit men and six women scattered in different parts of the country, the men acting as preachers and the women teaching the children:

They are all voluntary workers, and are doing a good work in a humble, quiet way. Our two old friends at Blacklead Island, Peter Toolooagjuak and Luke Kidlapik, are known and respected by all for hundreds of miles round the coast. They are now in full charge of the northern district where there is no white missionary at present.19

Archibald Lang Fleming, later Bishop of the Arctic, wrote about his travels with Luke Kidlapik while Fleming was stationed at Lake Harbour:

On our journey south over the frozen surface of Frobisher Bay we visited several encampments and held services with the Eskimo. Kidlapik and I took turn and turn about preaching and conducting the services, while Rhoda, Kidlapik's little wife, led the singing very nicely. Kidla-

The Church at Blacklead Island, from a drawing in the Church Missionary Gleaner, a newspaper printed in Britain.

L'église de Blacklead Island, d'après un dessin du Church Missionary Gleaner, un journal publié en Grande-Bretagne.
Peck conducting an open-air service on Blacklead Island.

Peck au cours d’un service religieux en plein air à Blacklead Island.

Luke Kidlapik, a lay preacher at Blackhead Island with his wife.

Luke Kidlapik, prédicateur laïc de Blacklead Island, en compagnie de son épouse.
Two Inuit evangelists working with Peck at Blacklead Island. Peter Tooloogakjuak is seen here with Luke Kidlapik.

Luke Nowdla, one of the assistant teachers at Blacklead, with his wife and family.

Luke Nowdla, un des aides-enseignants de Blacklead, en compagnie de son épouse et de sa famille.

Kidlapik’s addresses were delivered in a quiet, earnest voice and, thanks to the teaching he had received from Peck and Green­shield, he displayed a wonderful knowledge of the Gospels. For me it was an inspiring experience to get to know this man and a friendship was begun then that remains ...  

On one of Kidlapik’s journeys along the shores of Hudson Strait, he reached Inuit who had never seen a missionary but who could almost all read “chiefly through copies of the Gos-
pels which they had obtained and read continually. Some of these copies of the Word were so dilapidated through continuous usage by several families that they were literally dropping to pieces . . ."[21]

Alookie Kilabuk of Pangnirtung, who was born at Southampton Island at the turn of the century, grew up at Blacklead Island. She remembers Peter Tooookagjuak and Luke Kidlapiq and the work they did there. They were genuine helpers, she says, who were able to perform marriages and baptisms, and had been taught well by the early missionaries.

For many years Kidlapiq was the Anglican catechist on Southampton Island where he and his wife moved in 1926 and where Fleming met him again in 1942 and in 1946.

Wherever these native catechists served, they took with them not only religion but also literacy.

Roman Catholic missionaries established their first mission in the eastern Canadian Arctic in 1912 at Chesterfield Inlet under the leadership of Father Turquett. The Roman Catholics also adopted the syllabic orthography, although with some differences, from the Anglican system.

Among the very oldest of Inuit in Baffin Island today are a few who remember Reverend Peck from their childhood. Alookie Kilabuk remembers, as a small girl, being bounced on his knee in the tiny mission house while the missionary sang hymns. Peter Pitseolak, the Inuit historian of the Cape Dorset area, who died in 1974, wrote:

I was born when Christianity had already come to Baffin Island. For myself, I did not like the old, old way because the shamans would kill the people they did not like. When the ministers came the shamans stopped their killings. Reverend Peck—Okhamuk—was the first minister to bring the word of God to Baffin Island. People were very fond of him because he was so loving with all the people and very friendly.[22]
Learning from Parents

Old-time missionaries such as Peck often operated day classes for children at the missions or at the camps they visited. But probably most Inuit learned their syllabics from their parents, by rote. On evenings children would sit with their parents and, with the prayer book open, memorize the syllabic symbols, reciting chant-like, “ai, i, u, a, pai, pi, pu, pa.” Peter Pitseolak recalled:

Even before I was able to talk I had learned all the alphabet songs by listening to people sing them. Okhamuk taught the people the alphabets by singing. When the government had come to the North and they were handing out these papers with the Eskimo alphabet and the English alphabet, a man came and said, “You have to learn these.” I told him, “I knew them before I could talk.” He said, “You can’t possibly know these,” and I said, “What do you want me to do? Close my eyes and sing them to you?” He was very surprised that I knew them in both languages. He said, “So you have learned.”

In 1972 Agnes Poksiak of Whale Cove wrote in the Keewatin Echo:

I will never forget the few nights that I spent learning syllabics. There were few of us inside that igloo, dad, mom, Marie, my older sister, Susie, my younger sister, and myself ... Dad would open his Bible and teach me one syllabic after another until I was able to read it well enough.

In the 1950s and 1960s, before telephones were common in the north, letters written in syllabics often provided the only link between Inuit children who left home and visited hostels to further their education and the parents who had, often reluctantly, agreed to let them go. Agnes Poksiak continued:

... it was only a year later that I had my first airplane ride to the unknown with my older sister. On that first year in school, Marie and I got one letter from

A drawing done by a Blacklead Island resident with a caption in syllabics. Note the meat drying racks on the tent.
Mark Kalluak of Eskimo Point wrote of his desire to learn syllabics in his youth:

I know I don’t stand alone when I say I never learned syllabics in school ... Like many others, I learned it from the back of prayer books and Bibles, and I believe people who claim learning syllabics were the only ones that told us that mom and dad were at least alive ... I know that being able to write syllabics is a great help when you’re away from home.28


Permanence des témoignages écrits

Les Inuit ont rapidement su utiliser les caractères syllabiques, après les avoir...
The German missionaries who came to Labrador in the eighteenth century started schools for the Inuit. By 1790, notes Rose Jeddore, "the Labrador Inuit were learning reading, writing, and arithmetic ... In 1821 the Book of Acts was printed and was soon followed by the whole New Testament, hymnbook, the book of Isaiah, Bible stories for children, and some schoolbooks. By 1841 only 9 or 10 in the congregation of 334 were unable to read." All instruction in the Inuit schools was carried on in Inuttut and Inuit teachers ran the schools. The most notable of these teachers were Nathaniel Ilinniatissijuk, who taught for 50 years, and his wife Frederike, who taught for 30 years. Such was the situation until 1949 when Newfoundland joined Canada, at which time all instruction in Inuttut was discontinued. Only since the mid-1970s have attempts been made to re-instate Inuttut in the schools.

A Permanent Record

Inuit developed skill in the use of syllabics quickly, learning by rote from missionaries, their parents or other Inuit. With syllabics, Inuit of the Eastern Arctic were at last able to communicate with each other at a distance and letters were exchanged between camps. With syllabics, Inuit were finally able to leave a permanent written record of their activities. Many took to keeping diaries, making daily entries about the weather, animals taken, family events and other occurrences. In some families these diaries are personal treasures, kept within the family and not shared with outsiders. To non-Inuit, the most famous of the Inuit diarists who worked in syllabics is Peter Pitseolak, for two books of his work have been translated and published in English. These books are People from Our Side, Peter Pitseolak's Escape from Death which regroups two biographies of Inuit, one by Pitseolak himself and another one by his son. Pitseolak's book was published in English in 1956, and his son's book was published in Inuktitut in 1966. People from Our Side tells the story of Peter Pitseolak's life, from his childhood in a small village in the Arctic to his later years in Toronto. The book is an important contribution to the study of Inuit culture and history, and it is read by Inuit all over the world. People from Our Side is a true testament to the resilience of the Inuit people, and it is a reminder of the importance of preserving their culture and traditions.

The manuscript original ressemble a peu à un journal de bord, les saisons et parfois même les années ne sont pas mentionnées alors que sont décrits les événements importants d'une vie bien remplie.

Les missionnaires considéraient l'alphabet, qu'il soit syllabique ou romain, comme un moyen de diffuser l'Évangile, et ils ont très bien réussi. Toutefois, ce n'est que plusieurs années plus tard que l'on a pu lire inutilement d'autres documents que les ouvrages religieux. Il s'agissait d'ailleurs presque toujours de documents rédigés par le gouvernement pour
Side, a history of south-western Baffin Island, and Peter Pitseolak's Escape from Death, based on two accounts he left of his and his stepson Ashevak's narrow escape from danger on a hunting expedition. Pitseolak realized early that Inuit life was rapidly changing and he began "writing down what happened from day to day so my grandchildren will know what went on when I was alive." 28

Other Inuit, living outside the areas where syllabic orthography was used, kept diaries in Roman orthography. In the western Canadian Arctic, Father Maurice Metayer translated the autobiography of a man, Nuligak, who lived at Herschel Island and later at Tuktoyaktuk. The manuscript, which he received in 1956, was published in English in 1966 under the title I, Nuligak. Metayer says:

The original manuscript is somewhat like a mate's log, where seasons and even years are not mentioned while the most especially interesting facts of an eventful life are related. 29

Missionaries had intended their orthographies, be they syllabic or Roman, as means of spreading the Gospel, and they were very effective in accomplishing that purpose. But it was to be many years before reading material in Inuktitut, other than religious material, became available. When it did, it was almost always material prepared by government to inform Inuit. In the Labrador dialect, one of the exceptions was the Hudson's Bay Company publication of 1931, The Eskimo Book of Knowledge, with sections entitled "The British Empire to Which You Belong," "Health" and "Work." In syllabics and English, the federal Department of Mines and Resources published The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo in 1947; two years later it published a revised version in syllabics, Western Arctic Roman orthography and English.

First, and Only, Syllabic Book by an Inuk

The first book to be written by a Canadian Inuk and published in syllabics was The Autobiography of Peter Pitseolak. and published after his death.

Escape from Death and People from our Side are the two books written from the diaries of Pitseolak, and published after his death.

«Escape From Death» et «People from our Side» sont les deux livres inspirés des journaux intimes de Pitseolak et publiés après sa mort.
Premier livre publié en caractères syllabiques par un Inuk

L'Autobiography of John Ayaruaq, publié par le gouvernement fédéral en 1968, a été le premier livre rédigé par un Inuk canadien et imprimé en caractères syllabiques. Plusieurs autres histoires et articles inuit ont été publiés en caractères syllabiques dans différentes publications, particulièrement dans la revue Inuktitut, mais aucun sous forme de livre. C'est un roman de Markoosie, un pilote et chasseur de Resolute, qui a été la première histoire originale publiée en inuktitut et ce, sous la forme d'un feuilleton paru dans Inuktitut à la fin des années 60. Un fonctionnaire l'a décrit ainsi : «Le récit de la façon dont on vivait jadis, non telle qu'elle apparaissait aux yeux des gens du Sud, mais telle qu'elle a survécu dans la mémoire des Esquimaux eux-mêmes.»

Nécessité d'une réforme de l'écriture syllabique

Lorsque les missionnaires catholiques ont établi leurs missions chez les Inuit au début du siècle, ils ont utilisé des caractères syllabiques quelque peu différents de ceux du clergé anglican. L'une des principales différences portait sur la façon de rendre compte de la longueur des voyelles. Dans le système anglican, on plaçait des point au-dessus des symboles afin de préciser si la syllabe était «longue» ou «court», mais l'on interpréta les termes de «long» ou de «court» à peu
The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo was published by the federal Department of Mines and Resources, to provide Inuit with useful information on health, home management and the Canadian government.

«The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo» fut publié par le ministère fédéral des Mines et Ressources afin de communiquer aux Inuit des renseignements utiles sur la santé, la gestion du foyer et le gouvernement canadien.

The story, published in serial form in the late 1960s, was later translated into English and published as a book entitled Harpoon of the Hunter.
Need for Syllabic Reform

When Catholic missionaries established missions among the Inuit in the early years of this century, they used a syllabic orthography which differed in some respects from that used by the Anglican clergy. One of the main differences was in the showing of vocalic length. The Anglican system placed dots over symbols to show whether the vowel of that syllable was "long" or "short," but it considered the terms "long" and "short" in the same sense as they are considered in English in which, for example, "bit" contains a short sound, but "beet" the long sound of the same vowel. In Inuktitut, the terms "long" and "short," as applied to vowels, describe the relative length of time that the same sound is held, so that, for example, "inuk" has a "short u" sound but "inuuk" a "long u" sound. The Catholic syllabic orthography recognized the difference in vocalic length, but did so by duplicating the symbol for the vowel which was long, so that any syllable containing a long vowel required two symbols to write it. Thus the Anglicans wrote "ataata" (father) as <lcc> while the Catholics wrote it as <K><Ie>. There were other minor differences between the two systems.

With the spread of secular literature in Inuktitut syllabics, it became apparent to government officials and to many Inuit that there existed a need for orthographic reform in Inuktitut, to enable all Inuit to write using the same consistent orthography.

The Autobiography of John Ayaruaq was the first book published by a Canadian Inuk. The front cover and a page from the book are pictured here.
Footnotes/Part 1

Writing in Inuktitut: An Historical Perspective


3. Samuel Kleinschmidt in James L. Cotter (tr.), in *Greenland Eskimo Grammar* (unpublished English translation in Arctic Collection, M71-4, Box 10, General Synod Archives, Anglican Church, Toronto.)


5. Lawrence R. Smith, *ibid*.


7. *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* (Number 8, Volume 1, December, 1849), p. 177.

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Références : première partie

Écriture inuit : historique


5. Lawrence R. Smith, *ibid*.


7. *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record, n° 8, Vol. 1*, livraison de décembre 1849, p. 177.
10. Edmund James Peck, in preface to Eskimo Grammar (Edmund James Peck Papers, File XXXVIII, No. 6, General Synod Archives, Anglican Church, Toronto.)
13. ibid., p. 86.
18. Osbert Clare Forsyth-Grant, letter to Wrightington, Esq., 14 January 1907 (in Archives, Glenbow Foundation, Calgary).
20. Archibald Lang Fleming, Archibald the Arctic, p. 346 (manuscript in Fleming Papers, M70-1, Box 8, General Synod Archives, Anglican Church, Toronto).


23. ibid.


25. ibid.


22. Dorothy Eber (éditeur), People From Our Side, Hurtig, Edmonton, 1975, p. 40.

23. ibid.


25. ibid.

26. Mark Kalluak dans une lettre envoyée à Jose Kusugak le 18 mars 1976, dossiers de la Commission linguistique inuit, MAINC.

27. Rose Jeddore, The Decline and Development of the Inuttut Language in Labrador dans Bjarne Basse et Kirsten Jensen (éditeurs), op. cit., p. 84.


Part 2

Inuktitut Writing Systems: the Current Situation

A Standard System is Proposed

In the 1950s, with an increase in government services to the North, there was an increasing requirement for material published in Inuktitut, particularly in syllabics. In Ottawa an awareness grew among government officials of the inconsistencies in the Inuktitut orthographies in use at the time, and the possibility of orthographic reform was considered. The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (DNANR) hired a linguist, Gilles Lefebvre, "to discuss the possibilities in the field of a unified standard orthography for the Canadian Eskimo language" and to explore "the delicate question of this unification along the lines of the Greenlandic (Kleinschmidt) system." In 1957 the department published Lefebvre's A Draft Orthography for the Canadian Eskimo; it was subtitled "Towards a future unification with Greenlandic." It is clear from Lefebvre's work, however, that he proposed, not just a standard system for spelling Inuktitut, but a standard literary language, "common written language which would, in a near future, encompass the extensive Canadian Eskimo domain from the Eastern border of Alaska to the Eastern shores of Greenland." He referred to it as "a native, supra-dialectal written means of communication."

While acknowledging that syllabics have "performed a magnificent cul-

Deuxième partie

Systèmes d’écriture inuit : situation actuelle

Projet de système normalisé

Avec l’augmentation du nombre de services offerts dans le Nord par le gouvernement au cours des années 50, il devint nécessaire de publier de plus en plus de documents en inuktitut, tout particulièrement en caractères syllabiques. A Ottawa, les fonctionnaires ont peu à peu pris conscience des difficultés liées à l’orthographe inuit. Le ministère des Affaires du Nord et des Ressources nationales avait alors engagé un linguiste, Gilles Lefebvre : «pour discuter de la possibilité d’unifier la langue esquimaude canadienne» et pour étudier "la question de cette unification en se fondant sur le système d’écriture groenlandais (de Kleinschmidt).» En 1957, le Ministère publiait l’ouvrage de Lefebvre A Draft Orthography for the Canadian Eskimo dont le sous-titre était Towards a future unification with Greenlandic.

Il ressort de ces travaux que Lefebvre proposait non seulement une normalisation de l’orthographe inuktitut mais aussi une unification de la langue littéraire : «une langue écrite commune à tous qui pourrait servir, à apprêcher l’immense territoire esquimau canadien, de la frontière est de l’Alaska à la côte est du Groenland.»

Tout en reconnaissant que l’écriture syllabique avait «joué un rôle culturel primordial» et «tiré les Esquimaux de l’analphabétisme» Lefebvre a rejeté le système syllabique, qu’il
Lefebvre proposed a gradual phasing out of syllabics as the new Roman alphabetic writing would be introduced:

... the syllabics, which were first designed for American Indian languages, are not inherently Eskimo; therefore, no special virtue of their own would predestine them to symbolize the structure of the Eskimo language. One cannot advocate their use through the cultural argument.7

Lefebvre proposed a gradual phasing out of syllabics as the new Roman alphabetic writing would be introduced:

... les caractères syllabiques, adaptés au départ aux langues indiennes de l'Amerique, ne sont pas d'origine esquimaude et n'ont donc pas de vertu propre qui les prédestinerait à symboliser la structure de la langue esquimaude. On ne peut en préconiser l'utilisation en alléguant des motifs culturels.7

Lefebvre proposait l'abandon progressif des caractères syllabiques à mesure que la nouvelle méthode d'écriture en caractères romains serait implantée :

Notre objectif n'est pas d'éliminer le système d'écriture syllabique, mais plutôt de rechercher et d'atteindre une certaine unité en nous fondant sur les caractères latins et sur le groenlandais8 ... Rien n'empêche d'employer pendant un certain temps l'écriture syllabique, parallèlement au système latin.9

En travaillant à son «nouvel alphabet normalisé» reposant sur l'analyse du
"An Eskimo Woman’s Day" is a series of drawings with syllabic captions, by Genova Kashleyokak of Repulse Bay, published in the magazine Eskimo, by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Churchill.

Our first aim is not to eliminate the syllabic system of writing as such, but rather to seek and achieve unity along the lines of a Latin and Greenlandic system. Nothing prevents the syllabics from being used for a certain period of time, along with the Latin system.

In developing his “new standard alphabet,” based on his analysis of the Port Harrison dialect of Quebec, dialect de Port-Harrison (Québec), soit le dialecte canadien qu’il jugeait le plus proche du groenlandais, Lefebvre s’était donné pour but:

- de donner naissance à une orthographe aussi concise que possible quant au nombre de symboles, aussi précise que possible quant aux sons et aussi détaillée que possible quant aux différences dialectales.

Il est évident que les Inuit n’ont pas été consultés sur la nécessité d’utiliser un système d’écriture normalisé en caractères romains et qu’ils n’ont pas été invités à participer à son élaboration:

Si l’on veut parvenir à unifier la culture esquimau au Canada, il est absolument nécessaire de compter sur la collaboration des missionnaires, des éducateurs, des infirmières et des négociants ainsi que de l’administration.

Quant aux attitudes et aux opinions des Inuit eux-mêmes, elles ne font l’objet que de quelques lignes dans le rapport de Lefebvre:

... nous souhaitons que cette initiative culturelle du ministère...
Mary Cousins assisted Raymond Gagne with the development of a standard orthography for Canadian Inuit. She was also the first editor of Inuktitut Magazine.

the Canadian dialect which he considered to be phonemically the closest to Greenlandic, his goal was:

... to draw up an orthography which would be as concise as possible in the number of symbols, as accurate as possible with regard to the significant sounds, as comprehensive as possible with regard to the dialectal differences.\(^{10}\)

It is clear that Inuit were not consulted about the necessity for a standard Roman writing system, nor were they to participate in implementing it:

In order to achieve an Eskimo cultural unity through writing and literature in Canada, the co-operation of all the missionaries, educators, nurses and traders, as well as the administrators’ efforts, are strongly needed.\(^{11}\)

The attitudes and opinions of the Inuit themselves were given only one line in Lefebvre’s report:

... we strongly hope that the Eskimo response will be favourable towards this cultural initiative on the part of the Department of Northern Affairs.\(^{12}\)

Lefebvre’s “new standard alphabet” was very similar to Greenlandic. But the department considered it premature to adopt it, and it was never implemented.

In 1960 the department hired Raymond Gagne, another linguist, to build on the work done by Lefebvre on the

\(^{39}\)
Port Harrison dialect and to test its applicability to all Canadian Inuit dialects. Gagné very quickly realized that the development of a standard orthography and the creation of a standard literary dialect "are two distinct and separate problems that must never be confused." He rejected Lefebvre's idea of a standard literary language and set out to develop a standard orthography for Canadian Inuit, for the department's expressed goal was still "the establishment of one system of writing for all Canadian Eskimos." The choice of the dialects he was able to study was limited by the availability of informants, but he was ably assisted by Elijah Erkloo and Mary Panegoosho of Pond Inlet, Elijah Menarik of Fort George, Abe Okpik of Aklavik, and Joanasie Salomonie of Cape Dorset, to name a few. The result of their efforts was the publication in 1961 of the volume *Tentative Standard Orthography for Canadian Eskimos*.

**Weaknesses in the Writing Systems**

In that publication, Gagné outlined the deficiencies he saw in all existing writing systems for Canadian Inuit, be they in syllabics or Roman. The problem with the Roman orthographic attempts, he felt, was "the various personal interpretations made of the phonological structure by their inventors, who were mainly French, English and German missionaries, each of whom was strongly influenced by his own linguistic background." Gagné accordingly classified the alphabetic spellings of Inuktitut as "spellings à la française, spellings à l'anglaise, and spellings à l'allemande," while claiming that what was really needed was "a spelling à l’esquimaude, that is, a system of writing based on a scientific analysis of the phonological structure of the Eskimo language in which all foreign linguistic influences must be left out of account."

Gagné found that all the Roman orthographies in use had two weaknesses. In some instances they over-differentiated the phonemes of Inuktitut; that is to say, they used more letters than were needed. An example is that all Roman systems used five vowels—a, e, i, o, u—because they are all used in English, French and German, language littéraire uniforme, comme le voulait Lefebvre, Gagné s’est attaché à mettre au point une orthographe normalisée à l’intention des Inuit, comme le souhaitait le Ministère qui s’était toujours donné pour but : «de créer un système d’écriture unique à l’intention de tous les Esquimaux canadiens.» La variété de dialectes qu’il pouvait étudier était restreinte par le nombre d’informateurs disponibles, mais il a tout de même pu compter sur l’aide d’Elijah Erkloo et de Mary Panegoosho de Pond Inlet, d’Elijah Menarik de Fort-George, et d’Abe Okpik d’Aklavik et de Joanasie Salomonie de Cape Dorset. Leurs efforts se sont traduits par la publication en 1961 de l’ouvrage intitulé : *Tentative Standard Orthography for Canadian Eskimos*.

**Faiblesses des systèmes d’écriture**

Dans cette publication, Gagné soulignait les faiblesses remarquées dans tous les systèmes d’écriture inuit qu’ils soient en caractères syllabiques ou romains. Les difficultés posées par les systèmes en caractères romains provenaient à son avis : «des différentes interprétations personnelles de la structure phonologique faites par leurs inventeurs qui, pour la plupart, étaient des missionnaires et qui, dans chaque cas, étaient très influencés par leur propre formation linguistique.» Gagné a donc classé les diverses orthographies de l’inuktitut selon qu’il s’agissait d’une orthographe à la française, d’une orthographe à l’anglaise ou d’une orthographe à l’allemande, alors qu’il convenait, selon lui, de créer : «Une orthographe à l’esquimaude, c’est-à-dire un système d’écriture fondé sur l’analyse scientifique de la structure phonologique de la langue esquimaude dans lequel toutes les influences linguistiques étrangères seraient laissées de côté.»

Gagné a constaté que toutes les orthographies romaines alors utilisées présentaient deux grands défauts. Dans certains cas, elles exagéraient la différence entre les phonèmes de l’inuktitut, en utilisant par exemple trop de lettres. Tous les systèmes d’écriture en caractères romains emploient en effet cinq voyelles—a, e, i, o, u—alors que l’on n’a besoin...
whereas, in fact, only three—a, i, u—are actually needed in Inuktitut. In other instances they under-differentiated the phonemes—that is, they did not show the differences between sounds that are very different in Inuktitut. As an example, some Roman orthographies did not distinguish between “k” and “q”, an important distinction in Inuktitut.

In considering syllabics, Gagne found that it, too, under-differentiated. He over-stated this point, however, because he felt that finals were little used and little understood by Inuit. One might rightly argue that ... a small post-syllabic symbol, prescribed by certain missionaries, standing for the single consonant ... could maintain the distinction. A brief glance at any publication which uses the secondary syllabic symbols will easily illustrate the complexity of such a practice, keeping in mind the minuteness of such symbols and the difficulty of
reproducing them by hand at the upper right of the ordinary syllabic. They are very seldom used by the Eskimo people themselves. But, while seldom used by Inuit of the time in their own letters—content usually clarified any ambiguities—they were well-understood when seen in print. Thus the possibility for ambiguity in the syllabic system was a fact, but was generally over-stated:

Mark Kalluak, one-time editor of the Keewatin Echo, commented:

For a long time I never bothered to use the finals ... It was only when I stared publishing Inuit newspapers that I realized

Gagné has concluded that the exception of a few irregularities: «L'écriture syllabique suit les principes phonémiques recommandés par la majorité des linguistes modernes pour établir un bon système d'écriture.» Dans ce cas, la question posée, mais non réglée, est la suivante : «Serait-il difficile de réviser et d'améliorer le système au lieu de le remplacer?»

Tout en reconnaissant que «l'écriture syllabique est plus près de l'orthographe phonétique que le français ou l'anglais, ou que tout autre alphabet conçu jusqu'à présent pour écrire en Esquimau,» Gagné n'en conclut pas moins que «l'écriture syllabique est inexacte» et «qu'en dernière analyse il faut, soit l'améliorer, soit l'abandonner.»

Il est intéressant de noter que Gagné propose un choix, améliorer ou abandonner l'écriture syllabique, mais que, par la suite, il n'en fait plus mention. En fait, Gagné souhaitait abandonner l'écriture syllabique et la remplacer par une orthographe en caractères romains. Ailleurs dans le rapport, il
Gagné concluded that, apart from a few irregularities, "the syllabary follows the phonemic principle recommended by the majority of modern linguists as the soundest principle on which to base a system of writing." The question is asked, but not satisfactorily answered, "Could it not be easily revised and improved instead of being replaced?" While recognizing that "the syllabary is far closer to a phonemic orthography than either French or English spellings or any of the alphabets thus far devised for writing Eskimo," Gagné nonetheless concluded that "the syllabary is inaccurate" and "in the final analysis, it must either be improved or discarded."

It is interesting that Gagné's quotation mentions a choice, that syllabics could be improved or discarded, for, having said it, the idea was not mentioned again. It is clear that the desire was to discard syllabics and replace it with a Roman orthography, for elsewhere in the same report Gagné states that "the only solution rests in presenting a new orthography in Roman letters." Gagné elaborated on the purpose of DNANR in pressing for the establishment of one writing system for all Canadian Inuit:

"... the purpose of designing a common spelling is not only to ease communication among the various Eskimo dialectal groups, and between them and the white man, but also to foster a native literature through which this widespread native population can identify itself as a people possessing a distinct culture worthy of preserving. Thus it becomes essential to make the new system of writing as practical and efficient as possible."

Gagné apportait aussi des précisions sur l’objectif du Ministère qui consistait à établir un seul système d’écriture à l’intention de tous les Inuit :

... l'objectif qui consiste à trouver une orthographe commune ne vise pas seulement à faciliter les communications à l'intérieur des différents groupes esquimaux ainsi qu'entre ces derniers et l'homme blanc, mais aussi à encourager l'apparition d'une littérature autochtone à laquelle cette population, très dispersée, pourrait s'identifier. Il est donc important de créer un système d'écriture aussi pratique que possible.

Normalisation de l’orthographe en caractères romains

Gagné soutenait que même les missionnaires qu’il avait consultés étaient «à quelques exceptions près, en faveur de l'idée d’un alphabet normalisé, mais qu’ils ne croyaient pas qu’il convenait d’abandonner immédiatement et complètement l’écriture syllabique. Les deux systèmes devraient probablement coexister pendant au moins une génération, l’écriture syllabique étant progressivement remplacée par l’autre système.» Gagné ajoutait que «si l’on agissait avec précaution, le remplacement progressif d’un système d’écriture par l’autre devrait se faire sans difficulté.» Gagné s’est employé pendant les années 60 à mettre au point une orthographe normalisée en caractères romains à l’intention des Inuit. L’orthographe qu’il a proposée avec ses assistants inuit dans la publication de 1961 a été quelque peu révisée au moment de la réimpression de l’ouvrage, un an plus tard. Une troisième impression a eu lieu en 1965.

En 1964, le ministère des Affaires du Nord publiait un ouvrage de portée considérable en inuktitut et en anglais, intitulé en inuktitut Qaujivaaalirutissat et en anglais le Q-Book. Reprenant la tradition des ouvrages...
A Standard Roman Orthography

Gagné claimed that even the missionaries he had consulted were "with few exceptions, in favour of the idea of a standard alphabet although it was felt that the syllabary should not be replaced all at once. Both systems would probably have to co-exist for at least one generation, during which the syllabics would gradually give way to the other." Gagné added that "if done with care, the gradual replacement of one writing system by another should be able to take place painlessly."29

Gagné worked throughout much of the 1960s on the development of a standard Roman orthography for Inuit. His work was not static, for he was open to new ideas and new insights, but always within the confines of an alphabetic system. The orthography he and his Inuit assistants proposed in the 1961 publication was revised somewhat by the time the volume was reprinted a year later. It was reprinted a third time in 1965.

In 1964, the Department of Northern Affairs published a major work in Inuktitut and English entitled, in Inuktitut, Qaujivaallirutissat, and dubbed the Q-Book in English. In the tradition of the earlier The Eskimo Book of Knowledge and The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo, the Q-Book was initially envisaged as being a compendium of information for Inuit who were experiencing rapid and major cultural change with the abandonment of camp life and the provision by government of education and housing programs. But Qaujivaallirutissat was much more comprehensive than the earlier volumes; indeed, it was over 300 pages long. Once the project was under way, the department decided to use it as forum in which to introduce the new Roman orthography to Inuit. It would be not only a volume of much-needed information, but a teaching tool as well. It was published, therefore, in English, in Inuktitut syllabics and in Inuktitut Roman orthography. An introduction stated:

... the texts in the new orthography in this book are not meant for immediate use but...
only for future use, i.e. only after the Eskimo people have had a chance to be taught to read and write this new system of writing by teachers competent to do so. In fact the efficiency of this new spelling and the whole program regarding its implementation among the Eskimo people could be gravely compromised if the uninitiated judge it before receiving proper instruction.\(^\text{30}\)

But the uninitiated did prejudge it. In the mid-1960s the department prepared additional educational materials for use in teaching the new system to Inuit, and dedicated Inuit teachers—among them Elijah Erkloo, Abe Okpik and Joanasie Salomonie—were involved in attempting to implement the program among adults. But the program lost steam for a number of reasons. Many influential missionaries in the Eastern Arctic objected to a Roman orthography and spoke strongly against it to their congregations. As well, most Inuit in the Eastern Arctic had only just abandoned camp life for housing in the communities, and the primary grades in

\[\text{The Eskimo Book of Knowledge}\]

... 

was published in 1969 by the Department of Northern Affairs. It was designed to be a collection of information for Inuit who were experiencing cultural change.

\[\text{The Q-Book or Qaujivatiliutiksat}\]

Le Q-Book ou «Qaujivatiliutiksat» a été publié en 1969 par le ministère des Affaires du Nord. Ce livre devait être un recueil de renseignements à l’intention des Inuit qui subissaient des changements culturels.

\[\text{The Q-Book or Qaujivatiliutiksat}\]

...
the communities’ schools were swelled with young Inuit; the merits of educating native students in their first language for at least the first few years of their schooling had not yet been recognized in Canada and so the priority of government, as far as education in the North was concerned, was to direct its efforts to educating children, and to do so solely in English. The education of adults was accordingly downplayed.

In 1969 the responsibility for the implementation of the standard orthography, so far as the Northwest Territories was concerned, was transferred to the new territorial government, where it received a very low priority and was eventually abandoned.

Linguists generally praised the orthography developed by Gagné and the effort that had gone into its development. But the attempts to implement the use of the standard orthography among Inuit have been described by one critic as

... a dismal failure, as anyone ... could have predicted. For the need for it had been seen by the bureaucracy in Ottawa, but it had not been recognized by the Eskimo people for whom it was intended. Once devised, the government did not push their system very hard, teaching it sporadically here and there, but always stressing method and never illustrating the need for a change ....

Gagné, and through him the department, seriously misjudged Inuit attachment to syllabic orthography:

... I do not believe that the Eskimo are sentimentally attached to their syllabics as many Englishmen and Frenchmen are to their spelling ....

This opinion could not have been farther from the truth. Mark Kalluak commented in 1976:

When I became fully familiar with the use of syllabics, I became, as it were, in love with them, even so far as to defend their use if someone wasn’t pleased with the way I write, or hinted I was wrong ... Some...
Inuit do not want to give up syllabics simply because they’re different and it makes them appear to be genuine Inuk; some perhaps even think that syllabics was invented by Inuit.\textsuperscript{33}

Simeonie Amagoalik of Resolute commented in 1973 on the attempts to introduce a new orthography:

Personally, I am in favour of those who wish to retain the old system of syllabics, because I feel it’s their possession.\textsuperscript{34}

On the new orthography, he wrote:

For quite a while, people have learnt to write it and I assume it costed a fair amount of money. I am not saying it should be discontinued. It is fine for people to learn whatever way of writing they wish. But the sys-

A page from the Anglican Inuktitut hymn book. The church, which had published the first books in syllabics, preferred to maintain Inuktitut syllabics in the Eastern Arctic rather than introduce a new Roman orthography.

Simeonie Amagoalik, de Resolute, a observé en 1973 à propos des tentatives faites en ce domaine :

Personnellement, je suis en accord avec ceux qui désirent conserver l’ancien système parce que j’estime qu’il leur appartient.\textsuperscript{34}

A propos de la nouvelle orthographe, elle écrit :

Il y a longtemps que les gens s’efforcent d’apprendre à l’écriture et j’imagine que cela a coûté pas mal d’argent. Je ne dis pas qu’il faut abandonner le programme.
Inuit Interest in Syllabic Reform

Inuit did not generally subscribe to the idea that syllabics should be abandoned in favour of a Roman orthography, and the initiative of DNANR in fostering a standard writing system for Canadian Inuit failed. But the initiative bore unexpected fruit, for the idea of orthographic reform in syllabics was fostered among some Canadian Inuit, most notably in the Keewatin region. Instead of abandoning syllabics, as DNANR had proposed in the 1950s and 1960s, Inuit in the 1970s began the process of answering DNANR’s long-ignored question, “Could it not be easily revised and improved instead of being replaced?” Mark Kalluak’s comment perhaps sums up...
the thinking of many Inuit on the subject:

Considering syllabics is already in common use in writing and literature among many Inuit in certain parts of the North I would hesitate to see it scrapped, because I feel it would be a very long process and difficult to switch from the already existing system. I also feel it would not help to make the writing system any easier by deleting the use of syllabics. To me, it would be more logical to think of ways of "refining" the existing system. 

In May of 1972 a four-day syllabic seminar was held in Rankin Inlet to discuss what form of syllabic writing to use in two booklets prepared in Whale Cove for use in the primary grades. The results of the conference were a break-through in the development of syllabics. A report on the conference states:

The delegates agreed that syllabics be used with all the finals, with... the following:

A dot placed over a letter to indicate long vowel, e.g. AC

Omit all the first letters in the syllabic alphabet, e.g. TVU...

Omit small "o" placed over a letter to change the sound i to ai,

Also (omit) a small "o" placed between the letters to make a sound "d", e.g. kadluk (thunder) b. 41

At the conference the delegates agreed that two new series of symbols were necessary to represent sounds which syllabics inadequately represented. Mark Kalluk had done some experimentation in this regard because he had been concerned that syllabics did not distinguish between "k" and "q" and between "g" and "ng" unless one used diacritic marks, the so-called "finals":

Mark... showed the delegates some of his ideas of new syllabic symbols to capture the sounds made in the Eskimo tongue. Here are the new symbols that courses des années 70 à répondre à la question soulevée par le Ministère et oubliée depuis longtemps: «Ne serait-il pas plus facile de réviser et d’améliorer le système plutôt que de le remplacer?» La façon de penser de nombreux Inuit à ce sujet pourrait être résumée par cette observation de Mark Kalluk:

Puisque plusieurs Inuit dans certaines régions du Nord emploient couramment le système syllabique dans leurs écrits, j’hésiterais à ne plus l’utiliser parce qu’à mon avis la tâche de remplacer le système actuel serait longue et difficile. Je ne pense pas non plus que l’abandon du système syllabique contribuerait à faciliter l’écriture. Pour moi, il serait plus logique de concevoir des moyens «d’affiner» le système existant.

En mai 1972, un colloque de quatre jours, portant sur le système syllabique, s’est tenu à Rankin Inlet afin de discuter de l’écriture que l’on employerait dans deux livres scolaires préparés à Whale Cove à l’intention des classes élémentaires. Cette rencontre a permis de faire progresser le système d’écriture syllabique. On peut lire dans le rapport de la conférence :

Les délégués conviennent que le système syllabique doit être utilisé avec toutes les finales et comporter... des caractéristiques suivantes :

Un point placé au-dessus d’une lettre indique une voyelle longue, exemple : AC

Omission de toutes les premières lettres de l’alphabet syllabique, exemple : TVU ...

Omission du petit «o» placé au-dessus d’une lettre pour changer le son de i en ai,

Omission par ailleurs du petit «o» placé entre les lettres pour indiquer le son «d», exemple : kadluk (tonnerre) b. 41

Lors de cette conférence, les délégués ont convenu que deux nouvelles séries de symboles étaient nécessaires si l’on voulait rendre compte de...
the delegates seemed to agree on as being necessary:

qi qu qa Final

ngi ngu nga Final

However, instead of forcing these innovations on the public, the delegates passed recommendations calling for the new symbols to be advertised in newspapers with syllabic content and that a conference be held to continue the examination of writing in syllabics. Comment from the public was solicited in the Keewatin Echo.

One published reaction came from Caleb Apak of Igloolik. He approved, cautiously, of innovation and orthographic reform in syllabics so long as a consensus was reached among Inuit on the changes:

I noticed in the "Keewatin Echo" some new inventions. Such are $ t$ and $ t \cdot \$. I do not wish the people to use these before allowing the public to familiarize themselves to the purpose and meaning of the letters. It would be nice if a seminar regarding syllabics were to be held ... People who have never seen each other are able to communicate with one another by letters. Therefore the system of writing must be improved because there are variations in our language. If syllabics system improves we could understand more.

I work with syllabics quite a bit and am anxious for their improvement. I also teach it to children. If new letters were to be added to the present system, then it would mean that each and everyone who uses syllabics must agree. It wouldn’t be worth it if only a small minority were to use it. Also, I imagine our prayer books and Bibles would have to be changed. Let the people endeavour to improve syllabics by having a seminar.

The same issue of Keewatin Echo reprinted a letter from the Igloolik
Weekly Newsletter, written by Mark Evaluardjuk:

In our syllabics there are some letters missing like B, D, and F. I would like to see somebody find how these letters can be written in syllabics.44

Recognizing that, in his dialect, these letters are used only in loan-words from English, Mark concluded, nonetheless, that...

... it would be nice to be able to write all the letters in syllabics.45

The debate continued. Mark Kalluak’s suggestion of two new syllabic series did not catch on, but the Keewatin Echo remained a forum for the promotion of the other recommendations of the delegates to the 1972 conference. Two men, Mark Kalluak and Armand Tagoona, were largely responsible for the production of materials in a “standard” syllabic orthography, neither Anglican- or Catholic-inspired. Their contribution was recognized in 1974 in a letter from Eric Anoee of Eskimo Point:

Tagoona and Mark are the only ones in the Keewatin area who use syllabics in a suitable way through printed material. Personally I go along with their translations, and I agree with what they have written and how they use syllabics.... I have been concerned about syllabics for as many as forty years.... I want syllabics to have meaning and be able to express a word.46

The Inuit Language Commission

In 1974 the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs aged to provide Inuit Tapirisat of Canada with up to $250,000 to fund the Inuit Language Commission, which ITC had proposed. The Commission was charged with seven responsibilities. The first two were:

1. To produce a major statement on the viability of the Inuit language and to identify factors which threaten the existence of

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The reproduction of the Lord’s Prayer on the systems developed for Inuktitut over the years:

a) From the New Testament in the Labrador.

b) From the Roman Catholic Missal.

c) From the Anglican “Service Book of Common Prayer”.

d) From the modern Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

e) From the Anglican book of Common Prayer.

f) From a newspaper clipping collected by Inuit in the 1950s.

g) From “Watt’s First Catechism” in English.

Ces versions du «Notre Père» illustrent les différentes époques pour la transcription de:

a) Extrait du Nouveau Testament, version de 1876.

b) Extrait du Missel catholique romain.


d) Extrait de la version moderne du “Anglican Book of Common Prayer”.

e) Extrait d’une coupure de journal recueillie dans les années 1950.

f) Extrait de “Watt’s First Catechism” en anglais.

** LORD’S PRAYER. **

The variety of writing illustrates the service book of the Western Eskimos, published in 1922.

The look of the Western Esquimos, published in the western dialect.


The Service Book Of The Western, published in 1952.

The look of the Western Esquimos, published in 1964.

The Service Book Of The Western, published in 1876.

Appuvut kilyugmittuatin.

Idwin atkin nahugirauli.
Idwin umeadrigutin kaile,
Idwin picuttin neasutauli nunami.
Neludrusiatitut kilyugmi.

Nekiksruptign iub lupug aitchoktigut,
Pitludtivit sulekotiging erglugit.
Sulihotigingeniget isiptiktut pilugidritigum.
Iglehotunata pilukiscunmon,
Asi pilunmin anaututigut.
Idwin umeadrigum pigigin.
Owanadlu kawmanegluicuitcuamig.

AMEN
Inuktitut. At the same time, they should stimulate discussion on the language commission among Inuit.

2. To study the present state of the written language and recommend changes for the future.47

Jose Kusugak was appointed Executive Director of the Commission. For the project, the Arctic was divided into six regions representing major dialectal areas, and an Inuk commissioner appointed from each. Alex Stevenson served as co-ordinator of the commission. A committee of three—an administrator, a linguist and a priest—provided advice.

The Inuit commissioners visited most of the Inuit communities in Canada to solicit comment. A report on the work of the commission tells us:

Despite initial confusion and unwillingness in several communities, after the purpose of the Language Commission was explained, the majority of settlements expressed a "desire to be helped and to help."48

Support for the work of the commission was lacking in only one region. Inuit of Labrador felt strongly attached to their old Moravian writing.

Delegates from the six regions of the North attended meetings of the Inuit Language Commission in 1976 to make recommendations on the written forms of Inuktitut.
People don't really want to change their writing system at all because people don't want change as qablunaat do.\textsuperscript{50}

Jose Kusugak, in emphasizing that any decisions taken would be those of the people themselves, stated:

We're not here to change the writing system. We're here to see what people think of their own language. Do they think it's disappearing? Do they think it's strong enough? What do they think of their present writing system?\textsuperscript{51}

The commission recognized that a common writing system for all Canadian Inuit was desirable. To develop it, it established the Technical Orthography Committee which consisted of director Jose Kusugak, commissioners Rose Jeddore and Aipilii Qumaluk, and four authorities on Inuktitut, Mick Mallon, Louis-Jacques Dorais, Robert Petersen (of Greenland) and Abe Okpik. The commissioners on the basis of their surveys had already concluded that Inuit who used syllabics wanted to continue to use syllabics, and that those who used an alphabetic writing system wanted to continue using their system. Therefore the principle which guided the work of the Technical Orthography Committee was that the existing systems would form the basis of the revised system.

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1. Faire une déclaration fondamentale sur la langue inuit et identifier les facteurs menaçant l'existence de l'inuktitut. Par la même occasion, encourager les Inuit à donner leur opinion au sujet de la commission linguistique inuit.

2. Étudier la situation actuelle de la langue écrite et recommander les modifications à apporter.

Même si on a enregistré au départ dans des collectivités, une certaine confusion et quelques résistances, la plupart ont fait part de leur « désir d'être aidées et de se montrer utiles », une fois que la commission leur a été expliquée.

Jose Kusagak a été nommé directeur de la commission. Dans le cadre de ce projet, l'Arctique a été subdivisé en six régions représentant les principaux dialectes, chacune nommant un commissaire inuk. Alex Stevenson a fait office de coordonnateur de la commission. Un comité composé de trois conseillers — un administrateur, un linguiste et un prêtre — a également été nommé.

Les commissaires inuit ont rendu visite à la plupart des établissements inuit afin de recueillir leurs impressions. On peut lire ce qui suit dans le compte rendu des travaux de la commission :

Même si l'on a enregistré au départ dans des collectivités, une certaine confusion et quelques résistances, la plupart ont fait part de leur « désir d'être aidées et de se montrer utiles », une fois que le but de la commission leur a été expliqué.

Une seule région n'a pas appuyé les travaux de la commission. Il s'agit des du Labrador, où les Inuit restent très attachés à leur ancien système d'écriture morave, affirmant que « ... les gens, surtout les anciens, souhaitent conserver le système actuel (romain) et trouver eux-mêmes une réponse à cette question. ».

Les Inuit ont été rassurés lorsqu'ils ont appris que la normalisation de l'or-
writing Inuktitut using a Roman orthography. The system was neither Moravian nor derived from that of the Western Arctic; rather it was built on an analysis of the language and an application of scientific principles which could be used to guide the development of a writing system for any language. Although the system differed in some respects from the earlier work of Gagné in DNAANR, it drew heavily on that work. The committee also studied the conventions which were current in the writing of syllabics and concluded that the syllabic system was also in need of revision. The committee decided that orthographic innovations in syllabics should be avoided or kept to a minimum—no new symbols would be introduced unless they were absolutely necessary. The syllabic system was standardized and made completely compatible with the Roman system.

**Dual Orthography**

What the Technical Orthography Committee had done, then, was to create two orthographies for writing Canadian Inuktitut. Because these two orthographies, one Roman and one syllabic, were based on a single analysis and conception of the Inuktitut language, they were completely compatible and interchangeable. It was, in fact, one system with two orthographic forms and has, as a result, been described as a "dual orthography."

The dual orthography was ratified in August of 1976 at Frobisher Bay when the commission and its committees met with delegates from Inuit associations, the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches and observers from the federal and territorial governments.

The commission also proposed and approved two names to designate, in Inuktitut, the two forms of the dual orthography, "qaliujaapait" to describe the Roman orthography, and "ganijuqapait" to describe syllabics. The term "qaliujaapait" to describe the Roman orthography was suggested by Abe Okpik; it derived from "qallit," a word describing the markings or the grain in rocks, reminiscent of the appearance of Roman letters.

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De l'avis de la commission, il était souhaitable que tous les Inuit se dotent d'un système d'écriture unique. A cette fin, elle a créé le comité technique de l'orthographe regroupant son directeur, Jos Kusugak, les commissaires Rose Jeddore et Alpil Quamaluk et quatre spécialistes en inuktitut, Mick Mallon, Louis-Jacques Dorais, Robert Peterson du Groenland et Abe Okpik. A la suite de leurs enquêtes, les commissaires avaient conclu que les Inuit qui utilisaient les caractères syllabiques comme ceux qui employaient une écriture alphabétique, désiraient continuer comme avant. Le comité technique de l'orthographe s'est donc donné pour principe d'élaborer un système révisé à partir des systèmes actuels.

Le comité technique de l'orthographe a préparé une méthode d'écriture normalisée de l'inuktitut en caractères romains. Cette méthode n'était dérivée ni du système morave ni du système en vigueur dans l’Arctique de l’Ouest, mais d’un système élaboré à partir de l’analyse de la langue et mettant en application des principes scientifiques. Ce système était quelque peu différent des travaux antérieurs de Gagné, mais il s’en inspirait fortement. Le comité a par ailleurs étudié les règles utilisées couramment...
“Qaniujaaqpait” is derived from “qaniq,” the term for “mouth.”

During the two years of its work, control of the Language Commission had been transferred from ITC to the newly-created Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI); for this reason the dual orthography is often referred to as the ICI orthography.

Two years after the ratification of the dual orthography, Jose Kusugak commented:

The Language Commission shows us why Inuit are now excited about retaining and learning their language.... If this study were done by non-Inuit it would probably have been made compulsory for Inuit to learn one system of writing. We have found out that this is not the wish of the people, and understandably so. Anyone who has lost a right to do something in this world understands that no matter how small the right, it should not be lost.52

The Inuit Language Commission recognized also that no-one ever has the final word on orthographic change, for language and people’s awareness of it are constantly changing. Accordingly, it proposed:

Upon acceptance and implementation by the Language Commission this dual system of writing should be reviewed after five or ten years of use to measure its effectiveness and make revisions where necessary.53

Acceptance of the Dual Orthography Today

Over six years have passed since the ratification of the dual orthography. How have the innovations been accepted by the Inuit of the various regions?

In Labrador, the standardized Roman orthography — qaliujaaqpait — proposed by ICI aroused much initial interest. But that interest quickly developed into controversy. Older Inuit objected to the new system for social, rather than technical, reasons.

en matière d’écriture syllabique et a conclu que le système syllabique avait lui aussi besoin d’être révisé. Le système syllabique a été normalisé et rendu totalement compatible avec le système roman.

Orthographe double


Le principe de l’orthographe double a été accepté en août 1976 à Frobisher Bay lorsque la commission et ses différents comités ont rencontré les délégués des associations inuit et des diverses confessions religieuses, ainsi que les observateurs des gouvernements fédéral et territoriaux.


Au cours de ces deux années de travail, la commission linguistique inuit, qui dépendait au départ de l’I.T.C., est passée sous le contrôle de l’Institut culturel Inuit (I.C.I.) nouvellement créé; voilà pourquoi l’orthographe double est souvent qualifiée d’orthographe I.C.I.

Deux années après cette décision portant sur l’orthographe double, Jose Kusugak faisait le commentaire suivant :

La commission linguistique inuit nous montre pour quelle raison les Inuit cherchent tellement à conserver et à apprendre leur langue... Si cette étude avait été réalisée par des non-Inuit, il est probable que les Inuit aurait été obligés d’apprendre l’un ou l’autre des deux systèmes d’écriture. Nous avons constaté que
They felt a deep attachment to the Moravian orthography in which the Bible was written. In addition, Labra-
dorians, far from the mainstream of Canadian Inuit life, felt that the new system was an imposition on them from outside, despite the fact that one of the six language commission-
ers had been a Labrador Inuk. To date Labrador has clung to its Moravian

Old syllabic system.

Titirasuit nutaunngittut.

New writing system.

ce n'était pas là le souhait de la population. Quiconque a perdu le droit de faire quelque chose sur cette terre comprend qu'un droit, même infime, ne doit jamais être perdu.\textsuperscript{52}

La commission a reconnu par ailleurs que personne n'avait le dernier mot en matière de modification orthographi-

\textsuperscript{52}
orthography and the ICI Roman orthography has not been widely accepted. Rose Jeddore says:

The chief argument for maintaining the status quo was tradition—two hundred years. A lot of bad blood was split by misunderstandings on both sides. We did not like to be told our way of writing was a Qallunaak system. We did not believe that a writing system using geometric figures was a gift from God to the Inuit. If anything, the Language Commission firmly entrenched the traditional Moravian system in Labrador. The Labrador Inuit were not about to be dominated again, even if the dominant group this time were another group of Inuit.54

Concurrently with the development of the ICI standard orthographies the Labrador Inuit Committee on Literacy had been working on a number of Inuktitut language projects, one of which was a dictionary of the Labrador dialect, published in 1976 under the title Labrador Inuit Uqausingit. It was the first Canadian Inuktitut dictionary produced by Inuit alone. The dictionary was written in an orthography which differed only slightly from that adopted by ICI. In 1978 Rose Jeddore spoke about some of the frustration she and the committee experienced as a result of their innovative approach:

We have been accused of many things for stirring up this controversy over language and writing systems. We are accused of being Qallunaak because we have rejected the traditional Moravian system of writing for one that suits our needs better. We have been accused of bastardizing the Inuit language because we write the language as it is spoken today and not the way it was spoken two centuries ago. We have been accused of trying to destroy the Church because, prior to this, all Inuit literature was related to the Church and all published works in the Inuktitut language were by missionaries.55

On the church’s objections to orthographic change, Jeddore noted:

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Le désir de maintenir le statu quo s’appuyait principalement sur l’argument de la tradition : l’orthographe morave existait depuis deux siècles. De plus, des malentendus de part et d’autre ont fait sourdre de nombreuses rancœurs. Nous n’avons pas apprécié que l’on nous dise que notre système d’écriture était un système qallunaak. Nous ne pouvions croire qu’un système d’écriture faisant appel à des figures géométriques était un don de Dieu aux Inuit. Finale-ment, la commission n’a fait que renforcer l’utilisation du système traditionnel morave au Labra-dor.54

Pendant que l’on élaborait les orthographies normalisées de l’ICI, l’As-
The Moravian missionaries have said that the young people are bastardizing the Inuttut language but, from my experience, both young and old Inuit speak Inuttut the very same way. The missionaries ... speak only what they have learnt from out-dated Eskimo grammars and old translations. They are not even aware that there has been a language change and deny the actuality of language change. It is on the premise that there has been no language change in Labrador that they present a very convincing argument to Inuit people that promoters of the Inuit common writing system are bastardizing the language.

Rose Pamak represented Labrador interests to the Language Commission. Labrador continues to use Roman orthography exclusively.

Rose Pamak represented les intérêts du Labrador auprès de la Commission linguistique. Le Labrador continue d'utiliser exclusivement l'orthographe romaine.

On nous a accusés de plusieurs de choses parce que nous avons soulevé cette controverse au sujet de la langue et du système d'écriture. On nous accuse d'être des Qallunaak parce que nous avons rejeté le système traditionnel d'écriture morave pour en adopter un autre qui nous convient mieux. On nous a accusés d'abâtardir la langue inuit parce que nous écrivons la langue que l'on parle aujourd'hui et non celle que l'on parlait il y a deux siècles. On nous a accusés d'essayer de détruire l'Église parce que jusqu'alors la totalité de la littérature inuit était rattachée à l'Église, tous les ouvrages publiés en langue inuitut étant l'œuvre de missionnaires.
Lawrence Smith, a linguist who has studied Labrador Inuttut extensively, agrees with Jeddore:

"It is indeed ironic that the Moravian grasp on Inuttut has weakened over the years as the direct result of language change. The language changes...have been so extensive that the Moravian orthography...may be said to be obsolete...Through linguistic change the Labrador Inuit have reclaimed their language."

Jeddore concludes:

"One thing that we have done by challenging the writing system is to stir a lot of people of all ages out of their apathy over the Inuttut language. The writing system question in Labrador is far from settled." 58

In the western Canadian Arctic, reactions to ICI's proposed orthography were "unenthusiastic rather than hostile." 59 Very little linguistic study of the western dialects had been done and the small amount of literature produced in them had been very inconsistent orthographically. There was considerable controversy in Coppermine when the Department of Education attempted to produce material in the new galiujaqapaq orthography for the Local Education Authority could see no reason for distinguishing in print what the new orthography wrote as "k" and "q". A compromise saw the "q" sound written, for the time being, as a "k" with a "tail". (Thus, "qikiqtar" was written as "kikiktak".)

Farther west, in the Mackenzie Delta, there was at first little interest shown in the standard orthography. Indeed, there was little interest shown in native languages at all, and few people under twenty-five spoke the local dialects. A native caller to a phone-in radio program in Inuvik in 1978 commented:

"Here in the Delta the only two languages you need are English and broken English."

Attitudes are beginning to change, however. In 1981 the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE)

Quant aux objections de l'Église concernant les modifications orthographiques, Jeddore observe que :

"Les missionnaires moraves nous ont dit que les jeunes déformaient la langue inuttut mais j'ai pu constater que les jeunes comme les vieux parlent l'inuttut de la même manière. Les missionnaires...parlent l'inuttut comme ils l'ont appris dans de vieilles traditions et dans des grammaires esquimaudes périmées. Ils ne savent même pas que la langue a évolué et ils nient les changements. A partir du postulat que la langue n'a pas évolué au Labrador, ils fondent une argumentation très convaincante."

Lawrence Smith, un linguiste qui a étudié l'inuttut du Labrador, est d'accord avec Jeddore :

"Il est paradoxal de constater que l'ascendant morave sur l'inuttut s'est affaibli au cours des années en raison de l'évolution de la langue. Les changements...ont été si profonds que l'orthographe...peut être qualifiée de périmée...mais les Inuit du Labrador ont repris possession de leur langue."

Jeddore conclut ainsi :

"L'un des résultats de cette remise en cause du système d'écriture a été de secouer l'apathie de nombre de gens à l'égard de l'inuttut. La question du système d'écriture retenu au Labrador est loin d'être réglée."

Dans l'Arctique de l'Ouest, les réactions à l'orthographe proposé par l'I.C.I. ont été "plus indifférentes qu'hostiles." 59 Très peu d'études linguistiques ont été faites au sujet des dialectes de l'Ouest et les quelques ouvrages provenant de cette région présentent de nombreuses incohérences au niveau orthographique. Coppermine a été le siège de polémiques lorsque le ministère de l'Éducation a voulu publier des documents selon la nouvelle orthographe galiujaqapaq. Les responsables locaux de l'éducation ne voyaient pas l'intérêt d'établir une distinction dans les textes imprim-
established the COPE Inuvialuktun Language Project to try to halt the trend of decreased use of the native language, to study and document the local dialects, and to produce curriculum materials in the native language. As a result of the preliminary work of the project, it seems some modification to the ICI orthography may be necessary to make it applicable to these dialects.

In the Eastern Arctic, people have continued their deep attachment to syllabics. As a result, there has been very little interest in the Roman orthography. Initially there was strong debate over some of the changes made to syllabics through ICI’s innovations. In particular, there was strong opposition to the deletion of the first column of the traditional syllabarium. In practice, most older Inuit continue to write as they always have, using a four-column system, generally not using finals extensively or consistently, and under-representing orthographically the distinction between the velar “k” and uvular “q”. But, while not using the new qaniujaaqpait system themselves, they have become familiar with it through its use in much of the printed material they have seen since 1976 and have, often unconsciously, learned to recognize it and to read it accurately.

The revised syllabic orthography has been the most completely accepted in the Keewatin, and the least so in Northern Quebec. In 1976, Northern Quebec was unable to send a delegate to the ratification conference in Frobisher Bay, but sent a telegram advising that Northern Quebec would abide by whatever decision was reached. Subsequently, however, much of the opposition to the revised syllabic orthography, at least in print, has come from Northern Quebec. (This may, in part, be because of the existence of a regular newsletter, Atuagvik, which published many letters to the editor on the subject of language and culture. Similar forums did not exist in the Baffin and Keewatin at the time.)

Robbie Tookalook of Great Whale River commented:

The changes that have been made on the writing system més entre le “k” et le “q” telle que prévue par la nouvelle orthographe. En vertu d’un compromis, le son «q» s’est écrit provisoirement comme un “k” avec une “queue”. (On a donc écrit “qikiqtaq”, “kikiktak”).

Plus à l’ouest, dans le delta du Mackenzie, on s’est montré peu intéressé au départ par l’orthographe normalisée. On s’intéressait peu de toute façon aux langues autochtones et les moins de 25 ans paraissaient différents dialectes. En 1978, à Inuvik, un autochtone indiquait à la radio lors d’une émission que:

Dans le delta, deux langues seulement sont nécessaires : l’anglais et un jargon dérivé de l’anglais.

Mais la mentalité est en train de changer. En 1981, le Comité d’étude des droits des autochtones (CEDA) a lancé le projet linguistique Inuvialuktun afin d’enrayer la désaffection des autochtones à l’égard de leur langue, d’étudier les dialectes locaux et de rédiger des documents pédagogiques dans la langue autochtone. Il ressort des premiers travaux effectués dans le cadre de ce projet qu’il faudra modifier l’orthographe de l’I.C.I.

Dans l’Arctique de l’Est, les gens ont continué à se passionner pour l’écriture syllabique et à se désintéresser de l’orthographe romaine. Au départ, certains changements ont été largement débattus, en particulier, la suppression de la première colonne de l’alphabet syllabique traditionnel.

Dans la pratique, la plupart des anciens continuent à écrire comme ils l’ont toujours fait, dans un système à quatre colonnes, sans employer les finales de manière générale ou cohérente, et en sous-représentant du point de vue orthographique la distinction entre la vélaire “k” et l’uvulaire “q”. Mais, tout en n’utilisant pas eux-mêmes le qaniujaqpaît, ils se sont familiarisés avec ce nouveau système, compte tenu des nombreux documents imprimés en qaniujaqpaît depuis 1976.

C’est dans le district de Keewatin que l’orthographe syllabique révisée est la mieux acceptée et au Nouveau-Québec qu’elle l’est le moins. En 1976, le Nouveau-Québec n’a pu envoyer de délégués à la conférence
have been decided upon without any consultation with the people. The final in the syllabic writing system should not be removed because they have been just fine to use. The old syllabic system I am referring to is the one written in the bible.

... it will be more of a problem to use the new system. The writing system I'm talking about is the original V Δ > < system that should be kept. I think there will be problems especially for us elders which will be left behind by all of this.

Davidie Niviaxie, also of Great Whale River, said:

They are saying that we had agreed to the changes though no one has ever heard about it.

Isa Smiler of Inukjuaq wrote:

I believe that trying to change the syllabic writing system is not an easy task and if those people from NWT impose a syllabic system on all the people, it is not right. They have not travelled to all the communities and I don’t think that priests have approved of the changes either. We must also consider our bible which is written in Inuktitut; now if the bible has been revised with the full approval of the church leaders I would have consented.

Some of the comments expressed a misunderstanding of the purpose of adopting a dual orthography, both Roman and syllabic, and a fear that those accustomed to syllabics might be forced to switch to using a Roman orthography:

It is said that we will have to start using English letters. I totally disagree with this.

Many confused the development of a standard writing system with the imposition of a standard dialect:

It is also not right that our dialects which differ in each community are trying to be changed so that there would be...
one writing system for all of Northern Quebec.\textsuperscript{65}

Sam Metcalfe, an Inuk from Nain, Labrador, commented on these and similar statements in a letter of 1980:

If we are going to keep fighting among ourselves and keep on refusing to accept modifications to the writing systems, we are never going to learn to understand and be able to communicate with each other... If we keep on refusing to learn each other's writing systems and be unwilling to accept modifications, we have only the worst to fear... We are not talking about changing the language, all we are talking about is a simple modification to the two writing systems so that our children, and future generations, will be able to communicate with each other by using a standard system.\textsuperscript{66}

The type of comment being made on the syllabic orthography is healthy, for it is clear that Inuit who use syllabics are thinking seriously about their language and how it is written, and about its preservation.

ITC transferred responsibility for the Inuit Language Commission to ICI in Eskimo Point in January of 1976. On the conclusion of the ratification session in August of 1976, the Inuit Language Commission, as such, ceased to exist, but ICI retained responsibility for language development and for implementing the recommendations of the commission. Since the adoption of the dual orthography, ICI has been involved in developing ways to get the systems to the people and into the schools. Thomas Kutluk, past executive director of ICI, says:

The implementation program includes the development of written and taped material as well as a complete and accurate dictionary.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1980 a similar institute, Avataq Cultural Institute, was formed in northern Quebec. Zebedee Nungak, vice-president of the institute spoke of its aims:

\textsuperscript{64} On raconte qu'il faudra nous mettre à employer les lettres anglaises. Je m'y oppose totalement.

Plusieurs confondent la mise au point d'un système d'écriture normalisé avec l'imposition d'un dialecte uniforme:

\textsuperscript{65} Il n'est pas juste que l'on cherche à modifier nos dialectes, pour qu'il n'y ait plus qu'un seul système d'écriture au Nouveau-Québec.

Sam Metcalfe, un Inuk de Nain (Labrador), observe ce qui suit dans une lettre datée de 1980:

Si l'on continue à se battre entre nous et à refuser d'accepter les modifications apportées aux systèmes d'écriture, on n'apprendra jamais à se comprendre et à communiquer... Si l'on continue de refuser de apprendre les systèmes d'écriture de chacun et à repousser toute modification, il faudra craindre le pire... Il ne s'agit pas de changer la langue, mais simplement d'apporter quelques modifications aux deux systèmes d'écriture pour que nos enfants et les générations à venir soient en mesure de communiquer les uns avec les autres à l'aide d'un système normalisé.\textsuperscript{66}

Ce genre de commentaire est positif car il démontre que les Inuit qui emploient le système syllabique, réfléchissent sérieusement sur leur langue, sur la façon dont elle est écrite et sur les moyens de la conserver.

A Eskimo Point, en janvier 1976, l'I.T.C. a confirmé ce domaine de compétence de la commission linguistique inuit à l'I.C.I. A la fin de la rencontre d'août 1976, la commission linguistique inuit cessait d'exister en tant que telle mais l'I.C.I. a conservé le domaine de l'évolution linguistique et de l'application des recommandations de la commission. Depuis l'adoption de l'orthographe double, l'I.C.I. a cherché à diffuser ces systèmes. Thomas Kutluk, ancien directeur de l'I.C.I., nous dit:

Le programme d'application comprend la préparation de
... one of the major aspects of cultural activity that was identified ... was language and the writing system. The development and preservation of the language, the approval of the writing system, work on a dictionary ... was emphasized.

Much of the criticism of the revised syllabic orthography has come from older Inuit who object to any deviation from the syllabics to which they are accustomed in the Bible. It must be noted, then, that the Anglican and Catholic churches both contributed to the development of the revised orthography and participated in the 1976 meeting which resulted in the ratification of the system, although they made no commitment to use the revised system in new translations and in their publications.

Technology and Syllabics

Several technological advances have helped to create an environment in which the standardized syllabic orthography is flourishing. To date, the most significant of these has been the development of a syllabic element for use with the IBM Selectric typewriter:

This was by no means a straightforward matter. The project was initiated by DIAND, and overlapped in time the development of the ICI orthography. There was a certain amount of interaction between the two projects. For example, one set of redundant syllabic symbols was omitted from the ICI orthography not only for logical reasons, but also in order to free more keys on the keyboard.

Until now, virtually all material printed in syllabics in recent years was prepared using the IBM syllabic element. Almost all the old Remington and Olivetti syllabic typewriters have been retired. This has resulted in more consistency in spelling, and has helped immeasurably the acceptance of the revised syllabic system in the Eastern Arctic.

Other technological developments contributing to the strength of syllabic orthography are described as follows:

Sam Metcalfe, a Labrador Inuk, has contributed much to the development of Inuktitut as a teacher and researcher.
A technological development, initiated by the Department of Information of the Government of NWT, and carried through by two private concerns, Outcrop of Yellowknife and Nortext of Ottawa, was a syllabic film font for photo-typesetting. Syllabic characters can be stored as on a word processor; they can be typeset at a size ranging from 6 point (about 1/2 typewriter size) to 72 point (about one inch in height). Furthermore the proportions of the characters can be altered: they can be expanded, contracted or italicized at various degrees of slope.70

Another intriguing innovation is the development of systems which automatically transliterate from syllabic orthography into Roman and from Roman into syllabics. A prototype was developed by Kirk Com...
The Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Information has installed word-processing machines with syllabic capabilities in its offices in Yellowknife, Frobisher Bay and Rankin Inlet. A number of magazines and newspapers appear regularly in Inuktitut syllabics. Most use the revised syllabics consistently. These publications include DIAND's Inuktitut; ITC's Inuit Today/Inuit Ullumi; ICI's Ajurnarmat; as well as Taqralik and Nunatsiaq News.

Syllabics and the Schools

Inuktitut is taught extensively in the primary grades in both Northern Quebec and the Northwest Territories. In the schools the revised syllabics have been taught effectively, and a generation of young people is learning them consistently. A northern educator has commented:

The greatest improvements have been obvious in education.

Ten years ago the standard of literacy in syllabics among classroom assistants was abysmal ... the young classroom assistants had not learnt syllabics at home the way their parents had ...

... Equipped with the communications hook-up, the machine will send 300 words a minute over the telephone to another machine.71

... Equipped with a syllabic program, the machine has a video (TV) screen which shows Inuktitut syllabics while the typist sits at a keyboard very similar to the existing IBM typewriter's.

Syllabic text can be corrected and edited on the screen before it is printed out at 450 words per minute.

Une initiative technique que l'on doit au département de l'Information du gouvernement des T.N.-O. et qui a été menée à bien par deux entreprises, l'Outcrop de Yellowknife, la Kirk Computers Systems Ltd., et un programme de transcription complet a été mis au point par la Nortext d'Ottawa.

Le système de traitement de textes fonctionne ainsi:

Equipee d'un programme syllabique, la machine pourvue d'un écran vidéo (TV) affiche les symboles syllabiques inuktitut. L'opérateur est placé devant un clavier très semblable à celui d'une machine IBM.

Le texte syllabique peut être corrigé et révisé sur l'écran avant d'être imprimé au rythme de 450 mots à la minute.
The advent of the ICI orthography was a godsend to the educational system. The problem of producing teaching aids for different dialects remained, but at least the spelling was standardized. Improvement has been slow, and far from uniform, but each new class of student teachers contains a handful of young people who have already been completely taught the orthography in their school days. Teacher training in Arctic Quebec and the eastern Territories stresses the importance of following the ICI orthography. We can expect the situation to improve.72

Greenlandic Literature

In Greenland there is a 200-year-old tradition of literacy; books published in Greenlandic include works of fact and fiction, both original and in translation. It has been the opinion of many observers in Canada that the continued use of syllabics in the Eastern Arctic is an impediment to the development of a pan-Inuit literature which would encompass Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Lefebvre's 1957 publication, *A Draft Ortho-

... Equipée d'un système de relais, la machine est en mesure d'envoyer par téléphone 300 mots à la minute à une autre machine.71

Le département de l'Information du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest a installé dans ses bureaux de Yellowknife, de Frobisher Bay et de Rankin Inlet de machines de traitement de textes pouvant fonctionner dans un système syllabique. Un certain nombre de revues et de journaux rédigés en caractères syllabiques inuktitut paraissent régulièrement. La plupart emploient l'écriture syllabique révisée. On trouve parmi ceux-ci Inuktitut du MAINC, Inuit Todayinuit Ullumi de la TIC; Ajunnagimmatt de l'I.C.I. (anciennement Ajurnanarmat) ainsi que Taqralik et Nunatsiaq News.

Écriture syllabique à l'école

L'inuktitut est enseigné à l'école élémen
taire, tant au Nouveau-Québec que dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. L'écriture syllabique révisée a bien été enseignée dans les écoles et
Over 86 periodicals have been published in Inuktitut since 1970. Unfortunately most had short lives.

Depuis 1970, plus de 86 périodiques ont été publiées en inuktitut. Malheureusement, la plupart d'entre eux ont eu la vie brève.

La Littérature du Groenland

Au Groenland, la tradition littéraire est vieille de deux cents ans; on trouve parmi les ouvrages publiés en groenlandais des études et des romans, tant originaux que traduits. De nombreux observateurs canadiens ont estimé que la permanence des carac-

tous les jeunes apprennent à l’utiliser de manière uniforme. Un enseignant du Nord fai l’observation suivante : C’est dans le secteur de l’enseignement que les améliorations ont été les plus évidentes.

Il y a dix ans, la connaissance de l’écriture syllabique chez les adjoints d’enseignement était catastrophique... ces adjoints n’avaient pas appris les caractères syllabiques chez eux, contrairement à ce qu’avaient fait leurs parents...


Gagné was writing in 1961, before the revision of the old Kleinschmidt orthography for Greenlandic. That orthography was later revised and the revision officially adopted in 1973. In fact, the new Greenlandic orthography drew heavily on the work Gagné had done in Canada. It is ironic that his work, although rejected at the time by Inuit in Canada, served in part...
as the basis for the Greenlandic reform, just as it did a little later for the ICI Roman orthography. The revised Greenlandic orthography differs little from the Roman orthography adopted in Canada by ICI; its major point of difference is that Greenlandic retains five vowels, while Canadian Inuktitut uses only three.

Mallon observed, in 1982:

There is no doubt that mastery of the roman version of the ICI dual orthography gives access to the orthography of Greenlandic. However, Canadian Inuktitut and Greenlandic are sufficiently different in vocabulary, and, to a lesser extent, in structure, that access to the orthography does not entail access to the language.

Two developments are needed before the present potential access to Greenlandic is utilized:

— first, a strengthening of the sense of circumpolar cultural identity, so that individual Inuit and Greenlanders develop a keener interest to study each others’ language and culture.

— concomitantly, the setting-up of properly supported courses at the secondary and post-secondary level, in Inuktitut and Greenlandic.

Greenlandic uses, as its standard dialect for official and literary purposes, the dialect usually referred to as West Greenlandic (or sometimes Central West Greenlandic). It is what one sees in the newspapers and books, and what one hears on the radio and in the schools. It is the “official” dialect of Greenland. Yet its use, over a period of more than 100 years, has not led to the disappearance of the regional dialects which continue to flourish up and down the coast. The decision to use West Greenlandic as the official dialect was not a decision taken by Greenlandic Inuit; it was a decision made in the middle of the last century by that amazing and dedicated missionary, Samuel Kleinschmidt, who standardized the orthography, ran the teachers’ college, wrote textbooks and contributed to the national
tères syllabiques dans l’Arctique de l’Est s’oppose à l’apparition d’une littérature pan-Inuit englobant l’Alaska, le Canada et le Groenland. L’étude de Lefebvre publiée en 1957 : A Draft Orthography for the Canadian Eskimo était sous-titrée «Towards a Future Unification with Greenlandic». Par la suite, Gagné a écrit :

Le fait que le Groenland ait déjà une importante littérature esquimaude en caractères romains est une raison suffisante en soi de faire dépendre la nouvelle orthographe esquimaude canadienne du même alphabet. La réussite littéraire des Groenlandais pourrait servir de modèle aux Esquimaux canadiens. Un système d’écriture commun renforcerait sans aucun doute les liens culturels qui existent entre ces deux groupes. Bien entendu, ce n’est pas en mettant à la disposition des Esquimaux canadiens et des Groenlandais un système d’orthographe ayant une base commune qu’on leur permettrait automatiquement de communiquer sans difficulté.


Mallon a fait l’observation suivante en 1982 :

Lorsque l’on connaît la version romaine de l’orthographe double de l’I.C.I., il est possible de comprendre l’orthographe du groenlandais. Toutefois, l’inuktitut canadien et le groenlandais présentent suffisamment de différences de vocabulaire et, dans une moindre mesure, de struc-
Greenland has a wide variety of reading materials in Greenlandic available.

Au Groenland, on trouve un grand nombre de livres de lecture en groenlandais.

newspaper, all using the dialect of the central part of Greenland's west coast. In this sense, the dialect was "imposed" on all Greenlanders as the official standard.

Canadian Inuit are in a much different position, for there is no dialect of Canadian Inuktitut which is considered to be the official standard, nor is there liable to be in the forseeable future. While some Inuit (and many...
government officials) may occasionally lament the fact that there is no standard dialect and many even feel that one is desirable, few show any willingness to compromise in adopting the dialect of other areas. Indeed, it is often the case that individual speakers feel their dialect to be superior to other dialects, and often ridicule the speech of other Inuit. The work of the Inuit Language Commission confused some Inuit, who thought that a standard dialect was about to be imposed on them. An example of a comment on this subject, quoted earlier, is:

"It is also not right that our dialects which differ in each community are trying to be changed ...." 75

Gagné had recognized in 1961 that a standard literary language were not synonymous:

**Standard Literary Language**

It is very important to mention at the outset that the devising of a SO (standard orthography) and the creation or adoption of a standard literary language (SLL) are two distinct and separate problems that must never be confused. The existence of a SO does not presuppose the existence of a SLL nor by the same token does it imply the need of a SLL to be created or adapted ... as a medium of expression for the SO. However, it is obvious that the existence of a SO would greatly facilitate the realization of a SLL, for, by definition, a SLL needs to express itself graphically. 76

Gagné felt that the development of a standard orthography was a necessary first step in the eventual development of a standard literary language, or official dialect. He noted that, using syllabics, one attempt had been made by the federal government to use a standard dialect in the material it prepared for Inuit. In 1953, when the federal government began issuing the *Eskimo Bulletin* in Roman and syllabic Inuktitut, its foreword stated:

"It is possible that the official dialect of the Inuit will be printed in Roman and syllabic script ...."

Gagné croyait que l'élaboration d'une orthographe normalisée constituait une première étape indispensable à la création d'une langue littéraire normalisée, c'est-à-dire d'un dialecte officiel. Il a fait observer que le gouvernement fédéral avait déjà tenté d'employer un dialecte normalisé dans ses documents rédigés en syllabique à l'intention des Inuit. En 1953, on pouvait lire dans l'avant-propos de l'*Eskimo Bulletin* que le gouvernement fédéral s'apprêtait à publier en inuktitut, en romain et en caractères syllabiques :

"Il ne serait pas possible de rédiger ces documents dans tous les dialectes parlés par les Esquimaux. En conséquence, nous prenons comme norme le dialecte de l'île Baffin, en espérant que les Esquimaux se familiariseront ainsi avec tous les termes utilisés."

Il est possible toutefois que le principal critère de sélection ait été celui du personnel de traduction disponible plutôt que l'expression d'une politique officielle.

Il n'y a pas encore d'uniformisation de l'inuktitut à des fins officielles dans
S. T. (Mick) Mallon a déjà travaillé pour la Commission des langues inuit.

En raison des différences existant au niveau des dialectes et des systèmes d'écriture, aucun des documents mis au point par la Commission scolaire Kativik ne peut être directement mis à profit par les écoles du nord du Labrador. Des idées ont toutefois été échangées et certains documents empruntés peuvent être adaptés et réimprimés.

De même, des textes du Groenland, ont pu être adaptés et réimprimés en caractères syllabiques selon les besoins des écoles de l'Arctique de l'Ouest. Toutefois, la transcription de l'orthographe ne suffit pas car le vocabulaire du Groenland diffère de celui de l'Arctique de l'Est.

Il apparaît donc clairement que les Inuit canadiens qui désirent se familiariser avec la littérature groenlandaise doivent connaître au préalable l'orthographe romaine de l'I.C.I. Il n'en reste pas moins que la connaissance du vocabulaire utilisé dans cette littérature s'acquiert après avoir étudié le groenlandais de l'Ouest. La probabilité de l'apparition d'une littérature pan-Inuit en inuktitut apparaît donc très faible compte tenu de l'existence de systèmes d'écriture aussi différents entre eux que les caractères romains et les caractères syllabiques.

Edna Ahgeak Maclean, linguiste inuk employée au centre des langues autochtones de l'Alaska à Fairbanks, a proposé une solution pour remédier partiellement à l'abondance de systèmes d'écriture. Elle propose un système d'écriture inuit auxiliaire et international utilisant l'alphabet romain :

En raison des émissions radio-télévisées au Canada. Tant que l'on n'aura pas adopté une orthographe normalisée, il est peu probable que cette langue voit le jour. En attendant, les Inuit éprouvent des difficultés à se comprendre entre eux par écrit. Un rapport sur le Labrador nous signale :

J'estime que le système d'écriture commun de la langue inuit doit être un système auxiliaire. Pourquoi auxiliaire? Un système d'écriture auxiliaire ne vise pas à remplacer les grands systèmes
It would not be possible to prepare these papers in all the dialects the Eskimos use. We are therefore making the Baffin Land dialect the standard and hope in this way all Eskimos will become familiar with the words used.77

This may, however, have been more a function of who was available to translate the material than it was a government policy.

There is as yet no standard Inuktut dialect to use for official purposes, for publication, or for broadcasting in Canada. Until such time as one standard orthography is chosen, if ever, it is doubtful that there will be one. And until that time comes, Inuit have but little access to each others' writings, even within Canada. A report on Labrador notes:

Because of differences in dialects and writing systems, no material developed by the Kaktovik School Board or the NWT Department of Education can be used directly in northern Labrador schools. However, there has been an exchange of ideas and some borrowed materials have been adapted and reprinted.78

Similar adaptation and reprinting of materials has happened with some Greenlandic texts, which have been adapted for use in the schools of the Eastern Arctic, in syllabics. But transliteration of the orthography is not all that is required, for the vocabulary of Greenlandic differs sufficiently from that of the Eastern Arctic that translation of much of the material is also necessary.

It seems clear, then, that knowledge of the Roman version of the ICI orthography is a prerequisite for Canadian Inuit who wish to have access to the orthography of Greenlandic literature. But knowledge of the vocabulary used in that literature will only come through conscious study of West Greenlandic. The use of orthographies so different as Roman and syllabics makes the possibility of the development of a pan-Inuit literature in Inuktut seem very remote indeed.

Edna Ahgeak Maclean is an Inuk linguist working at the Alaska Native Language Centre in Fairbanks. She

Le caractère auxiliaire de ce système devra permettre de trouver un système commun sans craindre l'opposition des tenants de l'un ou l'autre des systèmes existants ... Ce système d'écriture auxiliaire pourrait être mis à profit par les linguistes pour préparer des dictionnaires comparés et éventuellement des grammaires. Les journalistes ainsi que les linguistes pourraient aussi l'employer lors de la publication de textes inuit ... Ce système d'écriture auxiliaire servirait aussi aux auteurs de films pédagogiques, leur permettant de créer des bandes magnétoscopiques et des films qui seraient diffusés dans tout le monde inuit ...

Le but de ce système d'écriture auxiliaire n'est pas de remplacer les systèmes régionaux mais de servir d'outil dans le cadre des études comparées et dans le domaine des communications internationales en inuktut.79

Les travaux effectués par la commission linguistique inuit vers le milieu des années 70 ont sensibilisé au Canada de nombreux Inuit aux problèmes linguistiques. Entre-temps, une prise de conscience de toutes ces questions a vu le jour. Ce phénomène et cet intérêt ont touché surtout les questions de politique internationale, mais l'on se préoccupe de plus en plus des éléments communs d'une culture diversifiée qui couvre la partie nord de quatre nations. L'une des composantes de ce patrimoine commun se présente sous la forme d'une langue riche et variée, mais peu logique au niveau de l'orthographe. L'institut culturel inuit se propose de réexaminer dans un proche avenir la question de l'orthographe double. De toute évidence, beaucoup de choses restent à considérer. Les travaux de la commission linguistique inuit ne sont pas terminés; ils ne font peut-être que commencer.
In Canada the work of the Inuit Language Commission in the mid-1970s sensitized many Canadian Inuit to language issues. In the interim, there has developed a great increase in circumpolar Inuit awareness. Much of that awareness and interest has been directed toward international political issues that affect Inuit, but there is a growing awareness too of the common elements of a diverse culture which is spread across the northern parts of four nations. One aspect of

has proposed a partial solution to the problem of the plethora of writing systems. Her proposal is for an international auxiliary Inuit writing system, which would use the Roman alphabet, and which would increase mutual intelligibility between Inuit presently using different orthographies:

I believe that the common writing system for the Inuit language should be an auxiliary one. Why auxiliary? An auxiliary writing system is not intended to replace the existing major writing systems. I believe that the Inuit groups are not ready to consider, much less accept, any writing system which proposes to replace the existing major writing systems.

The auxiliary status of the system should enable the participants to create a common system without fear of resentment from practitioners of any one writing system. The auxiliary writing system can be used by linguists in the preparation of comparative dictionaries and possibly grammars. It can also be used by journalists and linguists in the publication of Inuit texts in linguistic journals and circumpolar newsletters. The auxiliary writing system could also be used by educational film makers in the preparation of video-tapes and films for Pan-Inuit circulation.

The auxiliary writing system should not be designed to replace those in regional use, but to provide a tool for use in comparative studies and in international communication in the Inuit language.
that commonality is a language, dialectally rich and varied, orthographically inconsistent, but common to all. The Inuit Cultural Institute intends to undertake an examination of its dual orthography sometime in the near future. Clearly, there is much to consider. Like the Inuit language itself, the process of orthographic reform in Inuktitut will not be static. The work of the Inuit Language Commission has not ended; it may have only begun.
Footnotes/Part 2

Writing Systems:
Current Perspective

2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 6.
4. ibid.
5. ibid., p. 5.
6. ibid.
7. ibid.
8. ibid., p. i.
9. ibid., p. 5.
10. ibid., p. 2.
11. ibid., p. 6.
12. ibid., p. i.
14. ibid., p. 2.
15. ibid., Appendix 2, p. 1.

Références :
deuxième partie

Systèmes d'écriture :
situation actuelle

2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 6.
4. ibid.
5. ibid., p. 5.
6. ibid.
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8. ibid., p. i.
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11. ibid., p. 6.
12. ibid., p. i.
14. ibid., p. 2.
15. ibid., Appendix 2, p. 1.
15. ibid., Appendix 2, page 1.
16. ibid.
17. ibid.
18. ibid., p. 4.
22. ibid.
23. ibid., p. 3.
24. ibid.
25. ibid.
26. ibid., p. 2.
27. ibid., p. 4.
28. ibid., p. 6.
29. ibid.
33. Kalluak, op. cit.
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37. ibid.
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44. Mark Evaluardjuk, "Our Eskimo Syllabics," Keewatin Echo (No. 50, August 1972), p. 5.
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34. ibid., p. 87.
36. ibid., p. 89.
37. ibid., p. 90.
38. R.G. Williamson, lettre envoyée à Alex Stevenson le 16 mars 1976, dossiers de la commission linguistique inuit, MAINC.
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45. ibid.
47. Ajurnarmat, été 1978, p. 80.
49. ibid.
52. Jose Kusugak, op. cit., p. 86.
53. ibid., p. 85.
55. ibid., p. 85.
56. ibid., p. 86.


60. *ibid.*


62. Davidie Niviaxie, in *ibid.*


64. Robbie Tookalook, *op. cit.*

65. Davidie Niviaxie, *op. cit.*


68. Zebedee Nungak, “We have an underlying sense of urgency about Avataq’s work,” *Igalaq* (Volume 4, Number 9, July, 1982) p. 4.


73. R.C. Gagné, *op. cit.*, Appendix 2, p. 5.


75. Davidie Niviaxie, *op. cit.*


75. CDAF øgår 1562; NØFS/ Mørch's Dictionary of Old Danish

76. l-.ø. NØFS/ønæs'15

77. Ømdægelse af NØF (ved Jørgen Mørch, 1953); Ømøs/ønæs

78. Ømdægelse af NØF (ved Jørgen Mørch, 1953); Ømøs/ønæs

79. Ømdægelse af NØF (ved Jørgen Mørch, 1953); Ømøs/ønæs
Part 3

Inuktitut interpreting and translating

Probably even before Europeans came to the Arctic, Inuit in some areas of the Canadian north had a need to communicate with people who did not speak their language. Particularly in the Mackenzie Delta, in the Churchill and interior Keewatin areas, along the Labrador coast, in Ungava Bay and Lower Hudson Bay, Inuit would have come in contact with speakers of Indian languages, and some Inuit undoubtedly developed the ability to speak one or more of those languages in order to facilitate trade and prevent or resolve hostilities. Many Inuit would also have developed fluency in more than one Inuktitut dialect through extensive travel. Unfortunately we know little of this period of Inuit history.

When Europeans explorers and whalers came to the Arctic, they had a need for interpreters to help them communicate with the Inuit. Many of the Europeans, recognizing the close links between the Greenlandic language and Canadian Inuktitut, took Greenlandic interpreters with them to Canadian waters. Thus in 1860 the Groenlandais et l'inuktitut, se sont faites accompagner par des interprètes de langue indienne. II est possible que certains Inuit aient appris à parler une ou plusieurs de ces langues pour faciliter les échanges commerciaux et éviter ou résoudre les différends.

En arrivant dans l'Arctique, les explorateurs européens et les pêcheurs de baleine ont eu besoin d'interprètes afin de communiquer avec les Inuit. Beaucoup d'Européens, s'apercevant qu'il existait des liens étroits entre le groenlandais et l'inuktitut, se sont faits accompagnes par des interprètes groenlandais dans les eaux canadiennes. Ainsi en 1860, le Groenlandais Adam Beck a passé l'hiver à bord d'un baleinier britannique dans la baie Cumberland. Quelques Inuit très âgés de l'île Baffin se souviennent de la visite des derniers interprètes groenlandais. On les appelait les isilantimiu.
Augustus, or Tatannuaq, was one of the first Inuk interpreters. He worked with Sir John Franklin and several other explorers in the early 1800s.

Many Canadian Inuit themselves played indispensable roles in exploration and in providing assistance to expeditions. Many of their names have been lost to history. But those of which some knowledge has survived—usually in explorers’ accounts—are impressive indeed.

**Early Interpreters**

One of the earliest of whom we are aware was Tatannuaq, more well-known as Augustus, the name by which he was known to Europeans. Augustus was born at Roes Welcome Sound in the Keewatin about 1795. He learned Cree and English and worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company as an interpreter in the Churchill district. He accompanied John Franklin to the Mackenzie Delta as interpreter between 1820 and 1822. Back in Churchill in 1823 he interpreted on one occasion that year for the Reverend John West of the Church Missionary Society, who, three years earlier, had been the first non-Moravian missionary to meet Canadian Inuit. During the rest of the 1820s he worked with several explorers along the arctic coast; everywhere he was respected. In 1830 he went, in the services of the Hudson’s Bay Company, to Fort Chimo to help establish the new post there. He died in 1834 north of Fort Resolution on Lieutenant Back’s expedition to the Mackenzie.

Ouligbuck, an Inuk of the Keewatin, is native to 1800. In company of his friend Augustus, he participated in the second expedition of Franklin in the Arctic of the West. He appreciated the English and several languages indigenous. He also served as a guide with children in the Arctic of the West with a group of explorers. Ouligbuck is buried at Churchill in 1852. His son, William Ouligbuck, born in Fort-Chimo in 1831, had even more talent than his father. He participated with him to many expeditions, representing more of a range of languages. Despite his linguistic skills, he chose, one day adult, to live in the chasse. He is dead in 1896.
Ouligbuck, another Keewatin Inuk, was born about 1800. With his friend Augustus, he went on Franklin's second expedition to the Western Arctic. He learned English and several Indian languages. In 1829 he too moved to Fort Chimo to help prepare for the opening of the post there. He remained there for over six years before taking his wife and children to the Western Arctic with a party of explorers. Ouligbuck died at Churchill in 1852. His son, William Ouligbuck, born at Fort Chimo in 1831, was even more skilled than his father. He travelled with his father on many expeditions and learned about ten languages. Despite his skill with languages, as an adult he preferred to live as a hunter. He died in 1896.

Many explorers did not bother to learn the correct names of Inuit with whom they worked, often giving them nicknames instead. Albert One-Eye was one of those so-named. Born at Eastmain on James Bay in 1824, Albert One-Eye was popular with Europeans and Inuit alike. In 1848 he accompanied Sir John Richardson's expedition to the Mackenzie Delta; he may have saved the explorers' lives by explaining their purpose to the Inuit of the region. He died the following year in a boating accident near Coppermine.

Uqittuq, an Inuk from Cumberland Sound, served as interpreter and general labourer for the English-speaking German scientists at Clearwater Fiord during the first International Polar Year, 1882-1883. Uqittuq, who had a wife and a young daughter, was given five pounds of biscuits, du thé, a tasse de sirop and a peu de tabac.

Une femme de la baie Cumberland figure parmi les interprètes inuits les plus connus du siècle dernier. Nous ne connaissons pas exactement son nom en inuktitut parce que les explorateurs l'ont toujours orthographié de façon ambiguë sous la forme de Tookoolito, mais elle est bien connue dans les récits d'exploration sous son nom anglais d'Hannah. Son mari, Ipirvik, appelé Joe par les pêcheurs de baleines et les explorateurs, pouvait lui aussi parler anglais.

Hannah est née en 1839 à Cap Searle, au large de la côte est de l'île Baffin, mais elle a grandi dans la région de la baie Cumberland. À l'âge de 15 ans, elle est allée passer deux ans en Angleterre avec Ipirvik, rencontrant la reine Victoria et le prince Albert, et apprenant l'anglais. En 1860, Hannah et Ipirvik ont rencontré Charles Francis Hall, l'explorateur américain qui se rendait pour la première fois dans l'Arctique. Lorsqu'il est retourné aux États-Unis, Hall a emmené avec lui cette famille. Tous ensemble, ils participèrent à d'autres expéditions dans l'Arctique.

Lors de ses deux premières expéditions, Hall est resté en contact étroit avec les Inuit, leur posant de nom-
Hannah, along with her husband Ipirvik, accompanied Arctic explorer Charles Hall as interpreters during the mid-1800s.

Island but she grew up in Cumberland Sound. When she was 15, she and Ipirvik went to England where they spent two years, met Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and learned to speak English. In 1860 Hannah and Ipirvik met the American explorer, Charles Francis Hall, who was on his first expedition to the Arctic. When Hall returned to the United States, the Inuit family accompanied him there.

Ipirvik, Hannah’s husband. Both husband and wife came from the Pond Inlet region of Baffin Island. They became celebrities during their travels to the United States and England with Charles Hall.
They returned to the north with him on his other Arctic expeditions, returning each time to the United States.

On Hall's first two expeditions, he was in close contact with Inuit, questioning them extensively for information on the fate of the missing Franklin expedition. Both expeditions would have been miserable failures without the assistance of Hannah, with her good command of the English language, and Ipirvik, who guided Hall, hunted for him, and was able to function as his interpreter.

Foreign Concepts and Borrowed Words

Inuit interpreters, then as now, had to face the problem of explaining to Inuit many concepts foreign to their culture and, conversely, explaining Inuit perceptions to non-Inuit. And then, as now, foreign words, usually English, crept into the language. And so, in the days of exploration and whaling, Inuit borrowed and adopted terms such as palauga (from "flour"), siaiq (a follower, from "sailor"), uasakat (a vest, from "waistcoat"), puataqiq (a Negro, from "Portuguese"), and more obvious ones such as tii, kaapi, tipaaki and malaasi. After many years, even generations, of use these words became an integral and accepted part of Inuktitut vocabulary. The process of borrowing has continued, but the derivations of many of the more recent borrowings are more readily identifiable; some examples are gavamat (government), haamalat (hamlet), and paliisi (police).

It is not clear why Inuit have chosen to describe some concepts and technology introduced to them from other cultures by borrowed words and others by Inuktitut coinages. Perhaps part of the answer is that Inuit have tended to describe a function or concept roughly similar to a function or concept existing in their own culture with an Inuktitut term, but a more foreign function or concept by a term borrowed from English. Thus a white trader, who fulfills a function already known to Inuit from within their own culture, was called niuviqtii; a missionary, one who explains, was ajiuqsujiit; a teacher was ilisajjiit; but a policeman, who fulfills a more foreign

Les interprètes inuit ont toujours été placés devant la même situation : expliquer aux Inuit les nombreuses notions étrangères à leur culture et, inversement, faire comprendre aux non-Inuit la façon de penser des Inuit. De même, des mots étrangers, surtout anglais, ont envahi la langue. En ces temps d'exploration et de chasse à la baleine, les Inuit ont emprunté et adopté des termes comme palauga (sur le modèle de «flour»), siaiq (celui qui suit, terme qui vient de «sailor»), uasakat (un gilet, d'après «waistcoat»), puataqiq (un nègre, sur le modèle de «Portuguese») ainsi que des termes dont l'origine est encore plus évidente, tels que tii, kaapi, tipaaki et malaasi. Après avoir été employés pendant des générations, ces termes ont été intégrés intégralement au vocabulaire inuit. Les emprunts ont continué, la dérivation de certains termes plus récents étant facilement identifiable comme dans les exemples suivants : gavamat (gouvernement), haamalat «hameau» et paliisi (police).

Il est difficile de déterminer pourquoi les Inuit ont choisi parfois d'emprunter des mots alors qu'ils ont préféré à d'autres occasions créer leurs propres néologismes pour exprimer certaines notions et certaines techniques. Cela s'explique peut-être parce que les termes étrangers semblent être une façon de proche de celle qui existe dans leur propre culture à l'aide de termes inuit. Ainsi, un fonctionnaire blanc qui joue un rôle que connaissaient déjà les Inuit dans leur propre culture était appelé niuviqtii, un missionnaire, celui qui explique, ajiuqsujiit, un enseignant, ilisajjiit mais un agent de police, dont la fonction est plus étrangère, a reçu dans certaines régions le nom d'emprunt de paliisi. De la même manière, le conseil ou l'assemblée des responsables élus par la communauté reçoit la dénomination de katimajjiit en inuktitut, ceux qui se rencontrent, alors que le gouverne-
role, was described in some areas by the borrowed term *paliisi*. (In areas where a policeman is described by an Inuktitut term, the word *pukiqtalik*—the one with a stripe—describes how he appears because of his costume, rather than his function.) Similarly, a community council or group of elected officials is described by the Inuktitut term *katimajiit*—the ones who meet—whereas government, a more foreign concept, is known by the borrowed term *gavamat*.

It is perhaps significant that, when the federal government made its presence felt in the north in a major and unprecedented way in the 1950s, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, previously unknown to Inuit, was dubbed by them *tianakkut* (that is, *DNA-kut*). Eventually, perhaps with more understanding of the department's role in their lives, the name was supplanted by the Inuktitut term *inullirikkut*—the ones who work with Inuit. Today, because other governments, provincial and territorial, and...
Two pages from Umaok’s diary, in the Western Arctic dialect.

Deux pages du journal intime de Umaok rédigées dans le dialecte de l'Arctique de l'ouest.

other federal departments, are also working with Inuit, the present Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is known as inulirijuqqakkuq—the older of the ones who work with the Inuit.

Thought processes, however, do not always follow such neat guidelines for the development of terminology. Many words which are described by borrowed terms in one geographical area are known by Inuktitut terms in other areas. An example is the word for sugar; in many areas it is called sukka, but in some places it is called siuraujaq—that which resembles sand. A minister or missionary, often known as ajuiqsuji, in the Western Arctic is called minihitak. And in recent years the introduction of the snowmobile to the Arctic has led to an interesting profusion of names to describe it; these include sikituu and sikituuq (Inuktitut adoptions of the brand name “Skidoo”), qamutaujaq (that which resembles a sled, a term which evokes memories of the description of early automobiles as horseless carriages), nunakkurutiralaq (a small overland vehicle), and the Pangnirtung coinage of kukiliralaq (a functional analogy in which the snowmobile’s track is equated with an animal’s claw, the whole term meaning “the small one with a track or claws”.)

Inuit interpreters stand between individuals or groups of people who need or want to communicate with each other. It is the function of the
interpreter to take a speech from the "source" language and explain it in the "target" language. Often the differences in the cultural backgrounds of the two groups or individuals and the nature and complexity of the material prevent a literal, word-for-word translation. Interpreting for a discussion between a biologist and a group of hunters on the behavior and seasonal distribution of polar bear might be a relatively simple task for most interpreters. But interpreting for a discussion between the same participants on the rationale behind the decrease in the community's polar bear quota or the international politics which have so depressed fur prices in recent years will be a much more difficult task. And a meaningful discussion of the effects of an oil spill on polar bear and other marine mammals may prove almost impossible.

The differences between the source and target languages also present difficulties to the interpreter which are generally unrecognized by his clients. Inuktitut and English are quite unalike in structure. An interpreter may have

Les interprètes inuit servent d'intermédiaire entre les individus ou les groupes qui cherchent à communiquer entre eux. Leur rôle consiste à expliquer en la langue de l'auditeur, ce que dit celui qui parle en une autre langue. Bien souvent, les différences culturelles des deux groupes ou des individus, ainsi que la nature et la complexité de la matière ne permettent pas d'effectuer une traduction littérale. La traduction simultanée d'une discussion entre un biologiste et un groupe de chasseurs au sujet du comportement et de la répartition saisonnière des ours polaires pourrait se révéler relativement simple pour l'interprète. Par contre, la traduction simultanée d'une discussion portant sur l'explication de la diminution du contingent d'ours polaires de la communauté ou sur les facteurs politiques internationaux qui ont fait baisser le prix des fourrures ces dernières années sera beaucoup plus difficile. Quant à discuter utilement des effets d'un déversement de pétrole brut sur les ours polaires et les autres mammifères marins, il se pourrait bien que ce soit pratiquement impossible.
to wait until the very end of a simple English sentence to find the word with which he will commence his speech in Inuktitut. Inuktitut has special "dual" forms to describe two objects or actions involving two people, while English has only singular and plural. Inuktitut has a large number of terms to describe those things traditionally important in Inuit culture—snow, ice, wind, weather conditions, etc.; English lacks many of these.

Similarly Inuktitut lacks the terms required to describe the various levels of government, financial management, oil and gas development, and other topics traditionally outside the realm of Inuit need and interest. And while Inuktitut may have a variety of terms to describe snow conditions or species of the marine mammal we call in English a seal, it traditionally lacks a general term for "snow" or "seal." English has these generic forms, and often the nature of material being interpreted from English into Inuktitut requires them; it is the responsibility of the interpreter to provide them. Thus, *aput* has gradually come to be used as a generic term for "snow," and *natsiit* or *puijiltit* for "seals."

**Dramatic Increase in Translation**

The volume of material interpreted or translated from other languages, mostly English, into Inuktitut has increased dramatically in recent years. Over the past 100 years its nature has changed markedly as well. In the days of exploration, whaling and fur trading, the requirements for interpreting and translating were relatively simple, the volume of material low. In the present century, up until the 1960s, most interpreting was related to the needs of the church, the police, traders, and the relatively low level of government services.

In the last decade, however, there has been a virtual explosion in the volume of material which must be translated into Inuktitut. Government in the north has mushroomed until it has come to pervade the lives of northerners. Moreover it has manifested itself in a hierarchy of levels, from

Les différences que présentent la langue du locuteur et la langue de l'auditeur posent à l'interprète des difficultés dont ses clients n'ont généralement pas conscience. La structure de l'inuktitut est très différente de celle du français. L'interprète devra parfois attendre la fin de la phrase pour trouver le mot qui lui permettra de commencer sa phrase en inuktitut. L'inuktitut possède des formes doubles bien particulières lorsqu'il décrit deux objets ou deux actions mettant en présence deux personnes alors que le français ne possède que le singulier et le pluriel. L'inuktitut possède une grande quantité de mots pour décrire ce qui, traditionnellement, a de l'importance dans la culture inuit : la neige, la glace, le vent, le climat, etc.

L'inuktitut ne dispose pas de termes permettant de décrire les différents niveaux de gouvernement, la gestion financière, la mise en valeur du pétrole et du gaz, et différents sujets qui ne relèvent pas des besoins et des intérêts traditionnels inuit. Par contre, l'inuktitut dispose de tout un événement de termes pour décrire les conditions de la neige ou les différentes espèces de ce mammifère marin que l'on appelle en français un phoque. Le français dispose de termes génériques et, souvent, ceux-ci doivent être utilisés pour traduire un message du français à l'inuktitut. En conséquence, le terme *aput* s'est progressivement imposé à titre d'équivalent générique de «neige», de même que les termes de *natsiit* ou *puijiltit* pour les phoques.

**Volume des traductions**

Le nombre de traductions, principalement de l'anglais à l'inuktitut, a fait un véritable bond ces dernières années. Leur nature a par ailleurs nettement changé au cours des cent dernières années. A l'époque de l'exploration, de la chasse à la baleine et de la traite des fourrures, les exigences de la traduction étaient relativement simples, la demande était peu nombreuse. Au cours de ce siècle, et ce jusque dans les années 60, la plupart des traductions étaient liées aux besoins de l'Église, de la police, des négociants et de quelques services officiels.
municipal, through territorial, to federal. The search for non-renewable resources has become a major activity in the north, as elsewhere in the world, and a good interpreter is expected to be competent in the vocabulary necessary to discuss mining and mineral exploration, off-shore oil development, the danger of oil spills in northern waters, the search for natural gas, and the wisdom of year-round tanker traffic. Increased political awareness has resulted in the movement to settle native land claims and a requirement has grown in that sphere for a large amount of material to be translated.

This increased volume and variety of material has resulted in a need for more and more interpreters and translators. Government, industry and native associations have often made the mistake of assuming that bilin­
guality alone is a sufficient require­ment for a young native person who wishes to become a translator. This may occasionally be true, but, for most, training is required. Unfor­

Fortunately, because of the demand for more and more translators, this train­
ing is often not provided, or provided too little and too late.

Within Canada, Inuktitut translation and interpretation is provided by a
government documents, such as
this report on the Lancaster Sound
Regional Study, account for a large
part of the materials published in
Inuktitut.

Une grande partie des documents
publies en inuktitut sont des
documents du gouvernement
comme ce rapport de l'etude
regionale du detroit de Lancaster.

Toutefois, lors de la derniere decen­
nie, on a assiste a une veritable explo­
sion quant au nombre de documents
traduire en inuktitut. Les services
gouvernementaux ont prolifere dans
le Nord, au point d'envahir la vie quo­
tidienne des habitants. En outre, les
echelons de la hiерarchie se sont
multiplies. La recherche de ressources
non renouvelables est devenue une
priorite dans le Nord, comme partout
ailleurs, et un bon interprete doit con­
naître parfaitement le vocabulaire de
l'exploration miniere et des ressour­
ces minerales, de la mise en valeur du
petrole au large des cotes, du danger
des deversements de petro1e brut
dans les eaux du Nord, de la recher­
che de gaz naturel et des avantages
de la circulation ininterrompue de
petroliers tout au long de l'annee. Une
prise de conscience politique a donné
naissance a des mouvements cher­
chant a regler les revendications fon­
cieres des autochtones et un grand
nombre de documents ont du etre
traduits.

Etant donne le nombre accru de docu­
ments et leur grande diversite, les
interpretes et les traducteurs sont de
plus en plus recherches. Le gouverne­
ment, l'industrie et les associations
autochtones ont souvent commis l'er­
reur de penser qu'il suffisait a un jeune
autochtone d'etre bilingue pour qu'il
variety of organizations and individuals. In the Northwest Territories, an Interpreters Corps was organized with the territorial government's Department of Information in the early 1970s. In 1982 the Department of Information reorganized its language services under a new Language Bureau, which co-ordinates all government interpreting and translation services in Inuktitut and Dene languages. One of the major functions of the Inuktitut section of the Language Bureau is to provide simultaneous interpreting services for sessions of the Legislative Assembly. The Government of the Northwest Territories' Language Bureau is the only organization in Canada which trains its Inuit interpreters in the techniques of simultaneous interpreting and regularly provides simultaneous interpreting services, although many free-lance interpreters are also skilled in these techniques.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has interpreters and translators on the staff of the Northern Program, Social and Cultural Development Division. They provide translation services for the federal government, interpret for government officials, and allow the government to respond to Inuit requests and needs for information. They are also sometimes seconded or loaned for short periods of time to other organizations which may require their services.

In Northern Quebec, Makivik Corporation provides an interpreting and translating service through its Information Branch. The Government of Quebec also employs its own Inuit interpreters. A few Inuit in Northern Quebec, such as Jimmy Mark, are trilingual and can provide service in English, Inuktitut and French. In the communities of Northern Quebec, as in the Northwest Territories, most local interpreters are untrained; they have become interpreters by virtue of their bilingualism.

In Northern Quebec a translation service known as Tuki was set up under the auspices of the Kativik Regional Government in 1981. The service became incorporated and was headed by Eva Lapage. With headquarters in Fort Chimo, Tuki hoped to run a field-based translation service, employing staff in each community in
Northern Quebec, sending material for translation to its staff by DEX and receiving completed translations in the same manner. The service was not a success and the organization was disbanded; difficulty in co-ordinating the efforts of field-based staff was a major reason for its failure.

In Labrador there are few monolingual Inuit under 40 years of age, and there is no formal organization of translation services. The Northern Labrador Communications Society, as a result of a workshop held in early 1983, intends to establish an interpreting and translation service there.

Throughout the Canadian north there are many free-lance interpreters and translators providing services on contract to government, native associations and industry. Many of these have learned their skills or gained their experience through previous employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories or DIAND.

In 1978 DIAND sponsored the first Word Conference for Inuit interpreters. It was held in Ottawa and brought together delegates from all regions of the Canadian Arctic representing many organizations, including DIAND, GNWT, CBC Northern Services, ITC, ICI, Kativik School Board and Makivik Corporation. The Word Conference was held in response to a need expressed by many interpreters for assistance in developing Inuktut equivalents for new English terms they were encountering in their work, and in recognition of the desirability of consistency in new word coinages. The 1978 Word Conference chose as its theme the development of terminology for the metric system, mineral exploration and financial management. The conference was a success and has become an annual event.

The theme format of the first year's conference has been followed for each subsequent conference. At the 1979 conference, held also in Ottawa, it was agreed that future conferences, would be held in northern communities where unilingual and local Inuit would be able to act as resource people. As a result the 1980 conference was held in Rankin Inlet, 1981's in Kuujjuaq, and 1982's in Pangnirtung. Since 1979 the Inuit
Cultural Institute has been involved, under contract to DIAND, in the organization of the conferences.

In 1980 an unofficial body, the Inuit Interpreters and Translators Association of Canada (IITAC), was formed at the Rankin Inlet conference. Bernadette Immaroitok and Sam Metcalfe were selected as President and Vice-President respectively. The association replaced the standing committee of interpreters and translators which has functioned during the previous two years. The aims of the association have never been clearly articulated but reference has been made to the need for the association to be involved in the printing and circulation of word lists (both in draft and approved form), the preparation of a handbook containing approved terminology, the training and certification of interpreters and translators, the publication and distribution of a newsletter, the production of a multidialectal dictionary, and the coordinating of the annual conference. The problems the association has faced have resulted from the unofficial nature of its existence. Not incorporated as an independent body, it cannot survive in its present form and has decided to seek official affiliation with the Inuit Cultural Institute. It will be approaching ICI’s Board of Directors in 1983 to effect that affiliation.

No Concensus on Official Dialect

The question is often posed: To what extent are dialectal differences a limiting factor in written and oral communications among Canadian Inuit? With it comes another question as a corollary: Is there a need for a standard or “official” dialect for Canadian Inuktitut?

There is no concensus on this issue among Canadian Inuit today. Indeed the matter has very seldom been seriously addressed by Inuit. When it has, discussion of it has usually been characterized by confusion between

The Inuit Interpreters and Translators Association of Canada (IITAC) was formed in 1980. Since that time Bernadette Immaroitok has held the presidency.

besoins de normaliser les néologismes. La Conférence de 1978 avait choisi comme thème l’évolution de la terminologie dans les domaines du système métrique, de l’exploration minière et de la gestion financière. Cette conférence a connu un grand succès et se tient dorénavant chaque année.

La décision d’adopter des thèmes a été reprise chaque année. Lors de la conférence de 1979 qui s’est tenue, elle aussi, à Ottawa, il a été entendu qu’à l’avenir les conférences auraient lieu dans les communautés du Nord, où les Inuit unilingues serviraient de personnes-ressources. En consé-
Nick Arnatsiaq from Igloolik. A one-time member of the NWT Interpreter's Corps, Nick is now a freelance translator-interpreter.

Given the little discussion there has been on the issue in Canada to date, a standard orthography and a standard "official" dialect.

When the question of standard or official dialect is considered, one often hears reference to the situation in Greenland where a standard dialect, Kalaallisut, has been accepted and in use for over a century. It is important to realize, however, the rather unique circumstances under which this standard dialect developed. It was not chosen by native Greenlanders at all. It was, rather, the result of the work of a capable and dedicated missionary, Samuel Kleinschmidt, who laboured throughout his life for the development and preservation of the Greenlandic language. It was fortunate that the dialect in which he lived and worked occupied a central position, both geographical and linguistic, among Greenlandic dialects. Because of the efforts of Kleinschmidt Central West Greenlandic was accepted as the standard dialect of the country. But, it must be clearly stated, it was not chosen as the result of any polling of Inuit opinion or the seeking of any concensus among Inuit themselves. Such a development could not be duplicated in the Canadian North today.

En 1980, un organisme non officiel, l'Association des interprètes et des traducteurs inuit du Canada, a été créé lors de la conférence de Rankin Inlet. Bernadette Immaroitok et Sam Metcalfe ont été choisis respectivement présidente et vice-présidente. Cette association est venue remplacer le comité perment des interprètes et des traducteurs. Les buts de cette association n'ont jamais été bien précisés, mais elle a pour rôle d'imprimer et de diffuser les listes de mots, de publier une brochure regroupant la terminologie acceptée, de former et d'agréer les interprètes et traducteurs, de préparer un dictionnaire des dialectes et de coordonner la conférence annuelle. Les difficultes auxquelles a dû faire face l'association proviennent de son caractere non officiel. Comme il ne s'agit pas d'un organisme indépendant légalement constitué, il cesse virtuellement d'exister entre les conférences annuelles. De plus, personne n'est chargé de veiller à l'application des
it is difficult to summarize Inuit opinion on the subject. Probably it is most accurate, as a general statement, to say that most Inuit informed on the topic would support, philosophically, the idea of a standard national Inuktitut dialect. But at the practical level most Inuit are, quite naturally, strongly attached to their own dialects and this attachment would probably mean a lack of success for any discussion, no matter how protracted, whose purpose was to seek consensus on what dialect should be the standard.

Many Inuit would fear that the choosing of a standard dialect would eventually result in the extinction of other regional dialects. It should be pointed out that such has not been the case in Greenland, where many regional dialects continue to flourish a century after the imposition of Kleinschmidt’s standard Central West Greenlandic. Even in Canada, dialects seem to be remarkably resilient to change as a result of contact with other dialects. Witness the situation in Spence Bay where part of the population speaks Natsilik dialect and rest of the community Cape Dorset dialect, a result of the movement of a group of Inuit from Cape Dorset in the 1930s. Grise Fiord was established in 1953 with one group of Inuit from Northern Quebec, another from Pond Inlet; the two distinct dialects of these groups are still spoken there today. And in Baker Lake, the largest community in the Keewatin with a population of approximately 1,000, many Keewatin dialects have been spoken since the community was established; only in the last few years have their differences begun to be “levelled” in the speech of the young.

It is unlikely that any one dialect of Canadian Inuktitut will be chosen as an official standard in the foreseeable future. For the present, then, one of the major needs of interpreters is multi-dialectal awareness. Radio has proven to be a powerful medium for the expansion of Inuit awareness of other dialects and television shows the same potential. As a result of northern radio, many Inuit, although often speaking only one dialect, are able to understand much of the vocabulary of many dialects, particularly in Northern Quebec and the Baffin, Keewatin and Arctic Coast regions. This is less so in the Western

Dialecte officiel

On se pose souvent la question suivante : jusqu’à quel point les différences entre dialectes font-elles obstacle à la communication écrite et orale? Cette question entraîne un corollaire : a-t-on besoin d’un dialecte normalisé ou « officiel » en inuktitut canadien? Lorsqu’on parle de dialecte officiel, on pense souvent à la situation que l’on retrouve au Groenland, où un dialecte normalisé, le Kalaallisut, est accepté et utilisé depuis plus d’un siècle. Il faut comprendre toutefois que les circonstances qui ont permis l’évolution de ce dialecte sont bien particulières. Son choix n’a pas été fait par les autochtones; il résulte des travaux de Samuel Kleinschmidt qui, toute sa vie, s’est efforcé de développer et de conserver la langue groenlandaise. Le dialecte dont il se servait a joué un rôle de pivot, tant du point de vue géographique que linguistique, parmi les différents dialectes groenlandais. Grâce aux efforts de Kleinschmidt, le groenlandais du Centre-Ouest a pu jouer le rôle de dialecte normalisé du pays.

Étant donné que l’on a peu parlé de ce sujet au Canada jusqu’à présent, il est difficile de résumer les opinions des Inuit sur la question. De manière générale, on pourrait dire que la plupart des Inuit sont, en principe, en faveur, d’un dialecte national et normalisé. Toutefois, dans la pratique, la plupart des Inuit restent, fortement attachés à leur propre dialecte, ce qui entraînerait probablement l’échec de toute discussion.

De nombreux Inuit auraient peur que le choix d’un dialecte normalisé se traduise finalement par la disparition des autres dialectes. Ils conviennent de signaler que tel n’a pas été le cas au Groenland, où de nombreux dialectes régionaux continuent à vivre un siècle après l’imposition de la norme du groenlandais Centre-Ouest. Au Canada, il semble que chaque dialecte résiste : très bien au changement malgré les contacts avec les autres dialectes. A Spence Bay, une partie de la population parle le dialecte natsilik et l’autre celui de la communauté de Cape Dorset, du fait du déplacement
En théorie, il faudrait que les interprètes et les traducteurs inuit reçoivent une formation au départ dans leur propre dialecte puis dans les autres dialectes qu’ils peuvent être amenés à utiliser.

Les besoins des interprètes et de traducteurs inuit sont actuellement très grands. La formation doit être continue. Les personnes qui font appel à des interprètes et à des traducteurs, doivent se rendre compte qu’il n’est
Arctic where Inuktitut or Inuvialuktun is not used or understood by the majority of young people, or in Labrador where Inuit have been culturally isolated from the rest of Canadian Inuit. One interesting result of this tendency toward multi-dialectal awareness but uni-dialectal speech is the system for interpretation adopted by the councils of some communities for meetings with outsiders; usually a party of visiting officials is accompanied by its own interpreter who interprets, using the dialect in which he is most capable, for the visiting party, but often the host community uses its own local interpreter to articulate its feedback.

Ideally, Inuit interpreters and translators should be trained, first in their own dialects, and eventually in the other dialects they may have occasion to use.

The current needs of Inuit interpreters and translators are many. Training is an ongoing requirement. Those, especially in government, who are in a position to employ interpreters and translators, must realize that bilingualism alone is not a sufficient qualification. Interpreters need training in the techniques of both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, in understanding the varied roles of government in the north today and those of the many other players in the on-going evolution of northern lifestyles. An understanding clientele, knowledgeable of the significant differences between the source and target languages, and sensitive to the frustrations inherent in the role of interpreter, will make the task, never easy, less difficult.

**Translation Aids Needed**

Dictionaries and reference materials in Inuktitut are also required. DIAND has been working closely with Laval University which will soon be publishing an Inuktitut-English version of the Schneider dictionary in the Ungava dialect. When it is completed, it will be the first comprehensive Inuktitut-English dictionary of any Canadian Inuktitut dialect and will be an invaluable resource for interpreters and translators. The COPE Language Project intends to publish dictionaries in Inuvialuktun this year. They will, one hopes, stimulate a demand for...
The survival of the existant native languages of Canada is severely threatened. Inuktitut is one of the few which linguists give a chance of survival over the long term. There are many current initiatives which may help the language to survive. The soon-to-be published Schneider dictionary is the first, one hopes, of many such works. The Inuvialuktun Language Commission, sponsored by COPE, has analysed the three dialects of the western Arctic and compiled extensive vocabularies; it reflects the growing concern on the part of the Inuvialuit over the serious erosion of their language. In Northern Quebec, Avataq has expressed interest in language issues and Thomasie Qumak is compiling his own dictionary. The Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment to language development is shown in its support for community-based language projects. And the recently announced Northern Broadcasting Policy and Program is evidence of the federal government's commitment to native language broadcasting on radio and television.

New technology, including syllabic elements for modern typewriters and word-processing equipment, has been developed to facilitate easier production of written Inuktitut in syllabics. This technology, already impressive, is in its infancy. Further developments will enable Inuit interpreters and translators to build up their own word banks for introduced terminology. More importantly, it will
develop comprehensive dictionaries in other Canadian dialects.

Inuit also need time and resources to continue the development of word lists of introduced vocabulary to describe the multitude of new subjects, once foreign to the life of the Inuit, which are now very much a part of life in the north, subjects which include non-renewable resource development, law, biology, finance and legislation, to name only a few. One can foresee no respite from the demand for the services of Inuit to translate even more documents, yet somehow the time must be found to ensure the professional improvement of which the development of word lists is a part.

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allow them to share their information almost instantly.

It is a paradox then that, although Inuktitut is under severe pressure because of the incursion into the Arctic of concepts and technology once foreign to the Inuit, it may well be 20th century technology which allows dedicated interpreters and translators to help the language to survive.

De nouvelles techniques et, parmi elles, les claviers syllabiques des machines à écrire et du matériel de traitement de textes ont été mises au point afin de faciliter l'écriture de l'inuktitut en caractères syllabiques. Ces nouvelles techniques n'en sont qu'à leurs débuts. D'autres progrès permettront aux interprètes et aux traducteurs inuit de constituer leurs propres banques de données. Surtout, il leur offrira la possibilité de partager l'information presque instantanément.

Alors que l’inuktitut doit s’adapter rapidement à des notions et à de techniques jusqu’alors étrangères aux Inuit, il est paradoxal de constater que la technique du XXe siècle pourrait bien permettre à des interprètes et à des traducteurs dévoués d’aider la langue à survivre.
Watt’s First Catechism in Eskimo from a book published in England in 1869. Joyce Banks of the National Library, has identified this translation as that originally prepared by Watkins for use among the Inuit of Little Whale River, and first printed at Moose Factory by John Horden in the winter of 1855-56. This is the first publication known using Inuktitut syllabics.
In 1975 the Inuit Language Commission appointed by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada identified six broad regions of Inuktitut dialect variation across the Canadian Arctic as presently perceived by Inuit themselves. These are, from east to west, Labrador, Northern Quebec, Keewatin, Baffin, Central Arctic and the Western Arctic.