

TRANSCRIPTION DE L'ALLOCUTION DU PREMIER MINISTRE  
LORS DE LA REMISE DE LA PRIME POUR SERVICES  
INSIGNES DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE, A OTTAWA  
LE 9 FEVRIER 1977

---

An Inuit once met Stu, and asked him: "Do you mind if I name the baby after you, sir?" And I guess Stuart, feeling that Stuart was not such a bad name, said: "First class." Whereupon she said: "Very well and I will call him Oomingmak" Which, my pronunciation may not be too good, but it does mean musk-ox in Eskimo. Now, that is Stuart's nickname -- my son, Justin, can pronounce it better than I can, but that is what Oomingmak means. I take it not particularly from his physical appearance -- because we might have called him Walrus or whatever that means. But because the musk-ox is a symbol of strength, a symbol of authority, and it is reputed to be an animal which has very, very good eyesight. And I think these three characteristics as the Inuits very well saw, apply eminently to our distinguished guest of honour.

He is a man of great strength and endurance, always on the move. I think the first time I've ever seen him stand still for long, Your Excellency, was this afternoon when he was just listening to the well-deserved tribute. But a Territory of a million and a quarter square miles covering, I think, something like two-fifths of Canada's landspace, 70 odd communities that Stuart has had to visit or wanted to visit at least once every year and many several times; an incredible number of hours logged in flying -- something like 100,000 miles a year - and this obviously requires a man of great courage, of great stamina, of great strength. And this has shown not only in his travels but in the dedication and force with which he attacked, tackled the very difficult job of decentralizing to the North the government of the North.

A second characteristic is that of authority. And there again, one who has travelled with Stu in the North -- and there are many, because a large part of his efforts has been to make people see and understand the North -- have seen the way in which Stuart Hodgson when he arrives in the North really brings authority

with him. I have instances -- and I'm sure many of you have too -- where he would be met on his arrival in some small community, faced with a problem, a complex one which we in the South would only be able to solve after a great deal of involving ourselves in red tape and Stuart just would cut right through and say: "We'll solve this one right here, right now and then when we get back in Yellowknife, we'll fix the books and make it look all right".

When he arrives, the government arrives. And I've seen this in many instances. The way in which he takes over and takes command of a situation, whether it be in commandeering a motorcycle lost in the snows in the very northern tip of Ellesmere Island or deciding that there is no point in asking Greenland if we could land to visit Hall's grave in their part of the North.

Perhaps the most typical incident was when once we were flying from one point to another and Stu just said: "Well, there seems to be some dog-sleds down there, let's land." And it was some remote bay, snow-covered bay in Bathurst Inlet; and sure enough we landed, and there was this family of Eskimos who invited us into their snow-covered tent under the snowbank and invited us in for some tea. George Hakanak, some name like that, I remember the first name was George.

And after the greetings and tea and so on, George went out and came back with a little parcel which he very delicately unwrapped and he was talking, and I didn't understand what he was saying but it was a little Eskimo carving that he had done and he was preparing to present it to, I supposed, the important person -- that was being translated -- "...one of our great visitors and so on, I want to offer this..." And I was stretching out my hand when he gave it to Stu Hodgson. Certainly, there was, there is no mistake there as to where he sword swayed.

And many instances like that have shown the way Stuart Hodgson has tackled his job. And one of, whether it be one of opening Winter Games or having royalty tour the North, or of putting another dint into the Franklin Probe or really solving school problems or making

decisions which had to do with social questions. There has been that authority with the paradox that Stu brought his authority and left it there.

He is, he has been successful in decentralizing -- one of the most successful efforts of decentralizing -- the Canadian government and bringing the government of the North closer to the people, making sure that their needs and their desires are faced and met. And I think in this, he has been superbly aided in his third characteristic of the musk-ox: one of having a tremendous eyesight. He sees the North. He sees the changing. He sees the human needs -- not only the material ones. He sees the human beings in a state of evolution. And perhaps more important even than all that: he has helped us see the North. He has helped the rest of Canada in many cases, the rest of the world see the tremendous potential of this great part of Canada and see the tremendous human value of the people who live in the North -- the Eskimos and the Indians.

And I am absolutely delighted to be able to be on this occasion, to say on behalf of the Government of Canada how proud we are that this great Canadian has been sought out by the Committee of the Outstanding Achievement Award to receive this honour today. It is, I believe, ten years since Mr. Lester Pearson instituted this honour and I want to congratulate the Selection Committee for having made such a superb choice this year again.

Je crois qu'un grand Canadien, c'est non seulement celui qui aime son pays, mais qui sait le faire aimer par d'autres, qui sait faire voir à d'autres et à l'ensemble de ses concitoyens la beauté et la grandeur de ce pays-là. Et dans ce sens-là, les gens du Comité de sélection ont véritablement choisi cette année un grand Canadien. Je les en remercie et les en félicite.