

Commissioner's Speech Yellowknife, NT National Aboriginal Day June 21, 2013

Quanaqquq Mr. Tuccaro apirigangma niplirumayakhamnik uplumi.

Alianaraaluk akuni Yalunaimiittungnairama apquhaqtainnaqhunga tingmiliqpakkama.

Quvianaqtuq inungmiuyaami Yalunaimiuttani. Quviahukta Nunaqaqqaqtut Upluanni!

Thanks Commissioner Tuccaro for asking me to speak today.

I am truly enjoying being here as it has been a few years since I spent any length of time in Yellowknife other than passing through on travel.

It is a pleasure to be in your among such fine Yellowknifers.

National Aboriginal Day started in 1996 when the Governor General proclaimed June 21 as a day to mark and acknowledge our contributions and achievements as First Nations, Metis and Inuit. It is celebrated across Canada – from coast to coast to coast. We hear the saying that aboriginal day is every day for many of us and it's true – We live it!

However, in larger urban centres, many aboriginal peoples can get lost in the mix. Aboriginal Day is a day for all of us, wherever we are in Canada, to showcase our culture, music, dance, skills, arts and crafts as Canada's original inhabitants. This brings to mind, the very first involvement of the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society in the planning and preparation for that city's celebrations and how we were able to showcase, for the first time, Inuit culture in (year??).

Canada Day...July 1st ... is another opportunity to continue to showcase our pride as nation builders.

In Nunavut ..July 9th ...is an opportunity for Nunavummiut to celebrate our Land Claims agreement and to highlite our progress and contribution to the nation as a whole.

The Inuvialuit recently celebrated their IRC land claim anniversary. Each claimant group has their anniversaries to celebrate.

Putting aside all differences – let's celebrate as a united family of aboriginal people this fine day.

Happy Aboriginal Day!

Mashi cho, quyanainni, quana, matna quyannamiik thank you!