



**The Honourable Edna Ekhivalak Elias
Commissioner of Nunavut**

RCMP Regimental Dinner

Iqaluit, Nunavut

October 12, 2010

Unnukkut,

I am very honored to be in your presence, in this sea of red, to say a few words. I also feel very, very safe.

INTRODUCE MYSELF.

As a little girl I recall seeing police in our communities as they were established. They seemed very foreign, authoritarian and important in their uniforms. In those early days, they were the only ones in uniform. But they seemed friendly and very much a part of Coppermine at the time. They worked with the Church; talked to anyone and everyone that spoke English; learning from Inuit men how to handle and run a dog team and traveling with them by dog team. Little did I know they were patrolling.

Our communities were peaceful at the time; in harmony. Everyone helped one another. Today it is different. We have had to learn how to face the threats, disharmony and dangers that occasionally come up now in many communities. Past threats and dangers from man were few and far between; most came from nature – sea and ice conditions, the weather and fear and danger of handling our working dogs, the Husky and the Inuit dog.

Working together with the RCMP in the schools has given me great pleasure and satisfaction.

Steve, where are you? I share this with you.

By working together with the RCMP we were able to:

- promote punctuality, attendance and education
- bring awareness of RCMP as ordinary citizens, members of our community
- develop self esteem, sportsmanship, team work
- build relationship with the officers in our communities
- and many other benefits besides providing a healthy breakfast at the start of the day

Through joint effort, cooperation and teamwork, it worked. It worked because we made the time for it. I realize now that the RCMP is much busier in many communities to perhaps even consider extra duty activities such as this but I encourage it.

I commend you for your bravery, facing the challenges and current threats and dangers in your work today and for your on-going cooperation and leadership in Nunavut. I also commend you for all and any extra community work that you are involved with.

When I look back on my experiences working with the RCMP I am reminded of the principles that guide you: hard work, discipline, dedication and sacrifice. Tonight we honor those RCMP members who died while preserving law and order in Nunavut and in Canada.

Remembering them keeps us strong.