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STATEMENT BY INNU NATION ON PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S PLANNED VISIT TO NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR AND SPECULATION ON POTENTIAL HYDRO RELATED ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prime Minister Trudeau will be visiting St. John's tomorrow, and this has Innu Nation wondering whether there will be an announcement on hydro issues, something the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador said it would inform Innu Nation about ahead of time. At this time, Innu Nation has no information on what if anything the Prime Minister will say about the Atlantic Loop, Rate Mitigation, or development of Gull Island.

Speculation about N.L. selling part of its stake in the Muskrat Falls, Gull Island, and Upper Churchill Falls generating station to Hydro-Québec has been rampant since the Premier's Economic Recovery Team issued its report in May, that some, including former Nalcor Energy CEO, Stan Marshall, argue this could be a win-win situation. It would allow Hydro-Québec to fulfill its goal to sell billions of dollars worth of hydroelectricity to New York and Massachusetts and, at the same time, prevent N.L. from going bankrupt.

The last time Hydro-Québec and the Province did business, the result was the 1969 Churchill Falls power contract. That contract was a disaster for N.L. While Hydro-Québec has reaped upwards of \$80 billion in profits off this deal to date, CFLCo has barely been able to cover its operating costs.

People in this province agree that Churchill Falls was a bad deal for N.L. But, it was an even worse deal for Innu. It destroyed our connection to our land and hurt our people like no other project ever has. Despite any optimism Nalcor or Hydro-Québec might share for improved relations between the two, both parties need to know that the Innu will not be swindled again.

The Churchill Falls Generating Station (CFGS) is located on Innu Nation territory. Damming the Churchill River to create the Smallwood Reservoir flooded an area of our land roughly 70 per cent of the size of the Avalon Peninsula. It destroyed our traditional travel routes, hunting grounds, fishing places, and the burial sites of our ancestors. It happened without consultation, without advance warning, and without compensation. It abruptly put an end to our parents' and grandparents' traditional way of life. It deprived us of the ability to spend time on this land where, for centuries, our families had spent a good part of the year living, hunting, and fishing. It plunged our people into unprecedented social chaos and poverty. More than 50 years later, we are still trying to recover.

When the Province asked us if we would agree to the Muskrat Falls project, we told them one thing we would not agree to is a repeat of Churchill Falls. We eventually agreed to the Muskrat Falls project, after assessing the impacts, because of the benefits set out in our impacts and benefits agreement with Nalcor. While we know the Province needs a rate mitigation deal soon with Canada to avoid electricity rate shock, and we all expect the federal election to be called in the next few weeks, perhaps something the Prime Minister will announce tomorrow, the benefits promised to us in our agreement with Nalcor cannot be sacrificed in the process.

These large hydro projects have taken place on Innu lands without a treaty between the Innu, the Province and Canada. The Innu have been negotiating to try to reach a fair treaty for over 30 years. The treaty will finally recognize our rights under Canada's Constitution, including our right to consent to future major projects in our territory. The people of the Province need to ask their federal candidates if their party will ensure Canada reaches a just and fair treaty with us in the very near future. Premier Furey also needs to ensure the Province does its part to conclude our treaty without delay.

If there is to be further development of hydro-electric assets in Labrador, the Province and Innu Nation are in a position to insist that any deals must be done with the best interests of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in mind, including Innu Nation. We will not accept any agreements with Hydro-Québec or anyone else on Muskrat Falls, Upper Churchill or Gull Island until we have been fully consulted and have consented to those agreements.

Innu Nation is encouraging the provincial and federal governments and friends of the Innu to support our efforts to ensure that our rights are recognized and respected. Part of that must be to ensure that Hydro-Québec respects our rights as indigenous peoples and compensates our people for the irreversible damages caused by the flooding of our land to build and operate the CFGS.

This time, unlike 1969, our voices will be heard and our rights will be respected. Our land is not a commodity to be sold to solve N.L.'s economic crisis. Nor is the destruction of our land acceptable collateral damage to support Québec's vision for making massive profits from increased hydro-electric exports to the United States.

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