

**Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's speech at the gala dinner
in honour of self-government beginning in Greenland
on 21 June 2009**

Check against delivery.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Rasmus Lyberth has written a poem called "It was a wonderful day". And surely nothing else could describe today any better?

[The Danish PM will now read out the poem. The English meaning is set out below]

Rasmus Lyberth's poem is about a wonderful day where people were happy, and the poet noticed that hope was there to lead the way.

Today has been such a day. A day of happiness and hope. And I am both delighted and proud to be here celebrating self-government for Greenland.

Greenland and Denmark are united by our common history. We've paved the way for self-government together. And now a new chapter will be added to our history book. A chapter which, to a great extent, it is up to the younger generation of Greenlanders to write.

And the previous chapter – home rule – has prepared them well for the task.

During the home-rule years Greenland has become more financially independent. More and more Greenlanders have completed a formal education. And it has become possible to study ever more subjects here in Greenland.

The original Inuit came here because there were animals for them to hunt and it was possible to survive. They succeeded in adapting to the harsh conditions – with great inventiveness and creativity.

Adaptability, creativity and inventiveness are still needed. And nowadays young Greenlanders travel to acquire knowledge, both within and outside Greenland.

And that is a good thing, because the young people of both Greenland and Denmark gain valuable knowledge and inspiration by studying abroad.

The important thing is that they come home to utilise their knowledge and abilities to benefit their country.

Today isn't just a wonderful day because we're celebrating self-government; today is also Greenland's national day as well as being the longest and brightest day of the year. But that isn't the only reason why I'm looking on the bright side when it comes to the future of Greenlandic society.

It's because I can see there is a new generation of self-aware and strong young Greenlanders. A generation ready to take over where home rule left off. And build upon Greenlandic self-government.

Over the course of the day there have been many toasts and cheers for self-government.

I would like to propose that this evening we give three cheers for self-government and the younger generation.

HURRA HURRA HURRA