

1 Inuvik, NWT

2 --- Upon Commencing on Tuesday, May 5, 1992 at

3 3:10 p.m.

4 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Good
5 afternoon. Would you like to say the prayer?

6 **TOM WRIGHT:** (Opening Prayer).

7 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would like
8 to ask Chief James Firth to make some opening remarks.
9 Merci.

10 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH: CHIEF, INUVIK**

11 **GWICH'IN COUNCIL:** I am Chief James Firth from the Inuvik
12 Native Band. On behalf of all aboriginal peoples of the
13 Delta, we would like to welcome you Mr. Co-Chairman and
14 Commissioners of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
15 Peoples to Inuvik.

16 We want to thank you for coming to hear
17 our concerns and to try to find solutions for all our
18 problems. Over the next two days you will hear and meet
19 many of our aboriginal people, young and old. We hope
20 you will listen and try to understand what we are trying
21 to tell you. Again, welcome to Inuvik. Thank you.

22 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you very
23 much.

1 I would like first to welcome all of you
2 who have accepted the Commission's invitation to meet with
3 us.

4 Before going further, I would like to
5 introduce my fellow Commissioners. On my far right is
6 Commissioner Allan Blakeney, a former Premier of
7 Saskatchewan for many years. We have a Commissioner for
8 the duration of our visit, a Gwich'in Commissioner sitting
9 with us, Grace Blake. At the far left we have Mary Sillett
10 who is from Labrador and is a Commissioner with the
11 Commission. We have an Inuvialuit Commissioner, John
12 Holman, also for the two days that we are here in Inuvik.

13

14 Je voudrais simplement souhaiter la
15 bienvenue à tous ceux qui ont accepté notre invitation
16 de venir nous rencontrer et faire des présentations.

17 --- (Gwich'in)

18 For us, it is a very important day as
19 a Commission because, as you probably know, we started
20 our public hearings two weeks ago in Winnipeg. This is
21 the first time that we are meeting with a northern
22 community. We felt that coming to the western part of
23 the Northwest Territories was the right place to do so.

1 We will, as you know, be with you for two days and then
2 we move for about the same length to Fort McPherson.

3 I would like everyone to feel at ease
4 to speak to us. If you want to come and sit closer you
5 are most welcome. We have many presenters who will come
6 and tell us what they think should be done in order to
7 improve the situation in the near future, but also on the
8 longer term.

9 As you know, we were appointed as a
10 Commission last September, late August. We are seven
11 Commissioners. We have split this week into two panels
12 and four of us are in Nova Scotia. My co-Chairman -- I
13 am René Dussault, one of the two co-Chairs. I am a judge
14 with the Court of Appeal in Quebec. My co-Chair is Georges
15 Erasmus who is well known in this land. He was Chief of
16 the Assembly of First Nations for many years. There is
17 also Bertha Wilson, a former judge from the Supreme Court
18 of Canada and Viola Robinson who is from Nova Scotia.
19 She is a MicMac. We have Paul Chartrand who is a Métis
20 from Manitoba.

21 We have split into two panels. Our
22 purpose is to try to visit in the coming year or 15 months
23 over 100 communities. This includes mainly northern

1 communities. Also, we plan to visit major cities in the
2 south, in order to listen to what aboriginal peoples living
3 in an urban situation have to suggest to us and tell us
4 in terms of their situation and the improvement and the
5 way to improve their life condition.

6 We also want to hear non-aboriginal
7 people because the mandate we have been given is very wide.

8 It is written in 16 points but, fundamentally, it is about
9 building a new relationship and a new Canada where both
10 aboriginal and non-aboriginal people will work together
11 and feel partners towards building the future.

12 The mandate covers all the social
13 policies and education, justice, health, social care, all
14 the social questions, the problems, alcohol, drug abuse,
15 family violence and so forth. It does touch the daily
16 life conditions. Also, it deals with economic development
17 and the economic base of could this be done in order to
18 give hope and ensure a future for the young people living
19 in the north and also in the cities as aboriginal peoples.

20 It does include the bigger issues of political issues
21 like those concerned with self-government and the land
22 claims and land base.

23 What is different with this Commission

1 in comparison with others is that in having the whole field
2 we have an opportunity to link the various issues, to see
3 how social issues should be linked with self-government,
4 how economic issues should be linked with lands and also
5 social issues and so forth. Nothing has been excluded
6 from our mandate. Everybody should feel free to speak
7 about anything they feel they should tell us. It is
8 included in our mandate.

9 What we did during the last six months
10 is, very briefly, we have staffed the Commission. The
11 Commission will have a staff of around 80 people.
12 Two-thirds of them are and will be aboriginal peoples,
13 both from status Indian, non-status, Métis and Inuit.
14 We have to look at the situation of all the four groups,
15 the four major groups who form the aboriginal groups of
16 Canada. This is also the first time that the Inuit as
17 well as the Indians, for example, have to be looked upon
18 as people living on reserve as well as off reserve in the
19 cities and they have to be also part of the public
20 participation process.

21 We made a preliminary visit to plan our
22 Hearings in the fall. We met with the heads of the two
23 territories. We have met with provincial Premiers and

1 the Ministers responsible. We have issued a commentary
2 on the Constitution because we have tried to focus the
3 debate on what we felt was important. We have tried to
4 make clear that the recognition of the right has been
5 inherent. The right to self-government has been inherent
6 as to its source. It was a right that has always existed
7 and is not to be granted, that this was clear from the
8 beginning and accepted and that discussion should focus
9 on a relationship with this right and the larger Canadian
10 society with both federal and provincial governments,
11 federal and provincial legislation.

12 We have published a commentary that we
13 feel was a useful contribution. Our goal in opening these
14 public Hearings is really twofold: The first one is public
15 education. If we think about the implementation of
16 recommendations or proposals, it is very important that
17 the debate occur and is seen happening that the larger
18 public participate into the debate and understand better
19 what is at stake.

20 We have mentioned in the opening in
21 Winnipeg that we want to help the public to get rid of
22 some of the stereotypes that have plagued us for many years.
23 There are wrong assumptions about who are the aboriginal

1 peoples of Canada and vice versa. That is the reason why
2 in our public Hearings we plan to have Hearings like these
3 ones. We plan to have round tables where we will bring
4 aboriginal and non-aboriginal people together. We plan
5 to have visits of various institutions. We are going
6 tomorrow to visit the hospital, the schools. We are going
7 to also have some private visits in some houses to meet
8 some people privately. We want to get close, as much as
9 possible, to the daily life of the community. This is
10 the reason why we have put so much emphasis on visiting
11 the northern communities. We do not want to do our work
12 only from mainstream Canada, from downtown Ottawa, but
13 quite the contrary.

14 This Commission, for the first time, has
15 a majority of aboriginal Commissioners. Four
16 Commissioners out of seven are aboriginal people. Again,
17 Georges Erasmus is a co-Chair with me.

18 The purpose for which this Commission
19 was created, on the recommendation of Brian Dickson, the
20 former Chief Justice of Canada, and the reason why he
21 recommended the wide mandate that we have and also the
22 membership with a majority of aboriginal Commissioners
23 was because really to give for the first time a real chance

1 to have a working group that will be credible with both
2 aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

3 Again, at the end, we will have to
4 convince the various governments of the country, not only
5 the federal, but many of our recommendations will deal
6 with provincial jurisdiction and territorial
7 jurisdiction, that our solutions are not only the solutions
8 that we will develop from what we will hear from you and
9 from the research, but we are going to put the two streams
10 of information into a single discourse at the end and we
11 have to show that these recommendations are practicable,
12 acceptable and feasible and for the best of all components
13 of Canadian society and, of course, basically
14 fundamentally acceptable for aboriginal people.

15 We have a lot of work to do. The
16 constitutional framework, we hope, will be agreed upon
17 in the coming months and that will make easier our work
18 under that framework. Our role is to flesh out the
19 realities, how it is going to work, how self-government
20 is going to work, how the delivery of the services, the
21 programs, is going to be done in order to enhance the
22 quality of life, in order to enhance the future of young
23 people. So, that is the reason why we need to have

1 proposals that will have the support of aboriginal and
2 non-aboriginal people, to push the governments towards
3 implementation. To do this we have to address the tough
4 questions. We can't stay only at the level of higher
5 principles. We have to go down to specifics and to explain
6 how it is going to work in practice and why it is going
7 to be practicable and helpful to everybody.

8 So, really, alone we are nothing. We
9 are only there because you are there and our strength
10 totally depends on your contribution to our work. We are
11 again very, very, pleased to open this phase of our public
12 hearings in the northern communities here in Inuvik. We
13 hope we will have a fruitful and successful discussion.
14 Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

15 **DICK HILL:** Mr. Commissioner and other
16 Commissioners, my name is Dick Hill. My role today is
17 to be a facilitator, not to be involved, but to keep the
18 flow of things going and to encourage you as Commissioners
19 to interact with the presenters who will be here today.

20

21 We will jump into that. The first
22 presenter is Victor Allen on the history of Inuvik. Victor
23 is very well qualified, in that he was one of the original

1 -- he is both an aboriginal and an original person here
2 into Inuvik. He has many interesting aspects of Inuvik
3 because he was here at the start. He was asking me when
4 I arrived quite a few years later about all those crazy
5 things that happened, but really it is Victor who has the
6 knowledge and the experience. I will ask Victor to now
7 give the history of Inuvik.

8 **VICTOR ALLEN:** Ladies and gentlemen, I
9 am Victor Allen from Inuvik. I have been here for quite
10 some time. There are a lot of other people who are
11 qualified to tell this story, but I didn't want to turn
12 the young people down a couple of days ago when they
13 approached me. I will do the best I can, but they could
14 correct me. There are people who lived here with us from
15 1956 on and they could maybe correct me after the speech
16 or whatever. If you meet these people they could add on
17 to what Inuvik was like.

18 Inuvik started somewhere around 1954,
19 the site or whatever, but we came over here in 1956. They
20 were both straight tent towns, both places, across the
21 river and this side of the river with tents all over the
22 place.

23 We were continually told that you are

1 only going to work for one more summer, you are only going
2 to work for one more summer. We kept going along with
3 it and we ended up staying in Inuvik for the last 40 or
4 so years. We survived it and it is a government town.
5 It doesn't have history like other places such as Aklavik,
6 Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson or other places. It is a
7 government town. It is like you put a great big box in
8 with all kinds of outlets and you put one in and you get
9 what you want to get. This is the way Inuvik is. It
10 doesn't have a history.

11 To the young people it has history
12 because it is the education centre that was created in
13 the Northwest Territories. In the 1950s the
14 administration came into the north and started putting
15 people into communities and to educate their people, for
16 the betterment of their lives really.

17 I think Inuvik itself was created by some
18 engineers saying that Aklavik was going to sink down to
19 the bottom of the river or whatever. Aklavik people are
20 very strong people. It created for them administrations,
21 schools and stuff like that too, so it worked both ways.

22 Aklavik came out and instead of sinking it came out only
23 sooner, because it has to have its population. The

1 population has increased and the young people have to have
2 schooling and so they created another school there and
3 which is good in one way.

4 Inuvik is not really the place of man.
5 It means the place of dwelling. The people who created
6 the name kind of misnamed it. There is no such thing as
7 a man in it, according to my own Inuit language anyway.
8

9 It was quite a town with everybody living
10 in tents in the early 1960s. The airport itself was built
11 by Inuit and Gwich'in people and with the aboriginal
12 peoples being helpers and operators. They built that
13 airport by having tents down by the lake. You have to
14 give those people a lot of credit because they went through
15 a lot of hard times. It was a hard live here in Inuvik,
16 I guarantee, because I've lived in a tent and it's not
17 set up quite like a cabin in the Delta. It's something
18 that with all of these promises every year that this is
19 the last summer. I think a lot of my friends experienced
20 that also.

21 The people who lived here in Inuvik
22 during the building of Inuvik were mostly southern
23 companies that hired a lot of local people. I think Inuvik

1 itself really only came up on its own as an educational
2 centre. All of our children are educated through the
3 Inuvik system and they are all grown up and all married
4 off and have families of their own. If they want to tell
5 the history they could start off with: "I was in
6 kindergarten 40 years ago." They could say that, but there
7 is not very much that they could say about the land and
8 the use of the land or whatever its hunting purposes were.
9 I will come to that later.

10 Inuvik went through a boom and bust
11 system. In 1969 Inuvik had some news from the oil
12 companies that at Atkinson Point a gas well was found.
13 The Inuvialuit people got together and said: "What are
14 we doing here? Why don't we get in. This is our land
15 and there is oil there or gas". We formed an organization
16 called COPE, just a few of us, a few elders and ourselves
17 and from The Drum, of course, Tom Butters who had the little
18 paper there for information, which wasn't very much, and
19 it started off in a little cold house with no stove or
20 nothing.

21 From there on we've worked our way into
22 the oil company system through some people who knew what
23 they were doing because all we were doing was being advisers

1 or telling them what it is all about.

2 From 1969 on we had exploration and the
3 oil boom until about 1984. I was involved in it myself
4 from 1976 to 1984 I was in the oilfields every summer.
5 That was quite the boom we had and lots of us had quite
6 a bit of impact and this is when the impact came in.

7 The impact came in with everything you
8 needed, everything you needed. It came by plane, it came
9 by barge, it came by everything. Ice floats came out and
10 everything just boomed.

11 After we had that boom it went right down
12 to nothing. This is why I want to tell this little story
13 about Inuvik, because Inuvik with the right kind of control
14 and the Gwich'in land claims and the Inuvialuit land claims
15 are now finalized. I think they should work together in
16 order to use their resources to create an economy and this
17 is from the elders' point of view.

18 We are not really involved in it, but
19 there are young people coming up and I think we've got
20 the oil and gas according to the oil reports. We have
21 it all over the Delta, but we have it in the islands and
22 away from the land and it's pretty hard to get it out of
23 there. According to the oil companies it's going to cost

1 a lot of money, but we have to create that to make it work.

2 This is what we worked for and I think it's going to have
3 to work for itself. You cannot depend on the land because
4 we never made any land based educational purposes in the
5 Northwest Territories. We were so busy educating
6 everything else from elephants to dog teams, but we never
7 went out to the land and really materialized what we talk
8 about. We are going to have to create a land-based use
9 sort of an education for young people and even for older
10 people to move back on the land and learn to use that land.

11 That's the only way it is going to work because if we
12 do not use that land we are going to be caught. A lot
13 of people did not get an education. They cannot go for
14 further training.

15 Some of our people are getting tired of
16 this researching, training. We have so much researching
17 and training that we feel smart for maybe five minutes
18 and then they leave us. That makes it really hard for
19 us and for me anyway. This is why we have to use that
20 land base.

21 If we are going to use the land, let's
22 not just use the resources. Let's make the land use
23 itself. The only reason I say this is because a couple

1 of years ago people from Old Crow said they started an
2 outpost camp for their own people and it is working really
3 great because it has always got a little place where people
4 can go to learn a little bit about what is out there.
5 We've got lots of mileage in this country. We've got lots
6 of miles in this country and we could use it.

7 Our traditional ways shouldn't be taken
8 away because we have to learn to use them. That is the
9 only way we are going to use our traditional culture and
10 all that. That's the only way. We've got to go back to
11 the land and use it, just like any other Inuk. Once we
12 get in from the culture and into a community, we seem to
13 stop and start thinking like somebody else because our
14 own thinking sort of disappears on us. We have to follow
15 rules. This is why it is very important for us. That's
16 why I wanted to tell this little part about Inuvik.

17 There is nothing wrong with Inuvik, but
18 it could do a heck of a lot more now. It could come back
19 and do a lot of things for itself and for the people on
20 the land and for the people as a whole, the Gwich'in and
21 the Inuvialuit.

22 The small businesses that were here when
23 Inuvik first started, some buildings are still here where

1 people used to have little businesses. I think as far
2 as businesses are concerned, the Inuvialuit business
3 people who want to get into business should be encouraged
4 and supported from both parties and by all northerners.
5 We try to create a lot of little businesses and a lot
6 of times it seems like the credibility towards the Inuit
7 or the Gwich'in is always a little lower than those with
8 all kinds of degrees because it makes it hard for young
9 people.

10 I think we should train a heck of a lot
11 more young people to go into business and study business
12 like other people do. I think it is not going to boom,
13 but the Northwest Territories is going to look after
14 itself.

15 While I am finishing off I would like
16 to say in my own language, in Inuvialuit --
17 --- (Inuvialuit spoken)

18 **VICTOR ALLEN:** Thank you very much.

19 **DICK HILL:** We would encourage you,
20 Commissioners, to ask questions of Victor. I think we
21 will have lots of time. Go right ahead.

22 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Mary Sillett.

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** (Speaking

1 Inuvialuit)

2 My comments are not specific to Victor,
3 but I feel like somehow we started the agenda before we
4 were quite ready because I did have some opening comments
5 that I would have liked to have made. When would you accept
6 those?

7 **DICK HILL:** You are the Commissioners
8 and are in full charge. Just because it is not on my piece
9 of paper doesn't mean it shouldn't be on yours. Go right
10 ahead.

11 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
12 very much. (Speaking Inuvialuit)

13 I think it is only appropriate before
14 we begin to pay respect to the elders and to the translators
15 and interpreters because without them we wouldn't be able
16 to understand. I would really like to say that the Royal
17 Commission is very, very committed to ensuring that
18 aboriginal languages are used wherever we go, that
19 aboriginal languages are used throughout our work. I
20 think to me that makes this Commission different.

21 I would also like to say before we begin
22 that proper respect should be given to the people who worked
23 long and hard before we came here to make sure that this

1 happened. I would like to thank very much our Community
2 Co-ordinator, your Community Co-ordinator, Martha
3 Bernard, who worked very hard.

4 I would also like to introduce some of
5 the other Commission staff who are here with us and who
6 are taking care of the logistical arrangements. They are
7 John Morriseau who is the Deputy Director; Nora Jarrett
8 who is the team leader for the Inuk from Labrador and my
9 childhood friend, my very best friend in the world. There
10 is Les Clayton and Rhoda Kayakjuak. Rhoda is with
11 communications.

12 As well, I would like to welcome all the
13 observers. I know that Cece McCauley is here. I've read
14 your article many, many times. Thank you very much for
15 being here.

16 As well, I would like to say that many
17 Canadians think that larger centres like Inuvik are
18 probably the beginning and the end of life in the north,
19 but for those of us who are from smaller northern
20 communities, I think we think differently. This is the
21 first phase of our Hearings. We will probably be in public
22 Hearing sessions until June of 1993. At the end of that
23 time we hope to have travelled to at least 100 aboriginal

1 communities across Canada.

2 Even though we come to Inuvik now, we
3 plan to go to other communities in the Northwest
4 Territories, smaller communities, more remote communities
5 later on. So that the people who have hardly ever been
6 heard can be heard.

7 One of the major aims of this Royal
8 Commission will be public education. That means telling
9 and teaching non-aboriginal Canadians what it is like to
10 be aboriginal in Canada and in this area what it is like
11 to be aboriginal in Inuvik. One of the ways we propose
12 to do this is through the media. As you talk to this
13 Commission, your words will be reaching the ears of many.
14 We are hoping that will get a lot of people thinking about
15 what needs to be done in Canada, so that the problems of
16 aboriginal peoples are addressed, and what needs to happen
17 in this country so that aboriginal and non-aboriginal
18 people can live in equality, respect and dignity.

19 This is what the Commission is all about.

20 So, we are asking all of you today to help us find the
21 answers.

22 --- (Speaking Inuvialuit)

23 Merci.

1 **DICK HILL:** Thank you for that
2 interjection.

3 I wonder if I could facilitate one more.
4 You have two very familiar people sitting up with you
5 in John Holman and Grace Blake. I am wondering if one
6 of you could explain how "Commissioner of the day" fits
7 in for the rest of us here.

8 **COMMISSIONER GRACE BLAKE:** Good
9 afternoon to you all. To be quite honest with you, this
10 is quite unexpected for both John and I, but we are highly
11 honoured to be the representatives of our respective
12 Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people. We hope we will represent
13 you well. Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** I guess a lot
15 of you know me. I am John Holman and I work part-time
16 over at the CBC.

17 As Grace said, I was so ignorant of the
18 fact of things happening in this area that three hours
19 ago I didn't even know where I was going to be and here
20 I am. Like the briefing I was given, I should be very
21 open-minded and ask questions of the people who are
22 presenting, whatever they are presenting here in this
23 group.

1 I will be trying to listen to what you
2 are saying and trying to be attentive to each and every
3 one of you.

4 As to making a presentation, I don't have
5 anything to present, except myself, my Inuvialuit
6 background and my non-expertise in things that are going
7 to be presented here. So, I have open ears just like
8 everyone else here I guess.

9 **DICK HILL:** I think it is very
10 appropriate or a good innovation, which I haven't seen
11 before, that you do have local Commissioners to assist
12 you in understanding and in interpreting the situation
13 as presenters make them.

14 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I have a few
15 words or additional comments. We plan to have "visit
16 Commissioners" and it may be a day or a few days who will
17 be sitting with us in all the communities. The main idea
18 is to give the Commissioners an opportunity to exchange
19 in the evening on what they have heard and to test whether
20 they have the right feeling and interpretation of what
21 was said to them during the day, also to give an opportunity
22 to our fellow Commissioners to ask questions to help the
23 presenters to be more specific when they know they could

1 be, in order to help to have as good and fruitful as possible
2 discussion. So, they are really part of the Commission
3 for those two days.

4 We are going to live with them, discuss
5 with them, exchange with them what is going on, what we
6 will have heard and seen in the visits to the institutions,
7 as well as, of course, in Hearings like this one.

8 We are very happy and honoured to have
9 these two persons with us for the two days. Thank you.

10 **DICK HILL:** Very good. We have heard
11 from all the Commissioners except the gentleman on the
12 end. Would you like to say a few words, Mr. Blakeney?

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** My
14 purpose in coming to Inuvik was not primarily to talk but
15 to listen, so I am anxious to hear what you people have
16 to say.

17 I was listening carefully to what Victor
18 had to say about the history of Inuvik. He branched into
19 what he felt the future of Inuvik might be and that is
20 certainly what we would like to hear you tell us about,
21 what do you think is the likely mix, and I am speaking
22 to all of you, between people living the traditional way
23 of life and living partly the traditional way of life,

1 involving hunting but some other occupation, and other
2 people living on wage and salary work. How is it going
3 to work out because it will make quite a difference what
4 sort of governmental arrangements will work, depending
5 on how people earn their living and make their life.

6 We are anxious to hear what you might
7 say about what you think the young people of this community
8 will be doing 20 years from now, any period you like, and
9 what you think could be done to assist in the best possible
10 development between the governments of Canada and the
11 people who live in this Mackenzie Delta region.

12 I will have my ears open listening to
13 what you people think we should hear.

14 **DICK HILL:** Very good. We heard from
15 Victor and he has had 36 years of experience in Inuvik
16 in about ten minutes. I was going to ask Victor to come
17 back up and see if you have any more questions for him
18 about either the past or his opinion on the future.
19 Victor, you are not getting off so easily.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I think
21 I will start, if I may, Victor, by asking you whether you
22 think that the young people who are over at the Sir
23 Alexander Mackenzie School getting an education are

1 getting the right kind of education, as you would see it,
2 or should they be having a little bit different kind of
3 education; some of what they are now getting and something
4 else?

5 You mentioned the people at Old Crow are
6 trying to balance things a bit differently. I wondered
7 what you would say to us. **VICTOR ALLEN:** I don't
8 know. I am not educated, but I could try and give you
9 the best I can.

10 You see, we have young people today going
11 through education, our children, our grandchildren all
12 go through education, but lots of times we have graduated
13 more than we could create jobs for. We are getting like
14 southern people.

15 We have educated people up here, lots
16 of them. They go through Grade 12 and this happened in
17 the early 1960s. In the early 1960s when one of my girls
18 graduated and she couldn't get a job for two years. She
19 graduated from Grade 12, but she didn't know the language
20 and all that, so we took her out on the land.

21 I will give you a little example. We
22 took her out on the land and she didn't know anything about
23 the land. She didn't know anything about paddling or guns

1 and outboard motors, nothing at all. She's got a great
2 big book with all kinds of education in one big package.

3

4 Some of her relatives asked her one day:

5 "Judy, what are you going to do"? She said, "I'm going
6 to be the champion muskrat skinner in the Northwest
7 Territories". That just goes to show you that we have
8 lots of education. We have experts coming out of that
9 -- that's why what we should do, from my own thinking point
10 of view, is we could create leaders out of our own people.

11 We could make Commissioners, just like you people sitting
12 there, but in the future, not in my time. By that time
13 you will retire anyway and you don't need that job.

14 We would like to educate the young
15 people, so they will be used like the southern people,
16 the southern graduates. They will have a work base or
17 a college or whatever because that's what they need. Some
18 of my children had to go through college three times and
19 they are in their thirties already. I think everybody
20 who has that chance shouldn't bypass it.

21 I don't have one, but I'm pretty sure
22 I got a college degree out on the land, if I had a chance.

23 Does that answer your question, sir?

1 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner
2 Holman.

3 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** Hi, Victor.
4 You and I have had a few discussions here
5 and there in the past about the way things used to be before
6 Inuvik was created or born or whatever. Some the things
7 you told me were very fascinating of the way life was before
8 and during the beginning of the DEW Line sites and that
9 sort of thing. That changed the north quite a bit. Would
10 you tell us, for the benefit of our listeners here, a little
11 bit about that?

12 **VICTOR ALLEN:** I think a lot of us went
13 through the process because in the early 1950s when the
14 DEW Line was being created as a big project of the north
15 and lots of came right off the land and we got jobs as
16 labourers, anything, from Joe boys to cleaners and
17 dishwashers and everything else. This was the first big
18 impact we had. We thought it was just going to last a
19 few days. We were young too and all this kind of stuff.

20 We came off the land and we got hired
21 on and in those days you didn't need a driver's licence.
22 If you learned something, you learned it right now. They
23 gave us that option and we used it.

1 Then, education came along and we had
2 to re-educate ourselves to get a piece of paper called
3 a licence to do the same kind of job that we've done and
4 they take three months off our life, which was quite
5 frustrating at times really, because lots of them went
6 through that process. They made it kind of hard.

7 I could go back to what John was trying
8 to say because it's a story now of how we used to live
9 on the land. Like he says, it is fascinating and it is
10 fascinating even to us who went through it. When we go
11 back on it we feel relaxed. We feel that at one time we
12 didn't have very much but we were happy. When we had to
13 live like the Jones' then we really got into trouble.
14 We had to have what they had and we had to have a house
15 and everything else. That made it kind of hard for us.

16
17 Even today, lots of Inuvialuit people
18 they retire because they worked so hard for wages at one
19 time and I am glad they are relaxing now and they are not
20 living hard no more. This is the part that some of us
21 like to see and some of us like to see a place to go on
22 the land to retire. I would like to go back to the land
23 to retire. I can't stand doing nothing somewhere, I will

1 just be another, I don't know, with no history probably.

2

3 Another part we have to do between
4 ourselves is history. History has to be put together in
5 the Northwest Territories, from the Inuit to the Gwich'in,
6 the whole aboriginal peoples should put their stuff
7 together right away. We make a fascinating history
8 because these guys didn't go through colleges, they didn't
9 go through high schools and lots of us didn't even see
10 a blackboard. We had to learn to talk the English language
11 and I think some of us do pretty good at it, but some of
12 us are not too good I guess.

13 We are proud of it. It's just like if
14 you learn to talk Inuvialuit with nobody's help you would
15 be proud too, the same thing, the same system. That's
16 the way it works. This is why we should put that history
17 together and create funding for history because in
18 Yellowknife I understand they have an Inuit translating
19 and interpreting centre and the Western Arctic is way
20 behind. It hasn't got one. We have to listen to the
21 Eastern Arctic people to give us information.

22 I think the Northwest Territories itself
23 should have a base where they have a Gwich'in and an

1 Inuvialuit history centres where they could really
2 educate, so that even if these young people can't go out
3 to the land, they at least could see in a room, in a museum,
4 what happened at one time and see what there is to see
5 if you go back on the land. I would strongly support that
6 myself because I am a strong believer in languages, even
7 though I'm not an expert at it.

8 Thank you for listening to me. Does
9 that answer your question, John?

10 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** Yes. I
11 think you made a wonderful point there.

12 I have a further question to that, maybe
13 since you are an elder -- and I'm not that far behind you
14 -- I caught an undertone of our children and our teenagers
15 should be taught about the old ways and our history, which
16 dates back 30,000 years which we have lived on this land
17 and have survived to this day, regardless of the things
18 that have been happening, the progress that has come up
19 in this part of the world.

20 My question is: Do you think it is
21 really important that our young people define an identity
22 and define our true belonging in this land would be to
23 find out about their ancestry?

1 **VICTOR ALLEN:** This will have to be put
2 together because all generations, all nations, all people
3 that people different languages they have history books of
4 their own. The French have, the English have, Ukrainians,
5 the whole bit. Even the immigrants hang on to their own
6 history and they have it somewhere where they sit down
7 and talk to their children about it. I don't see why the
8 Inuvialuit of the Northwest Territories, this whole
9 aboriginal set-up, shouldn't have history just like the
10 rest of the world.

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would like
12 to thank you for your enlightened comments on the history
13 and also for sharing your thoughts with us on the importance
14 of education and in particular administrative management
15 training for young aboriginals and for the development
16 of small businesses, also the importance of the cultural
17 roots aspects. It gave us certainly a better
18 understanding of the start of the last 30 or 40 years here
19 in Inuvik. We thank you very much again.

20 **VICTOR ALLEN:** Just before I get off,
21 I would like to tell you that I am not an expert about
22 Inuvik's history. There are a lot of people sitting in
23 the room here who are real good experts if they would like

1 to speak.

2 **DICK HILL:** Thank you, Victor. You
3 have given us a good introduction, bringing us more up
4 to today's world.

5 Last week there was a very significant
6 signing ceremony in Fort McPherson with the Gwich'in land
7 claim. Four panellists of the Gwich'in will now make a
8 presentation to you. If I could ask them to take the four
9 chairs, Margaret, James, Eugene and Cheryl. These are
10 coming altogether so that they can both present in a row
11 and then discuss with you the situation.

12 The man who is a little slow in getting
13 up is Eugene Pascal. I don't think he is on your list.
14 He is Chief of the Aklavik Band and will be filling in
15 from the outside area.

16 On your right is Margaret Donovan,
17 Vice-President of the Gwich'in Tribunal Council and
18 Executive Director of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, a key
19 person to look after its administration.

20 From Inuvik you have Chief James Firth,
21 who has a very active band here in Inuvik.

22 Next, representing the youth, is Cheryl
23 Greenland, a student here in Inuvik, but a very aggressive

1 one and looking into things like history and the future.

2 Eugene is the Band Chief in Aklavik which
3 is also a dynamic and evolving situation, in that Aklavik
4 is shared with Inuvialuit and there are all kinds of
5 interesting programs and progress that they are making.

6

7 I will ask Margaret to start off.

8 **MARGARET DONOVAN: VICE-PRESIDENT,**

9 **GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL:** Good afternoon, ladies and
10 gentlemen. I was born and raised in the community of
11 Arctic Red River, the same community that Grace Blake comes
12 from. I want to welcome you here to Inuvik. It's a
13 pleasure to hear those encouraging words by René Dussault.
14 As an aboriginal person, I am very pleased to hear that
15 we are on a priority list with the government. I will
16 go into my presentation now.

17 We, the Gwich'in, are a unique and strong
18 people, with our own language and our own culture. We
19 have survived in a cold, harsh land for thousands of years,
20 using our intelligence and our adaptability to provide
21 ourselves with food, shelter and clothing.

22 Great changes have come to the Gwich'in.

23 Technology and culture unknown to us, introduced by the

1 Europeans, and for better or worse we adapted the new ways,
2 whereas others were forced upon us by the church,
3 governments and schools.

4 In 1921 Treaty 11 was signed. This
5 treaty was perceived by the Gwich'in as a peace and
6 friendship treaty and, according to the elders of that
7 time, it was never the intention to surrender our land
8 or our culture.

9 For 70 years our people have endured the
10 repression of cultural genocide. Our language, our
11 religion, our traditional values were almost lost to us,
12 but today we are in the process of reclaiming and rebuilding
13 our cultural identity and we are prepared to take control
14 of our future.

15 To that end we felt compelled to settle
16 a land claim agreement that would provide us with some
17 of the necessary tools and resources to achieve our goals.
18 It is just a small step forward to ensure that we never
19 again experience humiliation and defeat as a people.

20 Through the constitutional debate we
21 will fight to ensure that our language is protected, as
22 is the English and French languages in Canada. We will
23 never surrender our fundamental and moral right that we

1 have as a distinct society.

2 The government of the NWT, without
3 constitutional powers to legislate for native people, has
4 created a public government with programs and services
5 that are designed for non-aboriginal people. Indirectly,
6 the system is directed towards assimilation. We are
7 opposed to this type of government and, therefore, do not
8 support it.

9 Fundamental to the concept of aboriginal
10 self-government is the right of aboriginal people to retain
11 their relationship with the federal government.
12 Delegation of power to any level of government other than
13 the Government of Canada and the Gwich'in people must only
14 take place with the consent of the Gwich'in.

15 Through our self-government framework
16 agreement we will control programs such as education,
17 language, social services, health and any matters that
18 directly affect us. We will be able to form our own
19 Gwich'in tribal justice system, based on our own
20 traditional values and not on foreign-based values.

21 In the sharing of political power the
22 Gwich'in will define their lawmaking authority and their
23 financial arrangements with the government. This does

1 not mean that the government will provide extra resources
2 to the Gwich'in. It will, however, mean that resources
3 currently delivered to the Gwich'in as aboriginal people
4 or to the Gwich'in as Canadian citizens will be subject
5 to Gwich'in laws.

6 Gwich'in lawmaking authority will not
7 change the way non-aboriginal people are treated by their
8 government. It will, however, mean that they will have
9 to work with a new order of government.

10 The objectives of self-government can
11 be summed up in three broad categories. Number one, to
12 promote, preserve and maintain Gwich'in heritage. Number
13 two, to improve the quality of life. Number three, to
14 advance the acquisition of knowledge. These subjects will
15 be explored in more detail in the following presentations.
16 That's it. Thank you for listening.

17 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** Should we continue?

18 **DICK HILL:** Yes.

19 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** My name is James
20 Firth. I am Chief of the Inuvik Gwich'in Council, also
21 known as the Inuvik Native Band. I have been a chief for
22 five months and today I would like to make a presentation
23 on behalf of my band.

1 First of all, I will give you a brief
2 history on how Inuvik started. You heard it already, but
3 I have a little more to add to it.

4 The federal government started building
5 Inuvik in the early 1950s because of Aklavik experiencing
6 severe flooding. At that time a lot of native people were
7 moved over here, even though they didn't want to.

8 Also, the government found it easier to
9 deliver services in centralized communities, rather than
10 in the bush. At that time I am sure the government thought
11 all native people would move to Inuvik where their needs
12 could be taken care of by the government.

13 The government officials did not
14 recognize that native people lived in the bush with an
15 established economy and lifestyle. However, the
16 traditional lifestyle and economy is hard work and the
17 attractions of employment, free housing, free education,
18 welfare and alcohol brought many of the people into this
19 community.

20 It should be stated that the major reason
21 for all our peoples migration to the community 20 to 30
22 years ago was to educate their children because parents
23 at that time recognized that their traditional world was

1 changing and that children should be prepared for these
2 changes.

3 Education, as taught by white people,
4 could not give our children a sense of identity or the
5 confidence to face the challenges of a changing world.
6 Instead, during the 1970s and the early 1980s a large number
7 of our people faced the challenge of alcoholism and
8 overcoming other related social and health problems.

9 The Aklavik native people who did move
10 to Inuvik adapted and worked with non-aboriginal people.

11 However, when there was an increase in resource
12 development in the early 1960s, native people did not have
13 the tools, money and training to reap economic benefits
14 and also adjust to increased social impacts. Resource
15 development did attract a large number of non-aboriginals
16 to obtain wealth and in most cases leave the country with
17 this acquired wealth.

18 At the present time there is little
19 resource development activity and the non-aboriginal
20 businesses have left or the businesses are barely viable.

21 This gives Inuvik aboriginal people an opportunity to
22 prepare for future resource development.

23 The downturn in resource development,

1 combined with land claims, has created a new atmosphere
2 of co-operation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal
3 people. With co-operation, we believe the two societies
4 can work together to create a unique lifestyle, based on
5 mutual respect and understanding. Non-aboriginal respect
6 for aboriginal people is based on land claim agreement
7 rights and powers.

8 Non-aboriginal people accept the terms
9 of the agreements and have learned to work with aboriginal
10 people and this is far more beneficial than to oppose
11 aboriginal peoples' goals and aspirations. It is hoped
12 that this working relationship will grow and also be part
13 of the development and implementation of aboriginal
14 self-government in our communities and region.

15 I will now go into some goals of the
16 Inuvik Gwich'in Council. The Inuvik Gwich'in Council was
17 formed in the early 1980s. It has taken ten years to build
18 an organization which can effectively serve its
19 membership. At the present time, the Council delivers
20 a social housing program, owns a construction firm, tourism
21 business and is entering into various other economic
22 development ventures.

23 The organization's primary goal is to

1 improve the quality of life of our membership in the
2 following manner: To promote, protect and maintain our
3 culture; to develop a form of economic self-sufficiency
4 by increasing employment and decreased dependency on
5 government; removal of negative social conditions;
6 improvement of health conditions and to provide basic
7 shelter.

8 The objectives to improve the quality
9 of life are tasks that are carried out by the government
10 in the north. However, the government has provided for
11 the basic needs in the form of welfare to our membership.
12 Social welfare has never been asked for by our people,
13 but has grown to become a fate of our society.

14 Our organization feels that quality of
15 life is also contingent on people's self-esteem and pride.
16 The government has not failed in providing services to
17 our membership, but it certainly has failed in developing
18 the sense of self-worth that all individuals need in order
19 to face life's challenges head on.

20 On April 22nd, 1992 the Gwich'in signed
21 the third comprehensive land claim agreement with the
22 Government of Canada. For the first time our membership
23 feels that there is a means to improve their socio-economic

1 situation. The main reason that the leadership agreed
2 to sign a land claim agreement with the government was
3 to break the welfare state that the people were in and
4 to have greater influence over the government's decision
5 making, to provide an economic base to generate wealth
6 for employment and to secure a land base for our traditional
7 lifestyle and environment.

8 In addition, the Inuvik Gwich'in Council
9 seeks a renewed political arrangement with the Government
10 of Canada. The political arrangements begin with an
11 explicit recognition of our society as distinct. This
12 recognition requires a sharing of political power between
13 the two societies.

14 The next presentation is going to be done
15 by Elizabeth Hansen. It is to promote, preserve and
16 maintain Gwich'in heritage.

17 **ELIZABETH HANSEN: COUNCILLOR INUVIK**
18 **NATIVE BAND:** Good afternoon. I am Elizabeth Hansen and
19 I am presently working at the SAM school and I sit on the
20 Inuvik Native Band as a councillor. I will read my
21 presentation. It is to promote, preserve and maintain
22 Gwich'in heritage.

23 It is essential to preserve and promote

1 the understanding of Gwich'in history so that there is
2 an improved knowledge of who the Gwich'in are and the values
3 we hold and exclusive jurisdiction over all matters related
4 to the promotion, preservation and maintenance of Gwich'in
5 heritage. With lawmaking authority over these matters
6 the Gwich'in can rebuild their identity and reshape their
7 heritage to meet the challenges of a changing world.

8 Government programs or services which
9 have a negative impact on Gwich'in heritage must be
10 redirected or reshaped. A primary example of this is
11 social assistance. This program has shifted traditional
12 community support to government support. Negative
13 programs must be Gwich'in controlled and redirected to
14 cultural education and employment initiatives, so Gwich'in
15 individuals could improve their identity, self-esteem and
16 skills in a self-sustaining community.

17 To improve the quality of life, the
18 government's most important purpose is to improve the
19 quality of life of its citizens. However, the Gwich'in
20 have different cultural delivery methods. Under Gwich'in
21 direction there would be a fundamental difference in the
22 way the government's mission is implemented. We feel our
23 methods will be culturally relevant and effective.

1 Communities must have lawmaking
2 authority over program and service funding allocations,
3 priorities and delivery methods.

4 Some of the programs and services which
5 can improve the quality of life, if redeveloped and
6 redirected by the communities, are described below.

7 Economic development. The majority
8 difficulty with economic programs and services access is
9 the large amount of overlapping programs and services.
10 Recently we have seen some improvements and we are
11 encouraged by the recent government initiatives.
12 However, we see that further improvements can be made by
13 transfer of government economic development resources to
14 communities based on community, tribal economic strategies
15 and equal treatment of northern aboriginal people for tax
16 exemptions and empower aboriginal first nations with the
17 ability to tax on their own lands.

18 Housing. Social housing must be
19 redirected to homeownership. The Inuvik Gwich'in Council
20 provides social housing for its membership, but is
21 restricted by housing policies from providing an incentive
22 for the home ownership option.

23 Social services. Social financial

1 assistance is the single most destructive force of our
2 heritage. Our people do not want to be part of a welfare
3 state that looks after them from cradle to grave. If the
4 social financial assistance can be transferred to first
5 nations, we can begin to develop our people or at least
6 provide employment which will make each individual feel
7 like they are a productive member of the community.

8 Some programs we would like to create
9 are employment and training counselling services, life
10 skills and job entry training, literacy programs, adult
11 education and tutoring, community project employment and
12 traditional economic support programs.

13 Social services also regulates our
14 families, including traditional extended families, by
15 having the state determine whether a child is being raised
16 properly or how a child can be adopted. We are fortunate
17 that we have a large number of our own people as social
18 workers, otherwise child welfare and custom adoption
19 regulations would have been imposed.

20 Alcoholism, drug and solvent abuse has
21 ravaged our people. Only now are families and communities
22 beginning to take control of this problem by transferring
23 funds to community-based programs and counselling

1 services. We must now reassess our goals and direct
2 programs and services in a holistic fashion, taking into
3 account other initiatives to develop our people, such as
4 life skills training and employment opportunities.

5 It is important in the world of sobriety
6 to have hope for the future. First nations must present
7 this future in a clear, cultural and relevant manner for
8 the future sobriety programs to successfully work.

9 Justice. Our people have a great
10 capacity to forgive. Perhaps this has been also been our
11 downfall with out dealing with non-aboriginal society,
12 but we wish to continue our compassionate ways when we
13 deal with our own people.

14 Influence over sentencing and
15 corrections is a beginning for our first nations to
16 dispense justice to our people in our own way. It is
17 imperative that first nations begin to relearn their
18 justice system and develop appropriate ways of dispensing
19 justice with a view of controlling the administration of
20 justice.

21 Health services. Our people were
22 healthy people and many of our elders have lived to be
23 over 100 years of age. The major reason for this is that

1 people knew how to look after themselves. Simple
2 preventative health rules are forgotten. In fact, our
3 people look towards the nurse and doctor to take care of
4 their health and never question the treatment.

5 We are now into a health care system of
6 total treatment, rather than our traditional preventative
7 health. First nations needs to redirect resources to
8 educate our people in basic nutrition and preventative
9 health care at the community level. AIDS and other
10 diseases could very well harm our society in a similar
11 fashion as past outbreaks of flu. This does not mean that
12 we are capable of taking over the treatment of our people,
13 but it does mean that we are capable of educating our people
14 in preventative health care methods.

15 Thank you. Mussi cho.

16 **CHERYL GREENLAND: GWICH'IN YOUTH:**

17 Hi. I'm Cheryl Greenland. I am one of many representing
18 the youth today. My presentation is based on the concerns
19 of youth of this community.

20 There are many problems surrounding us,
21 one of which is that there seems to be nowhere to go or
22 nothing to do. Inuvik's youth have talked about a facility
23 for us to go, one with counsellors and a program

1 co-ordinator. In this centre we would like to see a
2 leisure and a sports complex as a joint facility, some
3 place where we can sit and enjoy each other's company or
4 to get involved in activities.

5 This facility will help keep the youth
6 busy and will probably ensure that the vandalism and
7 substance abuse rates will decrease. I would also
8 like to address our education system. I feel that the
9 alcohol and drug abuse awareness is not being enhanced
10 enough in the school. This topic should be put on the
11 school curriculum as an ongoing subject, so that our youth
12 may learn and understand how drugs affect their lives and
13 their families.

14 Youth also needs to learn how it affects
15 their education, self-esteem and the suicide rate among
16 our generation. This program should be set up in the
17 school system on a year-round basis, so that the students
18 may address their concerns and problems within a class.
19

20 These classes should not only inform
21 students about substance abuse, but should also help them
22 to deal with the problems at hand. This will teach the
23 youth how to get along with one another, as well as learn

1 to help each other in a crisis situation.

2 The support system will improve their
3 lifeskills and improve their grades because they feel good
4 about themselves. The system should also promote careers
5 after high school. I feel this subject is not being
6 carried out enough within the school and, therefore,
7 students are not pursuing further education.

8 Post-secondary education is not being
9 promoted enough in our region and our community.
10 Information to further one's education is not readily
11 available. Knowing how and where to get funding would
12 be an asset.

13 Knowing how to use these educational
14 facilities would help the youth a great deal. Students
15 need to know that there are people out there who are willing
16 to help you as much as they can.

17 I would also like to address the need
18 for native culture to be taught in the schools. Many
19 students who come from the elementary school have learned
20 about their culture and their language, but as soon as
21 they are in the secondary school all that they have learned
22 is forgotten. The reason for this is because it is not
23 being kept up in the high school. Languages are being

1 lost because the system does not provide this type of
2 education.

3 I do understand a lot of learning of our
4 culture and language is done in the home, but it must also
5 be put in the schools for it to be continued to be learned.
6 Without this we are losing our identity.

7 I hope this will help you to understand
8 our problems within this community for it is an important
9 matter. Thank you for listening.

10 **EUGENE PASCAL: CHIEF, ALKAVIK INDIAN**

11 **BAND:** Good afternoon. My name is Eugene Pascal and I
12 am Chief of the Aklavik Indian Band.

13 First of all, I would like to welcome
14 you to the Delta. If there was more time, I would like
15 for the Commission to see the lands that we live on and
16 the different systems. If you look on a map you will notice
17 that to the north there is an ocean, to the west there
18 are mountains and we are situated right on the Delta and
19 to the east there are a lot of barren lands.

20 I think, basically, this is mainly a
21 point to say that the Delta is not only trees, it's not
22 situated on one river, but the Mackenzie Delta region is
23 a whole different kind of systems mixed together. I guess

1 along with those systems comes the inhabitants of the
2 region.

3 As you were informed earlier, Aklavik
4 is one of the areas where the aboriginal groups live
5 together, basically, and have survived together.

6 As I was going through the terms and
7 reference of the Commission, I noticed a lot of good points,
8 a lot of good questions or tasks that the Commission should
9 answer. It talks about learning the history of the
10 relationships between the aboriginal peoples and Canada.

11 Basically, I guess the main theme of what I wanted to
12 try and explain is that we up here believe that our lives
13 can be better. We believe that we can create better lives
14 for ourselves.

15 I think, basically, we have as a people
16 been imposed on a different society all together. Laws
17 -- a different kind of laws; laws that are based on people
18 instead of based on land, laws that are based on
19 individual's rights. Basically, I think what we have to
20 offer is a lot. We stayed in this country for thousands
21 of years. We survived in this country. We have learned
22 to live in this country. We learned to respect the
23 country, because if we disrespect the country, if we abuse

1 the land, the animals, it hurts us more than it helps us.

2 We have learned that. We have learned that hands on.

3 This kind of knowledge has been passed down through
4 generations and generations.

5 Basically, what has happened for the
6 past I guess 70 years has been the destruction of our
7 culture, our society, our language. What we want now is
8 recognition that our culture is distinct. We want
9 recognition that our society is distinct and we want to
10 be able to create better lives for ourselves, as was
11 mentioned earlier about the social system, the educational
12 system has impacted onto our situation today. What we
13 want to do is to create our own programs, add to the
14 educational system our values, our culture.

15 I firmly believe that the whole key to
16 creating better lives for ourselves is to adopt, relearn
17 our culture, our language, our values. That is where we
18 need the support.

19 I believe that once we relearn that it
20 will make each individual stronger and healthier. Once
21 the individuals are stronger and healthier, they will want
22 to do more, do better, be more productive. Once they know
23 themselves, they will want to do that.

1 So, I guess basically we want to be
2 recognized. Right now the territorial government
3 recognizes the aboriginal languages, but they also
4 recognize French for the territories. It is good, but
5 there aren't resources put behind it.

6 Within our school systems our language
7 is recognized as a program. It is not part of the
8 curriculum. We learn the history of the Europeans, of
9 the European history of North America. Within the school
10 system our language should be taught, our culture, our
11 own history, our own way of knowing the land. That isn't
12 done. All of these are programs. They aren't recognized.

13

14 Maybe to add to the point which Cheryl
15 has brought up on the high school system, it's a pretty
16 good example there. The high school has a curriculum
17 developed for French. It has a curriculum developed for
18 history, but these are foreign to the aboriginal peoples.
19 We need the support to develop these programs and to put
20 from pre-school right up to Grade 12, even to
21 post-secondary. This has to be developed. This has to
22 be backed up. This has to be recognized.

23 I think there are a lot of things that

1 we have done and when I say "we" I mean the Gwich'in of
2 the Delta. As you were informed earlier, we signed a final
3 agreement with the federal government. This agreement
4 was between the federal government and the Gwich'in. The
5 Gwich'in includes treaty, non-status, Métis. I think that
6 alone creates a problem throughout Canada of the separation
7 of our people.

8 We in the Delta have recognized that.
9 For years we have strongly said we are one people. We
10 have negotiated a claim based on one people. In the
11 communities now you don't hear treaty, you don't hear
12 Métis, but what you hear is Gwich'in. I think that should
13 be a lesson that should be given to the rest of Canada,
14 that you separated us in the past; bring us together now.
15

16 We want to work on our own programs and
17 services. We want to define our own membership. We want
18 to relearn our history. We want to relearn how we dealt
19 with things, justice and so on.

20 With the signing of the final agreement
21 we have guaranteed our participation in the land, in the
22 wildlife, in the management and those aspects. Now it
23 is time to concentrate on our people. We secured our say

1 on the land, on how it is going to be treated. Now we
2 need to secure on our future of the individuals, of our
3 people.

4 I guess basically we are faced with a
5 lot of problems, mainly because of the transfer of the
6 federal government's obligations to the territories,
7 social services, the health, economic development, housing
8 and even our culture. They have transferred these
9 programs and the territorial government has taken over
10 the programs or devised their own. I guess we want a say
11 on how we want these programs delivered.

12 It was mentioned earlier of the social
13 assistance that is hindering our values. It is putting
14 a foreign -- it is getting our people more dependent on
15 government, rather than the people dependent on the people.
16 There is no more community aspect, community feeling.

17 The way we survived is we relied on each
18 other. Each person had a say, each person had a worth
19 and we have to get back to that system. We also realize
20 that there is no turning back. There will want to be
21 development on this land and right now we have a say on
22 that.

23 The main point is we want to control our

1 own destiny, but we do not have the resources or the
2 recognition to do that. Thank you.

3 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you very
4 much. I have some short technical questions.

5 As far as your Council is concerned, I
6 understand that it does represent all Gwich'in people,
7 either on reserves, status persons, non-status, Métis.
8 Could you tell me what comes under your Council?

9 **ENGINE PASCAL:** Under the band
10 or ...?

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Are they
12 mainly bands because your tribal Council represents --
13 because we have heard that you tried to cross the borders
14 of status, non-status and Métis. My question is: Who
15 do you represent exactly as a Council here in the Delta?

16 **ENGINE PASCAL:** The Gwich'in Tribal
17 Council, which is the voice between the Gwich'in people
18 and the government, represents all Gwich'in people of the
19 Delta; Gwich'in meaning Gwich'in blood in you up to 1921.
20

21 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** That means you
22 represent people living on reserves and bands?

23 **ENGINE PASCAL:** Yes.

1 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And off
2 reserves also?

3 **ENGINE PASCAL:** Yes.

4 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And the Métis?

5 **ENGINE PASCAL:** The Métis, yes.

6 We don't have reserves up here, but there
7 are Gwich'in people who live on reserves in Alberta.

8 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Status.

9 **ENGINE PASCAL:** Yes.

10 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Sorry.

11 My main question is this: From reading
12 your brief -- and it was quite clear from your presentation
13 -- you seem to have given up on the possibility of having
14 the government of the Northwest Territories representing
15 you in a way and administering the programs in a way that
16 would be suitable for you. You say in your brief that
17 the programs adopted by the government to date at least
18 has been non-aboriginal oriented and not tailored or suited
19 to your particular needs and that you would prefer that
20 the federal government transfer through some
21 self-government for Gwich'in the administration of those
22 programs of education, health and social assistance and
23 so forth, instead of transferring jurisdiction to the

1 Northwest Territories government.

2 Am I right in saying that? My question
3 is: In fact, you considered the government of the
4 Northwest Territories as a province is considered in other
5 areas of the country and even if there is a majority of
6 aboriginal elected to the Council it doesn't make the
7 situation at the level of the delivery of programs
8 acceptable for you. Could you explain that?

9 **COMMISSIONER GRACE BLAKE:** May I
10 interject here?

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes.

12 **COMMISSIONER GRACE BLAKE:** I think what
13 would be most appropriate here would be if someone could
14 go back in history to how the programs and services have
15 been devolved from the federal government to the
16 territorial government and what kind of involvement there
17 was on our part, if any, to make them understand better.

18 **ENGINE PASCAL:** I guess our view might
19 be a little different than what the government's view is,
20 either territorial or federal. In the past, or as you
21 are aware, our forefathers have signed a treaty with the
22 Queen back in 1921. Basically, our view of the treaty
23 is different than government's. I guess out of that treaty

1 came certain or uncertain rights of the responsibility
2 of what are the responsibilities of the federal government
3 and that argument is still going on.

4 During that time, with the influx of
5 European values, of jobs, of the monetary values came
6 certain problems that we have to change our lifestyles
7 and live within communities for educational purposes and
8 so on. During that change I guess it was realized that
9 there were a whole bunch of problems; how are we going
10 to feed ourselves, clothe ourselves?

11 With that came programs that were
12 probably developed by DIAND on giving out handouts. With
13 the evolution of the GNWT and their Legislative Assembly
14 and their wanting of more say closer to home and that
15 basically it's getting harder for DIAND to administer these
16 programs out of Ottawa, to transfer these responsibilities
17 to the federal government.

18 I guess quite a few of our people have
19 been getting used to that. It's a whole different system
20 than what we are and the government keeps on asking
21 themselves, "Well, what is the problem?" Some of these
22 basic things are the problem; the lack of recognition of
23 our culture and values and support, the concentration on

1 certain programs.

2 Basically, I guess what we are saying
3 is we can do a better job to look after our social programs,
4 our housing programs, our economic development, our
5 justice and our culture.

6 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** A better job
7 than the Government of the Northwest Territories?

8 **ENGINE PASCAL:** And the support has to
9 come right from the top and by the top I mean the
10 Constitution of Canada.

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In fact, my
12 question is in thinking about self-government what would
13 be the room for the territorial government if the
14 self-government with those powers you would like to have
15 transferred to the Gwich'in Council, for example, instead
16 of to the Government of the Northwest Territories, how
17 would it work, the two levels? Is there room for two
18 levels?

19 **ENGINE PASCAL:** Our view is that
20 everything has to start within the community first. There
21 are certain things that we also realize is more economical
22 to handle regionally or nationally, like education, like
23 health programs, that basically the control or the devising

1 of these things has to happen with a lot of community input
2 because that's where most of the resources are spent.

3 I got a little statistic here and this
4 is from Aklavik alone. This was in October 1991 and the
5 population of Aklavik is under 1,000. This statistic says
6 the total unemployed is 223 and this is of the adult
7 population, the working-age population. So, there is a
8 very serious problem, over a quarter of the population
9 are unemployed and that isn't just the adult population,
10 it's the whole population.

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Mr. Blakeney.

12 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I think
13 the question some of us are directing is if a GNWT
14 government with 18 out of 24 aboriginal members can't deal
15 with the unemployment problems in Aklavik, why do you feel
16 the Gwich'in Tribal Council will deal more effectively
17 with them? I am not denying, I am asking for your reasons.

18 **ENGINE PASCAL:** I think the main reason
19 for all of these problems, as I mentioned earlier, is
20 because of the lack of the individual not feeling confident
21 in himself and not feeling comfortable within this modern
22 society and not feeling confident within the traditional
23 society. I guess what I am saying is they have been putting

1 their resources inefficiently or they may think it's a
2 good cause, but it isn't.

3 I guess what we really want to do or our
4 ultimate job as leaders of the community is to make lives
5 better for our members. It should be that way all the
6 way up, right up to the Prime Minister, but somewhere along
7 the line you get lost. What we are saying is that we gave
8 you a chance to try and make a life better for us, the
9 territorial government, DIAND, whoever else; now let us
10 do it.

11 Support us on developing a way where we
12 can heal ourselves and feel comfortable within the modern
13 society and our traditional society. Once people feel
14 comfortable, they will want to excel. I guess that's what
15 we are saying.

16 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner
17 Sillett.

18 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you,
19 Mr. Chair. This question is directed I guess to Margaret
20 Donovan. You mentioned in your presentation that some
21 members of the Gwich'in Tribal Council had experienced
22 residential schools. I am interested in knowing more
23 about the residential schools and, for example, where were

1 they, who were they run by and what were the effects of
2 those who went through that system?

3 **MARGARET DONOVAN:** I myself am a product
4 of the institution of schools, but there were schools run
5 in Aklavik, operated by both religions, the Catholic Church
6 and the Anglican Church.

7 I don't have any facts with me, but maybe
8 Victor or Tommy Ross might be able to help answer that
9 question because I don't know how long the Aklavik schools
10 were in operation. They were transferred from Aklavik
11 to Inuvik in 1959. I was in the hostel, along with Grace
12 Blake and John Holman and most of the students around here
13 for 12 years. Does that answer your question?

14 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I have a
15 follow-up question too, based on the other parts of your
16 presentation. I am interested in knowing what the status
17 of the Gwich'in language is? Are there a lot of people
18 who speak it? Are there younger people who speak it?
19 Is it very much alive? What is the status of the language?

20 **MARGARET DONOVAN:** The language is
21 slowly dying. People 40 and above speak it more fluently.
22 Just recently there was a huge language conference which
23 Liz Hansen took part in and they are talking about reviving

1 the language through immersion camps and introducing it
2 into the schools on a regular basis and encouraging parents
3 to speak the language at home at all times, and encouraging
4 students to visit the elders and interact with them.

5 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** Like you
6 said, I am a product of the institutionalized education
7 system, right from the first day that I entered the Anglican
8 hostel in Aklavik in 1955. I went right through learning
9 everything that has to do with the schools.

10 I will give you a fast history of what
11 I went through, just for the sake of information here
12 because I lived in that hostel system, as I said, right
13 from the first day until the last day when I graduated
14 back in 1967.

15 It wasn't through my choice that this
16 happened to me. I went to school at the age of nine and
17 graduated from Grade 12 when I was 21 years old. During
18 those 12 years I forgot my language. I still remember
19 a few words, but I cannot carry on a conversation with
20 one of my Inuvialuit people.

21 As to the feeling that I have today of
22 the system that I went through, I have regrets, I have
23 anger, but the other side is that I achieved an education.

1 I see the good side of it more than I see the bad, because
2 at the very root of my being is the longing to want to
3 learn that language once again. Furthermore, to learn
4 through the education system through post-graduate or
5 whatever, or just going to the library, learn about my
6 heritage and have a good sense of who I am.

7 Having gone through the education
8 system, as it is now in the territories and as it was back
9 in the 1950s, I feel that I have been indoctrinated into
10 something that wasn't of my value. Like I said, I got
11 some good out of it because I am educated. On the negative
12 side of it, I don't have my language.

13 Cheryl was just saying that we should
14 learn our languages back again, just to get a good sense
15 of who we are, to have a good feeling about ourselves and
16 have a good sense of our heritage and carry on the
17 traditions, the languages, the history, to learn all of
18 that and be very proud of who we are.

19 I guess my main question would be to
20 Cheryl: How would you be willing to, say, work with the
21 elders, with whoever, the territorial government, the
22 tribal justice system, the tribal council or whoever?
23 There is a lot that you and I don't know about our

1 traditions, but my sense of wanting to know who I am and
2 get to know and feel proud of who I am is to work with
3 everyone around me. It doesn't matter whether it is a
4 white brother or an Indian brother or whatever, and also
5 to work with the young people.

6 I have a strong feeling that in order
7 to get what we want and wanting to feel very proud of who
8 we are, it doesn't matter who we are, is to start at a
9 very young age to do like what happened to me. I was
10 indoctrinated into a system that I didn't know nothing
11 about, but I got a lot of good out of it.

12 What do you think should be happening
13 to bring our youth back to a sense of who they are and
14 to be proud of who they are, or this question could go
15 to any one of you.

16 **CHERYL GREENLAND:** Recently we had just
17 finished Gwich'in classes which lasted I think three
18 months. The people who were there learned a lot. I
19 co-ordinated the lessons, as well as the classes, with
20 the help of a Gwich'in teacher. We made up the lessons
21 through my mother Elizabeth. I couldn't have done it
22 without her because she made most of the lessons.

23 The only way I could present these

1 lessons to the class was to write them the way I heard
2 them. We got Gwich'in dictionaries and we used them as
3 much as we could, but there are different dialects than
4 those two. We basically wrote our lessons the way we heard
5 them.

6 I think to get the youth involved in this
7 is to have them, like I said, to put them in the school
8 curriculum on an ongoing basis, as well as being taught
9 at home. I am being taught at home, but I can't continue
10 learning my language if I am not doing it in a class as
11 well because at home it is one language and outside of
12 home it is another language.

13 For the last few years that I've been
14 involved with the band office I've been going to
15 conferences. I have always stressed that education should
16 be put in the schools. I put this concern out for the
17 first time in 1987. I have put it out every time I have
18 been at meetings and I have never heard of anything done
19 about it. It was talked about, it was discussed, but
20 nothing has ever been done.

21 I went to school here and I was taught
22 my language in the elementary school. I have no idea how
23 to talk it again because I haven't been taught it in high

1 school or at home. It has just been forgotten. I have
2 always stressed for it to be put in the school because
3 it has to be learned. We are losing it. None of the youth
4 here know how to speak it. They may know a few words,
5 but it's not enough to carry on a conversation with an
6 elder.

7 It really bothers me that I can't talk
8 to my grandmother because I don't understand her. She
9 only speaks Gwich'in. That is all I have to say.

10 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We are running
11 out of time, but I would like to ask a last question about
12 social assistance. When you say in your brief and you
13 repeated that government programs or services which have
14 a negative impact on the Gwich'in heritage must be stopped
15 or redirected. I understand it and you certainly say that
16 economic development is better than a life under social
17 assistance, but is it only that what you say or do you
18 go further? Do you say that social assistance should be
19 cut off and that the money should be given to a Council
20 like yours for a community purpose, instead of to the
21 individuals? Is that what you say? What about the
22 transition because it is quite a big move that you advocate
23 there. Would you say a few words on that?

1 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** In there what we
2 mean is the Gwich'in people have had this social assistance
3 sort of forced on them. Over the years we have found out
4 it is not working the way it should. People become
5 dependent on it, they lose their culture, they lose their
6 self-esteem and one of the things we were looking at --
7 and I am sure it is in the James Bay Agreement -- is to
8 get social assistance you have to get back out on the land.
9 Why can't it work here? Why can't we give the money to
10 the people, but only if they go out on the land or something,
11 but just get pride back in themselves. This is what I
12 am trying to say.

13 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I understand
14 better. What you have in mind is a kind of minimum
15 guaranteed income program like the one flowing from the
16 James Bay Agreement, where people go so many days to hunt
17 and trap and fish. It is like unemployment insurance.

18 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** Yes.

19 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** It makes for
20 them doing something.

21 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** Exactly.

22 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And returning
23 to their traditional lands.

1 **CHIEF JAMES FIRTH:** Yes.

2 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We wish to
3 thank the five of you. We were very interested in the
4 presentation you made. We hope we will have an opportunity
5 to discuss things with you later in the day, but we thank
6 you for both writing the brief and coming to present it
7 orally here today. Thank you.

8 **DICK HILL:** It is suggested now that
9 while we get the next panel up to meet with you that you
10 as Commissioners take a five-minute break or seven minutes.

11 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes, but no
12 more because, as I just said, we are a bit late on our
13 schedule.

14 **DICK HILL:** We will encourage you to be
15 back in five minutes. The next panel will be fresh and
16 ready to go.

17 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

18 --- Short Recess at 5:10 p.m.

19 --- Upon Resuming at 5:25 p.m.

20 --- Electrical Power Failure, no transcript
21 available.

22 The following briefs were read.

23 **PATRICIA LOWE: SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

1 **AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE:** We are a dedicated, energetic
2 and enthusiastic group of men and women who first founded,
3 and then incorporated The Friends Against Family Violence
4 in Inuvik under the laws of the Government of the Northwest
5 Territories. As a society we have been actively promoting
6 a shelter for battered women and children in Inuvik for
7 four years.

8 During this time, we have furnished the
9 various members and government officials every bit of
10 information or documentation they required or requested.

11 This information ranged from a needs assessment to a
12 professionally prepared proposal which was sent to
13 relevant departments of government and tabled in the
14 Legislature of the GNWT. We have been promised and have
15 received interim funding from the Secretary of State.

16 We are the only region in the NWT that
17 does not have a shelter for the victims of family violence
18 (even tiny Tuktoyaktuk had 300 women and children make
19 use of its meagre service last year). We are almost four
20 times larger than Tuktoyaktuk and our needs are
21 correspondingly greater. It is difficult to see why we
22 do not have a first priority rating for the dispensing
23 of funds for 1992.

1 To recapitulate, we have done a needs
2 assessment. We have documented the need. We are
3 convinced there is a gap in the social service net in this
4 area, both geographical and social. We have groups and
5 the citizens in general. We have a group of people
6 willing, ready and even anxious to help with this sad and
7 perplexing social problem. We need co-operation from our
8 government.

9 The danger is that government delay,
10 procrastination, indecisiveness and other forms of
11 dithering will so discourage the people who are involved
12 in the effort that they will lose heart and interest.
13 It would take many years to again reach the current stage
14 of development. In the meantime, many women and children
15 whose lives could have been made better will be forced
16 to live a life characterized by fear and even desperation.
17 The cycle of violence which could have been and indeed
18 must be broken will continue and the problems will grow
19 even more severe and widespread.

20 **MARLENE VILLEBRUN: CANADIAN MENTAL**
21 **HEALTH ASSOCIATION:** Coming to terms with two cultures.
22 Growing up as a Dene in the Northwest Territories, I have
23 experienced difficulty in identifying with my culture and

1 in trying to fit into a dominant white society. Many other
2 aboriginal youths have had to come to terms with feeling
3 caught between two worlds, and I believe this struggle
4 with identity plays a part in many social issues.

5 Discrimination and the resulting low
6 self-esteem is compounded by the problems in northern
7 communities such as high unemployment, alcoholism and
8 physical abuse. these problems combine to increase a
9 sense of helplessness among young people, who without a
10 sense of their identity then turn to alcohol and drugs
11 and even suicide. The problems of alcoholism, physical
12 and sexual abuse in the north must be addressed by increased
13 government funding for family violence, alcohol and drug
14 treatment centres, women's shelters and other programs
15 which deal with family violence.

16 Aboriginal youths need extra support to
17 overcome these problems and one place to start is to
18 increase their cultural awareness and to combat racism
19 by non-native people. When I attended high school, I did
20 not learn much about the history of native people in Canada.

21 It should be mandatory in all schools in Canada that the
22 history of native people be included in their curriculums.

23 This would increase awareness and understanding among

1 native and non-native people of the issues which native
2 people have faced.

3 My parents were not very traditional as
4 my father spent a large part of his childhood in a
5 residential school and my mother spent most of her
6 childhood in a hospital in the south as a result of
7 tuberculosis. This deprived them of their culture and,
8 subsequently, deprived me as well. My experience, which
9 is shared by other native people, is to become ashamed
10 of being a native person after being exposed to racial
11 stereotypes. Classes with a cultural focus should be
12 included in more schools and more courses to teach
13 aboriginal languages should be offered.

14 As the north has a highly transient
15 population of non-native people, effort should be made
16 by employers to have their employees attend cross-cultural
17 workshops which should continue to be provided.

18 Although it is difficult for people to
19 grow if they are dealing with alcoholism and are subjected
20 to physical and sexual abuse, it would help if aboriginal
21 youths had a sense of identity and cultural pride. They
22 would then be better equipped to come to terms with living
23 in two cultures.

1 **BONITA CHLOW: INGAMO HALL FRIENDSHIP**

2 **CENTRE:** Over the past few years, the Ingamo Hall
3 Friendship Centre has become much more involved in the
4 integral workings of society, and has thus become more
5 aware of the problems and the needs of the community.

6 We have been trying to close some of the
7 gaps in services. However, there are so many of them that
8 there is absolutely no way that we can even come close.

9 There are many phases of education and
10 I would just like to touch on a few.

11 We need to have more literacy programs.
12 These programs should be specially designed to suit the
13 peoples' needs and interests. Several organizations,
14 including ours, are working in this area. We believe that
15 everyone has a right to be literate and we feel that it
16 should be legislated. We should not have to beg for every
17 dollar that we get for literacy programs. The funding
18 should be there on a continual basis.

19 In this land where people do a lot of
20 their learning through practical methods, we believe that
21 a very important aspect of education has been overlooked
22 in our system. there is absolutely no musical component
23 in our school system up here at all. Music is a very

1 important part of any culture and it should be offered
2 to everyone. There is an acute love of music up here,
3 along with the willingness and capability of learning it.
4 This aspect of our culture should not be overlooked.

5 We also feel that there has to be more
6 low-level educational training. The average educational
7 level in this area is grade 7/8. Although we have some
8 programming available, it is far from being adequate.
9 We are somewhat blessed to have a campus of Arctic College
10 here. However, most of their courses require a certain
11 educational level for participation. This does not meet
12 the needs of the area. In order to access these programs,
13 students must first upgrade their educational levels, or
14 the college must change the structure of their courses
15 to accommodate the needs of the people.

16 Lifeskills, as well, are very important.
17 Again, we do have some courses available. Since so many
18 youth leave the school system at an early age, and many
19 of the elders have grown up in residential schools, a whole
20 generation has been lost in between. We must give the
21 young people a chance to learn the skills that they have
22 not been taught.

23 Alcoholism is a disease of epidemic

1 proportions in our area. We do have a drug and alcohol
2 service facility in our community. However, it is not
3 enough. We need to have more counselling services. We
4 need to have a drop-in counselling service where people
5 can just drop in, either for information, or for
6 counselling at any time of the day or night.

7 In the same related area, we also feel
8 that we need to have a detox centre. At the present time,
9 we do not have any facilities that people with severe cases
10 can go to. Even our hospital does not have a ward for
11 patients who are suffering from this severe affliction.

12

13 Our hospital services are getting more
14 and more limited all the time. When we call at night there
15 are problems getting seen and sometimes you have to wait
16 hours. There is no longer a surgeon on staff because it
17 was decided that it is cheaper to send you out, where you
18 have no family or friends, rather than keep a surgeon on
19 staff. We feel that this is not only scary for people
20 who have to have surgery, but it also puts them in danger
21 as well.

22 There is no separate area to keep
23 patients who are under psychiatric care or who are violent

1 from drugs and/or alcohol abuse. This not only causes
2 problems for the staff of the hospital, but the police,
3 and the other patients as well. A possible solution to
4 this problem would be to take the ward that is not empty
5 and open it up for this kind of treatment.

6 Up to a short time ago we did not have
7 a local Crown prosecutor. This was a major cause of
8 concern. The prosecutors were flown in the night before
9 court, files upon files were shoved at them and they were
10 expected to make rational judgments on peoples' lives.
11 This practice has now been eliminated with the hiring of
12 a permanent resident prosecutor.

13 We need a local victim assistance
14 service organization in our community. This service will
15 be put in place to offer assistance to anyone who has been
16 a victim of any crime. The service should be available
17 on a 24-hour basis. It would range in services from going
18 to the hospital with a victim who was raped to getting
19 someone to clean up if their house was vandalized, to going
20 through the court system with that person, to filing out
21 victim compensation forms. At this time we have started
22 a victim assistance steering committee which is trying
23 to come up with funding in this area.

1 There is a local group that has started
2 lobbying for a shelter for victims of family violence.
3 They have gotten to the stage of opening an office. This
4 is not enough. The amount of violence within this and
5 the surrounding communities is paramount. It is a vicious
6 circle; the alcoholism, the drugs, the beatings, the sexual
7 abuse and the general violence. We must have a shelter
8 for these victims in order to break the chain of violence.
9 We must offer these victims a safe environment in which
10 to start their healing process.

11 Our centre has been running without an
12 increase in our Core funding for four years. We have had
13 to try to maintain a high level of programming with the
14 same amount of funding each year. This has been very
15 difficult to accomplish due to skyrocketing increases in
16 the costs for utilities, heat, maintenance, office
17 supplies, etc.

18 Then, there is the matter of staff.
19 Because of our limited budget, we are forced to keep our
20 salaries at a bare minimum standard. Although we can
21 supply a housing allowance, we cannot supply housing, nor
22 do we supply an Isolated Post Allowance. These factors
23 make it very difficult for us not only to find personnel,

1 but to keep them as well. To compound our problem, we
2 are forced to compete with both the territorial and the
3 federal government, as well as other large organizations
4 who can afford to pay their people extremely well.

5 --- Electrical Power Returns

6 **JIMMY OMILGOITUK:** If I could put myself
7 in your shoes, when I was going to school here at Arctic
8 College, I had the same problem. I got so frustrated that
9 at times I wanted to quit. I asked myself: What am I
10 doing here? How come when they tell you to get educated
11 then they put everything in your way, they throw everything
12 at you?

13 When you finally get over one barrier,
14 you get into another one. It seems like every time you
15 get over one there's another one. If you get over that
16 one they go right back to the same one. It gets so
17 frustrating after awhile.

18 Like yourself, I went to school until
19 I was in Grade 8. I quite at Grade 8. At that time Grade
20 8 was a good education and you could get any kind of a
21 job. Like I said, I loved the land. I loved my land so
22 much that I went out and worked and part of my time was
23 spent out on the land.

1 I could say the same thing as Grace, try
2 and educate yourself and then they throw things at you.
3 It has got to stop somewhere. Thank you.

4 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Do you have any
5 questions, Commissioners? Mr. Blakeney.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** In very
7 rough terms, about how many of the jobs as, I've got a
8 list here, teachers, social workers, nurses, police,
9 dental auxiliaries, Department of Public Works employees,
10 Arctic Co-op employees, all the people who serve the
11 community in these service jobs, about how many of those
12 would be aboriginal native people and how many would be
13 non-aboriginal people, of say teachers, social workers
14 and nurses, just rough and ready? I am not looking for
15 any exact figures.

16 **GEORGE GILLIES: INUVIK REGIONAL**
17 **HOSPITAL:** I can list them for health. Thirty-seven per
18 cent of the people who work for the Health Board are native
19 people. Out in the communities, all the support staff
20 at the Health Centres are native people.

21 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** In what
22 capacity? Are they senior positions or middle management
23 or ..."

1 **GEORGE GILLIES:** Support staff,
2 clerk-receptionist, secretary, community health
3 representative, janitor, housekeepers, et cetera. The
4 nurses are generally hired from the south. In all health
5 centres all nurses are hired from the south.

6 **PATRICIA LOWE:** I think with respect to
7 the helping professions, social services in particular,
8 there is a higher percentage of aboriginal people.

9 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** It always
10 struck me that the best place to find jobs is in the building
11 next door, if you can, and to displace people who come
12 into a community. I am thinking now in terms of northern
13 Saskatchewan, but I am sure the circumstances are not too
14 different in Inuvik or the Delta area. I know it's easier
15 said than done, believe me I know it is easier said than
16 done because while we had some success with teachers, we
17 had virtually no success with police. The RCMP were a
18 pretty tough nut to crack. They have one, two or three,
19 but not very many.

20 It always struck me that that was the
21 way to go, to see how many policemen from the immediate
22 area you could get and how many teachers and how many nurses
23 and how many social workers and how many people working

1 in the Co-op store and on and on. I am not pretending
2 it is easy, but I am wondering whether you see some progress
3 in that regard in the Delta area?

4 **CECE McCAULEY:** I want to say something
5 about the RCMP. It has nothing to do with health, but
6 with this system. At one time we only had Special
7 Constables. I remember a minister coming up here, the
8 minister came up from Ottawa and we were arguing about
9 the different ways that we could get more RCMP, and again
10 it was the education level.

11 I suggested that they should take the
12 RCMP, the constables, and upgrade them, have constables
13 but upgrade them and when they reach Grade 12 then they
14 can go into the real system. They did better than that,
15 you can join the RCMP with a lower grade and they upgrade
16 you. I thought that was a great system.

17 We have in Inuvik our own boys, I think
18 we have three of them who are regular RCMP and I think
19 that's wonderful. In a lot of areas we have to do the
20 same thing, is get our people in there and upgrade them.

21 I knew a girl who worked for the
22 government and she quit out of frustration. She was in
23 training. Like I said, the government doesn't listen to

1 good common sense. She thought in every government
2 department in the north they can have one native person
3 on the job training. Every department should be training
4 on the job, find a space for them. I always say there
5 are many jobs in the Northwest Territories in government
6 and we should infiltrate that with our own people, but
7 start at the bottom and work your way up. Like I say,
8 the government just won't listen to us. People out there
9 have a lot of good ideas.

10 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** Just a short
11 question to Mr. Gillies. You mentioned the maintenance
12 of the hospital at about \$1 million a year?

13 **GEORGE GILLIES:** Could you repeat your
14 question?

15 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** It's about
16 \$1 million a year to maintain the hospital?

17 **GEORGE GILLIES:** Roughly, yes.

18 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** For a year?

19 **GEORGE GILLIES:** Yes.

20 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** I don't
21 remember how far back, but I think it was in the eighties
22 there was some kind of decision made, in the past anyway
23 and I don't remember what year, that there was going to

1 be a new hospital built for this area. Maybe it is my
2 lack of good listening or what, but how far down the road
3 would a new hospital be?

4 **GEORGE GILLIES:** That is a difficult
5 question to answer. As I said before, at the time of
6 transfer of health services to the territorial government
7 there was an agreement that the Inuvik Regional Hospital
8 would be replaced. The federal government made a
9 commitment of a certain amount of money that was made
10 available to the territorial government for the
11 replacement of the hospital.

12 I have just been informed that there is
13 funding to do a role study in the Inuvik Region to identify
14 the type of hospital that we will require here in this
15 area. I would say we are looking at approximately 1997.

16 **COMMISSIONER JOHN HOLMAN:** Thank you.

17 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would like
18 on behalf of all Commissioners to thank you very much for
19 your interesting and useful presentation. What struck
20 me is that we have discussed a lot about education and
21 in a way that has not been discussed much before. It is
22 not only the opportunity, but also how to erase the
23 obstacles, both financial, psychological and otherwise

1 because it is quite striking in the health sector in
2 particular that young people are not yet there and
3 professionally trained. There is a future there
4 certainly.

5 The question is and I put back this
6 question to you and I know there might be many small
7 answers, but how do we move it, what could be done to succeed
8 in having more young people, young women, young men to
9 go in that kind of training. I am not necessarily talking
10 about medical training as such, but there is room there
11 of course, but it's quite striking and to come back to
12 their own community where there would be jobs. This is
13 quite fundamental for the future because health is a huge
14 area and it is an important one.

15 We are here to enter into a dialogue.
16 We are going to come back to the area with possibly more
17 focus. We might publish some documents over the summer
18 and when we come back for round two I would like it if
19 meanwhile you could give some thought as to how to trigger
20 a change, get things moving, because we are going to have
21 to discuss that again.

22 We really need your help because we feel
23 you might have the solutions. Again, the solutions might

1 be composed of many things, but it is a very important
2 issue because otherwise we keep talking about things
3 theoretically, but on the ground practically. How do we
4 overcome the homesick problem? I know a lot has been said
5 about the receptiveness in the various training areas and
6 understanding and to bridge some gaps and the adjustment
7 and so forth, but we have to have specifics on how it could
8 be done and in practical terms too, get down to the reality
9 of things and see how really we could convince both parents
10 and young people and the system, governments involved,
11 not only to put more money, but also it's not just a question
12 of money. It seems that there is more than that.

13 These are just reflections. I don't
14 want to keep you any longer. I know we have some other
15 duties, a feast, but again I would like if you could think
16 about it and if you feel you could get in touch with us,
17 we have an 800 line. You could send letters or additional
18 briefs and we would be only too happy to enter into a
19 discussion of those problems with you.

20 Thank you very much.

21 **DICK HILL:** If I could interject now and
22 ask the panellists to hold their seats while Joan
23 Cole-Heine offers us a closing prayer, but first an

1 announcement. There is a feast being served, a Gwich'in
2 feast by Ruby McLeod which will be over here. She has
3 now had ten minutes to get it warmed up with the electricity
4 back on. I would ask that you all stay and talk one on
5 one about the issues that René Dussault brings up and that
6 you benefit from this session.

7 First, Joan Cole-Heine.

8 **JOAN COLE-HEINE:** (Closing Prayer)

9 --- Whereupon the Commission adjourned at
10 6:35 p.m., to resume on Wednesday, May 6,
11 1992 at 9:00 a.m.