

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: Iqaluit,
Northwest Territories

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"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

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1 Iqaluit, Northwest Territories

2 --- Upon Resuming at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday May 26,
3 1992.

4 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

5 **DUSSAULT:** I would like to call upon Naki Echo,
6 Commissioner of the day, to open the meeting with a prayer.

7 **[OPENING PRAYER]**

8 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

9 **DUSSAULT:** I would like to ask Mr. George Ikaluk to come
10 to the table, to come forward.

11 **GEORGE IKALUK:**

12 [Translator] I am aware that in the north, they are
13 working on recognizing our language and our culture, so
14 therefore I will not speak in English.

15 I have a report which is
16 there written only in English. I will have to read it in
17 English, because we didn't have time to get it translated.

18 We have quite a heavy
19 mandate regarding health in the Baffin region, and with
20 me is executive assistant Ineq Korgak, who will be reading
21 our report.

22 It says here that
23 aboriginal people are fighting to be recognized in the

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1 Constitution on their culture and language, and because
2 of that, and not only that, I usually hesitate to speak
3 in English because I'm an aboriginal person.

4 I'm very happy that we're
5 able to be here, and that we're given the opportunity to
6 speak to you this morning, and Ineq will be reading our
7 report in English to you.

8 **INEAQ KORGAK:** My name is
9 Ineq Korgak, and my title is the executive assistant for
10 the Baffin Regional Health Board in this region. We
11 prepared this submission along with our chief executive
12 officer, Mr. Trevor Pollock, and George and myself, last
13 week. It was done on sort of short notice while George
14 was here, so some of the points that perhaps now we want
15 to raise, I guess, might not be agreed upon by some people.

16 I don't know how you want
17 to proceed with this, but I think both of the Commissioners
18 have a copy of the submission in front of you. Again,
19 for the benefit of the people that don't have a copy, I
20 will not read every word, but I will try to highlight some
21 of the points that we want to make.

22 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

23 **DUSSAULT:** Do I understand that you will make copies

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1 available to afterward?

2 **INEAQ KORGAK:** I did give
3 a copy of the submission yesterday afternoon. I don't
4 know if that was given to you or not by your staff.

5 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

6 **DUSSAULT:** I'm just going to check. O.K. I'm sorry.

7 **INEAQ KORGAK:** O.K.

8 Thank you. We'll try to talk about the health status in
9 the health status in the Baffin region, but I think as
10 we go along you will perhaps see the point that we want
11 to raise here, which was raised yesterday already by some
12 people appeared by the Commission.

13 Under the socioeconomic
14 factors, we feel, as a helper, that many of the residents,
15 or some of the health problems faced by the residents in
16 this region are not, under the economic conditions, will
17 not be resolved by health systems through treatment or
18 education alone. We just want to make that point.

19 I'll just give a brief
20 history of the population or demographic and socioeconomic
21 characteristics of this region. In the recent publicized
22 study in 1992, the mortality rate in the Baffin region
23 was that out of the 10,000 people, 8,200 were of Inuit

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1 origin. The structure of this population, this Inuit
2 population, is quite young, very young. 44 percent are
3 under 15 years of age, as compared to 21 percent in the
4 rest of Canada as a whole. The people 65 years and over
5 makes up 2.4 percent of the population in this region--when
6 I say "population," I'm referring to the Inuit
7 population--as compared to 10 percent for Canada who are
8 65 years or over. The average number of children per
9 family is twice that of the Canadian families. Half of
10 the population have less than years of schooling. The
11 unemployment rate is over 20 percent, and the average
12 income is about 40 percent lower than that observed among
13 the general population. Life expectancy for the period
14 1983-1987--now this study that I'm referring to, or the
15 information that I'm getting it from, is published, and
16 anyone can get a copy in the back. It's called the "Arctic
17 Medical Research," and that comes out, I believe, twice
18 a month. For the life expectancy for that period 1983
19 to 1987, the Inuit was 65 years for men and 68.3 for women.
20 In comparison, the Canadian population of men, the life
21 expectancy is 73 years of age, and women, almost 80 years.
22 When you calculate both of the sexes, both female and
23 male, the life expectancy of the Inuit population in the

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1 region is about 66.6 years. That was the life expectancy
2 in the 1940s for the Canadian population as a whole. The
3 life expectancy, I guess, when you look at it for the Inuit
4 people, is about 10 years less, as compared to the Canadian
5 population. The infant mortality for the same period,
6 for 1983 to 1987, was that 20,000 live births, which means
7 that out of 1,000 births, about 20 infants died at birth.

8 In Canada, that is about eight per thousand, so you can
9 see it's about three times as high in the North as it is
10 in Southern Canada.

11 As you probably will be
12 told, numerous teenagers are having babies at an early
13 age, more premature babies are born. The impact of AIDS,
14 smoking, inadequate nutrition are some of the factors that
15 contribute to this birth of the premature babies.

16 The cost of buying fresh
17 fruit and vegetables is beyond the scope of many Inuit
18 people who have inadequate household incomes, or choose
19 to spend their money on junk food, alcohol, cigarettes
20 or gambling.

21 We feel that a serious
22 consideration should be given to implementing free school
23 meals. This would ensure that youngsters are fed before

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1 they go to school, which, at the present time, is not always
2 the case. Young school kids go to school, in a lot of
3 cases, with empty stomachs, and might go back to school
4 at lunch time without having anything to eat.

5 The Baffin Inuit sanitary
6 conditions and social conditions are much worse than those
7 found in the Canadian population. I think it is obvious
8 that the Inuit population is underprivileged in the areas
9 of education, employment and disposable income. We have
10 to do something about it, and I think programs must be
11 directed equally to the social and the physical environment
12 to improve the health and status of the Inuit in general.

13 Home economics should be a compulsory subject in schools,
14 for both sexes, to prepare them for the real life after
15 they leave school.

16 The environmental health. As
17 you probably, if you have travelled in the north, or, I
18 guess, in southern Canada, in some of the native
19 communities, environmental sanitation is a big problem.

20 This is preventable, but in a lot of cases, inadequate
21 sewage lagoons, disposable solid wastes, inadequate clean,
22 running water are not there, and we feel perhaps they should
23 take precedence over community halls and other buildings

19 I'll just touch upon the
20 midwifery for a couple of minutes. Right now, there is
21 a lack of clear legislation to support the traditional
22 Inuit midwifery practice and to safeguard the health
23 professionals is an area of concern. Sometimes the two

As you probably know, the Baffin Inuit Hospital is the only hospital in this region, servicing 13 communities. Most of the people that have babies, or before they have babies, are flown to Iqaluit, and they are from outside of the community. And in a lot of cases, they are here from six to eight weeks, and that places an additional burden on both the mother, and on the relatives that she left behind, because under the present system, we cannot send the whole family to be with the mother prior to the delivery of the baby.

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1 we want to use the traditional midwifery practices, but
2 at the same time, we want to ensure the safety of both
3 the mother and the infant. What we do about this, we're
4 not sure, because of the present legislation.

5 In Canada, midwives are not
6 trained. They are from abroad, in most cases, where, in
7 that country, midwifery is a recognized profession in its
8 own right. In Canada, the medical profession in general
9 has not supported the concept, with a few exceptions where
10 pilot projects have been developed, for example, Alberta
11 or Ontario.

12 The Aboriginal Youth. In
13 1986, 44 percent of the Inuit were under 15 years of age.
14 This large group of people, future talent, is neither
15 recognized or fully utilized in today's society. Greater
16 respect was paid to the elders in the past. Many of the
17 youth are in conflict with their parents, since they are
18 caught in the transitional stage. They are pulled in two
19 different directions--trying to follow their parents'
20 traditional lifestyle, and trying to prepare themselves
21 for today's modern technological society.

22 Youths should be
23 recognized and their inputs sought in the decision-making

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1 process for future change. They should be perhaps
2 delegates at large on all boards or agencies or committees
3 in this region, or, I guess, in any region of the north.

4

5 This subject was discussed
6 yesterday, and that is the need to maintain and develop
7 the Inuit language and culture to ensure that the language
8 continues after the elders, and, I guess, people that use
9 the language or are fluent in it, are gone.

10 There is a need to protect
11 and develop the Inuit language and culture for future
12 generations before it is eroded. Presently, many of the
13 youths speak both Inuktitut and English badly. The Inuit
14 are distinct, with their own language and culture. This
15 is a fact of life. Whether the rest of Canada is blind
16 to reality is not the issue.

17 The aspirations of the
18 Inuit will never be utilized when the dominant minority,
19 non-natives, ignores or fails to understand that each and
20 every decision they make has a recognized impact on the
21 quality of the life of the majority, which are the Inuit,
22 who are affected.

23 We feel all public servants

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1 at all government levels should be encouraged to undertake
2 Inuktitut language classes as part of their normal working
3 week. This would create a better understanding between
4 the different ethnic groups, and would foster recognition
5 of the differences. A cultural and linguistic centre of
6 excellence should be established in the high arctic region,
7 or any part of the region, I guess, where, currently, the
8 traditional lifestyles are undertaken.

9 As you travel, you will
10 probably notice that some of the communities are more
11 traditional in method or practice. Iqaluit is a bad
12 example because of the number of non-natives, and, I guess,
13 the lifestyle that we have chosen to practice. At the
14 present time, for a variety of reasons, too many government
15 departments are located in Iqaluit, which is not truly
16 representative, like I was just saying, of perhaps the
17 more traditional Inuit lifestyles.

18 Access to health.
19 Everyone, all the residents, have access to the health
20 system, we feel, in an appropriate and timely manner.
21 Medical specialists, at the present time, 24 different
22 specialists, serve the region on a regular basis from the
23 McGill University affiliated hospitals. In recent

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1 months, some of these specialists have been travelling
2 to the smaller communities, which is both cost effective
3 and less inconvenient for the patients that they are
4 serving.

The region still requires specialized centres for the active treatment of psychiatry, drug and alcohol problems. At present, these services are provided in southern institutions. When the regional impact needs study is conducted, they will be identified as future programs and services to be provided in the region. Some of the services that we cannot provide in this region just because of the cost, so we do refer for those types of treatments of patients down south, or to other centres that provide those services.

At this time, there remains
a need for Inuit health professionals--doctors, dentists
and nurses. As a comparison, the Saami people or the Laps
of Norway have over 20 doctors. If that is the problem,
if we don't have any health professionals in this region
or in the north, is the current education system
appropriate in the science subjects required for most
health professionals.

23 Citizens must realize that

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1 government, at whatever level, cannot be expected to
2 provide everything for the people, from the cradle to the
3 grave. We feel that individuals must claim more personal
4 responsibility for their own health. The social issues
5 that impact on the status of health can be changed by the
6 individual changing his or her lifestyle. We know this
7 is a fact, and I think you have been told in the past,
8 and will be told again, that because of the social problems
9 that the Inuit people as a whole are having. We just have
10 to change, I guess, over the years, change their way of
11 thinking. We cannot change it for them.

12 To enhance civic pride in
13 the individual, there must be a feeling of ownership and
14 participation where, at the present time, the majority
15 of the Inuit are dominated by the decisions of the
16 minority--bureaucrats, in a lot of cases, or legislations
17 that are forced upon them without their agreement or
18 without their participation.

19 You probably have seen or
20 heard about the report that is called "The Strength at
21 Two Levels." We feel that this report, once implemented,
22 will put some of the decision-making process back into
23 the community where it rightfully belongs.

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1 Just to conclude, I would
2 just make the final comments here. The socioeconomic
3 issues need to be addressed to resolve the feelings of
4 isolation, depression, hopelessness, suicide, housing
5 needs, and hunger, by some individuals. Increased
6 population continues to be well beyond the Canadian
7 average. High unemployment, inadequate life skills and
8 education to meet the future.

9 The question of housing.
10 A lot of people have inadequate housing, not just in
11 Iqaluit, but in a lot of the communities.

12 The fluoridation of the
13 water system. Some of the problems we can deal with.
14 For example, fluoridation of the water system is one of
15 the most effective methods of improving the dental health
16 of the people.

17 The young people, who make
18 up a large proportion of the population, should become
19 more active, participate in the decision-making process
20 at whatever level in the government.

21 The decision-making again
22 should be decentralized, and I guess "The Strength at Two
23 Levels" would address that concern.

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1 The establishment of a
2 cultural and linguistic centre would ensure continuity
3 and development of Inuktitut as the official language.
4 The 13 communities of the Baffin region could actively
5 participate in a cottage industry where craft skills could
6 be maintained, and their products sold to a centre for
7 marketing. The income would assist the families and be
8 part of enhancing the craft industry. The quality
9 assurance, set by the marketing agencies, in conjunction
10 with the cultural and linguistic centre, would ensure
11 standards are met and traditional products continued.
12 Individual participation in a region-wide network would
13 encourage price in the end product. In Scotland and
14 Ireland, individuals who make a product place their names
15 on the items, and they are sold worldwide. This is
16 currently done with the painting and weaving products.

17 In the past, we have tried
18 to establish, or attempts have been made to grow vegetables
19 in this region. With today's modern technology, it should
20 be possible to create a greenhouse where you can grow
21 vegetables year around. The fresh fruits and vegetables
22 are currently flown in because we don't grow them here,
23 and they're very expensive for most families to purchase.

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1 The establishment of a greenhouse centre could provide
2 food and employment opportunities on a permanent basis.

3 Everyone has to eat. This is one of the things that
4 perhaps can be looked at seriously. Even if it was
5 subsidized, at least it would be providing income for
6 people who otherwise would perhaps be on the street or
7 unemployed or be on social assistance.

8 And finally, who knows?

9 Maybe a long time from now, the communities could be linked
10 by a road system. Up here, it seems a farfetched idea,
11 but perhaps some day, that will be possible.

12 That is the submission we
13 wanted to give to the Commission.

14 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

15 **DUSSAULT:** First of all, I would like to thank you for
16 providing us with such a substantive brief, very
17 informative and comprehensive. There are many questions,
18 because you've addressed the health concerns in a holistic
19 approach, and rightly so. Things are linked together.

20 I would like to start with
21 the lack of Inuit health, personal health, and you made
22 the comparison with the Saami people in Norway, and we
23 have many young people with us today from this high school,

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1 and we are struck by the fact that the system has not
2 allowed, so far, young people to go into the health
3 professions and get the jobs that are available in the
4 communities. And when we add the question of language,
5 communications with patients, it only makes sense that
6 young people go to post-secondary studies in the health
7 professions and become medical doctors, nurses, all kinds
8 of the professional--the dental work, dental nurses,
9 dentists.

10 So I would like to know what
11 prevents the young to go to the health professions. I
12 understand that there are barriers, psychological
13 barriers. You have to go south for getting the training
14 for a year or more. But it would be very sad if we were
15 to sit here in ten years with the demographic data that
16 you gave us with so many people under 15 or 19 years of
17 age--the majority, in fact, of the people are below 20,
18 25--so the young people have to not only understand that
19 this is open to them, that they could fulfil their dreams,
20 but they have to be helped. It's one thing to identify
21 the problems, but it's another thing to see how this could
22 be changed in the coming decade, because it would be a
23 pity in the year 2000 if the change was not somewhat

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1 radical. So I'm sure you've given some thought to that.

2

3 When we came to Iqaluit in
4 mid-January, we met with the hospital staff, and we
5 discussed that at length. Having said that, where do we
6 start to make the change happen, because there is a lot
7 of jobs in this area for young people, and it would be
8 better for the community. Is it a lack of interest from
9 the young people to go in the health field?

10 **INEAQ KORGAK:** I can see
11 your point. I think there are different answers as there
12 are many different problems why people don't go into these
13 professions. I think to go into a profession like a
14 medical school, first, you have to have the right subjects,
15 right, say, from elementary school, and keep it up all
16 your school years. I'm not putting down the school system,
17 but I think the school--I went to high school here, to
18 this very school, when it first opened, and I haven't been
19 here or taken an active participation in how they proceed
20 with the curriculum and all that, but I think if you look
21 at the history of how long the education has been in the
22 north, in this part of the north, perhaps we are expecting
23 too much too soon. It was only in the 1950s, late 1950s,

9 Perhaps as the years go by,
10 we have to not only try to get the school kids to be
11 interested in school, but also the parents. I'm a parent,
12 and I think I have perhaps a bit more appreciation for
13 the school system or why my kids should finish school than
14 my parents did, who had never been to school before. That
15 was reality. All their lives, they lived in a camp, or
16 they had to survive. They didn't have time to go to school,
17 and besides, there was no schools they could attend. But
18 I think if we're going to make an impact on our kids, we
19 have to be involved, not just the school kids, but the
20 parents, to get the parents to try to be more involved.

22 I think when you look at
23 the public meetings when some of the school boards or

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1 societies have their meetings, maybe you get a little
2 turnout, so I guess that gives an indication of how
3 interested some of the parents are, including myself.
4 No, I haven't attended one yet.

5 But that is reality. How
6 do we do that, I'm not sure, but I think we are slowly
7 training medical or professional people in the medical
8 field. We do have one Inuit dental therapist in this
9 region, and we have people that have been trained to be
10 nurses' aids or certified nursing assistants or to work
11 in the communities as community health representatives.
12 They are more than interpreters. They are not
13 interpreters or medical interpreters. They are actually
14 out there to do the practical work.

15 So I guess the comment I
16 made earlier that really, there are no medical staff is
17 a bit misleading. We are slowly getting some people in
18 the medical field. But I think all the agencies, all the
19 departments of the governments, have to work together,
20 because if you drop out of grade nine, chances are that
21 you'll never go back to school again.

22 And like it was pointed out
23 yesterday, and I pointed out this morning, there are a

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1 lot of young people going to school or are out of school
2 who can speak English and Inuktitut, but very badly. They
3 cannot use either language, really, in a skilled work
4 environment where that is required.

5 So right there, when you
6 look at the people, the only jobs they are really capable
7 of doing are skills that don't require too much thinking.

8 But it's the individual. If they're willing, they can
9 go along way, even without education. Don't get me wrong.

10 There are people without education that are making
11 something of themselves. But I'm talking in general
12 terms, and not those special people who have, on their
13 own, worked very hard, and are making something of
14 themselves.

15 There is really no answer.

16 I think at the health board level, we are trying to
17 encourage programs, and one of the problems, for example,
18 we face, if we have to send people to take the Certified
19 Nursing Assistance program this year or last year, it was
20 in Yellowknife. We sent some people there, but because
21 it's not in their community, it's out of the region, they
22 resigned or they quit before the program was finished.
23 Perhaps if it had been offered in this region, they would

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1 not have quit. I think that's one of the solutions,
2 perhaps. If you're going to have training programs, you
3 should try to have the training programs to the
4 individual's place of home as close as possible, and not
5 really outside of the region.

6 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

7 **DUSSAULT:** On this very point, obviously there could be
8 some kinds of training in the regions, but there is not
9 going to be a faculty of medicine for awhile, and people
10 will have to go elsewhere. In Yellowknife, for example,
11 were there support staff to receive those students and
12 to encourage them when they were down there, or were they
13 sent there by themselves with no support? I kind of feel
14 that the support system is lacking. We've been told often
15 that it's difficult for people who come to a different
16 community to adjust, and have you given thoughts to that?
17 I suppose so, but is there some organization in
18 Yellowknife that would be active with the students you
19 sent?

20 **INEAQ KORGAK:** I'm sure
21 there was support, but just the fact that you're thousands
22 of miles away from home, and any problems--it could be
23 really minor to us, but to that individual, because of

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1 the isolation and the remoteness or not being able to go
2 to a family member right there and then if you had a problem.
3 The problem is magnified. All of a sudden, because you
4 don't have the support system, other than your teachers
5 or your classmates, who, perhaps, you don't know that well,
6 the problems that you might have are magnified because,
7 although I'm sure the support system is there, but maybe,
8 perhaps, of a different kind.

9 I'm just saying that, but
10 I think, especially if you're a young person, it must be
11 hard to be away from home, and I think perhaps these are
12 some of the problems and all that that are faced by the
13 very people that are in this room, some of the high school
14 kids who are from out of town, the problems they must go
15 through because of just the fact that they don't have their
16 parents they can go to every day. They're separating them
17 for months on end. It must be hard, the feeling.

18 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

19 **DUSSAULT:** But there have to be some preparations to be
20 able to do that, because what worries me is that--and that's
21 quite true, that in the fifties, there was not much, and
22 it takes time to get involved into a system, but still,
23 those young people who are in the room today, that's their

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1 life, and ten years from now, it will be too late for them.

2 It might be for the next generation.

3 And there's still time to
4 realize how important it is, and that it could be done.

5 So the encouragement that should be given to them, and
6 the support, seems to be very, very important, because
7 we have to catch up. There are so many of them coming
8 in.

9 **INEAQ KORGAK:** Yes, I
10 agree, and I think this issue of separating school kids
11 at an early age in some communities have been dealt with,
12 because, I think, if you look at the larger communities,
13 before, they had no grade level, say, up to grade nine
14 or grade ten. I think if you go to some other communities,
15 the school system has recognized that perhaps it is not
16 wise to send a 15 or 14-year-old school kid for nine months
17 of the year to a different community.

18 So in that way, the school
19 system, because, say, for Pangnirtung, for example, they
20 have a grade 12 education system there, so the kids can
21 take up to grade 12 in that community. Before, they had
22 no choice but to go to Iqaluit under the school where they
23 offered grade 12 or grade 11.

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1 I think, slowly, the
2 government system is recognizing the necessity of trying
3 to keep the kids, when they're so young, at home, because
4 that's when they need the support the most, and the parents
5 are, I guess, the best people, in a lot of cases, to provide
6 that support. Even if you go to Arctic College level,
7 you have the same problem. We're trying to keep programs
8 here, instead of sending them over to Yellowknife or to
9 other centres or to Fort Smith, so we can keep the students
10 here in this region anyway.

11 So slowly, we are trying
12 to do these things, but I agree there are still some
13 programs that are not offered here because of the cost
14 or because there are no people to provide it here. But
15 eventually, we want to see that, so that we don't have
16 to send these people out, but it is a slow process.

17 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

18 **DUSSAULT:** I'm just closing on this and saying that
19 yesterday, we had students from Apex schools who walked
20 and came to make a presentation to us and told us well,
21 we have dreams, and help us to fulfil them. I realize
22 that it starts from the families, from the parents, and
23 there are small things that could make a big difference

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1 in the lives of those young people if it's done at the
2 proper time.

3 Of course money, they are
4 bigger solutions, but we have to work at all levels. Well,
5 certainly, that if you have other thinking on this issue,
6 we'll be only too happy to receive additional comments
7 from your board on this particular question.

8 I would not like to take
9 too much time, and I would ask Mary Sillett to speak.

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

11 [Translator] Mr. Chairman, I don't have any questions.
12 I just wanted to thank you, Ineq.

13 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

14 **DUSSAULT:** Maybe, then, just a last question. What is
15 the situation of the dental health? What is the dental
16 health situation in the area? Is it improving or
17 worsening?

18 **INEAQ KORGAK:** I guess it
19 depends on who you're talking to. Hopefully, it is
20 improving. I know in some communities where the school
21 system or the teacher takes a more active role, it has
22 been proven that the health of the students, dental health,
23 is better than in some schools.

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1 I think with the
2 fluoridation of the water system and the teaching of the
3 kids as they're entering schools, because I think in some
4 Inuit families, the parents don't adequately provide the
5 training of dental hygiene of their kids, so a lot of it
6 is left to the school system, whether they like it or not.

7 With our dental program, we try to provide support to
8 the schools and to the region so that we have a good dental
9 hygiene, and I think we have a good, dedicated dental staff
10 that want to provide that service, that support.

11 Because I do see in my work
12 where what treatment they come here for in Iqaluit when
13 they're going back, I see what they came here for. To
14 see a two-year-old or a three-year-old to have their teeth
15 pulled out under general anaesthesia is not good to see.

16 But to see that on a continuous basis from the communities
17 is sad, because you put a two-year-old or three-year-old
18 kid to sleep to pull all their teeth out, that will continue
19 to happen, I'm sure. But I like to think that the dental
20 hygiene is improving in this region.

21 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

22 **DUSSAULT:** One last question on midwifery. You've
23 mentioned that the infant mortality is 20 out of 1,000,

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1 in comparison with eight out of 1,000 in the larger Canadian
2 society. I understand that most childbirths are done in
3 the hospital here where the mothers are flown over to
4 deliver in the hospital. So do you feel that if more
5 deliveries could be done in the communities through a
6 relevant system of midwifery, it would help to lower the
7 infant mortality rate, or what? I understand the problems
8 of flying mothers for six weeks down here, what is involved
9 there, but in pure medical terms, what is your assessment?
10 Would it help to improve the rate if more deliveries could
11 be done in communities?

12 **INEAQ KORGAK:** Well, I
13 cannot answer that question if the infant mortality rate
14 would improve if you had midwives deliver babies, and I
15 don't think that's the issue. But I think the question
16 or the concern that has been raised in this region is that
17 delivery of babies, even when there was a hospital here
18 in Iqaluit a few years back, in the early sixties, was
19 done at home. I remember at my place when my sister had
20 a baby at home, the doctors were here, but my mother choose
21 to call some women who were midwives in their own right,
22 and she delivered at home.

23 I think George Ikaluk can

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1 perhaps elaborate a bit more on that, but we want to have
2 deliveries at home or in the communities. They shouldn't
3 always come here, but at the same time, we have to look
4 at the reality. What if something went wrong? When you
5 don't have a hospital in the community, and the person
6 bleeds and you cannot stop the bleeding, in that community,
7 and in some cases, the aircraft will probably take about
8 eight to ten hours before they get to here. These are
9 some of the questions you have to sort of weigh, but at
10 the same time, I think we have to try to maintain as much
11 as possible--and we have talked about this--the
12 traditional lifestyles of the Inuit, including midwifery.

13 We would like to see that, but at the same time, we don't
14 want to place unnecessarily the mother and the child at
15 risk in trying to have that program.

16 But yes, we would like to
17 see midwifery, perhaps. There are some pilot projects
18 being done right now in the country where, perhaps,
19 legislation is put in place where you can, of your own
20 free will, if you want to deliver at home or at the hospital,
21 you would have that choice. But right now, generally,
22 that is not done.

23

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1 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much. Any other questions?

2 **ABE OKPIK:** [Translator]

3 Perhaps I could make a little additional comment regarding
4 midwifery. Sometimes it's very difficult to deal with
5 health issues in the Baffin region, and we have requested
6 to have midwifery to be here in the Baffin region, because
7 we know mothers who have to be away from their families
8 for a long time before they have delivery, and even though
9 we have requested to try and get midwives up here, we have
10 had a very difficult time getting approval because of
11 legislations not being in place or legislation that won't
12 allow this type of program up north.

13 So sometimes it's very
14 difficult to obtain what our people are requesting for,
15 especially when we talk about midwifery. We have to
16 refrain from using too much money. This would help cut
17 back costs of transporting mothers to the hospitals where
18 they would be able to stay in the communities to have their
19 babies, and there is more help that can be obtained in
20 the communities.

21 That, as Inuit, is what we
22 would like to see more of in our communities, where there
23 would be more midwives in the communities that can help

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1 the mothers delivery the babies like they used to, because
2 the Inuit were not used to being transported out of their
3 communities and away from their parents when they will
4 be having their babies.

5 But we have noticed that
6 there is still some medical complications even if they
7 have their delivery in the hospitals, and not in the homes,
8 but they're looking at this for the future, and we're
9 looking to start programs so that the young people of today
10 can start learning how to be midwives and what our cultural
11 way of delivering was in the past.

12 I just wanted to add those
13 to Ineq's comments, and if you have no more questions,
14 I would just like to thank you.

15 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

16 I would just like to make one comment on traditional
17 midwifery, primarily because I was a president of
18 Pauktuutit, and that was one of the priority issues for
19 the organization.

20 I just want to let you
21 know that traditional midwifery, for example, is not a
22 new thing. It's happening in Buvoniaduk in Northern
23 Quebec. It is a pilot project which is sponsored by
Laval University. There, in that community, they have

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1 a birthing centre, they have Inuit midwives who work
2 alongside of medical professionals, and they provide
3 public education to women who are pregnant, so, for
4 example, that the health of the woman will be well so that
5 she can deliver well, and the family is allowed to be with
6 the woman when she delivers. So
7 it's something that's going on now. When people talk about
8 traditional midwifery, they always think that it's
9 something that's strange, that's not known, but it does
10 happen. It is happening in Buvoniaduk, and I think what
11 people are saying is yes, we are concerned about safety.
12 We are mothers, we want our children to be born healthy.
13 If anyone is concerned about safety, we are too, but we
14 want to change things in the north so that women don't
15 have to be gone so long, like four to six weeks gone to
16 the hospital before you have your baby, and you always
17 wonder what's happening to your family. So that's the
18 concern in the Northwest Territories. Thanks.

19 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

20 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for presenting us your views
21 on the health situation, and we're going, of course, to
22 look at not only your brief, but think about what we heard,
23 and we will come back at one point to you with ideas to

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1 discuss. Thank you very much.

2 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** The next
3 speaker today will be Saami Qumaraq on behalf of the Inuit
4 Women's Group.

5 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

6 **DUSSAULT:** Good morning.

7 **SAAMI QUMARAQ:**

8 [Translator] I would like to say thank you for giving me
9 the opportunity to speak, and I'm glad that the Commission
10 is here to listen to our views.

11 I was asked to represent--I
12 might not make much sense, but I would like to say thank
13 you that I was asked to come here. I would like to
14 apologize. I was supposed to be here yesterday. I went
15 to the wrong place, so I ended up just going home yesterday.
16 My husband has a car, but I cannot drive, so I didn't
17 know where to go yesterday.

18 As native women, we are
19 concerned. Perhaps it will help a little bit to make it
20 clear. Sometimes, we go through a difficult time, and
21 especially the Inuit younger people as well. Sometimes,
22 we are very concerned about the young people because they
23 don't have anybody to go to to talk to. When the counsellors

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1 or whatever are not available, it is very difficult to
2 find people that can help. When they don't know who or
3 where to go to get help, it gets very difficult for the
4 youth, and we don't have hardly any counsellors that can
5 help in Iqaluit, but maybe they have more in smaller
6 communities in Baffin.

7 When the youth are going
8 through depression, even though it will be very difficult
9 in growing up, but it will always be, I guess, in this
10 world.

11 I haven't really prepared
12 any speech that I was going to make. I just wanted to
13 say these few words in regards to people who have a very
14 difficult time, and that there should be more resource
15 people available to help them.

16 Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

18 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for coming and sharing your
19 concerns with us about the lack of counsellors and support
20 services for young people who have some difficulties in
21 their lives, and it is a very important subject. We are
22 certainly highly concerned with the high rate of suicide
23 and the alcohol problems, and these are very important

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1 issues. Thank you very much.

2 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** The next
3 speaker will be Mary Jane Litchard. She is a baleen
4 artist.

5 **MARY JANE LITCHARD:** I'm
6 an artist, and I work on baleen, but I'm not from Canada.
7 I was born and raised in Alaska, and when I was crossing
8 the border, I was told that my baleen would be confiscated,
9 and so I left it behind.

10 My dream had always been
11 to be a traditional artist, and teach to any grade, because
12 in Alaska, I wanted traditional artists, but not very much
13 people would teach art, because a lot of the elders could
14 not speak English, and a lot of my generation, we only
15 speak English. As children, we weren't allowed to speak
16 our language, our mother tongue, so I only know very, very
17 little of my dialect. So I started to teach, and I would
18 teach in jails and after-school programs for
19 extracurricular subjects, and I had taught grass basket
20 weaving, baleen basket weaving, baleen scrimshaw, and how
21 to make flowers, how to make flowers out of fur scraps,
22 and I had to learn a lot of these on my own, because I'm
23 an illustrator, and I was hired in the bilingual programs,

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1 and I was used as a resource person because I know a lot
2 of the history, even though I don't know my language.
3 I was taught by elders that can speak English a lot of
4 the past and from the beginning of time and stories, and
5 I was used as a resource person in the schools there in
6 Alaska, and I don't know what to do, because I've been
7 here almost three years, and I wasn't allowed to bring
8 my baleen.

9 I'm Inuit from my mother
10 and I'm part Comanche Indian from my father, and I thought
11 that Inuit people, native peoples, aboriginals, when they
12 cross the border, that they have the freedom to cross the
13 border back and forth because we have relatives all over,
14 and when we trace my Inuit ancestry, we started from Siberia
15 and migrated through Alaska, and I have relatives
16 throughout Canada, and we have even traced relatives up
17 to Greenland. And when I went to Greenland and gave talks
18 on the radios that I'm one of the very rare basket weavers,
19 they were shocked that I was not allowed to practice here.

20 I wanted to bring this up because I have heard a lot of
21 horror stories of across the border, like elders that want
22 to go to the United States, Indian elders, that want to
23 go to Canada to attend traditional ceremonies, Indian

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1 ceremonies, and how they're left at the border in cold
2 cars, and I've seen ill health elders come down with
3 pneumonia, lung trouble, because they're held up at the
4 border, and some of them weren't even allowed to cross.

5 I had always thought that there was an Act that allowed
6 natives to freely cross back and forth, and I feel that
7 it's very important that we, as native people, continue
8 our traditional arts, and that we be free to go to any
9 country--Siberia, Alaska, Canada or to Greenland--because
10 I want to be that kind of teacher where I can teach these
11 dying arts.

12 So my baleen is stored with
13 my cousin down in Seattle, Washington, and I haven't seen
14 it for three years now, and it's been there for about six
15 years. I had contacted the Congress of the United States,
16 I contacted different people, even here in Iqaluit, with
17 the arts and crafts centre, and what had happened was I
18 got real thick pieces of papers that I have to go through
19 all kinds of red tape. A lot of this baleen I had
20 inherited. I come from a line of artists. My grandfather
21 was a famous Inuit artist, my uncles, but they have passed
22 away now, and I have promised them, I had crossed my heart
23 and hoped to die that I would keep up the art work.

StenoTran

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1 I followed my husband here.
2 We could not find work in the United States. We just
3 lived in complete poverty, and my husband was offered a
4 job here because he's a travel agent, and we were willing
5 to move up north because we're northern people. I was
6 allowed to bring my ivory. I carve ivory on top of baleen,
7 and I was allowed to bring that, but they told me that
8 they would just take away my baleen and throw it away when
9 I had had it for way before the Act, because I was raised
10 in whaling communities up in Alaska. They want me to prove
11 through my paperwork, that I bought these from whaling
12 captains, and some of them, my brothers were even on whaling
13 crews, and they would get gifts of baleen, and my brother
14 would just give them to me, because he knew I would make
15 use of them.

16 So I wanted to bring this
17 up, because when we go to Inuit circumpolar conferences,
18 a lot of the traditional peoples that have traditional
19 seal skin, ivory or taking something for ceremonial,
20 something they own would be taken away at the border, and
21 I feel that's unfair when we're all North American
22 aboriginals, and we should have this freedom. And it's
23 hindering me to be as an artist. I can't do my work as

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1 a baleen basket weaver. I've been
2 hearing, yesterday and today, and talking about education
3 and about language. My daughter, when she was in Alaska,
4 they had trouble with the school, with the budget there
5 for teaching children the native language. There's a lot
6 of different dialects there in Alaska. In my home, where
7 she was born, in Nome, Alaska, there was like six different
8 Inuit dialects, and also Scandinavian dialects, Vietnamese
9 dialects, all kinds of dialects. So when I chose a dialect
10 for her to learn, she was just given whatever the budget
11 can cover, and she would come home and talk to me in a
12 different dialect, which I wouldn't understand. I still
13 know a little bit of my original dialect, just a very
14 little. But here, it's a very, very different dialect,
15 but she's dying to learn the dialect, but when she comes
16 to high school here, they wouldn't allow her to learn
17 Inuktitut. They said that because your mother does not
18 speak Inuktitut to you, you have to take French. And I
19 said why do you need to take French when I don't speak
20 French to you. It don't make sense. And so I told her
21 I will fight for her next year to learn this Inuktitut,
22 because she may be living here permanently, and she's been
23 studying on her own from my home town Inupiaq books.

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1 Another thing I would like
2 to bring up is that when I came here to Canada, because
3 my husband was on a work visa, we were told we could apply
4 for health care, so I applied for health care for me and
5 all my children. I was very shocked when I got a response
6 written on top of my health care papers for me and my
7 children. It said that we are not Inuit because we are
8 not Canadian aboriginals, and that made me very upset,
9 and I started writing to Jack Anawak and different people
10 saying this is not fair to tell us that we're not Inuit
11 just because we're from Alaska, and I called Nellie
12 Cornea's office, when she was then the Minister of Health,
13 and had to give an explanation and history that the elders
14 in Alaska told us that the Canadian Inuits originated from
15 Alaska, and that the Greenland Inuit also originated from
16 Alaska. It took about half the year for them to finally
17 explain to me. The health care program here in the
18 Northwest Territories finally sent me a brochure, and in
19 that brochure it explained that because I am on a visitor's
20 visa, that is why I was not allowed health care. And
21 because I'm on a visitor's visa, I was not allowed to work,
22 and I asked them how can I pay for my health care if I'm
23 not allowed to work and we have four children to feed and

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1 take care of. On our health care sheet, we're considered
2 white people, not native.

3 Talking about midwifery,
4 my grandmother was a midwife. She was a traditional
5 doctor, and she midwifed me, she delivered me, and a lot
6 of my relatives, my cousins and a lot of other people.
7 She delivered hundreds and hundreds of babies, and we
8 survived. And she was a traditional person. She believed
9 in blessing babies, and she blessed all of us, and all
10 of us are artists, because she would say to the spirit
11 world, let them do many things with their hands. My father
12 was Comanche Indian, but he was mixed white also, and he
13 can trace his ancestry all the way to Ireland. And in
14 Alaska, because he was married to an Inuit woman, he had
15 to work in outer places to hide the fact that he's married
16 to an Inuit woman, because if his boss found out, he would
17 lose his job, and so a lot of times, we were a nomadic
18 family. We had to move from place to place.

19 A lot of the topics that
20 I'm hearing, a lot about prejudice, because my father was
21 married to Inuit woman, I was one of the first groups of
22 children, I was with the first wave of children that were
23 mixed blood, and so there was a lot of prejudice, and I

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1 have to separate from my family to go to first grade.
2 So a lot of things happened in my childhood that were very
3 traumatic and made me have culture shock, because I was
4 raised in the Inuit way, spoke my Inuit language, ate on
5 the floor with ulu and blubber in my mouth, and then all
6 of a sudden be thrown in the white world and said you can't
7 speak your language, and I didn't even know how to speak
8 English. And so I went all through grade school not
9 knowing my Inuit language any more because my parents were
10 pressured not to speak to me any more in my dialect, so
11 it was just cut. So when I wanted to go to high school,
12 I was labelled as retarded, and so I had to go to an
13 institution, and in that institution, they found out I
14 was not retarded, that I was just ignored. I had TB in
15 my lungs, I had worms, and that's why I was very, very
16 thin and skinny. I had never been checked all my
17 childhood, except when I was 12 years old, I was sent to
18 a white doctor, and all he did was laugh at me that I'm
19 going to die, and never told my parents that I had TB.

20 Prejudice--it was all
21 related to prejudice. So I had a very traumatic childhood,
22 which I'm still dealing with, and my parents, because of
23 all the pressure of this prejudism, they turned to alcohol.

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1 I wanted to be a nurse in the worst way, and I tried for
2 five years to be a nurse, but I was not allowed until they
3 passed the law in 1977 in Alaska that Inuits and Indians
4 should be accepted to nursing schools and doctor schools
5 in the health field, and by that time, I was already burned
6 out and gave up on it.

7 So I just wanted to bring
8 up some things like when you're a child or a teenager,
9 there should be more listening, there should be more
10 talking, because right now, it's always someone else that
11 makes all the decisions, and they don't consult. We are
12 really in need of consultation. If we're going to survive,
13 and also solve a lot of these problems, we need a lot of
14 consultation in everything. And children and teenagers
15 should be asked to freely discuss what they need and help
16 solve problems. Because if I was allowed, as a child,
17 to say I'm hungry, my parents drank up our money, I'm
18 hungry, that's how come I can't study this morning, instead
19 of being told you're just a retarded child and be prejudiced
20 at and be shoved around and ignored. Counselling is really
21 needed, it's very badly needed, counselling everywhere,
22 and just support groups, healing, talking circles, are
23 really needed, so we could solve a lot of these problems,

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1 and we could be uplifted.

2 I just wanted to share
3 these. Thank you.

4 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

5 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for telling us and drawing
6 our attention on many concerns that you've encountered
7 in your own life experience. I understand that a lot of
8 the problems that you encountered when you crossed the
9 border was because you were on a visitor visa, and I
10 understand that when you said that you were not allowed
11 to practice your trade. You talked about the situation
12 when you just crossed the border and a few months following,
13 because at the moment, what is your status now?

14 **MARY JANE LITCHARD:** We're
15 trying to get our landed immigration status, but because
16 of the recession, my husband had lost two jobs already
17 and starting on a third job, and they require large amounts
18 of money, and he just started in December another new job.
19 I'm writing a letter right now to Jack Anawak to assist
20 us and explain, give a little history of why we had such
21 difficulty of not being able to get our landed immigration
22 status.

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

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1 I would like to thank you very much. I have been in
2 contact with you before on this issue of membership. I
3 also thank you very much for the Vitamin C you gave me
4 this morning.

5 Now I think on this whole
6 eligibility issue, that is one that is very, very
7 difficult. It is a complicated issue, and I can understand
8 your frustration. I was just thinking that I think the
9 best thing that we can do, as a Commission, on this whole
10 eligibility issue, like, for example, Inuit who move to
11 Canada are not eligible for certain rights, and to discuss
12 how we, as a Commission, can deal with it.

13 But I think the other way,
14 too, that this can be addressed is through the Inuit
15 Circumpolar Conference, because it's an issue very much
16 that they're concerned with. They're going to have their
17 annual general meeting in Inuvik this summer, in July,
18 and you probably won't be able to be there, but in any
19 event, I will be there, and I will raise it for you, and
20 I promise that I will get back to you to let you know what
21 has happened.

22 On this baleen issue, I
23 guess the only thing that I can suggest is we do have a

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1 case worker who is on staff with us whose responsibility
2 is to look at individual issues and to see what follow-up
3 is necessary, and I think that maybe what we can do is
4 somehow do something to see what we can do on this specific
5 issue. Our case worker is Tyler Woods. I don't know how
6 long you're going to be around, but I would suggest that
7 you leave with him probably your name, your address, the
8 details of the issue, and also where is the baleen, in
9 what location.

10 Thank you very much.

11 **ABE OKPIK:** I know your
12 aspiration, where you come from, because my parents were
13 both born in Alaska, but they trekked across the north
14 coast and came to Canada with their parents, and I'm the
15 first generation.

16 One time I was going to the
17 United States for a holiday, and I didn't have no
18 identification. I was working for the government. I
19 didn't apply for--what do you call them--immigration
20 papers. But I went to the Commissioner of the Northwest
21 Territories, and he wrote a letter saying that this an
22 aborigine of the country, and I think that he is entitled
23 to visit the United States under Jay Treaty. I didn't

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1 even know what Jay Treaty was, and I still don't know what
2 it was all about, until I found that you can go back and
3 forth across the border, as long as you don't contraband
4 anything. That was the issue, I think. I think that
5 native people from Alaska or from the United States, or
6 in Canada, anyway, could commute.

7 When I was on that ICC
8 Conference and commute from here, and the people that
9 are really having problems about that arts and crafts you
10 were talking about were from Greenland and the United
11 States, because one is a socialistic government, another
12 one is another government. I think they still do that
13 to us.

14 So traditionally, we are
15 together, but by the hand of whoever's hand it is, we still
16 live separate through the border of our communal system.
17 Thank you.

18 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** I would
19 like to apologize to Mary Jane for the mistake in her
20 introduction. I would like to remind presenters also to
21 please keep their presentations brief, because we are
22 lacking in time.

23 The next speaker will be

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1 Okalik Curley, talking on traditional adoption.

2 **OKALIK CURLEY:** This is
3 the time when I really want to be able to speak two languages
4 at the same to emphasize my presentation, so what I'm going
5 to do is make my presentation in Inuktitut--I prefer that.
6 I feel that this is how I'm able to emphasize the
7 importance of my presentation.

8 [Translator] Right now I
9 would like to speak in both Inuktitut and English language
10 when I'm making my presentation.

11 I am very thankful I was
12 able to come here to make my presentation. I didn't really
13 prepare anything. I went to Pauktuutit's Women's Group
14 in February, so I wanted to speak on this issue, but last
15 weekend, I was really trying to come up with what I am
16 going to present here, and I really wanted to come here
17 anyway. These problems are concerns of many people,
18 especially in the NWT.

19 I am originally from
20 Iqaluit. I'm not really representing all the different
21 communities, but I will say what I have heard, and I have
22 asked questions to different people, especially in custom
23 adoption.

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1 It was mentioned that we
2 have to use the education system to use this at the Arctic
3 College. I am learning right now that we have to write
4 down the different issues that we were concerned about.
5 We have our own custom of adoption of children, and it
6 is part of our culture and tradition. I became aware of
7 different things when I was researching this issue. We
8 had phone-in shows.

9 The custom adoption of
10 children is our tradition, but they are not being used
11 any more, and it's not being recognized. Since we're not
12 using our traditional roles any more, maybe we should look
13 at different areas that can be changed since I was concerned
14 about this. The research that I did in 1982, and I also
15 wrote to Pauktuutit Women's Group in February, and I'm
16 going to give these to different groups. I have spoken
17 to even less than 100 people when I was researching this.
18 Since the aboriginal people are trying to carry out their
19 own mandate more and more, and we have also heard through
20 the radio.

21 Statistically, it is
22 recognized that Inuit people have the highest birth rate,
23 and we have to recognize women are going to adopt, we have

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1 to go back since they are not being recognized like
2 aboriginal people have now have more written history or
3 their customs are not in books, we have to have everything
4 written down now for them to be recognized today, anyway.

5 When I was looking at this,
6 I cannot just leave this alone. Our custom adoption
7 tradition has to be recognized, and it has worked very
8 well. We cannot stop this because this is our traditional
9 way, and even though a lot of things are changing, that
10 it has also been changing. We have to look at what is
11 our traditional way, or where is it coming from. A lot
12 of people, a majority of the people, are in favour of custom
13 adoption, and we cannot stop it, but there's everything
14 inside that we have to identify these issues, so we will
15 not be confusing.

16 When I was talking to the
17 Pauktuutit Women's Group, it was mentioned that when I
18 have to make a presentation, usually we are always told
19 to keep our presentation very brief, so I'm going to give
20 a written document. When I went to talk to this women's
21 group, that they should be--they should be-- Also, the
22 Indians have traditional custom adoptions, and also in
23 Northern Quebec.

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1 But they have identified
2 exactly what they would like to do. At least, they have
3 taken this first step. This should be researched more,
4 and also identify exactly where we're at and how this should
5 be. I know we're not going to stop the custom adoption,
6 but it also--not only aboriginal people adopt children,
7 and also it was mentioned that the elders are not being
8 involved more, as they should be for this discussion.
9 This isn't making-- and since there is not enough
10 consultation between these different groups, how are we
11 going to identify, since we're losing a lot of our
12 traditional ways, but we can come up with different
13 alternatives.

14 [Presentation continues in
15 English] At this point, there are a lot of concerns that
16 were raised since I did my research. I cannot say them
17 all at this point. I have them in a written form, and
18 my proposal, at this time, is that this adoption in the
19 north really should be looked at, some sort of standards
20 known by people of the north, and Iqaluit being the largest
21 community in the north, in the Baffin region, I cannot
22 say I have fully gotten all the concerns, but through radio
23 shows that I've had, two or three times I've been on radio

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1 shows where it's just Inuktitut, and just from the fear
2 of those that did call, or have called, it is a concern.

3 It is going to other communities. And if this is evident
4 in this community, it certainly is going to get out there,
5 and are we going to be unorganized? Some families are
6 well organized. The way they are structured, some of them
7 are well organized, and some are not, and I think my
8 concentration on those that are not well-structured in
9 terms of decision-making and appropriate decision-making.

10 Unless there are
11 questions, I just wanted to end at that, since I'll be
12 presenting my report.

13 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

14 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for presenting your oral
15 report. We will be please to receive it in a written form.

16 I would like--and I'm
17 speaking for myself--I would like to have a bit more
18 information on traditional custom adoption. I've got a
19 rough idea of what is involved, but could you explain the
20 difference between the traditional custom adoption and
21 the adoption that is valid in the legal southern
22 communities? It would be of some help for me.

23 **OKALIK CURLEY:** The native

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1 or the custom adoption, comparing it to private adoption,
2 there's a lot of difference in terms of home studies.

3 There are no home studies done to custom adoptions. Maybe
4 yes, there is home studies, but it's not in a written form.

5 We use observation and knowledge of how this particular
6 family that is going to be adopting. I guess, in a way,
7 there is a study, but not as--how would you say it in
8 English--there is not many areas covered in our study,
9 home study, that's going to be adopting, and in private
10 adoption, it's between the immediate parent and the
11 adopting parents. Social services and lawyers are
12 involved. In custom adoption, normally what used to
13 happen was that elders of that particular pregnant woman,
14 in consultation with the family, more or less, I guess,
15 reviewed and decided, in consultation.

16 I find presently that is
17 not always the case, that it's almost in the form of private
18 adoption arrangements, and because of that, I see a
19 difference. Are we going to practice now private
20 adoption? And that's one of the areas that was raised.

21 We don't want to get into private adoption arrangements,
22 because it's too red tape, it takes too long. And who
23 is involved in that point? I feel it has always just been

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1 the family, but it's no longer just that for traditional
2 option. It involves other people, because, as
3 individuals, we are more asking around, outside the family.
4 And those two I can only say I really see them as different.

5
6 I just and to also say that
7 a lot of the Inuit people do not want to do away with our
8 traditional adoption, but they also don't want it to become
9 red tape where people are waiting a long time for a decision
10 to be made.

11 I summarized the
12 difference between departmental and private versus
13 traditional adoption. It's not everything, but it just
14 summarizes the difference. And I didn't prepare a
15 specific report for the Royal Commission, but I am
16 submitting two reports that I submitted to other
17 organizations.

18 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

19 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much. These additional
20 comments are very helpful.

21 **ABE OKPIK:** Thank you for
22 your good presentation. Being an old social worker
23 myself, I have problems with adoption through court and

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1 custom adoption. But I think the misunderstanding is that
2 when it's custom adoption, they feel it is a system where
3 nobody wants the child, but there is a way to say it this
4 way. The child has been spoken for long before he was
5 born, as long as he was already in the system. The birth
6 of a child has kept the family ties together and recognized
7 the symbols of relatives and friendship. I find it that
8 way. I mean, if I had to go through court, you have to
9 sign documents, and if a problem comes out of it, then
10 you become bewildered. That's my explanation.

11 Thank you for your
12 presentation. It was very interesting.

13 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** We will
14 be taking a ten-minute break right now.

15 [RECESS 1100 - 1110 hr]

16 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

17 **DUSSAULT:** Would you please take a seat? We're about to
18 resume.

19 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** Our next
20 speaker will be Saali Peter, who is chairman of the Apex
21 Education Council. He will be talking about national
22 borders.

23 **SAALI PETER:**

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1 [Translator] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm the chairman
2 of the Education Board in Apex, and I would like to thank
3 you very much for coming to the north to the Inuit
4 communities.

5 [Continuing in English]
6 I am very pleased that you have come to our land, and I
7 wish to welcome you.

8 [Translator] I have a
9 written presentation. It's quite lengthy, but I will make
10 my comments brief, and when I start reading my written
11 presentation, I will read it in English.

12 I have two main things to
13 talk about as chairman of the Education Council in the
14 Apex school. I will be commenting on different regions
15 of the north. Yesterday, there were some people who made
16 presentations regarding linguistics or the language. I
17 will not be touching upon this subject too much.

18 [Presentation continues in
19 English] Reading some excerpts from the written
20 presentation that I've given to you. It's eight pages
21 long. I will try to keep my reading as brief as possible.
22 The reason why I wanted to read some excerpts is so that
23 you can have time to read every other word I do not mention.

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1 First of all, I want to make
2 the observation that people organize themselves according
3 to need, they have always done so. Traditionally, we,
4 the Inuit, did not need to form self-governing units beyond
5 the family unit, at least not in the past 100 years.
6 European whalers almost decimated the bowhead whale, and
7 left us only with seals, walrus and polar bears to hunt,
8 so we do not know what kind of self-government we had prior
9 to the whalers coming into our waters. But it's clear
10 from the experience of the Alaskans that the hunt of the
11 bowhead demands a different type of self-government
12 mechanism.

13 In the tradition of my
14 people, I wish to tell you a little bit about myself.
15 I am an ancestor of [Tuluwakik?] and one of the
16 commissioners sitting today is related to him. She is
17 my grandmother, Naki, and she was one of many people that
18 [Tuluwakik?] adopted during this time. My parents are
19 Marx and Mary, and I am their first born. I was born in
20 a traditional camp called [Minuktit?], but I grew up in
21 the community of [Namuq?], just over the hills from here.

22

23 As a people, we Inuit are

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1 still coming to grips with the most important event in
2 our history, the arrival of the Canadian government during
3 the 1950s. An army of idealistic civil servants descended
4 upon our small hunting camps and lured us into
5 prefabricated, neatly-planned and strategically-chosen
6 communities. Government policy has evolved from the
7 pursuit of assimilation. Children were taught and
8 encouraged deliberately to disown their own language and
9 culture.

10 I can clearly recall my
11 first day of school in 1961, like it happened earlier today.

12 It was at a one-classroom building which still stands
13 today in Namuq. A teacher rang the morning bell, and we
14 stumbled inside. Now the release of gas from one's bowels
15 never receives more than a humorous remark at home, so
16 soon after I went into my seat, I released a silent fart
17 without so much as a second thought. As the gas spread
18 across the room, the teacher, a pretty, but stern, young
19 woman named Miss White, noticed. Clearly displeased, she
20 demanded to know who the culprit was. Immediately, my
21 peers pointed their fingers at me. Miss White took my
22 hand and slapped it with a ruler. I was shocked because
23 this was the very first time anyone ever punished me

23 Television is doing away

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1 with any sense of family duty to children that remain with
2 parents today. Sadly, it also leaves many children
3 physically and mentally underdeveloped. It wasn't long
4 ago that robust and vibrant Inuit children were the stuff
5 of news writers reporting on the north. It used to be
6 that parents that have an economic or social difficulty
7 adopted out unwanted babies to eager relatives. Today,
8 total strangers at social agencies take them away through
9 the power of the political and judicial system, and divided
10 among client foster parents who also are strangers in a
11 point barrell fashion.

12 How do these related issues
13 affect education? Plenty. The net result of the social
14 dependency cycle is numbing, and spreading rapidly. In
15 this climate, families are driven to alcohol and substance
16 abuse, teenaged suicide, family violence and break-up.
17 Growing numbers of parents are too caught up in their own
18 crises to fulfil an important role in the education of
19 their children. It's a tragic fact that children bear
20 the brunt of this social disintegration. Many exhibit
21 poor health, low attention spans, behaviour dysfunction
22 and low expectations and self-esteem.

23 I speak from experience in

9 When our present council
10 assumed office last fall, we set a policy unheard of in
11 the north. We declared ourselves open season to any group
12 of local residents who outnumbered our four-person
13 council. If any five local residents bothered to come
14 to any of our regular meetings, they would enjoy equal
15 and full voting rights, including the right to evict us
16 from office. We have reason to be optimistic, but we need
17 help outside the field of education.

StenoTran

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1 not receive enough government money or programs. We have
2 demanded the restoration of our right to determine and
3 fulfil our own future, since this is what self-government
4 is all about, which our leaders and our people have been
5 demanding all along. ever since Ottawa came to realize
6 we held real, as well as moral rights in the early 1970s.

7 We did so with a sense of
8 urgency, if only because dependency simply fosters more
9 dependency. Each year that Ottawa postpones the
10 restoration of our rights is one year more that a social
11 [goodeon?] knot winds around our people. The principle
12 of giving economic aid is, by itself, a worthy one. It
13 has been very much a welcome one to the previously marginal
14 existence of the Inuit, but its sudden withdrawal would
15 amount to cruelty of the worst kind.

16 The problem with the
17 present system of this age is that its purpose has lost
18 meaning. It is mere aid, just to keep us is a state of
19 human vegetation.

20 Now I would like to get on
21 with the action plan, because I think most people in the
22 country are now aware that we must do something about the
23 serious conditions that we aboriginal people are in.

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1 I wish to argue for a
2 revolutionary approach to the distribution of aid flowing
3 from Ottawa into our land. Restore our rights to
4 self-determination on terms acceptable to our needs and
5 the obligations of Ottawa. Restore the legitimacy of our
6 traditional justice system. Restore the role and
7 authority of elders and parents in all criminal and social
8 matters. If government is said to be owned by the people,
9 then give it to them in terms they can identify with.
10 Let them, at the community level, own existing homes,
11 schools, and other public institutions. It should be a
12 matter of government policy to distribute operating
13 capital and administrative funding on a fixed-formula,
14 per-capita basis, and directly to the new community
15 institutions. Let there be meaningful incentives, both
16 non-financial and financial, to reward cost cutting and
17 successful efforts for alternative non-government
18 funding.

19 This radically-different
20 tact is based on a simple concept that aboriginal people
21 are most familiar and acquainted with social organization
22 at the local community level. It brings public
23 accountability to a very real personal and accessible

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1 level.

2 The Nanuq Education

3 Council intends to actively do what it can to bring this
4 kind of radical change to local education. This past
5 March, we received a mandate of our community to draft
6 proposals on negotiating the public ownership of our
7 schools from the Territorial government. This would be
8 direct community ownership and include the transfer of
9 staffing authority, curriculum programs, and all funding
10 and spending authority. It is our deepest hope to build
11 in incentives and access to financial resources to
12 eventually become financially self-sufficient.

13 We are realistic about our
14 chances to receive our goals absolutely. It may be years,
15 decades, and maybe even centuries before we can be truly
16 financially self-sufficient. We argue, however, that by
17 setting lofty objectives, the public good will be served.

18 For one thing, spiralling costs and the growing demand
19 for more funds under the existing system will be reversed.

20 Through public ownership at the community level, we would
21 no longer need to fear that any resourceful and innovative
22 achievement we may accomplish towards education excellence
23 would be taken away from us by some unseen bureaucrat or

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1 politician outside our community. Indeed, it is our
2 greatest hope that our success would attract other people
3 and be copied elsewhere.

4 Paternalism in the last
5 half of this century is our legacy. I see it as a refined
6 form of colonialism which our cousins, the Indians in the
7 south and in the west, are familiar with. Men who abuse
8 women learn it from their fathers. Therefore, one
9 shouldn't be surprised that some of our people practice
10 paternalism themselves when in a position of power over
11 others. That is why it is very important to me and my
12 neighbours that as much self-governing power and resources
13 as possible must be restored to the community and family
14 levels.

15 Thank you. I will be more
16 than happy to answer any questions that you may wish to
17 ask me.

18 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

19 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for providing us with your
20 insights of many of the problems that have strong bearings
21 on the education process.

22 It is quite clear that
23 there have been many problems around, and that the

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1 collective will to work with the school and an education
2 council like yours has not necessarily been on in the
3 increase, but more on the decrease. Of course, we are
4 always pleased to be told about the situation. The
5 difficult part is to move toward solutions that would be
6 an improvement. Do you think that the coming of
7 self-government in Nunavut will bring changes to what is
8 presently done from Yellowknife? Because there is six
9 or seven years before full implementations, and it's going
10 to go ahead, these years will be very important in making
11 sure that it will be done properly and tailored to the
12 need of the eastern Arctic, and so how do you see this
13 coming of Nunavut? Do you see it as a tool for curing
14 some of the problems that you've listed?

15 **SAALI PETER:** Yes, I think
16 it will help, definitely, but as you say, it will take
17 about seven years, and I think that's a long time to wait
18 before it really starts to take effect. The form of
19 government that is being talked about, and which most
20 likely will be agreed to by Ottawa, will be pretty much
21 the same as the present government, and to me, that presents
22 a problem of being a clone of the kind of government that
23 we have had all along. So I have some reservations, but

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1 it will definitely be an improvement.

2 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

3 **DUSSAULT:** What kind of government would you like to have?

4 Could you describe how different it should be and how
5 it could be made different? It's time to discuss that
6 while Nunavut is only something on paper.

7 **SAALI PETER:** I think that
8 the kind of government that we should ultimately work out
9 should be based on the community form of government where
10 people who see each other on a day-to-day basis decide
11 for themselves how things should run, who should decide
12 things that happen in a community, who should judge people
13 who commit crimes or who are in trouble with the law.
14 There is a real problem with having judges from Ottawa,
15 professional lawyers, who do not have an intimate knowledge
16 of the people, who do not have an intimate trust of the
17 people, decide what happens to them. It's a real serious
18 problem, because in the past, the philosophy was totally
19 the opposite, that people who are closest to those in
20 trouble decided and helped that person get back on the
21 right track, and it's really unfortunate. But everything
22 will have to depend on giving most of the administrative
23 power, which would include power over resources at the

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1 community level. Now the constitution could say that the
2 overall government in Nunavut reserves the right to make
3 changes, to make basic changes, and I have no problems
4 with that.

5 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

6 **DUSSAULT:** It's one thing to look at the justice system,
7 and obviously, the justice area is an important component
8 of public powers and government, and part of any future
9 self-government. We're going to hear a lot about the
10 justice system and how it could be organized differently.

11 But again, it's quite clear to me that the Nunavut
12 government, the future Nunavut government, will be, or
13 should be, totally managed by people living in the Eastern
14 Arctic, and not only at the elected official levels, but
15 also at the administrative level. We have to get prepared
16 for this.

In terms of education, what
17 do you see? We have seven years ahead. What are the steps
18 that should be taken to make sure that Inuit people will
19 take the jobs and manage the new government that will be
20 created? In order to avoid an old situation where people
21 have to come to the south to do things, and then you start
22 all over again on the wrong foot. So do you have plans,
23 a council like yours? Are you thinking and planning the

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1 training that will be needed to make sure that the Inuit
2 people will be able to take the new government in charge,
3 at all levels?

4 **SAALI PETER:** Yes, we do
5 have a plan, in the sense that we don't have a plan.
6 Instead, what we want to do is to equip all children to
7 be like our ancestors. They lived in the land where there
8 was virtually nothing other than animals to hunt and to
9 clothe themselves and use whatever little material there
10 was to build their own housing and build their tools, their
11 boats, all their equipment.

12 So rather than trying to
13 figure out for children what kinds of jobs they should
14 have, and therefore what kinds of jobs they should be
15 trained for, we want to teach them to use their brainpower,
16 to be resourceful, imaginative, to not wait for someone
17 to decide O.K., you're going to need a job, O.K., we've
18 decided that we're going to turn you into miners, or we're
19 going to turn you into government civil servants. I think
20 there is something wrong with planning things. It
21 operates out of paternalism, and that doesn't work.

22 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

23 **DUSSAULT:** Well, I understand what you're telling us, up

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1 to a certain extent, that creativity in the sense of doing
2 things, and not only waiting for others to give money and
3 help, is important, but also it's quite clear that we're
4 not going to revert to the past.

5 I feel that what is
6 important to make sure that this new government will be
7 managed by Inuit people and designed in the way that is
8 seen fit for them and tailored to their needs by themselves
9 to avoid this being overtaken by people from the south
10 again. When we were in Inuvik and Fort MacPherson, the
11 reaction we had from the communities that we visited there
12 was that well, Yellowknife, even if there are a large
13 majority of aboriginal people who are elected officials,
14 Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories government, is
15 seen, as any provincial government, something outside of
16 the people, and that self-government should be done at
17 the community level.

18 But it seems to me that here
19 in the Eastern Arctic, we have an opportunity, because
20 Inuit are a majority, to really have self-government at
21 the level of the territory, as such, and relate to a
22 community level, so to avoid that in ten years, Nunavut
23 would be seen as another external bureaucracy.

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1 **SAALI PETER:** What are you
2 asking me? What is your question?

3 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

4 **DUSSAULT:** Well, my question is really, when you say our
5 plan is no plan, well, while I understand that plans should
6 not be a cap on creativity and imaginative solutions, on
7 the other hand, I'm just asking you, well, do you plan
8 to let things happen, or how are you going to master this
9 future that is coming to be to become a reality?

10 **SAALI PETER:** Well, if
11 it's a plan to properly train people and to give them every
12 opportunity to develop fully their resources, their
13 brainpower and everything else, then that's what I'm
14 talking about in terms of planning. We should restrict
15 ourselves to the development of people and let people
16 develop their own economy, their own future. That's my
17 real message.

18 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

19 **DUSSAULT:** I suppose my concern is more a concern of
20 getting young people in administration, getting management
21 skills that are needed to run a Territorial government.

22 **SAALI PETER:** Well, not
23 everybody can, nor has the interest, to work for

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1 government, to be in a position of power. So that might
2 be O.K. for some people, but the majority won't be working
3 for the government.

4 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

5 **DUSSAULT:** But this morning with the Health Board, we
6 discussed the situation of the lack of young people going
7 into the health professions, and now we're talking about
8 management, administration skills, so there's a variety.
9 But what is important is that people in this school see
10 their future in many fields, and that they be given a way
11 to reach up to what is their expectation, where they see
12 themselves in five or ten years in life, in professional
13 life.

14 **SAALI PETER:** I think I
15 understand what you're getting at, and I want to refer
16 back to my presentation where I'm really talking about
17 how we have a serious social crisis among all families
18 in the north, and government has had a lot to do with that,
19 where now a great number of the parents of the children
20 that we deal with come from largely broken families, broken
21 in terms of their attitude to life, broken in terms of
22 thinking in self-pity, instead of thinking what can I do
23 for society, what can I do for my people.

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1 When you have such large
2 numbers in that situation, where are these people going
3 to come from to be the doctors, to be the lawyers, to be
4 the surgeons and so on. As long as that first problem
5 is not dealt with, then those people are not going to arise,
6 no matter what we do, no matter how many programs we
7 provide, no matter how much encouragement we try to give
8 to young people. If we do not deal with their environment,
9 their family situation, if we do not deal with housing
10 so that we encourage people to be a little more responsible
11 to have the kind of habits that nobody gives a second
12 thought about in the south that end up being conducive
13 to a good learning environment for children. That's my
14 main concern.

15 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

16 **DUSSAULT:** O.K. I don't want to keep you too long. I
17 understand that certainly the basic priorities start
18 there, but it seems to me that we have to work on all
19 aspects, also, because young people are there and coming
20 in a great number, and if you could think about it, because
21 that's the most difficult aspect to deal with. How do
22 you turn around a situation where there is a lot of
23 self-pity and a lack of will in the family to be

3 So we feel, as a
4 Commission, that you certainly are the ones knowing better
5 what could be done, even if they are small things, many
6 small things different, they could add on and make a
7 difference in ten years. But where do we start? There's
8 so much to do. And that's what we're begging somehow,
9 for help for finding solutions, because we know that
10 pouring money from the top, it has proved to be, most of
11 the time, useless, if it doesn't come from the grass roots
12 on the bottom.

13 SAALI PETER: Well, as I
14 said, you really can't start solving problems piecemeal
15 without dealing with the environment that attempts to deal
16 with education, to deal with the workplace, can start to
17 be effective. I feel that a step such as making
18 government, the way it's structured, more accessible,
19 where you can see it with your own eyes, you can feel that
20 it's there, you can somehow reach it and leave your imprint
21 on it. That, in itself, would make a huge difference in
22 the attitude of people. As it is, government is far away
23 in Yellowknife, and when Nunavut comes about, wherever

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1 the capital may be for those outside of that capital, the
2 feeling will be very similar towards that place, that
3 government is way over there in Iqaluit, if I'm from
4 Cambridge Bay, or if I'm from Grise Fiord, it's way over
5 there in Rankin Bay, wherever the capital might be.

6 So I think the first job
7 is to make government accessible, where we can see it,
8 and that, to me, would be a good signal and a good starting
9 point in which to get people to have a sense that hey,
10 they have to be a part of it, and hey, I'll make a
11 difference.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

13 Thank you very much, Saali. Not necessarily in response
14 to you, but in response to Mr. Dussault's question, which
15 is, if Nunavut comes about, how are you going to get the
16 administrators and the managers for it? This is a question
17 that has been asked and considered by the organizations
18 in the Eastern Arctic, and also outside of the Eastern
19 Arctic, for at least a decade or so, and what's been
20 happening is that people said that if Nunavut does come
21 about, we want Inuit in every single position there, so
22 we have to consider the whole issue of training. How do
23 we train our people so that they can take, for example,

20 **SAALI PETER:** Could I just
21 add to Mary's comments? I'm glad you brought that up,
22 Mary. As an education council, we did not choose to be
23 responsible strictly for elementary school children from

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1 kindergarten to grade 12 at all, and we recognize that
2 we're really the only local authority that has anything
3 to do with education at all. We have had discussions about
4 the need for adult education for more advanced training
5 for anybody in the community who has expressed a need for
6 it, but because of the kind of mandate that we've been
7 given, the only thing that we can really address is
8 elementary education.

9 **ABE OKPIK:** Thank you for
10 your presentation, Saali. I was kind of alarmed that
11 you're still insisting that you want to teach your people
12 your old ways, but let me tell you, you can also tell learn
13 from the Arctic College. Do you want to run your
14 government in your own way, you the proponent, and you've
15 got all those things going for you.

16 I think that what you
17 should do here is think about is not the sad ones and not
18 the pitiful ones. Start leading them now on becoming a
19 part of your government, along with training, and along
20 with a lot of other things.

21 I used to remember when
22 Inuit first became the leaders of our country. Already,
23 it was criticize the government. They didn't have any

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1 kind of real argument. Now they're here, we've got the
2 Constitution through them, native Canada are getting all
3 the people listening, and I think that one of the things
4 is that some of us have to change our attitudes.

5 Thank you for your speech.

6 **SAALI PETER:** Thank you,
7 Abe. Could I just talk about the other thing that I wanted
8 to talk about? It's a lot shorter one.

9 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

10 **DUSSAULT:** Very briefly.

11 **SAALI PETER:** I've been to
12 a couple of schools in the 1970s that influenced me a great
13 deal. I went to a school in the eastern townships right
14 near the border with Vermont, in the United States, and
15 when I was going to school there, whenever I got my
16 allowance, I would just simply walk through the back
17 streets of the town and walk over to the other side and
18 do a little bit of shopping for little things, and I really
19 enjoyed that freedom, freedom to be able to actually cross
20 a national border into another country without really
21 thinking about it as being a different place. In this
22 case, it was not a different place from the Canadian side.

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1 And then I also went to
2 school in Greenland and spent a year there, and I found
3 that we have a lot more in common with the people there,
4 who have the same culture, who have the same language.
5 We have pretty much the same historical origin, and I got
6 married to a girl from there.

7 I find it really strange
8 that a person from there is treated as a total alien,
9 whereas there are people living here who are more strange
10 to us than people from over there. I would love to see
11 the Canadian government take the initiative to declare
12 the circumpolar region a zone for the free movement of
13 people, where you can move from place to place, work, do
14 whatever you want, without any paperwork, other than what
15 is locally required of local residents, and that if you
16 want to write to both, then those immigration laws or
17 whatever would then apply. I feel very strongly about
18 this, because the way the system goes is not fair at all,
19 and it goes against the rights of the native people.

20 And speaking of which, when
21 hunters in northern Greenland try to carry on their
22 traditional hunt without regard to national borders, and
23 they get picked up by the police and deported back to

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1 Greenland, I see it as something very, very, wrong, because
2 they're just simply carrying out their traditional right
3 to hunt wherever they used to go.

4 Thank you.

5 **SIMON MCDERMOTT:** Our next
6 presenter will be Leetia James. She is representing the
7 Baffin Region Uvik Society, and she'll be talking about
8 a women's shelter.

9 **LEETIA JAMES:** My name is
10 Leetia James, and I'm the vice-chairperson of the Baffin
11 Region Uvik Society. Susan Samms couldn't be here. She's
12 our chairperson. She had to be out of town, so I'm taking
13 her place. I'll be talking in English, as well as in
14 Inuktitut.

15 The Baffin Region Uvik Society
16 was founded in 1984 to find information on family violence,
17 and provide and co-ordinate services for women who are
18 living in violent relationships. In 1987, we opened a
19 ten-bed shelter in Iqaluit for battered women in the Baffin
20 region. It is still the only fully operational shelter
21 for the women in the region, as well as the eastern arctic.
22 In 1992, we will open an addition to provide 15 beds for
23 women and children.

16 In 1987-'88, the shelter
17 was used by 100 families, 69 for the first time. In
18 1991-'92, the shelter was used by 303 families, 71 for
19 the first time. Average occupancy has increased from
20 78 percent in 1987-'88 to 109 percent in 1991-'92. Over
21 the past five years, almost 400 families have used the
22 shelter at least once. Most have come back to the shelter
23 at least once within one year.

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1 In Canada, the latest
2 figures indicate one in eight women will be physically
3 or sexually assaulted. There has been no detailed
4 research done in the NWT. The last figures reported
5 suggest that one in four women in the north will be
6 assaulted, double the number in southern Canada. The
7 reasons for this are unclear, and there has been little
8 research done.

9 Almost all women in the
10 Baffin region using the shelter are forced to return to
11 abusive relationships because of factors other than
12 personal choice. Financial problems, housing shortages
13 and pressure to keep the family together are the main
14 reasons. Women from the region who use the shelter must
15 travel large distances and leave family and friends behind
16 to seek the service.

17 There are currently no
18 counselling programs for men who batter their spouses.
19 There are no family counselling services. Social workers
20 are so busy with other mandated services that there is
21 little or no time for personal or family counselling.
22 Many women are not able to use the few available services
23 because of lack of information, personal situation or

15 Social problems are
16 contributing to the further breakdown of the culture and
17 are a threat to the society as a whole. Drug and alcohol
18 abuse, spousal assault, suicide and other social problems
19 are having a major impact on the next generation. Children
20 from families with problems often grow up with the same
21 problems. They are too tired or worried to learn as they
22 should. Parents with problems may neglect their
23 children's needs, and they may be unable to provide the

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1 spiritual, emotional and cultural values needed to provide
2 growth for both the individual child and the society as
3 a whole.

4 Misunderstandings between
5 the Inuit and those involved in the justice system mean
6 that the legal system that the legal system is unable to
7 cope with the local and cultural issues. In its efforts
8 to accommodate cultural issues, the system has often
9 misread cultural standards. This is sometimes seen as
10 inconsistency by Inuit. A lot of the Inuit do not
11 understand how the legal system works, and are confused
12 and frustrated by a system that is based on values that
13 are very different from their traditional values.

14 That's all I have, and if
15 you have any questions, feel free to ask.

16 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

17 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for your excellent
18 presentation.

19 I understand that your
20 shelter is funded through the Territorial government.
21 Does it serve the whole area, or only the Iqaluit
22 vicinities? Are there other shelters like this in the
23 Eastern Arctic?

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1 **LEETIA JAMES:** No, that's
2 the only one in the whole Eastern Arctic, and Keewatin
3 and Kitkikmeot also have been served here in Iqaluit.
4 This is a regional society, but it's mainly being used
5 by the Baffin region, and we're presently working towards
6 networking the services that we have, and there are some
7 counselling programs done in Inuktitut in some of the
8 communities right now. It's slow, but it's starting to
9 network within the last few years.

10 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

11 **DUSSAULT:** And people coming from any of the 13
12 communities, are they coming by themselves, in terms of
13 is there a way to pay their costs to travel to the shelters?

14 **LEETIA JAMES:** There have
15 been referrals mainly through Social Services in the
16 communities, as well as RCMP and the Health Departments.
17 They have to be referred from the community before they
18 can allowed to stay at the house.

19 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

20 **DUSSAULT:** What is the average stay in the house?

21 **LEETIA JAMES:** Seven days
22 a week. I have some charts here. Average occupancy rates
23 by year and by month, it lists down the children, repeat

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1 clients and new clients, and I have another chart here
2 on a yearly basis. If you would like to get a copy of
3 it, it's right here.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

5 I have no questions Leetia, thank you.

6 **ABE OKPIK:** Thank you very
7 much.

8 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

9 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you for coming to meet with us this
10 morning.

11 **SIMON MACDERMOTT:** The
12 next speaker is David Panneeq. He's an individual who
13 will be discussing justice in the Northwest Territories.

14 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

15 **DUSSAULT:** Good morning and welcome.

16 **DAVID PANNEOQ:**

17 [Translator] Thank you. In 1989, apparently I was
18 informed through the RCMP that I was using a dangerous
19 weapon. I was taken to 1:53--I went to sleep at 1:30 in
20 the morning. When I woke up in the morning, 1:53 to 3:15,
21 to my sister's. When I knocked on the door a couple of
22 times, I thought there was nobody there. They called the
23 RCMP. I went to there to see. We were watching TV when

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1 the two RCMPs came over with their revolvers. They were
2 using a government 38-special revolver, and it was held
3 at me, and I was looking at them from--the other one was
4 on top of the building, and the other one in the snowbank.

5 I called [Silistut?], asking why her they were coming
6 to arrest me, and they told me I had been shooting. I
7 don't recall shooting at all, because I know I didn't--I
8 wasn't using a gun, and then I called Sara, my sister.

9 Sara and I were watching the RCMP that were trying to go
10 after me or trying to arrest me. Right after I made a
11 call there, I made another call to a lawyer inquiring why
12 the RCMP were going after me because I had done nothing
13 wrong as far as I knew. The lawyer just informed me to
14 surrender, and I asked why. I also gave him my phone
15 number, and the sergeant of the RCMP gave me a call, and
16 when he called me, three RCMP officers came, pointing their
17 revolvers at me. This was quite frightening, especially
18 when you know you haven't done anything wrong, and the
19 fact that these guys were pointing their revolvers at you.

20 And then the RCMP put me in handcuffs with my hands in
21 the back, and there was another RCMP in front of me and
22 two behind me, and they were holding me by the hand, going
23 down from the second storey building, and they took me

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1 to the RCMP vehicle. Volier and Repenot were watching
2 this happening. They were my witnesses. I was in remand
3 for 14 months while I was waiting for my court date. Joe
4 Broward was my lawyer, who couldn't help me much, and the
5 other lawyer, who is not well liked, Neil Sharkey, was
6 not able to help me, so I had to get a lawyer from
7 Yellowknife. And when I finally got my trial after 14
8 months, the RCMP stated that I had been shooting, and there
9 was no evidence, no bullets or clothing that was able to
10 be used as evidence by the RCMP. But they were trying
11 to say that they were positive that it was me. And then
12 when I had my trial, they put me with a correctional officer
13 for 37 months, even though I have done nothing.

14 I was in the Yellowknife
15 Correctional Centre for two months, and then they sent
16 down south to Drumhellar, Alberta to a penitentiary. They
17 asked me if I was going to apply for parole. I stated
18 that why should I ask for parole when I have done nothing.

19 It was the RCMP who mistook me for someone else and
20 arrested me. So I went to Calgary to appeal about being
21 incarcerated. I stayed overnight in Calgary, and stayed
22 overnight in Yellowknife, and in January, when I appealed
23 my situation, I won. When they let me go out of the

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1 penitentiary, they made me wear my jail clothes all the
2 way through the communities, southern route. [Inuktitut
3 spoken, not translated] I went to inquire why I wasn't
4 sent, even though I was inquiring about this I also have
5 some documents here. If you want to see them, you can
6 see them, if you want.

7 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

8 **DUSSAULT:** My suggestion would be that we have somebody
9 on our staff who speaks Inuktitut and could take the details
10 of your story, and we could see. Of course, as a
11 Commission, we're not here to settle all grievances,
12 individual grievances, but if we could be of some help,
13 we certainly would like to do so.

14 So what I would suggest is
15 that Rhoda Kayakjuak, that you could meet with her, she's
16 just there, and talk to her and tell your story and give
17 the documents, any documents you might have, and we're
18 going to have a look at it and see if there is some follow-up
19 that could be made.

20 Thank you very much.

21 Commissioner Abe Okpik has
22 to catch a flight at 2:00 and will have to leave, so just
23 before he does so, I would like to thank him very much

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1 for his being with us and his helping us in putting some
2 questions and clarifications, getting some
3 clarifications, and giving us some additional explanation
4 in the debriefing sessions.

5 So thank you very much
6 again for coming to sit with us.

7 **SIMON MACDERMOTT:** Our
8 next presenter will be Roger Cousins. He's an individual
9 who will be talking about the land claims.

10 **ROGER COUSINS:** Thank you
11 very much. My name is Roger Cousins. I'm a 30-year
12 resident of the Eastern Arctic, and I'm pleased to have
13 the opportunity to speak to the Commission. It's nice
14 to see Naki and Abe here. I'm sure that 30 years ago when
15 I arrived here in '61, I know that Abe was here. He was
16 even younger looking than he is now, and Naki's children
17 were in school, and I was a schoolteacher here in '61.

18 I'm here to speak on the
19 subject of land claims, as opposed to aboriginal claims,
20 because I'm particularly concerned about the status of
21 land and the relationship of aboriginal people with land
22 in the Eastern Arctic.

23 I've just come back from

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1 Saskatchewan, where I've had the opportunity to visit
2 several Indian reservations and other areas of
3 Saskatchewan where I know land and aboriginal people and
4 that relationship is so important. On the * Reserve in
5 Saskatchewan, although I will be speaking about the Eastern
6 Arctic in a moment, the Assingiboine Reserve in
7 Saskatchewan, the people there are concerned about the
8 fact that land has been stolen from them. You can go to
9 Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to find out where aboriginal
10 people have had to occupy illegally land within the city
11 of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to make their land claim.
12 You may know right now there's a blockage in Green Lake,
13 Saskatchewan, where people are concerned about their
14 relationship with the land. This happens to be in the
15 forestry area.

16 I would like to just make
17 a comment about British Columbia, where the aboriginal
18 people there, in their initial land claim, which is just
19 starting, are claiming whole areas of norther and central
20 British Columbia, whole towns, the land under businesses,
21 the land under schools, park lands, highways, streets.
22 The people there are very, very concerned with the land
23 and their relationship with it, and that's my concern this

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1 morning, and I would like to comment on it.

2 I have a quote to start
3 with. The quote is, "Where do we start? There is so much
4 to do." That quote was made at 11:45 this morning by Judge
5 Rene Dussault, who is a Commissioner on this Commission.

6 Well, I would suggest that your Commission may wish to
7 consider the plight of the Inuit of the Nunavut area and
8 their relationship with the land and the status of the
9 land, and particularly and specifically land within
10 municipalities.

11 The remarks I would like
12 to make are as follows, and I have a written copy, a printed
13 copy, of this, and I've given it to the officials of your
14 Commission. This presentation is made to point out to
15 the Royal Commission a major flaw in the aboriginal claims
16 process that will have serious effect on Inuit of the
17 Nunavut area. The Commission might agree that this flaw,
18 should it be repeated in other aboriginal claims in Canada,
19 will also have a negative effect on the well-being of people
20 in those areas. Your Commission is looking for ways that
21 the lives of aboriginal people can be better. There is
22 a direct relationship between the TFN Government of Canada
23 process and claim process and the work of your Commission.

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1 I note also that you are both financed by the same source.

2 There's a major problem in
3 making this presentation in that the final agreement for
4 the TFN claim, the Nunavut claim, is not available. An
5 agreement in principle has been made public, but it is
6 interesting to note that this agreement, in principle,
7 has been copywritten, and I, and no one else, can produce
8 sections of this agreement in principle without permission
9 of the TFN and the Minister of Indian Affairs. I hope
10 that your Commission will be able to study this AIP and
11 the concerns I will outline.

12 I am concerned with the
13 fact that in the land claims process, there is little or
14 no recognition of the value of land within the home
15 communities of the people of Nunavut. The future
16 wellbeing of the Inuit will be affected by the status of
17 the land within the 30 or 40 municipalities of the Nunavut
18 area. As things stand now, little or no home community
19 land has been identified by the claims negotiators.

20 Maybe I could just stop now
21 and make a comment that I had an opportunity to communicate
22 with TFN people. I had an opportunity to communicate with
23 one of your Commissioners, Miss Sillett, who is here right

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1 now. I communicated with her, in writing, and she
2 responded to me, so I'm glad that Mary is here.

3 Some of the most important
4 land in Nunavut has been ignored in the negotiations that
5 have taken place. It appears that virtually all lands
6 within municipalities have been declared off limits to
7 the negotiators. Land that the Inuit have actually lived
8 on for up to 30 years in communities has virtually been
9 excluded in the claims process. Virtually all
10 residential, industrial and commercial land in all
11 communities in the Nunavut area has been left out of the
12 agreement in principle, and will be left out in the final
13 agreement. This will be of concern to your Commission,
14 because this fact will have long-lasting effects on the
15 aboriginal people of this area.

16 In the agreement in
17 principle, I am aware that thousands of square miles or
18 kilometres of hunting and trapping and fishing land has
19 been designated as that belonging to Inuit. However, land
20 right under the homes of the Eastern Arctic Inuit is not
21 claimed. Land on which the Inuit live for 90 percent of
22 their lives and where they raise their families has not
23 been claimed. One TFN negotiator told me during the claims

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1 process that he thought that the land in communities could
2 not be considered in the claim. He thought and believed
3 that only hunting land could be identified as Inuit land.

4 Land is being claimed
5 within municipalities and has been for decades, but this
6 has been done through municipal leasing. This leasing
7 has been done primarily by outsiders.

8 There has been a freeze on
9 the sale of land in the Nunavut area for the past 15 years,
10 but this has not prevented municipal land from being
11 reserved for primarily non-aboriginal people. Virtually
12 no land has been protected by and for the Inuit. Not only
13 has land not been protected within communities by the
14 claims process, as early as October of 1990, an attempt
15 was made to sell leased land within the municipalities
16 before any final land claims agreement was ratified.

17 In the printed
18 presentation that I've given to the officials of this
19 Commission, I've indicated where this attempt was made,
20 but wasn't carried through, hasn't been carried through
21 yet.

22 The land under the very
23 homes of most Inuit today is controlled by some level of

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1 government, but there is no guarantee that this land will
2 ever belong to aboriginal people. Municipalities and
3 housing associations in control of this land are freeing
4 up this land for leasing, to outsiders primarily, on a
5 regular basis. According to the agreement in principle,
6 the communities will have, in the future, the opportunity,
7 after ratification of the land claims, to do one of two
8 things with all of this land that has already been leased.

9 Here's their choice. One--they could agree to sell it
10 to those people who have leased it. The second opportunity
11 is they can decide not to sell it, in which case those
12 people who have leased this land must be guaranteed
13 long-term leases. To me, this is not much of a land claim.

14 I have spoken to
15 representatives at the levels of government operating in
16 the Eastern Arctic concerning what I see as a land crisis
17 for Inuit within their home communities. The elected
18 people I have spoken to--federal, territorial,
19 municipal--have quietly stated that the status of
20 community lands is a problem, is really a problem, for
21 negotiators and others. This is so, but the answer is
22 not the wholesale disposal of land within Inuit
23 communities.

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1 In Iqaluit, I recall the
2 reaction of an elected member of the town council when
3 he heard that TFN might identify land in this town as Inuit
4 land. He was shocked that aboriginal people would dare
5 touch the sacred ground of a municipality. And by the
6 way, a good friend and colleague of mine from the
7 Municipality of Iqaluit will be speaking to you early this
8 afternoon.

9 I think the Royal
10 Commission should concern itself with this situation.
11 Surely, the well-being of aboriginal Canadians everywhere
12 will be adversely affected when they find themselves in
13 claims areas where key land is already occupied by
14 outsiders.

15 Concern must be expressed
16 about the process involved in aboriginal claims. To have
17 an agreement or an agreement in principle, there must be
18 two parties. There have been the Inuit, who have been
19 represented by people like John Amalqualit and Paul Quassa
20 and others. They have attempted to consult with Inuit
21 across Nunavut, and they have attempted to represent the
22 views of Inuit.

23 The second party was the

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1 Federal government. Who were these people? Who did they
2 represent? Did they represent me? Did they come up north
3 and consult with whomever or whoever they represented?
4 Did they find that non-aboriginal people were in favour
5 of not protecting land for Inuit in communities? On behalf
6 of the people of Canada, did these government negotiators
7 have a responsibility to ensure that Inuit would not be
8 landless within their own communities? I say the
9 government representatives in the negotiations did have
10 that responsibility.

11 I'm not suggesting that
12 land should not be leased to outsiders. I am not
13 suggesting that all lands now under lease should be
14 expropriated. But I am suggesting that acceptable amounts
15 of land must be claimed and reserved for aboriginal people
16 in all communities in Canada where aboriginal claims are
17 taking place.

18 And by the way, reserving
19 land in the Arctic is not new. The churches, the Hudson's
20 Bay Company and the RCMP have had land reservations within
21 communities for decades.

22 Finally, I am a
23 non-aboriginal native of Saskatchewan, and I have lived

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1 in Cree and Chipewyn areas of that province for five years.

2 I've lived in the Ojibway area of Northwestern Ontario,
3 and I've been a resident of the Baffin region for about
4 29 years. I have seen outsiders control almost every
5 institution and organization in aboriginal areas of
6 Canada, and now, I am witnessing a move for outsider control
7 of the land in this area. Now is the time for the land
8 claims process to ensure a real homeland for the Inuit.

9 Now is the time for a Royal Commission looking into
10 aboriginal affairs to involve itself in this concern.
11 Inuit deserve a guarantee of land within their own
12 communities, and I would hope that this Royal Commission
13 would recognize this right of a land base, not just a place
14 to regularly hunt and trap and fish, but a place to call
15 home. Land that would normally be available for these
16 pursuits is fast being reserved and controlled by
17 non-aboriginal people.

18 Let me finish by referring
19 once again to Judge Rene Dussault, 11:45 this morning,
20 who said, "Where do we start? There is so much to do."

21 I would say that for the well-being of aboriginal people
22 in the Nunavut area that a good place to start would be
23 to make sure that the Inuit have a land base in their home

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1 communities.

2 Thank you very much for the
3 opportunity.

4 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

5 **DUSSAULT:** Well, Mr. Cousins, it has been very helpful
6 to hear your comments. That's true, there are so many
7 things to do. That's true also that the fine print of
8 the Nunavut agreement is not yet available. But I think
9 it is very important to us to have our attention drawn
10 to a situation like this one. Of course, we know that
11 it took many years to come and reach this agreement.

12 So what I'm saying, really,
13 is that we are going to have a look at it with this
14 perspective in mind. I don't know what could be done on
15 this particular agreement, but certainly that's a concern
16 that is larger than this agreement. It's a concern that
17 might be repeated or might be avoided in other
18 circumstances. Also, there might be a solution, also,
19 for what has been done in this agreement. I can't tell,
20 at this point, but it's certainly very useful for us for
21 you to have drawn our attention to this question, and very
22 important. Thank you very much. Mary?

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

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1 Thank you very much. I do remember receiving this concern
2 from you when I was president of Pauktuutit, and I guess
3 so many months have passed and so many things have happened.

4 I feel somewhat guilty. I feel like whenever someone
5 gives me a letter, I have a personal responsibility, and
6 I guess there has been very little progress.

7 However, with respect to
8 your presentation, I think that there are two issues.
9 One of them is the whole lands issue as it relates to the
10 TFN Agreement, and then this whole issue as it relates
11 to the land claims generally. With respect to this issue
12 and how it pertains to the land claims generally, the Royal
13 Commission have heard right across this country that there
14 are many issues with respect to land claims, and the message
15 is very clear to us that we have a responsibility to look
16 at the policies for extinguishment policy in the
17 comprehensive land claims policy, the whole fact that land
18 claims take such a long time to finalize, and we have
19 another issue. So definitely, we will be looking at this
20 issue in the greater land claims question.

21 Now specifically,
22 this issue, as it relates to the TFN agreement, I'm going
23 to ask you if you've had any communication at all with

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1 TFN on this issue. In their ratification process, is there
2 a mechanism for them listening to people like you, and
3 will you be taking that opportunity to make this
4 presentation to them?

5 **ROGER COUSINS:** In
6 response to your first question, yes, I've had limited
7 communication with the TFN people. I have attended at
8 least one information session here at Iqaluit, and I've
9 listened to the frustrations of Inuit from the communities
10 about land, land selection, and I've spoken briefly to
11 Paul Quassa when he was the chief negotiator, and his
12 comments to me was Roger, don't worry about it, we're going
13 to make sure we have land within the communities. I'm
14 not sure that that has been realized.

15 But I would like to go back
16 to one little point in my presentation, and that is if
17 TFN represents Inuit in a land claims negotiation, that's
18 fine. But the other people at the table, the Canadian
19 government officials, do they represent me, and if they
20 do, surely those are the people that should be talking
21 to non-aboriginal people. But of course, as you know,
22 the process didn't go that way, and the Canadian government
23 officials didn't find it necessary to consult with anybody

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1 up here, or if they did, I didn't hear about it. But I
2 have spoken briefly to Paul Quasa*.

3 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

4 I was just wondering, I guess, in the public consultation
5 process, the only people that were consulted were Inuit?

6 **ROGER COUSINS:** Well, I
7 think the answer to that question is that the second party
8 in the negotiations, the Government of Canada, or Her
9 Majesty in Right of Canada, I think, is the way it's worded
10 in the agreement in principle, they found it, I would say,
11 unnecessary to consult with, have meetings with, any
12 Canadian, aboriginal or otherwise--certainly not us.

13 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

14 Thank you very much for your presentation.

15 **SIMON MACDERMOTT:** The
16 next speaker will be Lazarus Arreak. He will be talking
17 about Inuit past and future.

18 **LAZARUS ARREAK:**

19 [Translator] I am Lazarus Arreak. First of all, I would
20 like to say I am not going to submit any document to you,
21 since I don't have any, and also, I am not elected. I
22 just want you to know. I would like to speak, I think,
23 especially overseas, there was one guy, Ghandi, and he

4 Mr. Chairman, I have three
5 kids and a wife. Since I love my children, and they're
6 really healthy, and I have a good wife, that she can work
7 and do housework, but I want to make changes, and I wanted
8 to make changes in my life, I quit drinking. Just looking
9 at myself, when I woke up, one morning when I woke up,
10 I think it would be better if I quit drinking, because
11 I was concerned about the welfare of my family. I can
12 go out to the bars or dances, and I can drive my car.
13 I can drive the car since I don't drink any more when I
14 go out. I'm not complaining about the people who drink,
15 like the people down south, or I have never been to Tuvvik
16 either. I quit drinking on my own. But I don't agree
17 that people that use a lot of the money for air fare.
18 They go to detox centres, and when they come back, they
19 start drinking twice as much. They're losing a lot of
20 money sending these people out to detox centres.

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1 call it in the Eastern Arctic. When I was a kid, we didn't
2 have TV. We didn't even have ski-doo's then. They were
3 not available then, especially the Inuktitut literatures,
4 and even our language, the word "government" didn't really
5 exist when I was a kid. I can even remember my mother
6 stated when they were constructing a school, she told me
7 that I would be attending that school, and the one that
8 was speaking previously. Roger Cousins was the first
9 teacher I had. Isn't that so, Roger? I also can remember
10 when I couldn't go to a higher grade in [Nunasaq?], and
11 eventually, I had to go to a different province, to
12 Manitoba.

13 Now the aboriginal people
14 are going through a hard time, and they have a heavy
15 mandate. They have to look at things in a more positive
16 way, like we have to look at the good side of everybody
17 more. Maybe if I explain to you a little bit. Like
18 looking at Naki, you have been there for a long time, and
19 you are a good model, and all your children are good models.
20 They can work. We are very proud of you, because we have
21 to start looking at life more positively. I don't have
22 a grandmother right now. If I were to choose somebody,
23 I would choose you as a grandmother.

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1 [Presentation continues in
2 English] Nunavut is something exciting, but it's much
3 like marriage, where in marriage, you take one set of
4 problems, hers, and then one set of problems, his, and
5 then you put them together. If you remember your math,
6 one plus one equals two, so in marriage, what you are doing
7 is you are doubling your problems, so in that way, Nunavut
8 is much the same.

9 One thing about marriage,
10 Mr. Chairman, is that at least you have a teammate. You
11 have someone that can help you with your problems. So
12 it's much like Nunavut as well. We will have a set of
13 problems that we didn't have before, but at least we will
14 have other Inuit to help us.

15 Nunavut also means more
16 work. What we must now do is prepare ourselves by
17 attending courses, talking. We can no longer depend
18 entirely on the school system.

19 The real key to our future
20 lies in the home. Each one of our homes is much stronger
21 than any institution that we have in Canada, or anywhere
22 else in the world, for that matter.

23 We can no longer sit back.

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1 What we must do is go out, participate, get involved in
2 the dialogue, conversations, reading, writing. There is
3 really one secret to life that I've learned in my short
4 life. If you want to do anything, go anywhere, there's
5 only one word that describes it all. Mr. Chairman, it
6 happens to be a four-letter word. It's "work." Things
7 don't get done by themselves. You've got to go out and
8 do the work. You've got to go out and plan, you've got
9 to go out and do everything that is required.

10 There's another key among
11 the Inuit, and that is women. To me, women are the key
12 in our future. You educate them, and in turn, you have
13 educated a whole generation. So I feel in our future in
14 Nunavut, we must focus on the women, make sure that they
15 have the opportunity and the means to get their training
16 and education.

17 There's another feeling I
18 have, and that is on civilization in general. I feel it's
19 getting too soft. One demonstration may be one
20 institution we have in town. It's a correctional centre.

21 Where else, Mr. Chairman, can you get three square meals
22 a day, get recreation activities, get good service and
23 very good accommodation? This is more than a few of my

18 Opportunities have never
19 been greater among my people. The future is exciting.
20 For example, the communication system we have up here,
21 when you think back to when I was a child, we had no TV,
22 no television, no nothing. Today, I can know the same
23 second as someone in New York when the Pope is shot. I

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1 can know the same instant as someone in New York does.

2 This is due to satellite TV.

3 Also, we have more
4 resources. We have more books, more equipment. We also
5 have the use of our own institutions, Inuit Broadcasting
6 Corporation, CBC Radio and TV, papers. A lot of these
7 are delivered in our language as well. We even have Inuit
8 in the Royal Commission. We even have our own Inuit MPs.

9 In fact, our language, Inuktitut, has been spoken in the
10 house, and it's not the first time.

11 So Mr. Chairman, what I'm
12 trying to say is that Inuit are remarkable, in one sense,
13 because Inuit have absorbed and progressed--if that's a
14 good word, "progressed"--in 30 or 40 years what the western
15 civilization took hundreds or even thousands of years,
16 from the horse and buggy to the space age. If you think
17 back to when I was a child, we had no TV, no television,
18 no nothing. So we, as a people, have been forced to absorb
19 what was absorbed over thousands of years, and it's no
20 wonder we have problems here. What person would not?

21 When you hear of resources,
22 you think of something valuable--oil and gas--and
23 recently, in the Yellowknife area, diamonds. But the real

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1 resources and the most valuable resources among the Inuit
2 we have today are our young people. They are our future.
3 What we must do is assist them a little bit more than
4 what we have done in the past. For example, if they come
5 to you with a question, we should take the time to answer
6 it, and if we cannot, we can refer them to somebody else
7 or give them the dictionary. Some things, I guess, we
8 older can do for these young people. And in turn, the
9 kids should not be afraid to ask questions, and they should
10 not be afraid of work, that four-letter word, because we
11 need nurses, doctors and lawyers in our future. These
12 have been not traditional jobs among our people. We also
13 need authors, people that can write, because a lot of our
14 history is oral or verbal. Our next step should be to
15 record our history on paper.

16 Leaders--what we must do,
17 we, as Inuit, is that we must respect our leaders a little
18 bit more than we have in the past, and we should also assist
19 them a little bit more, give them feedback. Also, we
20 should keep in mind that even though they hold these
21 important offices and responsibilities, they are still
22 human, and we should also be proud of them, that they have
23 taken the time to take on this task.

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1 To date, Inuit have been
2 a very accommodating people. We have been generally
3 patient, and we have been generally very reasonable. It
4 is perhaps time for the rest of Canadians to display those
5 traits upon the Inuit. We need the Canadians to be
6 patient, we need the Canadians to be accommodating, and
7 we need the Canadians to be reasonable towards us, give
8 us time to practice, get trained, and do the work that
9 is required to govern our own territory.

10 It is also time for our
11 people to be a bit more assertive than we have been in
12 the past. It was gratifying, Mr. Chairman, though, that
13 Inuit were recently rewarded with an affirmative vote in
14 the recent plebiscite to divide the Northwest Territories,
15 so patience does pay off.

16 There is one thing that I'm
17 going to request of the Commission. There may be one thing
18 that you may be able to do for me, or for our people.
19 I think it's about time for Inuit to be defined separately
20 and individually as Inuit. For example, in the past, Inuit
21 have been defined and described as Indians, so I think
22 the next step that maybe the Commission could begin to
23 do is there should be a separate definition of Inuit, be

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1 it in the Constitution, be it anywhere else, but I think
2 that's what the Commission may wish to do is ensure that
3 there is a separate definition of Inuit.

4 With that, I would like to
5 thank the Commission for allowing me to make this
6 presentation. I just decided, as I walked in this morning,
7 that maybe I should speak with you, so in turn, I would
8 like to thank all of you for taking the time to help me
9 out.

10 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

11 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for giving us such a
12 thoughtful speech. You certainly made a good decision
13 this morning when you decided to come and make a
14 presentation. We certainly have appreciated your
15 comments about moving toward a positive approach to the
16 future, and we are going to look at the whole transcript.
17 What you've said will be transcribed at length, and we're
18 going to look at it again. There is certainly food for
19 thought there. Thank you very much.

20 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I would like to thank you
22 very much, Lazarus, for your excellent presentation. Just
23 a few comments. One of them is that I think leaders may

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1 be elected, but there are people who are leaders, too,
2 and they aren't elected, and I think you are one of them.

3 Before we started our
4 hearings, the Commissioners, especially the aboriginal
5 Commissioners, said many things, and one of the things
6 that the aboriginal Commissioners felt very strongly about
7 was that we must hear from all people, not only our leaders,
8 because they're the people who you usually hear from, but
9 then there are people who are not necessarily elected,
10 but we have to hear from them as well, and I think that
11 was a very, very good decision.

12 As we go through our
13 hearings, we're encouraging people, aboriginal people and
14 non-aboriginal people, to come to us and to help us with
15 the many difficult questions that we have facing us.

16 Secondly, I was very, very
17 touched by your words, because I, like you, do believe
18 that Inuit have an incredible reputation as nation
19 builders, as sharers, and negotiators, and I think that
20 we have much to teach non-aboriginal Canadians, and I think
21 that we have much to give to this exercise of nation
22 building.

23 When you said to the

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1 Commission make sure that you do whatever is necessary
2 so that Inuit are defined separately from Indians, I think
3 all Inuit that I've ever met share that concern, especially
4 the Inuit who are at the Royal Commission. They often
5 say we're small in numbers compared to the aboriginal
6 peoples who work at this Commission. We are different,
7 and that difference must be stressed at all times, and
8 I think that there is some progress made, because at least
9 in the highest law of the country, they do at least say
10 that aboriginal peoples are Inuit, Indians and Metis.
11 But you're right, we still have further to go, but I just
12 wanted to let you know that there are many Inuit who share
13 that vision.

14 Thank you.

15 **SIMON MACDERMOTT:** Our
16 final speaker for today will be Bryan Pearson.

17 **BRYAN PEARSON:** Thank you
18 very much. Good afternoon, and thank you for this
19 opportunity to address the Commission. The last Royal
20 Commission that we addressed in this community was the
21 Carruthers Commission some 20-odd years ago, and we're
22 honoured to have you here, and that hopefully you will
23 gain some insight into the needs of northerners from your

During the past 30 years,
we have seen a tremendous improvement in health all across
the north. Much of it can be attributed to better housing.
Most communities now enjoy excellent water and sewage

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1 services. But even with all the new amenities, the state
2 of the public's health is still not good. The outbreak
3 of so-called "Hamburger Disease" in Arviat and the deaths
4 that resulted are considered the most serious outbreak
5 of its kind in history. Meningitis continues to spring
6 up, killing children and adults. Tooth decay, ear
7 disease, skin disorders, venereal disease are on the
8 increase. Inuit women suffer from the highest rate of
9 death from lung cancer in the world. Tuberculosis is still
10 with us. Scabies and Impetigo show up on many kinds of
11 faces all across the north. Alcohol, tobacco syndrome
12 still affect many children, while many of the very young
13 children smoke cigarettes themselves. Suicide is
14 epidemic, and obesity is evident in the population as a
15 whole.

16 One of the major factors
17 contributing to the poor health of the people is that too
18 few wash their hands. Many adults and children never wash
19 their hands from one day to the next. Most school kids
20 are encouraged to clean their teeth during the day in
21 school, but none are taught to wash their hands. In fact,
22 the facilities are inadequate in most schools to enable
23 a handwashing program to be developed. Dirty hands are

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1 a major cause of health problems in human beings. The
2 common cold is easily transmitted from one person to
3 another by hand. Careful and thorough washing of the hands
4 will greatly reduce the risk of infection.

5 We newcomers to the north
6 will recall, as kids, how we were continuously harassed
7 by our parents to wash our hands, and don't forget behind
8 your ears. We have failed the people of the north. We
9 have not provided them with any information of this nature.
10 Igloos and tents did not come with a sink or a bar of
11 soap. They were not necessary in those days. Times have
12 changed.

13 Adult education could have
14 really helped the people enter the modern world without
15 the terrible costs that they have suffered. Our
16 government in Yellowknife seems to feel, as the government
17 in Ottawa used to admit, that at least one generation has
18 to be sacrificed. They have closed what few adult
19 education centres we had, and have moved them all under
20 the big umbrella of Arctic College. Adult education never
21 did adequately address the real needs of the people, but
22 it was at least accessible. Provision should have been
23 made to allow older people to attend adult education, as

16 Will people continue to die
17 through ignorance, or will the politicians in Yellowknife,
18 who have certainly washed their hands, begin to act in
19 a responsible manner and provide the funds necessary to
20 reestablish adult education facilities all across the
21 north? A program of preventative medicine surely is one
22 whose time has come. The people of the north should be
23 able to look forward to a future of good health and

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1 happiness. Without that, land claims will be meaningless.

2 Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

4 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much. I think you've certainly
5 put your finger on a very important issue. Preventative
6 medicine and education is fundamental.

7 Have you established
8 contact--I suppose you did--with the--this morning, we
9 had people from the Health Board, for example, and you
10 must have discussed that reality and the problems that
11 is within the community in terms of information and what
12 has been done to try to give better information and
13 understanding on some of the basic principles that lie
14 behind that kind of preventative medicine. Is there a
15 link with the health board on an issue like this, or
16 somebody like you? Is there some co-ordination, sharing
17 of thoughts? Could you expand?

18 **BRYAN PEARSON:** My
19 experience, 36 years now in this community, shows that
20 there is little co-operation between the Departments of
21 Education and Health, for example. There was a feeble
22 approach years ago to establish adult education centres
23 throughout the north where these sort of basic homemaking

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1 skills were taught.

2 Mr. Arreak pointed out this
3 morning that the Inuit society is an oral society. It
4 is not one that has had a history of the written word,
5 so that people do not read. People learn much easier by
6 example, by seeing things, by experiencing things. It
7 would have been a simple matter for the government, the
8 Federal government, and later the Territorial
9 government--it's still not too late, of course--to
10 establish simple adult education programs in the
11 communities to co-ordinate, to have a meeting of minds
12 between the educators, the public health people, the
13 medical profession that is screaming now about the
14 incredible costs of medical care to this region.

15 Much of the work of the
16 doctors and the medical staff could be reduced if there
17 were more native people involved in the medical profession,
18 if the educators, as I said, and the medical profession
19 got together and examined what the problems are, what the
20 issues are. Arviat, Eskimo Point, was just an amazing
21 example.

22 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

23 **DUSSAULT:** Well, as you've just said, it's never too late

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1 to act, and do you feel that the fact that there would
2 be a separate government closer to the people in the Eastern
3 Arctic will help to co-ordinate and bring together
4 educators, health professionals and also the people who
5 are responsible for their own community life to think about
6 solutions that are pretty basic and could make a big
7 difference in terms of the cost expenditures, human cost
8 and so forth. Do you think that there is a greater hope
9 that this could be achieved through a separate government
10 from Yellowknife, this new government that's going to take
11 place in seven or eight years?

12 **BRYAN PEARSON:** Well, with
13 all due respect, I am concerned. A separate government
14 from Yellowknife, as I think Saalie Peter pointed out well
15 this morning, really is fine if the seat of the government
16 happens to be at Eskimo Point or Arviat, and the people
17 in Arviat are fine. But the distance from Arviat to Cape
18 Dorset and the distance from Arviat to Yellowknife, really
19 there isn't very much that can be done about that. I don't
20 think that there is any improvement likely.

21 The effort has got to be
22 in education. The education system is not working. This
23 school will have its graduation in the next week or so.

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1 There are two academic graduates. The school has been
2 established in this community since 1955, and there will
3 be two graduates at the academic level, and I believe 12
4 or 13 at other levels, whatever those levels are.

5 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

6 **DUSSAULT:** Could you just explain to me what is the
7 academic level, in comparison with the other levels?

8 **BRYAN PEARSON:** Well, that
9 would be the standard Canadian academic--pardon me?

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

11 University entrance.

12 **BRYAN PEARSON:** Yes, the
13 grade 12 level--two--and I believe one of those graduates
14 is a person of native origin. Where do you start? How
15 do you resolve the problem? Unless the parents are
16 involved in the whole process, unless the parents have
17 an understanding and are able to encourage the kids to
18 participate, then how can you expect suddenly things to
19 happen? They don't happen by magic. There has to be a
20 process. You cannot sacrifice any generation, because
21 then you break the link in the chain, and that's what
22 happened. The Federal government broke the link, and the
23 Territorial government never patched up that link.

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1 I suggested, when I came
2 here 35 years ago, throw all the kids out of the schools
3 and put the parents in there, and if the parents had had
4 an opportunity to learn--the successful people in this
5 community, the breadwinners, the men have large families,
6 who work, who are reliable leaders of the community, have
7 one thing in common--they never went to school. Many of
8 the people that have spoken to you in the last few days
9 have never been to school.

10 The next group of
11 successful people are those who were fortunate to go to
12 residential schools in places like Churchill. They are
13 tremendously educated. John Amagoalit, Imo Nuqiquak,
14 David Audlakiak, Anne Hanson attended the Churchill
15 Vocational School. There was discipline, there was
16 instruction, and that's where they came from, John
17 Amagoalit and his friends, and perhaps the people here.
18 That system worked. Discipline works. Family
19 involvement.

20 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

21 **DUSSAULT:** We realize, with the demographic system, that
22 education is very, very important, but the question is
23 always how to trigger when there is kind of a generation

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1 gap, as you've mentioned, how to bring that change quick
2 enough to avoid losing another generation, because that's
3 the concern. When you have figures like the ones you've
4 just given us, it's not normal. It's not a normal
5 situation. And when you speak about adult education
6 centres for preventive health measures and so forth, it's
7 the same. What kind of effort has been done by the schools
8 to reach the parents and to try to make them understand
9 the importance of education for their kids? Are you aware?

10 **BRYAN PEARSON:** Well, they
11 make a tremendous effort. They are continuously concerned
12 about it. They try very hard to communicate. But the
13 breakdown seems to be occurring, in my experience, at the
14 elementary level. For example, this high school here has
15 difficulty in maintaining standards because the product
16 that it receives with which to work, the grade seven student
17 that arrives here, is not properly prepared for the
18 academic world. And so we go back one step further. We
19 go to elementary level, we go beyond that, and we go to
20 preschool. There should be massive efforts made all
21 across the north to develop preschool education so that
22 kids go into the system prepared and ready for an education,
23 instead of, as Saali Peter has so poignantly pointed out

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1 this morning, he went into school, made a noise, and was
2 punished for it.

3 We're dealing with an
4 isolated white man's system of education, on one hand,
5 and on the other hand, we're dealing with a race of people
6 that we don't really understand, a race of people with
7 totally different values, totally different ideas, totally
8 different concepts, and we're trying to fit them into this
9 strange white man's ways, and it isn't working, it hasn't
10 worked, and it won't work until we wake up and make some
11 effort at the preschool level and at the adult level and
12 try and meld the two together.

13 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

14 I have no questions. I would just like to thank Mr.
15 Pearson for his presentation. Thank you.

16 **COMMISSIONER RENE**

17 **DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for being with us.

18 I think this brings us to
19 a natural conclusion of this phase of our public hearings
20 in Iqaluit. We are going to have private consultation
21 this afternoon and tomorrow morning. We will be visiting
22 people in their houses, in private houses, which have been
23 requested from people who could not come to meet with us

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1 here, for us to go and visit them. We're going to also
2 visit institutions. Tomorrow morning, we're going to the
3 correctional centre for youth and adults.

4 We certainly learned a lot
5 in the last two days. This is a start. I would again
6 remind you that anybody who would want to get in touch
7 with us, either orally, through the 800 lines, the numbers
8 are in the materials that have finally arrived, or to send
9 us, in a written form, a letter or a brief, additional
10 ideas as to what should be done, because again, we're
11 looking for solutions, and solutions are, most of the time,
12 at the community level, and close to the ground and close
13 to the people. You're most welcome, because again, we
14 will be able to propose things only to the measure that
15 people would have given us important clues as to what could
16 work, what has been seen as a failing experience. We are
17 going to have some more academic research, but certainly
18 the information that we get from hearing like this is the
19 bulk of the information that we need for solutions.

20 Thank you very much again
21 for being with us.

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:**

23 Before everybody goes, I would like to extend my

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1 appreciation to Kilapik Barns, our local community
2 co-ordinator, Naki Ecko, for the Commissioner of the day,
3 the media for covering this, and the people for coming
4 and the school for having us. And maybe before we go,
5 we could have Naki say a prayer, and I would also like
6 to extend my thanks to the translators and interpreters,
7 Mary Nashook and Alice Nineogat.

8 **[Closing Prayer]**

9 --- Whereupon the Commission adjourned at 1:30
10 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 1992.

11