

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: ANICINABE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM
FORT ALEXANDER, MANITOBA

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30 1992

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"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

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**Royal Commission on
October 30, 1992**

Aboriginal Peoples

1 Fort Alexander, Manitoba

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, October 30, 1992

3 at 9:15 a.m.

4 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Good

5 morning. I would like to welcome you to Day 2 of the
6 Aboriginal Commission. We have just now completed a Pipe
7 Ceremony, and we are now going to have a Memorial Song
8 in honour of an Elder community member who has just passed
9 away, followed by the Opening Song for today.

10 I will ask all of you to stand and remain
11 standing for the Morning Prayer from Elder Jack Star.
12 (Memorial Song and Opening Prayer)

13 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

14 Meegwitch, Jack Star, for the Morning Prayer.

15 We are all set to go now with Day 2 of
16 the Royal Commission. Before I go through the Agenda,
17 I would like to introduce the head table.

18 To my left is Commissioner Mary Sillett,
19 and to my right is Commissioner Paul Chartrand. At the
20 far end we will have Elder Jack Star.

21 I would just like to go over the Agenda
22 before we get rolling here. At 8:45 to 9:00 we will have
23 Chief Jerry Fontaine doing a presentation. We will have
24 our young people coming up, following Jerry's

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1 presentation, followed by the Elders' presentation. Then
2 we have Dr. Sheehan coming in to do a presentation on the
3 health issue.

4 I don't know if we are going to make the
5 coffee break from 9:50 to 10:00. If we don't, we will
6 follow through from 10:00 to 12:00 with the Mini Roundtable
7 Discussion on Anicinabe government, with the topics to
8 include Anicinabe government, Anicinabe laws,
9 environment.

10 At our head table our Panel speakers will
11 be the Chief from Hollow Water, Mr. Rod Bushie, Councillors
12 from Black River, Warren Bird and Billy Bird, and Chief
13 Jerry Fontaine from Sagkeeng First Nations.

14 At 12:00 we will break for lunch, and
15 from 1:00 to 4:00 this afternoon we will have individual
16 presentations.

17 That is the agenda for this morning.
18 I would like to start off by calling Chief Fontaine to
19 come up and do the presentation. Our Youth Council
20 representatives are Winona Fontaine from the high school,
21 Tony Sinclair from Anicinabe School, and Jill Henderson
22 from the Sagkeeng School. Mr. George Courchene is the
23 Elder presenter this morning. And then we will have Dr.
24 Sheehan.

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1 Just before we start, I would like to
2 ask for opening remarks from our two Commissioners. I
3 will have Mary start it off this morning.

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Good
5 morning.

6 I want to begin by thanking all of you
7 for attending this session of the Royal Commission on
8 Aboriginal Peoples being held here this morning at
9 Anicinabe School with Sagkeeng First Nations.

10 This is the second day, as Gerald
11 Courchene has already told you, of our sitting here. We
12 were made very welcome yesterday. I am fortunate in having
13 friends here in this community, and it is not the first
14 time I have been here, sometimes to share in a sense of
15 loss, but one always feels welcome, particularly so last
16 night in the way that we were honoured by the community.

17 It is that sense of community which one
18 does not have living in the city, and I think that sense
19 of community of the Anicinabe is something that is very
20 fundamental and underlies the desire for self-government.

21 I was reminded, too, of one of the great
22 qualities of the Anicinabe that is often overlooked. We
23 know that, generally, the Anicinabe are overlooked, have
24 been overlooked in history and are still being overlooked.

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1 One of the great qualities that I like to emphasize, which
2 has been overlooked, is the humour of the people, which
3 is a feature of their strength.

4 I remember some months ago someone wrote
5 an editorial in the national Globe and Mail newspaper,
6 telling about the humour of, I believe, Gerald McMaster,
7 an Ojibway from Ontario. They lauded the value of humour
8 to really cement people, to bring people together. I think
9 we can assist building a vision of Canada like that.

10 I was actually the butt of some of that
11 humour myself last night. On my way out someone had moved
12 the rental car that I had to drive, and I was groping around
13 in the dark. Earlier in the afternoon we had been advised
14 that we ought to act as messengers to the government
15 regarding the wishes of the Anicinabe, and someone said,
16 "Look, our messenger is lost."

17 You may know we have a broad mandate.
18 It was given to us pursuant to the Prime Minister's special
19 representative, the Chief Justice of Canada, Brian
20 Dickson, over a year ago. The Prime Minister accepted
21 those recommendations.

22 There are seven people sitting on this
23 Commission. We have split up into two or three groups
24 so that we can visit many communities across the country.

3 Who are they? There are two Co-Chairs.

15 I am a Métis from Manitoba. I grew up not very far from
16 here on the southeast shores of Lake Manitoba in a place
17 called St. Laurent, Manitoba.

StenoTran

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1 We have a lot of work to do and we need
2 your help. As we were told yesterday, the Royal Commission
3 can be useful as a forum so that the Anicinabe can tell
4 their story and express their views. In that way, perhaps
5 we can engender a useful dialogue amongst Canadians so
6 that, together, we can build a better vision of Canada.

7 We have a good agenda here today to do
8 that. We are going to hear from the Elders, we are going
9 to hear from the young people, we are going to hear from
10 the people on the Councils, and later on this afternoon
11 we are going to hear from individuals. I look forward
12 very much to these presentations. I think we will hear
13 both about matters concerning individuals as well as the
14 important issues concerning the group.

15 Thank you very much, and I look forward
16 to the day.

17 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

18 Meegwitch, Commissioner Paul Chartrand. I will ask
19 Commissioner Mary Sillett now.

20 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
21 very much, Gerald.

22 Before I begin, I would like to introduce
23 the Royal Commission staff -- and I do this as a matter
24 of practice. I think we rarely recognize the people who

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1 do the really hard work in putting these things together.

2

3 I am going to begin by recognizing our
4 Regional Co-ordinator, Ernie Blais. Also our Community
5 Co-ordinators, Clem Courchene and Rhonda Houston. Our
6 Royal Commission staff that work permanently in Ottawa
7 are Jim Compton, who works in the Communications Section;
8 Becky Printup and Katherine Boissoneau, who work in Public
9 Participation; Mary Jane Commanda, who works with the
10 Information Section of the Royal Commission. We also have
11 with us Michael Cassidy who is working on contract with
12 the Commission to produce summaries of our discussions.

13 We also have Shirley Sereney who is the
14 Court Reporter, and John from ISTS -- I don't know his
15 last name.

16 I would like to acknowledge the
17 Moderator, Gerald Courchene, and the Commissioner of the
18 Day and our Elder and your Elder, Jack Star, and our
19 interpreter, Henry Courchene. I thank them for their
20 assistance.

21 It is both an honour and a privilege to
22 be here in Sagkeeng upon the invitation of Chief Jerry
23 Fontaine and the Sagkeeng First Nation Band. Yesterday's
24 expressions of hospitality and generosity and the

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1 excellent feast and the beautiful gifts will remain with
2 me for a long time. It gives me a renewed sense of optimism
3 and energy in the tremendous tasks that we have to do.

4 This community, like many other
5 communities that we have visited and that we will visit,
6 have given us much. I feel that we have a responsibility
7 to give our best. Following the other Commissioners as I do,
8 I know that will happen.

9 I think, too, we all have to recognize
10 that the Royal Commission is only one initiative that is
11 under way to deal with the many important issues that
12 Anicinabe, Inuit and Métis are facing. I would like to
13 recognize the work of the other organizations -- for
14 example, your own Band, your Assembly of First Nations,
15 your provincial association. They are doing some very,
16 very important work, and I wish them well in the work they
17 are doing.

18 Thank you very much.

19 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

20 Meegwitch, Mary.

21 We will now get started with the agenda
22 and ask for a presentation from Chief Jerry Fontaine.

23 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE, SAGKEENG FIRST**

24 **NATION:** Bonjour. Good morning.

7 As well, by way of introduction, I will
8 have the young people to my left introduce themselves as
9 well. I will introduce George Matthew Courchene, Elder,
10 and Dr. Sheehan.

15 Sagkeeng, as I indicated as well, is a
16 community that draws on the strength, that draws on the
17 will of the people. I take great heart in being able to
18 say that.

24 It is important to note that the youth

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1 are involved in every process in the day-to-day affairs
2 of Sagkeeng. As we have identified, they are our future
3 and they represent the hope and the promise of our people.

4

5 We also have George Courchene who
6 represents the knowledge and wisdom of the Anicinabe on
7 Sagkeeng. I feel very warm and very protected by having
8 them sit on either side of me.

9 In terms of the Royal Commission, it is
10 essentially a splendid idea. In light of the recent
11 Constitutional Referendum, its role becomes ever more
12 significant for our people. Initially, I had some
13 concerns respecting the political will and the intent of
14 the federal government. As we have seen time and again,
15 initiatives which may have had significant importance to
16 Canadians in general have been impacted by ego, political
17 gain and insincerity.

18 I just want to identify three glaring
19 examples of how this sitting government has refused to
20 acknowledge the concerns of Canadians in general.

21 First, we saw the demise of the Meech
22 Lake Accord. The majority of Canadians were in apparent
23 disagreement with the body of the Accord. Yet, the federal
24 government sought to roll the dice and thus cajole the

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1 Canadian public into accepting what was morally wrong and
2 dangerous. If it were not for Elijah Harper, the Meech
3 Lake Accord, as it was introduced then, may have been in
4 existence today.

5 Second, the Free Trade Agreement was
6 either a case of insanity or a necessity. This much
7 ballyhooed U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, which took
8 effect on January 1, 1989, has staked Canada's future on
9 the success of the trade pact.

10 As well, on August 12, 1992 the Final
11 Draft of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA,
12 was made. Many Canadians fear the cultural impact of
13 closer economic ties with the United States, the continued
14 economic recession, as well as the inferior environmental
15 and labour standards of Mexico. Canadians, stand guard.

16 Third, the GST became applicable on
17 January 1, 1991. Despite claims by learned economists
18 that the GST would batter an already-fragile economy and
19 spark greater inflation and that the GST would add a
20 one-time 2 to 3 per cent increase to the cost of living
21 in Canada, it was implemented.

22 The point I am trying to make in using
23 these examples is that, while the majority of Canadians
24 were opposed to the implementation and intent of these

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1 initiatives, the federal government disregarded the
2 opinion of the vast majority of the Canadian public and
3 sought to impose them nonetheless.

4 The track record of this government on
5 listening to its citizens is one that leaves a lot to be
6 desired. I think this is what troubles me most about this
7 exercise.

8 The political will must be there. The
9 political powers must listen and pay heed to the synergy
10 created; otherwise, it becomes just another exercise in
11 futility.

12 In terms of the Royal Commission itself,
13 from what I understand, it can subpoena witnesses, take
14 evidence under oath, requisition documents, and hire
15 expert staff. The purpose of this, I assume, is to provide
16 a thorough examination.

17 The advice secured from such
18 deliberations would give the Commission added impetus and
19 a powerful legal argument. However, it remains to be seen
20 whether this government will use the information acquired
21 to really do something or use it as an excuse to do nothing
22 while a protracted inquiry polls the Canadian public's
23 passion, commitment and support to Anicinabe peoples.

24 First Nations citizens must participate

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1 at every opportunity in this process established by the
2 Commission. The effectiveness and effect of the
3 Commission at the grassroots level is important. We
4 should feel as though the Commission and its mandate are
5 ours and that it exists to provide Anicinabe with a vehicle
6 to voice concerns, needs and aspirations. We must feel
7 as though we belong.

8 The citizens of Sagkeeng have always
9 maintained that one drawback to any initiative initiated
10 by the government, for example the constitutional process,
11 is that it sought to exclude the average Canadian citizen.
12 The ruling élite, however, have been dealt a severe blow
13 with respect to the latest constitutional results.
14 Granted, Canadian society may not have evolved to the point
15 where each Canadian citizen has the opportunity to
16 participate in serious discussions, but there must be
17 subtle recognition of their importance, and we hold true
18 to that frame of thought here in Sagkeeng.

19 Participatory democracy is a concept
20 that we understand and that we aspire to. The citizens
21 of Sagkeeng have reiterated time and again that they must
22 be involved in the political, financial, economic, and
23 social process. This ensures political stability,
24 finding a remedy for the social ills that plague our people,

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1 and establishing a foundation for economic development
2 and progress.

3 In discussions with leaders of other
4 First Nations, we agree that the Commission can be all
5 things to all people. It requires a clear focus and
6 direction.

7 There are many pressing issues affecting
8 Anicinabe. We must be careful never to lose sight of where
9 we intend to go. We must avoid confusing symptoms with
10 problems. Distinguishing long-term from short-term
11 aspects must be done very carefully.

12 As was indicated, government ministers
13 and their officials, First Nations leaders and citizens
14 could be subpoenaed. Therefore, information and data
15 collected must be analyzed to determine government
16 strategy and regulations, available financial resources,
17 and their impact upon short-term and long-term objectives
18 of First Nations governments.

19 I feel that the formulation of
20 alternatives will generate an excitement unparalleled.
21 The Anicinabe will rally around you as we work together
22 to develop a framework for the future.

23 Certainly, alternatives developed with
24 be a welcome change from the status quo. The choice of

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1 the alternative will be justified, and the statement of
2 the action to be taken must be clear. The impact will
3 be far-reaching.

4 At this point I want to make some
5 specific references to Sagkeeng and what we view as a
6 blueprint for Anicinabe government. Again, I just want
7 to caution that it is specific to Sagkeeng.

8 Whereas an Anicinabe government already
9 exists in Canada, the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35,
10 paragraph 1, confirmed and recognized existing Aboriginal
11 and treaty rights. Although the affirmation and
12 recognition of existing rights were considered a
13 substantial step forward, it remained a question of
14 defining those said rights. In light of this, Sagkeeng
15 has embarked upon a process that seeks to define these
16 rights, as seen through the eyes of our Elders, men, women
17 and youth. Te Bwe Win -- we heard that yesterday. The
18 truth is representative of our culture, our needs, our
19 aspirations, our language, and our distinct society.

20 Our people recognize that this
21 constitutional process will lay the foundation for our
22 children and their future. It is our opinion that, as
23 blatant attempts to erode basic treaty rights are made,
24 the Anicinabe throughout the land must assert their

4 The treaty-making process is a model for
5 a bilateral relationship. Nation-to-nation, treaties
6 were negotiated and entered into. Treaties, in essence,
7 recognized and guaranteed Anicinabe government. The
8 Penner Report, for example, recommended the recognition
9 of Anicinabe government as a distinct order of government
10 within the Canadian mosaic, followed by a financial process
11 that would ensure the concept of Anicinabe government.

20 Despite all its good intentions and
21 inadequacy, we have come to realize that the Department
22 of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada must be dismantled.
23 This oppressive and very anachronistic entity must be
24 destroyed. Our sanity depends on this. This federal

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1 bureaucracy represents the last colonial vestige that has
2 prevented Anicinabe from exercising our inherent right
3 to govern and provide for our people.

4 Interestingly enough, this department
5 has caused serious under-development and undermined every
6 positive process that Anicinabe people throughout the
7 country have implemented.

8 As well, the minister responsible for
9 this department assumes a confrontational stance when
10 dealing with our people when, theoretically, he should
11 be acting as advocate. Witness the events at Kahnawake
12 and Kanasatake.

13 One criticism that I have concerning
14 INAC -- and I have many -- and all its good intentions
15 is that it has never understood the economic and social
16 structure that it seeks to address is vastly different.

17 First Nations have reiterated time and again that a
18 prerequisite for economic and social development is an
19 understanding of specific needs and that each First Nation
20 is unique. The department has never understood the
21 complexity of this issue and has refused to entertain any
22 notion for change.

23 As well, there is little respect for
24 First Nations, their government and their people.

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1 As an alternative, Sagkeeng recommends
2 the total dismantling of this department and recommends
3 the legislation of an Anicinabe Government Commission
4 composed of Commissioners which would number 13,
5 representing the 11 provinces and the two territories,
6 or one based on the numbered treaties and those territories
7 without treaties. Each commissioner would be elected by
8 Anicinabe of each particular region and thus would be
9 representative of the people, their needs and their
10 aspirations.

11 Canadian society must understand -- and,
12 in fact, they do -- that Anicinabe are under-represented
13 in vehicles of change and decision-making structures.
14 Approximately two million people identify themselves as
15 of Aboriginal descent, about 4.5 per cent of the
16 population. Again, these people often represent distinct
17 cultural, socio-economic attitudes, and communities. Our
18 total numbers equal the population of the Atlantic Region
19 and of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. On this population
20 basis alone, direct proportional representation would mean
21 a drastic change in the parliamentary scenario if it were
22 to be implemented.

23 For most of our history, as a nation
24 whose political system has depended on a wide exercise

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1 of the vote of the people, it is a sad note that Anicinabe
2 were denied the vote until 1960. This sad historical
3 commentary has meant slow development of civic
4 participation. The effect of non-citizenship has
5 hindered participation and, of course, representation.

6 The times, however, are achanging.
7 Elijah Harper and Meech Lake are synonymous with the
8 rebirth of Anicinabe nationalism; the Mohawks at
9 Kanasatake, Phil Fontaine and the Assembly of Manitoba
10 Chiefs, Georges Erasmus, Mary Sillett and Paul Chartrand
11 of the Royal Commission. Anicinabe have much to
12 contribute. We must now assume the leadership role in
13 Canadian society.

14 The causes and effects of
15 non-citizenship become clear, I think, when we confront
16 the grim realities of Anicinabe society today. Anicinabe
17 have been the least rewarded. Small pockets of
18 population, linguistic diversity, discrimination by
19 Canadian society, cultural isolation, low levels of
20 education and serious poverty have all played a major role.
21 Disturbing realities!

22 Throughout the country, First Nations
23 find themselves in the midst of a silent war. Instead
24 of soldiers dying, there are children starving. Instead

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1 of millions wounded, there is massive unemployment and
2 poverty. Instead of the destruction of bridges and
3 infrastructure, there is the abrogation of treaty and
4 Aboriginal rights.

5 Many economists and historians have
6 proven that a stable and predictable political system that
7 is both effective and honest, in which there is a sense
8 of citizen participation, will enable economic progress
9 to follow. To ensure this, our education system must
10 identify our needs and aspirations. We should have, as
11 one of our basic goals, a high standard of basic literacy.

12 Witness that there is no country with a uniformly-literate
13 population that does not have a relatively high and
14 progressive standard of living. Conversely, there is no
15 country with a generally illiterate population that does.

16 Lives are being ruined and lost because
17 of bad federal government decisions, specifically the
18 Department of Indian Affairs. Never before have so few
19 been so wrong with such a devastating effect on so many.

20 Throughout many First Nations we see the
21 impact of the poverty plunge: the less you have, the less
22 you can do, so the less you have. Poverty is endemic
23 throughout. The department and the federal government
24 in general are uncomfortable when it comes to talking about

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1 equity and fairness. Taking from one to give to another
2 is morally wrong, I think. The poor become poorer while
3 the rich's riches increase dramatically. Thus, the
4 distribution of wealth and economic fairness becomes
5 noticeably more unequal.

6 Poverty is rising rapidly in many of our
7 First Nations. About half the people being added to that
8 poverty list are children, children who represent our
9 future and our promise. The future is certainly not bright
10 for those below the poverty line. Whether we choose to
11 ignore the inequalities, they do exist. It is never easy
12 to explain why we allow children to go hungry and never
13 do anything about it.

14 We recognize the importance of
15 tradition, the importance of our cultural, spiritual and
16 linguistic needs. A new social order? Not really. Just
17 a return to our basic values, beliefs and philosophy that
18 have endured throughout the centuries.

19 As well, many First Nations cannot grow
20 without drastic economic reform or debt relief. For First
21 Nations caught in a debt trap, new policy and financial
22 management regimes support painful restructuring and
23 austerity programs. In many instances, the debt crisis
24 leads to a growth crisis. Living standards plummet,

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1 services decline and, of course, capital investment so
2 critical to economic development and growth is nowhere
3 to be found.

4 More often than not, these financial
5 regimes are poorly designed, difficult to implement and
6 place most of the burden on the very poor. This is the
7 reality. This is a concept which the Department of Indian
8 Affairs promotes.

9 Cutting budgets will not develop
10 infrastructure, create employment and further social
11 programs. Progress mean debt reduction is made at an
12 immense social and human cost.

13 In response to the debt crisis, we should
14 look to multilateral institutions similar to the
15 International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These
16 new institutions could provide long-term structural loans
17 which would enable economic development and growth as well
18 as a more reasonable and cost-effective way of reducing
19 debt.

20 To conclude, the approach taken at
21 Sagkeeng has been one of citizen participation and
22 involvement, to seek consensus, where possible, and to
23 reintroduce a traditional form of government. Sagkeeng
24 recognizes that change is necessary and requires the

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1 support of all its citizens if progress is to be made.

2 Progress will mean legislative
3 enforcement powers. It will mean social justice, economic
4 self-sufficiency, social development and cultural
5 preservation, and the right to establish our own
6 institutions, procedures, processes of Anicinabe
7 government, control over education, health and welfare,
8 language, culture, citizenship, labour, and protection
9 of fish, wildlife and the environment. This is all
10 possible under the Anicinabe traditional form of
11 government.

12 Unilateral collective acts of will at
13 the grassroots level which define Anicinabe government,
14 which develop the institutions with mutual accountability
15 between the leaders and the citizens -- this process must
16 begin at the grassroots level.

17 We feel that government based on the
18 values of the people gender greater loyalty and are
19 probably the most effective at responding to the citizens'
20 needs and the needs of the community. To reiterate,
21 citizens must be involved in the drafting of their
22 constitution and system of government.

23 In closing, the intent this morning was
24 to identify a framework for a process of Anicinabe

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1 government. The task is a great one. I feel that we,
2 as Anicinabe, must maintain focus and clarity. The Royal
3 Commission is an excellent opportunity for Anicinabe to
4 effect an impact change. However, the political will must
5 be evident.

6 Meegwitch.

7 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

8 Meegwitch, Chief Fontaine. I now look forward to hearing
9 from our young people, voices we seldom hear. I would
10 like to start off with Tony Sinclair from Anicinabe School.

11 **TONY SINCLAIR, STUDENT, ANICINABE**

12 **SCHOOL:** My name is Tony Sinclair. I am Junior Chief of
13 Anicinabe School. I am here to speak on behalf of the
14 students of Anicinabe School.

15 We are located on the North Shore of
16 Sagkeeng First Nation. As the youth in this community,
17 we have a number of concerns.

18 One of the biggest concerns we have is
19 that there is nothing for us to do outside of school.
20 There is a lack of recreation in our community. We would
21 like to see a drop-in centre in our community. We see
22 this centre as a place where recreational activities can
23 take place. We would like to see dances, sports programs,
24 pool tables and cultural activities taking place in this

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1 drop-in centre.

2 Another big need is a daycare. There
3 are a lot of young parents in our community. If they do
4 not have a babysitter, then they cannot finish school.
5 It is very urgent that we have a daycare in our community.

6 On the north shore of our community, our
7 roads are in very bad shape. They need to be paved, but
8 not any old way, which show they have been paved. If they
9 are done any old way, we end up with big potholes like
10 we have right now. This makes the roads dangerous,
11 especially for the buses.

12 We would also like to see the water line
13 go all the way through the whole community. Everybody
14 deserves running water.

15 Finally, we would like to have the school
16 board cut funding for Native students who go to school
17 in Powerview or Pine Falls. We have schools in our
18 community. We think these students should attend their
19 own school and be proud to be an Indian.

20 These are some of the issues we think
21 are important. Thank you for listening. Meegwitch.

22 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

23 Meegwitch, Tony. That was Tony Sinclair from Anicinabe
24 School.

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1 We will now hear from Jill Henderson from
2 the Sagkeeng School.

3 **JILL HENDERSON, STUDENT, SAGKEENG**

4 **SCHOOL:** Hi. My name is Jill Henderson. I am Junior
5 Chief of our Junior Chief and Council. I attend Grade
6 8 at Sagkeeng Consolidated School. I am 13 years old and
7 I am currently learning how to speak my own language, which
8 is the Ojibway language. I would have liked to say this
9 speech in Ojibway, but I don't know much Ojibway in order
10 to do this.

11 Language is a system used by human beings
12 to communicate our thoughts and feelings. Through
13 language we are able to do this.

14 All human beings speak a language. For
15 a culture to develop, a language was invented. It is
16 difficult to say how many languages there are. Every
17 language is perfectly suited for the way it is used by
18 the culture of the people speaking it.

19 What my language means to me: I believe
20 that all Aboriginal people should be able to speak their
21 own language because it gives us a sense of pride of who
22 we are as Aboriginal people. I also feel that the younger
23 generation should learn how to speak the language because
24 it is part of our identity and culture. Our language is

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1 our last means as to who we are as Native people. As an
2 individual, I truly wish I could speak Ojibway. Not
3 knowing my language makes me feel sad because I am not
4 able to communicate with people who speak the language.

5 However, I am working on it. Whenever I go to my
6 grandparents' home, they usually speak to me in our
7 language. My mother is also teaching us what she knows.

8 I am paying more attention in our Ojibway classes taught
9 to us in our school.

10 I have heard stories from my mother and
11 grandparents, stories about how they were not allowed to
12 speak their language when they were in the residential
13 schools. Many were punished severely for speaking the
14 language. The residential school tried to strip them of
15 their language and dignity. But thanks to those Elders
16 who never forgot their language, it is slowly coming back
17 to us, giving our people pride and dignity once again.

18 I strongly urge all parents and
19 grandparents to speak to their young ones more frequently
20 in Ojibway. By doing this, we will learn much faster
21 because our classes are not enough to learn our language.

22 We, as Aboriginal people, have lost a
23 great deal in terms of land and resources. Let's not lose
24 our language.

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1 Meegwitch.

2 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

3 Meegwitch, Jill Henderson from Sagkeeng School. I will
4 now call on Winona Fontaine from Sagkeeng High School.

5 **WINONA FONTAINE, STUDENT, SAGKEENG HIGH**

6 **SCHOOL:** Good morning, Elders, Commissioners and guests.

7 My name is Winona Fontaine, and I am in
8 Grade 12 at Fort Alexander High School. This morning I
9 will be talking about the Indian Act, its intentions, and
10 a possible solution for it.

11 The Indian Act of Canada is the principal
12 instrument through which federal jurisdiction over Indians
13 and Native people has been exercised during the last 116
14 years. The intentions of the Indian Act were to protect,
15 civilize and assimilate the Anicinabe people. The
16 government wanted to protect the Anicinabe from European
17 exploit. Missionaries wanted to civilize the Indians and
18 to convert them to Christianity by taking away our
19 language, customs and religion. The European community
20 wanted to assimilate First Nations, to take away our
21 treaties and special status.

22 The Indian Act is not part of the
23 treaties. The basic philosophy behind the Act is
24 demoralizing and dehumanizing. Take, for example,

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1 section 2, paragraph (c):

2 "The expression 'person' means any individual other than
3 an Indian."

4 It is patronizing and paternalistic in tone.

5 The Indian Act should be changed so that
6 it will become a document that will protect Indian land
7 and ensure civil, human, treaty and Aboriginal rights.
8 I think the Indian Act should offer opportunity for
9 development and ongoing process rather than restriction.

10 If we abolish the Indian Act, we must
11 have something to replace it, making our leaders
12 accountable to the people. I urge all community members
13 to sit with our leaders and voice their concerns. I urge
14 our leaders to seriously consider developing a government
15 system that will hold present and future leaders
16 accountable to the people they serve, a government system
17 that will reflect the needs of First Nations people.

18 We talk about self-government, but the
19 place to start developing government structure is here
20 in the community, not halfway across the country.

21 Meegwitch.

22 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

23 Meegwitch, Winona Fontaine and to all three of you. Your
24 contributions here this morning are greatly appreciated.

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1 I would like to call on Elder George
2 Courchene to do his presentation. I understand he has
3 a flip chart at the back that will be brought to the front.

4 Just a reminder to the people in the
5 back. There are headsets available if you are having
6 problems hearing the presentations here this morning.
7 You can get it from the table at the back. We do have
8 the interpreter available this morning.

9 **ELDER GEORGE COURCHENE:** (Native
10 language -- not translated)

11 Good morning, everybody. I will speak
12 a little bit of English, as much as I know.

13 These teachings I am going to be talking
14 about. This old man that I work with, I have been with
15 him for 11 years. He left from here, I think, in 1800,
16 he said, when our white brothers came across into our lands.

17 He was told, when he was a little boy, that he had to
18 come back here to this reserve and tell about these
19 teachings, what the Creator gave us a long time ago.

20 When they left from here, he told me,
21 our white brothers took everything away from our people.

22 The teachings they had they wanted to protect. They went
23 to the mountains, and that is where they protect these
24 teachings.

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1 He lived for 40 years in the mountains
2 by himself to learn about this land. That is what I am
3 going to be talk about.

4 What do these teachings have to do with
5 when we sit here? Because this is the way of life of our
6 Indian people. They say we have to bring it up to the
7 surface and start teaching our young ones, because they
8 are the future. When our students were speaking here,
9 they had a big message for us as teachers. So I will start
10 with that teaching.

11 I am talking about creation, because
12 this first one is the creation.

13 When the Creator made two people at the
14 beginning of time, the Creator gave them Indian law to
15 follow in four directions. He gave them four directions.
16 He gave them sweetgrass, the tree, the animal and the
17 rock. The sweetgrass represents kindness; the tree
18 represents honesty; the animal, sharing; and the rock is
19 strength.

20 When we use the tree to make that pipe
21 you saw this morning -- Mr. Star smoked his pipe. The
22 Creator said to these people, "When you make that pipe,
23 you show me that pipe stem when you want to talk to me."
24 That is what he was doing this morning when he smoked

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1 the pipe.

2 Also, these four directions, he put four
3 eagles in those directions for Indian people. He told
4 these eagles, "Look after my people for me, the Native
5 people. Whatever they want you give them." That is what
6 the Creator said to these people at the beginning of time.

7 Also that direction, the east direction,
8 is the bald eagle. He is the one that brings tobacco for
9 our people. The east-south direction brings that cedar,
10 and that is that golden eagle. The west is that spotted
11 eagle, and it brings that buffalo sage. The north
12 direction is the white eagle, and he brings that food.

13 Yesterday, when we had the feast, these
14 are the things that happened out there when we had the
15 feast. They were there in spirit, these eagles.

16 We have a drum here today. It's a
17 traditional drum, and has four gates which represent those
18 four directions and the eagles.

19 So this is the law that the Creator gave
20 to the Indian people. But there is a little one that came
21 there, too, a third one. He said to the Creator, "You
22 didn't make anything for me." The Creator said, "Yes,
23 I didn't make anything for you." And he got jealous,
24 because he is the bad spirit. "Okay, you didn't make

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1 anything for me," he said to the Creator. "I'm going to
2 go in that circle, that circle of life that you made for
3 your people. That road you made, I will wait for them
4 here. One by one, I'll pull them out from you."

5 We see that every day with our people.
6 He is very powerful. He will do anything to your mind.
7 That's what happens to people today.

8 Also, our white brothers had the same
9 thing, four directions. They were given kindness, to be
10 honest, and to share and to have that strength at that
11 time. Also they were given a Bible, and that is this way
12 of life. It is not a religion. Some people call it a
13 religion; it is just a way of life, the Mother Earth.

14 When they came across here, they didn't
15 call it Canada at that time. It was in 1870. That is
16 the time they came and asked to sign the treaty. At that
17 time, when they came here, whoever had a drum, a pipe,
18 a rattle, they would take it away. They were saying we
19 were doing witchcraft.

20 When they brought the Bible, they
21 brought it upside down. Slowly, it is going back the way
22 it is supposed to be, this Bible. The Old Testament I
23 am talking about, not the New one. The New one has a lot
24 of politics; they only put something there to suit them,

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1 the politicians.

2 When they ask at that time to sign the
3 treaty, our Indian people said, "Okay, I will share my
4 land with you, this much, six inches of land at that time."
5 They agreed, and they signed the paper.

6 That old man drew Ottawa in here. There
7 is a lot of laws in here. Here we have the British crown.
8 Queen Victoria at that time came and asked to sign the
9 treaty. She said, "I will never bring my laws into
10 Canada." Today we see its laws. How many of our people
11 are in jail? Ninety-nine per cent. If you go to Stoney
12 Mountain, you will see our people there. Across the
13 country.

14 When they make these laws, we are not
15 included. We are down here. Today we have to come up,
16 and that is what they are saying, the Creator's workers.
17 We have to start teaching our Native heritage.

18 There is a lot of money, as always. How
19 many times did our Chief go to Ottawa and come home
20 broken-hearted because they can't run their programs?
21 And us, we blame our Chiefs; we blame our people, the
22 leaders; and that is what the government wants -- to fight
23 our people and these laws.

24 Also there is a side road in here. Also

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1 they have a side road here, too. Here they have a lot
2 of things going -- broken homes, drinking, drugs, not
3 working together. Even men steal wives on that road.
4 Even pipe-holders go in here with bad medicine. Suicides
5 -- there is a lot of suicides that go in our reserves.
6 Even people die on this road; they never find that good
7 life that the Creator put for us.

8 Here, too, we always watch TV. In the
9 old country they are always fighting for something. They
10 forgot all about this one here, too. What is the Bible?
11 What did the Creator put in there? Did he put kindness,
12 to be honest, and to love the people? We ask ourselves
13 that.

14 Also they said, when they signed that
15 treaty, "As long as the sun will shine and the grass will
16 grow and the river will flow, there will be a treaty."
17 The reason why our people said that, as long as the women
18 will bring life into Mother Earth and as long as they carry
19 that water, there will be treaty. That is what they meant
20 by that. That is why our people say they are sacred.

21 They are trying to break us as Indian
22 people. Here in the middle we have the sweat lodge. They
23 are getting closer. They put that thing in law that we
24 won't be able to use our heritage any more. When they

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1 came here in 1870, when they signed the treaty, that is
2 what they will do again.

3 They came with police that time, the
4 Northwest Mounted Police. That's what they were called.
5 Today we call them Royal Canadian. At that time it was
6 the Northwest Mounted Police, and those are the ones that
7 took everything away from our people at that time.

8 That is why this old man, they had to
9 leave from here to go the mountains to protect these
10 teachings. There is something to think about, as Indian
11 people. A lot of our people are pipe-holders, even women.

12 We ask ourselves, "Why did the Creator give these pipes?"
13 Because it is going to be harder. Right now it is mild,
14 but it is going to get harder for our little ones in the
15 future. We have to start teaching, and he is the one that
16 is going to help us, the Creator.

17 I don't want to talk about that little
18 green man.

19 We drew a lady here. Before I go on to
20 that lady, I am going to say my name now because I am proud
21 of the women. The Creator put beautiful women on this
22 Mother Earth. My name is George Courchene, George
23 Matthew. That is my Christian name. I used to go to
24 church when I was a young boy; I used to go to church with

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1 my grandfather. But in later years I started having
2 dreams, and I went to see an Elder, and he told me I had
3 to go back to my traditional life. So I did. Now I have
4 a traditional name. I have two names, but I am only going
5 to use one today. My name is Wabapinace(PH); it means
6 Morning Eagle.

7 This morning that eagle woke me up, about
8 three o'clock this morning, and wanted me to offer that
9 tobacco. So I got up and I went and offered that tobacco
10 for all the people that is going to be here today. I am
11 proud they give me that message to offer that tobacco to
12 the Creator, because the Creator made that tobacco for
13 us to offer.

14 When the Creator made this woman, he gave
15 her power to bring life to Mother Earth. The way we see
16 this lady, she is pregnant. When she brings life, that
17 is the way she looks. We drew little eagle feathers in
18 here and also braids his hair in that circle here. When
19 he braids his hair like this, it represents kindness, to
20 be kind when he carries that child, to be a good child
21 when he is born, and also the eagle feathers so that nothing
22 will come inside her bad, always to be kind. This band
23 represents that circle of life, what the Creator put for
24 us.

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1 Also we put colours in that dress as a
2 traditional name. The way we see it, like the grass.
3 Also the Creator said to that lady, "When I give you that
4 power to bring life into Mother Earth, you will have a
5 moon each month. You will cleanse yourself with that moon.
6 You will pass my Creator blood in that moon for four days.
7 After four days, then you are ready to create for me,"
8 the Creator said to that lady.

9 That is why the ladies are very special.
10 We don't abuse our women. Some of us maybe abuse them.
11 For 200 years the ladies never said nothing; they would
12 just sit like this. If they said something, our men would
13 hit them: "You don't know nothing." The Creator didn't
14 make it that way. We are supposed to work together because
15 everything is half and half with that lady. That is why
16 I say we never abuse our women. We have to be proud that
17 they bring this creation.

18 Also they carry that water here. This
19 old man drew that water. He drew a circle of life. The
20 ladies sit outside, and the men sit inside. The reason
21 for that is so nothing can come in, something bad that
22 would destroy us. That is why our ladies sit in that
23 outside circle, because they are powerful -- not in this
24 way, but powerful because they bring life.

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1 We drew a sweat lodge, the teachings.
2 When our white brothers came across in our land, our people
3 got mixed up. This one we see here, we call it Little
4 Boy Drum. It's a water drum. Seeing what is happening
5 to his people, because they used to fight one another and
6 they used bad medicine. While they were walking, they
7 fell down and they died. So this little boy wanted to
8 help his people, but he didn't know how to help them.

9 One day he decided he wanted to go and
10 look for life for his Indian people. He left his clan,
11 and he started to walk east. While he was walking, he
12 came to a creek. Before he crossed that creek, he saw
13 an old man sitting there, and he was thinking, "I should
14 ask this old man where this life flows from." He looked
15 at that old man again, and he thought maybe he wouldn't
16 know. So he crossed that creek and went toward the east.

17 He walked many days, and then he came to an old man sitting.
18 He asked him that question, "Can you tell me where that
19 life flows from?" That old man said, "I can't tell you
20 because I don't know. But go back where you came from,"
21 he told this little boy. So he came back.

22 Now he went south. He travelled many
23 days, and he came to another old man, and he asked him
24 that question: "Can you tell me where that life flows

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1 from?" That old man said, "I can't tell you because I
2 don't know. But go back where you came from," this old
3 man said to that little boy. So he came back.

4 Now he was going to go west. By that
5 time he was pretty tired because he wasn't eating or
6 drinking water. So he went west. He travelled many days,
7 and then he came to another old man, and he asked him that
8 question: "Can you tell me where that life flows from?"

9 That old man said, "I can't tell you because I don't know.
10 But go back where you came from." So he came back.

11 Now he was going to go north. Before
12 I talk about that north direction, about 25 miles from
13 here, that little boy's footprint is in the rock, and there
14 are teachings in there. That little boy must have
15 travelled many days. Today, to go to the mountains from
16 here will take us 18 hours. At the time I am talking about,
17 there were no cars, nothing, so he must have travelled
18 a long time.

19 He went north, and the same thing
20 happened. He came to another old man, and he asked him
21 that question: "Can you tell me where that life flows
22 from?" That old man said, "I can tell you because I don't
23 know. But go back where you came from. Maybe they will
24 tell you over there," this old man told that little boy.

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1 So he came back.

2 Where he crossed that creek, when he
3 walked by there, he saw somebody looking at him from the
4 water, a spirit. That old man that sat there spoke to
5 that little boy. "Maybe that life you are looking for
6 for your people, maybe you will find it in the high
7 mountain," he told this little boy. So that little boy
8 looked at that old man, and he didn't say nothing. He
9 decided he wanted to go to the mountains and find life
10 for his Indian people. So he went.

11 When he reached the mountains, he
12 started to climb up that mountain. When he reached half
13 of that mountain, he came to a place where there was green
14 grass. He saw a lady standing there, like this. He looked
15 at that lady and said, "Maybe this is the place that old
16 man told me I would find life for my people." He looked
17 at him again, and he thought, "This is not the place yet."

18 So he went around that lady, and he went to the peak of
19 the mountain. Then he came to a place again where there
20 was green grass, and he said, "This is the place."

21 He had his tobacco in four directions,
22 and then he sat. He was tired, so he laid down and he
23 slept. While he was sleeping, an old man came and got
24 his spirit. He took him on that half-moon we see, just

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1 like this one. He took him on that dark side of that moon.
2 They came to a doorway. That old man opened that door.
3 When that old man opened that door, he saw seven old men
4 standing there. They had grey hair, braided hair, and
5 the way we see our Indian people with beaded work.

6 He went inside and he stayed four nights
7 in there, and he was taught how to help his people. On
8 the fourth morning that old man brought him back again
9 into his body.

10 When he woke up that morning, he had a
11 hard time to sit down and he had a hard time to open his
12 eyes. Finally, he sat and he was reaching like this, and
13 he felt something in the ground, and he pulled it out.
14 He started to eat it. It was the cedar, and that is where
15 he got the strength, this little boy. He started to walk
16 to that mountain. He stood up, and it cast a shadow here
17 -- one teaching.

18 Finally, he decided he wanted to come
19 down from the mountains. When he reached half of that
20 mountain, that lady was still standing like this. That
21 lady I am talking about is a spirit woman, always asking
22 the water so everything will grow into Mother Earth.

23 When we go to the mountains, we see
24 streams coming from the mountains. That is that lady

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1 always asking for the water.

2 So he came to the level ground and he
3 started to walk this way toward the east. While he was
4 walking, he saw seven stones like this to use to help his
5 people. He came a little farther, and he saw the earth
6 like this, like a moon. He came a little farther, and
7 he came to a fire. He was told up there when he was going
8 to use that fire to warm up the grandfathers. The only
9 thing that he could burn in that fire is his tobacco, his
10 medicine and whatever he is going to offer to the Creator.
11 That' what this little boy was told.

12 He was told to cherish that fire. That
13 medicine I am talking about is the cedar. That's the one
14 that he has to burn in that fire, the tobacco.

15 There are seven ways to tie it, and in
16 each tie there is a teaching. There are seven teachings
17 in this little boy. We also have seven little
18 grandfathers, seven little stones on the ground. We use
19 tobacco and we use water, meegus(PH). The reason why we
20 use this meegus, when the Creator was going to make that
21 man, he took the earth in four directions and put this
22 one here, and that is where the Anicinabe came from. So
23 we hold it inside there, and it represents life. Only
24 good things to come in the sweat lodge, because we only

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1 ask for good things, the kind way that the Creator gave
2 us.

3 Also we have an antler here. We use that
4 antler to tie that little boy. These little drum sticks
5 -- the drum sticks represent the rock, the three-branch
6 road and the sweat lodge. The sweat lodge this little
7 boy was given has four rings. He was told up there if
8 he knows these four rings, four levels of knowledge. It
9 means you are really close to the Creator, working with
10 the Creator. Also there are four levels of earth, and
11 in the four levels there are spirits in there.

12 Also he used eight little sticks,
13 willows, to make this lodge and also these here.
14 Altogether he used 16 little willows. This half belonged
15 to the ladies and half to the men.

16 This little pit represents Mother Home.
17 That is the way our mother looked when he carried us,
18 and he was told to bring his people here to help them.
19 It is going to represent when you were born, because these
20 seven grandfathers are going to clean us. This is that
21 lodge, how it was given to this little boy.

22 Today, now, they are starting to hear
23 each other again, these little boys. There are some in
24 the east and there are some in the south and there are

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1 some in the west. Now they are carrying that message to
2 our people. They are coming very strong, our people, to
3 come up in the surface and start teaching about this life
4 that the Creator gave us.

5 Also here in the middle is a star. They
6 call this the morning star. He was told, if he was going
7 to use this Mother Moon and this lodge, it is going to
8 mean healing. So when we see a sweat lodge like this,
9 you know there is going to be healing.

10 The healing I am talking about is here,
11 to heal ourselves, to be kind to one another and to walk
12 proud of who we are as Indian people. That is what this
13 little boy did at that time I am talking about.

14 There were four of them that started,
15 and there is another teaching to this little boy that I
16 know, but I will just talk about this one.

17 Here we have the sun dance. I am not
18 a sun dance maker, but I participated in the sun dance.
19 I will talk about what I experienced in the sun dance
20 because I would be telling a lie maybe if I talk a lot
21 about the sun dance.

22 I fasted here, too. In four days I
23 didn't eat -- no water, no food. That is when you realize
24 that the water is very important when you fast for four

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1 days. Sometimes we abuse that water, when we have a cup
2 and only drink a little bit of it and throw it away. We
3 have to take care of that water, because it going to take
4 care of us, too. The reason why I say that, in the States
5 in some places they ration their water, and it is going
6 to come here to, that we have to take care of our water.

7 We have pulp mill here, and it is
8 polluting our water. We have to protect that water. That
9 is why these streams come from the mountains, to come this
10 way, always to have that fresh water.

11 When you want to dance in the sun dance,
12 you have to go and see that sun dance maker. You have
13 to go and give him tobacco. You go and ask him to dance
14 for four seasons. You have to make sure, when you give
15 that tobacco, that you fill up what you are saying in four
16 seasons. If you don't, you're going to be telling a lie.

17 That sun dance maker is going to talk to the Creator for
18 you, with your tobacco. If, along the line, you only do
19 two, now that tobacco lied for you. Then maybe you die
20 without finishing what you said you wanted to do.

21 So we have to be careful when we go to
22 these kind of things, that we make sure we finish what
23 we said, because we don't want to tell a lie to the Creator.

24 The reason why people won't suffer

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1 themselves here, or maybe some is sick in the family or
2 somebody has a problem with drinking, anything, they go
3 here and dance without water and food for four days.

4 There is lots of things that happen here,
5 but that I can't talk about because I don't have -- it's
6 not me to talk about this, but what I have seen.

7 The men dance on this side and the ladies
8 on that side. They call this an eagle sun dance. They
9 make a nest here. The only one that would make that nest
10 is a young boy. A young boy that is nice and clean will
11 make that nest. And they offer tobacco here to that eagle
12 spirit.

13 They dance for four days. When they are
14 going to finish that Sunday morning, the ladies turn around
15 and face the sun. The singers sit here, and they will
16 have a song for the grandfather's sun. As soon as they
17 hit that drum, the grandfather comes up, when you see that
18 sun come up early in the morning.

19 These ones are going to ask for that good
20 life, and the same with these ones here. When they finish
21 that, they bring contrary people, contrary people that
22 talk backwards. Sometimes we get hurt from contrary
23 people, how they talk. We really have to listen to them
24 when they talk to us. Supposing I say I am going to be

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1 here in the morning, and then I don't show up. If I am
2 a contrary people, that means I won't be here. If he says,
3 "I'm not going to be here," that means he is going to be
4 here. These are the kind of people I am talking about,
5 contrary people.

6 The Creator put contrary people for a
7 reason, to balance the life for our people. They are
8 dressed in white when they come to the sun dance. The
9 ladies dress in brown colour. Everybody offers tobacco
10 to them; they come inside here. When they come inside,
11 they go backwards to the door, and they go around here
12 and they come out and they leave. They always go backwards
13 when they leave. So whatever tobacco they got, they are
14 going to offer it to the Creator for the people that offered
15 that tobacco.

16 When that is finished, they have a
17 giveaway. People that dance here, all winter they prepare
18 to give that giveaway. They buy little things at a time,
19 what they are going to give to the other people, whoever
20 comes to the sun dance.

21 Some of them have big giveaways. Some
22 people give horses because they think their life to the
23 Creator is big, so they will walk that straight road with
24 a kind life.

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1 Then, when they finish the giveaway,
2 they bring the water. It is not the water that we take
3 from the river; they take it from the tree, special water,
4 and it goes around here. When that is finished, they bring
5 basins of water. All the ones that dance have to wash
6 their face. An old lady will sit here and braid the women,
7 an elder lady. When that is finished, they bring the food,
8 a lot of food, a big feast.

9 Before they eat that food, the singers
10 will sing an eagle song. Eight pushups they sing. When
11 they go to the fourth one, you see the eagles come flying,
12 just gliding, looking, coming to answer whatever they ask
13 because they are going to take it to the Creator.

14 These people that dance here, they bring
15 cloths, offerings to the Creator, and then these eagles
16 will take them away. The spirit of these cloths I am
17 talking about, because the Creator made everything in a
18 spirit. That is why they sing this song before they
19 finish, so these eagles will take whatever we ask in these
20 four days in that teaching in the sun dance.

21 This one is a teaching lodge. They call
22 it Indian school. Here we learn seven teachings. Also
23 this old man drew these two people again. These are the
24 mountains here, and these are the rivers that come from

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1 the mountains to give us that water. For four days it
2 goes on with this, and there is a lot of feasts that go
3 in here. Whoever has a pipe or a rattle, they bring it
4 here. Every morning they take it out and have a sunrise
5 ceremony. They sing here and talk to the Creator. Then,
6 when they are going to come inside, they come in this
7 direction and they go around like this.

8 There is a smudge here. You smudge your
9 stuff as you go in. You walk this way. Then they smudge
10 it again and put it here. The ladies go on this side,
11 and the men stay on this side.

12 Here, as we see it, it's a turtle. When
13 the Creator sent these four clans, the Creator put a law,
14 clan system, to Indian people and also our white brothers.
15 All people he give clans. The first ones that came down
16 to marry our Native people is the Eagle Clan, the Bear
17 Clan, the Turtle Clan and the Wolf Clan. These are the
18 four. Now, today, there is a lot of clans that came down.
19

20 The reason why the Creator put that law,
21 this clan system, is not to marry one another in the same
22 clan. If you marry the same clan as you, it means like
23 you married your sister. That's what it means. In the
24 church here, too, they used to have that when I was growing

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1 up. Nobody would get married if they were first cousins.

2 The first thing a lady would ask you, "What is your clan?"

3 If you didn't know your clan, then she wouldn't go with

4 you because they watched that pretty close a long time

5 ago, that clan system, so nobody will marry the same blood.

6 We have for four days teaching here.

7 This old man teaches to walk this life. When we are born,

8 this is our parents, our grandmother and our grandfather.

9 They are going to teach us about this life. They are

10 going to dress us with something to walk with in our life

11 when we are born.

12 So this young boy learns about this life.

13 Also he has fast life. Fast life means you have to learn

14 right away, not tomorrow, right away. Here we have the

15 wondering life. All the time we wonder. How many of us

16 are always wondering when we have that wondering life.

17 This young man gets here, and he meets

18 a lady who knows about this life. So he marries this woman.

19 Now he is going to have planting life. They are going

20 to plant. They are going to have kids. So they do have

21 kids.

22 By that time this young man's parents

23 are pretty old already, walking with canes. So it is his

24 turn to look after his parents when they get here. Today

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1 we have an old folks home. We send our old people there,
2 and they are lonesome in there. A lot of times I go in
3 there and talk to these old people, and that's what they
4 tell me. "We're lonesome. We're lonesome for our home.
5 We're lonesome for our grandchildren." And they die
6 there; they die in the old folks home. Or maybe they are
7 drugged up with pills.

8 I feel sorry for some of our people who
9 are hooked on drugs, pills. A lot of people that I see,
10 some of them take five pills at one time. For what? Just
11 to kill a little pain? Why did the Creator give you that
12 pain? You have to work with that pain.

13 I am very sorry to say this: A lot of
14 people are making money on us with drugs. It makes me
15 sad. I feel like crying for my people when I see them.
16 Some of them even take an overdose and they die. And
17 who is laughing? The one that makes lots of money with
18 drugs.

19 There is a lot of drugs that go around
20 here on our reserve. I work in Outreach at the Al-Care
21 Centre, and I see quite a bit. I cry for the little ones,
22 because I see them smoke up. Lots of times they used to
23 ask me to go to the school and talk to these kids.
24 Hopefully, the Creator will turn these things around, for

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1 our people to start getting healthy again without drugs,
2 because there are medicines for our people and there are
3 medicine people in our society of Native people. We have
4 to start using our people to cure us with their medicine.

5 If we use our medicine, we won't get hooked because the
6 medicine heals.

7 That is what happens today to our old
8 people. We say, "They are in the way. We can't go any
9 place. We have to put them in homes." A lot of us don't
10 think the way our people used to do. I remember my dad
11 used to keep my grandmother when I was a little boy. I
12 seen it lots, that they used to keep their old people.
13 But not today. We send them away and forget about them
14 in homes. That is what they are saying, too. "Our
15 children hardly visit us in this home."

16 So we ask the Creator to change these
17 things around to our people.

18 We drew a little lizard here. He wants
19 to come in this lodge, like the little devil. Supposing
20 you see a nice lady looking across to you. What would
21 come in your mind? After the ceremony, I will ask that
22 lady to go out with her. It works both ways. The lady
23 maybe would think the same way. So we try to push that
24 thing away. Only good things are to come here in this

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1 lodge.

2 They used to laugh about this little
3 lizard. They called it giganareesh(PH). Giganareesh
4 means try to sleep with everybody. That's what they used
5 to do, I guess, in the last generations when they used
6 to go farming. These little lizards used to go underneath
7 your pants. That's what this little lizard does to people,
8 and that is what he tries to do here, too, this little
9 lizard in this lodge.

10 You have a teepee here, like a woman's
11 dress. It brings life in here.

12 I asked my daughter to draw this for me
13 last night, this teaching. Our people got mixed up a long
14 time ago. There is a gap there in between. They fought.
15 They used to fight one another, too. The same here.
16 So the Creator sent two messengers here in our land.

17 One of them had to go to Jerusalem and
18 had to be born over there, and one here. When the Creator
19 sent these two messengers, they came down. The one I am
20 talking about is Nanabush(PH). He is a teacher. So he
21 came down. When he came down, he was bouncing all over
22 the place. He called that one that went to Jerusalem,
23 "We have to go back. I can't work with the Indian people."
24 They went back again. They went and talked to the

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1 Creator.

2 So the Creator said to them, "I made
3 everything over there on Mother Earth to be born, and that
4 is what is going to be happening to you. You are going
5 to be born in the Mother Earth." So he told one of the
6 spirits to go to Jerusalem and one here to the Indian people
7 to be born of one Native woman, and that's what happened
8 at that time.

9 When they came down, this eagle knew that
10 he was going to come here to the morning star, Nanabush.
11 He went and told that morning star, "Tell Nanabush not
12 to teach anything different from what the Creator gave
13 to the Indian people, these ones here." And the other
14 one was born in Jerusalem with the Bible. This one was
15 needed in the old country, the Bible. This is the Creator
16 here, and that is the one that works with us, that eagle.

17 When they got mixed up, they forgot all
18 about this here, the drum, the rattle, the pipe. They
19 didn't know their way of life.

20 Today what I present to you is Ojibway
21 teachings, what they gave us a long time ago, these ones
22 here. So we have to think about these things.

23 I say meegwitch to you people for
24 listening to me. I feel good here. Meegwitch.

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1 Mr. Star gave me an eagle feather this
2 morning. He wanted me to speak about this eagle feather.
3 I asked him not too long ago to have a tip like this because
4 I was going to put it in my roach to dance with. He gave
5 it to me this morning. That name that I have, Wabapinace,
6 is that eagle. So I will carry it from here and to the
7 Creator. When I dance, I will always think about this
8 eagle because some of them gave their lives to the Indian
9 people so they can carry them in whatever they do.

10 I say thank you to Jack.

11 Meegwitch.

12 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** We are
13 going to take a brief break here, and then go right into
14 the presentation of Dr. Sheehan. Then we will quickly
15 change our panelists in front.

16 --- Short Recess at 11:10 a.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at 11:25 a.m.

18 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** We will
19 now carry on with our final speaker for this morning.
20 Our next speaker is Dr. Sheehan, who will be talking on
21 the health issues within the community itself.

22 Dr. Sheehan, please.

23 **DR. SHEEHAN:** I would like to thank
24 Chief Jerry Fontaine and the people of Sagkeeng for asking

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1 me to make this presentation on their behalf this morning.

2 It is a little unusual to be an non-Aboriginal speaker
3 in this setting.

4 The first thing I would like to say is
5 that I have only been here three years now, and I can still
6 remember the horror I felt coming to Sagkeeng and seeing
7 the level of poverty in this community, a level of poverty
8 I had never been exposed to before in my life. I think
9 the major health issue in this community, and probably
10 for Aboriginal people across Canada, is the poverty which
11 they face.

12 Only this year have we seen running water
13 installed on the south shore of the Winnipeg River, in
14 half of this community. The people on the north shore
15 of Sagkeeng still have no running water.

16 When I see people in my office, I have
17 to ask them if they have running water in the house, because
18 it modifies the way I have to treat them. I have to work
19 out how to do things differently if people are going to
20 have problems washing, if they are going to have problems
21 keeping wounds clean.

22 I have seen an unprecedented level of
23 diabetes since I have come to work with the Native
24 community. There is a predisposition in Aboriginal people

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1 to diabetes, but the poor nutrition imposed on Aboriginal
2 people by the poverty in which they live makes this diabetic
3 problem much, much worse.

4 It does the same for heart disease.
5 Poor diets are usually much higher in fat content, to fill
6 people up quickly and cheaply, and that leads to heart
7 disease.

8 I have seen a lot of kidney problems.
9 These are related to end-stage diabetes. It is the result
10 of badly controlled diabetes, diabetes for which people
11 cannot afford to eat the right diet.

12 The second problem I would like to touch
13 on is the isolation of this community. If you want
14 anything beyond basic medical care, you have to go 130
15 kilometres to Winnipeg. This effectively means that a
16 lot of people have to settle for what they can get here.

17 I don't wish to comment on the quality
18 of local medical care, merely on the fact that people are
19 restricted in the choices they have for health care, unless
20 they are seriously enough ill or well enough off to be
21 able to travel to Winnipeg. This is a problem which gets
22 worse the farther you are from a major centre of population.

23 Another problem that people have here
24 is the level of education. We all know that the better

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1 educated you are, the easier it is to get things, whether
2 it be a new car, whether it be consumer goods, or even
3 access to good quality health care. If you can make enough
4 noise to the right people, using the right words, you will
5 get attention. Also with good education comes the
6 knowledge of what is acceptable and what you should be
7 entitled to.

8 People here, Aboriginal people in
9 general, are too poor to access health care. They are
10 not well enough educated to access health care and, I am
11 sorry to have to say, they are the wrong colour to access
12 health care. It does make a difference. It shouldn't.

13 I think it doesn't make a difference in my practice, but
14 I know the level of prejudice that exists throughout all
15 communities in Manitoba, and probably across Canada. I
16 know that, if a pharmacy is busy, the white people tend
17 to get seen before the red people; the white people tend
18 to get served earlier because the white staff are more
19 embarrassed about making white people wait than making
20 red people wait.

21 I don't think it is deliberate in the
22 majority of cases, but it is there nonetheless.

23 There are other problems. There are
24 problems in the basic system of health care. Health care

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1 is a provincial responsibility in this country, unless
2 you are Aboriginal, in which case some of it is provincial
3 and some of it is federal government. Both provincial
4 health care systems and federal health care departments
5 for Aboriginals are trying to save money, and it is very
6 easy for the province to say it is a federal responsibility
7 and for the federal government to say it is a provincial
8 responsibility. I couldn't count the number of times that
9 I have seen people fall between the federal government
10 funding and the provincial government funding and wind
11 up having to do without something that they are entitled
12 to.

13 As long as we have two paying agencies,
14 we are going to see people fall through the cracks, because
15 there is nobody to stop it from happening.

16 We are in desperate need of a single
17 government agency responsible for health care for
18 Aboriginal people. I believe that that should be an
19 Aboriginally-run organization. It should be an arm of
20 Aboriginal government.

21 We care more about ourselves than we do
22 about others in all communities. The only people who
23 really care about the quality of health care that
24 Aboriginal people receive are other Aboriginal people.

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1 People like myself are technical resources. We are there
2 to help. We know how to do things. But it is the people
3 who should be telling us what to do.

4 The needs and aspirations of Aboriginal
5 people should not be channelled through a white government
6 in Ottawa, nor through a white government in Winnipeg,
7 and the health care needs of Aboriginal people should not
8 be channelled through white-dominated agencies working
9 for those governments.

10 At a more practical level, health care
11 should be brought to the people. The people should not
12 be forced to go to the health care. We should have visiting
13 specialists working in this area. We should have them
14 seeing people on their own terms, with interpreters readily
15 available and with people who can explain the social
16 realities of life on reserves and explain the cultural
17 background from which people come and the kinds of thing
18 they will and will not accept as changes in their way of
19 life.

20 I also believe that our rural hospitals
21 should be controlled locally. The administration of rural
22 hospitals should not be appointed from provincial
23 government agencies. Administrators of local facilities
24 should be appointed locally, from within the community

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1 of talent which is definitely available, and they should
2 owe their allegiance to the local community, not to the
3 government agency which is going to give them their next
4 promotion.

5 We are living in a time of cutbacks
6 throughout all government programs. Health care is one
7 of the most expensive. Government is making cutbacks in
8 real terms in health care, and the people who are going
9 to be most severely affected are going to be the same ones
10 who are always most severely affected -- the poor, the
11 poorly educated and the isolated.

12 Effectively, Aboriginal people fall
13 into all of those categories.

14 I was asked to keep this brief, and I
15 am keeping it brief.

16 Meegwitch.

17 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

18 Meegwitch, Dr. Sheehan, and to the other speakers who were
19 up here this morning. We have some questions or comments
20 that Commissioner Paul Chartrand would like to make at
21 this time.

22 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I, too,
23 will be very brief. I am anxious to take a very few moments
24 to thank the last several speakers.

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1 Dr. Sheehan, I thank you for your
2 comments. You have made some sound recommendations --
3 at least, they appear to me to be sound. I thank you for
4 the unique perspective that you have given to us. I may
5 say that similar suggestions have been made by medical
6 practitioners in other places in this country, and I thank
7 you.

8 I thank Elder George Courchene for
9 assisting us in understanding the way of life of the
10 Anicinabe.

11 I thank the young people who were here
12 before and made their presentations. Tony talked to us
13 about the value of sports and recreation, and that is an
14 issue we have heard a lot about in other places and I think
15 we will hear about again. It is very important, and I
16 can assure you it will be dealt with.

17 Jill talked about languages, and I can
18 say that you have much support from across the country
19 in the views that you have expressed, from what we have
20 heard.

21 I was very interested in Winona's words,
22 talking about how a government must be built on the values
23 of the people if it is to be effective and it must be based
24 on local needs. The government services, public services,

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1 must be provided by those who understand them as a necessary
2 first step.

3 That, if I understood these things
4 correctly, is essentially what Chief Jerry Fontaine was
5 telling us, too, earlier on in his presentation. With
6 respect to that one, Chief Fontaine, I may say that your
7 proposal with respect to the election of commissioners
8 is a unique one, and I invite you to assist us in developing
9 it here and perhaps later in the other forums we are going
10 to have today, or perhaps in another way. Definitely,
11 I think it is something that ought to be developed.

12 I thank you all.

13 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

14 Meegwitch, Paul.

15 I would like to move to the next phase
16 of this morning's activities and have Chief Fontaine and
17 Chief Rod Bushie come up to the front. Also we will have
18 four other people in this next panel discussion: Mary
19 Star, Gary Courchene sitting at the far table; Glen Pinnell
20 and Chuck Koppang sitting on the far side.

21 We have all heard of the national
22 referendum that has just been completed, a referendum on
23 which Anicinabe people were in considerable debate.
24 Self-government, Anicinabe government, what does it mean?

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1 It can be complex or it can be defined very easily, as
2 our Elders do so eloquently.

3 What we would like to do here this
4 morning is have our Panel table give their views on what
5 Anicinabe government is, what it means to them.

6 Maybe I could start off with having Rod
7 Bushie, Chief of the Hollow Water Indian Band, make his
8 presentation.

9 **CHIEF ROD BUSHIE, HOLLOW WATER INDIAN**
10 **BAND:** Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. My
11 name is Chief Bushie of Hollow Water First Nations, who
12 are Ojibway people.

13 My presentation is very brief. I had
14 problems getting my information this morning due to the
15 fact that we, as Chiefs, have a lot of area to cover.
16 I got called in late yesterday afternoon, just getting
17 into my office yesterday morning from the city. I had
18 all my information in Hollow Water and I forgot it, and
19 I was on my way into two for an emergency meeting. I guess
20 it was the aftermath of the referendum, why we were called
21 in with one of our programs.

22 My presentation is what my people in
23 Hollow Water have chosen as the route and their way of
24 government, and the way they see their community operating.

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1 I made copies for the Commissioners in regard to the
2 community holistic healing area.

3 As our Elders are telling us, as
4 Anicinabe people, we live in the circle and we should deal
5 with our issues and problems that we have within our own
6 communities, our own jurisdictions. The process that we
7 have, that has been very beneficial to our people and to
8 the surrounding Métis communities in my area, is the
9 community holistic circle healing.

10 But, there again, I have problems with
11 the white governments in the area of recognizing what is
12 needed in my community. Yet, they continue to participate
13 as resource people with their people in the circle of
14 healing area; yet, they will not recognize the program
15 that exists in my community.

16 The amount of work that my Council
17 members and my staff have done in this area is what the
18 community of Hollow Water needs. In order for us to be
19 effective, we have to be healthy, we have to be cured,
20 we have to do all this stuff. Coming from the Elders,
21 this is what they have told us, and that is the process
22 we are looking at in the area of self-government. If you
23 don't have healthy people within your communities, it
24 doesn't work.

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1 The program we have has come a long way,
2 and it has a long way to go yet before it is recognized
3 by the people that government us in the area of federal
4 and provincial governments. But it is getting there.

5 I have approached both the Solicitor
6 General's office and the Attorney General's office in the
7 area of this program. We have recognized the major problem
8 in our community. The abuse in our community is a big
9 problem, and we have to deal with it. We have to start
10 healing within the community of Hollow Water First Nations.

11 If we don't do that, we are going to continue to live
12 the way we have lived in the past.

13 So our people have come out and spoken
14 and dealt with the issues in the areas of abuse through
15 this community holistic circle healing program. They have
16 cut the silence off; they have come out and spoken to the
17 leadership, and we are dealing with it. You can see the
18 change in our community becoming as one, where before it
19 was many communities in one. Now the community has come
20 together and has shared, has cared, and has dealt with
21 the issue that is in front of us.

22 From my presentation, that is the
23 process that we are taking in our community toward the
24 areas of self-government, or part of it anyway. As I said

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1 before, in order to have an effective self-government,
2 you have to have healthy people.

3 We did have our own governments away
4 before, according to our Elders. But, as Europeans and
5 as religions took over, it kind of destroyed the
6 self-government that existed in our community.

7 As a whole, we are dealing with it with
8 all the people that are involved -- the religions, the
9 school, the community, the leadership. We are dealing
10 with our way of self-government.

11 I gave you a package which is a History
12 of Community Holistic Circle Healing Program. That is
13 part of my presentation, and I hope you can take a look
14 at the material I have given you, because it would help
15 other communities with the direction that our people want
16 to go.

17 Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

18 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

19 Meegwitch, Rod Bushie from the Hollow Water Indian Band.

20 I would now like to call on Chief Jerry
21 Fontaine from Sagkeeng.

22 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE, SAGKEENG FIRST**

23 **NATION:** Moving to the area of Anicinabe government and
24 what it means to us, as I indicated this morning, Anicinabe

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1 government is going to be the foundation for our future.
2 It is very important that we look back toward the
3 traditional values that we have held dear to us for many
4 centuries.

5 George's presentation this morning gave
6 a good philosophical view of how Anicinabe carry on our
7 way of life, in terms of the seven teachings, in terms
8 of the values. It is important that our government, our
9 blueprint, have this as the basis. It has to be intrinsic
10 to our model.

11 We at Sagkeeng have embarked upon this
12 process now for three years, Te Bwe Win. We search for
13 the truth. The truth is what we call our constitutional
14 process. People of all ages and of all genders are
15 involved in this process. Again, the Anicinabe government
16 has to be reflective of the needs and the concerns of our
17 people. It has to be a government of the people for the
18 people.

19 The creation, the development and the
20 thought of this government has to come from the people.

21 We have embarked upon this process. It is a long process,
22 as we seek to gain consensus in all the areas of our
23 day-to-day activities here in Sagkeeng. It is not only
24 incumbent upon Council; it is incumbent upon all the

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1 citizens of Sagkeeng to be involved.

2 We always refer to one statement that
3 was made by a very famous politician in the 1960s, President
4 John F. Kennedy. He asked not what you can do for your
5 country, but what you can do for you -- I don't know if
6 I said that right. I am not very good at quotations.

7 Anyway, the point I am trying to make
8 is that we need to give something back to the community.

9 We can't always take and take and take. The more we take,
10 of course, the less we have.

11 The community members, the citizens of
12 Sagkeeng, are committed to this process. Again, it is
13 a grassroots process, and everyone needs to be involved.

14 With that, I will just pass it over.
15 Meegwitch.

16 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

17 Meegwitch, Chief Fontaine.

18 We have one more Panel member sitting
19 at the front, Elmer Courchene. Would you give us your
20 thoughts on Anicinabe government.

21 **ELMER COURCHENE:** My name is Elmer
22 Courchene, and I am a member of the Sagkeeng Nation.

23 It is always confusing and makes you
24 think when you have to talk about self-government. It

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1 has been talked about for so many years that your head
2 begins to spin and you say, "Where do I start?"

3 I believe self-government begins with
4 self, the family, and the community. How can we talk about
5 self-government when we have many hurting issues that have
6 to be corrected?

7 When we look back at our history, do we
8 have anything to be proud of? Since the first coming of
9 the Europeans, we began to have hurts inflicted on us.
10 Our spiritual way of understanding life was condemned.
11 Even our ancestors were killed for it. Until they came
12 to the point of reservations, today we are prisoners of
13 our own land.

14 Of course, they brought in the boarding
15 schools, the beginning of the break-up of family life and
16 community and self, to the point that we, the present
17 people, are inflicting the same hurts to ourselves. We
18 are not Aboriginal people any more. We are white. We
19 have adopted.

20 We create our own hurts nowadays on
21 ourselves, our families and our communities. We read and
22 hear of the corruption that is happening in families and
23 communities. We hear of sexual abuse, child abuse,
24 embezzlement, solvent and drug abuse. Those are all hurts

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1 that we face, and we say, "Let's talk about
2 self-government."

3 To me, to look at self-government I first
4 have to look at me. I have to begin to clean me, begin
5 to help myself the best way I can. We have to begin to
6 do that if we are to stand strong as a nation, as an
7 individual, as a family and as a community. We have to
8 look at the many things that could be possible or available
9 to us that were taken away from us or were stolen away
10 from us, and that is the resources of this country.

11 Our resources, allow us to boldly say,
12 were stolen from us by the Europeans. And they fully know
13 it, and I hope that some day they will begin to face and
14 make the correction of honesty to us. Without those
15 resources we are unable to self-govern ourselves and do
16 the many things we want to be able to do for our people.

17 We should be fighting for our resources
18 instead of wasting time to get resources from the black
19 market. With these resources we will be able to be
20 self-dependent instead of feeding our children through
21 the welfare system. Then we will be free people instead
22 of bought people.

23 With those resources we can also fulfill
24 all our needs and our wants that are required to be

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1 self-governing.

2 Right now, when we look at our Nation,
3 we don't have anything to be proud of because we lost our
4 way. We have lost the teachings that were given to us.
5 We have lost to know what is respect, what is care and
6 what is love, the seven teachings.

7 Today when we look at ourselves and be
8 honest with ourselves, what do we see? What is the disease
9 that we have as a Nation, as an individual, as family?
10 It is a disease of jealousy, anger, bitterness, hate.
11 We have to look at that, so that we can understand where
12 those things are coming from, so that once again we begin
13 to heal, so that once again we become brothers and sisters,
14 so that once we can self-govern ourselves. We have to
15 look at that strongly.

16 I see, and I have always dreamt, that
17 some day we, as a Nation, can walk hand in hand without
18 back-stabbing or hurting one another. Yes, our ancestors
19 had misunderstanding at times, but they always came
20 together and they always corrected their wrongs by
21 understanding the seven teachings. We have to remember
22 those.

23 Healing ourselves is very important.
24 How can we have a vision of the future, how can we lead

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1 our children and our grandchildren and the ones coming
2 behind if we, the present people, are still hurting and
3 cannot face one another? We have to begin to heal, but
4 that is not leaving aside that we need resources to do
5 this.

6 Those resources are out there. Those
7 resources are the resources that were taken away from us.
8 The governments have to be able to sit down and begin
9 to talk about sharing these resources with us. Maybe
10 "sharing" is the wrong word, but that's the only one I
11 can think of right now.

12 To me, that is the beginning of
13 self-government. We can talk of many directions, of many
14 ways, but self-government starts within one's self.

15 Meegwitch.

16 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Meegwitch
17 to our Panel speakers.

18 One important aspect of Anicinabe
19 government is that of enacting laws on our Anicinabe lands.

20 I would now to ask Mary Star and Gary Courchene to give
21 their presentation on one such law.

22 **MARY STAR, SAGKEENG GAMING COMMISSION:**

23 My name is Mary Star, and I am with the Sagkeeng Gaming
24 Commission.

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1 In the summer of 1990 the community of
2 Sagkeeng had a referendum in the community to decide if
3 they were going to run their own lotteries. The vote that
4 was taken was that the community decided "yes".

5 So through the process we formed the
6 Gaming Commission, sanctioned by the Chief and Council
7 and the community of Sagkeeng. We started the operation.
8 The operation supports recreation and provides jobs for
9 people that didn't have a job before.

10 The Province of Manitoba has taken the
11 stand that we are operating outside the laws of the province
12 and have charged a band member who is employed by the
13 Commission. The charge is section 206 under federal law,
14 but it has been forced on us by the Province.

15 We have taken the stand that we have our
16 jurisdiction here in the community of Sagkeeng and that
17 the Province does not have a say in what we do in the
18 community. Right now the case is still in the court and
19 will not be heard until late spring.

20 Throughout the process of the charge and
21 speaking with Native communities throughout Manitoba, we
22 have reached the conclusion that the Province is doing
23 what they are doing because they see what is happening
24 in the communities in Manitoba, that they are raising funds

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1 for the betterment of our community, and it seems that
2 they want to have a piece of that money. Yet, when we
3 go to the Province and ask for money for recreation and
4 other programs, they say it is federal responsibility.

5 What we done is we have formed a Manitoba
6 Native Gaming Commission and we have the sanction of the
7 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Through the Native Gaming
8 Commission we hope to draft up our own gaming regulations
9 for all the reserves in the Manitoba. We can see the
10 possibilities of helping our communities in all the ways
11 that government is cutting off funding right now for
12 recreation, education, health, social. Through gaming,
13 we hope that we could raise money for our own people and
14 not have to give any money to the Province. That money
15 should stay within our communities.

16 We have developed a package here in
17 Sagkeeng, a package that I hope, when we meet with the
18 proper officials, which will be the Province and the
19 federal government -- I hope they will look at the package,
20 based on the merits of that package, not based because
21 it came from the Native community. I hope they will listen
22 to what we have to say on the ways that we want to help
23 our communities in all the areas that I mentioned.

24 Right now, where it stands is that they

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1 say we are going against the law. I would like to ask
2 Gary if he has any more comments to add on.

3 **GARY COURCHENE:** My name is Gary
4 Courchene of the Sagkeeng Gaming Commission.

5 I don't have much to say right now.
6 Thank you.

7 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

8 Meegwitch, Mary Star and Gary Courchene.

9 Chuck Koppang, you have heard the
10 presentation. You are the manager of the Manitoba
11 Lotteries Foundation. Some questions that can be posed
12 to you are: Where does the government stand on Anicinabe
13 laws, in particular gaming laws? What are your thoughts
14 on the provincial and Anicinabe Gaming Commission? Does
15 the government recognize jurisdiction that Anicinabe
16 people have asserted? What kind of working relationship
17 do you presently have with First Nations? Do you
18 understand what the treaties mean? Do your base your
19 decisions on respect for those treaties?

20 **CHUCK KOPPANG, NATIVE GAMING**

21 **COMMISSION:** First, thank you very much for the invitation
22 from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to the Minister and
23 to me. I welcome the opportunity to present the provincial
24 way of dealing with the Native gaming issue.

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1 First off, I would like to address my
2 comments to the Chair. I will try to prepare a written
3 response to all of that list of questions; I can't remember
4 them all right off the bat here. I could start one at
5 a time, I suppose.

6 I can say that I am aware and have been
7 involved with the Native gaming issue in Manitoba for
8 approximately three or four years, in the last year or
9 so much more than before. The issue of Native gaming has
10 been going on for centuries, but the jurisdictional dispute
11 in Manitoba came to the forefront in 1986 when there was
12 a charge laid against The Pas Band for selling break-open
13 tickets without a licence, basically. I am going to just
14 touch highlights here because I realize we are short of
15 time.

16 This resulted in the government of the
17 day and, I believe, five Native political organizations
18 in Manitoba getting together and starting to identify
19 exactly what the jurisdictional problem is, which includes
20 many things, including existing treaty and Aboriginal
21 rights, plus the Criminal Code, plus other areas that both
22 sides identified. This resulted at the time in the signing
23 of a Memorandum of Understanding, I believe in 1987, in
24 which the Native leaders at the time plus the

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1 representatives of the provincial government agreed to
2 attempt to come up with some type of a solution, short
3 of going to the courts, which was another alternative that
4 both sides weighed.

5 What evolved from that was an agreement,
6 in essence, that is on an interim basis which designates
7 Indian Gaming Commissions jointly by Band Council
8 resolution and OICs. I believe we have six or seven Gaming
9 Agreements that have been signed around the province:
10 in the West Region which represents nine Bands in May of
11 1991; The Pas which was the first one in 1990; the Norway
12 House Band on June 7, 1991; the Roseau River Anicinabe
13 First Nation, March 17, 1992; the Matthias Band on April
14 6, 1992; the Nelson House First Nation on August 5, 1992;
15 Crane River Band, which I believe is being signed today;
16 Sandy Bay which is to their Band now. They have passed
17 their Band Council resolution, and the OIC has been passed,
18 and it's back to Sandy Bay for signing.

19 On top of that we have negotiated with
20 most of the 61 Bands, including Sagkeeng First Nation.
21 We have had two discussions, I believe, over the last couple
22 of years. I think they were more informative, and I do
23 appreciate the position that Sagkeeng First Nation takes
24 on this. It is something that has to be addressed.

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1 The way that the Province is dealing with
2 this is by attempting to encourage the Bands to take over
3 the responsibility. We are, if you want to use the word,
4 vacating, and I appreciate the argument of
5 self-government, that it was not given up with the
6 treaties.

7 The agreement we use is not the ultimate
8 solution to this, in my opinion, but it is an interim
9 agreement by which we can attempt to assist and get along
10 with each other until more fundamental solutions may be
11 found.

12 Contrary to what Mary has outlined to
13 you, we are attempting, by our efforts through the Native
14 Gaming Section, to maximize benefits to reserve groups
15 by providing product at cost, the product being bingo paper
16 and Nevada tickets. We offer a video lottery terminal
17 agreement that can provide the benefits of VLTs to reserves
18 in a legal manner.

19 Our Native Gaming Section is in place
20 to assist licensees. Many reserves have opted to stay
21 with a normal licence through the Manitoba Lotteries
22 Foundation. The section that I work with provides service
23 to the licensees on reserve. I have two Aboriginal people
24 in my section who do provide audit service, advice, et

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1 cetera.

2 The existing Native Gaming Commissions
3 in Manitoba, if they request, we will provide assistance
4 to them as well and training, but only on request. It
5 is their responsibility to get up and going. We have an
6 excellent relationship so far with the existing Gaming
7 Commissions, and they are successful in their endeavours.

8 It is my personal opinion -- and I have
9 listened to some very eloquent speakers here this morning
10 on some of the issues -- that this is one small step toward
11 self-government. Whatever does happen within the
12 jurisdictional dispute later on, Gaming Commissions,
13 including the one here at Sagkeeng and the other ones in
14 the province, will already be established and will already
15 have that as one little niche of self-government. They
16 will be up and established and running, and I think that
17 is beneficial.

18 There are other aspects to this. The
19 gaming industry in Canada is expanding greatly. We look
20 at our neighbours to the south in the Indian gaming field
21 who are into the casino business in a big way, making
22 tremendous amounts of money, apparently with some very
23 good economic spin-offs for their communities. Many of
24 the problems that have been identified here this morning

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1 are being addressed because they have an economic base.
2 That has to be address in Canada as well; the benefits
3 are there in the United States.

4 The gaming issue, I feel, can be resolved
5 in our province in this way. Our job is to assist Bands,
6 to maximize and to not stand in the way. We want to, and
7 are, encouraging a Band to form their own Gaming
8 Commission, and we will assist, if asked.

9 Thank you very much.

10 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
11 Chuck Koppang, Manager of Manitoba Lotteries Foundation.

12 I would like to wrap up this morning with
13 a discussion on the environment.

14 Perhaps we could have some comments from
15 the Chief and then from Glen Pinnell from Abitibi-Price.

16 We will have Rod address the issue of the environment,
17 something that is very sacred to the Anicinabe people --
18 the waters, the air, the resources -- what your feelings
19 are on the environment, and then a response from Glen
20 Pinnell.

21 **CHIEF ROD BUSHIE:** Thank you, Mr.
22 Moderator.

23 What I forgot earlier when I talked was
24 to thank the Elder that opened with the prayer and the

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1 Drum group. I apologize for that.

2 On the environment part of it, we have
3 dealt this within our community. We have talked to the
4 people that are in a position to listen to us, what we
5 are told by our Elders and the respect of the land that
6 we live on. We have had meetings with the ministerial
7 people and, again, as usual, they have put us on hold and
8 nothing has been happening.

9 It is a concern in our part of the
10 country, both water and land, and what is happening in
11 our area.

12 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

13 Meegwitch, Chief Bushie. Chief Fontaine.

14 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE:** Meegwitch.

15 I don't know if I would be out of turn
16 here in responding to Mr. Koppang's comments. First, with
17 respect to gaming, Sagkeeng has taken the position that
18 gaming is a matter for the First Nation people of Sagkeeng
19 to control, that it's a jurisdictional question. We
20 maintain that the Province has no business in any part
21 of the gaming aspect in the First Nation of Sagkeeng.

22 As well, we look at the Province's
23 meddling in this process as an attempt to control and use
24 some authoritarian method to get First Nations people to,

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1 I guess, surrender our rights to them. I look at the
2 provincial government basically as a means to control and
3 subjugate our people. We certainly don't recognize
4 provincial jurisdiction over gaming in Sagkeeng. The
5 matter was taken before the people, and the people decided
6 that the community would control all aspects of the gaming
7 operation, and that we have done.

8 We exist by virtue of legislation, by
9 an Order in Council, provided by the governing body of
10 the Sagkeeng First Nation, and we leave it that. In terms
11 of discussions with your provincial lotteries, the only
12 discussion we have is through the RCMP. If Manitoba
13 Lotteries wants to bring an issue to our people, their
14 messenger is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We resent
15 the confrontational methods they use, and we have indicated
16 to the RCMP as well that, if they wish to push the issue,
17 then the people of Sagkeeng will stand firm and not put
18 up with any abuse of power or our legislation.

19 That aside, in terms of the environment,
20 again we have been very involved in environmental clean-up
21 and the environmental protection here at Sagkeeng. The
22 Winnipeg River which at one time was used continually by
23 our people now has limited use. Our children can no longer
24 make recreational use of the river for swimming and things

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1 like that. The Winnipeg River is the source of our
2 drinking water. We have had to retrofit and upgrade our
3 pump houses and the like time and again.

4 Dr. Sheehan alluded to the fact that it
5 was important that we have running water. The community
6 has embarked upon an ambitious project of installing a
7 \$6.5 million water line on either side of the shore to
8 provide those services to our Band members.

9 Because of this, I will relate this
10 directly to the pulp and paper mill. We are directly
11 downstream from the mill. We have had study upon study
12 indicating that the effluent that is dumped into the river
13 is highly toxic and, in some cases, could cause severe
14 health damage. We have the studies that indicate this.

15 As well, the Abitibi-Price pulp and
16 paper mill has shown little regard for the forest
17 resources, for the hunting, the trapping, the traditional
18 areas of our people. Most of the areas that we utilize
19 for hunting, trapping and traditional ceremonial grounds
20 have all been cut out.

21 It is only recently that Abitibi has
22 decided to be the good corporate citizen, and embarked
23 again on an ambitious reforestation plan which seeks to
24 reforest areas that have been cut out.

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1 At one point we entertained the thought
2 of participating in a mill buy-out. We looked to see what
3 kind of economic advantages we could have leveraged from
4 the process. There were many. However, the community,
5 by referendum once again, decided that the health and the
6 future of our people were far, far more important than
7 any kind of economic benefit that we could have derived
8 from being involved in the mill buy-out. So, needless
9 to say, we are no longer part of the process.

10 As well, we are seeking compensation for
11 damages committed by Abitibi- Price to the river and to
12 our forest resources.

13 I will call on George Munroe to elaborate
14 a bit on that.

15 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** A most
16 distinguished addition to the Panel. George.

17 **GEORGE MUNROE:** I know everybody is
18 getting hungry, and some of us are getting tired, I guess.

19 Jerry said practically everything there
20 was to say on the subject, as usual.

21 We have had extensive negotiations with
22 Abitibi prior to the referendum. We have had a number
23 of community meetings and workshops to discuss this
24 subject. The bottom line was that the community didn't

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1 want to get involved in Abitibi because of the damage that
2 was done to the environment -- to the river, to the hunting
3 and trapping areas, as Jerry mentioned.

4 I think it is important for the
5 Commission members for us to say, for the record, that,
6 while it is categorically imperative that the federal
7 government take their legal and fiduciary and political
8 responsibilities seriously toward the First Nations of
9 this country, it is equally important that institutions
10 and organizations, such as the churches and Abitibi, which
11 impact on the social and economic livelihood of the
12 community and the cultural and spiritual welfare and
13 well-being of the community members, take responsibility
14 for the damage they have done to Indian people.

15 I think it is very important to say that
16 because for 60 years Abitibi has been causing all kinds
17 of environmental damage to the river, and it was only very
18 recently that they decided to sit down and talk to the
19 community. It was one of those situations where it was
20 too little too late as far as a lot of the community members
21 were concerned.

22 They have had 60 years in which to bring
23 the Indian people into the circle to discuss this
24 particular problem, and they waited until the Band itself

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1 actually forced them to sit down with us. They weren't
2 going to sit down with us initially. We had to force their
3 hand to bring them to the negotiating table.

4 While their offers for employment
5 opportunities, and so on, were, I guess from their point
6 of view, generous, they certainly weren't anywhere near
7 what would be considered adequate. Just as an example,
8 there are approximately 1,000 employees -- and Mr. Pinnell
9 can defend that point later. There are approximately
10 1,000 employees in Abitibi right now. There are 500
11 regular employees and another 500 contract employees who
12 work in the bush and in the trucking, and so on and so
13 forth.

14 If you look at the number of Anicinabe
15 people that are employed in the mill itself and in these
16 other areas, you will find there are very few. We would
17 be hard pressed to find 20 full-time employees in the mill.

18 If you look at it over a 60-year period, that is a very,
19 very poor track record for anybody to turn around and tell
20 us that they are serious about increasing the opportunities
21 for economic participation on the part of the community.

22 For those reasons they were soundly
23 rejected as far as getting involved in any of those
24 operations.

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1 I think it is important to state that
2 those institutions which have impacted negatively on the
3 community have to be made responsible, the same way we
4 are making the government responsible. It is not going
5 to happen because of generosity or out of the goodness
6 of their hearts. It is going to happen because the
7 community itself has to exercise its rights -- its
8 political rights, its legal rights, and its moral rights.

9 That is the only way that any action has ever taken place
10 in Indian country.

11 I have been involved in this business
12 for over 30 years, and I know from personal experience
13 that nothing ever happens in the political arena or in
14 the legal arena or in the social arena unless the community
15 itself starts demanding that these injustices be
16 rectified.

17 Whenever people come to us and say, "Now
18 we are going to start talking to you about the damage that
19 we did," whether it is the churches or whether it is Abitibi
20 or anybody else, I think it is very important for the
21 community people to remember that those discussions don't
22 take place out of the goodness of these people's hearts.

23 They take place because the people demand that justice
24 is finally served for the people.

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1 I just wanted to say that because
2 sometimes I get the impression, in listening to news
3 reports and in listening to these various institutional
4 organizations speaking, as though it is something they
5 are initiating when the fact of the matter is that it is
6 because the Anicinabe people forced them to. That's the
7 only way they are going to deal with those problems.

8 Having said that, we are still in the
9 process of negotiating with Abitibi-Price at their
10 headquarters in Toronto for compensation, because are not
11 going to let them go on this issue. They are going to
12 have to pay for the damage that they have done to the people
13 of Sagkeeng one way or the other. We are certainly not
14 going to give up on that. We are in the process right
15 now of pretty heavy-duty negotiations with them to try
16 to develop a compensation package that is going to be just
17 and fair for the damages they have done.

18 That is all I have to say for now.

19 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

20 Meegwitch, George.

21 Because of the time factor, I am going
22 to ask for a response and comments from Glen Pinnell, our
23 representative from Abitibi.

24 **GLEN PINNELL, ABITIBI-PRICE:** Thank

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1 you, Mr. Chairman.

2 In response to the environmental
3 regulations that are presently in effect, the mill is
4 complying to those regulations. There is a recognized
5 need for improvement in the environment for all mills in
6 the country, and there is are new environmental regulations
7 going to be brought in in 1994-95.

8 The plans on the purchase of the mill
9 include a \$26 million expenditure for upgrading the
10 environment, so there will be major improvements there.

11 On the Winnipeg River itself, there has
12 been some recognition, starting in 1987 or so, that there
13 had to be an improvement to the river. There had been
14 wood stored and also some barks on beaches. We have, to
15 the tune of somewhere around \$700,000, contributed over
16 the last five years.

17 Possibly, as indicated, it is not enough
18 or maybe a too little too late in some people's eyes, but
19 there is a significant movement to do that.

20 From the aspect of the woodlands, we see
21 the forest as a renewable resource. We are only able to
22 harvest the amount of timber that is growing each year,
23 and that is regulated by the government. We have continued
24 to be able to harvest wood, so we feel that it is growing

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1 back, except for the impacts of fires. Six times as much
2 area has been lost under our Forest Management Licence
3 to fires as there is to harvesting, so there has been a
4 reduction.

5 With the resource, it is important to
6 all the communities. It is important to the livelihood
7 of the mill. If the resource is not there, then there
8 is no possibility for investing in the mill. In order
9 to have the mill, there has to be the right or the commitment
10 to have that resource.

11 In dollars, with contracting and
12 salaries at the mill and salaries in the woodlands, in
13 1990 I believe there was \$3.5 million given to people who
14 were either contracting or working for Abitibi directly
15 -- that is, Aboriginals or Aboriginal descent. Sometimes
16 we are not able to distinguish completely if a person is
17 treaty or not. That is the combination.

18 I could give more numbers of people
19 working there, but it is something like George says. I
20 think in the mill there are 32 people, but some of them
21 aren't full-time. We recognize the unemployment rate on
22 this reserve and other reserves, and we are committed to
23 try to help with that. We feel there is no future in living
24 with the unemployment rate at the level it is.

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1 Just to show our commitment in the
2 woodlands to things like this, the Forest Renewal Plan
3 which started in 1979 has grown now that probably 80 per
4 cent of the people that are working in that program are
5 from local communities. When the fires came and reduced
6 the annual allowable cut and also with Atakaki Park
7 imposing on our area, when that was brought in, our annual
8 allowable cut was dropped by 30 per cent. The local
9 communities continued to harvest, and we moved white
10 contractors off the FML.

11 I am not sure if there is anything more
12 to say on that. If there is any opportunity, I would like
13 to make some comments in general.

14 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Do we have
15 any further questions from Panel members? Chief Fontaine.

16 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE:** I want to make
17 reference to an Initial Assessment Screening document on
18 a request for transitional authorization by Abitibi-Price.

19 This was tabled to Environment Canada, Conservation
20 Protection, on September 12, 1992. It says:

21 "Since monitoring began at the mill, the
22 mill effluent has been acutely
23 lethal to fish. For purposes of
24 the recently promulgated Pulp and


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13             As well, I want to make one other
14 comment:
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15 "Apparently, voluntary upgrading of the mill was not
16 undertaken by Abitibi-Price Inc.
17 for two main reasons. Firstly, no
18 economically-viable wastewater
19 treatment technology existed for
20 small sulphite mills in the early
21 to mid 1970's. Secondly, in the
22 early 1980's, the Pulp and Paper
23 Effluent Regulations came under
24 review for possible revision,

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1 creating some uncertainty in the
2 industry as to the new regulatory
3 limits. Lengthy consultations
4 with the pulp and paper industry,
5 provincial governments,
6 non-governmental environmental
7 groups, and the Canadian public,
8 delayed the promulgation of the
9 revised Pulp and Paper Effluent
10 Regulations until May 7, 1992."

11 In view of that, economic reasons far
12 outweigh the health and the welfare of Anicinabe people
13 directly downstream from the Abitibi-Price pulp and paper
14 mill.

15 There has been study upon study done,
16 and each indicates that the water is severely damaged.
17 We have two jars of water from the Winnipeg River that
18 we would like someone to drink before they leave. We are
19 looking at Glen for now. Glen, don't pick up any coffee
20 or soft drinks up front; we have some water for you here.

21 **ELMER COURCHENE:** I was listening here
22 and what I hear scares me. We hear the Nation saying many
23 things.

24 I briefly talked this morning about the

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1 resource equity position. Yes, Canada has done a lot of
2 damage to our country, and they have to repay that.

3 In saying that, the two who are sitting
4 here from the Gaming Commission have good intentions of
5 helping our people, but I think, if we have to make a stand,
6 I think we have to stop for a while and look at ourselves
7 and look at who we are and what we are and where we want
8 to go. We have to look at how we clean ourselves so that
9 we don't have to sit down and negotiate or even talk to
10 other governments when we have our own government because
11 we will have our own resource equity to make our own
12 positions in life.

13 Meegwitch.

14 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

15 Meegwitch, Elmer Courchene.

16 I would like to entertain more
17 questions, but I know everybody is getting rumbling
18 stomachs. We have 15 minutes to eat before we start at
19 one o'clock sharp for the presentations.

20 A very quick comment from Commissioner
21 Paul Chartrand before we break for lunch and one question
22 from Commissioner Mary Sillett.

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
24 you, Gerald. You know that, under these circumstances,

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1 I will not take long. Everyone is hungry.

2 Mr. Koppang -- and I hope I have that
3 name right -- the gentleman representing the Province,
4 referred to an acronym, and I heard it as BLT, which to
5 me meant bacon, lettuce and tomato burger.

6 It is good to be able to assist in
7 promoting a dialogue here, and I don't want to ask any
8 questions about the substantive issues that are before
9 us. I would like to ask a question, though, to clarify
10 a matter of fact.

11 I ask Chief Fontaine: With respect to
12 the referendums that you referred to and also the Order
13 in Council, do I understand correctly that these are
14 Sagkeeng creatures as opposed to creatures under the Indian
15 Act -- that is, are these the kind of Band Council Orders
16 that can be made pursuant to the Indian Act or,
17 alternatively, are the ones that you have referred to
18 Sagkeeng creatures?

19 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE:** They are
20 Sagkeeng creations, and this is basically how we attempt
21 to reach consensus with the community concerning issues
22 of major importance, such as gaming and economic
23 development. It is done outside of the Indian Act.

24 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you

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1 for that. I also want to thank all the members of the
2 Panel, also the representatives of the private parties
3 and the representative of the party. We talked to
4 government officials late in the last year and secured
5 their assistance in the work of the Commission, and we
6 thank you for having done that today.

7 Meegwitch.

8 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

9 Meegwitch, Mr. Chartrand. Commissioner Mary Sillett.

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
11 very much. I think there are many questions that can be
12 raised as a result of this Panel, but everybody is hungry
13 and I don't want to be too long.

14 There are two questions I would like to
15 seek clarification on.

16 This morning we were presented with a
17 model for Anicinabe self-government. You can appreciate
18 that we didn't have a chance to document, but there are
19 two questions I do have, and I think they are questions
20 that are asked of almost everyone who mentions proposals
21 for self-government.

22 Do you have a proposal as to how the
23 self-government will be financed, and are there mechanisms
24 within that structure for accountability?

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1 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE:** In terms of the
2 Sagkeeng model or the Sagkeeng blue print, in terms of
3 financial resources, the federal government still has a
4 fiduciary and trust obligation to Anicinabe people. We
5 are looking at continuing that obligation. I don't think
6 the federal government can renege on that.

7 We have also suggested -- and I think
8 Elmer alluded to it as well -- resource sharing of benefits.

9 I think that would create a whole new source of revenue
10 for Anicinabe.

11 In terms of accountability, the
12 government of Sagkeeng is accountable to its people. We
13 are accountable to our people first, rather than either
14 federal or provincial level of government. In terms of
15 accountability, there are four major assemblies throughout
16 the year wherein accountability is given to the citizens.

17 We do that, and that ensures accountability.

18 If people are empowered, then that
19 ensures that accountability will be front and centre.
20 I don't think any Council in its right mind would seek
21 not to be accountable to its people.

22 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** With that,
23 I would like to close up this morning's session. I thank
24 all the Panel members who sat here.

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1 I have a request made by one of the
2 organizers that we have a request out to the teaching staff
3 to quickly run down to the food bar at the end and get
4 plates for the Elders.

5 We have one more speaker, Elder Jack
6 Star.

7 **ELDER JACK STAR:** Before concluding, I
8 want to talk about this water and this and that.

9 In my young days, when the mill started,
10 we had very clear water in that time, in 1928-29. We
11 usually drink this water right up to 1969. I would like
12 to go back a little ways.

13 I truly blame the water. There is a lot
14 of stuff coming out all the way from Dryden, Fort Frances,
15 Kenora. It all combines in one area in this Winnipeg
16 River.

17 I guess there is a lot of sickness that
18 we went through. I myself suffered a lot, and we lost
19 a lot of young Elders. We don't see those people. I guess
20 that is on account of the poison that was put in this river
21 and the poison we drink.

22 Our hunting areas, we were given a piece
23 of land, a registered trap line, and that is all destroyed.
24 Even the animals are sick.

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1 One of my friends talked to me the other
2 day. He said, "Look at me." He had a big lump in his
3 ear. These are the things that happen to the people, us
4 people, when we are getting older. The fish we eat is
5 poison. The water we drink is poison. They poison the
6 resources where we hunt, trap. That is why these two jars
7 came.

8 I want to talk about this one. This one
9 is the first sample that was taken. You can see that.
10 This is water we were drinking earlier in the year.

11 This one, most of the things in here I
12 say are poison. That is why I want to talk about that.

13 I wonder if the Manitoba paper company at that time could
14 drink this water, I wonder how he would feel today. I
15 know it is a very bad situation. We have been having
16 trouble for a lot of time, a lot of sickness, a lot of
17 diabetes, cancer, tumours and all the things we have in
18 our bodies.

19 I was given this to talk about it, and
20 I don't know if we will be able to drink this water any
21 more. You will notice this water is very clear.

22 So there are a lot of questions to be
23 answered.

24 A long time ago our grandfathers never

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1 had sickness. They used to get their own food from the
2 water and the bush. In 1968 I moved out from the Winnipeg
3 River. I moved about a mile out on the highway. In that
4 time I saw the water very, very dirty, dirtier than this
5 one, so we had to stop drinking that water, but I already
6 had a poison in my stomach. I had a lot of operations,
7 not only myself, my wife and some other people that passed
8 away.

9 There should be something done. I know
10 a lot of people from the White Dog Reserve and Grassy
11 Narrows, when I was out that way, and there are some older
12 people that are still living. They were given a good
13 compensation. So I would like to see that in our community
14 here. The people are still at it, and I would like to
15 see something done. We don't have to wait another hundred
16 years; we don't have to wait another 50 years. We would
17 like to have it done as soon as possible.

18 Meegwitch, meegwitch.

19 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

20 Meegwitch, Elder Jack Star.

21 Again, we are coming close to afternoon
22 presentation time. If you haven't grabbed a plate yet,
23 the food bar is at the back.

24 --- Luncheon Recess at 12:51 p.m.

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1 --- Upon resuming at 1:20 p.m.

2 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** We have
3 one representative from Little Black River who didn't make
4 it this morning. He thought the session was this
5 afternoon. We are going to ask him to do a short
6 presentation here before we get into all the rest of the
7 people that are identified on your afternoon agenda.

8 We have Warren Bird here representing
9 Little Black River. He will be doing a short presentation.

10 **WARREN BIRD, LITTLE BLACK RIVER:** Thank
11 you.

12 On behalf of Little Black River, Chief
13 Frank Abraham is unable to make it.

14 On the topic of self-government, to us,
15 self-government is justice, treaties, child welfare,
16 education, housing, health and economic development. On
17 the self-government, the Anicinabe government, the law
18 is simple. There are four laws that we, as Anicinabe
19 people, know. Those laws are kindness, honesty, sharing
20 and from there the strength that we gather from these laws.

21 Our Elders talk about these laws. The
22 ceremonies that we have in Little Black River we keep
23 sacred. There we never lost our culture. It is there,
24 and we have to practise it.

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1 I am running out of words.

2 Again, I would like to thank the
3 Commission for letting me do this presentation. I guess
4 I lost my words.

5 For self-government we have it, and we
6 have to utilize it. We had it before and we have it today,
7 our rights as First Nations citizens.

8 The justice system is unfair to our First
9 Nations citizens. It is unfair in handing down our ways,
10 our hunting, our fishing, trapping.

11 I lost my words, what I was going to say.
12 I am not used to talking in front of people.

13 What we do learn from the teachings from
14 our Elders is that kindness, honesty, sharing and the
15 strength we receive is there. Our culture is there. We
16 just have to practise it.

17 Meegwitch. Thank you.

18 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

19 Meegwitch, Warren Bird. We appreciate your attendance
20 here this afternoon.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I want to
22 take a brief moment to say meegwitch for your presentation.

23 I think you have said essentially what Chief Jerry
24 Fontaine was telling this morning, that the unique culture

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1 of the Anicinabe have to be the basis for self-government
2 if it is going to make sense.

3 Thank you again for coming and
4 representing Chief Frank Abraham.

5 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

6 We will carry on now with presentations this afternoon.

7 The first person we have coming up is Steven Katz.

8 For the information of the presenters
9 who are coming up here this afternoon, we are asking that
10 you limit your presentations to 20 minutes, which will
11 include questions from Commissioner Mary Sillett and
12 Commissioner Paul Chartrand, so please wait for a few
13 minutes following your presentation.

14 Our first speaker this afternoon is
15 Steven Katz, with a discussion on self-government.

16 **STEVEN KATZ:** Thank you to the
17 Commission, to the Chiefs and ladies and gentlemen for
18 permitting me this opportunity to speak to you this
19 afternoon.

20 As the Moderator has advised you, my
21 topic is on self-government, but it deals with issue of
22 justice.

23 I would like to begin by saying that I
24 was encouraged when I saw the notice in the paper which

1 talked about a time to talk and a time to listen. I also
2 believe there is a time for action. What you will hear
3 from me this afternoon is nothing new; it is nothing that
4 hasn't been said before; it is nothing that hasn't been
5 repeated or printed in various reports throughout our
6 country and in our province.

7 What I will tell you is some of the
8 problems that Aboriginal people have encountered in our
9 provincial Circuit Court system, what I will hope to do
10 in the time I have been allotted is to make a recommendation
11 as to how we can overcome those problems and to enhance
12 the justice system for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
13 people alike.

14 Mr. Bird spoke before me and, in his
15 comments, he said that the justice system is unfair to
16 First Nations people. His comments echo those of the
17 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba. That report found
18 the justice system has failed Manitoba's Aboriginal people
19 on a massive scale. It has been insensitive and
20 inaccessible and has arrested and imprisoned Aboriginal
21 people in grossly disproportionate numbers.

22 It is not merely that the justice system
23 has failed Aboriginal people; justice has been denied them.

24 The comments of the Commissioners in the

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1 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry are nothing new to Manitobans
2 or Canadians. Those comments had been issued before them
3 from the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on the Donald
4 Marshall Inquiry. They had been issued in the Alberta
5 Justice on Trial: Report of the Task Force; and they had
6 been issued in the Law Reform Commission of Canada Report
7 No. 34 on Aboriginal Peoples and Criminal Justice.

8 What I find discouraging is that all
9 these reports acknowledge that there is a problem with
10 Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. All
11 these reports have made recommendations to the various
12 levels of government for the implementation of programs
13 to address those concerns, and none of the governments
14 has responded to the concerns addressed by the various
15 reports.

16 Because this is a time to talk and this
17 is a time to listen, I hope, through the course of my
18 proposal, to address some of the problems and to make a
19 recommendation that perhaps the governments might see fit
20 to listen to and to try to implement in order to improve
21 the system of justice.

22 In order to understand the problem
23 encountered by Aboriginal people, you must understand
24 their way of life. We have heard some of the problems

8 In Manitoba there are 61 First Nations.
9 The First Nations live on 102 land reserves. They are
10 generally small, with approximately 40 of them having
11 populations of less than 1,000 and approximately 25 with
12 populations of less than 500. Manitoba has the highest
13 proportion of its band population living in remote areas.
14 For nine or ten months a year approximately 20 Aboriginal
15 communities are accessible only by air.

StenoTran

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1 The report found the violent crime rate
2 to be 9 per 1,000, while for Aboriginal bands the violent
3 crime rate is 33.1 per 1,000, or 3.67 times the national
4 rate.

5 That last statistic might be somewhat
6 misleading, as a study by criminologists Mary Hyde and
7 Carol LaPrairie found that, although Aboriginal people
8 committed more violent offences than the non-Aboriginal
9 people committed, the majority of the crimes were, in their
10 words, petty offences. That finding of theirs was
11 confirmed in a study of Provincial Court data by the
12 Minister of Justice for the Province of Manitoba.

13 The study found that on reserves
14 surveyed 35 per cent of the crime fed into a group of four
15 offences, and those offences were common assault, break
16 and enter, theft under \$1,000, and public mischief.

17 The study by Hyde and LaPrairie found
18 that a high proportion of Aboriginal violent crimes were
19 directed against family members; they found a minimum of
20 41.4 per cent, and they qualified that by saying that the
21 figure may be much higher because in 50.2 per cent of the
22 files they studied the relationship between the attacker
23 and the victim was not known. It was known, however, that
24 violent offences most frequently take place in private

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1 residences on the reserve.

2 The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, in
3 examining the material, concluded:

4 "We believe that the relatively higher rates of crime among
5 Aboriginal people are a result of
6 the despair, dependency, anger,
7 frustration and sense of injustice
8 prevalent in Aboriginal
9 communities, stemming from the
10 cultural and community break down
11 that has occurred over the past
12 century."

13 I believe many of those comments were
14 issued by the earlier speakers. Elmer Courchene from
15 Sagkeeng talked about: We have lost our way, lost our
16 teachings; we do not respect each other any more. I
17 believe those statistics confirm his comments.

18 The prison rates, as set out in the
19 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Report, indicate that in
20 Manitoba, in which Aboriginal people constitute 12 per
21 cent of the total population, the prison population on
22 any given day of 1,600 incarcerated people is over one-half
23 Aboriginal people. A study prepared in 1989 found that
24 Aboriginal men accounted for 46 per cent of the inmate

10 Thus, Aboriginal people, depending on
11 their age or sex, are present in jails up to five times
12 more than their presence in the general population.

15 "-- the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the
16 province's criminal justice system
17 is not related solely to high
18 Aboriginal crime rates. We
19 believe that Aboriginal
20 over-representation may arise
21 because 'the current justice
22 system, in many ways, is culturally
23 inappropriate and discriminating
24 in its treatment of Aboriginal

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1 people'."

2 From these findings I have been able to
3 set out what I felt were nine material findings which I
4 use as a basis for the proposal that I make to this
5 Commission. I found the material facts of Aboriginal
6 life, which I have taken into consideration in making my
7 recommendation, were the facts that:

8 Sixty-one First Nations, or
9 approximately 49,000 registered Indians, live on 102
10 reserves;

11 The reserves are comprised of ethnically
12 homogeneous groups;

13 The reserve populations are small;
14 approximately 40 of them have a population of less than
15 1,000;

16 The reserves are in remote areas of the
17 province, often far from large centres;

18 A large portion of reserve residents
19 have retained their Aboriginal language and use it in their
20 homes;

21 The reserve populations suffer from
22 worse socio-economic conditions than any other segment
23 of Manitoba society;

24 The crime rates of Manitoba's reserves

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1 are higher than the national average, albeit that many
2 of these offences are of the less serious type;

3 A very high proportion of violent crime,
4 a minimum of 41.4 per cent, is directed against family
5 members; and

6 Aboriginal people are over-represented
7 in the province's prison system.

8 In identifying the problems, we can now
9 consider some of the difficulties in the Circuit Court
10 system.

11 Many of the reports identify two main
12 problems in the present justice system, being racism and
13 systemic or institutional discrimination. In the body
14 of my report I have indicated that I don't propose to deal
15 with the issue of racism. That has been touched upon in
16 other reports, and I have referred to them. I felt that,
17 for the purpose of this discussion, which is looking to
18 solutions to the problem, it would be far more productive
19 to identify problems that we can all agree upon.

20 The problems that I believe we can all
21 agree upon I have listed under the category of systemic
22 discrimination. Systemic discrimination is described:
23 "The term...is used where the application of a standard
24 of criterion, or the use of a

Systemic discrimination in the Circuit Court system in Manitoba causes inequitable and inadequate delivery of justice to Aboriginal people in Aboriginal communities. The four major causes of systemic discrimination I have identified as: cultural discrimination; language-related issues; location of Circuit Court sittings; and frequency of Circuit Court sittings.

Cultural Discrimination: We have heard talk earlier from Chief Rod Bushie that we must heal within our community. He talks about the Aboriginal concept of justice and the Aboriginal concept of healing. Many Aboriginal people, when they enter into the Anglo-Saxon system of justice encounter difficulties because the approach to justice is different from their concept of justice. That is what cultural discrimination is.

StenoTran

1 to the Law Reform Commission of Canada. Chief Mercredi
2 said:

3 "One of the problems that I see is the perception that
4 the criminal justice system is
5 near-perfect but can maybe be a
6 little more perfect by making some
7 changes to it over a period of time
8 to allow for the concerns and the
9 rights of Aboriginal people. The
10 real issue is what some people have
11 called cultural imperialism, where
12 one group of people who are
13 distinct make a decision for all
14 other people ... If you look at it
15 in the context of law, police,
16 court and corrections, and you ask
17 yourself: 'Can we improve upon
18 the system?', well, my response is,
19 quite frankly, you can't. Our
20 experiences are such that, if you
21 make it more representative, it's
22 still your law that would apply,
23 it would still be your police
24 forces that would enforce the laws,

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1 it would still be your courts that
2 would interpret them, and it would
3 still be your corrections system
4 that houses the people that go
5 through the court system.. It
6 would not be our language that is
7 used in the system. It would not
8 be our laws. It would not be our
9 traditions, our customs or our
10 values that decide what happens in
11 the system. That is what I mean
12 by cultural imperialism. So a
13 more representative system, where
14 we have more Indian judges, more
15 Indian lawyers, more Indian Clerks
16 of the Court, more Indian
17 correctional officers and more
18 Indian managers of the
19 correctional system is not the
20 solution. So what we have to do,
21 in my view, is take off that
22 imperial hat, if that's possible,
23 and find alternatives to the
24 existing system ..."

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1 If we are serious about addressing the
2 difficult position that Aboriginal people are put in when
3 they interact with the present justice system, we must
4 find ways for the system to recognize Aboriginal beliefs
5 and values, to the extent that Aboriginal people will feel
6 that the system has treated them fairly and in a way which
7 respects them as individuals of their society.

8 One of the ways that has been suggested
9 in some of the reports is through cross-cultural training.
10 It is an approach which is based on the premise that,
11 in order for one culture to take into account the other
12 culture's beliefs and values, it must first understand
13 the beliefs and values of the other culture. As you can
14 tell from the comments of Chief Mercredi, he does not
15 support that recommendation.

16 Another way of achieving the goal of
17 making the system more culturally relevant for Aboriginal
18 people is through the establishment of an Aboriginal
19 justice system based on Aboriginal values and beliefs in
20 Aboriginal communities. I believe that is what Chief
21 Mercredi is purporting to support in his recommendations
22 to the Law Reform Commission of Canada.

23 As I have stated earlier, there were four
24 problems under the category of systemic discrimination.

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1 The first category was cultural discrimination. The
2 second problem was language-related issues.

3 The Law Reform Report found:

4 "Language-related problems for Aboriginal persons that
5 have been remarked to us include
6 suggestions that: judges tend to
7 deny requests for an interpreter
8 if the accused can speak some
9 English; interpreters are often
10 not neutral, in the sense that they
11 are familiar with the accused;
12 interpreters are not adequately
13 trained; many legal concepts have
14 no equivalent words in Aboriginal
15 languages; --"

16 And the commonly referred to problem has been translating
17 fundamental words such as "guilty." They have found in
18 the report that that term has been translated by
19 interpreters as "Did you do it?" or "Are you being blamed?",
20 with unfortunate consequences.

21 The report found:

22 "-- where assistance is available, it is not sought, nor
23 is the need for it appreciated by
24 counsel and other personnel."

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1 Another problem identified in the
2 Marshall Inquiry was the difficulty many Aboriginal people
3 face when they have to testify in what to them is a foreign
4 language. The Marshall Inquiry noted that Donald Marshall
5 appeared more comfortable when testifying in Mi'kmag than
6 in English, a language in which he is fluent. Matters
7 of nuance can make the difference between giving an
8 inculpatory or exculpatory statement to the police,
9 between being believed or disbelieved and between being
10 convicted or acquitted, and receiving a harsh or lenient
11 sentence.

12 Another consideration of
13 language-related problems is the situation for members
14 of the community who are neither the accused nor witnesses,
15 but who are present in court hearings which are intended
16 to publicly reinforce values of the community, condemn
17 misbehaviour. The members of the community are often in
18 ignorance of what is transpiring since the proceedings
19 are neither conducted nor translated in a language known
20 to the majority of them. The reports found there was
21 little sense in calling it a public court if the public
22 cannot understand what is happening.

23 The reports made two recommendations.
24 One recommendation is that you can improve the translation

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1 services which are being offered to Aboriginal people,
2 but that would still get back to the problem addressed
3 by Chief Mercredi: It would still be your language. That
4 might address the problems of accused and witnesses, but
5 it does nothing to enhance the reputation of the court
6 to the people who come to court to see that justice is
7 administered.

8 Another recommendation is the right of
9 Aboriginal people to express themselves in their own
10 language in all court and administrative proceedings.
11 The UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and
12 Protection of Minorities, in their Draft Declaration on
13 Indigenous Peoples, stated, in part:

14 "States shall take measures to ensure that indigenous
15 peoples can understand and be
16 understood in political, legal and
17 administrative proceedings, where
18 necessary, through the provision
19 of interpretation or other
20 effective means."

21 I believe that is what Chief Mercredi
22 is saying in his submission, that not only must the courts
23 be culturally-sensitive; he doesn't see that as the
24 solution. He sees the solution as taking back the courts,

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1 taking control of the courts, applying traditional
2 Aboriginal values in traditional Aboriginal language
3 within the Aboriginal community.

4 Another problem of systemic
5 discrimination is the location of the Circuit Court
6 sittings. The physical isolation of many of the First
7 Nations, which I referred to earlier in my submission,
8 presents Aboriginal people with problems not experienced
9 by most Canadians who have relatively easy access to court.
10 Both accused and witnesses living in Aboriginal
11 communities face enormous transportation problems in
12 attending court, including the complete lack of public
13 transport, exorbitant costs for private transport, harsh
14 weather, and difficult road conditions. This problem is
15 often exacerbated by the criminal process which requires
16 numerous court room appearances by an accused person while
17 the matter is on remand.

18 The physical inaccessibility of courts
19 and the requirement of numerous court room appearances
20 often give rise to failure to appear charges and even to
21 unwarranted guilty pleas.

22 The physical isolation of Aboriginal
23 communities often causes certain secondary legal problems,
24 among them inadequate police services, limited access to

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1 counsel, and the release of persons far from their
2 community with no means to return home.

3 Various reports have found that the
4 remote communities are especially likely to suffer delay.

5 The Justice on Trial report from Alberta and the
6 Osnaburgh/Windigo Report have both noted that courts,
7 particularly Circuit Courts, are often cancelled owing
8 to weather. Cases are also delayed because of the
9 non-appearance of accused or witnesses at trial some
10 distance from the community and, equally, the need to find
11 interpreters can cause delay.

12 The reports talk about the problems
13 delay creates in physically isolated communities. First,
14 there is a problem that delay might actually interfere
15 in a situation where it has been resolved. Equally, the
16 delay could result in a situation not being adequately
17 resolved in the existing system.

18 Rupert Ross, in his article, "Leaving
19 Our White Eyes Behind: The Sentencing of Native Accused",
20 speaks of an Aboriginal teenaged rape victim who refused
21 to testify at a trial over a year after the event. For
22 her, it was simply too late to put him through it. The
23 past was the past.

24 Another pending trial can be exacerbated

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1 when the community aspect of delay is the practical
2 difficulty of leaving an offender in the community which
3 is small and relatively isolated. Already inappropriate
4 bail conditions are more difficulty to comply with over
5 a long period of time, and the offender and the victim
6 are likely to come in contact with each other, with
7 potentially unfortunate results.

8 Secondly, the time between the offence
9 and the trial becomes longer, and the connection for the
10 community becomes less clear. This often has the effect
11 of undermining the community's confidence in the justice
12 system.

13 The reports have recommended that there
14 should be efforts made to have more court sittings within
15 the Aboriginal communities, and another solution has been
16 to recommend the provision of transportation or repayment
17 of costs for accused or witnesses who have to attend courts.

18 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Excuse me,
19 I am going to have to ask you to conclude so that we can
20 have questions from the Commissioners.

21 **STEVEN KATZ:** In identifying these
22 problems, the last problem is the frequency of court
23 sittings. As many of you are aware, the Circuit Court
24 sits approximately once a month. Many people have found

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1 that this does not adequately address the length of the
2 dockets and the matters that have to be attended to.

3 Frequency of court sittings and
4 locations of court sittings deals with Aboriginal people's
5 problems of accessibility to court. People in Winnipeg
6 have access to courts, access to dealing with their
7 problems. They want to resolve problems quickly so they
8 can get on with their lives. Aboriginal people should
9 be entitled to the same remedies.

10 As a result of these problems which I
11 have identified -- cultural discrimination,
12 language-related problems, accessibility to the courts
13 -- what I propose to this Commission is that we need a
14 model that will address those problems.

15 If you have an alternative dispute
16 resolution model, that is a model where the disputes of
17 members in the community are referred out of the Circuit
18 Court system into the Aboriginal community where the
19 dispute arose, to be dealt with by Aboriginal leaders,
20 to be dealt with by leaders according to traditional
21 Aboriginal values, in the Aboriginal language of the
22 community, by the leaders of the community, so that you
23 can eliminate the problems identified in the report. What
24 you can accomplish is that you can instil a sense of pride

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1 in the traditions and the values of Aboriginal culture,
2 in the healing process which Chief Bushie talked about
3 -- we must heal within our community. The healing must
4 take place within the Aboriginal community, not within
5 the Circuit Court system.

6 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** We have
7 some questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner Mary
8 Sillett.

9 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** First of
10 all, I would like to thank you very much for your
11 presentation.

12 As you are aware, justice is a big issue
13 within Aboriginal communities. One thing that we are
14 planning to do is to have a workshop in Ottawa on the whole
15 justice issue. There are several questions that we will
16 be dealing with.

17 I would like to have your opinions on
18 two questions that have been discussed quite frequently
19 by the Aboriginal communities.

20 For example, if you did have a dispute
21 resolution mechanism within the community, would you have
22 one for everyone or would you have different forms for
23 different Aboriginal nations? Have you considered that
24 question?

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1 **STEVEN KATZ:** As you see in the proposal
2 which I put before the Commission -- and you must appreciate
3 that I didn't have time to develop the recommendation that
4 I made in the 20 minutes that was allotted to me. If you
5 look at Aboriginal life in Manitoba, you will see that
6 it is as different as white society is in Winnipeg. In
7 the rest of Manitoba you will see Ukrainians, Jewish
8 people, English people -- each one with different history,
9 different cultures. So, too, you see the same in
10 Aboriginal communities.

11 In order to recognize the difference
12 between Aboriginal people, what I have suggested is that
13 the model be somewhat flexible. As the cases get diverted
14 from the criminal justice system -- and I referred to the
15 crime rates earlier because I thought those were prime
16 areas that could be easily diverted from the criminal
17 justice system and put into an alternative dispute
18 resolution.

19 Each community would resolve the problem
20 according to that community's traditions and values and
21 according to that community's language, by that
22 community's leaders within that community. It offers a
23 degree of flexibility that each community could maintain
24 their identity, their traditions and their values in

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1 resolving their disputes.

2 It is much like Chief Rod Bushie said
3 earlier in his submission: We must heal within our
4 community. Each community should have the option of
5 healing according to their traditional ways. Any time
6 you try to impose one system upon many different peoples,
7 you have the problem that we have seen in the studies of
8 an foreign imposed system upon a subordinate people.

9 For the purpose of my recommendation,
10 I thought we should leave the option open to the different
11 communities to choose the values, the traditions that they
12 wanted to maintain within their community, that they wanted
13 to use in the resolving of disputes. So it would be
14 flexible to that extent.

15 It would be uniform in the sense that,
16 once the matter is referred to the Aboriginal community,
17 it would be resolved within the community according to
18 their practices and then referred back to the Circuit Court
19 system to be disposed with according to the recommendation
20 of the dispute resolution body.

21 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
22 very much. For the purpose of your recommendation or your
23 proposal, did you consider whether these mechanisms would
24 have jurisdiction over non-Aboriginal people living in

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1 that geographic area?

2 **STEVEN KATZ:** That is an interesting
3 issue. As you see in the proposal that I made, once the
4 matter is referred to the Circuit Court system, what I
5 suggested is that there would be an Aboriginal court
6 official. He would work in conjunction with the Crown
7 Attorney, screening files as they came before the court.

8 As he had an opportunity to refer to the
9 file to see if it fell within a category of offence that
10 could be referred to the system and it was approved either
11 by guidelines or by crown approval, the Aboriginal court
12 official would then contact both of the parties and give
13 them the option to see if they want to participate in the
14 system.

15 I believe you need a voluntary system
16 because, if the people aren't voluntary participants, they
17 are not likely to achieve a friendly settlement through
18 a dispute resolution process.

19 So whether they are Aboriginal or
20 non-Aboriginal, whether it is a victim or a complainant
21 who is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, both parties to the
22 process have the option of entering into a mediation
23 dispute process. When they are contacted by the
24 Aboriginal court official, what he would do at that time

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1 is explain to them the process, explain to them the
2 procedure, advise them of their rights. As I stated in
3 the proposal, accused persons would have to waive their
4 right to a trial within a reasonable time while they were
5 in the mediation process.

6 The Attorney General of Manitoba would
7 have to agree that any expression of guilt or sympathy
8 or apology on the part of the accused would not be used
9 in later proceedings against that person, and the
10 complainant or victim would have to agree that any
11 expression of sympathy or apology would not be used in
12 later civil proceedings against that person.

13 So I have left it somewhat flexible.
14 I have left it at the discretion of the community, if they
15 are prepared to extend the model to Aboriginal and
16 non-Aboriginal people or, if the community saw fit, they
17 could limit it strictly to Aboriginal people within their
18 community on the basis that: These people live in our
19 community; it is a small community; we see each other;
20 we can't resolve disputes through the traditional criminal
21 justice system because that is not working; people are
22 not satisfied with the results; people are coming back
23 into the community and hostilities are flaring up; you
24 hear about feud reserves. Many of us who practise in the

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1 criminal courts have seen them.

2 We see that the system doesn't work.
3 We are looking for new solutions, and that is why I propose
4 this.

5 Aboriginal people say that their system,
6 their traditions, their values work. Let's give them a
7 chance.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
9 you, Mr. Katz. There is no time to examine with care your
10 proposal in this forum, but we have it in writing, and
11 I will be giving it close consideration, as will the
12 Commission.

13 I would like to make a remark and invite
14 you to tell me if my remarks are correct.

15 You are suggesting a means of making the
16 system better by providing us with a model of accommodation
17 within the system. It does not go all the way to meet,
18 using your own test of the remarks of the Chief that you
19 referred to. It does not go all the way to providing relief
20 from the comment that "it is your system", because, among
21 other things, crown approval would be required.

22 This is a model built upon diversion from
23 the existing system, among other reasons, because the
24 offences themselves -- and offences are, at some point,

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1 based upon the values of a culture -- are still determined
2 not by the Anicinabe but by outsiders.

3 That is a very general description of
4 the proposal.

5 It appears, does it not, to be fairly
6 close in its conception and structure to the peacemaker
7 courts used by the Dene, also known as the Navajo in the
8 United States? Is it fair to so characterize it as quite
9 close to the peacemaker court model?

10 **STEVEN KATZ:** From the reports that I
11 have seen on alternative dispute resolutions used
12 throughout Canada, there are many similarities to some
13 of the systems in place. I have suggested in my submission
14 to this Commission that it is a first-step model on a
15 parallel process.

16 I appreciate your comments that it is
17 still closely associated with the existing Circuit Court
18 system, but I did so in the belief that initially many
19 Aboriginal communities might prefer to have a model that
20 bears a close resemblance or places a reliance on existing
21 systems and then, depending on the success of that system,
22 they would be prepared to take the next step to an
23 independent system.

24 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I

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1 understand that. I was raising the matter of the symmetry,
2 if I can put it that way, between the test that you had
3 posited at the beginning, with the extract from Chief
4 Mercredi, and then the subsequent proposal that you make.

5 I was saying I did not think there is a symmetry there.

6 But I do understand the goals that you
7 have articulated, and I thank you.

8 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
9 Mr. Katz, for your presentation.

10 I would now like to call on Fabian
11 Morrisseau and Harold Fontaine to do a presentation on
12 drug and alcohol abuse. For the purposes of timing, I
13 would like to give some indication when we have five minutes
14 left in the presentation so that questions can be asked
15 by our Commissioners, not out of disrespect for our
16 presenters but just as a matter of the time factor.

17 **FABIAN MORRISSEAU:** Good afternoon,
18 ladies and gentlemen. We will be talking about the Al-Care
19 and how it came about.

20 About 17 years ago, the Chief came to
21 us and said, "What is happening to our community? A lot
22 of our people are sick with alcoholism. What can we do?"

23 That is how the Al-Care came about.
24 Looking at the people around us in our community, we went

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1 around in institutions and we found a lot of our people
2 in there, in the hospitals, in jails. What was the reason
3 why they were there? Because of drugs and alcohol. We
4 said, "Well, we have to do something."

5 So we went looking around for ideas, and
6 we came with this idea, "Let's build a treatment centre."

7 When we talk about a treatment centre, that means the
8 community has to take its part in it, not only the centre
9 itself. We do have some difficulties in that. It seems
10 like people are afraid of that. They are afraid to face
11 the problems that are happening.

12 The Chief said, "All I hear in our
13 community is people crying." True enough, that is what
14 was happening. People were crying for help.

15 The treatment is there now, and the
16 problem is still here. The only way we could help
17 ourselves is with community participation. The centre
18 alone can't do it. It has to take people itself, in Fort
19 Alexander.

20 (Translated): A lot of our people are
21 sick and are not in this treatment centre, to treat the
22 people that are having problems. But they are so scared
23 of it. They are scared because they don't understand it
24 because they took their relatives away from them. They

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1 want to get back to the life that they used to live, the
2 respect they had for people. That is what they are trying
3 to teach the people today. It is not only the ones who
4 are working that will be able to do it; the whole community
5 has to do it. They have to support it. That is what we
6 have been talking about. We must try to straighten out
7 the problems we are facing.

8 I have lost all my children because of
9 drinking. These are the things we are fighting.
10 Governments still don't have enough tools to help our
11 people. We have to explain why these things are happening
12 to our people. If he understood and if he lived here,
13 what we are fighting is alcohol and drugs. I lost my two
14 children because they took too much medication from the
15 doctors.

16 I feel sorry when I look behind at my
17 grandchildren, when they see this kind of life. This is
18 what we are trying to teach our people who are suffering,
19 but they are not listening to what we are saying. We can't
20 do it alone. It is not only Fort Alex; they come from
21 all over, and the building was built for them, to go back
22 to the teachings. But the government says: No, I will
23 teach you another thing. Give us the right to look after
24 ourselves, to look after our people. We will try to help

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1 anybody; it doesn't matter who he is, Indian or white man.

2 We will help anybody.

3 This is why we do it on our own, so we
4 could be understood. We know how we can heal these people.

5 This is where the Indian people can help themselves.

6 I am scared that we will lose that.

7 I am not going to say very much. I don't
8 want to take too much of somebody else's time. This is
9 what we are planning on alcohol and drugs. This is what
10 we are fighting. All of us have to fight that in the
11 community. This is all I am going to say.

12 I don't have anything in writing. I am
13 speaking from the heart. Thank you.

14 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

15 Meegwitch, Fabian. We will now have some comments from
16 Harold.

17 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** Meegwitch. My name
18 is Harold Fontaine. Meegwitch, hello, aneen and tansi (PH)

19 First of all, I would like to read a
20 couple of statements. For my part, I would like to give
21 a few examples of the statements that I am making here.

22 Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, let
23 me thank you for allowing me to make this presentation.

24 We work in an area of treatment,

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1 prevention for alcohol and drugs and, recently, solvent
2 abuse. It is under these circumstances that we meet many
3 of our people. These people who take treatment, for
4 whatever reason, cannot be given up on.

5 The inequalities of citizenship in
6 Canada -- I would like to read some statements on that.

7 Treaty rights are special rights in
8 Canada for the use of the land. Treaty rights are not
9 gifts or free rights for the Natives. The rights of treaty
10 are in addition to the rights that all residents of Canada
11 share, but this is not the case, for example, for the
12 Aboriginal student.

13 Some treaty students have access to
14 funding for post-secondary education through their bands.
15 However, most bands are being told that post-secondary
16 education is not a right, so some bands can't afford to
17 send their people through college or university. These
18 students will go the same route as all Canadians will.
19 They will pay for fees themselves and may apply for
20 provincial grants and bursaries. The Province may accept
21 the grant application from the student, but will disallow
22 any chance of receiving any bursary because they are
23 status.

24 There are cases of discrimination to the

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1 special rights of Natives. In health agencies of
2 reserves, for example a Personal Care Home on a reserve,
3 will be eligible for a \$89 per diem, but the same agency,
4 if run by non-Natives outside of the reserve, will be
5 eligible for a \$150 per diem.

6 Another example of discrimination to the
7 Native agencies is that, if a Native agency runs a health
8 organization, they must sign a contribution agreement with
9 the government. If a non-Native agency establishes the
10 same organization, they are offered a written or verbal
11 contract. This option is not open to the Natives.

12 As one government official stated, there
13 are two systems: the contract for the non-Native and the
14 contribution agreements for Natives. In his words, "The
15 Contribution Agreement helps government keep a tighter
16 control over the operation."

17 It is evident that government people do
18 not think much of Native people. They feel that Natives
19 cannot co-ordinate or control their own destiny. The
20 Government of Canada must realize rights that treaty people
21 have in addition to the rights of all people who reside
22 in Canada.

23 As I said earlier, there are a couple
24 of things that I would like to give as an example of some

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1 inequalities.

2 Being a Native social worker, one thing
3 that is very obvious when you work in a Native treatment
4 centre compared to a provincial-run treatment centre is
5 the salary scale. A counsellor is able to receive a
6 \$36,000 salary in a provincial-run treatment centre, while
7 in the reserve Native-run treatment centre a counsellor
8 with some years' experience would just be barely receiving
9 \$21,000. So there is quite a difference in that area.

10 Furthermore, with training, we do have
11 a lot of Native treatment centres that have opened up in
12 Manitoba. But that is not a full answer to the drinking
13 problem and the drug problem. The training the workers
14 receive is very minimal. A lot of times their training
15 is not recognized and, because of that, their salaries
16 are below par.

17 The other thing that the Native social
18 workers go through is that in a Native-run treatment centre
19 we get clients that come in and they have multiple problems.

20 We have only a limited three weeks to work with clients,
21 and they have so many problems. It is really overwhelming
22 what to do with these people that come in. For example,
23 I myself have to deal with an individual who had five family
24 members die in one year, and she was contemplating suicide.

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1 I had to try to deal with her prescription drug problem
2 and also her grieving. It was really overwhelming.

3 One area that we really need to move
4 ahead with with Native people, if they are going to go
5 to self-government, is to have more mental health workers
6 in the reserves. We do have social workers there, but
7 some of them are specialized only in child welfare or
8 alcohol and drugs. We need workers that can practise a
9 generalist approach, where they would be able to deal with
10 all problems, with the many issues of the clients.

11 My final remark will be going to the
12 Chiefs. As a Native social worker, I never get a chance
13 to say anything in a Chiefs' Conference. I would like
14 to say to the Chiefs that sometime they are going to have
15 to find a balance or find a way to let the Native social
16 workers do their job. They are doing too much intervening,
17 and they are sometimes blocking the healthy process that
18 is going on between the Native social worker and the client.
19 The Chiefs have to learn to back off and let the workers
20 do the work that they are trained to do.

21 In some cases, some Chiefs have already
22 made some steps and have started to work in that fashion,
23 but some Chiefs are still operating in the 1920s, or
24 whatever. I think those Chiefs have to move up a bit.

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1 With that I will shut up and pass it back
2 to you.

3 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

4 Meegwitch, Fabian Morrisseau and Harold Fontaine, for your
5 presentation on drug and alcohol abuse.

6 I will call on Commissioner Paul
7 Chartrand for questions.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
9 both for your presentations.

10 Dealing very briefly with the written
11 portion of your submission, Mr. Fontaine, I must say that
12 you did not choose any easy topic to submit to us here.

13 The matter of treaty rights in addition to the rights
14 of other citizens in Canada is definitely a difficult
15 matter. We already have significant problems in this
16 country where there are alternative rights, such as
17 denomination school rights and linguistic rights. These
18 are certainly important matters that we will have to
19 address, and we thank you for your contribution.

20 I have one question. You state that
21 there are per diem allowances respecting Personal Care
22 Homes, and you cite a difference between entitlement for
23 on-reserve homes and others. My question is: Who pays
24 these entitlements? Where does the money come from? Who

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1 pays that?

2 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** We get the money from
3 Medical Services. Medical Services provides the funding.

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That is
5 a federal department?

6 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** Yes.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** What is
8 their reasoning for giving you less than they give the
9 others?

10 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** I don't know. I am
11 sorry, I can't answer that.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** It does
13 not make sense, at first blush, to see a difference of
14 this sort. I am interested in it, and we will have to
15 pursue it.

16 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** There is a lot of
17 things, like training and all that stuff, having a Personal
18 Care Home situated in a reserve where they don't pay tax,
19 and all that stuff. I imagine that has some bearing on
20 why they want to give a lower per diem rate. But then
21 again, in some Personal Care Homes these figures vary,
22 there is a difference.

23 What I am saying is that there are
24 variances. There are differences in what the Province

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1 pays out to these health agencies all across the board,
2 in geriatric and also health and family services and all
3 that stuff. The reserve workers always seem to be getting
4 the short end.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
6 for bringing the matter to our attention. It is part of
7 an important issue regarding health that we will be
8 considering. Thank you. Meegwitch.

9 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
10 Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

11 Commissioner Mary Sillett.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would
13 like to thank you very much for both your presentations.

14 I do want to make a point, because I don't
15 think very many people know this.

16 Within the Royal Commission we discussed
17 how we would receive presentations. We felt that, in
18 respect of the fact that the tradition of many of our
19 societies is oral, we would accept written as well as oral
20 presentations. I always feel badly when people come up
21 and sort of apologize for not having a written submission.

22 It's okay, really. That is one point I wanted to make.

23 I want to ask a general question on the
24 issue of training. I am just wondering what you see as

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1 obstacles to training. Is it a lack of funding, physical
2 distance? What are the obstacles to training, especially
3 in the area of mental health workers?

4 **HAROLD FONTAINE:** The cost factor, of
5 course, has a big bearing. I find some workers don't want
6 to leave their reserve setting to go out for training.
7 Then, again, when we do ask a training body, like the
8 University of Manitoba or Winnipeg, the professors have
9 a time factor. It is not easy for them to stop what they
10 are doing at the university and come out and train people.
11 That is something that we are always struggling with.

12 Of course, the funding also. Training
13 is very expensive. They say university is expensive, but
14 the kind of training we get is also expensive.
15 Facilitators have to be paid their room and board, and
16 things like that.

17 I don't know if I have answered your
18 question.

19 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
20 Fabian Morrisseau and Harold Fontaine for coming up for
21 your presentation on drug and alcohol abuse.

22 I would now like to call on Buzzie
23 (Henry) Phillips and Eileen Meade. Buzzie, the floor is
24 yours.

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1 **BUZZIE (HENRY) PHILLIPS:** Good
2 afternoon, Commissioners.

3 I want to apologize on behalf of Eileen.
4 She has a very bad cold and has lost her voice, so she
5 was not able to sit with me here today. This fellow here
6 has agreed to take her place.

7 Before we start the presentation, I
8 would like to just say that the presentation that we are
9 putting forward here today was decided between a group
10 of us people, consisting of status and Métis people in
11 our community, who got together and wanted to see changes
12 in the way our lives are governed.

13 Under the present system, which is under
14 the jurisdiction of the Department of Northern Affairs,
15 the Northern Affairs Act that governs the Métis communities
16 is not only a political straitjacket for the Métis people;
17 it also depresses and suppresses the aspirations and the
18 dreams of the Aboriginal peoples in our community.

19 In every aspect of the Act, there are
20 stumbling blocks and roadblocks and every other kind of
21 block that they have in it that restrict and basically
22 limit what we can say and can do, and gives all the authority
23 to the Minister of Northern Affairs who has the final say
24 in most things.

4 Mr. Simard wants to say something.

8 My name is Rudy Simard, and I will be
9 speaking on behalf of the community of Manigotagan, the
10 Manigotagan Community Council, the Aboriginal Council of
11 Manigotagan and Bill C-31 off-reserve Indians and the
12 proposed Chillwee Indian Band.

StenoTran

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1 An adequate land base for our Aboriginal
2 people is a necessity for our future economic, social and
3 cultural development.

4 I watched with interest last night
5 Pierre Berton's series, "The National Dream", on the
6 building of the CPR railway and the opening of the Canadian
7 West for settlement in the 1880s. My heart went out to
8 the Native people of those times and our ancestors whose
9 land was taken, and they just had to sit idly by and watch.

10 I believe this era was termed the biggest land grab in
11 Canadian history.

12 Even today we find that these kinds of
13 injustices are happening.

14 I have also followed with interest "The
15 Manitou Abi Model Forest" study that is being conducted
16 by various stakeholders and users of the forest management
17 licence area controlled by Abitibi-Price.

18 Of the total 1,047,070 hectares of
19 northeastern Manitoba being studied, 11,117 hectares, or
20 1.1 per cent, are Indian lands. The major portion of these
21 1 million-plus hectares was always considered traditional
22 Aboriginal lands. I believe that only through current
23 negotiations and the settling of outstanding Aboriginal
24 land claims can these injustices be rectified. I hope

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1 the government is serious when they say it is time to
2 negotiate and listen to the Aboriginal people.

3 Meegwitch.

4 **BUZZIE (HENRY) PHILLIPS:** The
5 historical background of the community has been recorded
6 some 200 years ago, when they first started writing down
7 some facts. The sustainable economic development was in
8 existence prior to becoming classified as an "organized
9 territory" and the introduction of organized government,
10 the Department of Northern Affairs.

11 Some sustainable economic developments
12 included: lumber mills; brick mills; boarding houses;
13 schools and school divisions; private entrepreneurship;
14 trapping; fishing; and hunting.

15 The present government structures:
16 Under the jurisdiction of Northern Affairs and the Northern
17 Affairs Act. Local government structure: five members,
18 mayor and council; administration of council/community
19 business done accordingly with the Northern Affairs Act;
20 community operational budget determined by the Department
21 and the community councils.

22 The Northern Affairs Act does not
23 protect the community's resources nor does it allow the
24 community control over its resources. It does not

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1 encourage political development but, rather, suppresses
2 political development in the communities.

3 The Northern Affairs Act does not offer
4 information on any of the other Acts which govern our daily
5 lives and, therefore, provides minimal governing
6 legislation to the people.

7 It does not provide enough support to
8 or recognition of the political, economic and social
9 development decisions and directives as identified by the
10 community.

11 Regardless of community council's
12 efforts and decisions, final approval is required by the
13 Minister. If the decision of the community council
14 requires substantial financial support, more than likely
15 we will be refused regardless of how beneficial it would
16 be to the community.

17 It does not allow the community to
18 venture into business developments and, therefore,
19 suppresses or restricts sustainable economic development.

20 The list can go on and on as to why
21 Northern Affairs is not providing proper legislation by
22 which we are being governed.

23 Recommended Changes:

24 1. That the federal government accept

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1 sole responsibility for Métis people.

2 2. Strike a task force consisting of
3 representation from the federal government, provincial
4 government, and Aboriginal Local Métis Federation of
5 Manitoba to determine boundaries, jurisdiction, and
6 financial arrangements.

7 3. After agreement has been reached,
8 both levels of government assist in the implementation
9 of this new arrangement.

10 Land: In the community of Manigotagan,
11 when the homesteads were surveyed in 1924, there were 26
12 homesteads. The average acreage of the homesteads was
13 140 acres.

14 Crown Land: Crown land is available
15 upon request and application to the Lands Branch Office.
16 Applications for crown land does not require the community
17 council's approval prior to receiving departmental
18 approval.

19 Monies received from crown lands leases
20 and purchases go directly to the Lands Branch in the
21 Department of Natural Resources under the present system.

22 Land developers under the present system
23 can develop without consulting the community. They can
24 go directly to the Department of Northern Affairs.

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1 Recommended changes for land:

2 1. Final approval of crown land leases
3 and purchases be given by the local government within the
4 community. This process would assist communities in the
5 administration of land and give control of the land
6 resource.

7 2. Crown lands that would be sold
8 within a given boundary for land use purposes or economic
9 development will remain to a greater degree in the local
10 treasury.

11 3. Land developers should be in full
12 consultation with the local governments throughout all
13 levels of the development and, therefore, should consult
14 with the local government at all times.

15 Resources: Presently community
16 councils have no control over the natural resources inside
17 or outside the community boundaries. This lack of control
18 results in the exploitation of the natural resources
19 without benefiting the community in any aspect.

20 There is no protection of the natural
21 resources under the present governing legislation. As
22 Aboriginal people, we respect the natural resources
23 provided to us by God. The rate at which these resources
24 are being raped is ominous and unless we protect rather

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1 than rape the resources, we will have a barren land which
2 will prove detrimental to all forms of life.

3 Recommended changes for resources:

4 1. The establishment of a resource
5 boundary for the community as identified by the community.

6 2. The community be given full control
7 over the resources inside the resource boundary.

8 3. Any royalties received from the
9 resources be kept at the community level.

10 4. Allow the community full control
11 over all resources within the resource boundaries,
12 including wildlife management and clean water supply.

13 Economy: Under the present
14 legislation, community councils are considered as a
15 non-profit organization. They have no control over the
16 natural resources, thus limiting economic development.

17 Economic development must include more
18 than the traditional Aboriginal economic pursuits of
19 trapping, hunting and fishing.

20 Recommended changes for Economy:

21 1. Local Aboriginal government shall
22 be allowed to operate as a profit organization. They must
23 be given control over the natural resources in an attempt
24 to create a sustainable economy as well as to stabilize

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1 the economy.

2 2. New economic development ideas in
3 addition to the traditional Aboriginal economic pursuits
4 must be implemented to create a sustainable economy.

5 3. Private entrepreneurship will be
6 encouraged in order to help build a stronger economy.

7 4. Long-term economic development
8 plans will include control of resources within
9 establishment of resource boundaries.

10 5. Provincial parks and recreational
11 service areas that are developed within the established
12 resource or community boundaries shall be operated and
13 maintained by the local government.

14 Education: Presently, education is a
15 joint cost-sharing by the provincial and federal
16 governments. The school is located on the reserve and
17 the students are bused from neighbouring communities.

18 Frontier School Division is responsible
19 for the delivery of education.

20 There is insufficient financial support
21 for non-treaty students and adults who wish to continue
22 their education.

23 There is a lack of adult education
24 programs at the community level.

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1 Recommended changes for education:

2 1. Educational funding will be part of
3 the financial arrangement to go directly to the local
4 government who will pay directly contract-provided
5 services or provide the service themselves.

6 2. Funding should be made available for
7 adults who wish to continue their education.

8 3. Adult education programs should be
9 offered on a continual basis. An Adult Education Centre
10 should be established to accommodate adult education
11 programs.

12 4. The term "education" should not be
13 restricted to academic studies but include personal
14 development as well.

15 5. Education should be regarded as a
16 panacea for social, economic, political problems and,
17 therefore, should be encouraged by all levels of
18 government.

19 Language and Culture: Presently there
20 are no restrictions which prevent the practice of language
21 and culture. However, there is a lack of cross-cultural
22 practices.

23 Recommendations for changes for
24 language and culture:

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1 1. Implementation of cross-cultural
2 studies or workshops in schools for staff in all public
3 offices where there is high interaction between many
4 various cultural groups.

5 We are proposing that the new government
6 should consist of six to eight people. The duration of
7 the mandate would be four years. It shall be accountable
8 to the people who elect them. It must have financial
9 accountability to the same.

10 The Local Aboriginal Government shall
11 have advisory groups who will be given a real meaningful
12 role to play in the running of the government. These
13 groups will consist of good, responsible, accountable
14 Elders and youths.

15 All proposed laws and legislation that
16 affect the lives or lifestyles of the community shall have
17 their approval before implementation, and any necessary
18 changes will be made in order for all to fully benefit
19 from it.

20 By way of by-law or law, Aboriginal
21 people will form the majority of the Local Government in
22 order to ensure all will not be lost or slip into history
23 down the road in a few years.

24 Local laws will be implemented by the

3 It shall have our own local judge who
4 will preside over our local laws. The more serious laws
5 of Canada will prevail and be dealt with in the higher
6 courts of the land.

10 More and more of the services provided
11 by the Department of Northern Affairs shall be turned over
12 to the Métis Federation of Manitoba.

16 Non-Native residents shall be welcomed;
17 however, they must abide by the rules and governance of
18 the Local Government to ensure an Aboriginal consistency
19 in the community and culture.

22 The Aboriginal Government of any said
23 community where status and Métis form the majority of that
24 particular community will have been arranged beforehand

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1 as to the governance structure and how both may work
2 together.

3 Basically, both Northern Métis and
4 Status have lived side by side and shared generally the
5 same lifestyle in terms of survival, which meant depending
6 upon the land and what it could provide.

7 In a general sense, an Aboriginal
8 Government would have to take into consideration at the
9 higher level a government consisting of all Aboriginal
10 groups under one umbrella, which could and would respect
11 each other's culture, aspirations, dreams and financial
12 arrangements. Of course, there could be other
13 arrangements, but one would suspect that achieving three
14 different levels would be somewhat more difficult.

15 That concludes our presentation. We
16 have abbreviated a lot of this to make it brief.

17 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you.
18 Your presentations will be given to the staff that are
19 out here.

20 Are there questions from the
21 Commissioners?

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I have no
23 questions. Your presentation was very, very clear. I
24 would like to thank you for coming here because I know

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1 you travelled for about an hour.

2 Thank you very much.

3 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

4 Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
6 both. I looked at your recommendations regarding advisory
7 groups that the local government is proposing, and you
8 say that these groups should consist of good, responsible,
9 accountable Elders and youths.

10 Don't you see any possible good for
11 middle-aged types like me?

12 **BUZZIE (HENRY) PHILLIPS:** More
13 seriously, I would like to remind you that in some cases
14 Elders are 21 years old.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I
16 appreciate that. I was at a conference where people were
17 distinguishing between the young old and the middle old
18 and the old old, so I am thoroughly confused.

19 I have no questions. You have a lot in
20 here and, as you say, you have condensed it. I am glad
21 we have computers to keep all of this. It is on record,
22 as has been indicated. It is being taped and we have your
23 written submission and we have a data bank, a system that
24 keeps all information and categories it by subject, and

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1 so on. You can be sure that what you have provided us
2 with here today is going to be considered systematically,
3 both the oral and the written portion, because it is all
4 being recorded and today we even have the pictures.

5 I want to emphasize that particularly
6 because I have my eye on Josephine Courchene. She is very
7 anxious to make sure that everything that is said here
8 today gets to the federal government. So I am not
9 forgetting that.

10 Thank you again for your sound
11 suggestions. In particular, there are some quite
12 important ones, for example the role of small businesses
13 in Aboriginal Local Governments, and also your broad view
14 of education. I think these are quite creative. Again,
15 thank you both.

16 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
17 Buzzie (Henry) Phillips and Rudy Simard, for coming here
18 this afternoon. It is greatly appreciated.

19 We will take a short five-minute break.

20 --- Short Recess at 2:45 p.m.

21 --- Upon resuming at 2:52 p.m.

22 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Connie
23 Eyolfson is the next presenter here this afternoon.

24 **CONNIE EYOLFSON:** Good afternoon,

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1 Chiefs, Elders, Commissioners Sillett and Chartrand.

2 My home is at Traverse Bay. We are
3 non-treaty Cree. Our ancestors were Cree and never did
4 join the treaty. Our ancestors travelled and worked in
5 what is Northern Canada and in Eastern Canada.

6 When the treaties were signed in Western
7 Canada, our people had been accustomed to travelling and
8 moving about freely. Because one of the treaties was that
9 the people would have to stay enclosed on the reserve,
10 my grandparents did not join the treaty because it would
11 be like being in prison if they were confined to a
12 four-square-mile area.

13 So we grew up at Traverse Bay, knowing
14 who we are, knowing where our roots are. When the Manitoba
15 Métis Federation was formed, my father went to those
16 meetings and encouraged me to as well. We did identify
17 ourselves as Métis because, at the time, we hoped to see
18 justice for those people who were left outside the
19 treaties, for those Native people who were left outside
20 the treaties.

21 When the Manitoba Métis Federation and
22 quite a number of their leadership and members will say
23 publicly and to anyone who will listen that they are Métis
24 but they are not Native.

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1 We cannot reconcile those two notions
2 within the community at Traverse Bay. We see ourselves
3 first and foremost as Aboriginal people. We are Cree and
4 we are Native.

5 So, in the discussions that the Manitoba
6 Métis Federation have and the Native Council of Canada
7 have and the Métis National Council from Alberta -- when
8 Dumont speaks on behalf of the Métis communities, he is
9 not speaking for Traverse Bay because, I have to underline,
10 we are Native.

11 When I hear the Métis leaders saying that
12 they are interested in economic development and they are
13 interested in programs but not so much in the land base,
14 at Traverse Bay the non-treaty Cree are interested in the
15 land base. We claim through our ancestry Aboriginal title
16 to the land. That doesn't change.

17 We have seen the destructive forces of
18 500 years of oppression. We have seen people with loss
19 of identity, not knowing who they really are and trying
20 to deny their Native identity. We have seen what poverty
21 and the failure of the justice system has done and the
22 residential school syndrome.

23 This summer it was my privilege to attend
24 a conference in Fort Albany, Ontario, a conference on the

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1 residential schools. I heard firsthand from the
2 participants that went forward to a panel to present what
3 had happened to them, and there was one word that came
4 to my mind, and it is the only word that adequately covers
5 what happened to our people who attended that particular
6 residential school -- and I am sure it follows as well
7 across Canada -- and that word is "atrocities." Those people
8 came forward and spoke about the atrocities that they
9 experienced and witnessed.

10 The fallout and the effects of that
11 devastation of the Native people is seen and is read about
12 in the paper, in suicides, in alcoholism, in drug abuse,
13 in family violence, incest, and so on.

14 There is one thing that stays with us
15 as Native people, one strength, and that is the power that
16 comes from the Creator, the power and the strength of the
17 traditional teachings. What we have done at Traverse Bay,
18 together with people from this Sagkeeng First Nation, we
19 have together built the Strong Earth Woman Lodge. It is
20 a healing centre at Traverse Bay.

21 The Strong Earth Woman Lodge is a
22 holistic healing centre based on Native spirituality and
23 traditional teachings. Holistic healing is the healing
24 of the mind, body, emotions and spirit. Traditionally,

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1 this is done through sweatlodges; fasting; vision quests;
2 herbal medicines; ceremonial healing with the eagle fan
3 and rattles, in which sacred songs and the drum are key
4 components; traditional teachings at the sacred fire;
5 sharing circles; individualized counselling; and guidance
6 and direction through traditional teachings.

7 The Strong Earth Woman Lodge
8 incorporates any or all of these into an individualized
9 program based on the needs of each client. All clients
10 are instructed in the seven sacred teachings and are
11 encouraged to seek understanding of the four elements --
12 Fire, Earth, Water and Air -- and the four directions.
13 The seven sacred teachings are respect, love, courage,
14 humility, honesty, wisdom and truth. These teachings are
15 carried by the Spirits of the Buffalo, Eagle, Bear, Wolf,
16 Sabe which is the Giant, Beaver and Turtle respectively.

17 The Strong Earth Woman Lodge offers
18 24-hour care service towards holistic healing for
19 grieving, loss of identity and suicide crisis
20 intervention. Native spirituality fills the spiritual
21 vacuum in the lives of people traumatized by residential
22 schools and allows clients to find healing for sexual,
23 emotional, mental and physical abuses. Strong Earth Woman
24 Lodge is also a place for Native people just wanting to

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1 learn their culture. Although the Lodge is based on Native
2 spirituality, we welcome people from all faiths and from
3 all nations. The recommended lengths of stay are four-,
4 eight-, or twelve-day periods or as required.

5 The Lodge is located on traditionally
6 sacred grounds 70 miles northeast of Winnipeg and is run
7 by Native women and men under the direction of the Creator.

8 What we have come to see is what the
9 gentleman who spoke just before me talked about, the
10 inadequate funding toward Native organizations, toward
11 Native agencies, when they deal in the area of healing.

12 I brought a copy of yesterday's
13 newspaper with me. In this section it is about a healing
14 centre for sexually-abused women. It says there that
15 professional counselling costs \$70 an hour. When we talk
16 to the Government of Canada, we speak about, for the
17 treatment of people who have been traumatized in this way,
18 in all of those areas that I talked about -- we talk about
19 care and treatment for people at the rate of \$200 and \$300
20 a day, which the government balks at. They say that it
21 is too much; yet, at the same time, they will pay \$70 an
22 hour for counselling.

23 My point here is that what we have seen
24 and witnessed at that Strong Earth Woman Lodge, what we

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1 have seen and witnessed are miracles in the lives of the
2 people that have come there for healing. No less than
3 miracles.

4 The people come there hurting, hardly
5 able to speak about what hurts them, hardly able to speak
6 about the pain they have suffered, and they go away with
7 joy and love in their hearts. They go away with hope for
8 the future because they have experienced love, because
9 they know that they were placed on this earth for a purpose.

10 Notwithstanding that we have been, as Native people, under
11 oppression for the last 500 years, we are going home now.

12 We are going back to what the Creator intended us to be
13 as Aboriginal people.

14 When you take your recommendations back
15 to the government, speak about what these Elders have done,
16 these Elders who have carried those sacred teachings and
17 brought them to us so that we could carry on. Talk about
18 that these Elders don't require a degree, that these Elders
19 are already honoured by the gifts that they carry and the
20 teachings that they carry. This should be recognized in
21 order to undo the damage that was done to our people.

22 So I say meegwitch.

23 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

24 Meegwitch, Connie Eyolfson.

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1 Are there comments from our
2 Commissioners? Commissioner Mary Sillett.

3 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I really
4 appreciate your presentation. Thank you.

5 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**
6 Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
8 very much. You say in your written portion that you
9 welcome people from all faiths and from all nations. I
10 think that is what you bring here today, a message of
11 tolerance and accommodation, and I think it is a kind that
12 can form a better vision of a renewed Canada. I thank
13 you for it.

14 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you
15 to Connie Eyolfson from Traverse Bay.

16 I would now like to call on Denise Thomas
17 from Manitoba Métis Federation Southeast Region to come
18 up and do her presentation.

19 **DENISE THOMAS, SOUTHEAST REGION OF THE**
20 **MANITOBA METIS FEDERATION:** I would like to welcome the
21 Commissioners to our beautiful part of the country, and
22 the staff that works for the Royal Commission. I think
23 they are doing a commendable job.

24 Mr. Chairman, Elders, ladies and

4 The Southeast Region of the Manitoba
5 Métis Federation reflects the social and economic problems
6 that burden the Métis people throughout Canada. We have:

9 ii) the almost complete absence of
10 entrepreneurs and small businesses; and

13 Politicians and government officials
14 point out the millions of dollars spent annually on Native
15 people in a variety of programs such as CAED and still
16 ask why the Métis economy is not improving. In our view,
17 there are two basic and important reasons for this
18 situation:

22 I will speak on the lack of business
23 community first.

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1 our Region. This is a problem because it affects the
2 vitality of our communities. There have been many studies
3 which evidence that a good solid economic base results
4 in social stability both at the family and community level.

5 Therefore, what must be done to produce
6 economic vitality in our communities?

7 The Southeast Region believes that with
8 the proper environment Métis people can flourish in
9 business. What is needed are three key elements: First,
10 access to capital; second, access to a market; third,
11 access to ongoing management and technical skills.

12 Access to Capital: Gains have been made
13 over the past year which greatly improve the ability of
14 our Métis people to gain access to the necessary capital
15 to start a business. Historically, getting loans to start
16 a business has been a problem for most Métis because we
17 have been viewed as high risk clients by the banks and
18 credit unions. This was particularly so in the rural areas
19 where the institutions have proven to be more conservative
20 in their lending practices.

21 The Louis Riel Capital Corporation is
22 the organization that provides capital to Métis
23 businesses. Just recently incorporated and capitalized
24 with \$8.2 million for loans and guarantees for Métis in

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1 Manitoba, this institution will provide the necessary
2 capital to get our people in business where the banks have
3 always been reluctant to do so. This is a great
4 opportunity for our Region.

5 However, there are still drawbacks to
6 this type of funding in the present economy. The problem
7 is that the Corporation, in order to be viable, must lend
8 at higher rates of interest, between 12 and 13 per cent.

9 These high rates of interest can be a real problem for
10 a person starting a business. The solution lies in
11 interest rebates.

12 Currently there are interest rebate
13 programs in operation in the province. Loans made to young
14 farmers can be the subject of a 3 per cent interest rebate.

15 This helps in viability of the farm. What we need in
16 our Region is the same type of rebates applied to loans
17 made by the Capital Corporation to Métis involved in
18 primary production, i.e. farming, fishing, woodcutting
19 and dairy businesses.

20 With this rebate applied to loans
21 originally made at 13 per cent, it could make the loan
22 more economically feasible for the business person in
23 today's economy. This is a very important part of our
24 Region's overall strategy of getting our people into

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1 business for themselves.

2 Access to a Market: The second element
3 that is needed in order for a business to be successful
4 is access to a market. Larger established businesses
5 access the market by way of the public identifying with
6 a trade mark or label which they own. When an established
7 company creates a new product, the consumer will buy it
8 out of familiarity with the company's name. Accountants
9 call this the goodwill of a company. New businesses do
10 not possess any goodwill. This is their greatest hurdle
11 as they attempt to get established.

12 Set-Aside Contract: In order to
13 provide a market for minority-owned firms, the United
14 States reserves a portion of its total procurement budget
15 for these firms to bid on. This pool of contracts creates
16 the market from which many minority firms have used to
17 become established in their field. The contracts are
18 known as "set-asides" because they are not put out for
19 tender as is usually the case, but are reserved for the
20 minority-owned firm as a chance of becoming established
21 in their formative years as a business. All this from
22 one of the greatest free enterprise countries in the world.

23 The Southeast Region believes that the
24 same policy should be adopted in Canada, with a portion

6 Through this method of the set-aside
7 contract, many Métis businesses could access this market
8 reserved exclusively for them.

18 In relation to economic development, the
19 lack of management expertise and access to Métis
20 professional advice has a crippling effect on our business
21 people as they are forced to turn to outside consultants
22 for business plans and advice. All too often, once the
23 business plan has been completed or the grant processed,
24 the Métis business person is left to flounder as no

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1 follow-up advice is provided, as these consultants move
2 on to the next plan or grant proposal.

3 Ongoing assistance must be provided to
4 the Métis entrepreneur if they are going to become
5 established. Professional advice such as legal and
6 accounting and management services must be provided if
7 Métis businesses are to succeed, and this technical advice
8 should be developed within our people.

9 The interaction of these three elements
10 -- access to capital; access to a market; access to ongoing
11 technical advice -- leads to business development.

12 The Southeast Region believes that only
13 through this three-pronged approach to developing Métis
14 business will the proper environment be created which will
15 allow our latent commercial spirit to flourish within the
16 economy.

17 Thank you.

18 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

19 Meegwitch, Denise Thomas, Manitoba Métis Federation
20 Southeast.

21 Are there any comments from our
22 Commissioners?

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Very
24 briefly, I would like to thank you very much for your

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1 presentation.

2 I have just one question. Has there
3 been an issue identified with the particular kinds of
4 problems that Métis women may experience in starting
5 businesses? Have you looked at that? Do you have any
6 feeling about that particular issue?

7 **DENISE THOMAS:** I haven't really. In
8 my experience as a woman, I never really had a problem
9 in that area. I thought this was overall for all the women
10 and the men for businesses. In our Region we have some
11 women in business, and I never really thought about it.

12 I am speaking for all the people here,
13 Métis women and Métis men.

14 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I fully
15 understand that, but I do also know that at the national
16 level there is an economic development corporation set
17 up for Aboriginal women, and they look at Aboriginal
18 women's concerns specifically. I was just wondering if
19 you had any connection with that.

20 **DENISE THOMAS:** We have our Louis Riel
21 Capital Corporation which has money set aside for Métis
22 women and Métis men. That is all I can say.

23 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**
24 Commissioner Chartrand.

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1 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I have no
2 questions, but I would like to say that I appreciate very
3 much your worthwhile written submission regarding some
4 very important matters. They have been mentioned
5 elsewhere, too -- the importance of small, private
6 businesses, for example, and development of Aboriginal
7 autonomy, the matters of education and training. Those
8 are very important things.

9 We saw recently, in looking at the United
10 States situation, the policy of the federal government
11 there to make use of these set-aside contracts and some
12 of the Indian nations there were making use of that.

13 Again, thank you very much for your
14 useful suggestions.

15 **DENISE THOMAS:** Thank you.

16 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
17 Denise Thomas, for your presentation from the Manitoba
18 Métis Federation Southeast.

19 I would now like to call on Patrick
20 Bruyere and Karen Courchene for their presentation on
21 education. It is going to be a joint presentation, I
22 understand. And Lorna Fontaine and Isabelle Courchene
23 and Jeanette Courchene.

24 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** Thank you very much.

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1 In my eyes, I would like to take the
2 opportunity to say "ladies first." Without further ado,
3 ladies.

4 **KAREN COURCHENE:** Elders,
5 Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Karen
6 Courchene. I am a member of Sagkeeng First Nation, and
7 I am also the Principal of this school, Anicinabe Community
8 School.

9 A group of teachers from this school took
10 the opportunity to make a presentation to this Commission.
11 What we are going to be presenting here is a collaborative
12 effort.

13 I would like to introduce my
14 co-presenters. To my left is Isabelle Courchene; next
15 to her is Jeanette Courchene; and next to Jeanette is Lorna,
16 who will be making the body of the presentation.

17 I will just pass it on to Isabelle.

18 **ISABELLE COURCHENE:** (Translated) I
19 was asked to explain what was happening with our
20 people...especially for our children. We are trying to
21 teach our children to learn. It is very hard in a child.
22 Some kids are saying, "Why should we learn? There is
23 nothing here in Fort Alex for us anyway. There are no
24 jobs. We have to leave." Some say, "We don't have to

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1 learn anything because we are given welfare and money."
2 Our parents should talk to the children and tell them
3 to be proud of who they are. Talk to them and tell them
4 to try to get educated. It won't always be like this in
5 Fort Alex. Tell your children to be proud of who they
6 are. Tell them to be proud of who they are. Tell them
7 that we love them. The teachers will also help you. We
8 will help them to be proud of who they are, that they are
9 Aboriginal people, proud to be Indian people, to watch
10 over this land. But it is not happening today.

11 Everything was taken by the Europeans
12 and they own it. This is what your child will get back.
13 People say we don't own anything. They are lying. There
14 is a lot of money for the children to be educated. If
15 there was money, our children would know everything.

16 Our great grandfathers told us to listen
17 to them. Those government people are always taking
18 something away from us, and they don't put anything back
19 when they use the resources. Even our own language, they
20 took it away from us. This is where it is difficult to
21 teach our children because they have a concern: Why should
22 we learn our language because it is not used any more?

23 I am a teacher. I hear these children
24 that don't believe in that, and it's hard when you are

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1 always listening to the children when they are saying,
2 "I don't have to learn it because it hasn't any use anyway."

3 Parents, always talk to your children, to be proud of
4 who they are, not to throw away what they were given.
5 God gave us to protect us, our parents, our grandparents.

6 It's hard for me to speak this way
7 because I am proud of who I am. I am proud of my language.
8 This is what I have to say.

9 **JEANETTE COURCHENE:** (Translated)

10 This money that is given to us, there is not enough of
11 it, not enough to teach them, not enough to help these
12 people. There is nobody that is well-educated and that
13 are concerned. People know that the schools are concerned
14 about a lot of things. It's not the way that they were
15 taught, not only for reading and writing and to be able
16 to count and to talk. Because of the way they were treated,
17 they suffered. They are concerned and have parents that
18 are separated, and those who only have one parent. The
19 social workers were not taught to work that way. They
20 are needed very badly. These are the kind of people that
21 are supposed to help out; they don't help these kids that
22 are suffering.

23 This money that we get, there is not
24 enough of it for us to make an educational system for our

8 This is all I have to say.

1. We would like to know why schools located on reserves are funded at a lower level than other public schools. We recommend that our funding levels be brought up, so that our education will be a more complete experience for our students. An example of this would be Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

20 3. We recommend that Native Studies be
21 taught in the public schools by Native teachers, our
22 rationale being that, as the First Nations in this country,
23 our history deserves to be told.

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1 number of teaching positions in the public schools
2 designated for Aboriginal teachers.

3 5. We recommend that the government
4 make monies available specifically for curriculum
5 development so that culturally-relevant curricula can be
6 developed at the local levels.

7 6. We recommend that the government and
8 churches fund programs which specifically deal with the
9 residential school experience so that we as Aboriginal
10 peoples can put that part of our history to rest. That
11 experience is still impacting our children of today even
12 though the last school closed 20 years ago.

13 7. We recommend that an adult education
14 program be set up to suit the needs of those people whose
15 education suffered because of the residential school
16 system.

17 8. We recommend that Native Studies be
18 made compulsory in the education program at the university
19 level since many non-Natives eventually teach Aboriginal
20 children at some point in their career as teachers.

21 Thank you.

22 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** Thank you very much.

23 Seeing as I was allotted 20 minutes and
24 these people were allotted 20 minutes, if my addition is

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1 correct, it should be 40 minutes. Right? I don't know
2 if my presentation is going to take 20 minutes; I am just
3 wondering if I will be able to go through all of it.

4 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** It is a
5 joint presentation timed at 20 minutes.

6 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** It is somewhat
7 similar to what these people have mentioned. Isabelle
8 and Jeanette mentioned quite a bit in the language. What
9 I have written down here I would hope to be able to go
10 through the whole thing. Some points may be similar to
11 what they brought forward.

12 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Would it
13 be possible to summarize your presentation, and then we
14 will have questions from the Commissioners based on what
15 was presented?

16 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** I guess it is your
17 prerogative. If you want to cut me off, you can cut me
18 off.

19 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** My
20 understanding was that this was a joint presentation within
21 20 minutes.

22 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** How much have I got?
23 I was going to start off with a joke.

24 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** You didn't

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1 even have to tell the joke. Go ahead, Pat.

2 **PATRICK BRUYERE:** First of all, I would
3 like to say thank you very much to these lovely ladies
4 for their presentation and as well their proficient
5 language. At this point, I would like to start off by
6 making an acknowledgement to the Youth Council of each
7 school for their presentations this morning. Those people
8 I feel I have to mention: Tony Doherty from Anicinabe
9 School, Jill Henderson from Sagkeeng, and Winona Fontaine
10 from the High School.

11 I would like to start off by giving a
12 little background.

13 Sagkeeng Education Authority was
14 organized and formed by community members of Sagkeeng.
15 Through the tireless efforts and dedication to a common
16 vision, Sagkeeng Education Authority was born. I think
17 that many thanks should be extended to all those key
18 individuals who may have had a part in this process. Some
19 of those individuals may be sitting in this very room today.

20 This whole process was undertaken by the
21 people in 1973, I believe, and originally the overall
22 administration of the education program was handled by
23 the Chief and Council of that era, through its hired staff.

24 As the years went by, the different

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1 programs within the education system became larger and
2 somewhat difficult to handle for our Chief and Council.

3 As we all know, Chief and Council have different programs
4 within their own office to administer, and after some
5 meetings with the general band membership, the concept
6 of the school board being in charge of the education program
7 became more evident. So in 1978 the first school board
8 of Sagkeeng came into place. A band council resolution
9 was drafted and signed by the Chief and Council placing
10 this school board as the overall authority of education
11 on the reserve.

12 Through its policy directives and
13 administration staff, the Sagkeeng school board operates
14 three schools -- two elementary, nursery to Grade 8, and
15 one high school, Grades 9 to 12. With a student population
16 of slightly over 800 students, the school board operates
17 a budget of approximately \$6 million, give or take a few
18 cents.

19 Since the inception of local control of
20 education by the community of Sagkeeng, there have been
21 many rewards and, as well, failures of the system. I feel
22 that this is no different from other public education
23 systems across the country.

24 One of the most notable successes of the

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1 takeover of education by the community of Sagkeeng is the
2 number of high school graduates that have gone through
3 our system. Some have gone on to further their education
4 either at the university and/or college level; some have
5 been able to obtain employment on reserve and off reserve
6 as well; and, of course, there are some who have been unable
7 to obtain employment due to many circumstances.

8 The important thing to remember here is
9 that, before local control, there weren't that many high
10 school and even less university/college graduates. Since
11 local control, the numbers have risen quite encouragingly
12 and are continuing to rise. Today, as of June 1992, which
13 is last year, there have been 150 high school graduates
14 and approximately 40 more from the university/college
15 level. Currently we are sponsoring 40 to 50 more students
16 who are in their fourth and fifth years of study at the
17 university level, and within the next two years we could
18 have another 50 people with a university degree in various
19 fields.

20 The whole area of the post-secondary
21 program is one of grave concern to all First Nations who
22 are administering this program. Just in Sagkeeng alone,
23 we have approximately 55 people on the waiting list for
24 sponsorship.

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1 The government took it upon itself to
2 cap post-secondary funding across the country for First
3 Nations. Alongside this, the government did nothing to
4 improve the economic conditions of First Nations. I
5 believe they should be taken to task for this double
6 jeopardy upon First Nations. We all know that one of the
7 most important keys to self-sufficiency is education, and
8 everything should be done to make this treaty right a
9 reality. Sufficient funding should be made accessible
10 to First Nations across the country so that First Nations
11 can accommodate their clientele.

12 Consider for a moment the amount of money
13 that is being spent on the employees of the Department
14 of Indian Affairs. These employees that are in DIAND are
15 duplicating the work that is being done at the band level.
16 Why do we need to perform this exercise twice? The
17 government should provide that money allocated for Indian
18 education directly to the education authorities. As a
19 result, there would be more money available for education
20 authorities at the band level to run a more effective and
21 meaningful program in all areas of education.

22 Within our geographic area, Sagkeeng
23 Education Authority is neighbour to two other school
24 divisions nearby. We have some children from the reserve

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1 who attend these schools. The tuition rates for these
2 divisions are quite a bit higher than what is being provided
3 to Sagkeeng Education Authority on a per capita basis.

4 The Chief and Council provided an Order
5 in Council to our Education Authority that our per capita
6 cost for our students be comparable to the neighbouring
7 school divisions. The Sagkeeng Education Authority
8 forwarded this directive to the Department of Indian
9 Affairs, and to date we have not received an official
10 response from the department. Therefore, S.E.A. is still
11 being funded lower than our neighbouring school divisions
12 -- and I think that was mentioned before. I don't think
13 it is fair that First Nations should be expected to deliver
14 effective education at a much lower cost than other school
15 divisions. If the same results are expected of First
16 Nations education program delivery, then the cost per
17 capita should be comparable to, if not higher than, other
18 school divisions.

19 Another difficulty experienced at our
20 level is the contribution agreements which we sign with
21 the Department of Indian Affairs for our funding in any
22 given year. Because of the fact that Sagkeeng Education
23 Authority is always underfunded in many program areas,
24 we are also experiencing problems of cash flow toward the

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1 last month of the fiscal year, sometimes even the last
2 two months.

3 What needs to be done to overcome this
4 problem, I believe, is to negotiate a proper contribution
5 arrangement for the year and, upon signing the arrangement,
6 all funds for the entire year should flow to the education
7 authority. This process makes for better and proper
8 planning and, as well, it gives an opportunity to the
9 education authority to invest some of these funds in term
10 deposits at banking institutions to offset some of the
11 shortfalls that may occur at year-end.

12 With the above comment that I just
13 mentioned, I am not saying that the education authority
14 shouldn't report monthly, but merely that the education
15 authority be given the yearly budget in a lump sum payment
16 at the beginning of each year.

17 Capital costs for the education
18 authority should be made more easily accessible.
19 Currently, these costs are at a minimum, and whenever some
20 work or major repairs have to be done in our buildings,
21 it involves a lot of meetings with departmental officials.
22 The time taken to deal with bureaucrats and to access
23 funding is painstakingly slow; yet, more often than not,
24 major repairs are of an immediate nature.

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1 I believe that funding should be made
2 available to the community of Sagkeeng for an effective
3 daycare program -- and that was mentioned earlier by one
4 of the students. In the high school we are finding that
5 a lot of young mothers are experiencing difficulties while
6 trying to get an education and having to provide proper
7 care for their small children while away at school. This
8 results in a lot of these young mothers having to quit
9 school. If a daycare facility were made available on the
10 reserve for these people, it would lessen their worries
11 and, therefore, full concentration on their education can
12 be applied.

13 I would like to add here that counsellors
14 are very needed very much in our schools. We are
15 recommending that we operate three schools and, therefore,
16 we should be entitled to three different counsellors for
17 each school, for the simple reason that one counsellor
18 cannot handle the clientele of 800 students. When you
19 realize all the difficulties that are happening on
20 reserves, related to child abuse, sexual abuse,
21 alcoholism, the whole bit, it has a drastic impact on a
22 lot of our students. Therefore, there is need for
23 counsellors in that area.

24 In the old boarding school system

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1 discipline was a way of life for these people that operated
2 the education system on behalf of the government. These
3 missionaries were directed to kill the language of our
4 people. They were directed to teach the Indians the Roman
5 Catholic faith and then to educate them with the strictest
6 rules possible.

7 This thrust or this vision by the
8 government, however, did not succeed. Today there are
9 people in this reserve that can speak our language fluently
10 and, as well, there are people in this reserve who still
11 follow the traditions of our people. I believe you people
12 have experienced both here today.

13 With the education system, there are
14 never enough dollars provided by the government for our
15 language program and cultural enrichment. Because of the
16 injustices placed on our people and their language,
17 customs, traditions, et cetera, then government is
18 responsible to provide adequate resourcing so these
19 programs can be delivered more effectively. Our children
20 deserve to know their language and to learn the traditions
21 and customs of our people. Only through the language can
22 our children better identify themselves as Anicinabe
23 people.

24 In spite of restrictive funding, great

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1 strides have been made in the Ojibway language program
2 within our schools. I think it is a great tribute to the
3 people directly involved in the program, past and present.

4 With increased funding the desired results can even be
5 greater. One of the things often talked about in this
6 reserve is the idea of total immersion. I know that we
7 are a long way from this point, but I sincerely believe
8 that, if the French can do it, then certainly the Anicinabe
9 people can do it. All we are asking of the government
10 is to give the Anicinabe people a chance to do it. After
11 all, the government is responsible for trying to do away
12 with our language and our culture and, by right, they are
13 responsible to restore the language and culture.

14 There has been a lot of work done at the
15 national level on the whole question of Indian education
16 and, more specifically, the language program. I would
17 suggest that this Royal Commission pay close attention
18 to the statistics provided by this group of people.

19 The reports, studies and compilation of
20 data was done by Indian educators across the country and,
21 therefore, cannot be wrong because a lot of their work
22 stems from the grassroots level. Who better to know than
23 the people directly involved in the whole process?

24 I take this opportunity to say thank you

StenoTran

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1 for allowing me to appear before you this afternoon.
2 Hopefully, I have been a little successful in highlighting
3 some of the areas of concern in this reserve.

4 Meegwitch.

5 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Meegwitch
6 to the panel that has just made the presentation. Are
7 there comments from our Commissioners?

8 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I think the
9 presentation is very clear and very excellent, and I thank
10 you all for it.

11 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**
12 Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

13 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** There is
14 not time to comment on the many issues that both the group
15 and Pat have brought before us here. I can say that they
16 contain some very important issues. Not only that, but
17 the also contain, in my view, some very sound
18 recommendations that will deserve very serious
19 consideration by this Commission. The goals, of course,
20 are undeniably worthwhile -- the object of educating
21 children and recapturing one's culture.

22 I would like to make one point about the
23 many points in your submission, Mr. Bruyere. It has to
24 do with the correspondence with the Department of Indian

3 The Commission has a liaison with that
4 department -- that is, they have organized a liaison with
5 us. So it should not be difficult for our staff to make
6 inquiry of the department with respect to this matter that
7 you have brought before us. I ask our staff to ensure
8 that that is done. Further, I invite you to send me a
9 copy of the reply so that this matter can be looked into.

12 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Meegwitch
13 to all of you for your presentation on behalf of the
14 Sagkeeng Education Program.

17 **KENNETH EMBERLEY:** I have my alarm
18 clock, Mr. Moderator. My name is Ken Emberley.

23 It is a great honour to be here. I am
24 just thrilled with what is going on today, especially those

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1 five high school students who came ahead of us. I thought
2 they did a magnificent team-work effort. It was just an
3 incredible brief on behalf of their school system.

4 I want to mention five little things that
5 came up during the day today.

6 Some of you remember Oka and all the fuss
7 and excitement when Canadians went berserk about the
8 Warrior Chiefs and the Warriors. I was at the
9 International Peace Garden just three years ago when the
10 Aboriginal people had their Peace Conference. We met the
11 Peace Chief of the Cheyenne Nation who quit being an F-16
12 fighter pilot to come home and take an oath for a lifetime
13 of peace promotion and conflict resolution.

14 Nobody raised the issue during the whole
15 of the Oka crisis that I ever heard in public: How many
16 Peace Chiefs are there in the federal Cabinet? I think
17 that is a big issue we should draw.

18 The problem of alcoholism, drug
19 addiction, sexual abuse, physical abuse is mind-boggling
20 in white society as well as Aboriginal society. I would
21 like to make a suggestion that, when you examine and talk
22 to women that have been raped, you talk to men about the
23 possibility of castration, and then you know what fear
24 is. But I want to ask you: Have any of you people ever

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1 been administrated? Have you ever been administrated and
2 come up against the mind-boggling, brutal stupidity of
3 an insensitive administration in any field? Just think
4 about that, the problem, and think about the fact that
5 they say that, in so many cases, the people who come in
6 for alcohol treatment and sexual abuse treatment account
7 for almost 80 per cent of the drug addicts and alcoholics.
8 There is a connection.

9 Every time one of your Aboriginal people
10 is dragged into jail for alcoholism or drunkenness or
11 sexual breakdown, social breakdown and suicide, they
12 should have a picture of the Prime Minister and Tom Siddon
13 and the people that were running the Aboriginal School
14 Detention System, and that should come into court beside
15 the Aboriginal person and should be discussed the sharing
16 of the blame and the sharing of the cost.

17 My presentation is in four parts, and
18 I am going to be extremely brief.

19 I prepared one brief on comments on the
20 human rights decision of the Human Rights Commission
21 regarding the Canadian Parliament Indian Act and regarding
22 Indian Affairs. I also made a written presentation last
23 April some of which I wish to put on record here in public.

24 I cannot adequately express my gratitude

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1 for the courtesy with which we have been received and the
2 new things we have learned about Aboriginal people and
3 their culture during the last five years, especially at
4 these Hearings; my son's first Pow-Wow in Winnipeg 25 years
5 ago; five years a member of the Canadian Association in
6 Support of Native People; and the wonderful gathering last
7 year. I have been out to a traditional wedding at Dave
8 Courchene's community, and at the Fort Alexander Sun Dance
9 last year. I cannot thank you adequately for the
10 opportunity to take part in these events.

11 I wish to switch to my second brief.
12 "A New Commitment" is the title. I will run quickly
13 through only the red parts.

14 There seems to be no sense of urgency
15 and no real innovation, only minor Indian Affairs
16 Department changes and the offer of a Royal Commission.
17 Forgive me, a process of no value when urgent action is
18 needed. All Indian Affairs offers are very unfair.

19 You may notice that you have a grand
20 opportunity to do great things, if you are lucky.

21 Improved Land Claim Process: I wish to
22 recommend that by January 1992 five teams should be in
23 place to negotiate five land claims at once. Another 1992
24 training session should train five more new teams to

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1 negotiate another five land claims simultaneously, ten
2 in all, and five new teams every single year -- 25 teams
3 negotiating land claims by 1996.

4 No Aboriginal rights should be allowed
5 to be signed away to get a treaty settled. Keep the
6 Aboriginal rights after signing a treaty.

7 Recent land claims for hydro and for land
8 alienation since 1990 should owe simple interest only from
9 the date of the event. Justice delayed is justice denied,
10 and this interest is an absolute non-debatable obligation
11 in my mind.

12 I think we should have a fast track for
13 claims. One day should be allowed, the
14 first day of the meeting, to set the approximate guess
15 of the possible cash claim, and within one week five years
16 of back interest should be paid on that cash claim and
17 a minimum every single year for five years, by which time
18 the claim must be settled. Get the cash flowing fast.
19 Five years of interest each five years.

20 One week after beginning to settle land
21 claim, approximately 5 per cent of the possible land should
22 be delivered immediately to the Aboriginal people while
23 the land claim is being negotiated, so that by the end
24 of the fifth year you have received 25 per cent of your

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1 land claim. It is a deliberate fraud and dishonesty of
2 the brute that we call the establishment that I don't
3 believe they ever intend to give you any land claim until
4 they fight to the death and drag it out. But they should
5 have to pay interest. The longer they pay interest, the
6 more it is going to cost them to delay the settlement.

7 That has never been a factor that has
8 been brought up, and I beg our Aboriginal leaders to begin
9 to discuss that, and you discuss it with them.

10 Justice delayed is justice denied. An
11 accounting must be demanded. Naturally, these are polite
12 suggestions. An accounting must be demand of at least
13 five items, with capital punishment for destroying
14 records. A whistle-blower's law is needed to protect the
15 lives, careers and incomes of brave, honest people who
16 wish to assist the search for information. This is just
17 as important in Canada as in Brazil, Argentina or Romania.

18 Research the year-by-year amount that
19 Indian Affairs spent on administration at all levels and
20 how much finally got directly into the hands of Aboriginal
21 people.

22 Two crews -- one should start in 1990
23 and one start in 1980 records, and work back for 10 years.

24 Research the year-by-year amounts spent in fighting

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1 Indian land claims, administrative and legal war to evade
2 paying the money owed and beside it the amount paid in
3 claims. Then add on the interest owed to show how illegal
4 acts of government increase the cost of a fair settlement
5 by increased interest owed.

6 Play the game. Don't always react. Put
7 them a speck on the defensive. They are the criminals
8 that took all your land and wouldn't give you any back.
9

10 I humbly beg of you: Learn to think like
11 white people. Be nasty!

12 This is especially important to assess
13 the cost to Manitoba taxpayers of delayed settlement of
14 Northern Flood Committee damage claims. The capital cost
15 and the interest must be separately identified in all
16 documents and press releases, besides the major claim to
17 land to live on, to hunt, to fish, to use in traditional
18 gathering and harvesting.

19 The twin tools of genocide: Research
20 the cost to Native people of the twin tools of genocide.
21 Tool 1: Starvation and disease. It is relatively
22 well-known to a few of
23 you how many Native people died of starvation, disease
24 and neglect by Aboriginal people being refused enough land

4 The need for back interest on the cost
5 of human lives must be clearly identified.

16 Tool Two - Family Life Destruction:
17 Mixed Native/white teams must examine and complete records
18 on the kidnapping of children, how far they were removed
19 from home, how often they got parole to visit their parents.
20 Maps and word stories. The cost of kidnapping children
21 and destroying them by being kept in detention, like
22 boarding schools, denying them any chance to have love,
23 kindness, to see an example of humane family living, with
24 the resulting drunkenness, violence and suicide.

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1 I ask for a major research program.
2 This is only one-tenth of my brief. All of my briefs are
3 sitting over on the table there for anybody who thinks
4 it is worth the trouble to glance at them.

5 Repeat clearly again -- the Key
6 Essentials: Aboriginals must not be required to give up
7 their Aboriginal rights and title to get a sheet of paper
8 for what was theirs all along. Self-government land claims
9 are one item and must be settled together at the same time.

10 The speech of that man over there talking
11 about your Lottery Commission is just obscene. The
12 government is cutting the funding, and they are going to
13 allow you to improve the strength of your community by
14 gambling, by selling tobacco to strengthen lung health,
15 by selling alcohol -- you can make a quick profit on that
16 -- and they will probably encourage prostitution -- four
17 methods of making quick money that won't cost the
18 government anything, but will destroy society.

19 Industrial Civilization -- Desolation:
20 It is impossible to calmly describe the destruction of
21 the forests and the grasslands around the world and the
22 production of bare granite islands and pure deserts during
23 10,000 years of population explosion of humans behaving
24 exactly like a locust plague. Let me show you a picture

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1 of what the land looks like. That is just two and a half
2 years later, a B.C. mountain, 45-degree slope clearcut.
3

4 That is what they did to Aboriginal
5 culture; that is what they did to Aboriginal society; that
6 is what they did to Aboriginal religious communities; that
7 is what they did to Aboriginal spiritual and moral life.
8 That is called civilization. That is a picture of what
9 happens to all of it, and I don't think it is good enough.
10 That is just a hint.

11 The orgy of resource destruction to
12 accomplish the 40-year arms race led by the U.S.A. was
13 only surpassed by the massive destruction of the energy
14 mega projects caused by the artificially-created energy
15 crisis. The Consumer Society of Conspicuous Consumption
16 rivals the waste and extravagance of the great emperors
17 of China and India.

18 Twenty-two million Americans around Los
19 Angeles consume as much each year of the world's resources
20 and energy as 884 million people in India. We must
21 decrease our consumption soon. The multinational
22 corporations that wanted to put in the free trade
23 constitution here and continue the expansion of Conawapa,
24 the Portage Place Shopping Centre, of Repap -- they are

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1 destroying the world. They are doing nothing inherently
2 decent whatsoever. It is all subsidized by government.

3 Every one of the things that would create
4 more jobs, the development of communities, the development
5 of newspaper recycling instead of Repap, the development
6 of energy conservation instead of Conawapa -- every one
7 would cost a fraction as much and would produce more jobs
8 and wouldn't destroy the land.

9 Population impact is the number of
10 people multiplied by the affluence and by the technology.

11 I think affluence means money and technology means mega
12 project machines. You try and figure out how much your
13 population has of affluence and technology and how much
14 the white people have. The white people's population is
15 the curse in this land, in North America and the world.

16 It is not the Aboriginal people's modest consumption
17 population that is the problem.

18 The Indians jailed for bulldozing the
19 Old Man River should be in the pulpit beside Billy Graham
20 or on a pedestal beside Justice Tom Berger for their
21 courage.

22 David Suzuki and Stan Rowe, the author
23 of "Home Place - Essays on Ecology" clearly identify our
24 only hope for continuing to live well in North America

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1 is to use technologies and systems that work in harmony
2 with natural systems and are kinder to people. The Native
3 people must be seen as allies who know how to live in harmony
4 with nature and people. Learn about them. Work with
5 them.

6 Naturally, these are only polite
7 suggestions offered in support of our Native people and
8 their leaders. Why not share in the excitement and joy
9 of learning. But a different kind of book each year.
10 My whole thing in here is book reviews.

11 I hope, and know, that many of the best
12 of our leaders and all the citizens have realized that
13 the most important allies we need to save our world from
14 the out-of-control assault on the earth and the assault
15 on its ordinary people and on their local institutions
16 by this uncaring, aggressive brute that we call
17 profit-making, scientific, high-technology civilization
18 are the Aboriginal people. Then there are pages of book
19 reviews.

20 One other quick submission for five
21 minutes or less. The whistle-blower will come soon.

22 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal
23 Peoples, may I welcome you to your most challenging job
24 but almost most rare opportunity to do great good and bring

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1 great honour to your names and to your people. There are
2 small happy stories I want to tell you.

3 There are groups of people all over the
4 world working gently, kindly, bravely, fairly with each
5 other to build the kinder, gentler, more honest and decent
6 society that many of us feared for years would be
7 permanently beyond our reach. You heard about what the
8 Aboriginal people are doing today, as I did. Do you know
9 how many white people are trying to do the same thing,
10 to save the white communities from being destroyed by our
11 mega project, industrial technology?

12 We are in a parallel course in the same
13 disastrous situation.

14 There are two sides to court cases. I
15 would guess that 90 per cent of the time only one side
16 of the story is heard in the mass media. Ask Boyce
17 Richardson, the author of "Drum Beat" or Peter Matthiessen,
18 the author of "The Spirit of Crazy Horse", et cetera.

19 You must be cunning and wise beyond
20 belief to win with the set-up you have been offered. Most
21 Royal Commissions delay any action for two to three years
22 by deliberate government policy. Most Royal Commissions
23 are under-funded, so you can't hold a hearing of more than
24 20 minutes on any brief, so that you can't hire the

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1 translators you want. You people have been given a very
2 difficult job. We were given a difficult job with the
3 Conawapa public hearings. We got one-twentieth the
4 funding we should have. It is part of the fraud that
5 government gives to people

6 Don't think that you haven't been set
7 up, and you have to use all your wisdom to out-manoeuvre
8 them, like Tom Berger tried to do.

9 Please examine the enclosed paper,
10 "Managing Public Opinion." It's the most important
11 document I have come across in the last 10 years. It
12 describes 80 years of the National Association of
13 Manufacturers in the U.S.A. controlling and manipulating
14 public opinion to get what the government and the
15 businessmen want.

16 I have another paper called "Share
17 Groups in B.C.", which Colleen McRory told us about in
18 Augustine Church last night, an ally of the Aboriginal
19 people in the fight on the Charlottes and all throughout
20 Canada and around the world. She described these share
21 groups who are carrying out a professionally-organized
22 war by business corporations to set up imitation citizen
23 groups and thwart environmental groups and thwart
24 Aboriginal people fighting for their Aboriginal rights.

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1 I beg of you to examine some of these
2 papers.

3 A weakened federal government is their
4 goal in every country in the world, to put weak,
5 under-financed provincial and federal governments under
6 the greater control of multinational corporations. Most
7 of you know about that. It's nothing new.

8 Have I used up by my time, sir?

9 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** A few
10 minutes left.

11 **KENNETH EMBERLEY:** That's wonderful.
12 I only have nine more pages.

13 Read "Waiting for Democracy" by Rick
14 Salutin, a story about the North. Read the book
15 "Trilateralism" by Holly Sklar. You cannot believe the
16 story about Aboriginal lands and land claims. Read
17 "Towards an American Revolution" by Jerry Fresia, the story
18 of the creation of the U.S.A. Constitution. They were
19 so scared, there were so many riots and revolutions by
20 middle class people when the American Constitution was
21 first created that they kept all the notes secret for 53
22 years. It was just like Meech Lake I. I don't know what
23 they are going to do with the secret notes for Meech Lake
24 II they just passed last Monday.

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1 See a story of the grim payback of greed,
2 about the problems of the consumer society. Do you know
3 that an Indian peasant in India, walking his ox, producing
4 grain, eating the grain, feeding his ox the straw, produces
5 an energy harvest seven times the energy he and the ox
6 put into producing it? Do you know in North America we
7 don't even get one energy of harvest out of the energy
8 we put into making a grain and fruit and vegetable crop
9 in North America?

10 Part of the energy crisis was our energy
11 consumption in our farming. If you ever want to beat the
12 system, try starting to raise some of your own food
13 yourselves in your own organic farming. Try building your
14 own houses out of logs with 10 inches of fibreglass in
15 the walls. Build log houses with 10 inches of fibreglass
16 in the walls, two by ten studs in the walls. Put two-inch
17 planks on the inside and cover all the walls, floors and
18 ceilings with galvanized iron to make it fireproof. Ask
19 your Aboriginal leaders to spend 10 years and invent an
20 electric, humus, dry toilet that you don't have to take
21 a little bit of liquid and solid human waste and put five
22 or ten gallons of water with it and then try to figure
23 how to make it disappear into the river so it doesn't smell
24 and poison people and pollute.

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1 If you can invent dry toilets and you
2 can invent super-insulated houses -- in my brother's
3 super-insulated house, he only has to chop one and a half
4 cords of wood every year to pay his hydro bill for heating.
5 How would you like that? There is something you could
6 do yourselves.

7 Thank you for your courtesy.

8 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you
9 very much, Ken Emberley, for your discussion on the
10 environment.

11 I think we have a few comments from
12 Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

13 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I want to
14 thank you very much for your most interesting presentation.
15 I can't help but take the opportunity to make a few
16 comments.

17 I am very interested by your crossing
18 out the word "justice" here in reference to the law system.
19 I have at times wondered what philosophy of justice is
20 it, what idea of justice is it, that promotes the way in
21 which Aboriginal people are treated in this criminal law
22 system.

23 **KENNETH EMBERLEY:** If I may answer that
24 one question in one sentence, read the book "Sultans of

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1 Sleaze." We used to have hospitals; now they have health
2 facilities. We have more diseased people on the one
3 five-acre health facility in the centre of Winnipeg than
4 any other place in North America.

5 They used to have a law system, law and
6 judges and policemen. Then they put in a justice system
7 so it would seem more fair. It's PR.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I was
9 asking a rhetorical question.

10 My point was that I have not heard of
11 a philosophy of justice that would justify the way
12 Aboriginal people are treated by the system, and I suggest
13 there is not one. My point is that it is a misnomer.

14 If I may go on and make my other comments
15 because I do want to be brief, I am very interested in
16 your suggestion that the Royal Commission will have to
17 be cunning and wise, and I put that in the context of your
18 other suggestion to the Aboriginal people, to think like
19 white people and be nasty to them. It reminds me of the
20 expression that was used by those who negotiated Treaty
21 6. The Treaty Commissioners said to the people signing
22 the treaty: We will do this; we will do that; we will
23 teach you the cunning of the white man.

24 I met a friend of mine who was studying

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1 at the university and I said, "What are you doing here?"

2 He was from Treaty 6, and that is what he said. He said,

3 "I am studying the cunning of the white man."

4 So it seems that some people have already
5 taken your counsel.

6 You make a very interesting suggestion
7 about computing the costs of the government's fighting
8 land claims. Particularly so that is useful in light of
9 the role of the Commission in being a forum for public
10 education. I thank you for that suggestion.

11 I thank you also for the interesting
12 suggestions regarding the settlement of land claims,
13 because that is a very important issue and one where it
14 is not easy to find useful precedents. The American use
15 of Indian Claims Commissions, for example, does not appear
16 to be the model that we might want to follow.

17 I thank you for all these suggestions.

18 I have not had the time to look at them and give them
19 the serious consideration they deserve, but I will read
20 them and they are on the record. I thank you very much
21 for having made them.

22 **KENNETH EMBERLEY:** Thank you kindly for
23 your courtesy in allowing me to make a presentation and
24 use the briefs that I submitted to you last April. I do

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1 thank you very sincerely.

2 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
3 Ken Emberley, for your paper on the environment.

4 I would like to call now on Dave
5 Courchene, Jr. from the Mother Earth Spiritual Camp.

6 **DAVE COURCHENE, JR., MOTHER EARTH**
7 **SPIRITUAL CAMP:** Bonjour.

8 First of all, I would like to thank you,
9 Mr. Chairman and Members of the Royal Commission, for
10 sticking around. I know that people have some tight
11 agendas.

12 I would like to acknowledge the
13 individual who was responsible for allowing me or inviting
14 me to be here this afternoon. I do have some concerns
15 regarding the purpose and intent of the Royal Commission.

16 I just want to qualify my participation
17 in this gathering and in giving a presentation.

18 First of all, in terms of the purpose
19 and the intent of the Commission, from my understanding,
20 it was to seek some understanding of the direction that
21 indigenous people would like to go and also to allow the
22 federal government to establish some relationship that
23 would benefit indigenous people.

24 First of all, indigenous people have

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1 been studied over and over and over again. I think the
2 Commission itself is another way of the federal
3 government's attempt to renege on their responsibilities.

4 Be that as it may, we, as indigenous
5 people, are very patient people. Whenever we are given
6 the opportunity to express how we feel, we take that
7 opportunity.

8 I would like to make some
9 recommendations, but first I want to go into some
10 historical perspective of what I believe is the spirit
11 of indigenous people.

12 Prior to the invasion of the Americas
13 by Anglo-Europeans 500 years ago, indigenous people had
14 a way of life which was spiritually directed and reflected
15 in the systems of education, governance, social
16 relationships, economics and culture. The goal of the
17 individual in the community was to live a way of life of
18 harmony, to balance beauty and peace with all creation.

19 These elements of being human, the
20 spirit, the intellect, the body and emotions, were
21 developed in balance with one another so that the
22 individual could fulfill their growth as an individual
23 harmoniously with all of life.

24 The underlying premise upon which all

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1 else was based was to recognize and fulfill the spirit
2 of life within oneself and with all others in the circle
3 of individuals, relationship or community and the land.

4 This was achieved through concerted effort on developing
5 the spirit through prayer, meditation, vision quests,
6 fasting, ceremony, and in other ways of communicating with
7 the Creator.

8 This connection and communication with
9 the Creator provided the guidance that an individual needed
10 to ensure that all of life was respected in the decisions
11 one made in their lives.

12 When the invaders came to the shores of
13 the Americas, they found an environment and a way of life
14 which recognized and honoured the interconnectedness of
15 all living things. The natural worlds appeared untouched
16 by humanity and reflected the beauty of the indigenous
17 spirit and its connection with the Creator. The invaders
18 from Europe not only brought death and destruction and
19 annihilation of indigenous people and all other beings
20 in a natural world, but a world view which regarded the
21 mind as the supreme being.

22 The devastation of the Americas and
23 other parts of the world is the result of the mind gone
24 mad, without spiritual direction and guidance. It is the

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1 truest reflection of the difference in the way of life,
2 indigenous and Western. A before-and-after photograph
3 might be the most graphic depiction of this comparison.

4 There is no doubt by any individual in
5 the world that a drastic transformation must be developed
6 if humanity is to reverse the course of its own destruction.

7 Recent authorities predict that, if the present course
8 of consumption and destruction is not reversed, widespread
9 human and environmental collapse will occur.

10 In the last 20 years there has been an
11 increased effort to understand the psychology of the human
12 being. Psychological self-help books, Alcoholics
13 Anonymous and popular magazines have explored the
14 relationships of emotions to human wellness. This was
15 preceded by increased consciousness about the health of
16 the human body. Western consciousness has now
17 incorporated the mind, body and emotions as critical
18 elements of what it is to be human.

19 Less explored and least understood is
20 the human spirit. Spirituality, the once-guiding force
21 in the lives of indigenous people and many of the peoples
22 of the world has become a footnote in the lives of human
23 beings. Even in the formalized institutions that were
24 created to honour the spirit, the churches and the many

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1 religions of the world, among many spirituality is feared,
2 ridiculed and regarded as irrelevant.

3 Simultaneously with this, some in the
4 medical profession have begun to explore the connection
5 between the mind and the body or the relationship of one's
6 emotional well-being to physical health. Many within the
7 New Age movement have begun to explore the dimensions of
8 spirituality. Many contemporary writers have begun to
9 propose that global change will require transformation
10 of the individual or a shift of consciousness.

11 The underlying question is: What is the
12 process of transformation and how does it happen within
13 an individual, a community or a nation? Those interested
14 in the environment seek Native philosophy and wisdom about
15 how to live in relation to the natural world. Indigenous
16 people are increasingly being called upon to assist others
17 in understanding spirituality. There is a huge emptiness
18 within most individuals within Western civilization.

19 Many seekers come to indigenous people
20 seeking a direction as to what is affecting the earth.
21 All of this indicates a tremendous thirst for spiritual
22 understanding which is not being met in contemporary
23 society. Others are undergoing abrupt spiritual
24 experiences which could be transformative, but do not

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1 understand the full implications of what they are
2 experiencing.

3 Within Native communities, the spirit
4 has been devastated by the cumulative effect of 500 years
5 of genocide, forced assimilation, destruction of the
6 natural world and internalized oppression. This has
7 resulted in the highest national statistics of suicide,
8 violent deaths, alcoholism and various forms of abuse.
9 The destruction of the spirit which was initially
10 perpetrated viciously by the outside has been taken within.

11 Many Native individuals and communities
12 have lost the connection to their spirit and to their
13 Creator.

14 We have in the contemporary world,
15 whether it is individuals from the black, red, yellow or
16 white races, such a severe impoverishment of spirit that
17 the human race has created a path of destruction in its
18 wake, rather than a path of regeneration and renewal of
19 life.

20 To understand how a human being is to
21 live, one must understand the source of life itself, the
22 spirit and the Creator from whence that life came. The
23 spirit is the one dimension of the human which has not
24 been evolved as the mind, the body or emotion have.

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1 At this critical crossroad in the
2 history of humanity, it is critical that we transcend the
3 conventional and take the risk of examining the unexplored.

4 We know that indigenous people lived for
5 tens of thousands of years in a spiritually-based way of
6 life which was harmonious with all of creation. It is
7 imperative to begin the path of serious exploration of
8 that aspect of ourselves, which can provide the essential
9 transformative process, the healing and renewing of the
10 human being and the earth.

11 I see a day when indigenous people will
12 be sitting in the position where the white people and other
13 people of the world will come to us and say, "Tell us what
14 to do; tell us how to live on this earth. Tell us how
15 to correct the damage that we have created on this earth."
16

17 The assumption, such as the Commission,
18 or the assumption of the policy of the federal government,
19 is that the problem is the Indian. The Indian has no
20 problem. The problem is not the Indian. The problem is
21 the institutions that continue to show disrespect for other
22 human beings. The problem is with the institutions that
23 continue to have the arrogance and believe that they are
24 and have developed superior institutions, that we, as

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1 indigenous people, in order to survive, must be trained
2 in those institutions in order to survive.

3 I propose that a Royal Commission be set
4 up by our own people that will travel the country to give
5 direction to the institutions on what they are doing to
6 the land and to other people of the world, and especially
7 indigenous people of this country; that we be given the
8 opportunity to go out and teach people how they are to
9 live on the land and how they are to respect all living
10 things that are generated from the earth.

11 We want to share what has been passed
12 on to us as indigenous people. We have shared the land;
13 we have shared the resources; now we want to share our
14 ancient teachings and our ancient wisdom on what the human
15 being should be really like in this world.

16 The assumption is always that we are the
17 problem, but the truth is that indigenous people are the
18 solution to what is happening in the world today.

19 We are always put in a subservient
20 position, always, that we are less than whatever
21 institutions are out there. I see what is happening to
22 my people across the country. Many of our people have
23 accepted to be administrators of that assimilation policy
24 that the government has put in effect since Day One, where

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1 many of
2 our people continue to compromise what really the strength
3 of our own people is.

4 We, as indigenous people, have an
5 alliance with the power of spirit and the land through
6 the trees, the water, the birds, the animals. We are not
7 a minority in the sense of our spiritual understanding
8 and knowledge. The institutions have an alliance with
9 everything that is most negative -- disrespect, hatred,
10 war, exploitation, greed, money; that is the alliance the
11 institutions have.

12 Indigenous people very soon will be
13 sitting at the table in equalness with all other races
14 of the world because it was prophesied by our people a
15 long time ago, that indigenous people will be sitting on
16 the east side of that table, where they will be giving
17 leadership and direction to the rest of the people of the
18 world on what they are to do if there is to be a future
19 for all the children of the world.

20 If indigenous people are going to be able
21 to be sitting in that direction, then indigenous people
22 must be able to re-embrace that way of life that they were
23 given by none other than the Great Spirit, the one we call
24 the Creator. The Creator gave indigenous people the pipe,

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1 the drum, the songs and all the ceremony that is needed
2 for us to generate our own life, our own understanding.
3 Everything that we have been given as indigenous people
4 is always in the spirit of love and kindness and compassion,
5 and we have shown it. For 500 years we have shown the
6 love that we have for the land, the love that we have for
7 people, no matter what they have done to us.

8 I did not come here to speak out of
9 arrogance, out of disrespect for anyone. I know that I
10 am a whisper, and the yelling and the screaming of
11 institutions tell me how I should live and what I should
12 believe. But some day that whisper will be heard. Some
13 day the people will say: Yes, indigenous people do have
14 the answer to providing a new life and a new direction.

15 I was a bit disturbed when I found out
16 that the result of the Commission will not reach any real
17 conclusion in terms of its recommendations until 1994.
18 Many of our people are dying out there. Many of our people
19 are suffering because of the policies of many different
20 institutions, primarily the federal government.

21 I offer a challenge to all my people.
22 I offer a challenge to all indigenous people of this land:
23 Turn to where the greatest power is, and that is to the
24 Creator. The Creator will give you your dream and your

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1 vision, and he will tell you what he expects you to do
2 in this world. As long as we keep knocking on the door
3 of the federal government, they will never, never give
4 us what we are seeking. The government cannot give life;
5 it is only the Creator that can give us life.

6 Where we need the strength to be able
7 to continue surviving is relying on our ceremonies and
8 holding that pipe in the most sacred way and asking and
9 crying out to the Creator that he gives us life, that he
10 gives us the direction.

11 All is not lost because institutions do
12 not want to respect us. But prophecy tells us -- and I
13 believe the prophecy -- that people will come to us, but
14 we must re-embrace that way of life and allow the spirit
15 to teach us.

16 One final recommendation. I would
17 challenge the government, if they are concerned with really
18 offering support to what they call the indigenous problem,
19 to support centres of healing and teachings that are
20 totally controlled and run by indigenous people. Allow
21 the indigenous people to be themselves. When you allow
22 us to be ourselves, then we can help other people. There
23 are no institutions in this country that really are
24 supported by the federal government or any institution

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1 in this country that is really, truly reflective of the
2 spirit of indigenous people. What we have is our lodges,
3 and we don't need the government to come and tell us how
4 to run those lodges.

5 People talk about defining Indian
6 self-government. Indian self-government is determined
7 by the spiritual direction that we receive from the lodges
8 and from the grandfathers. They tell us what to do. We
9 don't rely on other institutions. We don't rely on another
10 race of people telling us how to live. We recognize that
11 we have a responsibility as indigenous people to be
12 caretakers of this earth.

13 Our voice will be heard. It will be
14 heard because I see this as the beginning of our people
15 and the movement that is going to happen across this country
16 and around the world, the spiritual movement that is in
17 effect because of the natural things that are happening
18 around the world. It is forcing all of us, as human beings,
19 to come to terms with our own spirituality and to
20 re-establish a relationship with the true source of power
21 that exists in our life. We are forced, whether we like
22 it or not.

23 In conclusion, I want to thank the people
24 that are responsible for allowing me this time to express

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1 how I feel. I also want to thank the people up in front
2 here that are sitting there. I know that it must get really
3 boring when you have to listen to people as they speak.

4 I, as an indigenous person, hold a lot
5 of hope for the future because of the alliance we have
6 with the power of spirit and the power of the grandfathers,
7 that they will take us through.

8 Initially, the relationship that was
9 established with the federal government was recognized
10 through the treaties, and all the pipes and all the
11 spiritual people were there. Those treaties will never
12 be broken. The treaties established and recognized the
13 nationhood and the sovereignty position that indigenous
14 people have in this country.

15 In our understanding of sovereignty, we
16 derive our sovereignty from none other than the Creator;
17 we do not derive our sovereignty from Brian Mulroney and
18 his government or any other government that is there.
19 We derive our sovereignty from the Creator. He will give
20 the things that we need in order to live. But there has
21 to a lot of change in attitude, particularly from the
22 federal government, and there certainly has to be a lot
23 of changing in terms of the attitude of many of our people
24 also.

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1 The way to clear the mind is to go into
2 the sweatlodge, to sun dance, the prayers, the fasts.
3 That is the answer for indigenous people.

4 I don't expect to get 100 per cent
5 support in the things I say. All I can speak of, as an
6 individual, is what I have experienced and how I have
7 divorced myself away from those institutions that have
8 oppressed my people for 500 years. I do not want to be
9 a part of it because I know that, as a human being, I have
10 just as much intelligence, I have just as much gifts.
11 All I have to do is accept that responsibility to be that
12 human being that the Creator wants me to be, and I don't
13 need an institution to tell me otherwise.

14 That is what is needed in this country,
15 for people to accept the responsibility of their own lives.
16 Indigenous people will survive; there is absolutely no
17 question about it. Indigenous people will survive because
18 it has been said that they will survive and that they will
19 be needed to offer guidance and direction to humanity in
20 this world.

21 Thank you very much.

22 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you
23 very much, Dave.

24 We have comments from Commissioner

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1 Sillett.

2 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
3 very much. I have several points of clarification.

4 First, you said that the federal
5 government must develop a relationship, and you focused
6 on that. I just want to clarify that.

7 In the first round of hearings, this
8 Commission met with over 850 people. In those
9 presentations many Anicinabe, Métis and Inuit people said
10 many similar things that you did about the relationship,
11 and I will read you a paragraph or two from our Summary.
12 This is our report to the public.

13 "We cannot help but think that much of what we heard --
14 the discrimination, the pain and
15 the anger -- are symptoms of a much
16 more fundamental problem, a
17 problem in the basic relationship
18 between Aboriginal and
19 non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

20 When European settlers first
21 arrived in what is now Canada, they
22 relied upon Aboriginal people for
23 their survival. This was followed
24 by an influx of settlers

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1 predominantly from Europe. Then
2 there was a period of time when both
3 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
4 people were self-sufficient.

5 The balance has shifted over time, and
6 the relations are now
7 characterized, for the most part,
8 by political and economic
9 dependency of Aboriginal peoples,
10 by inequality of opportunity and
11 by subordination of Aboriginal
12 languages and cultures. The
13 relationship has, for many years,
14 been a colonial one, with the
15 rights of Aboriginal people
16 suppressed and with Aboriginal
17 self-sufficiency on a land base
18 systemically destroyed.

19 We believe that we are on the threshold
20 of a new era, one that will begin
21 a process of decolonization and
22 that will replace outdated notions
23 with a new set of principles upon
24 which to build a new relationship.

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1 If this is the case, restoring the
2 relationship will not be achieved
3 by tinkering with existing
4 legislation such as the Indian Act,
5 nor will it be resolved solely with
6 the addition of more money,
7 although this is an important
8 element. What will be required is
9 nothing less than the complete
10 restructuring of relations between
11 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
12 people in Canada."

13 So it was recognized that, in order for
14 Aboriginal people to have a place in Canada, we must have
15 a restructuring of the relationship. That is the first
16 clarification.

17 Second, you were saying that we didn't
18 have the ability to make recommendations until 1994. This
19 Commission does have the ability to issue commentary or
20 to issue interim reports. When we first met with Aboriginal
21 groups, before we even started our public hearings, many
22 said, "You know, we have many, many outstanding issues,
23 issues that have been there for a long, long time, and
24 we can't wait until 1994 to have some action. We need

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1 action now.

2 So we do have that ability to issue
3 interim reports on issues which cannot wait.

4 Third, I want to say that one of the major
5 elements of our work is public education, and that is what
6 you were talking about earlier. That is something that
7 we support.

8 You talked about the need to set up our
9 own Royal Commission with our own people to address a number
10 of issues. Just as a matter of information, before this
11 Royal Commission was created, Chief Justice Brian Dickson
12 travelled the entire country and met with Aboriginal and
13 non-Aboriginal people. He sought advice. He said: What
14 should this Royal Commission look like? Who should sit
15 on it? What should it address?

16 What you see now are seven
17 Commissioners. Four of them are Aboriginal. Our job is
18 to address almost every single issue which is of importance
19 to Aboriginal people.

20 Those are just points of clarification.

21 I can't talk any more because I know that, if I do, we
22 will probably miss our plane and everyone will be made
23 at me. Thank you very much.

24 **DAVE COURCHENE, JR:** I just want to make

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1 a quick clarification in terms of the proposal of the Royal
2 Commission. Really, it is totally designed by Aboriginal
3 people; it is not associated with the federal government.

4 The intent of the Royal Commission would be to go out
5 and teach the people how to live on the land, how to respect
6 human beings, how to respect life.

7 We are prepared to share our teachings,
8 but we sit here and say, "We have the problem." We do
9 not have the problem. It's the institutions that have
10 oppressed our ancient teachings and our knowledge and
11 understanding of life.

12 Maybe "Royal Commission" is the wrong
13 word to use. I would like to see Brian Mulroney and any
14 of his people sit there, and I would like to propose to
15 him that he come with me, that I take him out in the bush
16 and teach him about life. That's what I want to do, because
17 he does not understand it. The institutions that exist
18 in this country do not understand the respect of life.

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I only
20 want to say meegwitch. The merit of what you say is evident
21 from your words, and I don't want to put my own gloss upon
22 them.

23 Thank you very much.

24 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:**

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1 Meegwitch, Dave Jr., for your presentation.

2 Before I ask for closing comments from
3 our Commissioners and the Chief's closing remarks, I would
4 like to thank Commissioner Mary Sillett, Commissioner Paul
5 Chartrand and crew members and all those who participated
6 in the round-table discussions, all those who made
7 presentations and, of course, you, your audience. It has
8 been an interesting day and a half.

9 We have heard many recommendations and
10 many solutions on the directions Anicinabe people will
11 be taking at this point in their history. I believe I
12 can safely say that the bottom line is: Whatever decision
13 is chosen, individual communities will decide for
14 themselves, for their children and for their future. The
15 days of paternalism are gone. The days when Anicinabe
16 are used as pawns in a game between two governments are
17 gone.

18 All we ask for is respect, respect for
19 the sacredness of the treaties, respect for our remaining
20 homelands and, most important, respect for our decisions.
21 Without this mutual respect, anger, frustration and
22 confrontations will only heighten.

23 Our Elders always say: If the treaties
24 had been ordered by the governments, by the Canadian

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1 public, our contributions as Anicinabe people would today
2 be felt and seen across this country. There is nothing
3 to lose but everything to gain if we are looked upon as
4 equal partners.

5 With that, I will call for the
6 Commissioners' closing statements.

7 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** After every
8 meeting, I guess a question that everyone asks you is:
9 Was it a good one? For me, this was a really good meeting.
10 There were excellent presentations which identified
11 issues and which focused on solutions and recommendations,
12 and we have been asking for that. We have said that we
13 have a very difficult job to do, some very difficult
14 questions to answer, and we can't do it ourselves.

15 We also heard from a number of different
16 groups. We have a responsibility within our mandate to
17 make sure that groups who are not usually heard are heard
18 from. We have a responsibility to try to get youth here.
19 We had those. We had Elders here and also men.

20 This is the first meeting I have been
21 to which had one representative from the Province and one
22 representative from industry or business. I think that
23 is something.

24 We have had a committed audience,

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1 excellent hospitality and treatment and, finally, we had
2 an extremely efficient Moderator.

3 Thank you very much.

4 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** Thank you,
5 Commissioner Mary Sillett. Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:**
7 Meegwitch. I want to thank everyone. I will not name
8 everyone because I know I would forget some.

9 I want to thank not only our staff, but
10 Gerald Courchene, our able Moderator. Meegwitch, Gerald.

11 I want to thank the Elders, Jack Star
12 and the others who assisted us yesterday and today.

13 I want to thank Jerry and Councillors
14 for inviting us here and showing us really wonderful
15 hospitality. We appreciate that very much.

16 Most of all, of course, we want to thank
17 all the people of Sagkeeng who made this possible, and
18 all the other people who participated.

19 Our job is not so bad. Some thought it
20 might be boring to sit up here. I had a different view
21 given to me yesterday. After the feast and the giveaway
22 last night, I went home. My daughter, who is twelve, was
23 wondering what I do. She said, "Gee, you mean you sit
24 and listen to people talk and then you get all these great

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1 gifts on top of that? And you get paid for all that?"

2 So our job is not too bad.

3 I would like to sit and visit after the
4 ceremonies are over but, unfortunately, my driver, Jim
5 Compton over there, has the motor warming up. He has a
6 flight to get on at 7:20, I think, and I have to make a
7 presentation at a Law Conference at 7 o'clock and I have
8 to prepare it in the car on the way.

9 Again, thank you very much.

10 **MODERATOR GERALD COURCHENE:** I would
11 like to ask Chief Fontaine to do closing remarks.
12 Following that, we will have an Ojibway travelling song
13 for safe journey in your continued travels as Commissioners
14 and staff and also for a safe journey to your families
15 and relatives.

16 **CHIEF JERRY FONTAINE:** I won't take too
17 long. I was actually going to ask the King of the Saddle
18 to come up here with me. I think we all know who the King
19 of the Saddle is in these parts.

20 On behalf of the people of Sagkeeng, I
21 want to thank the Commissioners, Ms Sillett and Mr.
22 Chartrand, for their patience and their understanding.
23 I also want to thank the other members of the Royal
24 Commission staff.

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1 We have tokens of our appreciation as
2 well for you ladies and gentlemen, so we will be doing
3 that before you leave.

4 As well, to the Moderator, Gerald, my
5 good friend, an excellent job well done. We are quite
6 proud of you.

7 Just to keep things light, I understand
8 the women of the Commission were being asked what clan
9 they belong to. I notice a lot of our single men were
10 in that corner making inquiries. I hope they found men
11 that were compatible with their clans.

12 I am going to make these presentations
13 very quickly because I understand there is a time frame.
14 George and Paul have a very long journey. I am going
15 to call each one of you up. If you could come up as I
16 call you, it would be greatly appreciated.

17 This is, by the way, courtesy of our
18 Interpreter, Mr. Henry Courchene, from the territory of
19 the Ojibway. I hope you have a hearty meal, and I hope
20 you don't gain weight as a result of eating this.

21 (Presentations to Commission Staff)

22 With that, I say meegwitch to all of you.

23 On behalf of Sagkeeng, we really appreciated your visit
24 with us. I hope it was as enjoyable for you as it was

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1 for us.

2 With that, I will turn it over to the
3 White Eagle singers.

4 --- Whereupon the Hearing adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

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