

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR  
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: THE SENATOR HOTEL  
TIMMINS, ONTARIO

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1992

VOLUME: 1

"for the record..."

**STENOTRAN**

1376 Kilborn Ave.

Ottawa 521-0703

**I N D E X**

**TIMMINS, ONTARIO  
NOVEMBER 2, 1992**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Presentation by Aboriginal Peoples Community Health Centre Richard Mills Evelyn Buffalo	14
Presentation by Ininew Friendship Centre Doreen Pichette Bernice Archibald	40
Presentation by Kunuwanimano Child and Family Resources Andrew Wesley	59
Presentation by Don McKinnon	89
Presentation by Suzanne McCarthy	129
Presentation by Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre Dorothy Wynne	148
Presentation by Porcupine United Way Jack Yard John Farrington	161
Presentation by Wabun Tribal Council Lindberg Louttit	197
Presentation by First Nations Fort Albany Chief Edmond Metatawabin	231
Presentation by Timmins Native Friendship Centre Peter Sackney	263
Presentation by Ontario Hydro Jane Tennyson	286
Presentation by Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre Anatasia Wheesk Bertha Metatawabin Esther Wesley	303
Presentation by John Cheechou	316

**INDEX**

Presentation by Marinus Dieleman Tom Mills	339
Presentation by Osnaburgh First Nation Andrew Rickart	371

November 5, 1992

1

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 --- Upon commencing at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, November 5,  
2 1992

3

4 **ED SACKENEY:** Good morning, ladies and  
5 gentlemen. I thank you for your patience. We will  
6 begin this morning with the opening prayer and the person  
7 to do the opening prayer is Mr. Bob Sutherland.

8 Mr. Bob Sutherland has been involved  
9 with the spiritual field for about 10 years. He has earned  
10 his status as a person that is sincere and being recognized  
11 as an elder. He hails from Moose Factory which is up in  
12 James Bay. He has travelled across this country to get  
13 his traditional teachings, from the Cree Nations -- from  
14 various groups. As you know the Cree Nations go from the  
15 east side of Quebec, James Bay, right to the Rocky  
16 Mountains.

17 Bob would like to get the people up  
18 front. I guess we could do it a circle around the camera  
19 and we will start the presentations.

20 So if people could move up and Bob will  
21 direct you how to.

22 Thank you.

23

November 5, 1992

2

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                                   **(Opening Prayer)**

2

3                                   **ED SACKENEY:**   Next on the agenda we have  
4   His Lordship for the City of Timmins, Mr. Victor Power.

5                                   **MAYOR VICTOR POWER, THE CITY OF TIMMINS:**

6    Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, ladies and  
7   gentlemen.  It is indeed an honour to welcome Members of  
8   the Royal Commission to the City of Timmins.

9                                   As you may have noticed by now, in terms  
10   of area the City is the largest in Canada -- 1224 square  
11   miles.  It is 52 miles long from east to west.  I think  
12   this is a significant fact for you to consider because  
13   I know you are going across the country.

14                                  I would mention this -- that certainly  
15   there is a good liaison between -- I believe -- the Native  
16   peoples and the City of Timmins and between the Native  
17   peoples and all other groups within the City of Timmins.

18                                  In your considerations I do hope that  
19   you will ponder over the matter of development.  Without  
20   development we can't make progress.  The City of Timmins  
21   is 80 years young this year, and as you drive around the  
22   city you will see there has been tremendous progress over  
23   those eight decades.

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   That progress is because there was  
2   exploration and because there was development in the  
3   forestry industry. I think it is to the advantage of the  
4   Native peoples, the Aboriginal peoples, and to the  
5   advantage of all the citizens of the City of Timmins that  
6   there be sustainable development. We trust that you will  
7   keep this in mind in your deliberations and also, in your  
8   decisions.

9                   Again, thank you for coming to Timmins.  
10   We hope that as individuals you will return again and  
11   we will all be looking forward to the result of these  
12   discussions.

13                   Thanks very much.

14                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
15   very much, Mr. Mayor.

16                   I would like to just make a few brief  
17   opening remarks before we start with the presentations.

18   I think my fellow Commissioners will introduce themselves  
19   so I will just say a word or two about myself.

20                   My name is Bertha Wilson. I was trained  
21   as a lawyer and then subsequently became a judge and retired  
22   from the bench in the beginning of 1991. The Royal  
23   Commission has seven Commissioners, four of whom are

November 5, 1992

4

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1    Aboriginal people and three are non-Aboriginal people.

2                    Allan Blakeney and I are two of the  
3    non-Aboriginal people. Mary is one of the four Aboriginal  
4    persons. The other is our co-chair of the Commission,  
5    George Erasmus, the former Chief of the Assembly of First  
6    Nations. Viola Robinson, the former President of the  
7    Native Council of Canada and a Treaty Indian from Nova  
8    Scotia. Paul Chartrand, a professor of Native Studies  
9    at the University of Manitoba and Metis. The other  
10   non-Aboriginal person is our other co-chair, Mr. Justice  
11   Rene Duseault, a judge of the Quebec Court of Appeal.

12                   I will ask my two colleagues here to say  
13   a word or two about themselves and then I will say something  
14   about the Commission's Terms of Reference.

15                   Mary, please.

16                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you  
17   very much, Mrs. Wilson.

18                   I am really pleased to be here in Timmins  
19   and before I introduce myself I will introduce many of  
20   the people who have made sure that this public hearing  
21   happened. I will begin by introducing Pat Chilton, who  
22   is hired on contract by the Royal Commission to act as  
23   Regional Coordinator for the Province of Ontario.

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   There is Ed Sackeney. He is from the  
2 community of Timmins. He is on contract to act as our  
3 local community coordinator.

4                   The Royal Commission staff that I would  
5 like to introduce are Becky Printup, she works in the area  
6 of public participation. Becky would you stand up please.  
7 And Michael Lazore who works there, too. And Don Kelly,  
8 he is with our communications section. Rosalie Tizya,  
9 she works on the urban prospective part of research. Gail  
10 Bradshaw, she works with the information management. And  
11 we also have on contract Judy Stevenson who is working  
12 on discussion paper for the Commission.

13                  My name is Mary Sillett. I am an Inuk  
14 which is singular of Inuit. I am from Northern Labrador.  
15 I spent many years working on Inuit and Aboriginal issues.  
16 I started with the communities, with my region, and I  
17 went to the National level to work with the Inuit Committee  
18 on National Issues which was the National spokes  
19 organization for Inuit constitutional concerns.

20                  I was a founding member and the President  
21 of Boudootit, (PH) the Inuit Women's Association of Canada.  
22 A National Inuit women's association which represented  
23 Inuit in the Northwest Territories in Nunavik (PH) which



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 is Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. I was also the  
2 Vice-President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and it  
3 was Inuit Tapirisat of Canada that recommended me to sit  
4 on the Royal Commission for Aboriginal peoples and I am  
5 very grateful for that honour. I am glad to be here and  
6 I look forward to hearing from you today.

7 Nacomik (PH).

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
9 Mary.

10 Allan, please.

11 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** My name  
12 is Allan Blakeney. I was born and educated in Nova Scotia  
13 and took legal training there. I then moved to  
14 Saskatchewan and worked there in the public service and  
15 in the private practice of law before entering politics.  
16 I was in political life in Saskatchewan for some 28 years  
17 serving as a Cabinet Minister and as a private member and  
18 as Premier for 11 years.

19 During the course of the 11 years as  
20 Premier, I had many many dealings with Aboriginal people  
21 in that province. That is necessarily so since the  
22 Aboriginal population of Saskatchewan is in proportional  
23 terms greater than anywhere else in Canada.

November 5, 1992

7

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   After leaving politics I taught law in  
2 Toronto and at the University of Saskatchewan. I have  
3 joined the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples now for  
4 one year as we are touring across the country. I have  
5 greatly added to my knowledge of the issues elsewhere in  
6 Canada enormously and look forward to adding to it still  
7 further here in Timmins and finding out what the problems  
8 peculiar to this area of Northern Ontario -- if I may call  
9 it that -- are and look forward, therefore, to our hearings  
10 here today in Timmins -- and tomorrow.

11                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
12 Allan.

13                   Before I say a word or two about the Terms  
14 of Reference I would like to introduce the other member  
15 sitting at the table with us. She is Angela Sheeshish  
16 and is to act as our Commissioner for the day.

17                   I understand that she has been employed  
18 by Ojibway Cree Cultural Centre for the last five years.  
19 She is the Literacy Coordinator for the organization and  
20 has lived in Timmins since 1979. I believe she is also  
21 asked sometimes to be a resource person for the local court  
22 system to translate for Aboriginal clients.

23                   I understand she is also involved in

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 several other agencies and we are very happy that she has  
2 agreed to act as our Commissioner for the day.

3 Our Terms of Reference as you are  
4 probably aware are extremely broad. They extend from  
5 Native Self-Government to education, health, justice,  
6 housing, social conditions generally, and of course,  
7 language and culture. So it is rather a massive  
8 undertaking that we are engaged in. We look to you for  
9 help in undertaking our task.

10 Our hearings opened in Winnipeg in April  
11 of this year and continued to the end of June. During  
12 that period we visited 36 different locations across the  
13 country and heard presentations from 850 individuals and  
14 organizations. Some non-Native organizations as well as  
15 in most cases Native organizations.

16 As a result of that First Round of  
17 hearings we prepared a Discussion Paper to outline the  
18 various issues that we raised by the presenters during  
19 that First Round of hearings and we have called that  
20 document "Framing the Issues". It is a red document and  
21 I understand that there are some available at the back  
22 of the room, if you haven't already received it.

23 The purpose of the document "Framing the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   Issues" was to try to gather together all that we had heard  
2   because on our First Round of hearings we proceeded on  
3   the basis that anyone in the community could raise any  
4   issue or any problem they wanted to direct our attention  
5   to. So, there was a huge spectrum of concerns that were  
6   raised.

7                   In the Discussion Paper, Framing the  
8   Issues, we try to pool together all that we had heard and  
9   identify what seemed to be the crucial things that the  
10   Commission would have to come to grips with. That was  
11   the purpose of Framing the Issues and that is the purpose  
12   of the list of questions that are at the end of that  
13   document.

14                  We are hoping very much that in the  
15   Second Round of hearings the presenters will try to address  
16   those particular issues that seem to be basic. This  
17   doesn't mean that they can't raise any other issues they  
18   wish to raise and are concerned about, but we are looking  
19   for a lot of assistance on these major problems that seem  
20   to be very fundamental.

21                  You may be aware that our overall  
22   objective is to try to work out a better relationship  
23   between Native people in Canada and Canadian citizens at

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 large. What we are aiming for, of course, is an equal  
2 partnership between Native people and non-Native people  
3 in the country. It was on that basis that we decided what  
4 were the fundamental issues that had to be addressed in  
5 order to achieve that objective.

6 This is what we are after. We are after  
7 not only the identification of problems, we are after the  
8 identification of solutions. In other words, where there  
9 is a real fundamental problem what can we do about it?  
10 What can the Commission do about it? What do you see as  
11 the solution for some of these conditions and concerns  
12 that Native people encounter? How can they be resolved  
13 so that we can move on from there? This is what we are  
14 really most anxious to hear and -- as I have said -- we  
15 desperately need your help in trying to achieve our goal.

16 I understand we are going to have Ed  
17 Sackenev as our moderator for this session of public  
18 hearings. He is going to introduce the presenters and  
19 I hope maybe tell us a little bit about each one.

20 But before he does that I would  
21 appreciate it very much if he would just say a word or  
22 two about himself.

23 Ed, please.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you very much, Mrs.  
2     Wilson. My name is Ed Sackenev and I have lived in Timmins  
3     since 1979. I have worked with several Aboriginal  
4     organizations in the area during that time. I have also  
5     worked for the Federal Government through their Canada  
6     Manpower Centre for a number of years. Also, I have worked  
7     with Placer Dome which is a gold mining corporation and  
8     I was their Native personnel consultant for a number of  
9     years working and promoting the Native employment program  
10    at Deter (PH) Lake.

11                   My background and my experience sort of  
12    assisted with the process of the Commissioners coming into  
13    town. The concept of these public hearings is also a  
14    teaching of an elder some years ago -- that I did know  
15    and who is no longer with us -- when he stated that when  
16    you see a problem and you sit back and just criticize and  
17    complain then you become part of the problem. However,  
18    if you see a problem and you decide that you want to get  
19    involved and look for recommendations to better that  
20    problem then you become the solution.

21                   This is how I seem to translate the Royal  
22    Commission on Aboriginal People. It is a time to talk  
23    and a time to listen. As you know this has been ongoing

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 for a number of years now, but I am confident that once  
2 we start talking -- with this day and tomorrow -- it will  
3 be up to us to carry on the Commission's work at our grass  
4 roots level and for the surrounding area.

5                   Hopefully, the discussions today will  
6 get the non-Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal people  
7 together and I will do my utmost best to give you the  
8 backgrounds of the presenters as they come up to the  
9 microphone.

10                   Thank you very much.

11                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
12 very much, Ed. We will hand over to you now.

13                   **ED SACKENEY:** To you, Commissioners, I  
14 would like to introduce the lady to my right, Evelyn  
15 Buffalo. She is the Chairperson or the President of the  
16 Aboriginal Health Centre Board that is situated here in  
17 Timmins. It is a 12 member Board.

18                   Evelyn comes from Moosonee. She has  
19 worked at one of our local hospitals -- the Porcupine  
20 General -- for the last 14 years. She has volunteered  
21 her time in setting up the Centre which is going to be  
22 open as of January 1st. So the Chairperson is Ms Evelyn  
23 Buffalo.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   To the far right is Mr. Richard Mills.  
2     He originates from Moose Factory, Ontario, in James Bay.  
3     He has been involved with the Health Centre for a number  
4     of years as well -- as a volunteer -- to see this dream  
5     come true.

6                   He also is involved with the Aboriginal  
7     Race Relations Committee that is in Timmins. What they  
8     do is they go to the school to visit children, go to northern  
9     college to visit the nursing program to give a  
10    cross-cultural teachings to these people to teach about  
11    the Aboriginal people of the area. It is all volunteer.  
12    This is what, I think, makes it very effective is that  
13    he volunteers his time. So I will let them take the  
14    microphone and proceed with the Aboriginal Health Centre.

15                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

16                   **RICHARD MILLS, ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

17    **COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE:** Good morning. I will be  
18    starting off the first half of the presentation on how  
19    we approach the idea of having a health centre.

20                   We are approached by the community in  
21    the friendship centre -- and individuals -- on all the  
22    troubles they have had with the doctors, the hospitals,  
23    etc., and a lot of it is actually based just on ignorance.



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1     There is not enough people in the medical field willing  
2     to learn, or try to understand, Native concerns.

3                     One of the factors is discrimiNation  
4     against Native beliefs. There have been times where  
5     doctors would tell the patients that medicine men or women  
6     were witch doctors and practising witchcraft because they  
7     don't realize and don't understand what it really is --  
8     what Native medicine is.

9                     They also have impressions in the  
10    hospitals that Native people don't feel pain like  
11    Aboriginal people do, especially Native women in  
12    childbirth. They are not as vocal, but they feel the pain.

13    It is a known fact that even in the nursing that don't  
14    really believe that -- here is a few ideas of a few things  
15    that happened.

16                    A lot of the Native people were not given  
17    pain medication because they were not voicing their pain.

18    They were not crying out. I guess that is where they  
19    got the impression that we don't have nerve endings.

20                    To me Aboriginal health or well being  
21    as a -- let's put it this way, health is defined in various  
22    ways, but for Aboriginal health and well being it is more  
23    than just putting bandages on, having the facilities for

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 bandages for repairing bones or even for checking for  
2 cholesterol. Simple things.

3 Native health has more to it than that.

4 As Native people we look at medicine as well being or  
5 health as holistic. We have the mental, the emotional,  
6 the physical, the spiritual. All those when they are as  
7 one, make a person healthy. Any one of those areas that  
8 are effected makes a person sick.

9 Even culture -- I am speaking on behalf  
10 of urban Aboriginal people here, this morning -- living  
11 in an urban area we can't practice our culture, live our  
12 culture as we would like to.

13 Yes, some people do move here as a matter  
14 of choice and some people have no choice at all because  
15 of economics or illness where they have to be close to  
16 certain facilities. But when you can't practice your  
17 culture, you lose a lot of respect for yourself. You get  
18 depressed more often and you eventually lose your language  
19 because you have to use english more often or other  
20 languages -- depending on what area you are in.

21 That, to me, breaks down a persons  
22 ability to health because it effects a lot of areas. The  
23 main part in the urban areas now -- that has just started

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to come out -- is the spiritual part. To me a Native  
2 persons well being -- the first on the list is the  
3 spiritual, it is the most important. Without being  
4 spiritually well, all areas are effected.

5 I won't go into a lot of detail or present  
6 a lot of statistics because that is not why I am here.  
7 I don't even have anything really written down to present  
8 this morning. I am just speaking on how I feel and how  
9 I see it and why I sit on the Health Centre Board.

10 We have seen a lot of problem areas and  
11 a lot of it is racial. Like I was saying earlier, a lot  
12 of people really don't understand what Native culture  
13 really is, what Native medicine really is. I think that  
14 is important.

15 I have talked to a lot of Commissions.  
16 I have talked to four departments in the Ministry of  
17 Health. I am always repeating myself and I hope this  
18 morning what is presented today will really make a  
19 difference -- as the poster says on the outside of the  
20 door here, that people will really understand, not just  
21 listen and document it, but really look into it themselves  
22 to see what Native health, Native culture, Native medicine  
23 is really about.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 All these put together were issues  
2 brought to us by the Aboriginal people here in the Timmins  
3 area and with the Ministry of Health offering us assistance  
4 because of the problems here, we came to the idea of opening  
5 our Aboriginal Peoples Community Health Centre.

6 This is where Miss Buffalo will take over  
7 the presentation on the Centre.

8 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Good morning.

9 The Aboriginal Peoples Community Health  
10 Centre was -- first of all, I will just go back a bit.  
11 There was a Primary Care Study done by the Cochrane District  
12 Health Council and they found that the Aboriginal people  
13 had one of the worst health statuses in the country.

14 They have a higher rate of health  
15 problems. They died younger. Died of violent means more  
16 often and have more difficulty getting help than the  
17 non-Aboriginal persons because of culture and language  
18 barriers.

19 Many Aboriginal persons living in the  
20 urban areas are facing problems of dislocation, broken  
21 cultural ties and facing increasing prejudice and  
22 discrimination. They also have a higher rate of  
23 unemployment. All these effect the health and the well

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 being of a person.

2 In November of 1990, a Steering  
3 Committee of 12 members was formed. Our task was to find  
4 a solution to these problems. After receiving a special  
5 project funding the committee hired a consultant, a  
6 researcher, a junior researcher and a secretary. We put  
7 a proposal together and submitted it to the DHC and the  
8 Ministry of Health.

9 We believed that a Health Centre  
10 controlled and governed by Aboriginal people was a solution  
11 to the language and cultural issues. The Health Centre  
12 will hire Aboriginal people and in doing this, we will  
13 take care of our own people in our own way.

14 Our goal will be to better the holistic  
15 overall health of our people so they may have an equal  
16 chance as other Canadians are -- living to the maximum  
17 of their potential. We hope to meet the health needs of  
18 different age groups: babies; children; youth; women of  
19 all ages; men of all ages; and elders.

20 Every effort will be made to fill  
21 positions with Aboriginal peoples. Emphasis will be  
22 placed on a well developed staff training program to help  
23 those who need to further their technical skills.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Many persons of Aboriginal descent have  
2   lost touch with their language and culture. Therefore,  
3   workshops and other activities -- with emphasis on the  
4   traditional practices -- will need to be held.

5                   Our Centre was funded in June of 1992.  
6   We will receive our funding in January. In that time  
7   we will be hiring an Executive Director. We are in the  
8   process now of putting our by-laws together and getting  
9   incorporated.

10                  We hope to make the lives of our people  
11   better so that they can have a brighter future.

12                  That is all I have to say.

13                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
14   very much.

15                  In response to what Mr. Mills has said,  
16   the Commission is very well aware that public education  
17   is one of the main roles of this Commission. It didn't  
18   take us very long to realize that there was tremendous  
19   ignorance in the white society about Native people and  
20   their culture.

21                  Many many people have never met or been  
22   exposed to a Native person, just don't understand them  
23   at all, don't understand how they think, don't understand

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 their values and their lifestyle. We realize that there  
2 is a major educational job to be done to try to get white  
3 society to educate themselves and to become educated about  
4 our Native population.

5 We realize that this is one of the main  
6 problems that the Commission faces. For that reason, we  
7 have been trying very hard to think of ways in which we  
8 could get non-Aboriginal people involved in what we are  
9 doing.

10 We have been -- as I mentioned -- criss  
11 crossing the country and going into Native communities  
12 and hearing their concerns, but this does not -- by in  
13 large -- bring non-Aboriginal people forward so that we  
14 have an opportunity to talk to them and they to us. We  
15 realize that the cross country travel program in the Native  
16 communities is not going to fill that gap and we have to  
17 think of other ways of trying to involve the non-Native  
18 society in what we are doing.

19 One of the ways that we want to do that  
20 is through a series of Round Tables to which we would invite  
21 the non-Native leaders who are in the business of making  
22 decisions in various areas like health, education, justice  
23 and so on. If we can invite non-Native people who are

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 in positions of leadership, particularly those who deliver  
2 services, if we can make contact with those people and  
3 get them involved, we might have a better opportunity for  
4 our public education role.

5 We are going to try this and we are  
6 starting with a Round Table on the justice system because  
7 we realize that the justice system does not work well for  
8 Aboriginal people. We are inviting to that the  
9 representatives of the various aspects of the justice  
10 system: the police; the National Parole Board; judges at  
11 the different levels; members of the indigenous bar and  
12 so on -- and of the white bar -- to try to get a real dialogue  
13 going between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons.

14 This is not easy, but we are going to  
15 see if the Round Table approach is a more effective tool  
16 for this purpose. We are all very well aware that public  
17 education, particularly to the white society, is a vital  
18 task that we just have to meet.

19 I am curious as to whether there are any  
20 Native people at all on the staff of the hospital? Are  
21 there any Native nurses or any people there at all? Is  
22 there an elder who has a role in relation to the hospital?  
23 Could you tell us a bit about what extent there is Native



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 people involvement in the running of the hospital.

2 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** I could just speak for  
3 Porcupine General. There is about -- there is myself and  
4 another Aboriginal, Arnie. Then there is a cleaning lady  
5 who is Ojibway. I believe there is about three of us  
6 working in Porcupine General who are Aboriginal people.

7 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Out of  
8 how many? Roughly.

9 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** You mean employed?

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Yes,  
11 about how many are employed at the hospital.

12 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Just the three.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Sorry.  
14 What is the total number of people employed at the hospital?

15 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Oh, I see.

16 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Roughly.

17 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** About 60, 70.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** The Centre  
19 -- as I understand it -- is very new. You are just getting  
20 started, getting incorporated and getting your by-laws  
21 passed and the structure set up. You can't really tell  
22 us much about the experience of the Centre. Are you too  
23 recent to be able to tell us something about how it is

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 working?

2 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** We are just getting  
3 started. We have been at this now since 1990 and in  
4 September we just voted on 12 Board of Directors which  
5 will carry on the work of getting incorporated and setting  
6 up by-laws and hiring an Executive Director. Hopefully,  
7 in January the funds will start to come in and we will  
8 be -- like I say -- hiring a health promoter and  
9 administrative assistant.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** You are  
11 contemplating that not only will you be providing health  
12 advise and health service, you will also be providing --  
13 if I understand you -- training.

14 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Yes.

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Workshops  
16 and training for people interested in the health area.

17 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Yes. We are going to  
18 try to hire as many Aboriginal people as possible and go  
19 into the high schools and encourage high school students  
20 to stay in school and enter the medical field.

21 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Do you  
22 know what funding you are going to get that is going to  
23 be made available to you for this?

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **RICHARD MILLS:** Most of the monies are  
2 coming from the Ministry of Health for the basic running  
3 of the Centre which will be preventative medicine, covering  
4 doctors, nurses, all the staff. Any extras that we decide  
5 to do will have to be through fund raising, doNations,  
6 other grants possibly. It will be a step by step process.

7                   When the Centre opens we will have the  
8 basic staff. We will have the teachers for the workshops,  
9 but the monies available from the Ministry of Health were  
10 not enough to cover everything on our proposal. It would  
11 be a process until we get running with everything that  
12 we feel we should have in the Centre.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Do you  
14 have any feel for what support there might be from the  
15 non-Aboriginal community?

16                   **RICHARD MILLS:** We have very little  
17 support from the Porcupine Health Unit. We might have  
18 difficulties getting privileges from the hospital for our  
19 doctors. We have public support when it comes to being  
20 in front of microphones, but behind the scenes we hear  
21 things differently.

22                   To add to this -- the question you asked  
23 Miss Buffalo, about having more representation in the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 hospitals -- there is very little because most of the  
2 hospitals in this area don't see the need. In fact, the  
3 monies that were given to us for the Health Centre, they  
4 figure they should have the money, receive the money  
5 instead of us because they don't see the need that -- they  
6 figure they are providing already for Native people, which  
7 is not so.

8                               We have documents and proof to prove  
9 that, but that is a separate issue.

10                           As Aboriginal people in the urban area  
11 we have to look after our own. We have no representation  
12 from our respective reserves -- if you want to call it  
13 -- First Nations. That is why we are doing it on our own.

14                           **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Most towns  
15 and cities -- there are usually a number of service co-ops  
16 of one kind or another like Lions Clubs and all these  
17 things. Would any of those have any interest in trying  
18 to promote the cause of a Native Health Centre? I mean  
19 they would be logical groups to approach certainly to help  
20 with fund raising and so on. Would that meet with any  
21 kind of a favourable response, do you think?

22                           **RICHARD MILLS:** We have been approached  
23 already by some service organizations, to be under their

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 umbrella so that they can work with us. But what bothers  
2 me is where were they before this? It seems to me that  
3 we have had no help from anybody at all until we started  
4 getting out there and doing it ourselves. It seems now  
5 that the money is there from the government, everybody  
6 wants to help us. Yes, there are some organizations that  
7 are knocking on our door, but we haven't really discussed  
8 it fully -- about what to do yet -- to say yes to their  
9 help.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Well, that  
11 is often the way, of course. They don't get in when they  
12 are really desperately needed at the beginning, but  
13 certainly I would be disposed to find help especially if  
14 it is money primarily that you are looking for any way  
15 you can get it. My philosophy in life is why should the  
16 devil have all the good things. If somebody is prepared  
17 to give it to you, grab it. That would be my advice on  
18 that.

19 I will ask the other Commissioners if  
20 they want to make a comment or ask a question.

21 Mary, please.

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you  
23 very much, Mrs. Wilson.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 I just want to thank you both for making  
2 the presentation. I am not quite clear on one point.  
3 Even after your Health Centre is created, will there be  
4 Aboriginal people still going to the hospital?

5 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Probably for surgery.  
6 We won't be equipped to do surgery at our Health Centre  
7 or things like that. We are hoping that our doctors will  
8 get privileges at the hospital so that they can go in and  
9 see them and work with them. They will be more familiar  
10 with their own doctor.

11 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** That is  
12 sort of a longer term goal, right?

13 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** Right.

14 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I am just  
15 wondering in the interim, what do you see -- if any --  
16 the relationship being between the Health Centre and the  
17 hospital?

18 **EVELYN BUFFALO:** We will certainly have  
19 to work together at some point, like programs having to  
20 do with health and that.

21 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I  
22 understand that that is not happening very well now. Is  
23 that correct?

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **EVELYN BUFFALO:** No. Not to well,  
2 right now. That is why we are trying to bring in a Health  
3 Centre here in Timmins, for our people.

4                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** The other  
5 thing that I would like to respond to is your feeling of  
6 frustration seeing Commission after Commission and not  
7 having it change. I really sympathize with you and we  
8 hear this all across the country and many times wish that  
9 change was faster.

10                   That's all.

11                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
12 Mary.

13                   Allan, please.

14                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I was  
15 pleased to see that you are going to make every effort  
16 to fill positions with Aboriginal persons -- persons who  
17 know Aboriginal culture. The absence of knowledge and  
18 sympathy for Aboriginal culture is a real problem in trying  
19 to deal with issues of relationships between Aboriginal  
20 and non-Aboriginal people.

21                   We see it in the justice system with  
22 respect to judges and prosecutors. We see it in policing.  
23 We see it in government. It has been my experience that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 in a big organization you can sometimes compensate for  
2 it by getting a few Aboriginal people, but in an  
3 organization where there is a lot of one on one -- as there  
4 is in the justice system and the medical system -- it is  
5 just an awful lot easier to make a doctor or a nurse out  
6 of an Aboriginal person than it is to teach doctors and  
7 nurses Aboriginal culture.

8                   For one thing the doctors and nurses keep  
9 changing and you have to -- your process is endless. If  
10 you can get more Aboriginal doctors, nurses and health  
11 workers you are so much farther ahead and I would certainly  
12 urge you to follow that route. It is a longer term route  
13 because you have to seek out people who will persevere  
14 with medical training -- and the like -- and nurses  
15 training, but I urge you to consider that as a long-term  
16 prospect.

17                   You are probably aware, but I will  
18 mention it anyway that this problem is not unique to Timmins  
19 as you would guess. In Northern Manitoba, we were pressing  
20 people with respect to this and why there weren't more  
21 nurses of Cree or Ojibway origin in the hospitals and the  
22 Pow Wow and elsewhere. They were saying that there is  
23 a real reluctance for people to go out of the community



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 and go to Winnipeg and get the nurses training.

2                   They attacked this by getting a nursing  
3 education program -- which allows one to become a  
4 registered nurse -- at the community college in The Paw,  
5 which is a Cree and Cree Ojibway community. I thought  
6 now that is getting there.

7                   The chances are that they may well get  
8 some good Aboriginal high school and now we have a community  
9 college down the road. The chances are that they are going  
10 to get a number of Aboriginal nurses. Nurses of Aboriginal  
11 origin. I think that they may get that within the next  
12 five years which is going to show significant progress.

13 If at the same time they can get some people who will  
14 go to medical school, they are on their way.

15                   My point is that I would suggest to you  
16 that you might consider some of those options as being  
17 attractive in producing longer term results because it  
18 is certainly my view that until we get some professionals  
19 of Aboriginal origin, this problem is going to persist.

20                   **RICHARD MILLS:** I would just like to  
21 respond to that briefly. One of the problems we have with  
22 that -- it sounds nice to have our own doctors and nurses,  
23 but unless we have a say in how that care is performed

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 -- done -- there will be a lot of difficulties, too. We  
2 still have a different value system. Our Native medicine  
3 is not looked upon as effective or even realistic. It  
4 is considered to be in the dark ages.

5                   Again, education is necessary so people  
6 will understand. Even if we had nurses and doctors, we  
7 still have a process and a policy followed by the government  
8 or medical guidelines which are contrary to what we believe  
9 so there will be some difficulties in that too -- unless  
10 we have some control in it.

11                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I agree  
12 completely, but I think that if you are going to wrestle  
13 with the medical and nursing establishment -- as inevitably  
14 you will, it is because the non-Aboriginal one is sort  
15 of a totally physical medicine although even there there  
16 is a dawning realization that this isn't working.

17                   But it would be nice on your part to have  
18 some "credential" people -- and I use that in quotes --  
19 leading your fight because I think they will be listened  
20 to in a way that lay people in these esoteric professions  
21 -- at least lawyers think they are esoteric -- I suspect  
22 doctors do as well. I think you just make more yards.

23                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Miss Sheeshish would like to make a  
2 comment.

3 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

4 **SHEESHISH:** I just wanted to comment on what you said there  
5 earlier, Richard, about losing our identity or not to be  
6 able to practice our culture. I don't really agree with  
7 that because once who you are and as long as you have your  
8 language, you can still do a lot to practice your own  
9 culture.

10 No matter where you are because the  
11 Creator has given you the identity who you are and it is  
12 up to you to practice it right at home. To teach your  
13 own children not to forget who you are. It doesn't matter  
14 -- you know you could be out somewhere where there is no  
15 other Aboriginal person, it is within your heart that is  
16 who you are. I always encourage other people this way.

17 I met a lot of people in that line saying  
18 that oh, I lost my culture because of the schooling I had.

19 I really disagree on that because I have been around in  
20 so many places alone with my children and as a parent it  
21 is my duty to teach them everything that I know from my  
22 own culture. I know it is very important to send them  
23 to school, but it is still also important to teach your

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 own children. You are the foundation and you are the  
2 foundation just as if you want to build a house. That  
3 is exactly how it looks like in ones family.

4 I know there is a lot of people who  
5 wouldn't understand about the Native culture. There is  
6 a lot of people who are misunderstood about the Native  
7 culture because the way the history books were written,  
8 the way the history books and the movies that were created,  
9 no wonder sometimes we are having a hard time. I ran into  
10 all kinds of problems when I was growing up, too.

11 Who you are -- and the same way my kids  
12 went through being called Wikenburner, (PH) they didn't  
13 know anything about that. They didn't know, but it is  
14 just because some of the other kids see it in the books,  
15 see it on the movies and this is what they register in  
16 their minds. Just because you have a different colour  
17 of skin they think that oh, that is what they did in the  
18 movies. That is what they are still doing.

19 We have to educate one another. We have  
20 to try to understand one another from both ways. They  
21 are not only the white people who are prejudiced. There  
22 are all kinds of people like Native people. I always come  
23 across from my own Aboriginal friends who are making funny

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 remarks to other Nationalities.

2                   The only way we can straighten that out  
3 is to just to try to educate one another because some day  
4 we are all going to be sitting in that circle. Some day  
5 we are going to be there because we were created the same  
6 way. We come from the same Creator. This is my belief  
7 and I just want to remind you because I know a lot of you  
8 young people out here, you are going to have families in  
9 the future and please don't forget who you are, as an  
10 Aboriginal person, to teach your children to respect who  
11 they are.

12                   That is the only way that you are going  
13 to keep your identity. Try to tell them not to follow  
14 those other people who want to be -- there are a lot of  
15 us who want to be out there, but in our hearts we are still  
16 who we are.

17                   For the Health Centre, I am one of the  
18 Board Members from the very first time we start the Steering  
19 Committee, I was asked if I was interested to sit in.  
20 I said, I agree with it. I know because I had a lot of  
21 experience of what happens to the Native people who are  
22 living in the community especially for the hospitals and  
23 the doctors.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   There are times, in the middle of the  
2   night, that I was called to go to the hospital because  
3   they couldn't communicate with the patient. What happens  
4   sometimes is that person might not speak the same language  
5   as me because I am from Cree Nation and the other individual  
6   is from the Ojibway.

7                   There are so many different languages  
8   within the Cree Nations and I think for this Community  
9   Health Centre, I think most of our people will get benefit  
10  from this. Like for minor stuff. I know we cannot solve  
11  the problems. It is going to take a long time. Those  
12  are my beliefs for this Health Centre.

13                  Thank you.

14                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Would  
15  either of you wish to respond to Miss Sheeshish?

16                  **RICHARD MILLS:** I would like to. I know  
17  that some of the comments were not actually directly  
18  related to health, but without getting into a heated  
19  discussion here, I would just like a short response to  
20  that.

21                  Yes, I can understand what you are  
22  saying, but there are a lot of issues that are not even  
23  mentioned here which I didn't -- I went briefly into before

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 -- but what I meant by cultural, I meant that there are  
2 some people, including myself, who prefer the older  
3 traditional ways, the sweatlodge, the sweet grass, that  
4 type of culture which I meant. A lot of that is not even  
5 recognized by mainstream society as part of a mainstream  
6 religion, if you want to call it that.

7                   For instance, I will give you examples  
8 that I have come across myself personally in my travelling.

9     If we are not losing our culture, why is it that at airports  
10 and other government places we are not allowed to -- I  
11 am not saying we are not allowed to, but we are hassled  
12 because we don't like to take the sage and sweet grass  
13 through the x-ray machines and it has to be searched  
14 separately. A lot of times not by personnel who are not  
15 -- who don't understand what it is all about and what it  
16 is.

17                   I have a friend who is in jail now because  
18 of the Jay Treaty. They want to immigrate him back to  
19 the United States. His medicine bag, his pouch -- which  
20 a lot of people don't understand the meaning of -- was  
21 removed from him saying jewellery is not allowed. It is  
22 not jewellery. It has more meaning than that.

23                   This is what I mean about practising what

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 some -- the culture. I am talking about the older ways  
2 which a lot of us still believe that we want to practice.

3 I am not talking about the other basic issues of life  
4 in general.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
6 very much.

7 I think we understand what you are saying  
8 and we appreciate it very much your coming and talking  
9 to us today.

10 Thank you.

11 Perhaps our moderator will introduce the  
12 next presenter.

13 **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you.

14 The next presenter on your agenda is  
15 Doreen Pichette. Doreen is a Native court worker for the  
16 last seven years for the Ininew Friendship Centre in  
17 Cochrane. Cochrane is about 60 miles northeast from  
18 Timmins.

19 She was born and raised in Cochrane.  
20 She resides in Cochrane. She is married with two children  
21 and she is registered with the Fort Albany First Nations  
22 Band. She has upgraded herself in the legal field. She  
23 has grade 12 education.



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Her co-presenter is Bernice Archibald.  
2 Bernice is a Native family court worker for the same  
3 organization. She just started in June, 1972. Bernice  
4 -- actually all she said to me was that she was born in  
5 Cochrane, she will live in Cochrane and she will probably  
6 die in Cochrane. She has graduated from high school.  
7 Taken a year at the University of Trent, Native Management,  
8 Economic Development.

9 Could we have the ladies come forward  
10 and make their presentation, please.

11 **DOREEN PICHETTE, ININEW FRIENDSHIP**

12 **CENTRE:** Good morning, everyone. I am Doreen Pichette.  
13 I would just like to take this opportunity to say thank  
14 you for allowing me to be a part of this very important  
15 issues.

16 As Ed introduced me, I am a Native court  
17 worker and I work out of the Ininew Friendship Centre in  
18 Cochrane. I have been there for quite some time. I  
19 deliver services to Native people in the areas of  
20 provincial offenses and criminal divisions excluding  
21 family division.

22 When I say I deliver services to Native  
23 people, I am talking about Metis, status, non-status, Inuit

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 or anyone of Native ancestry. My service area is Cochrane  
2 to Hornepayne.

3 I would like to take this opportunity  
4 to tell you a little bit about the court program for those  
5 of you who are not too familiar. The court work services  
6 go way back as far as the early '60s.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Excuse me,  
8 can the people in the room hear? No. Could you take the  
9 mike a little closer.

10 **DOREEN PICHETTE:** I will just go back  
11 to the beginning of where my service area is then. It  
12 is Cochrane to Hornepayne.

13 I would like to take this opportunity  
14 to tell you a bit about the court work program, for those  
15 of you who are not too familiar with the program. Court  
16 worker services go a way back; as far as the early 1960's.  
17 So we are not new.

18 This program is the cornerstone of the  
19 Friendship Centre existence making it the first program,  
20 I believe, to be specifically directed towards Native  
21 people. I think of it as the doorway to greener pastures  
22 for our people. It was a result of the staggering numbers  
23 of Native people caught up in judicial system, proceedings;

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 mainly criminal law. Saying that I think Native people  
2 have come a long way as far as services.

3 Native people used to be swept along  
4 without representation. Basic rights, knowledge of court  
5 proceedings by Native people were highly effected and  
6 reflected in the courts. Before court workers came along,  
7 the judicial system may have been somewhat unbalanced and  
8 viewed by Native people. People were not receiving as  
9 fair treatment and the differences in cultures certainly  
10 called for a culturally appropriate court liaison which  
11 is what court workers do as we know them now.

12 The effectiveness of court proceeding  
13 was also affected and impaired, there was unquestionably  
14 unnecessary guilty pleas, bench warrants, and failing to  
15 appears -- to mention a few --resulting in dragged out  
16 court proceedings affecting all people, especially Native  
17 people.

18 It has been commented by many people  
19 (Native and non-Native) that the court work program has  
20 swung balance in the court system, increasing efficiency  
21 of the court process. The positive impact of the program  
22 is due to the watchdog effect and effectiveness of the  
23 court workers throughout Ontario and Canada. Court

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 workers can guide clients to produce more favourable  
2 outcomes on behalf of the accused that are appearing before  
3 the courts.

4                   The general perception is that without  
5 court workers the administration of justice involving our  
6 people would be less fair. The interests of Native people  
7 has taken a turn for the better; although we still have  
8 a long way to go. I think everybody would agree with that.

9 We, as Native people, are coming forward and voicing our  
10 opinions and interests and we can only be thanked for that.

11                   I would like to go on to tell you a bit  
12 about the responsibilities. There are assistance that  
13 come through my being a court worker during this past year.

14 Explaining charges, court proceedings, advising client's  
15 of their rights; one being the right to remain silent;  
16 right to legal representation; right to speak on one's  
17 own behalf if that person so wishes. I do a lot of the  
18 legal aid assistance and by that I mean legal aid  
19 applications for people who can't afford lawyers  
20 otherwise. A good 75 per cent of those assistance probably  
21 comes from myself with my clientele.

22                   There are other non court related  
23 assistance that I also adhere to. I help people out with

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 pardons and explaining pardons and going through the  
2 applications with them. I also help them with fine  
3 payments, just general information as far as the courts  
4 and the effects of it are concerned.

5 I would just like to go on to say that  
6 I feel that the court worker program is a very important  
7 program and the court worker program should be a permanent  
8 entity in the justice system. I hope people realize how  
9 important this program is. Any improvements or additions  
10 to the court related services for Native people, in my  
11 opinion, would be to have more public legal educators  
12 focusing on prevention programs resulting in less conflict  
13 with the judicial system by ways of legal awareness.

14 I would like to see some Native victim  
15 witness assistance programs come up in the area and I would  
16 like to see -- in Cochrane, we now have Cree translator  
17 services which is something that is something that is  
18 permanent and fairly new to the area although we have always  
19 had the Cree interpreters sitting in the court background,  
20 but now it is permanent -- like the french translation  
21 services.

22 I would like to see this service expanded  
23 a bit more to go into the pre-investigation level services,

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 working with the police and in itself it may be a  
2 preventative program.

3 I would just like to -- before closing  
4 -- give you a general amount maybe of the numbers of people  
5 who are serviced by myself in this program throughout a  
6 year. There is approximately 300 - 350 client contacts  
7 and breaking that down actual contacts is probably 90 -  
8 95 different people a year. This represents only accused  
9 people now, it doesn't represent victims or witnesses.

10 Thank you.

11 **BERNICE ARCHIBALD:** Good morning. My  
12 name is Bernice Archibald. I am the Native family court  
13 worker based at the Ininew Friendship Centre at Cochrane.  
14 I service four different courts. Those would be Hurst,  
15 Kapuskasing, Cochrane and here in Timmins. I also service  
16 family and youth courts.

17 Although I have a few concerns to put  
18 forward to the Commission, I would like to first take this  
19 opportunity to give a brief background on the Native Family  
20 Court Work Programme.

21 The Native Family Court Work Programme  
22 is primarily a culturally appropriate service providing  
23 support mechanisms to Native youth and/or families who

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1    become involved in the judicial system. Services are  
2    available to all Native people, whether they are status,  
3    non-status or Metis and irrespective of their place of  
4    residence.

5                    The objectives and principles of the  
6    programme are:

7                    To ensure access to all Native people  
8    in Ontario to the best legal and justice related services  
9    prior to, during and following a court appearance and to  
10   maintain the effectiveness of those services; and

11                   To ensure the sense of alienation  
12   experienced by Native people who are in conflict with the  
13   law and to bridge -- that didn't sound right -- and to  
14   bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between the Native  
15   people and the judicial system.

16                   One of the more important concerns I have  
17   is the lack of facilities or the lack of accessibility  
18   to a culturally appropriate service to counteract drug,  
19   alcohol and solvent abuse in our northern communities.  
20   On that same note it is the general lack of culture at  
21   the appropriate facilities or components in place to deal  
22   with crisis situations whether they are child and spousal  
23   abuse or sexual assault. Besides increasing services in

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 these areas another possible solution could be to direct  
2 efforts to prevention programs.

3 In closing, I would like to say that the  
4 importance of unifying and coordinating our services to  
5 effectively deal with the social situations of our people  
6 cannot be overemphasized.

7 Thank you.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
9 very much.

10 We are very interested in hearing about  
11 your role in relation to the administration of justice  
12 because as we visited in several different penal  
13 institutions, it has come home to us loud and clear that  
14 a disproportionate number of Native people are in the  
15 penitentiaries.

16 One or two that I have been in, we have  
17 heard from many of the inmates about their sense of  
18 alienation. They tell us that things have improved a  
19 little with the introduction of elders into the  
20 institutions and sweatlodges and healing circles have been  
21 introduced in more recent years and that this has been  
22 very helpful to the Native inmates.

23 Indeed, in two or three of the



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 institutions, the Native inmates asked us to do something  
2 about upgrading the status of the elder. They drew to  
3 our attention that many professional people are brought  
4 in from the community outside, psychologists and doctors  
5 and so on, and they have a certain status and have a certain  
6 pay rate for their services, but that the elder does not  
7 have comparable status and doesn't receive comparable  
8 remuneration.

9                   Yet, in the view of the inmates, the  
10 elder is the most valuable person -- from their point of  
11 view -- to help them in coping with their period of  
12 incarceration. Indeed, it is interesting to us that many  
13 inmates told us it was very ironic that their first real  
14 understanding of their identity -- who they were and where  
15 they came from -- they received in the institution through  
16 the offices of the elder.

17                   We have written to try to do something  
18 about the status of the elder in the view that he is the  
19 person that contributes most to the well being of Native  
20 people who have run foul of the law.

21                   The issue of family violence is one that  
22 has been raised before us in almost every community that  
23 we visited. We have been increasingly concerned about

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the lack of any facilities particularly of any shelters  
2 in the vast majority of the communities. So that the  
3 battered women and abused children have a place of safety  
4 to which they can go. We realize that this is really a  
5 major problem and one that probably could be addressed  
6 by more funding being made available to these communities.

7 The same is true of treatment facilities and so on for  
8 drug and alcohol abusers.

9 One of the things that has been raised  
10 with us in a number of communities is that you have to  
11 treat drug and alcohol abuse in terms of its being a family  
12 problem rather than an individual problem of the addict.

13 That a lot of the methods that are being  
14 attempted to address this problem of alcohol and drug abuse  
15 focuses very much on the individual person and doesn't  
16 address the problem in terms of its impact on the family  
17 as a whole. We have heard that over and over again and  
18 we have been told that the programs are, therefore, less  
19 effective for that reason that the problem has to be --  
20 the whole family impact has to be looked at and addressed.

21 The victims have to be serviced as well as the abusers  
22 themselves. I think we have that message loud and clear.

23 On the larger issue, we are very

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 concerned about the impact of the existing justice system  
2 on Native people and from the point of view that it does  
3 not reflect Native values. We have heard some quite major  
4 criticisms of the system in this respect. The fact that  
5 it is an adversarial process -- we have been told -- is  
6 very difficult for Native people to function in.

7                   Native people just don't think in terms  
8 of an adversarial process. We have been told that the  
9 concept of guilt is a difficult concept for Native people  
10 to understand. We have also been told that the concept  
11 of punishment to which the existing justice system  
12 addresses itself is not an acceptable principle to Native  
13 people who put the emphasis on healing and re-integration  
14 of the offender back into the community.

15                   These seem to be three absolutely  
16 fundamental features -- central features -- of our existing  
17 justice system that present problems for Native people  
18 and really don't reflect their values.

19                   We realize that we have a lot of work  
20 to do as a Commission examining the system and trying to  
21 see whether there are changes that could be made to the  
22 existing system to make it more compatible with the values  
23 of Native people or whether the essential elements of the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 existing system are so fundamental that insufficient  
2 change could be made to it without totally vitiating the  
3 existing system and its application to non-Native people  
4 and that therefore it would be necessary to have a separate  
5 justice system for the Aboriginal population.

6 We have heard a great deal on this  
7 subject. We think it is one of the very important matters  
8 that the Commission has to address so we appreciate your  
9 coming and talking to us about your role.

10 I will ask my colleagues if they have  
11 some questions they would like to put to you.

12 Mary, please.

13 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you  
14 very much.

15 I would like to thank Miss Pichette and  
16 the girl that was born in Cochrane, lived in Cochrane and  
17 will probably die in Cochrane, Bernice Archibald.

18 Actually, I really like that because I  
19 think that is very true of the Labrador women and men.  
20 People are the same way there.

21 Anyway, Madam Justice Wilson covered a  
22 very wide range of issues. I am not going to repeat them.

23 I do have one question with respect to the court worker

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 program. I think it was very very clear in our travels  
2 that there are too many Native people in conflict with  
3 the law.

4                   Clearly we have heard some people say  
5 that criminal justice system does not reflect the values  
6 of Aboriginal people -- does not even understand the values  
7 of Aboriginal people. I am wondering if the court worker  
8 does any work in the area of cross-cultural training in  
9 terms of helping police and judges to understand what  
10 values and what practices Aboriginal peoples bring with  
11 them?

12                   **DOREEN PICHETTE:** It is a component of  
13 the program to deliver that service of the cross-cultural  
14 training, however, it is minimum and I think that is  
15 probably mostly due to the fact that the large area that  
16 most court workers are covering and how little court  
17 workers there are in Ontario for the large areas that are  
18 covered. There are only 19 of us.

19                   As I mentioned earlier, I service an area  
20 from Cochrane to Hornepayne. That is approximately a 250  
21 mile radius. One court worker, four days of court. It  
22 is minimal. It is being done, but it is minimal.

23                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 very much.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
3 please.

4 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** This is  
5 addressed to both of you, I noted Ms Pichette said that  
6 a victim witness program was needed. Just a general  
7 question to which you may wish to comment. If I asked  
8 you what improvement to the court worker program or the  
9 family court worker program you would suggest be made,  
10 what the next step to be made would be to make it a better  
11 program, what would your response be?

12 **DOREEN PICHETTE:** Could you repeat that  
13 please?

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** My  
15 question really is just a general question. If I asked  
16 you what would be your suggestion for the next step to  
17 improve the court worker program or the family court worker  
18 program, how would you answer. If we are going to move  
19 forward what should be our next step?

20 **DOREEN PICHETTE:** I would like to  
21 address that by saying extra court workers and added  
22 components to the program so that they can be delivered  
23 more effectively than they presently are.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Extra  
2 court workers, I understand. What one or two added  
3 components would you add?

4                   **DOREEN PICHETTE:** I would like to see  
5 -- although public legal education, again, it is a  
6 component of the program, but because of the lack of numbers  
7 of court workers, I mean it is in reality not feasible.  
8 I would like to see -- like I mentioned earlier, the victim  
9 witness and even probably -- as not a part of the court  
10 worker program, but probably as part of the judicial  
11 system, more Aboriginal courts and elders panels.

12                  **BERNICE ARCHIBALD:** I think what I would  
13 like to see is a higher profile of the Native family court  
14 worker program and the criminal court worker program,  
15 within the court system and within the general public.  
16 I don't think there is enough money in our budgets to  
17 publicize our programs as much as it is needed to non-Native  
18 and to Natives themselves.

19                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
20 you.

21                  **DOREEN PICHETTE:** Excuse me, I would  
22 just like to add one thing to that. I think that lack  
23 of space on circuit courts is a problem. I believe

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 probably in this area it even is for the court party that  
2 is coming in as far as defence council is concerned because  
3 there isn't any office space secured in any of the court  
4 circuits. This would enable us to do our jobs more  
5 effectively if we did have office space and a door and  
6 more private accommodations for the people that we are  
7 servicing. This is something that we don't have right  
8 now. We are meeting in hall ways -- this sort of thing  
9 -- and corridors.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Not  
11 necessarily in Cochrane, but in some other places that  
12 don't have a court house as such and you meet wherever  
13 in the hall or whatever, somebody lines up a court room  
14 but there is no place where you can have a private  
15 conversation with somebody other than, as you say, in the  
16 hall or wherever and that this makes it very difficult  
17 to get people relaxed, as you might say, so you can deliver  
18 your service.

19 **DOREEN PICHETTE:** That's right.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I  
21 know what you mean. I have interviewed the odd witness  
22 in the hall and it is not the place to interview a witness.  
23 Thank you.



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I believe  
2 Miss Sheeshish has a question.

3                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

4   **SHEESHISH:** Thank you, Mrs. Wilson.

5                   About the Cree interpreter in Cochrane,  
6 the court interpreter, is that only for the Cochrane and  
7 northern communities? Is it also for Timmins?

8                   **DOREEN PICHETTE:** I believe it is for  
9 Timmins, also.

10                  **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

11   **SHEESHISH:** Because lately we have been having some  
12 problems because either that she wasn't available, you  
13 know, so I think it will be more nicer if we have at least  
14 another interpreter for the court system.

15                  **DOREEN PICHETTE:** I believe that this  
16 position was recently filled. It is new. She is out in  
17 the field training people to come in and interpret in  
18 different areas so you will see an improvement, I'm sure.

19                  **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

20   **SHEESHISH:** Thank you.

21                  **DOREEN PICHETTE:** Thank you.

22                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
23 very much for coming and telling us about your role. We

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 appreciate it. Thank you.

2 **ED SACKENEY:** Commissioners, I wonder  
3 if it would be possible -- we are behind schedule, mind  
4 you -- but would it be possible to take a 10 minute break.  
5 Sort of stretch and yawn a couple of times and we will  
6 get back to it.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

8 **ED SACKENEY:** For Andrew Wesley's  
9 presentation that is coming up right afterwards, in 10  
10 minutes, he will be doing it in Cree. The earphones are  
11 up front here and people who are interested having the  
12 translation services provided -- the Commissioners will  
13 have the earphones as well.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
15 very much.

16 **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you. Take a 10  
17 minute break.

18

19 --- Upon recessing at 10:40 a.m.

20 --- Upon resuming at 10:55 a.m.

21

22 **ED SACKENEY:** I would like to call to  
23 order, please.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Our next presenter is Andrew Wesley  
2 representing the Kunuwanimano Child and Family Resources.

3 Andrew broke new trails for the City of  
4 Timmins when he ran for a seat as a Councilman with the  
5 City Council and it was as he puts it to no avail.

6 I would like to introduce to you Mr.  
7 Andrew Wesley.

8 **ANDREW WESLEY, KUNUWANIMANO CHILD AND**  
9 **FAMILY RESOURCES (Translated from Cree):** Thank you very  
10 much for allowing me to express my views and also to be  
11 able to speak in front -- and also to outline some of the  
12 issues that I am going to be talking and also to be able  
13 to speak about what is across Canada.

14 I like to speak in my own language  
15 because it is my mother tongue and also I like to speak  
16 in my own language in memory of my father and mother.  
17 It was with great pleasure that they take me to and the  
18 job that I am employed right now. I am the Executive  
19 Director for Kunuwanimano Family Service. It has been  
20 in existence for three years now.

21 It is mostly concentrated in the Uwapin  
22 (PH) area that is through highway 11 and also like some  
23 of the territories that work with us in the Maskako (PH)

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Council area and Metowa (PH) Tribal Council and we will  
2 be working with three areas of tribal councils. Also the  
3 urban areas like here in Timmins, or Cochrane, Chapleau,  
4 Kapuskasing and Kirkland Lake.

5 So these trying to concentrate in the  
6 area where there are lots of people in these areas, the  
7 urban people and we can try to concentrate on Child Welfare  
8 of these people.

9 I would like to touch on a little bit  
10 about the foster care especially when the kids are being  
11 taken away from their families, where families have their  
12 problems and at the same time when they have been taken  
13 away from home.

14 The reason I want to discuss it is  
15 because when you talk about urban areas -- when you talk  
16 about child care of that individual and in a non-Native  
17 society they make sure that the kid is being given a good  
18 environment. Like for instance, good housing, everything  
19 is being taken care of for them because the services that  
20 exist in the community, in an urban community, they have  
21 certain laws that they have to go by. They have certain  
22 rules that they have to follow. They have certain policies  
23 to make sure that that child has good welfare.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   But in our communities when you talk  
2 about a Native people, the atmosphere of the Native  
3 community is not always the case to accommodate those  
4 policies especially when dealing with a Native child under  
5 the Children's Aid Society.

6                   For instance, they have to know the  
7 values of people of -- for instance, when you transfer  
8 a child for one family to another, sometimes they have  
9 to go to another community and that community and when  
10 you talk about environment, if you look at the environment  
11 they don't have all the services that an urban family would  
12 have because there are lots of things about living  
13 standards are inadequate. There is no running water in  
14 houses or there is -- so these are the things that -- so  
15 those policies don't justify the existence of our young  
16 people.

17                   That is why we are going to have to study  
18 those regulations that will accommodate that child  
19 although because we have to respect the culture of our  
20 people, they should not be living different because some  
21 of the services are inadequate and sometimes an individual  
22 or parent have the same love like that child.

23                   In that pursuit, I would like to give

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 you a little story of some of the things that happened.

2 For instance, what happened was one time there was an  
3 Indian agent that went there and one time they saw a child  
4 eating at a house and it looked like it was sawdust. The  
5 sawdust it looked like is a dry fish to us. The dry fish  
6 when it is dried up is broken into two pieces. They thought  
7 they were eating sawdust, but they were eating a dried  
8 fish. Because they didn't know the type of food that that  
9 child was eating which is a natural food for Native people.

10 They were automatic to look at it differently because  
11 these non-Native people that were working for Children's  
12 Aid at that time didn't understand the culture of those  
13 people.

14 That is why I said that it is very  
15 important that we should look at different cultural values  
16 of people because when a child comes into the middle of  
17 these things and I have heard in Peawanuk, the Chief and  
18 Council in Peawanuk that they were talking about they were  
19 a little reluctant to talk about the Child Welfare because  
20 lots of times there may be interpreted because of the lack  
21 of services are available in the communities and the  
22 lifestyles of our people are quite different.

23 That is why these are the things that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 you have to clearly identify when you talk about these  
2 services. The background of our people. The different  
3 cultures of our people. The different languages and also,  
4 the different atmosphere of that home environment.

5                   It is my belief that the more  
6 understanding that we have -- the understanding of various  
7 cultures -- only then we will be able to accommodate  
8 ourselves and be able to create a better atmosphere within  
9 our own working area.

10                   I just want to touch on something  
11 especially in the area of family services. There seems  
12 to be a lack of financial assistance given to people that  
13 are supposed to be counselling in the area of Native culture  
14 because if you look at the white society there services  
15 are maximized every time they need something, but one of  
16 the unfortunate things is because the criteria of those  
17 programs doesn't really translate to the atmosphere of  
18 Native persons and that is why there is little -- have  
19 a tendency to minimize the expense of those programs.

20                   These are things that we are trying to  
21 understand because our interpretation of certain criteria  
22 are quite different from our own environment especially  
23 when you talk about -- try to understand about our

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 communities and also trying to educate ourselves.

2 Last summer we had a meeting in Fort  
3 Albany to talk about the residential school syndrome.  
4 I heard lots of young people and the problems that they  
5 had when they were kept in residential schools. We had  
6 interviewed 10 people. Out of those 10 people, four had  
7 went through the healing process because of the problems  
8 that they had when they went to the residential school.

9 They were not against religion, but it  
10 was just the effects that they have on them. Now they  
11 are going through the healing process because the problems  
12 that they have and the experience that they had through  
13 the residential school was quite a tremendous problem for  
14 them and now decide to turn on their elders as part of  
15 the healing process. They were able to accommodate  
16 themselves and to understand and forget.

17 That is why it is very important to  
18 understand both cultures because if you look at their  
19 history, we were always controlled by missionaries. We  
20 were always controlled by government. Also, by the Hudson  
21 Bay Company people. Also, government agencies.

22 Now, we are talking about the Canadian  
23 government. Also, the various council systems. So, by



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 our history it seems that we are always constantly being  
2 controlled by certain powers so that we could not really  
3 understand. Then when you talk about our own people, the  
4 way they think, they never used to write anything. Mostly  
5 oral. Because by doing that they would be able to feel  
6 comfortable living off the land because they were only  
7 practising what was given to them by our Creator. They  
8 didn't have any written materials, but be able to live  
9 and respect their environment.

10 That is why when they talk about the  
11 different cultures by both sides. So, these are the things  
12 that different culture values that we have because it is  
13 what the Creator has given us. These are the things that  
14 we are trying to understand when we talk about our own  
15 programs you will never see an elder who will give you  
16 written material or to be able to give you by-laws or how  
17 to go about hunting.

18 He is going to sit down with you and  
19 explain to you the right process of going hunting and at  
20 the same time be able to explain to you what would be the  
21 best way of trapping and at the same time be able to explain  
22 to you the tools that you would need in order to be a good  
23 hunter. These things are passed on. These experiences

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 that are elders have are passed on. They were not written  
2 because sometimes the written materials because the  
3 different interpretations of the materials sometimes they  
4 have a tendency to misunderstand certain things.

5 Then to an elder because using their  
6 knowledge -- because they are knowledgeable. By using  
7 their language that is why it is easy for us to understand.

8 I know that lots of our young people too are taking the  
9 modern education system to try to understand -- we are  
10 starting to see our own lawyers now, they are started to  
11 see especially the southern part. Even in the north there  
12 are some people who have started to educate themselves  
13 because of trying to take over certain challenges that  
14 needs to be -- that is needed in our community.

15 At the same time I am glad that the Chief  
16 and Council are supporting this concept because one day  
17 they will be needing their own people to accommodate their  
18 atmosphere in some of the things that they are trying to  
19 do in their communities.

20 It is important to have our own doctors.

21 Once we have our own doctors, they will be able to go  
22 about their own communities so the various other experts  
23 -- and they will be able to continue the education system

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   that is needed in our community.

2                   I am hoping that a large majority of our  
3   young people will continue their education so eventually  
4   they will go back to their own communities.

5                   Another issue that I would like to touch  
6   on is when we talk about the -- when you build a bridge  
7   you want the footing to stand firm and the ground on both  
8   sides. You want the bridge itself to be solid as well.  
9   So you have the Native people to consolidate their own  
10   way of life and then you build the bridge together. Then  
11   and only then we will be able to understand ourselves by  
12   bridging these two cultures. At the same time our Native  
13   people will be able to establish themselves to have an  
14   understanding how will be the best way of carrying out  
15   some of these services in a very effective way.

16                  By using your skills in the future we  
17   will be able to cross on both sides of the bridge. I  
18   realize that there is a whole concept of local government  
19   and I realize too that there are certain agreements that  
20   have been placed by the Department of Indian Affairs and  
21   also talking about the community developments in their  
22   own communities.

23                  I know that our people are starting to

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 take steps in identifying what will be the best way of  
2 governing themselves and at the same time trying to  
3 understand and to try and see which will be the best way  
4 of running their own communities and that will be the best  
5 way to helping their own people.

6                   Now we have seen what is happening in  
7 our reserves and if you talk to government people there  
8 is supposed to be a tri-part agreements going on and I  
9 know that these things are going to take time, but I know  
10 somehow there is more positive things because various doors  
11 are open for us, but at the same time that door is still  
12 narrow. Not everybody will be able to get through it right  
13 now, but eventually the more educated people that we have  
14 that door is going to be bigger and then we will be able  
15 to accommodate ourselves.

16                   There is one thing that I have problems  
17 with is certain policies by the Children's Aid Society  
18 especially they call it a protocol. When you have a  
19 protocol -- it is that word protocol is something that  
20 doesn't exist in our language because it is hard to  
21 understand. It is just like you having a protocol. You  
22 put yourself in a higher position than somebody else.  
23 You do not have an equal partnership when you have a

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 protocol. You think that somebody is more superior than  
2 you are.

3 That is why when we have our own program  
4 this is the kind of things that we have problems with.  
5 Trying to do our own programs in the Children's Aid area.

6 Could someone talk a touch about  
7 Timmins. I have been here for a long time and I realize  
8 that Timmins is just celebrating their 75 year anniversary.  
9 That is 75 years that they are celebrating their 75 year  
10 anniversary. I still have to see a Native person being  
11 hired in the City Hall. It is very important that they  
12 should promote the use of using Native people and the  
13 expertise of Native people.

14 Perhaps certain policies -- because we  
15 have a large majority of our people especially like a large  
16 majority of our people are going to the City Hall to utilize  
17 some of the services and there seems to be a lack of services  
18 in order to accommodate our people, especially in the area  
19 of translation.

20 Some of you don't understand me because  
21 you guys don't speak my language but that is why you are  
22 able to understand me now because there is a service of  
23 translation being available, but just imagine how people

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 feel when they go to some of these programs trying to get  
2 service when they are not being understood because there  
3 is no service available in these areas.

4                   They need some help. The service is  
5 available. So these are the things that I would like to  
6 promote in this community of Timmins. That more Native  
7 services should be made available so that our own people  
8 will be very comfortable. That is the reason that I  
9 decided to run for Council one time because I felt that  
10 if I got in as a Councillor I would have recommended some  
11 of the services.

12                   Also, at the same time there are lots  
13 of cultures, lots of different other cultures, here in  
14 Timmins and I just wanted to demonstrate it that there  
15 is a lot of Native population here in the community and  
16 that is why hopefully on the next election when time  
17 permits, maybe I will try again because it is important  
18 that our white brothers and sisters that are working in  
19 same -- it is important to understand our own people.

20                   Thank you very much.

21                   Meeqwetch.

22                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
23 very much.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I am sorry that I can't communicate with  
2   you in your own language and I apologize for that. There  
3   are one or two comments that I would like to make and maybe  
4   get some more information from you.

5                   In connection with Child Welfare as we  
6   have gone across the country -- are you hearing?

7                   **ANDREW WESLEY:** I am bilingual, yes.

8                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Oh, okay.

9   As we have gone across the country, we have heard a great  
10 deal about the problems in the Child Welfare system. It  
11 has been suggested to us that one of the sources of the  
12 problem is that the criteria or the qualifications for  
13 being licensed as a foster home in order to be able to  
14 take in children that need to be moved out of their existing  
15 home and into an new family setting, that the  
16 qualifications in the legislation or in the regulations  
17 that have been passed under the legislation can't be met  
18 by a lot of Native homes because the qualifications are  
19 very much geared to white society and that many Native  
20 homes would be willing to take in children, but can't meet  
21 tests of running water and all the other things that you  
22 are supposed to have in order to qualify to be a foster  
23 home.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                    Obviously, this is wrong. Clearly it  
2    is more important for the children to be moved into their  
3    own cultural environment and I mention that because I am  
4    not familiar with the legislation or regulations that apply  
5    in Ontario, but we have heard this in spades in other  
6    provinces that this is one of the real problems in placing  
7    children and what you are saying is a proper environment  
8    for Native children to be in which is so important. I  
9    am wondering if you would like to comment on that. Is  
10   this the source of the problem or are there other problems?

11                   **ANDREW WESLEY:** It seems to be one of  
12   the concerns. I don't think I would say it is a problem.  
13   I think it is a matter of all Native family agencies  
14   getting together to make a presentation, let's say, to  
15   the provincial government on some of the obstacles that  
16   we face when we want to place a child on the reserve or  
17   even in an urban setting.

18                   Where the standard of housing as  
19   measured by federal and provincial government are not  
20   within the criteria, but as far as Native community is  
21   concerned that is a good home, that is a perfect home,  
22   as far as Native people are concerned. We get overruled  
23   because of the Act that states that these things have to



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 be available in order to house the child in a Native  
2 setting.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** One of the  
4 things I am wondering -- we appreciate how important the  
5 oral tradition is in Native society and that the frequently  
6 is not written material. I am wondering whether we realize  
7 how important stories are in the Native culture. We have  
8 heard this over and over again and I am wondering now that  
9 there is a lot of modern technology whether their are  
10 efforts made to record what the elders and the grandparents  
11 and the older members of society have to say because it  
12 is important that these not be lost and it is important  
13 not only that they be communicated to their own children  
14 and grandchildren, but for the benefit of the future  
15 generations of Native people.

16 Are there any efforts being made to  
17 record this and have it available a hundred years from  
18 now?

19 **ANDREW WESLEY:** Yes, there is a Centre  
20 here in Timmins called the Ojibway Cree Cultural Centre.  
21 They have tapes of the various elders both male and female  
22 that are in tapes that are kept at the centre, but they  
23 have never been -- they don't have the money yet to get

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   them translated into the written materials, but it is all  
2   available in the various legends that were told by various  
3   elders by various regions.

4                   That is one of the reasons I grew up  
5   myself hearing those legends because those legends contain  
6   the moral teaching at the end that you have to live by.

7   I would say most of the Omishkagua, (PH) I am just speaking  
8   of the James Bay, Hudson Bay area now, that tapes are in  
9   place it is just that they have never been put into a written  
10  form because of the scarce money or that is not available.

11                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We are  
12  very interested in this as a Commission because we feel  
13  that our role is not only to address the concerns that  
14  Native people have about the conditions that they are  
15  living in and so on, the preservation of their culture,  
16  but we also feel that if there are things that we could  
17  do and we call these things a legacy that we might leave  
18  long after the Commission has reported and folded and is  
19  no longer operating.

20                   We feel that there are a number of things  
21  and we have pinpointed, for example, one or two and one  
22  of them is a history of the Native people in Canada both  
23  before the advent of the Europeans and subsequent written

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 from an Aboriginal perspective. All our history books  
2 are written by non-Native people and we feel that it would  
3 be a kind of a legacy that the Commission might leave if  
4 it could contract for a history of Canada's Native people  
5 from an Aboriginal point of view.

6                   We feel that combined with that, but  
7 along the same lines, it is important to have this kind  
8 of a history put into words that would be understood by  
9 school children. In other words, in addition to an  
10 academic type of history that it is important to have proper  
11 history material for teaching children at various levels.  
12 At the elementary level. At the high school level.

13                   Those would require to be different  
14 versions aimed at different educational levels, but that  
15 this would be terribly important and that is one of the  
16 things that we thought we ought to try to do.

17                   The other thing was if we could help in  
18 some way to get this kind of thing that you are talking  
19 about about the stories and the traditions that are  
20 understood by the elders and by the older members of the  
21 community, if we could help in preparing something that  
22 would really be like an archive. We would be very  
23 interested in doing that and having some assistance on

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 a project like that. I don't know whether you feel that  
2 would be valuable and that you could participate in  
3 something like that.

4 **ANDREW WESLEY:** I would be very  
5 supportive of something created like that. I would even  
6 recommend that any place there is a tuition agreement  
7 either in the high school setting or in the public setting  
8 that there should be a Native studies attached with that  
9 agreement. That is where those materials could come in.  
10 The ones you are talking about.

11 Maybe this is where the Ministry of  
12 Education could take a priority or whatever so -- like  
13 I said in my presentation we have to work together so that  
14 if we start teaching the non-Natives and also the Natives  
15 that have forgot their legends, then if we start teaching  
16 in elementary and all through high school and I think we  
17 would have created a better relationship in the next  
18 generation to come if we have those things available too.  
19 There is lots of learning in those legends that we have  
20 in place.

21 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

22 I would just like to say that I hope you  
23 do run again for a seat on Council. I will ask my

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 colleagues if they have any questions or comments.

2 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I hope you  
3 win. Meeqwetch. That is the only Cree -- are you speaking  
4 Cree or Ojibway?

5 **ANDREW WESLEY:** Okay.

6 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** That is the  
7 only word I know. Well, no. I know a few other words,  
8 but I can't speak the language.

9 Anyway, as we crossed the country in the  
10 First Round, I think there was sort of a consensus that  
11 what we need in this country is a new relationship between  
12 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. What people have  
13 called for is a new relationship which is characterized  
14 by equality, respect, understanding and co-operation.

15 I think clearly before that happens  
16 there has to be a recognition by mainstream society that  
17 Aboriginal languages are just as important as french and  
18 english. There has to be recognition that Aboriginal  
19 spirituality is no less than, for example, the Christian  
20 religions and that clearly our ways are not wrong.

21 I think the challenge that we have before  
22 us is how do we do that. That is why we are continuing  
23 consultations. Having said that I guess I am particularly

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 interested in the area of Native languages,  
2 revitalization, preservation and of the 53 Aboriginal  
3 languages, not considering the dialects, I guess we have  
4 been told there are three languages which are fairly much  
5 alive. They are Cree, Ojibway and Inuktituk.

6 I am wondering what is being done in this  
7 area to promote and preserve Aboriginal languages. What  
8 is being done in the schools? What is being done to  
9 promote, for example, Aboriginal pride and Aboriginal  
10 culture?

11 **ANDREW WESLEY:** One of the problems that  
12 we experience as the Trustee of the Board of Education  
13 is there is not enough teachers out there that are teachers  
14 in the Cree language or in the Ojibway language. We had  
15 a Cree language at the high school, but this year we are  
16 having a hard time to recruit because we can't find a  
17 teacher that can run that program for us.

18 I think that needs to be addressed by  
19 our leaders. There should be an established education  
20 program in the summertime that could lead to a degree or  
21 even a certificate if a teacher was supposed to be hired  
22 and then picks up the credits in the summer months and  
23 then becomes a qualified teacher.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   If we look at those type of areas where  
2 we could encourage even young people to go into that field  
3 of education and then be able to -- that way the language  
4 will survive both written and oral.

5                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
6 please.

7                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** A comment  
8 and a couple of questions. My first comment is about  
9 elections and the trouble with elections is that somebody  
10 has to win them and somebody has to lose them and I will  
11 talk about that to you sometime.

12                   I wanted to ask about the approximate  
13 population of Timmins and about how many of those would  
14 be Aboriginal people. Could you tell me roughly how many  
15 people live in Timmins and how many of those would be  
16 Aboriginal?

17                   **ANDREW WESLEY:** The population of  
18 Timmins would be about 4,000 - 6,000 right now. Possibly  
19 I would say about between 3,000 and 3,500 are Natives.  
20 There seems to be more increase in Native people coming  
21 to Timmins because of the housing services that are  
22 available here and also the higher standard of education  
23 that the City of Timmins provides.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** The next  
2 question is one that you just touched on, but we haven't  
3 directly spoken to. We have heard elsewhere that it has  
4 been difficult for school boards to hire people of  
5 Aboriginal origin to teach Native studies, Native  
6 languages and sometimes surprisingly, it has been hard  
7 for school boards on reserves which were Band operated  
8 schools, which were -- so there was no culture clash there  
9 in the school which there might be in Timmins, the teacher  
10 might feel that it is a little inhospitable -- but can  
11 you offer any comments as to why it might be difficult  
12 to get Aboriginal people to take a job like a teacher's  
13 job, which, after all, is a pretty fair job?

14                   **ANDREW WESLEY:** I think I can give you  
15 an answer in the experience we had with the Cree program.  
16 I think the main reason we didn't get anybody is because  
17 we are only offering it part time. For somebody to move  
18 from -- there are teachers that we can get from the far  
19 north meaning like Moosonee, Fort Albany and even Erobsget,  
20 (PH) but I don't think anybody -- a good teacher is going  
21 move to Timmins just to get a part-time job and that is  
22 what seems to be happening with the Timmins Board of  
23 Education in regards to even where you create Native



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 programs.

2                   They always want to start first at the  
3 part-time level. Any individual that has a common sense  
4 and that has to make a good living is not going to go for  
5 a part-time job when there is a high cost of living. I  
6 think the Board of Education has to become creative and  
7 combine the Cree program with Native studies and create  
8 a full-time position.

9                   I think that will be more attractive to  
10 an individual that has those qualities who is living in  
11 the far north and wants to move to Timmins or any urban  
12 area for a set of time to meet his family obligations or  
13 whatever or wants a better life to drive around on highways  
14 for awhile instead of on a skidoo or a boat. Those type  
15 of things.

16                   I think that is the problem I see sitting  
17 as a Trustee. The education boards only want to create  
18 part-time positions and I think they will have to put on  
19 their hats and smarten up and create full-time positions  
20 for Native people.

21                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I take it  
22 that the other difficulty is that if you were going to  
23 hire someone who was at an Aboriginal cultural or a Native

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 cultural centre who might well be able to teach the  
2 language, they won't have the proper teacher's  
3 certificate. I suppose that is the problem. You have  
4 to find someone with the paper who can take a part-time  
5 job because they have some other work some place else.  
6 I can see that problem. That gets to be a really difficult  
7 problem.

8 **ANDREW WESLEY:** That is one of the form  
9 that the Norpee (PH) Nipissing Board is following. They  
10 are hiring a Cree teacher and also doing Native studies  
11 and, of course, the person has to be a qualified  
12 qualifications in order to teach at the high school level.  
13 Yes.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.  
15 Our Commissioner of the day would like  
16 to make a comment in the Cree language.

17 **ANDREW WESLEY:** Maybe just before I get  
18 to the Cree there is one thing I forgot in regards to Child  
19 Family Services.

20 Since I have been with Child and Family  
21 Services area when it comes to cases when you are delivering  
22 an expert witness, so far I have never seen an elder brought  
23 in as an expert witness in regards to child situations.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I think the courts have to start  
2 entertaining those kinds of areas or let's say, as an  
3 Executive Director, I say I have an expert witness here  
4 that I need to help you out in this case and then I bring  
5 a Native person that is an expert on the family life.  
6 I think the courts or the province have to start realizing  
7 that an expert witness as an elder is a person who has  
8 wisdom and knowledge and would be able to help out.

9                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Mary, did  
10 you want to say something?

11                  **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Yes, I  
12 would like to -- you know, this is an interesting issue  
13 -- this whole issue of expert witnesses because this is  
14 something that we have come across a lot. I used to come  
15 across it a lot before I became a Commissioner, but the  
16 question that was asked was what qualifications are  
17 necessary in order to ensure an expert witness. Is it  
18 age? Is it knowledge? Is it gender? Do you have any  
19 comments to offer about that?

20                  **ANDREW WESLEY:** There is an elder who  
21 lives in Arobisquet (PH) who had about 14 kids. To me  
22 I would call that an expert witness that if I were to ask  
23 to come and help me solve a situation in court, that I

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 need a person that has experienced that kind of life.

2 I am not saying that you have to have  
3 14 kids, but anybody that has even four or even less than  
4 that, but has the knowledge to be able to help out and  
5 then the -- I think the main thing is that we have to  
6 persuade the courts that this is an expert witness in the  
7 eye of the Native community.

8 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

9 **SHEESHISH:** I understand what you say is very important  
10 when you look after the Family Services where the families  
11 are broken according to what you are talking about. A  
12 white person does not understand how the Indians are  
13 living, the Indian way of life.

14 As long as a Native person has a place  
15 to sleep, they are satisfied. They don't -- it doesn't  
16 bother him that he doesn't have all the modern  
17 conveniences. He doesn't have money. He doesn't care,  
18 as long as he is alive and as long as he has the things  
19 he feeds his children for the day. He is satisfied with  
20 that.

21 Some elders say a person who has a lot  
22 of money it leads them in the wrong direction. Sometimes  
23 they forget love -- those people who have a lot of money

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 -- that is what the elders are saying. I believe that.

2                   When a person has a lot of money, a rich  
3 person, they forget their relatives or even family or his  
4 parents. He does much better -- it is much better to teach  
5 one another to understand better. I believe what you just  
6 said, Andrew.

7                   As far as age division is concerned, I  
8 hear lots of things. When you are looking for somebody  
9 to teach Cree, the Cree and Native language, first they  
10 look at the government regulations as their certificate.  
11 Only a person who has a certificate can teach, but  
12 sometimes it doesn't work.

13                   Right now, I bring -- that has been  
14 working in the education department for 12 years and I  
15 don't have any licence, as long as I do the best I can  
16 to follow what education systems should be. I work in  
17 Arafulskit (PH) and the Natives are -- I taught Cree  
18 programs and I also teach the slow learners. Those are  
19 the students I work with.

20                   Now, right now, I am teaching the elders  
21 and anybody who cannot speak Cree -- I teach them to learn  
22 to teach their own language or try to teach them english.  
23 I think sometimes that it doesn't make sense. It is not

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1   worth it to have a licence. A licence is just a thing  
2   from the government. It doesn't -- same thing with the  
3   Council, sometimes you don't have to look at the licence  
4   part. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you break  
5   the law a little bit to look for somebody who can perform  
6   the job, as long as it comes from the heart, to do whatever  
7   she can to help the people.

8                   It is the same thing if you work at the  
9   elementary sometimes the licence doesn't make sense, it  
10  doesn't work out that way. I believe what you say when  
11  a Native person wants to do something, he don't need a  
12  licence as long as you follow your heart, to help your  
13  own person, your own people. That is all I can say to  
14  you.

15                   **ANDREW WESLEY:** (Native language - no  
16  translation available).

17                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
18  very much for your presentation.

19                   **ED SACKENEY:** I would like to introduce  
20  you to the next presenter, Mr. Donald D. McKinnon.

21                   Mr. McKinnon was born August 18th, 1929  
22  in Cochrane, Ontario. He also worked 17 years within the  
23  woods industry and has been a prospector since 1960.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   In fact, he was named prospector of the  
2   year in 1983 by the Northern Miner Weekly mining newspaper  
3   for his role in finding the Hemlo gold field known as the  
4   richest gold mining in Canada.

5                   He moved to Timmins in 1956, lives on  
6   a farm in Connaught, a townsite within the City of Timmins.  
7   He also serves as a councillor for the former town of  
8   Timmins in 1965, 1967 and 1970. He ran unsuccessfully  
9   for provincial parliament as a liberal in 1967, as well  
10   unsuccessfully for Mayor of Timmins in 1970 and 1988.

11                  His education is self-taught by reading.  
12   He is married and has five children. Mr. McKinnon has  
13   lived and worked in the north all his life. Since the  
14   north made him independently wealthy he feels he should  
15   return something to it.

16                  Mr. McKinnon, please.

17                  **DON MCKINNON:** Madam Chairperson,  
18   Commissioners, friends and neighbours.

19                  I welcome this opportunity to express  
20   some views that are both highly personal and also common  
21   among those in the mining and forestry industry. That  
22   you are here today is evidence of a new commitment among  
23   Canadians to treat Aboriginal people with fairness and

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to find ways to correct past errors. Those are certainly  
2 objectives I support.

3 As someone who has spent his entire adult  
4 life working in the forestry and mining fields, I am deeply  
5 concerned about the future of these industries. What that  
6 really means is concern for the men, women and children  
7 who make the north their home.

8 It would appear that in an effort to  
9 right old wrongs, the federal and provincial governments  
10 are threatening the very existence of the two industries  
11 that are major producers of export dollars for the Nation.  
12 The livelihood and culture of hundreds of thousands of  
13 non-Aboriginal are at risk.

14 This Commission is dealing with the  
15 issue of Aboriginal identity, the retention of a culture.  
16 We urge you to keep in mind that in Northern Canada there  
17 is a non-Aboriginal culture that is endangered. Residents  
18 find themselves being ignored as governments and  
19 Aboriginal groups work towards new relationships.

20 Most people work in the north, and  
21 especially Northern Ontario, because they like it. They  
22 work in resource industries and they enjoy the outdoors,  
23 for recreation such as skiing, snowmobiling, fishing and



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 hunting. They also like the clean air and fresh water.

2                   They are just as concerned as the  
3 Aboriginal about environmental issues and preserving the  
4 land and its wildlife. Forestry and mining depend on  
5 secure long-term access to Canada's land base. Land  
6 access restrictions and security of tenure concerns are  
7 a significant obstacle to finding mineral investors in  
8 today's world economy.

9                   When we consider the damage to these  
10 industries by Ontario, which has gone further along the  
11 path towards granting self-government to its Aboriginal  
12 people than any other jurisdiction, we feel more than  
13 concerned - we feel threatened.

14                   How can we believe today's elected  
15 leaders, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, when they  
16 talk about accepting the principle of self-government if  
17 the details are to be worked out in secret?

18                   During the constitutional debate,  
19 Premier Ray was a strong yes advocate. He asked Canadians  
20 to make a leap of faith by endorsing Aboriginal  
21 self-government without knowing its terms, costs or legal  
22 implications.

23                   For a mining company or forestry firm

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   uncertainty is the same as refusal. They need to know  
2   if they have title to a piece of property or an occupancy  
3   licence.

4                   Investors vote with money. They are  
5   putting their mining dollars into Central America and  
6   Europe. Canada's minerals inventory are dangerously low  
7   and the only way to replenish them is to allow exploration  
8   and development in areas of high potential. We must sell  
9   our products in a global economy.

10                  We must be competitive. We must use our  
11   capital wisely. We cannot afford to waste hundreds of  
12   millions of dollars and valuable human resources  
13   constantly fighting one another while other Nations snap  
14   up our markets.

15                  If we fail to meet the growing world  
16   demand for metals and forestry products, other Nations  
17   will. Our standards of living will decline if we fail  
18   to use our natural resource well.

19                  While we have been dealing with the  
20   problems facing large companies, we wouldn't want the  
21   Commission to forget about the more than 700,000 residents  
22   of Northern Ontario. The north only has two primary  
23   industries, mining and forestry.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Both the Federal and Ontario Government  
2   admit the economy of Northern Ontario is faltering because  
3   both these industries are in a long-term decline. Several  
4   hundred one-industry communities are losing their  
5   populations, their services and their young people.

6                   Trees that aren't cut, rot. Minerals  
7   left in the ground can't reduce the Nation's balance of  
8   payment deficit. Exports of non-fuel minerals earned a  
9   profit for Canada of \$10.8 billion in 1991.

10                  There has been talk that Natives will  
11   be taxed in order to finance self-government. How can  
12   they pay taxes if they aren't working? Where will they  
13   work unless it is in the forestry and mining industries  
14   or the service sectors?

15                  I personally endorse self-government  
16   for Aboriginal. We just don't believe that  
17   self-government will be self-financed by Aboriginal  
18   peoples, their bureaucracies will be financed by transfers  
19   of tax dollars from Ottawa and perhaps the provincial  
20   governments.

21                  Which leads us to the major problem to  
22   Aboriginal self-government. Higher taxes on working  
23   Canadians to finance another level of government.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Canadians already over-taxed and over-governed.

2                   The frustration level is high in the  
3 north among non-Aboriginal over the indifference by  
4 federal and provincial governments towards residents and  
5 their problems. We feel we receive little enough now for  
6 our tax dollars. Municipalities are facing huge new costs  
7 as Ottawa dumps programs onto the province and they in  
8 turn pass them on to the local governments.

9                   Higher taxes for fourth level government  
10 is just not acceptable. Our theory of government is based  
11 on individual rights being paramount. The Native culture,  
12 according to Mary Ellen Turpel, a law professor at  
13 Dalhousie University who is part Cree, has no concept of  
14 private property.

15                  It is from this concept that the legal  
16 philosophy of individual rights springs. The communal  
17 base of collective rights is the basis of Native culture.

18                  The two theories of law cannot exist  
19 together. Yet, that was what was tried in the late  
20 Charlottetown Accord. Native self-governments were to  
21 be allowed to use the "notwithstanding clause" to override  
22 the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

23                  Since the news media reports over 60 per

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 cent of those Natives who voted opposed the Charlottetown  
2 Accord, it appears the traditional idea of collective  
3 rights is no longer acceptable to many present day  
4 Aboriginal.

5                   It is ironic that so many of the gains  
6 by Natives in the past three decades have been in courts  
7 where individual rights came before all else.  
8 Nevertheless, this dry argument over collective versus  
9 individual rights is vital to the future of both Aboriginal  
10 and non-Aboriginal in areas that might come under Native  
11 self-governments.

12                   We would like to suggest that the proper  
13 way to address the legitimate concerns of the Aboriginal  
14 peoples is one step at a time. Much as we recognize their  
15 frustration at the slowness of change and their desire  
16 to control their own affairs on their own land, we feel  
17 two wrongs can never make a right.

18                   Natives cannot build a secure future on  
19 the wreckage of the lives of their non-Aboriginal  
20 neighbours. There has been too little consultation with  
21 the non-Aboriginal residents of northern Canada by the  
22 negotiating teams of Aboriginal and faceless bureaucrats.

23                   There are three parties to any

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 negotiations on Aboriginal self-government, governments,  
2 Aboriginal and residents. We do not feel to date that  
3 our voice has been heard and we certainly reject the  
4 approach of politicians in Ottawa and Queen's Park who  
5 live far from the consequences of their actions.

6                   What then are our conclusions on  
7 Aboriginal self-government? It must be spelled out in  
8 precise terms, its costs, its powers and its areas of  
9 jurisdiction. The fate of the non-Aboriginal must also  
10 be declared in advance of any signed agreement.

11                   We are talking about residents who live  
12 and will be living in areas placed under a self-government  
13 and also those living outside such areas, but still  
14 affected by it.

15                   We also strongly urge this Commission  
16 to endorse the concept of multi-use of our natural  
17 resources, not just by tourist outfitters, trappers,  
18 fishermen and mining and forestry companies, but by  
19 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

20                   We endorse the thought embodied in a  
21 quote to her neighbours about the land proposal from Gloria  
22 Daybutch, wife of the Chief of the Mississauga Band, as  
23 recorded in the Toronto Star, September 19th: "We are here

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to stay and I know you are here to stay and we have to  
2 work together. We all have to make room for each other."

3 Let her words be a beacon to lead us all  
4 out of the present constitutional fog, past the quicksand  
5 of violence and around the verbal traps of the self-servers  
6 into a new dawn of understanding and brotherhood.

7 In conclusion, I would like to tell the  
8 Commission that I was born in the north, have lived here  
9 all my life and I will die here. I love the north.

10 I love the fresh water and stately trees  
11 and clean air and fruitful land. I want my children and  
12 my grandchildren to develop the same strong feelings for  
13 the land. More than that, I pledge that there will be  
14 a place for them here in Northern Ontario.

15 No elected or appointed body has the  
16 moral right to give away my heritage. No politician or  
17 bureaucrat with the wave of a pen will make me disappear.

18 I am prepared to share with others, but I will not be  
19 pushed off my land or out of the north.

20 Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
22 very much, Mr. McKinnon.

23 I have one or two comments that I would

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 like to make on some of the issues that you have raised.

2 The first one is Native self-government, particularly  
3 your plea for a definition of what is involved in that.

4 We can, of course, perfectly understand -- this is the  
5 way white society thinks in terms of definitions, but the  
6 fact is that from what we have heard as we have travelled  
7 across this country self-government will not take the same  
8 form all across the country. There will obviously be  
9 different models of self-government by Native people  
10 arising out of their own historic background and  
11 conditions.

12 It would clearly be a mistake for  
13 government or for the Commission or indeed for anybody  
14 else to say here is self-government, this is the form it  
15 will take, this is the way it will work and think that  
16 that is an intelligent way of going about addressing this  
17 issue. I don't think you can do it.

18 This is something that is going to have  
19 to be worked out in different parts of the country with  
20 different Native groups. I think that is really what the  
21 governments contemplated when they said that there would  
22 be a period of time -- there were addressing the  
23 Charlottetown Accord -- but there would be a period of



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 time during which the federal and provincial governments  
2 would negotiate self-government agreements with Native  
3 groups.

4 I think they contemplated that you  
5 couldn't have one model and impose it upon Native people  
6 right across the country. I agree that this is a live  
7 issue, models of Native self-government and how they will  
8 work. I just wanted to make that point. You can't have  
9 a uniform legislative form of self-government and force  
10 it on people all across the country.

11 **DON MCKINNON:** If I could address that  
12 point?

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes,  
14 please do.

15 **DON MCKINNON:** I don't think there is  
16 any white man in Canada that knows that every Native  
17 community, Inuit community -- I have lived in them. I  
18 have lived with the people -- that you can have a rule  
19 that would apply to every different culture they have,  
20 every different area.

21 The only thing that I am concerned about  
22 is and I am not object to giving up land or anything --  
23 I think we have to work together, but we as non-Aboriginal

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 people have to know how we are going to affected. This  
2 other thing doesn't have to be worked out by governments  
3 because you will end up in the same thing that you  
4 government people have been doing all their life, telling  
5 the Natives how they are going to run their lives.

6                   If you would let each different culture  
7 of Natives form their own governments, but just all we  
8 want to know -- I am speaking for myself personally --  
9 is how is it going to affect us. I am not objecting to  
10 financing or taking anything away from them, but I don't  
11 want anything taken away from us.

12                   I realize -- I have lived on the Arctic  
13 Isle, I have worked on 30 of the Arctic Islands, I have  
14 lived in Cortak, (PH) I have stayed in Cortak (PH) all  
15 summer. I have stayed in Native -- I know how they feel,  
16 I know how they think and if I would have had anything  
17 to do with Native affairs we wouldn't be in the jackpot  
18 we are in now. There would be no bureaucrats running up  
19 to the reserves telling them how to run their lives.

20                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would  
21 like to comment. This is the other thing that I would  
22 like to comment on what you have said about how it will  
23 affect you. Of course, that is a very legitimate concern

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 and I don't think anyone would disagree with that, but  
2 I would like to say something about the view you take of  
3 the situation with respect to the land.

4                   The fact is the land belonged to the  
5 Native people who were here long before you and I and our  
6 ancestors were here. It was their land. They gave up  
7 a great deal of land and of the rights to the European  
8 people who arrived in order that they could live together  
9 with the Native people and share the land and make lives  
10 for themselves in this country.

11                   I think we have to get our overall  
12 perspective straight because this is factual. This is,  
13 in fact, what happened. This was not a vacant country  
14 with no one living in it, no one occupying the land at  
15 the time of the advent of the Europeans. This was the  
16 land of the Native people.

17                   Now, I think we have to acknowledge that  
18 when the Native people gave up a lot of the land and their  
19 interests in the land, that has turned out to be a  
20 tremendously valuable sacrifice that they made which  
21 perhaps they didn't appreciate at the time, but we know  
22 now because of the very thing you are interested in, the  
23 natural resources that were on that land both underneath

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the ground and on top of it.

2                   It has been suggested to us by a number  
3 of Native people that in effect what they did was they  
4 made a prepayment for all the services that they were  
5 promised under the arrangements that they made with the  
6 Crown. In other words, we give you our land and our  
7 interest in our land and you will fulfil your obligations  
8 towards us.

9                   If you take that approach and some  
10 non-Aboriginal people agree that that is a sound approach,  
11 and you look at what the value was that was given up in  
12 terms of their interest in the land and measure against  
13 that the cost of the services that they are receiving,  
14 they are not receiving anything like value for what they  
15 gave up. You may not agree with that because you and I  
16 tend to look at these things from the point of view of  
17 the non-Aboriginal person, but what I am saying is in order  
18 to get a better understanding of where we are at on this  
19 issue, we have to appreciate that there is another point  
20 of view and it is the Aboriginal point of view that this  
21 is what they gave up.

22                   It was interesting Allan Blakeney and  
23 I were out at a conference in Saskatchewan at which

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 accounting firms and financial analysts presented material  
2 along these lines and showed us what was involved if you  
3 took that view of what happened. Then they did an analysis  
4 and, of course, it was very very fascinating because it  
5 showed the white man was still miles ahead as far as the  
6 sacrifice in terms of land that was made by the Native  
7 people way back.

8                   You may not agree with that approach,  
9 but it is an interesting approach and it is another  
10 perspective. So when you say we don't want to pay taxes  
11 to support self-government, I would just like to make that  
12 point about the value of the land that was seeded to the  
13 Europeans.

14                   Also, I would like to make this point  
15 and it is one of the things we are trying as a Commission  
16 to canvas -- what is the cost of the current method of  
17 dealing with Aboriginal people? You know, when we talk  
18 about we are going to have to pay more taxes. What is  
19 it costing for this system for dealing with Aboriginal  
20 people across the country now? If you were to add the  
21 cost of all the services, the welfare and all the other  
22 things what would that add up to?

23                   We don't know whether that is more or

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 less costly than self-government would be. I hear a lot  
2 of people saying this is going to be a very costly business,  
3 but to say that without any appreciation of what the  
4 existing system which the Native people don't want is  
5 costing the taxpayers.

6 We thought it would be interesting if  
7 we tried to get a handle on that and make inquiries through  
8 government and all the different departments of  
9 government. Not only federal, but provincial to see what  
10 does that add up to. Nobody really knows.

11 I don't think the governments themselves  
12 have sat down and tried to figure what this unsatisfactory  
13 -- in the eyes of the Native people -- system is costing  
14 right now before they go off and say look it is going to  
15 mean higher taxes and all these terrible things. I just  
16 wanted to make those two points.

17 On the issues of the industries, of  
18 course, what you are saying makes a lot of sense. There  
19 are tensions and I am very glad you came today to make  
20 your presentation because we have -- as you have indicated  
21 -- been hearing substantially from Native people and we  
22 are most anxious to hear the other side of some of the  
23 issues that are being raised.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I am delighted that you have come to talk  
2 about the future of these industries and the role they  
3 undoubtedly in the health of this community and in other  
4 communities where these industries are going on. I think  
5 that is a very important point that you make.

6                   I don't know whether these things are  
7 necessarily in conflict or whether there are ways of  
8 resolving the tension between those interested in  
9 developing the land and those interested in preserving  
10 it to a large extent -- as it has always been -- as their  
11 homeland. There is, obviously, a tension there.

12                  We are interested as I mentioned at the  
13 beginning in solutions. We realize those tensions exist  
14 and we think we have to do more as a Commission in bringing  
15 the groups together face to face and saying look, how do  
16 you respond to this? This is a legitimate comment. What  
17 is your answer? And we plan to do more of that sort of  
18 thing.

19                  Personally, I am delighted that you have  
20 come and I have had the opportunity just to raise these  
21 things which are very difficult to get a handle on, but  
22 we have to struggle with. I don't know if you want to  
23 respond to that or if you want to wait and hear from my

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 two colleagues.

2 **DON MCKINNON:** I would like to respond  
3 to your summary.

4 In other words you are telling me I have  
5 no land.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** No.

7 **DON MCKINNON:** You know what a Native  
8 is. I am a Native. A Native is a person who lives in  
9 the country he was born in. I was mislead all my life  
10 then by politicians that I own a piece of land and I could  
11 work and I am proud of being a minor and I am proud of  
12 what I contributed to it.

13 I am proud of being in the forestry  
14 business. There has been lots of flack against both  
15 industries. Without these industries myself and the  
16 Aboriginal friends I have, will not be able to survive.

17 I am not against financing, education  
18 or any type of government for the Aboriginal people. I  
19 am in full agreement, but to be able to come through with  
20 any of these agreements we have to have money and we can't  
21 have it by hugging trees like our Premier has done and  
22 closing down sawmills, closing down mines and we won't  
23 have anybody left in Canada unless we can pay for it.



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 I certainly would not object to any Aboriginal group being  
2 financed.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think  
4 you misunderstood me. I am not saying that you have no  
5 interest in the land. I am simply saying that when we  
6 come to look at this dilemma and this tension that obviously  
7 exists between economic development in areas and the desire  
8 of Native people to continue to have their own lifestyle  
9 and so on, that we should look at that tension in the context  
10 of the background of Canada and how we came to be here.

11 That is really all I am saying. I think  
12 it would be conducive to a more reasonable and  
13 accommodating type of dialogue between the two groups if  
14 we recognize certain fundamental historical truths. That  
15 is really all I am saying.

16 I am not saying that you have no interest  
17 in the land. That would be ridiculous. Of course you  
18 have, but I am just saying that we should put the issues  
19 into the proper historical context and I think this would  
20 be helpful in having a good rational discussion with both  
21 parties felt that their interests were being protected.

22 That is really the point that I am trying to make.

23 I will ask Mary if she has something to

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 say.

2 Mary, please.

3 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
4 just like to thank you very much for coming today. I have  
5 no additional questions.

6 **DON MCKINNON:** It was my pleasure.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
8 please.

9 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I want to  
10 put a little proposition to you. You make the point that  
11 the north depends to a large extent on mining and forestry.  
12 No one can go against that. There is a tourism industry  
13 and there are some others, but the mining and forestry  
14 are the basis of northern industry. They operate in this  
15 vast area called Northern Ontario where a large number  
16 of Aboriginal people live. I don't know how many, but  
17 there two to three hundred thousand in Ontario all in and  
18 a good number of them live in Northern Ontario. That is  
19 their home and their base as well.

20 As you make the point I think it is  
21 realistic to believe that we -- Aboriginal and  
22 non-Aboriginal -- are going to live in this territory for  
23 a long time. Neither is going to leave. The Aboriginal

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 people are very sure that they are not going to leave.  
2 And you make the point that you and others who call the  
3 north your home have no intention of leaving. Fair enough.

4 The next proposition is are we finding  
5 a way to make forestry and mining a basis for economic  
6 welfare, economic development, for all the people who live  
7 here.

8 My short question is -- you are saying  
9 if they are closing down mines, my question is: How can  
10 they close down the mines? Wouldn't all the Aboriginal  
11 people who worked in the mines object to that? If your  
12 answer is not many Aboriginal people work in the mines.

13 My question is: Why? Have we made an effort, an  
14 appropriate effort, we non-Aboriginal people, to make  
15 forestry and mining something from which Aboriginal  
16 people, those who wish to engage in that type of activity  
17 have a full opportunity. Not on our terms because that  
18 spoils the game, but on terms both our and theirs.

19 **DON MCKINNON:** To answer your question  
20 there are Aboriginal people working in the mines. In the  
21 Hemlo area there was two reserves. I can't give you the  
22 numbers. They were encouraged. They had special  
23 training. As far as myself way back in the early '50s,

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 we as a company personally brought people from  
2 Attawapaskat. I can name them. I know them well. They  
3 were just kids when they came there.

4 We trained them in the forestry  
5 industry. One, in particular, is in the mining business  
6 now. His name is Mike Wabano. He was just a kid when  
7 he came there. We trained him and this is the point I  
8 am always trying to push. These industries there is no  
9 person in Canada that should apply to these industries  
10 more than the Natives. This is part of their life.

11 The bush, the forest. They should be  
12 the best mining people or best prospectors people, but  
13 I don't think they are getting the proper training under  
14 the present programs.

15 They should be taught how to do this  
16 work. Quebec have thousands of them. Whether the program  
17 is different -- when I was up in Cortak, (PH) we took some  
18 Aboriginal people, we gave them a one day idea of what  
19 was going on and they are still in the business. I  
20 certainly -- that is my objective to find more mines for  
21 more Aboriginal can work and have something to show for  
22 it.

23 There is Hemlo. There would have been

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 nothing wrong with saying half the people who work in Hemlo  
2 have got to be Aboriginal. If you had done that -- and  
3 I am not saying you I am saying somebody had done it ---  
4 they would be there today. Hemlo has a capital intensive  
5 industry where the cost of labour is a relatively small  
6 part of the whole costs and no doubt about it, it might  
7 have cost an extra one per cent of the first couple of  
8 years, but after that no trouble.

9 I wonder why we -- and I am not blaming  
10 anyone -- why we don't do that sort of thing.

11 Your philosophy and mine are 100 per cent  
12 different. I am free enterprise and as far as the Natives  
13 there there could be 90 per cent Aboriginal people there  
14 as far as I am concerned. It wouldn't bother me. They  
15 had programs and I think in the future that this is one  
16 of the approaches that we have to do is to train the  
17 Aboriginal people to fall into these industries.

18 The governments of today, as far as I  
19 am concerned, aren't doing that job. They are doing  
20 everything else, but trying to get them into everything  
21 else. These are things that they should be in. To give  
22 quotas, I don't give quotas. The quota is I don't care  
23 what colour they are, what gender or who they are if they

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 want to work they can work for me and I have lots of them  
2 working for me.

3 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Do you  
4 not concede the point that the views you are expressing  
5 are a very characteristic of non-Aboriginal society? The  
6 idea that every person for himself. Here I am not being  
7 difficult on this score. I am just saying that one by  
8 one Aboriginal people could get jobs. Know that we as  
9 a non-Aboriginal people don't have any obligation to  
10 Aboriginal people as a group to see that we make the  
11 conditions whereby they can get their jobs there. We set  
12 the conditions, we say what skills they have to have and  
13 we say you meet our standards or you don't get a job.

14 Fair enough. It sounds very reasonable  
15 from our point of view. Do you think it sounds reasonable  
16 from their point of view?

17 **DON MCKINNON:** I think -- I don't know  
18 what your background is, but if you know mining is a very  
19 dangerous and highly professional industry. They have  
20 to be trained. There is nothing wrong with any of the  
21 Aboriginal people who work for me. They are trained.  
22 They are some of the best.

23 You can't set aside like who is going

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to work -- what about the actual Native people in the  
2 Marathon, (PH) you are talking to Hemlo's is a good example.  
3 The mill was closing. When I first went there we couldn't  
4 even get a restaurant opened. You couldn't rent a boat  
5 from an outfitter. It was absolutely finished.

6 A lot of the fellows from the White River  
7 Reserve work for me. I can name them. From the other  
8 reserve, I forget it now. They worked for me and some  
9 of them are working yet at the mines. The opportunities  
10 are there for everybody and I think the Aboriginal people  
11 should have more money poured into training them for some  
12 of these jobs.

13 That has been my philosophy all along.  
14 I mean how can they sit around. They are going to get  
15 in trouble if you are sitting around, standing around the  
16 store all day in the reserve. I lived on Sandy Lake  
17 Reserve. I have seen what happened to these people. It  
18 just makes me sick why these programs can't be put in place  
19 and teach them and on their own grounds.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Do I take  
21 it your view is that -- notwithstanding the views you  
22 earlier expressed -- the training programs ought to be  
23 run and financed by government?

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **DON MCKINNON:** That's right.

2                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** The  
3 people who own the gold mine have no obligation to train  
4 Aboriginal people to work there.

5                   **DON MCKINNON:** Do you know what taxes  
6 go in from the gold mines and from the paper mills. We  
7 are paying. Why would you want additional -- we can't  
8 even survive today in the world markets. We have major  
9 companies leaving -- there are eight head offices in Miami,  
10 Florida. Does that help Aboriginal or Natives.

11                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I don't  
12 think we are talking about head offices because we know  
13 they are mobile. I don't think we are going to see the  
14 Hemlo Gold Mine move to Miami.

15                  **DON MCKINNON:** So what do you want to  
16 take over the Hemlo Gold Mine by the Ontario Government?

17                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** No, I  
18 don't.

19                  **DON MCKINNON:** Fill them with untrained  
20 people, white and Aboriginal?

21                               We are at a different level and maybe  
22 we will move on. I'm sorry.

23                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** May I



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 make the point that there are mines in Canada that do this.

2 **DON MCKINNON:** They did it at Deter.

3 (PH)

4 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** That

5 Chemico, for example, a private sector uranium mine has  
6 at least 40 and 45 per cent of the people in the mining  
7 end of it, Aboriginal. They provide the training. They  
8 don't ask governments to do it and they are delivering  
9 jobs for a large number of Aboriginal people and I am  
10 interested to know why it couldn't be done by the Hemlo.

11 **DON MCKINNON:** It is done by the Hemlo.

12 They bring them in and they train them. It has been done  
13 by Deter (PH) Lake. It has been done by the Hollanger  
14 Mine, the Dome. All the mines have a training program  
15 for them at their expense. I know one who have trained  
16 in Deter. (PH)

17 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** How

18 successful have they been? Do you know off hand how many  
19 ---

20 **DON MCKINNON:** I don't know off hand how  
21 many, but the opportunity is there.

22 You can't expect the Aboriginal people  
23 to change overnight from their culture into a culture like

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 we are trying to give them. It is not their lifestyle.  
2 It is going to take time, training and negotiations on  
3 all parts. Discussions.

4 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** We are  
5 thinking of not asking the Aboriginal people to change  
6 overnight. We are just talking about a couple of hundred  
7 jobs out of a hundred thousand people. Aboriginal people  
8 in Northern Ontario.

9 Unless we show good faith, unless in the  
10 forestry industry and the mining industry and find jobs  
11 for Aboriginal people, it is going to be a little bit  
12 difficult -- I believe -- for non-Aboriginal people to  
13 convince them that we believe in sharing. If we can't  
14 make the forestry industry and the mining industry a basis  
15 for Aboriginal economic development, I think we are just  
16 not going to convince them that our idea of sharing benefits  
17 them very much. Do you not share that view?

18 **DON MCKINNON:** I share the view 100 per  
19 cent. I would be the happiest person on earth to see 50  
20 per cent of any company I have with Aboriginal people there  
21 and any of them are welcome. I will train anybody in the  
22 fields I am in and be happy to have them.

23 I know what they have gone through

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 because I have travelled to all these communities. I have  
2 seen the poverty. I have seen the dope and the stuff and  
3 it hurts me really deeply to see this.

4 I would be the first one who would agree  
5 that we train them, but you have to understand that you  
6 can't take somebody from Attawapaskat who has never been  
7 downtown -- I remember when we took a crew, they had never  
8 seen a railway track, the poor people we had from there.  
9 They had never seen the train. They came down and they  
10 came into our camp and we trained them. It was a shock  
11 -- as you can imagine -- to them. They are still in the  
12 industry. I have no objections to that or of paying for  
13 them or anything. I would be happy.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** But you  
15 don't believe we should do anything more than offer the  
16 opportunity to them which is essentially an opportunity  
17 to do it our way.

18 **DON MCKINNON:** We are not dictators  
19 here. We can't dictate to them. There is opportunity  
20 offered. There has to be a better dialogue between the  
21 people offering and the Aboriginal people and I think as  
22 things progress along the lines of the discussions and  
23 that, that this will come about and I don't think of anybody

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 in the businesses that I have been in ever would not hire  
2 an Aboriginal person or train them, that I know of.

3 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I think  
4 they are going to judge us by results not by our professions  
5 that the opportunity is there.

6 **DON McKINNON:** How can you force anybody  
7 into something. If the opportunity is there, it should  
8 be promoted more among the Aboriginal people, but you can't  
9 force anybody into anything.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Nobody is  
11 talking about force.

12 **DON McKINNON:** You almost say force.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** All  
14 right. You think that the mines -- I am using the  
15 Saskatchewan example, the mines there that have very  
16 significant numbers of Aboriginal people somehow forced  
17 them.

18 **DON McKINNON:** I didn't say that. I  
19 said it takes time, training programs, getting them  
20 adapted. It is like taking their kids from four out and  
21 hauling them down to Toronto to schools. I was never for  
22 that. Never. You can understand the frustration they  
23 are in now because they have never had the guidance of

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 their parents. That I was never for.

2                   There is training programs in the mining  
3 industry and in the forestry industry and I think that  
4 will transpire over a few years of sitting down with them  
5 and asking them how we come up with these programs and  
6 I would be the happiest programs on earth to see these  
7 programs being taught to them and these trades being taught  
8 to them.

9                   You can't bring somebody out of Toronto  
10 or out of Moosonee, or Cortak (PH) and pop them into a  
11 mine. They have to be trained regardless of what they  
12 are.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would  
14 just like to say that I think we are into a very large  
15 subject here which is becoming more and more important.  
16 Not just in relation to Native people, but in relation  
17 to people living in a community generally, namely, the  
18 area of corporate social responsibility.

19                   A corporate entity that is living as it  
20 were in a community and deriving its profits from a  
21 community -- I think it is now generally accepted -- has  
22 a social responsibility to the community generally. This  
23 is a huge subject, but I think more and more corporations

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 are understanding that they are members and residents of  
2 a community just as individuals are and that they should  
3 have the same participation and should feel the same sense  
4 of responsibility to the other residents in that community.

5 I think most large corporations,  
6 certainly many I have been exposed to, appreciate that  
7 and are very anxious to discharge that responsibility.  
8 I think that is really what this dialogue is all about  
9 and it is obviously not confined to Native people.

10 It applies generally to residents of any  
11 communities where large corporations are functioning and  
12 we know all the static that occurs when there is the closing  
13 down and the impact of closing down on the population in  
14 the area and so on.

15 But that is a very large and a very  
16 difficult subject. I would like to say that we do  
17 appreciate your coming. We want to hear from more people  
18 like yourself. We don't just want to be hearing the Native  
19 people and no one else. We really are most appreciative  
20 of your coming. I think on behalf of all three of us we  
21 would like to say thank you very much.

22 I don't know whether our Commissioner  
23 wishes to add anything.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

2   **SHEESHISH:** Thank you, Mrs. Wilson.

3                                   Mr. McKinnon, I am very pleased to  
4 finally see you in person. I have heard a lot about you.  
5 Your presentation is kind of interesting. The only thing  
6 that I disagree with you is when you mention about the  
7 Native people and you know how they feel. You can't  
8 actually know how they feel unless you are an Aboriginal  
9 person yourself. So please don't ever use that to say  
10 you know how they feel because I am kind of offended myself  
11 when somebody else says that.

12                                  **DON MCKINNON:** I apologize for that.  
13 I know how I would feel, I should say.

14                                  **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

15   **SHEESHISH:** Thank you.

16                                  I agree with you that no one has an  
17 authority to push you out of your land and more to say  
18 the land that we live in. Nobody belongs to the land,  
19 but the Creator. That is how I look at it.

20                                  Thank you.

21                                  **DON MCKINNON:** Good term. Thank you.

22                                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I just  
23 want to thank you.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   The fact that I engaged you in a little  
2   debate doesn't mean that I didn't fully appreciate the  
3   points that you were making.

4                   **DON MCKINNON:** I appreciate that.

5                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** We are  
6   here to illicit each others views and you have done it  
7   well.

8                   **DON MCKINNON:** Thank you.

9                   **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you very much.

10                  I guess that would be -- it will start  
11   a discussion once the Commission does leave town. I am  
12   pretty sure that the groups will get together at some point  
13   in time.

14                  Commissioners, I would like to request  
15   that we take a one hour lunch. For a while I was quite  
16   proud that we were on Newfoundland time, but now we are  
17   really behind schedule here.

18                  For your information I would like to  
19   notify you of a change in the presentations. Reverend  
20   Jim Collins, Dean Diocese of Moosonee will not be able  
21   to make it, however we will have Suzanne McCarthy make  
22   the presentation in his place right at -- hopefully we  
23   can take a lunch for an hour -- 1:30 p.m. and we will



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 continue from there.

2 I would like to make a correction, this  
3 morning I had mentioned Bernice Archibald was a Family  
4 Court worker since June of 1972. Apparently, she might  
5 have been in pampers by then, but it is 1992.

6 So we can take a one hour lunch and come  
7 back at 1:30 sharp. Would you people agree to that?

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
9 yes. We agree.

10

11 --- Upon recessing at 12:30 p.m.

12 --- Upon resuming at 1:45 p.m.

13

14 **ED SACKENEY:** Mrs. Wilson, if you could  
15 just briefly introduce the Commissioners once again since  
16 we do have more people in attendance this afternoon.

17 Then we can proceed with the  
18 presentations. Just briefly.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes, by  
20 all means.

21 We have as you can see three of the seven  
22 Commissioners here today. The reason for that is that  
23 in order to cover a large number of communities the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Commissioners have had to divide themselves up into three  
2 teams with three people on one team and two and some support  
3 staff on the other teams. The other two teams are in  
4 different parts of the country conducting hearings there.

5 My name is Bertha Wilson. I am a trained  
6 lawyer and former judge. I retired from the bench at the  
7 beginning of 1991. I will let my two colleagues introduce  
8 themselves.

9 Mary, please.

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you,  
11 Madam Wilson.

12 Before I introduce myself I would like  
13 to introduce some of the people who are working with us  
14 either on contract or on a permanent basis.

15 We have Pat Chilton who is on contract  
16 with us as Ontario Regional Coordinator. We have Ed  
17 Sackenev who is acting as our local community coordinator.

18 We have on permanent staff, Becky Printup. She works  
19 with public participation as does Michael Lazore. We have  
20 Don Kelly who is working with communications. Rosalie  
21 Tizya who works with research specializing in urban issues.

22 Gail Bradshaw, she is working in the information section  
23 of the Commission and we have Judy Stevenson on contract

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 working on our Discussion Paper.

2 I am extremely glad to be here and I  
3 welcome all the people who have come to listen.

4 My name is Mary Sillett. I am from  
5 Northern Labrador, a community called Hopedale in Northern  
6 Labrador. I worked for many many years on Inuit and  
7 Aboriginal issues at the community and regional levels,  
8 but more recently I was the President of the Boudootit  
9 (PH) which is the Inuit Women's Association of Canada.  
10 It represents Inuit women in Northern Labrador, in Nunuvik  
11 (PH) which is Northern Quebec and the Northwest  
12 Territories.

13 I also was the Vice-President of the  
14 Inuit Tapirisat of Canada which is a National Inuit  
15 organization and it was the ITC Board of Directors that  
16 recommended me to sit on the Royal Commission. I am  
17 extremely appreciative of that honour and I am really glad  
18 to be here today.

19 Thank you very much.

20 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
21 Mary.

22 Before we move to Allan, I would like  
23 to say how pleased we are to have Angela Sheeshish here

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 as our Commissioner for the day and she is sitting on my  
2 right at the table here.

3 Allan, please.

4 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** My name  
5 is Allan Blakeney. I have trained as a lawyer and worked  
6 for a number of years as a public servant and was in the  
7 private practice of law for a good number of years. I  
8 have been in politics in Saskatchewan as an MLA and as  
9 a Cabinet Minister and as a Premier for 11 years.

10 After retiring from politics I have  
11 taught at the Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto and at  
12 the University of Saskatchewan Law School in Saskatoon.

13 Now, I am spending my time as a member  
14 of this Royal Commission.

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

16 Mr. Moderator.

17 **ED SACKENEY:** The next speaker we are  
18 going have is changed on our schedule. As I told the  
19 audience earlier Reverend Jim Collins could not make it  
20 to this Commission hearing due to the fact that he is in  
21 one of communities up in James Bay, Northern Ontario.

22 The person we have put in his place will  
23 be Suzanne McCarthy who is a Masters student with the

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

2 She has taught french to english  
3 Canadians and english to french Canadians. She has been  
4 a student of Cree in spurts and starts for two years.  
5 A resident of Timmins for four years. She has done some  
6 consulting on language and literacy issues for the Anglican  
7 Diocese of Moosonee.

8 The Anglican Diocese covers about  
9 approximately 350 square miles both Northern Quebec and  
10 Northern Ontario. In kilometres that would be about a  
11 half a million. I had to just throw that in there to try  
12 to sound impressive.

13 Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Suzanne  
14 McCarthy.

15 **SUZANNE MCCARTHY:** I speak a little  
16 Cree, but I am white so I will speak white.

17 I am speaking today as a non-Native, who  
18 has chosen the maintenance of Cree Literacy as the focus  
19 of my studies for a master's degree in education at the  
20 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I have taken  
21 the approach of studying Native literacy primarily in the  
22 church rather than in the school system.

23 I would like to say that the residential

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 school system is not something I have studied more than  
2 superficially so I can't comment on that at all. I can  
3 only comment on the use of Cree Syllabics in the home and  
4 in church services per se.

5                   However, research on the Anglican church  
6 is certainly pertinent to the issue of the relationship  
7 between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society at large,  
8 since the church is a voluntary organization which has  
9 both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members within it.  
10 Therefore, they are relating to each other within the  
11 church setting. I feel this makes the church a very rich  
12 opportunity for the observation of Aboriginal and  
13 non-Aboriginal relationships.

14                   When I began my study of Native literacy  
15 in the church, I tried to learn as much as I could about  
16 Cree Syllabics, since they differ so much from our  
17 alphabetic way of writing. I want to mention briefly that  
18 they are one of the only three syllabic writing systems  
19 in the world, there is one in the States among the Cherokee  
20 and one in Africa.

21                   In my opinion syllabics is a unique form  
22 of literacy, quite different in every way from western  
23 literacy, and deeply reflects Cree values, culture and

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 social patterns. As such, then, I feel all Canadians  
2 should recognize and wish to protect syllabics as a part  
3 of Canadian culture.

4 I have had to learn that preserving  
5 syllabics doesn't mean storing it in a dictionary that  
6 we can file in some Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, but  
7 it means ensuring that there are people who use it. We  
8 must support the social structures within which men, women  
9 and children acquire and pass on skill in syllabics.

10 This has lead me to research exactly what  
11 current social structures and institutions have  
12 contributed to the maintenance of minority literacy around  
13 the world. Most studies reveal the same overall pattern  
14 -- minority literacy is most often maintained when it is  
15 used within religious institutions. This may be, but is  
16 not necessarily, dependent on its also being taught in  
17 school.

18 Some famous examples of this are the  
19 Jewish people who retained Hebrew literacy for almost 3000  
20 years by religious use. Others include the Hutterites,  
21 the Cherokee, the Navajo, many Australian and New Zealand  
22 groups and North American Immigrant communities. Most,  
23 but not all of these examples involve the Christian church

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 use of literacy.

2 I would like to clarify what I mean by  
3 literacy use - well, first as support for oral  
4 participation in the worship service or classroom, second  
5 for reading or passing on knowledge, then, for use by  
6 ministers and teachers as their own language of literacy;  
7 and finally in organizational governance by bishops and  
8 education directors.

9 I mean Native people using Native  
10 literacy at all these levels in both the schools and  
11 churches, that is the pattern that demonstrates the  
12 strongest Native language and literacy retention. That  
13 doesn't necessarily mean using the minority literacy for  
14 all functions in the church and school, but at least for  
15 some functions at all of these levels.

16 My next area of study was the history  
17 of literacy in western European countries and I found out  
18 that a few hundred years ago the people who had the job  
19 description of being guardians of Native literacy were  
20 the priests. In the Church of England they were the  
21 "guardians of the Holy Writ", in Sweden, priests were not  
22 allowed to perform marriages for anyone who couldn't read  
23 and since in the country areas there were no schools, guess



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 who had to teach reading. In fact, Sunday Schools got  
2 started in Britain originally to teach people how to read.  
3 This is part of our western history.

4 To demystify the word priest, it  
5 actually comes from an early english word meaning elder,  
6 so priests were elders, guardians of literacy who dedicated  
7 themselves to the service of the Creator.

8 The way I would use the word priest  
9 today, and I hope church officers will forgive me for this,  
10 would be to refer to any Cree elders, men and women, who  
11 serve as ministers, teachers and translators for the  
12 purpose of guarding Cree culture, beliefs, language and  
13 literacy. I don't think anyone can say, we'll do it in  
14 the schools and ignore the church or vice versa -- it must  
15 be both and not either/or.

16 I would suggest then that as a response  
17 to this concern for Cree literacy, first, for Cree men  
18 and women to aspire to and dedicate time to training for  
19 positions in Cree communities as priests -- I mean either  
20 ministers or teachers. I would suggest that non-Native  
21 people hold these positions among the Cree for one reason  
22 only -- in order to pass the position on to a Cree.

23 So it is a call to responsibility on both

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 sides -- on the one side to aspire to leadership and  
2 dedicate oneself to this goal and on the other side to  
3 surrender leadership. This requires maturity and  
4 generosity on both sides as well as the support of one's  
5 own community.

6                   In practical terms this involves  
7 assigning resources and accountability for the devolution  
8 of governance positions in both schools and churches.  
9 It means a radical decentralization of the education  
10 system, with programs designed for Native people, brought  
11 to the north. Non-Native people working in the north,  
12 then, will not just be teachers and ministers, but also  
13 experienced professors of education and theology who  
14 engage themselves in dialogue with Cree communities. It  
15 means a tertiary education system that is accountable to  
16 the Cree community.

17                   It should also mean that more Native  
18 people from the north will be able to go on to engage  
19 themselves in western education programs in the south,  
20 not as consumers of a western product, but critically,  
21 with a view to further dialogue.

22                   While most of this is already beginning  
23 to happen, there needs to be a coordiNation of policy

November 5, 1992

128

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 initiatives, allocation of resources and status for the  
2 training and promotion of Native people as teachers and  
3 ministers, superintendents and bishops, and a conscious  
4 effort to recognize both church and school as essential  
5 in the transmission and maintenance of Native literacy.

6 I am not talking about Native churches  
7 and schools which use the Native language, but imitate  
8 western institutions, nor am I talking about churches and  
9 schools which tack on Native language and culture or Native  
10 spirituality as an afterthought, but institutions which  
11 fill their function as churches and schools -- based on  
12 Native patterns of governance and Native ideology.

13 Meeqwetch.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I am  
15 wondering if you could tell us what, if anything, is being  
16 done within the Anglican Church either in respect of having  
17 Native people train for the ministry or the priesthood  
18 so that they can go in and minister to Native communities  
19 or what is done to train non-Native persons in the language  
20 and culture of Native people and particularly in their  
21 spirituality? Are there programs within the church  
22 directed to either of these two things.

23 **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** They are -- in a

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 sense -- in an infancy stage, to a certain extent. There  
2 is a program now of concentric theological education  
3 developed by the Diocese in Moosonee. It has taken a few  
4 years getting started and it is still in the beginning  
5 stages. That is why I say there needs to be some  
6 coordiNation of policy.

7 I see the efforts being made, but I see  
8 a very slow start up, on both sides. I think there is  
9 a hard time getting some people to train full time in these  
10 programs even though it is brought to their communities.

11 At the same time, I also see that the  
12 ministers who are in the communities -- to function as  
13 mentors for this program -- do not have the training to  
14 fill that function.

15 I see the program being there. It is  
16 commendable, but I question whether there is the  
17 coordiNation of effort. That is you can't just find a  
18 curriculum which is acceptable. You are using a  
19 curriculum developed among the Navajo by Native people.

20 So I think that says something about  
21 resources available in Canada to being with that this was  
22 the best program found. I have nothing against it. I  
23 would like to see more done here. Not just the curriculum

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 content, but the training of the people who are the  
2 facilitators of the program.

3 I don't feel there is enough being done  
4 in that area in the Anglican church. I feel that this  
5 is the responsibility of -- I would say -- the seminaries  
6 and institutions in the south.

7 I don't see a coordiNation of effort  
8 within the Anglican church at the highest levels, but I  
9 would have to say I am not fully informed. I can only  
10 speak on observation.

11 I will be moving to Toronto soon and will  
12 continue to investigate this and bring it to the attention  
13 of the seminaries and higher authorities of the church  
14 in the near future.

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Would it  
16 be true to say that this is a purely diocism initiative  
17 and not the result of any overall church policy?

18 **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** I would have to say  
19 that is my impression. I don't know for sure because I  
20 have only been acting as a consultant. I am not a member.

21 I am not part of the Anglican church as a employee. I  
22 believe that the Anglican church has many strong pro-Native  
23 policies so I do not question that. They have a training

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 school in the north among the Inuit. However, as I say  
2 to me it is lack of coordiNation. There is a Native  
3 ministries consortium and I have not consulted with them  
4 either, but hope to do so soon.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** This would  
6 seem to be something that perhaps the various churches  
7 should collaborate on -- I would think -- as opposed to  
8 dealing with this on the basis of individual denomiNations.

9 **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** That is a difficult  
10 question because a lot of areas among the Native people  
11 there is a geographic distribution of churches so I would  
12 say in the Diocese in Moosonee there is -- the United  
13 church, as far as I know, does not have any parishes up  
14 here. There are the Pentecostals and I guess that is the  
15 other strong element.

16 I am not sure whether they would  
17 coordinate on training. I would like to see them --  
18 certainly more coordiNation on the production of texts,  
19 Bibles, hymn books and so on. I think there could be a  
20 lot done interdenomiNationally there.

21 I have been working at promoting this.  
22 As I say it is very much to my way of seeing it. It is  
23 very much at the infant stage of their people coming in

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 with outside social science training to look at this.  
2 It is the time that it takes and the two or three years  
3 I have been working to just simply engage myself in some  
4 idea of Cree social patterns and community life. It takes  
5 a lot of time.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes,  
7 because I think it is very confusing for non-Native people  
8 to have 57 different varieties of a Christian religion  
9 that it would seem that starting something new like this  
10 -- an ecumenical approach -- would seem to make eminent  
11 good sense.

12 **SUZANNE MCCARTHY:** I think that would  
13 have to be up to the Native people. I would not presume  
14 to comment on something like that at all.

15 I guess I feel that the church needs to  
16 be accountable to the Native communities. That the  
17 education programs come in. The tertiary education  
18 programs need to be accountable to the Cree communities.

19 I think the Cree people need to assert this accountability  
20 in terms of tertiary programs and governments. Then if  
21 they would like to be interdenominational or ecumenical  
22 then that is certainly their choice. I have no opinion  
23 on that.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.  
2                   Mary, please.

3                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
4 like to thank you very much for your presentation.

5                   As you are aware there are two writing  
6 systems for Inuit. One is the Romanorthography and the  
7 other is Syllabics which is very much alive in the eastern  
8 arctic at the NWT, Nunuvik (PH) and Northern Quebec. Of  
9 course, the other agents either have Romanorthography or  
10 they have Syllabics.

11                  I was wondering it is primarily a lot  
12 of the unilingual Inuktituk speaking people know syllabics  
13 very well and there is some efforts by the more progressive  
14 areas to teach Inuktituk and the writing system to the  
15 children, but I guess there is problems with funding, etc.

16 I was wondering do you know what the experience of the  
17 Cree syllabic is?

18                  **SUZANNE MCCARTHY:** I think,  
19 unfortunately, the Cree syllabics is probably not as well  
20 placed in the statistics at least. So all I can say of  
21 the Inuktituk syllabics, that Inuktituk is stronger. I  
22 am not sure whether for the maintenance of syllabic use  
23 whether everyone has be able to use it. That may be



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 unrealistic. What I see is a group of people who consider  
2 themselves dedicated to this.

3 I think in the arctic, the fact that  
4 there are more Inuktituk priests who use it for reading  
5 and I centre back on religious text because these are the  
6 earliest and most well used of the texts in syllabics,  
7 whether among the Inuktituk or Cree.

8 So I feel that the church should put this  
9 at the centre of their responsibility to the Cree and  
10 Inuktituk to train Native people who use syllabics and  
11 who will use syllabics week by week and those people will  
12 pass it on in the church whether or not it is successful  
13 in the school system.

14 I comment on this as a world wide  
15 pattern. It may not be everything I think Cree language  
16 teaches in the schools. I don't discount that one bit,  
17 but other people are studying that so I have focused on  
18 the use in the church.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

20 Allan, please.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
22 you.

23 There have been materials in Cree

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 syllabics around the Anglican church for a good number  
2 of years. I recall seeing hymn books at Stanley Mission  
3 15 years ago anyway. They go much farther back than that.

4 I was interested in your last comment.

5 Institutions which fill their functions as churches and  
6 schools based on Native patterns of governance and Native  
7 ideology. Does any such institution exist at the present  
8 time that you could point to?

9 **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** I am not sure if it  
10 does in Canada or not, but I think there are -- in other  
11 countries where indigenous peoples have more  
12 self-government in other areas, they may also in the  
13 church. That is they may have churches which are their  
14 own. Among the Navajo there is a Navajo Bishop who has  
15 been trained through the same program that has been brought  
16 in here.

17 So, I am talking about when Native people  
18 go through all the levels and are provided with the  
19 education to do so, that they take that education not as  
20 something that is handed to them or transmitted to them  
21 as a product. You know, take this. But that they are  
22 allowed to interact and bring their own culture to the  
23 education. So the education becomes a combination of

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 their own background, the needs of their people and  
2 education provided whether it is through the church or  
3 school system.

4 I think there are a great many parallels  
5 here whether it is training teachers, whatever, but each  
6 side brings what they have. The products that would be  
7 Native people who have the training and dedication to be  
8 the teachers or superintendents or bishops or whatever.

9 But in taking that education they are still going to  
10 develop a governance style that is according to Cree social  
11 -- Native social -- patterns. I do think this happens.

12 There is Fiji, the Navajo, there is many  
13 cases in Australia and New Zealand where this is happening.

14 There are counter problems to that maybe, but I think  
15 those are areas which should be studied for the successes  
16 and problems of that type of model.

17 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
18 you.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
20 for coming and talking about a very fascinating area.  
21 I am sure one that we will hear quite a lot about in the  
22 future.

23 Thank you very much.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **SUZANNE MCCARTHY:** Thank you.

2                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Our  
3 Commissioner would like to make some comments.

4                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

5   **SHEESHISH:** It is very nice to hear that you are trying  
6 to learn the Cree language, but it is going to take you  
7 a long time. If you really put your mind to it, you will  
8 succeed.

9                   I am telling you don't use A, B, C when  
10 you want to learn the Cree language, please the syllabic  
11 system that is how I do it when they teach the language.  
12 Even for the english language, like I am coordinating  
13 literacy programs. What I do for those non-speakers with  
14 the english language, I use the syllabic system. That  
15 way they seem to learn faster than if I was trying to teach  
16 them how to read in english. It is still in english.

17                   I guess my program is one of the unique  
18 programs because a lot of other literacy programs have  
19 asked me for the materials I use. I said, since you don't  
20 know how to read or write the syllabics it won't do any  
21 good to your program.

22                   But most of the churches I know up north,  
23 like I am from Attawapaskat, and the priest that we have

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 up in Attawapaskat there, flew in Cree speakers. They  
2 know how to read and write with the syllabic system.  
3 Actually that is where I learned my syllabics was from  
4 one of the men that used to teach us when I was at the  
5 residential school.

6 I am proud to say that I learned syllabic  
7 system from the school even though I am one of the victims.

8 I am not going to get into that either, yet. It is so  
9 nice to know when someone like you -- your age -- can master  
10 a few words.

11 Thank you.

12 **SUZANNE MCCARTHY:** I guess I don't know  
13 how to say it, express it anyway, but to say that truly  
14 there is something absolutely unique about syllabics.  
15 It has opened up a whole new way of thinking about language  
16 and literacy for me. I don't think that there is any way  
17 I can emphasize enough the difference between using an  
18 alphabet and using syllabics. It is like two different  
19 worlds. I wish I knew how to communicate that to make  
20 more english people understand that. I am working on it.

21 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

22 **SHEESHISH:** Don't get mixed up with the Chinese writing  
23 system.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** No. I do some  
2 comparisons and that is one of my hobbies is writing system  
3 comparison and no, it is the opposite end of the spectrum,  
4 but I think they are both equally different from an alphabet  
5 and I think sometimes in itself you get a lot more exposure  
6 for Chinese and I guess I am trying to say we have something  
7 here in Canada that is truly unique and we all should be  
8 proud of it.

9                   We should put it front and centre and  
10 concentrate energy on protecting it. We should be  
11 prepared to put in -- invest resources whether in the church  
12 or the schools or both in the continuance of this literacy  
13 and have a lot more dialogue between the institutions in  
14 the south. The tertiary education systems in the south  
15 and the north.

16                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
17 very much.

18                   **SUZANNE McCARTHY:** Thank you.

19                   **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you.

20 Commissioners, I would like to request a change in the  
21 speakers. Both of the speakers are here, presenters.  
22 However, Dorothy Wynne who is from Kapuskasing which is  
23 about a hundred miles northwest from here has to be in

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the community by 4:00 and she would like -- an agreement  
2 has been made with Lindberg Louttit that she would switch  
3 places with her. Lindberg Louttit would go after Jack  
4 Yard and John Farrington who are presenting on behalf of  
5 the Porcupine United Way.

6 So if you are in agreement we would ---

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

8 That is fine.

9 **ED SACKENEY:** I would like to present  
10 to you Ms Dorothy Wynne. She is originally from Moose  
11 Factory. She has been involved with the Ontario Native  
12 Women's Association for the past 10 years at the provincial  
13 level as well as the local level.

14 As well, she has been involved with the  
15 Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association for about seven years  
16 serving in the capacity of a board member at the provincial  
17 level, as well as up to the president of the local.

18 She also created and started the  
19 Friendship Centre since 1985. The Friendship Centre is  
20 quite unique in the sense that it has been operating solely  
21 on volunteers and receives no continuous support from any  
22 government source whether it be federal or provincial.

23 I would like to present Ms Dorothy Wynne

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 and she will be speaking on behalf of the Kapuskasing Indian  
2 Friendship Centre.

3 **DOROTHY WYNNE, KAPUSKASING INDIAN**

4 **FRIENDSHIP CENTRE:** Good afternoon.

5 Greetings from Kapuskasing Indian  
6 Friendship Centre. I present this tobacco to you and wish  
7 to thank you for coming north to listen to our people in  
8 this area.

9 Tobacco is usually wrapped in cloth, but  
10 you will understand the significance of my wrap as I make  
11 my presentation.

12 The Aboriginal community of Kapuskasing  
13 decided in '85 that there was a Friendship Centre needed  
14 in the community to better service our members and  
15 establish the communication link with other service  
16 organizations and providers. It became incorporated in  
17 '85.

18 The Board of Directors consists of seven  
19 members from the Aboriginal community. An elected  
20 President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and three  
21 Board Members.

22 Although we have been making annual  
23 submissions to the Secretary of State for core-funding



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 there has never been any money allocated for new and  
2 developing centres such as ours.

3                   Yet in the Secretary of State criteria,  
4 the Aboriginal peoples program, they say that a Friendship  
5 Centre has to be operating for at least two years in order  
6 to secure funding. Well, we have been going on for eight  
7 years without any government assistance.

8                   Despite the fact that there have been  
9 no operational funds, we have been able to keep our Centre  
10 doors open and provide the assistance to our community  
11 through a fund raising effort that is done by our  
12 volunteers. They surely need to be commended.

13                   We have submitted to other ministries  
14 for different projects and programs without success. An  
15 example is this proposal I have here that was submitted  
16 to the Attorney General's office for a community justice  
17 worker. Attached to this proposal -- you can have for  
18 your use -- is a response we received from the AGM's office.

19 It took them one year less five days from the submission  
20 when it was submitted before they responded.

21                   During that time numerous numbers of our  
22 people have gone through the justice system involved with  
23 courts.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   In regard to employment and training for  
2   our members, the Aboriginal people of our community have  
3   difficulty in getting employment due to the fact that  
4   Kapuskasing is a bilingual town. Most job opportunities  
5   specify that french and english are a requirement that  
6   have to be met. Also, due to lack of education.

7                   In regards to the training program,  
8   Pathways to Success, had a positive impact on our  
9   Aboriginal community. The Friendship Centre secured  
10  \$180,882 on training dollars. Tanning of moose hide and  
11  deer hide was done by the traditional methods. The  
12  allocation of these training dollars encouraged us to apply  
13  for funds to set up an Aboriginal tannery for moose and  
14  deer hides.

15                  The market for the moose and deer hide  
16  is being done now. The tannery would be environmentally  
17  safe as there are no chemicals being used in the process.

18                  The moose hair is being utilized in  
19  preparing it for the moose hair tufting art work. The  
20  hides that are not suitable for tanning are being used  
21  in making babish. That is the netting for the snow shoes.

22   We had hoped to utilize the scrapings from the hides for  
23  bait for trappers, but due to lack of freezers we were

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   unable to do that process.

2                   We are still pursuing the idea of setting  
3   up a tannery. It would establish an economic base for  
4   our Friendship Centre and be self-sustaining in the long  
5   run.

6                   We would resolve the bilingual problem  
7   as we know that one does not have to parlez-vous francais  
8   while moose hides are being scraped or worked on. We would  
9   be producing top quality product. The example being the  
10  wrap on the tobacco being presented to you today.

11                  There is special difficulty in  
12  Aboriginal peoples in our areas, not in the lack of  
13  services, but in the lack of the cultural understanding,  
14  sensitivity and Native values. The non-Native services  
15  organizations and service providers do not know enough  
16  about our people and yet they are servicing them.

17                  Agencies that work with our people are  
18  usually done through Court Orders and that should have  
19  to be that way. They should feel free to go to these  
20  organizations if we cannot meet their needs at our  
21  Friendship Centre.

22                  The Friendship Centre's main goal is to  
23  improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people in urban

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 settings. Our Friendship Centre's Board of Directors and  
2 community volunteers have been struggling to secure funds  
3 so that the following can be achieved.

4                   If we secured core-funding we would be  
5 able to hire staff, therefore creating employment for full  
6 and half time positions. That would effect the economy  
7 of the town and the area. We could provide culturally  
8 appropriate programs such as little beavers, an Aboriginal  
9 addiction counsellor or social student counsellor to work  
10 with the drop outs and students.

11                   We would be able to concentrate on  
12 setting up the economic base for our centre. That would  
13 be towards a step to self-government. That is what we  
14 are supposed to be all about.

15                   In regards to the protection of  
16 traditional hunting, fishing and trapping, we are finding  
17 there are more non-Aboriginal people that are doing the  
18 trapping and fishing and commercial fishermen and  
19 trappers, who of course, have the same concerns of the  
20 environmental effects to the area so we have to work with  
21 those people and continue the communication link with them.

22                   I want to thank each and every one of  
23 you for giving me the opportunity to make this

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 presentation. I wish you a good and safe journey home.

2 Meeqwetch.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
4 very much.

5 That is an interesting concept that  
6 there are no french speaking moose in and around  
7 Kapuskasing.

8 I am wondering what fields do young  
9 people in Kapuskasing go into? What kind of training are  
10 they looking for themselves?

11 **DOROTHY WYNNE:** There have been some  
12 students that have gone to the Native Drug and Alcohol  
13 Abuse Programs delivered by a northern college here in  
14 South Porcupine. They have graduated. We have one of  
15 our own members that is working in a Toronto centre for  
16 men in regards to Native drug and abuse counselling. That  
17 is that area.

18 We have teachers that have worked as  
19 teachers through northern college and have gone down now  
20 to Sudbury because there are no opportunities up here.

21 There are social workers that are  
22 trained. We went to bat for one of our own community  
23 members, she was a Cambian graduate, she applied for the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Children's Aid in Kapuskasing for the job and they told  
2 her the job opportunities were there. You had to be  
3 bilingual french and english.

4 Well, we went to bat for that worker.

5 We asked to meet with the Executive Director, the social  
6 workers within that agency. We took to them our own terms  
7 of reference of our own Child Welfare Committee within  
8 the Friendship Centre. We met with them. You are using  
9 Aboriginal dollars from the government to service our  
10 people yet you don't have any people, any staff members,  
11 within your agency.

12 We showed them our terms of reference  
13 and two weeks later they had an add in the paper because  
14 we threatened to advertise and seek monies for our own  
15 Aboriginal Child Care Worker within our Friendship Centre.

16 We threatened to do that. They took the task and went  
17 ahead and hired our Cambrian graduate in Child Welfare.

18 So there are the addiction services that  
19 are required, the counsellors are required. The child  
20 care workers. We have one in the Children's Aid in  
21 Kapuskasing. I don't know if there is any one around in  
22 other areas. Like in Hurst, I don't know if there is  
23 another one there, but in urban centres like that.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Native student counsellors. We have  
2   the highest drop out rate within the education system.  
3   We don't have a Native social student counsellor in our  
4   schools that can deal with the elementary and the separate  
5   school board working together and the high schools.

6                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** In  
7   connection with the job requirement -- I am not  
8   knowledgeable about Kapuskasing -- do most of the people  
9   who live in and around that area, are they mostly french  
10  speaking?

11                  **DOROTHY WYNNE:** They are mostly french,  
12  yes.

13                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** They are.

14                  **DOROTHY WYNNE:** Yes. Kapuskasing was  
15  declared a bilingual town maybe about three years ago.

16                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I see.

17                  **DOROTHY WYNNE:** But with the  
18  down-sizing of the mill there is less jobs being available  
19  there too, with the down-sizing of that mill. So it is  
20  harder for our young people to get work.

21                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

22                               Mary, have you anything that you would  
23  like to ask?

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** First of  
2 all, I would like to thank you very much for travelling  
3 100 miles to make your presentation. Thank you very much  
4 for the tobacco.

5                   I guess essentially your major concern  
6 is the need for operational funding. Is that correct?

7                   **DOROTHY WYNNE:** Yes. Support for the  
8 operational funding, but also support for the  
9 establishment of that tannery. We have done the training  
10 part of it. It is the set up -- the structure -- to set  
11 up the tannery itself. We have hides that we can work  
12 with. We have the manpower there and they don't have to  
13 be bilingual as I said.

14                  **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
15 just like to know I guess you have dealt with Secretary  
16 of State on the Native Friendship Centre Program many times  
17 in order to request core-funding and am I correct in my  
18 understanding that the criteria of the Native Friendship  
19 Centre Program is such that it excludes your group from  
20 core-funding?

21                  **DOROTHY WYNNE:** It doesn't exclude --  
22 it excludes all Friendship Centres. There are a number  
23 -- there are seven at least in Ontario of new and developing



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 centres that haven't had or received any core-funding since  
2 1986, I believe, was the last year the Secretary of State  
3 gave out core-funding that went to a new centre in Manitoba.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** So what has  
5 been happening since then? I mean they certainly -- I  
6 am not aware of -- what action did you take in order to  
7 -- have you worked with the other groups collectively in  
8 order to lobby Secretary of State?

9 **DOROTHY WYNNE:** We are members of  
10 Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and from  
11 what I understand at the last annual meeting of the OFIFC,  
12 they are paying our membership to the National Association  
13 of Friendship Centres so they can continue lobbying with  
14 the Secretary of State.

15 The government is telling us there is  
16 not any money. Look at the thousands of dollars they spent  
17 in the war with our Aboriginal people in Oka.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
19 please.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have  
21 nothing to add except to say that you have people who are  
22 sharing the same problem with respect to Friendship Centres  
23 elsewhere. Lac Labish, (PH) I heard the exact story.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 We have organized one in '87 or '88 and we have run it  
2 for a number of years and we can't get any money from the  
3 Secretary of State and it is badly needed.

4 I think they made an excellent case as  
5 you have made an excellent case for saying that  
6 organizations such as yours who obviously are well  
7 connected and well regarded in the community otherwise  
8 you wouldn't be able to operate for five years on volunteer  
9 money.

10 You make an excellent case for saying  
11 that you should receive further support in the way that  
12 older established Friendship Centres receive.

13 **DOROTHY WYNNE:** Then I guess the  
14 emphasis should be, we need support for setting up this  
15 tannery to the government source that we will be applying  
16 for in regards to the infrastructure. We need a site.  
17 We need monies for the facility. We have the manpower,  
18 we have the hides. That is the kind of support maybe then  
19 it should be coming rather than support for the  
20 core-funding, support for the establishment of the  
21 tannery.

22 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
23 very much for coming to Timmins to talk to us and for

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 bringing the tobacco with you.

2 Thank you.

3 **DOROTHY WYNNE:** Thank you very much.

4 **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you.

5 The next presenters are from the  
6 Porcupine United Way. Mr. Jack Yard has been a volunteer  
7 for the United Way for 2 1/2 years and is presently in  
8 his second term as President of their Board. He is also  
9 a resident of Timmins for the past 15 years off and on.  
10 He is in the insurance business, travels Northern Ontario  
11 quite extensively.

12 His co-presenter is Mr. Farrington, who  
13 is the publisher and general manager of The Daily Press  
14 of Timmins. This apparently would be Mr. Farrington's  
15 second appearance before the Commission. He went up north  
16 on a different matter. He is the co-chair for their annual  
17 campaign for fund-raising which ends November 25th. He  
18 has been involved with the Thompson Newspaper chain for  
19 quite some time.

20 As a campaigner for fund-raising, he has  
21 always surpassed the amount of the target sometimes by  
22 five per cent and the United Way people feel quite fortunate  
23 to have his support since he is an extremely busy person.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   He will actually be doing the  
2 presentation with Jack Yard being there for moral support  
3 or to cover any area he may miss.

4                   So, Mr. Jack Yard and Mr. Farrington.

5                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes,  
6 please proceed.

7                   **JOHN FARRINGTON, PORCUPINE UNITED WAY:**  
8 Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen.

9                   As you heard this is the second time I  
10 have prepared a presentation for this Royal Commission.  
11 The first was at the first meetings in Ontario in Moose  
12 Factory earlier this year. Then it was in my capacity  
13 as publisher and general manager of The Daily Press. It  
14 was about the newspapers increasing role in the promotion  
15 of literacy through reading newspapers.

16                   It is a program we are very pleased with  
17 and one that we believe is having an impact in the Cree  
18 communities along the James Bay and Hudson Bay coastline  
19 in Ontario.

20                   I should tell you that since that  
21 presentation which was delivered by our newspaper and  
22 education coordinator, we have started to take our program  
23 to the Native communities on the Quebec side of James Bay.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 But that is another story.

2 Today I will deal with the Porcupine  
3 United Way.

4 Just as the newspaper is being a leader  
5 in offering a helping hand -- so is the United Way  
6 attempting to do its part to eliminate the  
7 misunderstandings and uncertainty, even uneasiness, that  
8 exists between our two cultures, our two societies.

9 We both have histories and heritage that  
10 we cherish and preserve. We will only be able to break  
11 down the barriers by sharing our ideas, our cultures,  
12 indeed ourselves.

13 Porcupine United Way is such a group of  
14 individuals -- numbering in the hundreds -- from all walks  
15 of life who believe in sharing time and talents to help  
16 those who are not able to help themselves -- physically  
17 or financially.

18 It was John F. Kennedy who put it so  
19 eloquently some thirty years ago when he  
20 said:

21 "Ask not what your country can do for  
22 you -- but what can you do for your  
23 country."

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   The other night watching the U.S.  
2 president-elect Bill Clinton make his acceptance speech,  
3 he said something very similar when he said he wanted to  
4 change the American people to be "more interested in  
5 giving, not just getting".

6                   This simple, yet profound statement, if  
7 applied to this great country of ours would, I believe,  
8 be the very key to restoring the great Canadian dream.

9                   As government funds diminish for health  
10 care costs, and there is absolutely no indication that  
11 this will ever change, we are going to have to become a  
12 society which cares for itself, rather than relying on  
13 government to look after those who find it difficult  
14 looking after themselves.

15                  More and more Canadians are going to be  
16 more generous and more aware of their obligation to help  
17 their fellow man. The difference between sickness and  
18 health is so fine, yet too often too many of us take our  
19 health for granted and in this fast-paced world in which  
20 we live delay our involvement in do-gooder groups such  
21 as United Way.

22                  Often it takes the illness of a loved  
23 one, or a friend or neighbour to jar us to the reality

November 5, 1992

156

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 that there are groups very active in our communities which  
2 operate through the kindness of so very few who have --  
3 for whatever reason -- made it their commitment to help  
4 those who can use a helping hand.

5 I am sure that many of you are familiar  
6 with the helping hand symbol of the United Way -- a logo  
7 which is used throughout Canada, North America and even  
8 the world.

9 The rainbow presents hope. The hand  
10 signifies help -- extended by people to people. And the  
11 person in the centre is the donor and the person who is  
12 helped.

13 Let me deal specifically today with the  
14 Porcupine United Way. Perhaps, we could first see our  
15 1992 video, if that would be possible. I think it is in  
16 there.

17 (VIDEO PRESENTATION)

18 I apologize for the technical  
19 difficulties at the start.

20 There are 11 member agencies in the  
21 Porcupine United Way and if I could just briefly go through  
22 them and give you there aims.

23 The Canadian Mental Health

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Association's aim is to engage in activities designed to  
2 prevent human conditions that result in emotional  
3 sickness. To reduce dependency on institution-based care  
4 and to develop support systems for clients.

5                   The Canadian National Institute for the  
6 Blind is to improve the conditions of the blind through  
7 rehabilitation and advocacy. To prevent blindness  
8 through the distribution of literature and the  
9 establishment of educational programs.

10                   Canadian Red Cross Society aims to  
11 provide volunteers in time of war and peace and to work  
12 for the improvement of health, the prevention of disease,  
13 and the alleviation of suffering throughout the world.

14                   The Ontario March of Dimes assists all  
15 physically disabled adults to achieve meaningful and  
16 dignified lives.

17                   The Porcupine Big Brother and Big Sister  
18 Association helps children from homes which are father  
19 or mother absent, develop into responsible, well-adjusted  
20 adults by spending time with a big brother or a big sister.

21                   Community Living Timmins ensures  
22 community based accommodation, employment, recreation and  
23 education for children and adults who have a developmental



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   handicap. Their aim is that all persons live in a state  
2   of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community  
3   and have the opportunity to participate effectively.

4                   The St. John Ambulance provides first  
5   aid and CPR training to the resident of Timmins and area.

6                   Telecare - Timmins provides a  
7   befriending, counselling service and a community referral  
8   service.

9                   Timmins Credit Counselling teaches  
10   clients on a one-to-one basis how to develop a budget and  
11   live within it so that they can reduce their debt to zero  
12   within a measurable period of time.

13                  Timmins Volunteer Centre recruits  
14   screens and refers volunteers to agency programs; to  
15   maintain a record of volunteers and their skills; to  
16   provide volunteer training.

17                  The Victoria Order of Nurses establishes  
18   and maintains services and programs necessary to enhance  
19   the care of patients in their home.

20                  As you saw on the video, this year we  
21   have a specially funded agency, The Timmins Therapeutic  
22   Riding Association. This Therapeutic Riding is widely  
23   accepted as a useful method of improving the physical and

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 mental well being of patient's suffering from a wide  
2 variety of disabilities. As well as providing exercise,  
3 it is recreational and creates a sense of achievement.

4                   The horse becomes what a seeing eye dog  
5 is to the blind, for he provides the legs for those who  
6 cannot run and participate in other sports. Most  
7 importantly, he gives independence from such artificial  
8 aids as crutches and wheelchairs.

9                   Everyday someone in our community is in  
10 need of support from another person: the blind; an innocent  
11 child who is the victim of abuse; or a recently widowed  
12 woman who can't face life alone.

13                   Everyday someone reaches out to help  
14 them through a United Way agency. Last year more than  
15 40 person years of volunteer time was donated by people  
16 in this fine community of ours to assist those who needed  
17 help. Forty person years, obviously that is the  
18 equivalent of forty full-time jobs.

19                   Those agencies provided 80 health and  
20 human care services which in turn were used by 80,000 client  
21 visits.

22                   Why are we making this presentation  
23 today? Simply, we believe that one of the best ways for

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 people to get to know each other is for them to work together  
2 in a volunteer capacity, especially when you can be on  
3 the front line seeing and feeling the warmth and the love  
4 of those who are the direct beneficiaries of the funding  
5 process.

6 But, I am sure there are many of you here  
7 today who have worked for things which you know to be right,  
8 sometimes quietly in the background or in the back room,  
9 and you have enjoyed that peace of mind that calmness,  
10 that serenity which envelops us as we give of ourselves.

11 We have made the first steps towards  
12 making it easier for the Native population of Northern  
13 Ontario, particularly the Porcupine and the coastal  
14 communities, to play their part as the givers. You have  
15 seen in the video that Mary Fortier is as much a giver  
16 as a receiver of Porcupine United Way services.

17 There will be representation from the  
18 Native community on the Porcupine United Way Board of  
19 Directors in 1993 and we obviously hope that that will  
20 be the beginning of a long, even never-ending relationship  
21 that will help us all work together to put some love and  
22 some caring into lives that otherwise may miss these two  
23 significant qualities.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Many Native people use the facilities  
2 of the agencies which belong to the United Way, and we  
3 are sure that with the right approach many of them would  
4 be able to experience the obvious happiness that Mary  
5 Fortier feels -- and that many of us thrive on -- as we  
6 are presented with opportunities to help our fellow human  
7 beings.

8                   It would be my hope that when the Native  
9 community jumps into United Way with both feet that we  
10 won't keep the services and the service separated. We  
11 are the United Way -- I would expect that we would be  
12 completely united in our efforts to help all those who  
13 need our help, not only those who speak the same and look  
14 the same as we do.

15                  A famous man once said: No other success  
16 can compensate for failure in the home.

17                  I submit to you today that funds raised  
18 by United Way while they are a means to the end, they are  
19 definitely not the end. Our success as a United Way family  
20 is totally dependent on us getting along as a family.  
21 One group of people, working with one goal -- to help the  
22 persons who need our help the most.

23                  The aims of this Commission are to look

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 for a path of reconciliation, a basis for sharing and to  
2 interpret the different cultures.

3                   Your goal is to find ways to achieve  
4 equality, dignity and full participation by Aboriginal  
5 peoples in Canada's economic prosperity and political life  
6 -- and I would submit to you that you should not overlook  
7 the social life and the community involvement that is  
8 necessary to make this Nation greater and our reason for  
9 being on this earth more worthwhile.

10                   The work of the Royal Commission will  
11 help begin the journey down the path of reconciliation.

12 Please count in the Porcupine United Way as one group  
13 of dedicated people wanting to make that trip with you.

14                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Did Mr.  
15 Yard have anything he wanted to add?

16                   **JACK YARD:** Basically the point that I  
17 want to make which John made very clearly was that the  
18 Porcupine United Way and the communities that we serve  
19 -- not only Timmins, but right up through the James  
20 Bay area -- we can work together and succeed in growth  
21 through synergy and a synergist relationship with the  
22 Aboriginal population, french and english population in  
23 Northern Ontario is going to add strength to everybody's

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 feelings in the community and make us all enjoy and be  
2 able to relate better to one another in the future.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
4 very much.

5 I am sure that we all appreciate the  
6 tremendous work that United Way does. It is a wonderful  
7 mechanism through which the citizens can express the care  
8 in society, the responsibility that we all feel for people  
9 who are less fortunate than ourselves.

10 Personally, I have been involved with  
11 the issue of philanthropy for a long time and was one of  
12 the founding members of the Canadian Centre for  
13 philanthropy which has an interesting role.

14 It is really a resource centre which  
15 identifies the various bodies that support particular  
16 needs. So the person who has a need and needs support  
17 and funding knows which agencies to apply to to get that  
18 need. Some agencies support only people with medical  
19 needs that they can't afford. Others educational needs  
20 and so on.

21 We felt there was a need for a resource  
22 centre that had that kind of information so that it could  
23 direct people to the body or the agency that was interested

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 in meeting those particular needs. It has turned out to  
2 be a very valuable resource and they have an 800 number  
3 and they are fully staffed and their sole concern is  
4 directing people to the right sources because there is  
5 such a meviad of them in addition to United Way that look  
6 after only very special concerns.

7 I think that the United Way is a  
8 wonderful concept. I am sure we all support them because  
9 we do hold ourselves out in Canada as being a caring society  
10 and this is one way we can express that.

11 I would like to -- I know this is not  
12 why you are here, Mr. Farrington -- and you don't have  
13 to respond to this if you don't wish to, but I would be  
14 interested because of your involvement in media knowing  
15 how you think the media -- whether it is the press or radio,  
16 television -- how can the media -- what could the media  
17 do -- as you know our overall objective on the Commission  
18 is to develop totally new kind of relationship between  
19 Native people and other Canadians and have a true  
20 partnership relationship.

21 The media has so much power -- the press,  
22 television -- they are such powerful instruments as you  
23 realize because you are using it here to promote the cause

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 of United Way.

2 I am wondering what you think the role  
3 of our responsible media should be in the venture on which  
4 we are engaged? Would you care to comment on that?

5 **JOHN FARRINGTON:** What kind of press  
6 have you been getting as you travel around?

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Well, we  
8 have been getting some coverage, but I am thinking more  
9 at large, quite apart from just reporting what is happening  
10 at our hearings. I am wondering whether the media doesn't  
11 have a larger role in promoting the cause of Native people  
12 -- whether it would see that as an obligation that it has  
13 because it is the repository of tremendous power and  
14 usually we think that people who have power also have  
15 responsibilities that should go with it.

16 I am just wondering what your thoughts  
17 are on that.

18 **JOHN FARRINGTON:** Maybe I could just  
19 tell you some of the things that I know and some of the  
20 involvement that I have had. I worked in a number of  
21 communities where there have been substantial Native  
22 communities, perhaps more significantly in Lethbridge,  
23 Alberta, where the Bloods and the Pagans are very very



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 strong. I believe the Bloods have the largest reserve  
2 in Canada in that particular area.

3                   There, of course, was a significant  
4 amount of business to be done between the two different  
5 cultures. We attempted to establish on several occasions  
6 a page -- albeit weekly -- and didn't have a lot of success  
7 in doing that. We then went to what I feel was the best  
8 route to try to get a correspondent or someone who was  
9 interested in writing Native affairs and we had some  
10 success with that.

11                   I think there is a great interest in the  
12 rest of the population to learn more about all of the  
13 peoples that make up this land of ours. It then petered  
14 out. We attempted to get a full-time person and I believe  
15 the University of Western Ontario had a course at one time  
16 for Native journalism students. It was cancelled. I can  
17 only assume through lack of participation.

18                   The Thompson Company now has annual  
19 scholarships where they are attempting to bring in Native  
20 peoples into the workforce in our newspapers particularly  
21 into the editorial department. I did apply for one for  
22 Timmins this year for 1993, but so far I haven't heard  
23 back whether I will be successful.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   We are attempting -- albeit on a small  
2   scale here in Timmins -- to bring newspapers and newspaper  
3   reading and reading period into the lives of those people  
4   who we feel that we can touch more in our circulation area.

5                   I spent some time up in Kewanuk (PH)  
6   which is a community of about 260 people, following Wenesk  
7   right up on Hudson Bay. There I met with a group of grade  
8   6 and 7 students and there suggested -- following a whole  
9   day of talking about newspapers and showing them what  
10  newspapers could do -- would they like to produce their  
11  own Kewanuk (PH) newspaper. Everyone in the class thought  
12  it was a great idea except one young man who thought it  
13  was too whitemanish. This is grade 5 or 6 students.

14                  We have since produced for the students  
15  for that 260 population community -- have since produced  
16  three newspapers. They create eight tabloid pages on  
17  their macintosh computers with the help of newspaper and  
18  educational person and usually we send up an editor. So  
19  we send two people up for three days once every couple  
20  of months to work with the students to produce and eight  
21  page newspaper.

22                  We provide them with disposable cameras  
23  so that they can take their own pictures, send them down

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 to us. We develop them and they are able to take them  
2 back up so that they can place them on to the pages as  
3 they want them while we are there helping them to develop  
4 their newspaper.

5 We are attempting in 1993 to produce 20  
6 similar newspapers in the various communities in which  
7 we deal right now and those where we are going into on  
8 the Quebec side. I don't know how difficult it is going  
9 to be for us to work on the Quebec side, but we have  
10 certainly made -- we have been in Wiskagonish (PH) and  
11 our looking at going up to the communities further north.

12 I would hope that we would be able to  
13 produce or that the students in those communities would  
14 be able to produce perhaps two or three newspapers each  
15 -- one every quarter during the school year.

16 Looking at it globally, I think with the  
17 University of Western Ontario program not succeeding, I  
18 think perhaps if we start off a lot smaller and develop  
19 -- I realize that you want to go a lot faster than waiting  
20 for grade 5 and 6 students to be able to create their own  
21 newspapers or produce their own thoughts in other  
22 newspapers throughout the country.

23 I think this is a start. I think there

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 are many other people like those at The Daily Press  
2 throughout the country who would work with Native  
3 populations given the encouragement and we have certainly  
4 been given a lot of encouragement in this community by  
5 the Native people to be involved with their children.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

7 It occurred to me at the time when there  
8 were the financial cutbacks on the means of communication,  
9 the communications network, among Native people which was  
10 a very damaging thing -- the financial cutbacks on the  
11 newspapers, radio and television and so on.

12 I wondered whether there was any  
13 umbrella organization of media people that would have felt  
14 a responsibility to say, look, we are media people. We  
15 realize how important it is for diverse, wide-spread Native  
16 communities to have a really effective communications  
17 system and try to use the influence that the media have  
18 -- if you like -- to plead the cause of other journalists  
19 and other Native media people because it is hard when you  
20 are fighting for your own cause alone, but if there is  
21 an umbrella body of all journalists or all press people  
22 who were prepared to say, look, we think this is important.  
23 We know the importance and the influence and the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 contribution that the media can make to take up that cause  
2 would obviously be far more effective with government  
3 departments than the Native people themselves trying to  
4 make a plea for funding.

5 I just wondered if any such effort was  
6 made or could be made.

7 **JOHN FARRINGTON:** I am not aware that  
8 one was made. There are two groups that spring to mind,  
9 one the Canadian Press and the other, The Canadian Daily  
10 Newspaper Association.

11 Of course, there is a counterpart with  
12 the Weekly Association in Canada. The Canadian Press is  
13 wholly owned by the newspapers and is a non-profit  
14 organization as is the Canadian Daily Newspaper  
15 Association.

16 Perhaps the way to go would be to -- if  
17 someone felt the way that you feel could make a presentation  
18 to them at their annual meetings which are usually held  
19 in Toronto in April and usually on the same day or on  
20 successive days when all the editors -- not necessarily  
21 the editors, but the publishers and general managers --  
22 get together and hear presentations such as the one that  
23 you foresee.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **JOHN FARRINGTON:** I could certainly  
2 help you with coming up with names to get on those  
3 particular agendas.

4                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.  
5 I don't think we should just let that  
6 rest the way it is and any assistance you can give or  
7 suggestions would be appreciated.

8                   **JOHN FARRINGTON:** Thank you.

9                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I will ask  
10 Mary if there is anything she wishes to add.

11                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
12 like to thank you both, and in particular, I would like  
13 to thank yourself. I understand this is the second time  
14 that you have made a presentation to the Commission.

15                   Just one general question -- more  
16 specific question. You were saying that in 1993 you will  
17 be having one person on your Board of Directors who is  
18 a Native person. I am just wondering how long you have  
19 been in existence. Has it taken a long time to get a Native  
20 person to your Board? Why 1993? I am sort of interested  
21 in that.

22                   Also, how large is your Board? Is there  
23 only one Native person and many non-Native persons? If

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 so, what kind of impact do you think that person can have?  
2 Do you see anything else that your organization can do  
3 to make the process more inclusive?

4 **JACK YARD:** Porcupine United Way has  
5 been in existence for 25 years. This is our 25th year.  
6 It has started off as a very small organization with a  
7 few individuals coming forward to organize a fund-raising  
8 effort on behalf of the local agencies.

9 As far as our numbers right now we have  
10 12, 13 Board Members and we invite the Aboriginal community  
11 to provide representation on our Board -- as we are  
12 beginning to reach out further into the communities outside  
13 of Timmins.

14 The fund-raising efforts for the  
15 Porcupine United Way have been concentrated very much so  
16 in the business sector and the residential sector within  
17 Timmins. The representation that you are asking about  
18 has not been there through no intentional oversight  
19 however, it has just been a fact that when asked for  
20 volunteers to come forward rather than soliciting from  
21 specific areas, it seems that the volunteers have come  
22 not from that sector of the population.

23 Our mandate includes coverage right up

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 through the James Bay coast and we feel that in order to  
2 better provide the services that reach out into those  
3 areas, we have to have a representation from the Aboriginal  
4 community sitting with us to better direct us in those  
5 areas.

6                               So we are beginning to reach out and one  
7 of the first ways that we are going to be able to do that  
8 is through having a member or members from those  
9 communities sitting on the Board to assist us and direct  
10 us in where we should be looking.

11                               I hope that answers your question.

12                               **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
13 please.

14                               **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I want to  
15 thank you for your presentation and make a couple of  
16 comments and then ask a question or two.

17                               My first comment is that your  
18 presentation is right in line with what this Commission  
19 is called upon to deal with. Among the items in our mandate  
20 we are asked to look at social issues being those things  
21 that might improve life for Aboriginal people on reserves,  
22 in cities or wherever they may live. That is not a direct  
23 quote, but it is pretty close.



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   As you can see that is exactly what you  
2 are about. Your concerns are not confined to Aboriginal  
3 people, but they certainly include Aboriginal people.  
4 Your purpose is to improve life for people who live in  
5 cities and on reserves and in rural areas -- north of here.

6                   My second point is that I fully  
7 appreciate the work of the United appeal. We used to call  
8 them campaign teams in Regina and I served on them more  
9 than one year, several years.

10                  I digress now for a moment, and say how  
11 interested I was in the proposal -- not of the proposal,  
12 the project -- you have for getting grades 5 and 6 students  
13 -- giving them skills to put out a printed piece on a more  
14 or less regular basis. It has been my sense that in the  
15 rather rough and tumble world in which we live, Aboriginal  
16 people would be well advised to gather in some skills of  
17 how to put out their story using the media and using the  
18 media in as inexpensive a way as possible.

19                  I suspect that you are teaching these  
20 young people to put out a piece that may not be a perfect  
21 looking piece, but it is a piece and it is done economically  
22 and that I think is one of the skills which -- whether  
23 it should be this way or not -- Aboriginal people are going

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 to have acquire in order to fight their battle in the  
2 general community as we more or less all have to do.

3 This is the type of society that we live  
4 in and we are not disappointed that we live in that kind  
5 of society where there is a certain give and take.

6 I make one further point and call  
7 attention to tomorrow morning where we are going to have  
8 a discussion on resource development and Aboriginal land  
9 claims. You may well think that this is media worthy and  
10 if you did my plea would be not to report it as a boxing  
11 match, but as a clash of opinions or differing opinions  
12 being presented -- if I may put it this way -- and get  
13 the ideas out there as opposed to what I sometimes see  
14 elections and other things reported as essentially horse  
15 races.

16 However exciting boxing matches are, I  
17 would like to think we can get some clash of opinions so  
18 that each attempts to get a better chance to understand  
19 the others point of view.

20 Enough of this chatter, I want to ask  
21 two questions. I think I know the answer to this one,  
22 but are there any predominantly Aboriginal organizations  
23 who are recipient members of the United Way? I think the

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 answer to that is probably no. This is not to suggest  
2 that the clients aren't that way, but the organization  
3 itself is probably not so defined. I will allow you to  
4 answer that.

5 Do you think that Aboriginal people by  
6 and large feel comfortable with most of the United Way  
7 agencies? Some of them will be specialized, some of them  
8 will have their own particular clientele. It is always  
9 thus, but if I may ask this general question, do you think  
10 that the Aboriginal clients feel comfortable in accessing  
11 these agencies or is there still a cultural barrier there?

12 **JACK YARD:** For your first question I  
13 would say you were right and for your second one, I would  
14 imagine there is some uneasiness and some difficulty and  
15 I would think it would depend on the kind of agency that  
16 we are talking about whether it is an agency that is  
17 necessary to maintain health or one that is simply one  
18 that could improve their quality of life -- such as a credit  
19 counselling service.

20 I don't know what the percentages are  
21 of use by Native peoples -- of any of the agencies -- but  
22 I would imagine that with more Native Aboriginal  
23 involvement in the organization itself that the weaning

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 process would be very much easier and the people who do  
2 need the services and all of the services of the United  
3 Way in this community would feel comfortable when once  
4 whatever barriers there are there -- perceived or  
5 otherwise, perception is reality -- whenever they can be  
6 broken down.

7 I would hope that as soon as possible  
8 in 1993 that might start with the person joining our Board  
9 of Directors. Again, it is going to be I think up to the  
10 media and up the Friendship Centre and all of the other  
11 Native support groups in the community to open up the doors  
12 to United Way. I think it is something that is more going  
13 to be in the hands of the Aboriginal people than in our  
14 hands to encourage them to go through the doors of the  
15 various agencies -- to knock on the doors and to seek  
16 support. The support is going to be there. They have  
17 nothing to fear.

18 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
19 you.

20 I think you have virtually implied what  
21 I would say that there is certainly a place for  
22 organizations dedicated -- next to exclusively -- to  
23 Aboriginal interests, but we can't possibly replicate all

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 of society's institutions for Aboriginal people because  
2 we will dissipate our resources and Aboriginal people  
3 particularly are likely to get the short end of that stick  
4 -- life being what it is with minority groups -- therefore,  
5 if it is possible to make these organizations sensitive  
6 and welcoming for Aboriginal clients then we have done  
7 a good piece of work for society in the best traditions  
8 of John F. Kennedy and anything that you can do along that  
9 line would I think be a solid contribution.

10 **JACK YARD:** Thank you, Allan.

11 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think  
12 Miss Sheeshish has a question she would like to put to  
13 you.

14 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

15 **SHEESHISH:** First of all I want to thank you for all your  
16 presentations, from both of you. The only questions I  
17 have is about the newspaper from Peawanuk. Was that only  
18 an experiment thing -- like you know there is other reserves  
19 along the James Bay along the west coast -- is that the  
20 reason why was just Peawanuk just to experiment how the  
21 school children could react to what you were imposing on  
22 them?

23 **JOHN FARRINGTON:** At first we went into

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Attawapaskat and suggested doing a newspaper there. In  
2 fact, we actually did our entire program in Attawapaskat  
3 into a video which the Commission does have from the  
4 previous visit.

5                   It certainly wasn't the intention to  
6 even start in Peawanuk, but Peawanuk turned out to be  
7 such a friendly place that it was easy to go in and start  
8 something there. No, we want to go to Fort Albany. We  
9 want to go Kashechewan. We want to go to Attawapaskat.  
10 Just recently we have taken our program into Moose Factory  
11 and we want to produce newspapers -- have the school  
12 children -- the community I should say -- produce their  
13 own newspaper throughout all of those areas. When we  
14 produce the newspapers we do send them to all of the other  
15 schools.

16                   As I said I am hoping that this year we  
17 will do 20 of those newspapers, but not all 20 in Peawanuk.  
18 Perhaps three in each of the communities and even some  
19 on the Quebec side communities.

20                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

21 **SHEESHISH:** What do you mean by friendly community? Do  
22 you mean the other communities didn't welcome you?

23                   **JOHN FARRINGTON:** No. No. We had been

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 ---

2 COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA

3 SHEESHISH: It scared me there for a moment.

4 JOHN FARRINGTON: No. No. We were  
5 very welcomed in all of those communities and please  
6 understand that. We have not been scared off anywhere  
7 at this particular point. We are welcomed into the schools  
8 and we have easy access into the schools and we are treated  
9 very very well when we go to all of the communities I  
10 mentioned.

11 In fact, our newspaper and education  
12 coordinator is in these communities -- at least two  
13 communities every month for a couple of days at a time.  
14 Why I said they were more friendly towards the idea of  
15 producing a newspaper.

16 I think it takes more than just the  
17 students and more than just the Native population to want  
18 to do something that is a little different. In Peawanuk  
19 we had a school principal who said yes, let's get going  
20 and here is the date that I want to do the first one and  
21 here is the date that I want to do the second one. It  
22 has been not quite that enthusiastic in the other  
23 communities. Let's face it, it is extra work for the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 teachers. It is extra work for the principal when projects  
2 like this are initiated.

3 Perhaps there was just a feeling in those  
4 other communities of let somebody else try it first. As  
5 I say, we have been three times to Peawanuk to accomplish  
6 this and we would like to get moving in Attawapaskat and  
7 Fort Albany and Kashechewan and then Moose Factory and  
8 Moosonee.

9 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

10 **SHEESHISH:** The reason why I said you scared me is because  
11 I am originally from Attawapaskat.

12 **JOHN FARRINGTON:** No, we had some  
13 wonderful times in Attawapaskat with the principal and  
14 with his vice-principal and with all of the -- I guess  
15 our main problem in all of these communities has been  
16 convincing the Band that what we are doing is not  
17 self-serving. I think -- you know, why would someone want  
18 to come up from Timmins and start doing all of this and  
19 not charging us anything.

20 When I speak of uneasiness, I think there  
21 is some of that there. We are going to have to prove  
22 ourselves as time goes on that all we are interested in  
23 doing is helping the communities up that coast to enjoy



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 reading newspapers and to develop something this country  
2 is sadly lacking now and that is a literacy rate that should  
3 go along with the country of development that we are in,  
4 but unfortunately we are 33 per cent illiterate in this  
5 country and that is a staggering figure when you consider  
6 how advanced we appear to be.

7                   Some of these communities obviously have  
8 rates that parallel -- if not go higher than other areas  
9 across our country. For us it is a start. I make no  
10 apologies to the fact that it can be perceived as  
11 self-serving. As I say, I make no apologies -- no one  
12 else is doing it. We have to protect our future as well  
13 as newspapers, if we don't do this we don't feel that other  
14 groups in our society are doing as much as they should  
15 to improve the literacy levels. In fact, they are  
16 declining rather than improving and that is throughout  
17 North America.

18                   By the year 2000 it is expected that in  
19 the United States 40 per cent of the people will be  
20 illiterate. If 40 per cent are illiterate it means that  
21 40 per cent of the people aren't even going to want to  
22 buy newspapers or magazines or be able to read books.

23                   We have to do something now -- albeit

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Timmins, albeit very very tiny -- I feel that whatever  
2 one can do, others will join as success is recorded through  
3 the newspaper industry and perhaps through meetings that  
4 Band members have, that your educational supervisors have,  
5 not only within your small groups along the coast, but  
6 when you come into Ontario and right across the country.

7 I think what we are starting is something  
8 that will eventually catch on from coast to coast. I know  
9 that our particular company is promoting it and we have  
10 newspapers that are close by -- many Native populations  
11 throughout North America, not only in Canada, and our  
12 company is going to great lengths to make sure that the  
13 Timmins program is conveyed to the publishers in these  
14 other communities so that they can go out and make  
15 representation into the Bands and to the school systems  
16 that operate on the reserves from sea to shining sea, as  
17 it were.

18 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

19 **SHEESHISH:** Sometimes what happens to is -- sometimes the  
20 reason why some people are so uneasy if they see a stranger  
21 come into their community they wonder what kind of  
22 interviews are we going to get from this guy, you know.  
23 Sometimes like I read in an article one time that there

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 were misunderstandings with the interview of the  
2 individual -- it wasn't exactly what that kind of program  
3 was going on on the reserve and I said, oh, my goodness,  
4 who interviewed this guy.

5                   Of all people, I picked up this magazine  
6 on the aircraft and started reading it and I said oh, my  
7 goodness. Everybody is going to think that is how it is  
8 up in Attawapaskat. You really have to watch who you  
9 interview and sometimes people do get misunderstood. You  
10 get misinterpretation of whoever goes to interview the  
11 individual.

12                   **JOHN FARRINGTON:** I think this really  
13 comes back to what Mrs. Wilson was talking about earlier  
14 on why newspapers report Native affairs the way they report  
15 Native affairs today. I think the sooner that you can  
16 get Native people reporting Native affairs the sooner we  
17 are going to get a truer picture.

18                   I think when people from big cities go  
19 into places like Attawapaskat the shock of whether it is  
20 summertime or wintertime there is a different appearance  
21 there right away and you have to overcome all of that and  
22 get really to the heart of the people. It takes a lot  
23 of stories before someone can really appreciate what goes

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 on in those communities. The stories of heartache. The  
2 stories of snowmobile deaths. The stories of -- most times  
3 when I went into Attawapaskat, the flag was at half mast  
4 and it was for the death of someone -- an untimely death.

5 Those unfortunately are the stories that  
6 are published mainly by newspapers even in our own  
7 communities. There are so many more better stories to  
8 publish. Unfortunately, a lot of the good stories and  
9 the stories that people would like to read, people really  
10 don't want to talk about themselves. I don't say this  
11 as a cop-out, I say this as a reality.

12 Often, too, because of the way  
13 newspapers have been over the years, the positive story  
14 is looked upon by a reporter getting an assignment not  
15 with the same kind of vigour as a story that would be perhaps  
16 a negative story. A story that would be dealing with  
17 violence, with fire, with drugs, with alcohol. Problems  
18 that you have, but you don't have sole claim to all of  
19 those. We have all of those problems in our own society  
20 as well. Yet, somehow they get a lot more attention.

21 I think that is part of the problem  
22 between our two societys. We don't know enough about each  
23 other and we don't go out of our way to find out more about

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 each other to be able to do the positive stories. I read  
2 the story that you are referring to. I thought you were  
3 coming down on The Daily Press for a moment there, but  
4 I did read the story on the airplane.

5 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

6 **SHEESHISH:** Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
8 both very much.

9 **ED SACKENEY:** The next presenter is from  
10 the Wabun Tribal Council area where Commissioner of  
11 Information the Wabun Tribal Council's office was of great  
12 support in putting these hearings together. They have  
13 an excellent staff and they have helped me quite  
14 extensively.

15 Lindberg Louttit is a former Chief of  
16 one of the communities they cover, Wahgoshig, which is  
17 about 70 miles northeast of Timmins. He is also a former  
18 Grand Chief of Ninabioski (PH) Nation. He also has been  
19 a pilot and flew over Northern Ontario for about 20 years  
20 or so.

21 He will be making his presentation as  
22 a member of the Wabun Tribal Council and I thank Lindberg  
23 for his graciousness of changing places with Dorothy and

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 his patience for waiting for his turn to come up.

2 Lindy, please.

3 **LINDBERG LOUTTIT, MEMBER WABUN TRIBAL**

4 **COUNCIL:** My name is Lindy Louttit. I am from the

5 Attawapaskat the same as the lady I sit beside there.

6 I am registered at the Fort Albany Band and my Chief is  
7 over here.

8 I went to school at Moose Factory,  
9 Ontario; Moosonee, Ontario and Moose River Crossing. For  
10 six great years I went to school there. Moose U. That  
11 is where I got my degree.

12 Just to give you a little brief history  
13 on myself. I was very interested in airplanes and that  
14 was all I saw in those days from when I was born -- it  
15 was airplanes and I became very interested in these things.

16 I thought one day I would fly one. I became the first  
17 Treaty Indian Pilot, Commercial, in Canada and was rewarded  
18 by Pearson Medal for this occasion. It was very good.

19 Since the late 1950's I was a pilot and  
20 I saw a great deal of Labrador, a great deal of Angava,  
21 (PH) Northern Quebec, the Territories and the far north  
22 Arctic. I flew out of La Ronge, Saskatchewan. I flew  
23 out of Alberta and B.C. and I was to about 300 - 400 reserves

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 during that time.

2 I learned to speak a little Inuit and  
3 I speak Cree fluently, that was my first language. I speak  
4 a bit of Ojibway and finally, I learned to speak english  
5 at the Moose U.

6 I was much obliged to come and speak to  
7 you folks on matters concerning the Treaty #9 and also  
8 the people from the Wabun Tribal Council with regards to  
9 -- first I would like to speak on this issue number 1 that  
10 you have on your pamphlet, the history and relations  
11 between Aboriginal people with the Canadian government  
12 and Canadian society as a whole.

13 Last winter a friend -- I am just going  
14 to wing it -- last winter a friend of mine was in Wahgoshig  
15 and he came over to my house and his brother had met a  
16 German lady who was going through for her doctorate. She  
17 wanted to write her doctorate -- her thesis on the first  
18 meeting with the white people and the Aboriginal people  
19 which was some years back -- 300 - 400 years back -- in  
20 the northern part of North America, prior to that, I guess,  
21 Columbus.

22 The news that she brought us was not good  
23 news. I don't know whether she has her doctorate or not

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 yet, she is from Germany. She went to find out the --  
2 to prove her thesis on these people -- she went to the  
3 Vatican to get her proof, where there were letters between  
4 the Jesuits and the Catholic Church.

5                   The report came like this that when the  
6 people started to land -- the french and the english --  
7 started to land, I guess this would come from the french  
8 and the spanish, that when they landed in North America  
9 there was an estimated 35 million North American people  
10 here at the time.

11                   There was code letters. These letters  
12 were in code in the Vatican. She deciphered this code.  
13 In the code between the Jesuits and the priest that ran  
14 the Vatican at the time, this is what they had found.  
15 That there was 35 million people and that they would have  
16 to get rid of these people somehow because they would be  
17 in the way of developing North America, United States and  
18 Canada, at the time. They had different names as you would  
19 know the history of North America.

20                   I guess there must have been a genocide  
21 somewhere because we are only 3 million in population here  
22 with Native people. It is kind of flattering to -- it  
23 kind of hits the heart when you learn this -- that there



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 is no recording of this in public. There is no public  
2 recording saying this.

3 Is it a hidden agenda? A hidden  
4 document that somewhere along the line we lost 30 million  
5 people -- of our Aboriginal people. How did they  
6 disappear? You know it was said in there that they handed  
7 them poison blankets. It was said that this lady had  
8 recorded that there were pills given, there was some kind  
9 of dope given to the baptisms when they had mass  
10 baptisms and they would put some kind of opium in the  
11 water so that it would kill the babies.

12 It is recorded in history that the  
13 Iroquois people are very vicious people and those were  
14 the people that were hit first with those mass baptisms  
15 where people got killed. Their babies got killed. If  
16 your baby gets killed, you would also retaliate.

17 The transmittal diseases through  
18 blankets from the Roman Catholic Church that were passed  
19 out by the Jesuits. Those transmittal diseases went  
20 through North America. It is some kind of germ warfare,  
21 I guess it would be called.

22 Why I am telling you this story is to  
23 get down to our Treaty, Treaty #9, where the Wabun Tribal

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Council is a part of. I believe there are six tribal  
2 councils in this area and 45 Bands across the Nation.

3                   There was to be a correction, I was not  
4 a Grand Chief. I was a Deputy Grand Chief for a short  
5 while taking another man's place until there was a regular  
6 election.

7                   Treaties were made in the early 1900's,  
8 1905, and like every other treaty, I suppose, they are  
9 made to be broken. There were promises made. These  
10 promises were not kept. Promises on education -- I wanted  
11 to go to school. I am a prime example of what I am trying  
12 to get at here and it is still happening today where there  
13 is not enough money for children to go on to school; for  
14 young adults to go on to university, to college and so  
15 on. These promises are made by the Canadian government  
16 for these people to go to school.

17                   I don't know what the exact percentage  
18 is, but I would dare say there is probably less than one  
19 per cent that get to college or university. And way far  
20 less than 10 per cent get to finish high school. I don't  
21 know what the percentage -- quite a higher per cent that  
22 get to grade 8 because it is provided on the reserves.

23                   I am a great believer in education.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Education on the reserves is not so good. In the earlier  
2 days we had boarding schools. The boarding schools in  
3 this area was Chapleau, Moose Factory, Fort Albany, Fort  
4 George in this area -- Fort George, Quebec. Now known  
5 as Cheseebec, (PH) La Grande, that area. Two of these  
6 schools were run by the Catholic Church. Two of the  
7 schools were run by the Anglican Church. And the money  
8 was granted from Indian Affairs to these schools to run  
9 these schools.

10 In the school system, I was one of the  
11 victims of the school board systems. In these schools  
12 people my age, some younger, some older, have been  
13 victimized -- maybe a lot of you know what I am getting  
14 at -- I believe Blakeney you would know from your province  
15 and the Province of Alberta, there was a movie made. It  
16 not only happens in Native residential schools, but it  
17 happens in white residential schools, Newfoundland  
18 recently there is still court going on about these schools  
19 where kids were molested.

20 A lot of those kids that have come from  
21 those schools have died through their own causes. I know  
22 some of them are my friends that have committed suicide  
23 from these schools. So it makes it quite obvious that

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 these school systems do not work where you have to put  
2 them in boarding schools within that society because it  
3 is a prey for people who want to molest children. It seems  
4 to be a gathering place for them. It doesn't work.

5 I believe if the Native people  
6 themselves had these systems, it would work. For high  
7 school, for example, there are no Aboriginal high schools  
8 in this part of the country -- Northern Ontario. Northern  
9 Ontario deserves to have high schools on reserves where  
10 Aboriginal people can look after their own children, their  
11 own kind. They could have their own families come there  
12 and look after those families.

13 I believe that has to happen because  
14 there is 90 per cent drop out. There is no need for that.

15 I believe there needs to be a development of curriculum  
16 in there own way, in their own society, their own way.  
17 If you can have it for the french and you can have it for  
18 the english, you can have it for the Indian people.

19 Have their own things so that doctors  
20 develop curriculums; be equal to any other type of school,  
21 white school, french school, whatever you want. That when  
22 he or she wants to go to college, boom, its there. When  
23 he or she wants to go to university, boom, they are there.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 I believe this needs to be there so that the people can  
2 look after their own children to go to high school, to  
3 finish high school I believe that they would have a better  
4 success rate -- is what I am trying to say.

5 The other thing that I would like to talk  
6 about is about the hydro, the hydraulic resources, within  
7 our Nations. Treaty #9 has no place -- there is nothing  
8 where it is written about water and the use of water.  
9 Hydro has come along and put in dams. Dams are okay some  
10 places, but not everywhere.

11 Dams have created mercury spills. Dams  
12 have polluted our fish. Dams have polluted our animals.  
13 Towns dumping their dumps into the creeks, into the  
14 rivers. I live in a little town called Matheson. (PH)  
15 Where do we dump our dump? Right into a creek. The  
16 seepage from this goes right into the creek and it is  
17 poison.

18 Timmins -- many other towns -- mining  
19 tailings which are not watched, which are not recorded,  
20 what kind of water is going into our waterways. Our fish  
21 are all polluted. We cannot eat the fish. The whales  
22 are polluted in James Bay, that many of our people use.  
23 The seals are polluted, which many of our people cannot

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 use or eat. It has just polluted James Bay and Hudson  
2 Bay, let's say.

3                   Recently there was dams built in Quebec  
4 and they have found a great deal of increase in mercury.  
5 So those people over there cannot eat fish and so the  
6 same thing has happened in the Moose River Delta. I  
7 believe there ought to be a provision made in the treaty  
8 of Treaty #9 for the use of water so there can be more  
9 control of what is going on. The Aboriginal people can  
10 have control and more say about what is going on within  
11 the development of hydro, hydro dams, etc.

12                   The Wahgoshig reserve, the Mattagami  
13 reserve, the Chapleau reserve, they have all been affected  
14 by hydro within the Wabun Tribal Council. The water has  
15 polluted their lakes. It has eroded their reserves.  
16 There is very little negotiations being done from hydro  
17 to come and replace the lands that are lost from the treaty  
18 lands, those lands have to be replaced and they are not  
19 being replaced.

20                   I believe that the treaties that were  
21 made -- we are ostracised from these treaties. We are  
22 victims. We have become victims. We are incarcerated  
23 and those kinds of things that are happening are not right.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Nobody has brought that up as concern within the white  
2 society, but we have and it is not listened to. It is  
3 not right. The treaty is not right. It hasn't fulfilled  
4 hardly any of its obligations.

5                   What will be done for these children that  
6 have been damaged through the missionary schools? You  
7 know the doctor's bills. Who is going to pay the doctor  
8 bill? Who is going to provide the services for the elders  
9 that are left from these schools to straighten out their  
10 minds? They have been corrupted -- a good many of them.

11                   How are we going to help these people?  
12 Who is going to pay the bills? There is no provision  
13 made to compensate for that. Provisions have to be put  
14 out there. The treaty calls and says it will help the  
15 Native people for health and it is not doing its full job.

16                   I want to talk about economic  
17 development for Nations and for the Wabun Tribal Council  
18 and for other tribal council because what happens on one  
19 reserve happens to many other reserves across the country.  
20 For example, the forestry -- they have clear cut -- clear  
21 cutting has destroyed many many trap lines. For our  
22 people, for men that are 50, 60 years old, 70 years old,  
23 those people that have never been to school a day in their

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 lives, but know how to trap and make a living have put  
2 their kids through school.

3                   People that are from reserves, but live  
4 off reserves, those people -- a man came to me one time  
5 when I was a Deputy Grand Chief and he says, you know Lindy,  
6 he said, I had a township out here and for 30 years I  
7 provided my family. I raised my family. He said, I still  
8 have a couple of kids at home. I have eight children and  
9 he said, now I have nothing. How am I going to provide  
10 for my children?

11                   He said, I have no bush left on my  
12 reserve. There is no martin, there is no beaver, there  
13 is nothing there. He said welfare doesn't cover what I  
14 used to make with the trap line and they have no other  
15 trap line to give me. What am I going to do? He said,  
16 what are you going to do about this? He told me this.  
17 What could I do for the man? He said, all I get is social  
18 assistance.

19                   Chair, I want to tell you, social  
20 assistance in this country does not meet the needs of the  
21 Native people. It doesn't meet the needs of the Native  
22 people. For example, Attawapaskat. You get \$50 per  
23 person, but little do we know that we have to pay \$5.00



**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 for a pound of butter. Here you pay \$3.00, but over there  
2 you have to pay \$5.00 because you have to pay the air  
3 freight. It is not compensated.

4 Over there you can't buy a file unless  
5 you pay \$10 for a file to sharpen your axe to go and  
6 catch a rabbit. They need to trap in order to fill in  
7 for the welfare that is not there, that is not provided.

8 For the crippled people it is provided  
9 because they can't get wood, because they can't get water.  
10 That is provided for. But for the guy that has a family,  
11 he only gets so much a head and it is not enough to fill  
12 the grocery basket. When he does go out to go and catch  
13 a rabbit, or to go and get a fish, it is polluted. He  
14 and his family get polluted from the mercury that comes  
15 from the hydro dams. The towns that dump their slop in  
16 the rivers.

17 There needs to be provisions made.  
18 There needs to be for the communities better water  
19 facilities. Water care, water treatment. It is not  
20 there. It is not in Attawapaskat. It is there, but it  
21 is very very poor. I was there. A couple of years ago  
22 I was there and I was ashamed to see the way their water  
23 plant was. An awful shame, but they can't drink the water

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 out of the river.

2                   When I was a kid at Moose Factory in 1948  
3 that is where our water came from. It came from the river,  
4 straight from the river. There was no water plant. It  
5 only took since 1948 until now to completely pollute the  
6 river. The towns, the paper mills, and all these other  
7 things, more hydro dams were built. Now we cannot -- the  
8 water has to be treated and more expenses are made and  
9 no compensation given for this.

10                  When we go trapping now we are afraid  
11 to dip the water out of the creeks to make a cup of tea  
12 because we are afraid it is polluted. I went for a walk  
13 the other day at my reserve, Wahgoshig reserve, with my  
14 grandchild to go partridge hunting.

15                  Low and behold I come to a sign in the  
16 bush and it has a big red circle and a strike and a man  
17 walking behind it which told me you can't walk here because  
18 they sprayed from the air. Why do they put a sign up there.  
19 That stuff must be awfully poisonous that they spray on  
20 the ground to -- they have stuff that will kill the grass  
21 so the grass can't grow so the little trees will grow.

22                  If you kill the grass -- in our belief,  
23 I want to tell you something there is a circle of life

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 and in that circle of life if you break one part of that  
2 circle you destroy the rest of the circle. What they  
3 destroy is the caterpillar and the bird that depends on  
4 that caterpillar cannot live so he dies. The nest is put  
5 there. The nest is put there and when the bird builds  
6 his nest then the eggs are born. When the little ones  
7 are born the mother has to go and get caterpillars and  
8 other bugs to provide lunch for these little guys. When  
9 the lunch is not there, the little guys starve.

10 That is what we get in Northern Ontario  
11 is these airplanes flying around dishing out tons and tons  
12 of toxic -- that kills grass and some of the trees and  
13 we don't want that. Our treaty doesn't call for that.  
14 It is not necessary. Trees have always grown. Leave it  
15 alone and it will grow, that is what I told one fellow.

16 My daughter and I -- I picked up my  
17 daughter one night at 11:00 to go and wake those guys up  
18 because they were going to start to spray on the reserve.

19 I said hey you guys have to get out of our reserve. Oh,  
20 he said, we are not on your reserve, we are just a couple  
21 of feet off. But I said that water, we have to drink that  
22 water.

23 I want to tell you on the Wahgoshig

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1    reserve, we have water that is 23 parts to million and  
2    they are going to pollute that, too. Twenty-three parts  
3    per million. You can't find water in Canada that is that  
4    good and it comes from the ground. It is filtered through  
5    200 feet of sand. It is beautiful beautiful water. Now,  
6    we are going to destroy that, too. Even though it is  
7    hidden.

8                            I am ashamed to be called a Canadian and  
9    I am really ashamed it only took 50 years to destroy this  
10   beautiful country. There is no trees. Now they are  
11   trying to kill the grass. They have polluted the rivers.

12                          Chair, 40 years ago I drank water out  
13   of rivers and creeks without any fear, now I am afraid.  
14   What is going to happen in the next 75 years? Now I hear  
15   about the ozone. I hear scientists say it is going to  
16   fry us, this radiation that is going to come down. Is  
17   it going to fry the bush too? Is it going to fry us too?

18   Do we have to walk around in special seals? You know  
19   we made a treaty so we would get along. You would have  
20   use of the land. We would share it amongst each other,  
21   but we didn't think you were going to come down and cremate  
22   it.

23                          For this, there is no compensation in

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the treaty. There is no compensation for anybody. When  
2 we had it ourselves, we had been custodians of that land  
3 for 14,000 years. We didn't do that to the land. We have  
4 been there -- but in 50 years you are going to destroy  
5 it. It takes 200 years to replace a tree. You mean to  
6 say that we are going to -- how long is it going to be  
7 before we get another tree going?

8 I am ashamed to be a Canadian, to even  
9 be called a Canadian.

10 Self-governing. Chair, we have been  
11 self-governed for 14,000 years that we know in existence  
12 we have been passed here. Everybody -- this one little  
13 kid was selling cards to raise money for his school on  
14 his reserve in Toronto, was down on the lake-front selling  
15 little cards for \$1.00 a piece to the public so he could  
16 get some money for education for school.

17 A bunch of university students came  
18 along -- I was with my daughter, she is here -- one of  
19 them piped up and said, you have beautiful cards and he  
20 started to look at me. How are you people going to  
21 self-govern? I looked at him. I said we are going to  
22 raise your taxes, your rent. We are going to raise it,  
23 I said. That is the answer.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   We are going to raise the rent because  
2   since 1905 all we got was \$4.00 plus the other promises,  
3   but we still get \$4.00 today. You used to be able to buy  
4   a case of wine for \$4.00, but you can't today. You may  
5   get a glass full or something like that. You can't even  
6   celebrate your treaty any more. It's true. Go next door  
7   here and they will charge you \$5.00 for a glass of wine.

8                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I see you  
9   are tuned into the costs, all right.

10                  **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** Yes.

11                  I believe that the provisions of the  
12   treaty should make adjustments to those dollar figures.  
13   Since 1905 there has been a fold of 1600 times. That  
14   is a lot of money -- value of the dollar. I guess then  
15   it was good money. Four dollars would probably carry you  
16   for a year, but not today. It does not carry you for a  
17   quarter of a day.

18                  I am very disappointed and I want to tell  
19   my colleagues back here that I have almost forgotten about  
20   what I was supposed to talk about because I get carried  
21   away here trying to look at some of the issues.

22                  I don't want to take up much more of your  
23   time. I know there are other people who want to speak

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 and I notice yourself, you are going on Indian time. I  
2 was supposed to speak at 1:00.

3 We want to have a school on our reserve.

4 While I was Chief I talked to my people and asked them  
5 would they support a high school -- to run a high school  
6 on the reserve. Today I would ask the Wabun Tribal Council  
7 if they would. I am very much interested in education  
8 because I know what it means.

9 I had a rather difficult time to get to  
10 be a pilot. When I asked Indian Affairs if they would  
11 pay my schooling to be a pilot, they said no because I  
12 needed a junior metric and I only had grade 8. I said  
13 I could write my licence, I have been studying aviation.  
14 And that is what I was doing.

15 I had books and pilots teach me, but had  
16 I had my junior metric I don't think I would be sitting  
17 here talking to you, I would be on one of the airlines  
18 flying airplanes. My brother has taken up flying and he  
19 flies for a millionaire in Australia. His private  
20 airplane is a DC-8. My brother is a part of the crew.

21 Yes, I run my own airline out of  
22 Cochrane. It is still there. It is called Lindberg's  
23 Air Service. Since, I have sold it.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I know that education plays an important  
2 part in everyday life and I would like to see education  
3 delivered in the Native tongue, the Native ways, but when  
4 they are finished grade 12, it is equivalent to any other  
5 education put out whether it be french or english. So  
6 that those kids could go on from high school on to  
7 university. Whatever they want to do, choose their own  
8 way.

9                   I believe that we could produce a more  
10 productive Nation by having more education for our people.  
11 Our people could join in with you people and work together  
12 side by side. As it is today it can't happen because our  
13 people -- very few are well educated.

14                  The treaties be looked at and there be  
15 a water provision put in the Treaty #9, because the water  
16 has damaged -- it is a cycle of life and it does damage  
17 all over the territory. It is a shame to think and sit  
18 here and we are polluting the Arctic right from here.  
19 From the mine tailings, from the dump tailings, the dump  
20 seepage. All that kind of stuff that goes into the water.

21                  It is a shame to think that we only have  
22 done that in the last 50 years. Something seriously has  
23 to be done with it. I don't know what it is going to be.



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1     My guess is as good as yours -- what has to be done.  
2     I am sure if other countries found out how fast we polluted  
3     our country -- it would be a shame to talk about it. Our  
4     grandsons and grandchildren are not going to have a place  
5     to go -- and their grandchildren.

6                     Meeqwetch.

7                     **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
8     very much. You have raised a tremendous number of issues.  
9     Some of them we have been hearing in communities all across  
10    the country, particularly something like the effect of  
11    the residential school system. This is something that  
12    I think has probably been raised in every community that  
13    we have visited. The damage that was done -- not only  
14    on the individual basis, but also to the killing off of  
15    the language and the culture of Native people.

16                    Various people have different ideas as  
17    to what should happen about that. Some have suggested  
18    that there should be apologies from governments, from  
19    churches that were involved. Others have said it should  
20    go much further than that. That there should be  
21    compensation.

22                    We have heard suggestions that the  
23    compensation should take the form of putting funds into

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the community to try to restore the language which was  
2 one of the things that was lost as a result of the  
3 residential school system and to restore the culture and  
4 to teach parenting skills to people who went through the  
5 system or whose parents went through the system and lost  
6 those skills.

7                   Many attribute the family violence that  
8 is so prevalent in Native communities to the impact of  
9 the residential school systems. It would appear that it  
10 is sort of an ongoing thing that is reaching down through  
11 several generations. We have heard a great deal about  
12 that and obviously, we have to address that as a Commission  
13 and we hope to do so.

14                   You have also raised the issue of  
15 pollution. The tragic things that we are doing to the  
16 environment and what the answer is for this. Of course,  
17 pollution of the waters is now affecting non-Aboriginal  
18 people as well as Aboriginal people and no doubt that is  
19 why it has become a more high profile concern because it  
20 is affecting non-Aboriginal people as well, but of course,  
21 it affects Aboriginal people in a much more dramatic way  
22 because of the nature of the Native lifestyle and the  
23 traditional way of life.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   We have heard from many men and various  
2 communities who have really been devastated by their  
3 inability to make a living and provide for their children.

4    We heard this in spades up in Quebec. We were asked --  
5 I recall -- what we thought it did to the men in the  
6 community who had traditionally been able to make a living  
7 through the traditional means and now no longer could  
8 because of environmental damage and also because of the  
9 unavailability of jobs in the area.

10                  It was pointed out to us that this had  
11 had a very devastating effect on the Native male  
12 population. That we should be addressing that problem.

13    They were making the point that they had lost their sense  
14 of initiative and had really developed a sense of despair  
15 at the fruitlessness of their existence once that  
16 traditional way of life was gone. We are very concerned  
17 about that and realize that that is a major problem.

18                  You have mentioned also the increase  
19 costs of living. Of course, we have this in spades in  
20 the Arctic where the transportation costs are  
21 astronomical. We were given figures for what it costs  
22 to buy a skidoo and then you added on to that the cost  
23 of getting it up to their community and the cost of GST

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 on the price of the skidoo, but also the cost of the GST  
2 on the price of the transportation because that was a  
3 service and therefore subject to GST.

4                   We heard the problems that that has  
5 created for the Inuit. They asked us what we could do  
6 by way of relief and whether there could be exemptions,  
7 for example, from some of these costs where the articles  
8 involved were the very means of livelihood of the people.  
9 So we have been asked to look into that. You have  
10 mentioned that, as well.

11                   You have also raised the subject of the  
12 treaties. I am very interested in that, are as we all  
13 because in relation to the recent referendum it would  
14 appear that a great many treaty people voted no on the  
15 basis that they had their treaties, that they viewed their  
16 treaties as their constitutional documents. That the  
17 provisions for self-government being added to the general  
18 Canadian constitution just wasn't a big deal for them  
19 because they had their constitution in the shape of their  
20 treaties.

21                   The only thing was the promises in the  
22 treaties were not being honoured as you have mentioned.  
23 They raised that with us and asked us to think about that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 and what could be done about it.

2                   We have been hearing these same messages  
3 right across the country, so they are obviously general  
4 concerns that have to be addressed by the Commission.  
5 I think we all appreciate that.

6                   I would like to ask Mary if she has  
7 anything she would like to comment on.

8                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
9 like to thank you very much for having waited three hours  
10 to make a presentation here before us and then referring  
11 to your ability to speak Inuktituk and your knowing  
12 Labrador made me feel friendly towards you.

13                   Having said that I would just like to  
14 make one comment. You did say, for example, that there  
15 are many people who went to the residential schools and  
16 also there are many non-Aboriginal people who went through  
17 orphanages and suffered the same bad experiences.

18                   I would just like to comment and say that  
19 there is a difference. The harm, the pain that these  
20 people experienced probably was the same. The residential  
21 school history is not a good one. No more than, for  
22 example, the Mount Casual Orphanage experience is a good  
23 one.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   But in the case of the residential  
2 schools, there was clear government policy which said that  
3 to be an Indian was no good. To speak Indian was no good  
4 and what the good thing was was to be white. So what they  
5 did was actually introduce a policy which took small  
6 children away from their parents, from their support, from  
7 their protection for many many months at a time and they  
8 put them into institutions which taught them every single  
9 day that to be an Indian was wrong. I think that is an  
10 unacceptable difference. That is the difference, for  
11 example, between the residential school and the Mount  
12 Casual experience.

13                   Many people talk about their experiences  
14 in residential schools and say no, that was terrible.  
15 It is something that should never have happened. What  
16 can we do, for example, to help the people that went through  
17 it and what must we do to make sure that that never happens  
18 again.

19                   Thank you.

20                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Did you  
21 want to respond to that before I ask Allan for his comments?

22                   **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** Yes. I want to talk  
23 -- there is an issue that I didn't speak on and that is

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 about women. I congratulate you and you and you, but we  
2 need more women in your government to balance out the  
3 government. In the Native society, Native women are an  
4 equal.

5                   They were always an equal before and they  
6 still are, but in the changes of some of the stuff that  
7 was brought with your government -- has changed some of  
8 the thinking of our Aboriginal Chiefs today. More of that  
9 has to be brought back where we have more women and equality  
10 basis. Right now what we have ruling our country is a  
11 bunch of bald heads and I have never seen women with bald  
12 heads.

13                   You need to bring more of that back.  
14 More equality within all structures. They need to be  
15 recognized more.

16                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I am  
17 feeling friendlier.

18                   **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** I am not fishing for  
19 a date here.

20                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think  
21 before Mary gets carried away, I should go to Allan.

22                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** One has  
23 to be pretty careful what one says.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I was interested in what you said. I  
2 always have a fond place in my memory for bush pilots.  
3 For five years of my life I was a corporate secretary and  
4 lawyer for a little airline in Northern Saskatchewan and  
5 banged around in Norsemen which reeked of fish and oil  
6 and old ansence and stinson reliance and then we got modern,  
7 we got beavers and otters and twin otters and I have been  
8 in an awful lot of places around that far and over a little  
9 bit into Manitoba. They are a great breed of cat, as we  
10 saw illustrated today.

11                   I think there is just one thing I would  
12 like to say, not really asking a question, but -- you were  
13 talking about you felt it probably a good idea to have  
14 Band operated high schools on the reserves. Bertha Wilson  
15 and I were out in Saskatchewan a couple of months ago and  
16 heard a pretty interesting and detailed presentation.  
17 It went on for two or three days about education.

18                   One of the things they had were the  
19 record of Band operated high schools on Saskatchewan  
20 reserves over a period of a dozen years and they compared  
21 1980 with 1990 and when they -- those schools which started  
22 operating as Band operated, Band controlled schools in  
23 about 1980 and by 1990 they had raised their retention



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 rate spectacularly. By which I mean that the number of  
2 young people who stayed in high school to grade 12 went  
3 up like from 25 or 30 per cent to 65 or 70 per cent, all  
4 in a period of 10 years.

5                   The quick answer to that was oh, well,  
6 they have changed the standard. They have lowered the  
7 standard. There was an American who said, well I can't  
8 speak certainly for Saskatchewan, but I will tell you what  
9 our experience was down in the Dakotas. We had some  
10 similar experience and we had not raised the standard.  
11 Percentage wise more of the people in 1990 went to  
12 university than the people in 1980. So we had more than  
13 twice as many people going to universities out of high  
14 school in 10 short years.

15                   **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** Then I will have to  
16 write you for a support letter.

17                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Yes, I  
18 think there is a block of research material that the  
19 Federation of Sask Indian Nations has accumulated. So  
20 if anyone is running a campaign for this, there are a fair  
21 number of numbers already worked out. That is really all  
22 I wanted to say. If they are accurate -- and I have no  
23 reason to believe they are not -- it indicates that for

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 some people anyway, Band operated schools on reserves are  
2 working out very well indeed.

3 **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** I am going to add a  
4 name here who recently got her doctorate. She is from  
5 Moose Factory. Dr. Emily Ferries. She majored in  
6 curriculum developments. Many times we have spoken to  
7 her and she would have no problem in helping to develop  
8 curriculums for the high schools which would be equivalent  
9 or higher than today's traditional values within the Native  
10 organizations.

11 I very much look forward -- there are  
12 no provisions made within the Indian Act to hand out monies  
13 to develop curriculum's for Indian reserves. Those  
14 provisions ought to be put in the Indian Act and they are  
15 not there. Therefore, it holds back -- people have to  
16 really lobby in order to get monies to develop curriculums  
17 in schools and so on on the reserves. Yes, I understand  
18 how government money works and I know when you get a bag  
19 of money and you have to service your province, I know  
20 what that means.

21 It is like when Indians get a bag of money  
22 for education, everybody has to get a little chunk of this.  
23 Normally the bigger reserves get it, but the little

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 reserves can help also by raising some of their own money  
2 and that is what we are trying to do so we can get a public  
3 school on our reserve.

4 Here in Timmins many of the Native people  
5 from James Bay, Hudson Bay and so on, the northern  
6 communities, kids come to high school here and some of  
7 the kids we lose them through death. Through suicide.  
8 Non-drinkers committing suicide. Recently the last few  
9 months we had lost a child here. Every week or other week  
10 you hear from the other reserves in Ontario -- in Northern  
11 Ontario -- of children doing away with their lives.

12 A lot of times I think it is from taking  
13 them away from their families and I am probably pretty  
14 close to being right. That probably a high percentage  
15 of that is correct. Taking them away from their families  
16 and putting them in another school is pretty detrimental  
17 because the Native culture is a real close knit culture.  
18 It is a kind of a family type of thing and when you take  
19 one away there is sorrow on both sides. Sorrow on mother's  
20 side. Sorrow on the child's side because he or she wants  
21 his family.

22 I think that those provision ought to  
23 be changed in the Indian Act that Natives can get their

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 own schools and their own curriculums and the Tribal  
2 Councils could maybe have their own high school. There  
3 is a few thousand kids that come out to high schools.  
4 Why is there not a bigger school in Moosonee, for example,  
5 to service James Bay? Because there is a lot of Native  
6 people in Moosonee and even some of the Bands could have  
7 their own high school because they are Bands with two or  
8 three thousand people on the reserve.

9                   There is no reason that they shouldn't  
10 have their own high school. I am sure it would save a  
11 lot of money on travel and other things.

12                   I want to thank you for having me here.  
13 It was nice meeting you.

14                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think  
15 that Miss Sheeshish has a comment that she would like to  
16 make. Do you?

17                   **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ANGELA**

18 **SHEESHISH:** I just want to thank you for the emotional  
19 speech you made this afternoon. No matter how many times  
20 we repeat ourselves, but some day the government is going  
21 to hear our voices. Just like the way our puppies or own  
22 children when we finally say yes. So we are just going  
23 to hope for the best in the near future.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Meeqwetch.

2 **LINDBERG LOUTTIT:** Meeqwetch.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

4 This party is getting a bit wild. Could  
5 we have a coffee break?

6 **ED SACKENEY:** Yes. I would like to make  
7 a suggestion because to give justice to Edmond  
8 Metatawabin's presentation.

9 Also, before the coffee break -- a purple  
10 wallet was found in the ladies room. It was given to me.  
11 Whoever's wallet it is -- it was found in the ladies room.

12 Can we take a 10 minute break, please?

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes.

14

15 --- Upon recessing at 4:30 p.m.

16 --- Upon resuming at 4:45 p.m.

17

18 **ED SACKENEY:** If you people can take  
19 your seats, we will start with the next presenter.

20 The next presenter is Chief Edmond  
21 Metatawabin from the First Nations community of Fort  
22 Albany, James Bay. Ed is married with four children and  
23 in 1988 was elected as Chief of Fort Albany now heading

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 into his third term. He is also presently working towards  
2 his masters degree in the environmental studies with York  
3 University.

4 Before we begin we do have more speakers  
5 and we would appreciate it if we will continue with our  
6 schedule. The people that have been allocated some time  
7 and see if we can complete these people for today.

8 We can proceed and we will probably be  
9 here until 7:00. So Chief, Ed.

10 **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN, FIRST NATIONS**

11 **FORT ALBANY:** Greetings. I am glad to see Gagashuvik (PH)  
12 is sitting with the panel.

13 I think we will have a better chance,  
14 eh.

15 Also, I was notified that our translator  
16 is not able to sing so my song will have to be cut out.

17 I am from Fort Albany. I was born in  
18 the natural environment. My mother keeps telling me one  
19 time they were travelling in the snow and that I fell out  
20 with a tiganogan. (PH) I think they travelled for a mile  
21 before they knew I was not in the sled any longer. So  
22 I am glad to be here.

23 You have mentioned the topic that I will

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 be speaking on. It seems to have hit Canada. It is a  
2 timely topic and it is amazing that what happens in one  
3 part of the country seems to have simultaneously happened  
4 in the other parts of the country.

5 It is not a topic that is only confined  
6 to certain areas, it just seems to be from all areas and  
7 there is a source where that problem came from. And this  
8 one, as has been said earlier, is a government policy that  
9 was implemented by certain sectors of the Canadian society.

10 Mushkegowuk of James Bay ancestry dating  
11 back 10,000 years, hold a belief that: The Creator put  
12 them on this land. This garden, to oversee and take care  
13 of for those that are not yet born. The law of maintenance  
14 or just maintaining that garden means taking care of the  
15 physical environment. It also means maintaining a  
16 harmonious relationship with other people and the animals  
17 depended on for survival. The balance of life was  
18 observable at the time of contact by the absence of  
19 pollutants in the air, water and land.

20 The phrase "go forth and multiply" taken  
21 from the Bible can be said to exist in another form among  
22 the Cree, in their strong belief of the family unit. The  
23 elders were there as a man or woman to guide the society

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 using the accumulated wisdom from a long life. The youth  
2 presented the hope and aspirations of a culture who learned  
3 by sense and imitation. The woman held the central and  
4 most honoured role as the bearer of life and man held the  
5 envious role of protector, to preserve and maintain the  
6 continuity of the family unit.

7                   Mushkegowuk people received the Cree  
8 language from the Creator with which to conduct and  
9 implement their daily affairs. For spiritual  
10 gratification, the Cree had the sweatlodge, the shaking  
11 tent, the Pipe, sweetgrass and tobacco. The land gave  
12 the hunter access to fish, moose and herbal medicine.  
13 The land provided sources of shelter, tools and food.  
14 Co-existence was the aim.

15                   At the same Europe was undergoing social  
16 stress, environmental pressure and economic stagNation.  
17 It was necessary to seek riches from various corners of  
18 the world. It was also necessary at the same time that  
19 the gospel be spread throughout the world. It has not  
20 been uncommon to state that the church, as an arm of the  
21 state, went forward to diffuse resistance that may be met.

22                   This had been the intent in Europe and  
23 when missionaries crossed the Atlantic, they were not just



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 missionaries of the gospel, but also agents of an  
2 aggressive civilization. Superiority was their belief  
3 and conversion to a different culture was not conceivable.  
4 It was the contrary.

5                   From the very beginning missionaries  
6 arrived to transform a pagan people. Father Lascelles  
7 admits: Early missionaries had a little appreciation of  
8 Native cultures, and even less of Native religions. In  
9 those days too, needless to say, Native peoples were not  
10 asked what kind of education they wanted their children  
11 to receive.

12                   In 1896, missionaries arrived in Fort  
13 Albany and by 1904, the first residential school intake  
14 was started with twelve students.

15                   "With a lump in my throat and a vacant  
16 feeling in my stomach, I watched my dejected father,  
17 heading home...without me."

18                   By 1960, the Catholic Church had  
19 constructed a massive structure, to house, cloth, feed  
20 two hundred students from the surrounding communities.  
21 The school was built by our grandfathers who received half  
22 a loaf of bread and a can of beans a day, for their effort.  
23 The Catholic Church was able to construct one residential

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 school, one residence for the oblates, one for the Grey  
2 Nuns, one hospital, one garage and purchase heavy  
3 equipment.

4                   The children were kept in residential  
5 school ten months out of each year to accelerate the process  
6 of cultural change. By keeping children away from family  
7 associations, it was expected that memories of their  
8 parents, language, and the Native way of life would fade.

9     It is still said by teachers and medical people that for  
10 learning the formative years is the most important. In  
11 Fort Albany, the program consisted of heavy religious  
12 content, academic training, manual work and character  
13 transformation. We were to enter school as First Nations  
14 children and come out as brown "white" teenagers.

15                   Father Delmas writes: "As for the  
16 girls, they have to be trained to be good housewives,  
17 knowing how to cook, wash clothes, mend them, keep a neat  
18 house and to take care of a small vegetable garden."

19                   The residential school have left marks  
20 in the personality of many previous inmates. There has  
21 always been the feeling of some unfinished business that  
22 has to be resolved. With that in mind, Fort Albany First  
23 Nation Council hosted the St. Anne's Residential School

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Reunion and Conference in August of 1992. Through  
2 speeches, workshops and healing circles, the participants  
3 began to explore the road to recovery.

4                   During this time a panel of six  
5 professionals heard private testimony from individuals  
6 who told about their experience in residential school.  
7 The following is the report of the Testimonial Panel.

8                   We had to have an understanding first  
9 of why the Panel was in place so we wrote the terms of  
10 reference. This was from the First Nation Council in Fort  
11 Albany.

12                   The Terms of Reference were hearing and  
13 recording the testimonials of selected participants; being  
14 aware of the term "Residential School Syndrome"; provide  
15 a summary report of the testimonials to the Chief and  
16 Council of the Fort Albany First Nation; provide  
17 recommendations to the Fort Albany Chief and Council; keep  
18 all information confidential; and have the ability to  
19 discuss the contents of the hearings and provide a  
20 future-oriented view to facilitate the healing of "past  
21 inmates" to provide positive environment for the newer  
22 generations.

23                   The names of the Panel members are listed

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 as: Andrew Wesley, Chairperson. Executive Director,  
2 Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services, Timmins, Ontario;  
3 Ms Barbara Montgomery, Co-Chairperson. Director,  
4 Alemotaeta, James Bay Community Mental Health Program,  
5 Moosonee; Mr. James Carpenter, Elder, Kashechewan First  
6 Nation; Ms Theresa Hall, Justice of the Peace, Cochrane  
7 Court; Mr. Alex Spence, now working in Fort Albany; and  
8 Mr. James Morris, Deputy Grand Chief, Nishnawbe-Aski  
9 Nation, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

10 It should be noted, from the general  
11 information presented at the conference, that the purpose  
12 of the co-operative approach exercised by the Federal  
13 government and the churches in operating the residential  
14 schools was to assimilate the First Nations children into  
15 mainstream Canadian society and to Christianize them.

16 The church that operated St. Anne's  
17 Residential School maintains that, given the  
18 socio-economic condition of the First Nations at the time,  
19 the residential schools served a useful purpose; however,  
20 they acknowledge that, like any other system, the  
21 residential school had its negative aspects.

22 The Panel members agree that good was  
23 served by the residential school and that many people were

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   helped. There were many good Priests, Brothers and Nuns  
2   who genuinely cared for their charges; however, the main  
3   concern of the Panel lies with those many children for  
4   whom the system went horribly wrong and who, as adults,  
5   are still suffering the negative effects of the Residential  
6   School Syndrome.

7                   For those children for whom the system  
8   went wrong, the picture was frighteningly similar:

9                   1) They entered the residential  
10   school as innocent children. As one person stated "we  
11   were like little flowers, but because of the residential  
12   school, the flowers never fully blossomed";

13                  2) The children were abused. They  
14   were abused physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally  
15   and spiritually;

16                  3) In the aftermath, the effects of  
17   the abuse caused them to lose their spirit; they were unable  
18   to love or could not function sexually in the proper way,  
19   their marriages broke down, they physically abused their  
20   own children, they had low self-esteem, they hated  
21   themselves, they thought they were dirty, they sought  
22   refuge in alcohol and drugs, they attempted suicide, while  
23   some of their former classmates committed suicide; and

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                               4)    After many years of suffering  
2 alone, some of the people interviewed have begun the  
3 journey to healing, but it is still a long and difficult  
4 road. For the people who disclosed abuse to the Panel  
5 at this conference, this was a very important step, taken  
6 after much anguish and doubt, and it is the first step  
7 to healing; however, some of the people who were  
8 interviewed speak of many others who were not ready to  
9 come in.

10                           The Panel heard testimony from 30  
11 individuals: 19 men and 11 women. They ranged in age from  
12 the mid-thirties to Elders.

13                           Of the 19 men who gave testimony, 10 were  
14 sexually abused. Almost all of them were physically  
15 abused in other ways; spiritually abused, humiliated,  
16 strapped, hit with rules, hair pulled and dragged by the  
17 hair, stabbed with a pencil, made to eat their vomit, etc.

18                           Of the 11 women who gave testimony, two  
19 were sexually abused. Almost all of them were physically  
20 abused in a variety of ways, including strapping, being  
21 made to sit in the electric chair, being made to eat their  
22 vomit, being made to kneel on concrete floors, locked away  
23 in dark basements, being wrongly punished for things they

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 did not do, etc.

2                   What follows now are a few of the  
3 incidents which were related by the people who gave  
4 testimony to illustrate the type of physical and sexual  
5 abuse they suffered.

6                   Several people talked about three boys  
7 who ran away from St. Anne's Residential School and never  
8 came back. To this day, it is not certain what happened  
9 to the boys. It was related that bones were unearthed  
10 by the old barn and sent to Ottawa for analysis, but no  
11 report ever came back.

12                   Boys were lined up outside and sent into  
13 a room one at a time where their pants were pulled down,  
14 and their genitals were fondled, looking for disorders.  
15 Boys were made to masturbate while they were watched.

16                   One of the boys was sexually abused where  
17 the penis penetrated his anus. He was abused by another  
18 person. The abuse did not stop for a long time. He almost  
19 became an abuser himself.

20                   Several men related how they were made  
21 to wear plastic skirts while they took showers and were  
22 sometimes fondled while they were in that state. The  
23 person watching them played the part of a voyeur.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   A woman relates how she arrived at the  
2 school with three brothers and two sisters. Because she  
3 was the oldest and their parents had separated, she felt  
4 responsible for the children. She could not understand  
5 why they were separated. She kept asking for one of the  
6 brothers for whom she was particularly concerned.

7                   Six months after their arrival, she was  
8 awakened by another person dressed in white with her head  
9 covered who told her that her brother had died. She went  
10 with the person who took her to a room where she was raped  
11 by two men, who gagged her and tied her down. At dawn,  
12 she was discovered not being in her room and was strapped  
13 20 times as punishment. She was told if she said anything  
14 about it again, she would be strapped 40 times.

15                  After four months, she discovered  
16 something funny about her stomach and was told she was  
17 going to have a baby. Three months after that, they took  
18 the baby away. She was taken to a room under the hospital.  
19 She does not know what they did with the baby. At that  
20 time, she hated the baby, but on this trip, the women went  
21 to the room under the old hospital and said a prayer for  
22 the lost baby.

23                  Several people talked about the electric



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 chair that was used in the girls playroom. It seems odd  
2 how an electric chair can find its way into a residential  
3 school; however, it seems to have been brought to the school  
4 for fun. Nevertheless, all the people who remembered the  
5 electric chair do not remember it in fun, but with pain  
6 and horror.

7                         Several people described the incidents  
8 of throwing up into their porridge and then being made  
9 to eat their own vomit.

10                        The straps are described as being red  
11 in colour and about an inch thick, and another strap that  
12 had metal rivets or nuts and bolts on it.

13                        Following are the recommendations from  
14 the Panel. Short-term recommendations include: 1)

15                        the case of the three missing boys needs  
16 to be investigated and dealt with immediately in the  
17 following manner:

18                        a) The three run-away boys and the  
19 bones that were found near the old barn needs to be  
20 investigated to determine if there is a connection between  
21 the two. Is it fact or is it rumour?

22                        b) The psychological impact on  
23 the families of the three run-away boys, who were never

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 found and never given proper burials needs to be redressed;  
2 and

3 c) A memorial gathering should be  
4 given for the three families of the lost boys, and all  
5 their relatives, to finally deal with their loss.  
6 Compensation should be provided to the families by  
7 providing financial assistance for the memorial or any  
8 costs associated with putting the bones to their final  
9 resting place.

10 2) All the individuals who gave  
11 testimony and disclosed physical, psychological, sexual  
12 or spiritual abuse need immediate attention. It was a  
13 profound and painful event for the victims to come forward  
14 and required much courage on their part. They must not  
15 be let down now. They must receive on-going counselling  
16 and healing to be determined before they leave the  
17 community;

18 3) The case of the electric chair  
19 needs to be clarified. While it appeared to have started  
20 as a toy, it was eventually used to terrorize the children,  
21 to the extent of fainting and memory loss.

22 The long-term recommendations include:

23 4) An independent Commission of

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Inquiry should be set up to look into the St. Anne's  
2 Residential School syndrome:

3 a) The people who gave testimony  
4 spoke of friends and other people who are not ready to  
5 disclose, they spoke of many other boys and girls who were  
6 physically and sexually abused and girls who were raped;

7 b) The Commission of Inquiry must  
8 have a process for the disclosure by other individuals  
9 who were physically and sexually abused;

10 c) The Commission of Inquiry must  
11 have a counselling and healing component to provide  
12 immediate attention to any victims who disclose at the  
13 hearings;

14 d) The leadership for the  
15 Commission should be a mix of elders, former residential  
16 school students who want to heal and any high profile  
17 figures who may wish to participate; and

18 e) Compensation for the victims.

19 5) The role of the Federal Government  
20 and the Roman Catholic Church in the fates of the victims  
21 of abuse needs to be addressed, without rest. As a start,  
22 they could be asked to finance the Commission of Inquiry;  
23 however, the Commission should begin with or without the

November 5, 1992

233

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 support of the Federal government or the church;

2                                 6) In the aftermath of the residential  
3 school experience, many of the survivors went on to  
4 experience difficulty in providing proper parenting for  
5 their children, often passing the syndrome onto the next  
6 generation. To counter the effects of this syndrome,  
7 counselling services to provide training in parenting  
8 skills should be set up in every community where former  
9 students reside; and

10                               7) The Panel noted that the people who  
11 have made the most progress in their own healing processes  
12 are those who adopted their own beliefs, including those  
13 who went back to their traditional beliefs and practices.

14                               The following -- the church and Indian  
15 residential schools, a paper by Brian Titley is included  
16 as an appendices to the presentation and I am not going  
17 to read it.

18                               In conclusion, the elders have expressed  
19 that it is too painful for them to hear about abuses  
20 committed by the church. The same church they placed their  
21 trust and confidence and their children. It is also their  
22 wish that these abuses must never be allowed to happen  
23 again.

StenoTran

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   A public inquiry, we have been told will  
2   be very costly and it is not even certain that we can get  
3   anyone to support it given the fact that the Minister of  
4   Indian Affairs, Tom Siddon, has completely rejected the  
5   idea. The Catholic Church has a copy of the Panel Report  
6   and to date has not responded.

7                   In order to meet the wishes of the elders  
8   and also help the victims of the residential school era,  
9   we have given the Panel Report to the police. In this  
10  way the investigation can proceed quietly.

11                  Of immediate concern is responding to  
12  the hurt and shame carried by those who testified and the  
13  others who say "next time I will tell my story". I've  
14  seen lips begin to tremble and eyes turning moist and that  
15  person looking away to avoid eye contact -- there is a  
16  lot of pain there.

17                  With the testimony of the individual the  
18  infection has been broken. In exposing the weakness that  
19  man or woman is now in a very vulnerable stage. A recovery  
20  process must begin immediately.

21                  Healing lodges have been discussed.  
22  Programs in these lodges can assist individuals recover  
23  lost traditional knowledge, provide long-term

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 counselling, academic training in one's own language and  
2 other future activities.

3                   The recommendations contained in the  
4 Panel Report must be acted on. We cannot wait for three  
5 years or so before something can be done.

6                   The victims of the St. Anne's  
7 Residential School in Fort Albany had this story to tell  
8 you and we thank you all for listening.

9                   This is the presentation that we came  
10 here to give and it is a true story, but it is only the  
11 tip of the iceberg.

12                   Thank you.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
14 very much.

15                   As I mentioned earlier today we have been  
16 hearing the issue of the impact of the residential school  
17 system almost in every community that we visited.

18                   It is obviously, as you say, an example  
19 of a very bad, misguided government policy and its impact  
20 seems to be stretching down through the generations of  
21 Native people.

22                   We have heard different views as to what  
23 should be done. We have heard some Native people say that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 they didn't think anything would be gained by subjecting  
2 the victims of this policy to their repeated pain of telling  
3 their stories over and over and over again, particularly  
4 unless support systems were provided for them after they  
5 had given their testimony.

6 I think what I would like you to tell  
7 us is in connection for the claim for compensation -- which  
8 is obviously a valid claim -- do you see that compensation  
9 in terms of individual compensation which would obviously  
10 be a very complex thing to work out or do you see it in  
11 terms of community compensation more in the provision of  
12 all of the kinds of services that are necessary for the  
13 healing process to take place?

14 Quite clearly our Commission will have  
15 to address this issue and make recommendations in relation  
16 to it and I am wondering how you see the compensation issue  
17 being addressed.

18 **CHIEF EDMOND METATWABIN:** It could be  
19 various ways: individually and community oriented.

20 There is a lot of damage. I will even  
21 venture to say it is incalculable damage that was inflicted  
22 on the culture and not only in our own case, but across  
23 the world. It seems that it was the general practice.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   This is 1992. Canadians enjoy homes  
2 with a lot of room full with finished basements, with water  
3 and sewer facilities, central heating, infrastructure to  
4 support the community. In Fort Albany, I have 80 year  
5 old elders that struggle to get water from sources of water,  
6 standpipes as we call them. We have them struggling in  
7 40 below weather trying to empty their sewage pails to  
8 be dumped in places where they empty them.

9                   I have them sitting in a house that is  
10 sitting on the ground without a proper foundation subjected  
11 to frost, cold, wind, made of plywood. Substandard  
12 housing.

13                  That is the difference. They are not  
14 Canadians. They are not living like Canadians. We can  
15 only ask that we be allowed to live like Canadians by being  
16 shown that we can live like Canadians in the proper housing.

17                  Also, to be educated like Canadians.  
18 Canadians are very proud of their english language. They  
19 fight for their french language, but the government still  
20 wants to eradicate our Cree language.

21                  We thought we were going towards  
22 self-government, but we got kicked in the gut through the  
23 manipulations of the Prime Minister and we felt that pain



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to all of us.

2 I don't really know what kind of  
3 compensation.

4 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** From the  
5 things you have mentioned such as access to water supplies  
6 and sewage services, education and so on, it seems to me  
7 as if those are more compensation that could be put into  
8 the communities rather than trying to assess what  
9 individual victims or their children or grandchildren may  
10 have suffered as a result of the residential school system  
11 which I would imagine -- I don't know, but speaking as  
12 a lawyer -- I would imagine that measuring individual  
13 compensation through one or two generations would be a  
14 very difficult process.

15 On the other hand, I can see that it would  
16 be relatively easy to look at the community and see what  
17 was required in the way of services both to assist the  
18 people who have suffered from the system and also, to make  
19 sure -- as you say -- that Natives are living like other  
20 Canadians in decent housing and having decent schooling  
21 and decent health services and so on. That all makes very  
22 good sense to me.

23 I would like to ask you another question

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1    which is what do you see the role of our Commission to  
2    be? I notice that your contemplating or the Panel was  
3    contemplating a special Commission which would be  
4    addressing this particular issue.

5                    As I said, we have had this issue raised  
6    with us and people seem to be saying that we, as a  
7    Commission, ought to be doing something about it. I am  
8    wondering what you see -- how you see us playing a role.  
9    What kind of a role can we play in relation to this very  
10   serious problem?

11                   **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:** I think one  
12   way the Commission can help the process is to speed it  
13   up. I know you have hearings to undergo for the next period  
14   of time -- I don't know how long it will be for the report  
15   to come out -- but in the meantime, we have people  
16   committing suicide and we have people having difficulties  
17   in their families and in their communities. This is a  
18   real problem. The effects of the residential school era.  
19   We would like to speed up the healing. I mentioned the  
20   healing lodges.

21                   I think this might help to illustrate  
22   what is possible. We had a medicine man who came from  
23   Arizona during the conference. The medicine man visited

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 a young man that was confined to a hospital bed. The young  
2 man already had one operation for back trouble. At this  
3 time the young man was not able to walk around or even  
4 move when not in bed. The only reaction or the only  
5 alterNative to hospital that medical people had was to  
6 shoot pain killing drugs into the young man to the point  
7 where the young man was swelling in his lower back because  
8 of these repeated injections.

9                   The medicine man went to visit the young  
10 man and within a half hour the young man was able to walk  
11 around his room. Three days later the young man was  
12 walking around the community. Presently that young man  
13 can do anything in sports, hunting or any kind of activity.

14                   This has been observed by the hospital  
15 staff. It is a concrete case. It was not something that  
16 was made up. The role that a medicine man can play in  
17 curing and counselling and providing healing to these  
18 individuals has to be considered.

19                   The healing lodge can provide programs  
20 that will help individuals recover forgotten knowledge,  
21 beliefs, traditions, language and the medicine people can  
22 be the essential figures in these lodges. That is for  
23 the individual.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   We have to recover our constitution.  
2   A lot of us have forgotten the constitution that we were  
3   given. I mentioned the role of elders, youth the woman  
4   and the man briefly. There is a lot more that we have  
5   given up because we thought we were meeting honest people.

6                   That is my comments on your question.

7                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

8   I will ask Mary if she has any questions.

9                   **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I have  
10 nothing to add except to thank you and to say that you  
11 can rest assured that we, as Commissioners, feel exactly  
12 the same as you have expressed.

13                  **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:** Thank you.

14                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
15 Mary.

16                  Allan, please.

17                  **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have  
18 one simple factual question and one other question which  
19 I wasn't quite sure what you were saying and I am looking  
20 for clarification.

21                  The simple factual one refers to the  
22 story of the three missing boys. About when did that  
23 happen?

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:**   About 1940.

2                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:**   About  
3   1940, that's good enough.

4                   The other question was you spoke of the  
5   need for healing and particularly you suggested that  
6   sweatlodges should be used.   Who should do what with  
7   respect to sweatlodges?   Who should go about setting them  
8   up?   Is it a matter of money or -- I am not quite sure  
9   what the issue is.

10                  **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:**   I think the  
11   gentleman previously mentioned the Indian Act doesn't have  
12   provisions for a lot of Native oriented activities.  
13   Curriculum development, we have a hard time accessing  
14   resources to be able to do that.

15                  Now I mentioned the sweatlodges.   The  
16   other traditional ceremonies by our own medicine people.  
17   It should be a matter of course if we consider continuity  
18   in every culture.   Continuity means your forefathers gave  
19   you something to do and you, as a man or woman, must take  
20   that practice or teaching or other activity from your  
21   elders and take it upon yourself and have it be active  
22   in your own time so you can pass it on to future generations.

23                  I know right now the church doesn't

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 recognize our traditional ceremonies. I know right now  
2 the government doesn't recognize our traditional  
3 ceremonies. We have a hard time funding travel for the  
4 medicine man to come to us. Those kinds of things have  
5 to be included in legislation or in the affairs of the  
6 Native people. They have to be acknowledged instead of  
7 government trying to eradicate them.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think  
9 Miss Sheeshish has something she wants to add.

10 Miss Sheeshish, please.

11 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

12 **SHEESHISH:** Thank you, Mrs. Wilson.

13 The only way we can deal with this  
14 problem about the incidents that happened at the  
15 residential school is to keep on having healing circles  
16 because I have already went to two of them myself.

17 I am one of the victims as mentioned here  
18 to eat your own vomit. Today I am still suffering from  
19 that. You can't even make your own pet eat their own vomit.

20 It has to be something very clean that I have to feed  
21 them. Every time that I try to feed my animals, it always  
22 comes back to me what I went through and I learned a lot  
23 from the suffering I had when I was at the residential

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 school.

2 I learned how to care for more other  
3 people. I learned how to laugh at myself so many times.

4 I tried to forget what happened and the only way that  
5 some of those victims could heal is by talking about it.

6 Trying to accept what had happened to them.

7 One of those three boys that ran away  
8 from the school, one of them was my aunt's son, Mary  
9 Matinas. I am sure you all know her. She is my aunt and  
10 one of them was her son.

11 Sometimes I wonder how she feels about  
12 everything, knowing that she is very religious and she  
13 still knows how to forgive, I guess, no matter what. That  
14 is one thing about our culture. It is knowing how to  
15 forgive one another. It wouldn't be us if we don't forgive  
16 our fellow brothers or sisters because that is not how  
17 we were made. That is not how our Creator has put us on  
18 this earth to have grudges with one another. It has to  
19 be forgiven right away.

20 That is what made me -- sometimes laugh  
21 at what happened, yet it still suffers and I don't want  
22 to dwell on that so much now. Every time when those things  
23 come up, it is always the same. Thinking about the little

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 people -- how the little kids at that time had pressed  
2 from their mind, like so many of us went to this residential  
3 school and even though sometimes the ones that weren't  
4 punished for anything, there was a big scar. Longing for  
5 our parent's love because it is not the same thing -- even  
6 though some of the supervisors were very good, but it is  
7 not the same as though you are living at home.

8                   There were a lot of things that were  
9 missing. I encourage you to tell everybody that went  
10 through this, the only way you can get rid of the pain  
11 is by trying to talk about it and go to the healing circles.

12                   Thank you.

13                   **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:** One thing I  
14 have been going to school for a long time and not in my  
15 own culture -- probably to grade 2 in my own culture --  
16 in the white man's system. I am getting close to reaching  
17 the end of the academic road. I will have three letters  
18 to prove that.

19                   I am getting to understand how the white  
20 man thinks. The only way he will react -- he is not going  
21 to react if you talk about something, but the only way  
22 the white man will react if there is a potential -- if  
23 there is a risk -- for being liable for something.



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   At this point in time we only have the  
2 words of our own people. The Minister of Indian Affairs  
3 says that's nothing. He is not going to react to it.  
4 Indian people say something it doesn't mean anything.

5                   I have heard indigenous people from  
6 across the world talk about the environment. It wasn't  
7 until the white people started talking about it that the  
8 press, the governments and other people reacted to it.

9                   So I know in this case, unless the police  
10 -- whether the Ontario Provincial Police or the Royal  
11 Canadian Mounted Police -- have it on pieces of paper and  
12 provide a document where we can hold it in our hands and  
13 meet the government on that level, that is the only time  
14 they will listen. It is unfortunate that they want to  
15 hear specific details and proof, but I know we have to  
16 give it to them.

17                  We have to accumulate the proof right  
18 now and then sit down with the churches, the various levels  
19 of government, Minister of Indian Affairs and our own  
20 people then we can seriously search for solutions to this  
21 thing.

22                  Right now, I know for a fact the  
23 government is not going to do anything just because we

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 say it -- just because Indian people say it. It has to  
2 be said by white people. That is the only time they will  
3 listen to it. That is the only time the government will  
4 listen to it. That is our history.

5 That is the history that was developed  
6 in Canada and that is how we get to understand the thinking  
7 of the white man.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** That is  
9 precisely why I asked you whether you saw any role for  
10 our Commission on this issue.

11 **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:** The request  
12 for a public inquiry was rejected. If the Commission could  
13 somehow get this thing going. We will get to resolution  
14 a lot quicker, but this will not disappear. This will  
15 not be forgotten unless we get past this barricade that  
16 we have in front of us. We want to get to the future,  
17 but we want to deal with this first.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
19 very much for coming and talking to us about a very  
20 sensitive issue. We appreciate it.

21 **CHIEF EDMOND METATAWABIN:** Thank you.

22 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

23 **ED SACKENEY:** The next presenter on the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 list is from the Timmins Native Friendship Centre.

2 Unfortunately, Lina McKenzie couldn't make it so in her  
3 place will Peter Sackenev who is the Executive Director.

4 Peter I have known for practically all  
5 his life because he is my brother. He completed the drug  
6 and alcohol program at the local community college. Has  
7 been with the Friendship Centre serving in the capacity  
8 as a Native court worker, community development and  
9 presently as the Executive Director.

10 He also wrote something there that I know  
11 is not true, but I will mention it anyway. He is also  
12 an ex-champion of a golden glove lightweight division.

13 To present with him is Holly Kowtook  
14 Holopainen, born in Moose Factory, but she is also Inuk  
15 and has relatives in New Beltcher (PH) Island. She has  
16 been involved in several capacities in this community.  
17 She presently is the Vice-President of the Native  
18 Friendship Centre. She is also involved in Native race  
19 relations. She was also instrumental in developing a race  
20 relations policy at one of our school boards.

21 She is also a member of the Race  
22 Relations Committee, Aboriginal Anti-Race Committee of  
23 Ontario. She also sits on our Health Centre Board. I

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 think one of the greatest attributes she also has is she  
2 a mother and she is married to a wonderful person, that  
3 I think comes first and above all the things I mentioned.  
4 So Peter Sackenev and Holly Kowtook Holopainen.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Who is  
6 going to start?

7 **PETER SACKENEV, TIMMINS NATIVE**

8 **FRIENDSHIP CENTRE:** Good evening. I would have liked to  
9 say good afternoon, but ---

10 The recent event -- I would like to share  
11 a little story with you. Recently we celebrated a common  
12 tradition on a yearly basis that has to do mostly with  
13 the children, but when the adults get involved with it  
14 we make a lot of fun out of it. We recently celebrated  
15 Halloween.

16 Somebody made a comment on my suit today.

17 I am very dressed up. Halloween, however, I did dress  
18 up. I wore a suit and tie and carried around a little  
19 briefcase and I was acting as a DIA agent. I went to knock  
20 at all the Indian homes and announce trick or treaty.  
21 Needless to say, they all wanted the treaty.

22 I work with Timmins Native Friendship  
23 Centre for the last 12 years with various positions. The

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 best position that I ever held was being a Native Criminal  
2 Court Worker. I think that you had an introduction on  
3 that program this morning.

4                   However, there is more to it than what  
5 was heard. You see when you get the first time look at  
6 the judicial system and how it operates, it is an important  
7 concern to Native people, whether they are First Nation  
8 or urban that the program must exist for the people that  
9 come in contact with the law.

10                   The program that we operate has serviced  
11 the Timmins area for the last eight years. We also serve  
12 areas of Gogama (PH) and Chapleau on a monthly basis.  
13 We have had some conflicts and difficulties within the  
14 judicial system before the program existed and now that  
15 the program exists, the complications are still there.

16                   As First People in the North American  
17 Continent, we are unique. We have survived 500 years of  
18 change. Recently they celebrated 500 years of Columbus  
19 landing. We celebrated 500 years ago the fact that we  
20 found Columbus. In that time all things happen for a  
21 reason. It was just to make us stronger people.

22                   I don't want to wonder off the topic,  
23 but I think it is important to note that we will continue

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 to strive for a better tomorrow for all our Aboriginal  
2 people regardless of what background they come from. We  
3 will strive towards the building of self-government. We  
4 will strive towards better education and understanding  
5 the Native culture. We will strive towards dealing with  
6 discrimiNation and ignorance of the Native culture. That  
7 is a sad case when it comes down, finding that happening  
8 yet within the court systems. That it is our people are  
9 treated differently in some ways.

10                   There is always a conflict of languages  
11 across the Nation. The two main languages are always  
12 english and french. The Native dialects are always  
13 ignored. When you go to a court room here in the City  
14 of Timmins, they will have a french interpreter up there  
15 for the people who cannot correspond in the english  
16 language.

17                   As a worker we have to run throughout  
18 the City to find an interpreter to provide for our people.  
19 I think that it is important that the court system also  
20 recognizes the language of the Native people and start  
21 hiring or putting in full-time interpreters because that  
22 protects the confidentiality of the people that pass  
23 through the system.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Also, it must be noted that in  
2   discussions made that there must be some special training  
3   programs provided because of the languages that are shared.

4   Everything that is said in english within the court  
5   systems are not common within Native language.

6                   I present to you that that is one of the  
7   important things that must be addressed anywhere  
8   throughout the country.

9                   I also feel that the program is important  
10   because now we are running into areas of difficulty within  
11   our own Nations whether it is status or non-status, First  
12   Nations or Aboriginal. You know I am going into a meeting  
13   with the Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres there  
14   is always a concern of who will take care of the urban  
15   people.

16                   In a recent meeting, the population in  
17   the urban areas throughout Canada has escalated about 68  
18   per cent which is high number for the Native population.  
19   You find a lot of people migrating to the cities.

20                   The programs that we offer within our  
21   Friendship Centre is all culturally orientated. We a  
22   little beavers program which deals with little children.  
23   We service the needs for adult education. We service

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the needs to the elders. We basically service the social  
2 needs to any individual that walks in our doors.

3 We find every program that we are  
4 offering to be very important to us because then it answers  
5 a question within itself that there is somebody out there  
6 taking care of the urban people. These programs must keep  
7 on going as long as migration keeps on escalating.

8 The work that I am involved with -- I  
9 have learned a lot in the last five years in being a Native  
10 individual like many others have commented, many others  
11 that have passed through this microphone in sharing, I  
12 too have lost some identity along the way because I have  
13 become more or less urbanized most of my life. I am  
14 fortunate, however, that I could understand a bit of my  
15 own language, but I cannot really correspond in my  
16 language.

17 I speak very highly of the court work  
18 program being a Native Criminal Court Worker in my past  
19 and seeing that the work across Ontario and across Canada  
20 is effective. I have met judicial officials that speak  
21 very highly of the program. I have always supported the  
22 program since its existence.

23 There is something, I guess, that I will



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 share and which I am bothered because it will come down  
2 to a governmental decision once it starts happening. As  
3 I have mentioned, our court work program has been in  
4 operation now for approximately eight years. We service  
5 the surrounding communities, Gogama (PH) and Chapleau and  
6 now we have other workers stepping in that are offering  
7 the same programs. We have no conflict with that.

8                   If it comes down to it -- if a decision  
9 comes down to it and something should be cut, will the  
10 court work program be threatened in any way? If we are  
11 told by our First Nations people that they can handle their  
12 own affairs, then we will respect that decision.

13                   But what about the people in the urban  
14 areas across the country. Who will meet their needs when  
15 they come across that conflict with the law? Who will  
16 meet with their needs when they need somebody to talk to?  
17 They should -- picked up in the middle of the night rather  
18 than talking to a lawyer, most people would rather call  
19 a court worker.

20                   My concern is a question of the urban  
21 people. We still, in our hearts, know who you are,  
22 maintain our cultural and our values within ourselves,  
23 within our groups, within our friends, within the urban

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 community. We will keep doing that.

2 That is all I have to say.

3 Meeqwetch.

4 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

5 Would you like to make a presentation?

6 Thank you very much.

7 The Commission is very concerned about  
8 the situation of Native people in urban areas. We held  
9 a Round Table in Edmonton and during our First Round of  
10 public hearings to hear what the special problems of Native  
11 people in urban areas were. Obviously, they have special  
12 problems and serious problems.

13 I am wondering if you can tell us why  
14 you think so many Native people are migrating to the cities.  
15 Obviously, they are leaving the protection of their own  
16 communities and it seems to me from all I have heard they  
17 are extremely vulnerable in a city environment to  
18 discrimination, racism, all sorts of things that probably  
19 that they don't suffer from to the same extent in their  
20 own communities.

21 What in your view is the attraction of  
22 the city? Is it jobs? Is it a better way of life? Can  
23 you shed any light on why there is this terrific movement

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 of Native people into urban centres because it is quite  
2 clear that there is and that it is going to continue?  
3 I am wondering if you can give us any answers on that.

4 **PETER SACKENEY:** You can have the issue  
5 of dealing with better economic situations. There are  
6 certainly more jobs within the urban areas available to  
7 those that qualify for them. I cannot speak on behalf  
8 of the First Nations people, but with the sharing of some  
9 of the people that do come in, they just like to get away  
10 from the situations that are back home.

11 To look at the status of Native people  
12 regardless if they are on First Nations land or in the  
13 urban areas. We have a high rate of alcoholism. We have  
14 a high rate of drug abuse. As someone mentioned, we do  
15 have a high rate of suicide. Maybe dreams look a lot better  
16 within the urban areas. Maybe they are a lot more  
17 accessible in terms of attaining their dreams.

18 Certainly, the part of education of  
19 Natives migrating explains itself. There are no colleges  
20 or universities within First Nations areas. We also have  
21 some of our young children travelling from the coastal  
22 communities down here to get their high school education  
23 which is a trauma and stress within itself.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   We have a lot of our young people who  
2 do come down here that fall into the position of culture  
3 shock because they have a lot of things to deal with being  
4 away from home 10 months out of the year. Maybe a month  
5 and a half of that time they go back home for holidays.

6                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** In several  
7 communities we were told that the young people who had  
8 to leave the community to go to a high school and went  
9 to the nearest centre encountered discrimination and  
10 racism and many of them didn't stay very long, but were  
11 glad to return to the community. Some of the Native  
12 leaders told us that perhaps this was because their own  
13 sense of identity wasn't strong enough.

14                   The educational system at the elementary  
15 level -- the education they got -- within the community  
16 didn't stress sufficiently the history and the language  
17 and the culture of the Native people so that the student,  
18 didn't have within themselves a sufficient sense of who  
19 they are and a sufficient self-respect to be able to face  
20 the outside world.

21                   That the answer to that was to look at  
22 the curriculum and design a curriculum that would have  
23 the effect of strengthening the children and their own

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Native identity and make them proud of their own identity  
2 so that when they went to the larger centre they were  
3 impervious to the impact of the white society -- would  
4 you think perhaps that that might help to solve the  
5 situation?

6 **PETER SACKENEY:** I think certainly in  
7 giving a person the pride in their heritage and the pride  
8 in their culture would certainly diminish some of the  
9 existing discrimination and racism.

10 Also, I feel that on lines of education  
11 -- not only within the high school systems, but also post  
12 secondary -- they offer programs to Native people with  
13 a title of Native social worker, but the curriculum has  
14 no background on Native teachings.

15 We have no teachers on a full-time basis  
16 that teach the history of our people, the history of our  
17 treaties. Not only that, we don't learn about the Native  
18 culture. We would like to learn more of the Cree people  
19 rather than learning more about the Mohawk people.

20 The Mohawk people are located more to  
21 the south. They have their own thing going on there.  
22 We want to have our identity up here. I have often heard  
23 comments that we are not as fast moving as the people down

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 south. That is because we still have room to move around  
2 up here. We still have isolation. We still have the earth  
3 to go back to. We still have hunting to do. We still  
4 have some trapping to do.

5 If you go down to the City of Toronto,  
6 what are you going to do there? Maybe hunt for a little  
7 fun on Young Street.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Not the  
9 right kind, probably.

10 **PETER SACKENEY:** I have had the  
11 opportunity to travel the south and for me, it is a good  
12 place to get away, but I wouldn't want to live in an area  
13 such -- I would rather live in my environment because then  
14 I become a product of my environment. My environment is  
15 nature. I like to be with nature.

16 You know you go and spoil nature and you  
17 are destroying something. It is like the thing with the  
18 Ontario Hydro development, the dams. Once those go up,  
19 it is a lot of land that is going to be flooded. That  
20 is a lot of trapping and hunting grounds that are going  
21 to be destroyed. That itself is culture.

22 Talking on the thing of ignorance of our  
23 non-Native brothers and sisters, we want to maintain our

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 culture, the importance of our identity. We don't want  
2 to go back to the days of the teepee, to the days of hunting  
3 buffalo, that is impossible. Our language is important.  
4 Our grass roots are important. As long as we can make  
5 that as adults, we can pass it on to our children. That  
6 itself will give them pride in who they are.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes. I  
8 will ask Mary, do you have anything you want to comment  
9 on?

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
11 just like to thank you both for your presentations. I  
12 would just like to ask several questions. We heard this  
13 morning that the Native community in Timmins is  
14 approximately 3500 in a population of -- it is a very small  
15 minority, nevertheless. I am just wondering is the Native  
16 community in Timmins very closely knit and what kinds of  
17 cultural opportunities does, for example, the Friendship  
18 Centre provide?

19 The second question I have is: I know  
20 that the Friendship Centres especially in urban areas  
21 provide a very significant cross-cultural role and what  
22 do you specifically your Friendship Centre do in order  
23 to promote that?

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   **PETER SACKENEY:** Our Friendship Centre,  
2 as I mentioned, has programs offered to maintain the  
3 cultural orientation to our children. The importance of  
4 our culture.

5                   We have received a number of requests  
6 from various educational institutions, from other  
7 services, from the police services, the exchange of  
8 cross-cultural information. We have attended a number  
9 of schools and made our presentations, right from  
10 elementary, to high school, to post secondary. We will  
11 continue to do that as long as they request it.

12                  We also will continue to provide  
13 culturally oriented programs for our children. That is  
14 never going to change. Our doors, as mentioned, are open  
15 to anybody. Just because it is called the Timmins Native  
16 Friendship Centre does not necessarily mean that we only  
17 invite Native people in there. We also invite non-Native  
18 people as well.

19                  As far as social activities, we do have  
20 a lot of participation and interest from the community  
21 members that do get involved. We do have a lot of things  
22 provided to the community if they want it.

23                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 please.

2 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Can you  
3 offer to us any thoughts as to how Aboriginal  
4 self-government or self-determiNation ought to operate  
5 in an urban centre. How should things be organized so  
6 that Aboriginal people in a city like Timmins might have  
7 greater control over the things that effect their lives?

8 **PETER SACKENEY:** There is -- sometimes  
9 we have in the last couple of years a number of Native  
10 agencies have been springing up in the City of Timmins.  
11 We have been taking care of our own. An example, at  
12 Kanawanamano, (PH) Native Child and Family Services. We  
13 have the Wabun Tribal Council which takes care of its First  
14 Nations. We have Wapanatum, (PH) Native Non-Profit Homes.  
15 We have the cultural centre which deals  
16 with education and we have the Timmins Native Friendship  
17 Centre that offers social assistance to people that need  
18 help that have problems with society. That in itself is  
19 taking a step towards self-government.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I agree  
21 and I ask: do you feel that essentially the non-profit  
22 organizations, as you have described them, does the job  
23 or do you think that an elected board -- elected by all

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 the Aboriginal people who might run a child care system  
2 or might even run a school or whatever -- would be a good  
3 idea. Does that make sense to you.

4 **PETER SACKENEY:** It makes a lot of  
5 sense, when it comes down to taking care of your own.  
6 I mean as it is already known with the english and the  
7 french appellation, they take care of their own.  
8 Everybody always wants to be included in that little  
9 milking pot. We don't want to be included in the milking  
10 pot. We want to be our own people as we have been trying  
11 to say for years and years.

12 In my own opinion, and this is my own  
13 opinion only and nobody else's, when we talk about  
14 self-government, that is going to take a lot of time.  
15 It is not something that is going to happen tomorrow.  
16 I see my children growing up and governing their own.  
17 Because we are just the pioneers of something that should  
18 never have happened. We are opening new doorways. We  
19 are opening new pathways for our children to walk in to  
20 make them a stronger culture.

21 As mentioned before, there is a lot of  
22 healing that has to take place because of a lot of things  
23 that have happened in the past. Personally, in order to

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 deal with the past it makes it a lot better to live in  
2 the present. Because if we do not deal with our past,  
3 it makes our present living very difficult. It will sure  
4 make our tomorrow a lot brighter.

5 Native people are survivors because we  
6 dealt with a lot of things. We have become assimilated  
7 within another culture without choice.

8 I am a Native person. I am a grass  
9 roots. I am proud of who I am. I make mistakes like  
10 anybody else. I don't consider myself to be the perfect  
11 individual. But my identity is the most important thing  
12 to me because as long as I have that, my children and my  
13 grandchildren will have that.

14 It was predicted by our elders at one  
15 time that our culture would disappear for a time, but we  
16 would come about it as stronger individuals.

17 The talk of residential schools. I was  
18 fortunate I got the tail end of that. I attended  
19 residential schools for three years. Just not seeing your  
20 parents for that time is enough to cause a little damage.

21 I grew up in a french community. I understand a little  
22 bit of their language because I was forced to use it.

23 Like everybody else we grew up with

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   discrimiNation. We grew up with racism. We are still  
2   here today. It made me a stronger individual by nature.  
3   It made me who I am today which is the obvious, an  
4   individual.

5                   When it comes down to stepping into the  
6   political arena, I am not the type to go in there. I am  
7   the type to stand back and watch things happen because  
8   of my silence I have learned a lot of things. I have heard  
9   a lot of things and I have seen a lot of things.

10                  That is how I am by nature. I am quiet.  
11   There was a time that you could never get me to come up  
12   here to talk with you, but that talking to people, and  
13   that talking and opening up to people is back on to my  
14   identity because I am proud of who I am and I am not going  
15   to sit up here being ashamed of who I am because I am not.

16                  My people have walked a long way. My  
17   people have been through a lot of things. We will never  
18   be put into another position of being compared with anybody  
19   because we are not there to be compared. Because we went  
20   through our own sufferings, we can identify our own  
21   sufferings.

22                  The identity to our children that we must  
23   pass on is a strong identity. The importance of

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 maintaining the service and the privilege of passing on  
2 the urban community is important. The importance of being  
3 recognized for who we are.

4 Because I sit back here and I have heard  
5 comments and I ask myself, what is the Royal Commission  
6 really going to do with everything that is brought forth.

7 I realize that everything will be recorded. I realize  
8 that reports will be distributed to all participants.  
9 But what will it really do? Will it open another door?  
10 Will it put us in a better position than we are at now?  
11 Could somebody answer that for me?

12 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I will  
13 try. I don't think that the Royal Commission can guarantee  
14 any results except to say that we will listen, we will  
15 record some of the material which came to us in our report  
16 and we will put forward some ideas which we think might  
17 help the situation.

18 We can in no way guarantee that anybody  
19 will do anything because of what we recommend. That just  
20 isn't within the power of the Royal Commission.

21 We hope that our activities will change  
22 the way some people think. Some Royal Commissions in the  
23 past -- Royal Commissions like Tom Bergers and others --

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 have made quite an effect on the way people think and  
2 therefore, they have opened the door for new and different  
3 government policies.

4 We don't even know for sure whether that  
5 will happen. We will certainly be trying. So it is not  
6 very much that we can guarantee. I would think it would  
7 be worthwhile for Aboriginal people to participate and  
8 get what good they can from this Commission, but others  
9 may take the view that perhaps it is not worthwhile.

10 I would not agree with that, but I can  
11 understand why they might think so.

12 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Miss  
13 Sheeshish, please.

14 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

15 **SHEESHISH:** As a court worker, do you ever have a chance  
16 to talk to those lawyers or the judge before the proceedings  
17 with the cases?

18 **PETER SACKENEY:** I have many times. On  
19 many occasions when we have -- if you know on the court  
20 room procedures, I will walk up to a judge in his chambers  
21 and ask for a remand when the clients tell they weren't  
22 being serviced.

23 Often I have stood up in court and made

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 it aware that the client has no legal representation and  
2 that a remand is necessary. Made a complaint as to why  
3 -- you know at one time something -- I was very surprised  
4 to see where we had a young offender come in shackled with  
5 his arms and his legs. I could never understand that.  
6 So I just questioned it. A young man like that to be  
7 treated like that publicly is humiliation. It is not very  
8 nice to see.

9 I have had lawyers talk to people over  
10 their heads using this lawyer lingo. A lot of people walk  
11 away saying okay, yes, I understand, but in the meantime  
12 they don't really understand what is going on.

13 I have had lawyers who say that I will  
14 speak for you and you will agree with me. Just listen  
15 to what I have to say and shake your head yes. You know,  
16 it makes you almost want to become a lawyer. It is  
17 something that has happened and I am sure that I am not  
18 the only court worker that does speak up on something like  
19 that because when we get together on our provincial  
20 gatherings or court work Ontario meetings, you hear  
21 complaints of such come forth, all the time. This is not  
22 only happening in Timmins, it is happening in the various  
23 regions of Ontario.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

2   **SHEESHISH:** The reason why I asked you that question is  
3 I often wonder -- here they are dealing with justice, so  
4 they call it. I had an incident there not too long ago,  
5 a woman couldn't speak not even a word of english and I  
6 was asked to go and interpret for this individual so I  
7 figured everything has been dealt with before hand for  
8 me to go up for when they brought this individual. So  
9 nothing was done.

10                               I went up to the lawyer and I said the  
11 woman needs help. She doesn't speak a word of english.  
12 All he tells me relax, relax. That is what he told me.  
13 So I figured he was going to bring it up to the judge,  
14 but nothing was done.

15                               I finally got up and went to the lady  
16 and she was in custody, so I said do you understand what  
17 the judge asked you. She didn't really know. She just  
18 nodded her head when the judge mentioned November. She  
19 just nodded. That was the only thing she could understand.

20                               After that I wasn't too happy about the  
21 whole thing because I feel every individual -- doesn't  
22 matter who you are if you make a mistake, I don't judge  
23 anybody -- but I feel it is her right to be served like



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the rest of the people. It happened that same morning  
2 a french speaking person couldn't understand the english  
3 language. Right away there was an interpreter for this  
4 person and that was why I wasn't too happy about it.

5 Right after the recess I went up to the  
6 lawyer and I asked him in my own language, I said: Did  
7 you ask the judge that this woman a translator for her  
8 case. He got so puzzled. He didn't even know what to  
9 say. I said: I am just trying to make a point. That is  
10 exactly how that woman feels when she couldn't understand.

11 I said: you people are trying to work out the justice  
12 system here and I don't think it is properly presented  
13 to this individual.

14 I said: is it because she is a Native  
15 person or what? That is why I said -- I am sure ahead  
16 of time a court worker knows the individual who is on the  
17 list, who needs help for anything like that.

18 In the near future I don't want to see  
19 anything like that happen again. That is why I strongly  
20 feel that we should -- I know it is very important to have  
21 the court worker program at the Friendship Centre. We  
22 need it. We need it there almost everyday for our people.

23 If you could strongly emphasize for asking more in the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 near future so there will be court worker program existing  
2 at all times.

3 Thank you.

4 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
5 very much for your presentation. I think the  
6 Commissioners are all in complete agreement with  
7 everything you have said.

8 Thank you for coming.

9 **ED SACKENEY:** Our next presenter is Jane  
10 Tennyson who is a community studies consultant with Ontario  
11 Hydro. She has worked there for the past five years.  
12 She has a PhD in Regional Planning and Resource Development  
13 from the University of Waterloo.

14 Jane Tennyson.

15 **JANE TENNYSON, ONTARIO HYDRO:** I work  
16 in the Community Studies section of the Corporate Relations  
17 Planning and Research Department. My role is to carry  
18 out socio-economic impact assessments to identify, assess  
19 and evaluate the potential social, cultural and economic  
20 effects of proposed projects, policies or programs on  
21 people and their communities.

22 My group has the responsibility for  
23 addressing the cultural environment and most specifically,

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 at the project level, to take a lead role with Aboriginal  
2 issues and concerns in the environmental impact assessment  
3 process.

4 This submission deals with developing  
5 working relationships with Aboriginal people to conduct  
6 environmental impact assessment studies on two of Ontario  
7 Hydro's recent transmission projects in Northern Ontario.

8 I shall present an approach to  
9 developing these relationships and some of the lessons  
10 that Ontario Hydro has learned and some of the changes  
11 in the corporation that have occurred which either support  
12 the development of these relationships or have resulted  
13 from them.

14 My submission does not address many  
15 other corporate initiatives such as employment equity  
16 ones, regions branch initiatives and many of the activities  
17 of the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Branch.

18 The importance of Aboriginal peoples  
19 role in the environmental assessment process was  
20 recognized at an early stage in the planning process.  
21 We recognize the inherent social, economic and cultural  
22 differences that exist between the Aboriginal communities  
23 and other communities which may be affected in an area.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Therefore, as a basis for developing  
2   respectful and co-operative working relationships with  
3   First Nations, Ontario Hydro employed the following  
4   principles: recognition of the distinct legal, historical  
5   and cultural status of First Nations; consulting First  
6   Nations as governments; understanding the necessity to  
7   provide financial assistance so that First Nations can  
8   participate fully in the environmental assessment study  
9   process; and addressing past issues and grievances as an  
10   integral component of a joint study process.

11                   The First Nations were asked if and how  
12   they would like to work with Ontario Hydro. They were  
13   informed that in order to identify all of the benefits  
14   as well as all of the negative changes that can occur as  
15   a result of the projects as part of the environmental  
16   assessment studies, we needed their help to understand  
17   the area in the same way as the people who live there do.

18                   The communities had to be involved in  
19   the program studies because they had to provide most of  
20   the information. The people living in the communities  
21   are the experts on hunting, trapping, fishing and berry  
22   picking and medicinal plant areas, on sacred and sensitive  
23   areas, on the importance of all of these areas to the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 economy, traditions and lifestyle of the communities, on  
2 the possible impacts on these areas and activities as a  
3 result of the construction and presence of the transmission  
4 line and on ways to benefit the communities.

5                   They would also identify issues and  
6 concerns about the projects and ultimately, decide whether  
7 to support or oppose the projects based on this  
8 information. Points that were stressed in Ontario Hydro's  
9 approach were as follows: we very much wanted to work with  
10 them; working with us did not mean that they supported  
11 the projects; the studies would be jointly owned studies;  
12 they could submit a separate report which presented their  
13 findings and conclusions about the projects; the studies  
14 would give them an important information base that would  
15 be useful in deciding on the benefits of these projects;  
16 and deciding on the benefits of other projects in the treaty  
17 area that would be proposed by other agencies and companies  
18 and in their dealings of all levels of government.

19                   Following this approach, a working  
20 relationship and programs for studies and consultation  
21 processes have been established with the Wabun Tribal  
22 Council First Nations in this area.

23                   Two essential components formed the

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 basis of this working relationship. First, mechanisms  
2 were established to address past grievances and other  
3 Ontario Hydro issues unrelated to the projects. One  
4 mechanism was an issue study group comprised of Chiefs  
5 representatives and Ontario Hydro representatives which  
6 would identify past grievances with Ontario Hydro, have  
7 them investigated and look for solutions to resolve them.

8 It would also provide a mechanism for investigating and  
9 resolving current issues.

10 The second component was the current  
11 joint co-operative socio-economic land use and  
12 environmental studies and the community involvement  
13 program for the environmental assessments.

14 I would now like to address some of the  
15 lessons we have learned and changes that have been made  
16 within Ontario Hydro. In general, we have learned the  
17 importance of trust. Trust is a key issue with most  
18 Aboriginal communities. Past negative experiences with  
19 development, including Ontario Hydro projects, have made  
20 people very sceptical of promises made by large  
21 corporations and government agencies. Ontario Hydro has  
22 recognized that it must earn their trust and that it will  
23 take time and commitment.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Another fundamental issue is the  
2   importance of mutual respect. In terms of developing  
3   these working relationships, Ontario Hydro recognizes the  
4   importance and the necessity of the involvement and  
5   commitment of senior Ontario Hydro staff including  
6   vice-presidents in meetings and negotiations, in the  
7   development of the working arrangements and in the  
8   agreements for funding and in the resolution of past  
9   grievances and other issues.

10                  Another key area is the importance of  
11   institutional arrangements in the development of these  
12   relationships. At the beginning of our project efforts,  
13   draft Aboriginal relation guidelines existed in the  
14   corporation which supported many of the principles of our  
15   approach. Also, there was the existence of a Manager of  
16   Aboriginal Affairs.

17                  Then during the past two years, while  
18   developing these working relationships, there have been  
19   many other institutional responses to our project efforts  
20   as well as ongoing changes in the corporation. Among the  
21   changes in the corporation are new corporate initiatives.

22                  An Aboriginal and Northern Affairs  
23   Committee of the Board has been formed. This Committee

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 will regularly review and assess the corporations  
2 objectives, policies, programs and performance related  
3 to:

4                               1)     Developing initiatives that  
5 provide leadership and better in keeping with contemporary  
6 perspectives, priorities and involving authorities of  
7 Aboriginal and Northern peoples and to ensuring that access  
8 and opportunity are provided to Aboriginal and northern  
9 groups who are interested in or will be affected by the  
10 corporation's activities; and

11                              2)     An Aboriginal and Northern Affairs  
12 Branch was created in September, 1991. It's mandate is  
13 to provide the corporation with a strategic focus and  
14 direction in its relations with First Nations and Northern  
15 people in order to ensure that the corporation's actions  
16 reflect the interests of these customers.

17                              In working to meet its mandate, the  
18 branches initiatives include: establishing effective  
19 working relationships with Aboriginal and Northern  
20 communities; and addressing past grievances and current  
21 concerns raised by these groups regarding the activities  
22 of the corporation in their respective communities.

23                              Now that this branch has the



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 responsibility for addressing past grievances, the role  
2 and responsibility of the issues study group mentioned  
3 earlier has consequently emerged as one to address project  
4 related issues as well as other non-project specific  
5 Ontario Hydro issues identified by the Wabun Tribal Council  
6 First Nations.

7                               Finally, another key area is changes in  
8 practices. One specific initiative that Ontario Hydro  
9 has undertaken in response to Aboriginal and Northern  
10 concerns identified through the project studies is the  
11 establishment of two committees to address Aboriginal and  
12 northern employment, training and business participation  
13 issues as they relate to major construction projects in  
14 Northern Ontario.

15                              These committees will examine existing  
16 barriers, identify new opportunities and make  
17 recommendations to enhance Aboriginal and northern  
18 employment and training and to promote the development  
19 of Aboriginal and northern suppliers and their  
20 participation in Ontario Hydro business.

21                              I would like to conclude my remarks by  
22 saying that these are just some of the first steps that  
23 Ontario Hydro has taken. In order to build new kinds of

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 relationships in a new manner and to being the development  
2 of ongoing dialogue and long-term relationships with  
3 Aboriginal people in this area.

4 Thank you.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
6 Miss Tennyson.

7 I wonder if you could tell me how long  
8 this co-operative approach has been going on, when it  
9 started and if there has been enough experience with it  
10 to be able to comment on how it works -- how it is working.  
11 Is it effective?

12 **JANE TENNYSON:** Initially, in terms of  
13 the projects, we began these efforts in terms of going  
14 out and asking the communities -- actually all across  
15 Northern Ontario because one of the projects does span  
16 the length of Northern Ontario -- that would have been  
17 maybe June, 1990, around that time.

18 So we only have a little better than two  
19 years experience. In terms of when the working  
20 relationships got more formalized and got more  
21 established, that might be -- with Wabun -- about 14 months  
22 ago.

23 I would just like to suggest that it is

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 an effort that is being made. I can only speak from my  
2 point of view and Ontario Hydro's point of view, I think  
3 that the relationships have been developing in terms of  
4 the studies. They have been very effective. By working  
5 jointly, it is the First Nations themselves that are  
6 identifying their issues, identifying their concerns  
7 through a lot of community consultation, working with the  
8 elders.

9 For anyone, I would suggest that if they  
10 want to know what the First Nations or Wabun Tribal Council  
11 feels about it, I would like their perspective to be  
12 presented by them.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** As you  
14 mentioned, one very important aspect must be obtaining  
15 the trust of the Native people. That is absolutely  
16 fundamental to whether the co-operative approach is  
17 practical.

18 **JANE TENNYSON:** Yes. It certainly has  
19 been a major concern. We are not finished all of these  
20 studies by any means. One of the major concerns has been  
21 the sharing of information that is critical to them that  
22 they may not want to share with proponents. Certainly  
23 there is a fear that a proponent might want to use any

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 information against them. So, we have tried to develop  
2 in relationships the fact that nothing has to be released  
3 to us that the communities don't want to. That it will  
4 be treated as confidential in a sense that it is their  
5 information to release, it is not ours.

6 We are trying to address those, but those  
7 are very real concerns and very legitimate. The earning  
8 of trust will take the corporation a long time.

9 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** You  
10 mentioned that part of that process had to be sort of a  
11 review of past grievances and trying to redress those.  
12 I am wondering if you could give us an illustration of  
13 how that works.

14 **JANE TENNYSON:** The willingness and the  
15 desire of Ontario Hydro to address past grievances, I think  
16 was absolutely essential to the beginnings of any kind  
17 of working relationship. What has happened is that it  
18 has evolved over time so that now that the branch has been  
19 created and taken over the responsibility -- initially,  
20 when we first started talking to the communities at the  
21 community meetings or at the Chief's meetings, the past  
22 grievances were identified pretty immediately.

23 We brought them back to the corporation.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1     Why I was suggesting that an institutional response is  
2     very important is that there is now a branch with the  
3     responsibility to actually work out processes to try and  
4     resolve them. There are processes put in place now with  
5     a number of First Nations including one in the Wabun Tribal  
6     Council area here.

7                     These are individual processes with the  
8     First Nations. The idea is that their representatives  
9     from the First Nations, representatives from Hydro and  
10    a mediator that is mutually agreed upon so they have to  
11    agree what the process would be and I think that is the  
12    first step that is taken.

13                    **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Sounds  
14    like a very positive approach to me. I will ask Mary if  
15    she has any comments.

16                    **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you.  
17    Two questions. The senior hydro -- as a principle of  
18    this relationship there must be senior hydro staff  
19    involved. I am just wondering -- that is a principle,  
20    is that actually practised?

21                    **JANE TENNYSON:** I don't know that I  
22    exactly said that it was one of the principles. I said  
23    that it was something that we felt was very important.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 Is it practised? Yes, it is.

2 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** That is  
3 encouraging, some of these people are very very busy.

4 The other thing is that I would like to  
5 have -- if possible -- a copy of your paper because I found  
6 it very very interesting. We don't have one.

7 **JANE TENNYSON:** Yes, I will get copies.

8 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you  
9 very much for your time. I know you waited for a long  
10 time. Thank you.

11 **JANE TENNYSON:** Thank you.

12 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

13 I will ask Allan if he has any questions.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I think  
15 I would just have one general question. I will ask it  
16 by specific example.

17 We earlier today heard somebody outline  
18 grievances, past grievances, with respect to Ontario Hydro  
19 reserve land flooded, but not replaced. Pollution of fish  
20 by mercury as a result of dams. Perhaps even spraying,  
21 although I am not sure that was attributed to Ontario Hydro,  
22 much more likely a forestry company.

23 Does Ontario Hydro agree that the first

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 two at least -- land flooded, but not replaced and pollution  
2 of fish -- are grievances which have been brought to their  
3 attention and do they agree that they are legitimate in  
4 principle, not necessarily with precision, but legitimate  
5 in principle or is there a dispute over the legitimacy  
6 of the grievances?

7 **JANE TENNYSON:** In terms of the  
8 grievances that have been identified -- as you point out,  
9 there are many -- the specific ones and the program that  
10 is in place is that with the individual First Nations,  
11 many of whom we are working with across Northern Ontario  
12 or elsewhere -- they identify the specific grievances that  
13 they have and then, as I say, deal with this branch in  
14 terms of setting up an appropriate process to deal with  
15 them.

16 So certain ones that have begun some do  
17 specifically address that. I mean flooding of reserve  
18 lands and burial sites and they run the full gambit, I  
19 think part of the process is to establish what the grievance  
20 is, identify the ways to study it and then find solutions  
21 to it. In principle, all grievances are respected and  
22 attempted to be addressed.

23 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Has the

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 process gone on long enough to produce a final resolution  
2 of any one of these grievances using the process?

3 **JANE TENNYSON:** Not that I am aware of.  
4 No.

5 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
6 you.

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Those do  
8 take place before an arbitrator who makes a decision, I  
9 take it, which both parties will agree they will accept?

10 **JANE TENNYSON:** Actually, the way that  
11 it is being approached at the present time -- it depends,  
12 some are at different stages as you can appreciate.

13 There have been claims against hydro in  
14 the past and some are far more down the road into a sort  
15 of a legal situation -- but I think that the ones that  
16 -- what I am talking about the way the Aboriginal and  
17 Northern Affairs Branch wants to approach this is that  
18 they want a process in place where it is sort of almost  
19 like a joint problem solving team with mediation and then  
20 if they can come up with the solutions and the  
21 recommendations that they both jointly recommend, those  
22 would go to the Chief and Band, and as well to, let's say,  
23 Hydro's Board of Directors or whatever level it would have



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 to be approved at.

2 There is not -- to my knowledge at this  
3 point -- a mechanism. They haven't thought that they would  
4 need the arbitration at this point.

5 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I could  
6 see that in some of these types of grievances it would  
7 be basic to have an independent person involved.

8 **JANE TENNYSON:** Yes, I am sure that will  
9 happen.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I will ask  
11 Miss Sheeshish if she has any questions.

12 In that case, thank you very much for  
13 coming and as Mary has asked we would appreciate receiving  
14 your brief.

15 **JANE TENNYSON:** Yes.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
17 very much.

18 **JANE TENNYSON:** Thank you.

19 **MR. ED SACKENEY:** Commissioners, I  
20 wonder if the Reporter could use a five minute break,  
21 because she has been at it for quite a while.

22 We will just take five minutes because  
23 we still have three presenters.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:**   No

2    problem.   Thank you.

3

4    --- Upon recessing at 6:50 p.m.

5    --- Upon resuming at 7:00 p.m.

6

7                   **ED SACKENEY:**    If we could ask our  
8    remaining speakers to keep it to less than 30 minutes  
9    because of the time.   I know I made that request before  
10   too.

11                   The next speaker on the agenda is  
12   Anatasia Wheesk, and Anatasia is the translator for the  
13   Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre.   She will be accompanied  
14   by the Executive Director and also the Coordinator of the  
15   Language Section.   They will not be making a presentation,  
16   they will just be here to hold Anatasia's elbow so she  
17   doesn't fall over.

18                   **ANATASIA WHEESK, OJIBWAY-CREE CULTURAL**  
19   **CENTRE:**   We will begin with the story of the Ojibway-Cree  
20   Cultural Centre.

21                   In early 1970, the federal government  
22   initiated a five year plan to fund Native cultural centres  
23   across Canada.   In late October of 1974, the Ojibway-Cree

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Cultural Centre came into existence.

2                   Previous to its inception, two years  
3 were spent in consulting with the people of Nishnawbe-aski  
4 Nation, known then as the Grand Council Treaty 9, to find  
5 out what would be expected of the cultural centre. This  
6 work was done through the cultural education program of  
7 the Grand Council Treaty 9. Because of the philosophy  
8 that was developed to work from the grassroots level, the  
9 people felt it was necessary to introduce the concept of  
10 a cultural centre to the people. Because of this gradual  
11 process, we were able to gain the confidence and support  
12 of the people.

13                   Once all the preliminary work was done,  
14 the Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre received funds in 1975  
15 to help meet the cultural and educational needs of the  
16 Native communities within the Treaty 9 area. The region  
17 that the centre serves is very large, 210,000 square miles  
18 containing 46 communities, mostly isolated, with  
19 approximately 52 schools that we serve. It is quite large.

20                   The Centre continues to attempt to  
21 service these communities according to their needs.  
22 Because of the vastness of the area, populations are small  
23 and scattered, and a real lack of other sources, the needs

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 expressed by our communities are many and varied.

2 In response to the expressed needs the  
3 Centre developed four major ongoing programs:

4 (a) Native language program;

5 (b) resource centre program

6 (c) media production program ; and,

7 (d) Native education program.

8 Cree and Ojibway are the first languages  
9 of the Nishnawbe-aski. English is the second language  
10 for about 30 per cent of the people. The main task of  
11 the Native language program is to translate material from  
12 English to Cree and/or Ojibway. Other activities include  
13 research work with elders, technical vocabulary  
14 development and interpreter/translator training. Our  
15 most recent accomplishment is the application of syllabics  
16 to computers.

17 The resource centre program has two main  
18 goals. First, to ensure the right of every community to  
19 information and knowledge. Second, to encourage each band  
20 in the development of efficient library services by  
21 providing coordination, guidance, contacts and other  
22 services that are requested.

23 To accomplish these goals the resource

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 centre provides the following:

2 1) collects and researches books,  
3 periodicals and audio visual material of interest to and  
4 on the subject of Native people;

5 2) it houses a special reference  
6 collection and answers reference requests;

7 3) offers assistance to Indian bands  
8 in establishing band libraries;

9 4) works closely with existing  
10 libraries and organizations who offer services to benefit  
11 the communities;

12 5) provides material of Native content  
13 to schools, educational institutions and individuals, as  
14 well as the rest of the province upon request;

15 6) collects socio-demographic  
16 information pertaining to the communities to further  
17 information services.

18 Through our extensive collection and  
19 varied services we are able to promote and develop the  
20 preservation of Native culture and traditions for future  
21 generations.

22 In the media production programs the  
23 main area is program development and production for radio,

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 TV and print. Through video, audio recordings and still  
2 photographs many aspects of contemporary and traditional  
3 lifestyles of the Nishnawbe-aski have been explored.

4 The main focus of the Native education  
5 program is to provide the Native communities with cultural  
6 and educational services in support of their struggle for  
7 spiritual, cultural, social and economic independence.  
8 This education program reflects goals related to  
9 development in education directly affecting children,  
10 educators, parents and all other educational/cultural  
11 organizations.

12 To realize these goals the main  
13 objectives are:

14 1) to respond to the educational and  
15 cultural needs of the Native people;

16 2) to develop educational and cultural  
17 materials which instill a sense of pride and self-esteem  
18 for the Native culture in the fields of history,  
19 philosophy, religion, music, art and literature;

20 3) to maintain and reinforce the use  
21 of languages of the people;

22 4) to integrate Native culture into the  
23 curriculum of Native schools;

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                           5) to provide assistance in the  
2 planning and development of school programs, curriculum,  
3 professional development, and the process of local control  
4 of education;

5                           6) to develop and promote Native  
6 language in school programs;

7                           7) to provide consultant services for  
8 Native language development and other educational issues;  
9 and,

10                          8) to promote cross-cultural awareness  
11 in mainstream educational programs and institutions.

12                          These are what the people in those  
13 regions want and we try to do our best to meet their needs,  
14 but we do have problems, such as lack of funding, lack  
15 of curriculum materials and lack of trained language  
16 instructors, and lack of Native language consultants.

17                          The majority of communities rarely use  
18 their Native tongue in community gatherings. The language  
19 is even less frequently used in public communications such  
20 as newsletters, radio or television.

21                          Language is not often integrated into  
22 community programs and services.

23                          Due to a lack of long-term funding and

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 shortage of trained language specialists, the vast  
2 majority of existing programs are available only to a small  
3 segment of the community and many do not have basic learning  
4 resources.

5                   Language coordinators and instructors  
6 feel isolated and are frustrated with the lack of support.

7                   There is a shared desire to restore and  
8 strengthen the language in community and family life.

9                   First Nations are calling for community  
10 healing, a social renewal based on traditional values,  
11 knowledge and spirituality. Language is intimately  
12 connected to these elements.

13                   To show you how the language is  
14 declining, of the 181 communities surveyed 21 communities  
15 have flourishing languages, 32 have enduring languages,  
16 48 have declining languages, 52 have endangered languages  
17 and 19 have critical languages. This is happening in  
18 almost every community.

19                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Did I hear  
20 you right when you said 181 communities?

21                   **ANATASIA WHEESK:** Yes, of the 181  
22 communities surveyed this is the number of people where  
23 their language is diminishing.



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could I  
2 ask how many staff -- it seems like a mammoth amount of  
3 work. Could you tell me how many staff you have and how  
4 you operate to service these communities.

5                   **BERTHA METATAWABIN:** At the centre we  
6 are a total of 12 staff and out of that 12 staff there  
7 are only two of us working in education covering those  
8 46 communities within that area.

9                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could I  
10 ask what skills are available in the staff? Do they have  
11 specific areas that they have expertise in or how does  
12 this work?

13                   **BERTHA METATAWABIN:** At the centre  
14 where staff work they have their own expertise within their  
15 programs, but as for education and language it's her and  
16 I who have the teachers program to be able to work with  
17 education.

18                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** And you  
19 say that you are lacking in funding?

20                   **BERTHA METATAWABIN:** Yes.

21                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Who  
22 provides the funding that you do have?

23                   **ESTHER WESLEY:** It is provided through

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 the Department of Indian Affairs under the cultural centre  
2 funding program.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I see.

4 Mary, do you have any questions?

5 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you  
6 very much for your presentation.

7 Is there a role that elders play within  
8 your work?

9 **ESTHER WESLEY:** The research work done  
10 through the language program involves elders. Much of  
11 the language terminology development, research for  
12 curriculum development in order that the curriculum is  
13 culturally relevant to these communities. There is also  
14 other areas, for example, all the research that is done,  
15 anything to be used within the communities is done through  
16 research with elders.

17 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** You say  
18 that you work on school curriculum, is that used in the  
19 schools? Is there any requirement for them to use it?  
20 Do they use it sometimes? Do they not have to use it?  
21 What?

22 **ESTHER WESLEY:** For the Nishnawbe-aski  
23 Nation there is no curriculum guidelines for Native

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 language courses that offered, whether they be elementary,  
2 high school, no curriculum guideline whatsoever. So each  
3 community struggles with inexperienced teachers,  
4 unqualified teachers to try and come up with outlines.  
5 Many of these do not know what an outline is. It is our  
6 job, the two of us here, to teach them what an outline  
7 is. How to do an outline and to write outlines.

8 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Does any of  
9 that curriculum include Aboriginal history?

10 **ESTHER WESLEY:** Much of it includes  
11 Aboriginal history.

12 We are also continually doing research  
13 for secondary schools and post-secondary schools who want  
14 to include Aboriginal history in their programs.

15 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Because  
16 much of what we heard is the need for Aboriginal history  
17 in classes and I am wondering where your Aboriginal history  
18 ends up?

19 **BERTHA METATAWABIN:** It depends which  
20 communities. We have 46 communities with a total of 12  
21 staff with approximately half of those being Native people.  
22 Most of these people, with no teaching background, with  
23 no experience at all to understand what a curriculum

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 guideline is. So therefore it is very limited what we  
2 do with two people working for 52 schools.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
4 please.

5 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I  
6 understood you to say that you had four main programs:  
7 Native language, Native education, media production and  
8 a resource program. I didn't hear what was in the resource  
9 program, I missed it, so could you refresh me on that one?

10 **ANATASIA WHEESK:** The resource centre  
11 has two main goals. First, to ensure the right of every  
12 community to information and language.

13 Second, to encourage each band in the  
14 development of efficient library services by providing  
15 coordination, guidance, contacts and other services that  
16 are requested.

17 To accomplish these goals the resource  
18 centre provides the following:

19 1) collects and researches books,  
20 periodicals and audio visual material of interest to and  
21 on the subject of Native people;

22 2) it houses a special reference  
23 collection and answers reference requests;

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                               3)   offers assistance to Indian bands  
2   in establishing band libraries;

3                               4)   works closely with existing  
4   libraries and organizations who offer services to benefit  
5   the communities;

6                               5)   provides material of Native content  
7   to schools, educational institutions and individuals, as  
8   well as the rest of the province upon request.

9                               **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:**   I heard  
10   that but didn't associate it with the resource centre.

11                              Are you able to use any of the material  
12   turned out by the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College?  
13   They turn out curriculum material in Cree, but it is Plains  
14   Cree and Prairie Woodland Cree and I don't know if it is  
15   useful to you at all.

16                              **BERTHA METATAWABIN:**   The materials we  
17   need for our language instructors up north we collect  
18   whatever material we can get across the country.   We attach  
19   those to be used in our area and we do have a large pile  
20   of stuff there, but still because there is just the two  
21   of us it still has to be translated into their own Native  
22   dialect and there are only two translators at our office  
23   and they are busy, which leaves, again, just her and I

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 to translate the material, or transcribe it from one  
2 dialect to another.

3 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I  
4 recognize that there are significant differences in  
5 dialect, even in a province like Saskatchewan.

6 **BERTHA METATAWABIN:** Not just to  
7 mention the dialect, another problem we have is one  
8 community sometimes there are three different writing  
9 systems and we have to accommodate those writing systems.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I can see  
11 that to be a problem.

12 Thank you very much.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** It seems  
14 to me you have a tremendous task to be handled by very  
15 few people on limited resources. I don't know how you  
16 do it. It sounds to me as if it is almost as bad as the  
17 mandate of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

18 Thank you very much for coming and  
19 speaking to us.

20 **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you, ladies.

21 Our next presenter is John Cheechou.  
22 John is from the First Nations of Moose Factory. He is  
23 the father of two. He is currently enrolled in a social

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 services work program at our community college. He has  
2 previously worked for the Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre  
3 for seven years within the video production and documentary  
4 department.

5 So I would ask John to come up.

6 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** It has been a long day.  
7 Fortunately my presentation is going to be quite brief,  
8 which is quite convenient at this time of the day.

9 The concern of this presentation mainly  
10 deals with my background as a student at the college and  
11 as a Native person from the Moose Factory area, with  
12 experience of course in the educational system of our  
13 province.

14 There are two major perspectives in  
15 Canada which, in part, play out a debate on the issue of  
16 unity. On one side we have the Native perspective, and  
17 on the other we have the non-Native perspective. Each  
18 perspective carries with it its dreams, its aspirations,  
19 its efforts and its people. Each perspective teaches its  
20 ways of survival for the benefit of its future generations.

21 It is fair that we judge each  
22 perspective, both Native and non-Native, as having a life  
23 of its own and thus, having the potential to meet the needs

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 of its people, that is foremost. As these perspectives  
2 are individually true, together they are not in balance  
3 as we understand. Under the unity issue, achieving  
4 balance is not only a difficult undertaking, but also a  
5 necessary goal for this country.

6                   If it is balance that we seek then we  
7 must first understand the relationship between these two  
8 perspectives in question. Essentially each perspective  
9 is a direct reflection of its own culture. Each has a  
10 cultural point of view, and each is innately different  
11 from the other. For balance to occur between our two  
12 differing cultures, we must respect each other for who  
13 we really are, and more importantly, we must relate to  
14 each other on a complimentary level, not on a competitive  
15 level.

16                   In my culture, or in the Native  
17 perspective, I have learned that seeking balance in life  
18 and teaching it to others is a virtue. From our lands  
19 we learn the concept of balance, and the same idea of  
20 balance can exist here in this country.

21                   Balance between our two cultures does  
22 not mean that one dominates over the other. Nor does it  
23 mean that one culture is expected to adopt the other.



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Balance does not mean that one culture sees the other as  
2 helpless. Balance between our two cultures does not mean  
3 that one is expected to give in and then follow the other.  
4 Ultimately, balance does not mean that one culture will  
5 be like the other. As in the natural world, there are  
6 many and different elements. They are not the same, but  
7 they are in balance.

8                   Our country's history clearly  
9 illustrates that we, Native people, have been dominated  
10 and this lack of balance has existed in our country for  
11 many years, as we know. But one notable imbalance I wish  
12 to put forward as a deep concern is the current educational  
13 system. It seems to me that Native students like myself  
14 today are still facing similar pressures to learn  
15 non-Native concepts, as our forbearers did when they were  
16 institutionalized in residential schools. We are not only  
17 pressured to learn non-Native concepts but to be taught  
18 in a non-Native institutional environment, that whole  
19 process still exists today. In northern Ontario today,  
20 as far as I know, there is no elementary, secondary, or  
21 post-secondary school which exclusively administers  
22 Native teachings within a Native type of environment.

23                   Much of the in-roads being created for

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Native-specific education are being made mostly at the  
2 university levels. But these teachings are taught to  
3 adults, of course, not to our children. Our children  
4 should, without question, be our priority when we develop  
5 Native-specific education, as in implementation for Native  
6 self-government in the future. If we cannot teach our own  
7 children in the future, then either government policies  
8 still hold us by the neck, so to speak, or the assimilation  
9 process has taken the fight out of us. Maybe it will be  
10 a case of both, hopefully not.

11 My college transcripts I have here  
12 clearly indicate that I am an A student with a pretty  
13 impressive average. I have worked hard to achieve this  
14 grade. For other Native kids I would not call myself a  
15 role model, but perhaps a good example of another Native  
16 person who has sacrificed his cultural experience and his  
17 language, all for the teachings of the non-Native world.

18 I would not wish my experience on our  
19 upcoming children, regardless of my A grade. I know from  
20 experience that there is a better way to bring up our  
21 children and teach them, to teach them who they really  
22 are and thus provide them with appropriate choices for  
23 who they wish to be.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   A way of creating a new balance for  
2 ourselves within the fabric of Canada will be in the name  
3 of self-government. That is my opinion. But  
4 self-government must include that we, as Native people,  
5 be given back the right to teach our people and to change  
6 existing educational laws or attitudes which prohibit or  
7 prevent us from doing so. We have to fight for the  
8 opportunity to include more cultural and spiritual  
9 experiences, and this does not merely mean that we set  
10 up a single Native studies course in a university or  
11 college. We must reconsider the land as our classroom  
12 which can be incorporated as a full-time component in our  
13 elementary schools. We can produce employment and create  
14 new roles for seasonal hunters and trappers, at the  
15 community level, as teachers and land caretakers. We can  
16 reinstate the valuable leader role and teacher role of  
17 our elders in this natural classroom.

18                   In essence, there is no plausible reason  
19 why our First Nations cannot help develop a customized  
20 school year calendar which could be quite different from  
21 the present calendar right now, and to develop an  
22 appropriate learning environment. Unless, of course,  
23 government policies still hold us by the neck, or that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 we have no fight left.

2 Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
4 very much.

5 While we were out west attending a mock  
6 trial on the issue of the Native right to education a number  
7 of Native leaders told us that something had been achieved  
8 in the area of education with respect to the administration  
9 of the educational programs, that some of the Tribal  
10 Councils had taken over the administration. My colleague,  
11 Allan Blakeney, mentioned the tremendous improvement in  
12 the progress of the students under this administration  
13 by Native people because the parents and children felt  
14 they had an ownership interest in the system because they  
15 were administering it themselves. But of course they  
16 stressed that this was not adequate, that Native people  
17 had to be in control of educational policy for their  
18 children. It was the policy-making role that was so  
19 fundamental and that until they got that control in their  
20 own hands over educational policy there would be limited  
21 progress. A number said they thought this was what  
22 self-government was all about, that self-government was  
23 all about getting control of policy-making in various

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 areas, including education.

2 I could relate to that. I could  
3 understand that and think that that was very sound  
4 thinking. It is basic to have control of the  
5 policy-making. I don't know whether it is fair to ask  
6 you this question, but if that is correct then why were  
7 so many Native people opposed to the Charlottetown package,  
8 which as far as Native people were concerned provided for  
9 putting into our Constitution Native self-government.  
10 I am a little baffled by that and perhaps you can help  
11 me.

12 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** As far as my own opinion  
13 stretches, I believe that what the Charlottetown agreement  
14 offered us was something of a paradox, as far as I can  
15 see. The inherent right exists regardless because it is  
16 stated and recognized as an inherent right. Why then  
17 should Canada be given the opportunity, or at least given  
18 that privilege to then vote on something that is inherent  
19 -- yes or no. It involved an inherent right to the yes  
20 or no question at that time. For us, I believe at least,  
21 that it was a misuse of our issue in that particular  
22 question of the Charlottetown agreement. I believe that  
23 other questions should have been asked and answered before

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 that question because it seemed to include everyone,  
2 including our inherent right issue. I found it to be quite  
3 unfair.

4 It is my opinion at least, my personal  
5 opinion, that some very clever people at the top were  
6 actually using our issue as a very big diamond, more or  
7 less, in the whole issue of yes and no. So I felt we were  
8 used and I think a lot of people were disparaged on that  
9 issue. That is my understanding, personally.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could I  
11 ask how you see Native people getting control over  
12 policy-making in all the different areas that they  
13 obviously need to have control over? How do you see this  
14 happening, absent any constitutional protection for the  
15 right?

16 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** Obviously the absence  
17 of it is going to make our lives very difficult in trying  
18 to create a format where we can control our policies of  
19 course. But we are still in the cloud and still in the  
20 grey if we still are denied our right to self-government,  
21 because self-government of course includes these policies  
22 that we must make on our own. That is our control, that  
23 is the meaning of it.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Unless we get that control from the  
2 government, and that commitment, it is only then that we  
3 can really act with full accord from our people. I feel  
4 that the constitutional question for Native  
5 self-government is really an issue that needs to be dealt  
6 with on its own and not with the issues of Quebec, the  
7 distinct society issues and so forth.

8                   That cloud needs to be lifted and it is  
9 only from the Canadian government's commitment that that  
10 cloud will then dissipate and then we can act as we've  
11 planned, or at least intend to act, insofar as developing  
12 policies for our own.

13                  But in regards to the absence of it, at  
14 this time, I find that it is going to further separate  
15 our relationships for the future if it is being withheld,  
16 or at least our opportunity to get that control for  
17 ourselves.

18                  **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** The reason  
19 I asked the question was that I see a dilemma in that it  
20 seems to me the only other way that this can be achieved  
21 is through agreement with the other two levels of  
22 government, the federal and the provincial governments.  
23 Yet, my understanding is that the Native position on

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 self-government is that this is not something that we get  
2 from the other levels of government, that this is not  
3 something that should come from an agreement, it is  
4 something that is inherent to us.

5 I wondered whether through the failure  
6 of the Charlottetown Accord you are in the position of  
7 having to go that route of working out by agreement with  
8 the other two levels of government that you would have  
9 this, which makes it almost look like the kind of delegated  
10 authority that certainly Mr. Mercredi has been very  
11 vigorously opposed to. I don't know if there is an answer  
12 to that dilemma, but I just wondered what you thought about  
13 it.

14 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** To me it is quite a  
15 complex web of opinions involved in there.

16 I do not know when the process of  
17 governmental policies and so forth will actually give us  
18 the opportunity to put into effect all automatically our  
19 inherent right, which as it reads inherency is what it  
20 is, an automatic understanding and acceptance of it. Like  
21 I said earlier about the yes and no question of  
22 Charlottetown, I found it quite disappointing, in fact  
23 insulting. Though I feel this there is no other format



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 that I can think of that would bring this whole thing to  
2 resolve, except that the inherent right, as it states,  
3 should be given automatic consideration.

4 That is my point of view. There seems  
5 to be no other way I could think about it.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
7 I will ask Mary if she has any questions or comments.

8 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I thank  
9 you.

10 I think in addition to the need for  
11 Aboriginal people to control policies there is definitely  
12 the need for the resources to be there. When I say that  
13 I remember, for example, when we went to Waswanape (PH)  
14 and we met with the Cree School Board. It was clear that  
15 they had some control over the policies, but the real  
16 problem was the implementation of that particular  
17 agreement. That is just something I remember when you  
18 were having this discussion.

19 I do have a question. As we cross this  
20 country we have heard many, many people say that there  
21 is systemic racism within the educational system at all  
22 levels, that it is very, very difficult for Native people  
23 to achieve a high school leaving. But it seems that

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 somehow that discrimination becomes less if the students  
2 perform exceptionally high academically. I have also  
3 heard too that even if you do perform exceptionally high  
4 academically, and that means being at the top of your class,  
5 the racism is so ingrained in the educational system, that  
6 the educational counsellors will probably say, "You can't  
7 go to university", "You're still not smart enough to go  
8 to university", and recommend probably some other  
9 post-secondary education.

10 I am wondering, based on your own  
11 experience, and your academic excellence in college, what  
12 has your experience been? What kind of comments can you  
13 offer on that issue?

14 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** Yes, I agree with you  
15 that if you get good marks there is really no place for  
16 you to be insulted, at least openly, to other people's  
17 disappointments or what have you, with the teachers or  
18 the institution itself. Because I have a good grade I  
19 have only received a lot of compliments and so forth, and  
20 that they wish that I work harder, or at least keep up  
21 the hard work.

22 But I have looked at the issue a lot  
23 deeper than that and that is when I am sitting there in

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the classroom, for instance in my social work class, which  
2 is non-Native content in terms of treatment, sources,  
3 intervention, approaches, those kinds of concepts. When  
4 I sit there my inner experiences as a Native person is  
5 being infiltrated every day and I'm changing, especially  
6 when you're in that environment where there is no Native  
7 environmental kind of place for you to be. The subject  
8 matter is non-existent with Native concepts and so forth.

9                   Although you have higher marks those  
10 feelings come to you and I feel very distressed in that  
11 whole environment, even though I can logically figure out  
12 and be reasonable about that situation I can still feel  
13 myself grappling with my identity as these concepts are  
14 being drilled into me, which gives evidence to a lot of  
15 people that even the highest scoring Native students can  
16 suffer from just the fact that they are concentrating so  
17 much on non-Native concepts.

18                   For those who are not leading an academic  
19 life that is as successful, it is mainly because they have  
20 other barriers that are before them and it is very easy  
21 for anyone in the upper ranks of marks to think that Native  
22 people are going to fail because they just haven't got  
23 the knack. But ultimately we share the same experience

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 no matter how many marks you've got. There is no real  
2 difference.

3 So that is generally what I felt.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Just two  
5 other questions, very quickly, because I know there's not  
6 much time.

7 There is a real concern too in many, many  
8 communities, for example, Aboriginal people become  
9 trained, they acquire quick skills, but in most cases it  
10 seems that they never go back to their communities, they  
11 work elsewhere because they are attracted to -- could you  
12 offer any solutions as to how people could probably back  
13 to their communities? Do you have any comments on that?

14 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** The only way I could see  
15 an attractive kind of development for educated Native  
16 people coming back is when Native self-government begins  
17 to create really purposeful conditions for professional  
18 people who are highly educated. Because one of the reasons  
19 why a lot of educated people do not go back is because  
20 of the lack of work. They are over-qualified. A lot of  
21 those jobs aren't there. And the jobs that are there are  
22 already taken up by years of other people being in those  
23 job positions. So it is very difficult to get in there.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   But the in-roads that Native  
2 self-government can produce in terms of getting people  
3 in their home bases, is to create these really innovative  
4 positions that can be very valuable. For instance, in  
5 creating education for the use of land, not as just a  
6 resource for timber or mining, but as a resource in terms  
7 of its land value for spiritual and cultural experiences.

8                   I'm sure a lot of anthropology qualified  
9 Native people can then have an opportunity to synthesize  
10 their white knowledge with their Native experience on these  
11 kinds of developments back home. It is only then that  
12 a lot of people will be attracted.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Allan,  
14 please.

15                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** One  
16 comment and one question. My comment has to do with the  
17 referendum and I viewed it perhaps a little differently  
18 than some other people did with respect to the inherent  
19 right portion of it. I didn't regard the referendum as  
20 being about inherent right, I regarded it as being about  
21 whether Canadians generally, particularly non-Aboriginal  
22 Canadians, would recognize this inherent right. I was  
23 a little surprised to think that Aboriginal people wouldn't

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 be all in favour of non-Aboriginal people recognizing the  
2 inherent right. I now there are many other things in the  
3 Accord and there are many other reasons for voting no or  
4 yes, as the case may be, but on that narrow issue I said,  
5 "Well, if people are voting on that all the Aboriginals  
6 will be in favour of the non-Aboriginals recognizing the  
7 inherent right, because how could they think anything  
8 else." But obviously there was more to this than met the  
9 eye, insofar as I was concerned. That was by way of a  
10 comment.

11 By way of a question, in the Moose  
12 Factory area where you grew up, in the reserves in that  
13 area, and I'm not familiar with them in terms of size,  
14 are there many band-operated schools? Are they all  
15 band-operated? Or are most of them operated by Indian  
16 Affairs? Or what is the situation?

17 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** Most of it is basically  
18 run by government people and controlled, as far as policy  
19 or anything else is concerned, by federal and Ontario  
20 sources.

21 There has always been a lack of Native  
22 teachers in those schools. I grew up with non-Native  
23 teachers teaching me everything. It was only until grade

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 8 that they put in a Cree program which was just a classroom  
2 style program. In my view when that occurred there wasn't  
3 much success because the Cree language, as it is taught,  
4 is taught in real life settings, because many of the words  
5 relate to actual conditions of a hunting trip, or the things  
6 you do when you travel, or the things you do when you skin  
7 animals, or the things you do when you prepare food. That  
8 is where the basis and the meaning of the language comes  
9 alive. The classroom was a very stale setting for those  
10 very I think what are highly metaphorical expressions in  
11 the Cree language and with metaphor you must have an  
12 example. I found it very stale.

13 But anyway, there was, in my day, a  
14 predominance of non-Native teachers, it was a non-Native  
15 environment and that was the essence of it really. It  
16 was much the same throughout the coastal communities.

17 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Could you  
18 speculate on why bands haven't taken over the  
19 administration of their schools, at least in part press  
20 to hire -- and they would hire the teachers then -- hire  
21 Aboriginal teachers. I know there is a significant  
22 shortage of them. I know that. But some of them are  
23 showing up and particularly in the band-operated schools.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 I am wondering whether you could offer a comment as to  
2 what might be the barriers for the bands moving into that  
3 area?

4 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** That is a very difficult  
5 question. It might have to do with the actual content  
6 of the education. It might have to do with as we have  
7 a very deep cultural background we can judge from that  
8 background on what is relevant in our school systems and  
9 what is not.

10 As it stands, apparently, from what I  
11 can speculate, there is a predominance of non-Native  
12 content, non-Native rules and regulations and  
13 environments. What is it for the Native person who grows  
14 up and wants to be a teacher in that environment when,  
15 in fact, his cultural background says, "This is still alien  
16 to me". In that environment what spurs a Native person  
17 to become a teacher? Not very much, as far as a Native  
18 person to become a teacher in that kind of environment.

19 Except, of course, if you have the obvious reasons for  
20 employment and so forth, but the content has a lot to do  
21 with that, because if we have a lot of content that is  
22 spiritually guided, or at least Native guided and so forth,  
23 and it has that potential growth for something bigger in



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the future, then perhaps that spurring of Native interest  
2 will come into view.

3 That is as far as I can speculate to be  
4 one of the reasons, other than say maybe there's a deeper  
5 reason why a lot of Native teachers aren't in the system.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I will  
7 ask one more question and you may not have access to this  
8 information. Do you know whether -- I think of the Indian  
9 Association of Alberta -- do they go around -- at least  
10 it is my understanding that they go around and really hustle  
11 the bands and say, "Why don't you take control over your  
12 schools? We will back you up. We will find curriculum  
13 for you and we will get you going because we think  
14 band-operated schools -- they're not perfect, but they  
15 are better than Indian Affairs operated schools." That  
16 is their argument.

17 Do you know whether there is a similar  
18 pressure or guidance from the province-wide Aboriginal  
19 associations to get bands to move in this direction?

20 **JOHN CHEECHOU:** I have not come across  
21 that kind of condition, so I can't answer.

22 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank  
23 you.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:**   Ms

2   Sheeshish, please.

3                   **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

4   **SHEESHISH:**   John, I just wanted to ask you one question,  
5   you said here that you would not call yourself a role model,  
6   what do you mean by that?

7                   **JOHN CHEECHOU:**   I mean that my success  
8   at school would be considered to be a good role model for  
9   the administrators who have interest in the school, but  
10   I particularly, as a Native person, do not wish for my  
11   children or the future generations to go through the same  
12   experience I've had to go through because although I got  
13   A grades I have had to sacrifice a lot of my language and  
14   my cultural experiences.   I believe that the language and  
15   cultural experiences don't have to be sacrificed.   We have  
16   institutions or these school systems available that can  
17   be band or Native operated, Native controlled, even the  
18   policies as to how the school day is even set up, how the  
19   seasonal calendar is set up and so forth, and even the  
20   use of land because in my experience in the school there  
21   was only one week during the year that we went out.   That  
22   is nothing, especially when you are at an age where your  
23   culture teaches you the most.   I was at a disadvantage,

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 like many who have spent most of their impressionistic  
2 years in the school classroom. So we have lost a lot.

3 That is why I feel I am not a proper role  
4 model. I might be a transitional model or an example,  
5 but not the role model that I see for the future  
6 generations.

7 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY ANGELA**

8 **SHEESHISH:** Thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
10 very much for coming and making a very interesting  
11 presentation.

12 **ED SACKENEY:** Our next presenters are  
13 from the same community college. Tom Mills is currently  
14 enrolled in the drug and alcohol counsellor program at  
15 Northern College. He was born in Moose Factory but has  
16 lived away from the community since he had to leave for  
17 high school. He was worked at numerous occupations and  
18 is the father of two children.

19 Marinus Dieleman is an applied  
20 anthropologist who is currently teaching anthropology for  
21 Laurentian University and also teaches various courses  
22 in the Applied Arts division at Northern College. Marinus  
23 has always been interested in the linkage between adult

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 education, community development and self-government for  
2 Aboriginal people.

3                   He is also interested in the way the  
4 state's dominant ideology is presented as a social gift.  
5 When they give programs to the Aboriginal people with  
6 respect to Aboriginal self-government they think it is  
7 a social gift, rather than looking at it as an inherent  
8 right.

9                   He has also been studying people in the  
10 Third World and his ethnographic focus is on the  
11 south-Arctic south, Africa and the Caribbean, notably  
12 Jamaican.

13                   So I would like to ask these two  
14 gentlemen to come up front, please.

15                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

16                   Who is going to go first?

17                   **MARINUS DIELEMAN:** I think I have just  
18 developed some callouses in a place where I'd rather not  
19 have them. It's been a little while.

20                   Thank you for your patience too, as Ed  
21 mentioned my background is in applied anthropology. I  
22 want to thank you very much for your patience and your  
23 listening skills. I have often seen Native people in

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 relation to non-Native, like myself, in interchanges of  
2 different sorts and they often get the short end of the  
3 stick in terms of the amount of dialogue that they have.

4 So I would like to thank you very much for this  
5 opportunity.

6                   There is a movie on currently in town  
7 it is entitled "The Last of the Mohicans". I haven't seen  
8 it and Ed Sackenev and my friends said, "Why don't you  
9 go see it", and perhaps I will one of these days. It is  
10 a rather ominous title, "The Last of the Mohicans" and  
11 having read the book years and years ago, when I was much  
12 younger and all my romantic ideas about Native people and  
13 so on and what happened in those historic times. Obviously  
14 we know the truth that these people were almost annihilated  
15 and hence the title.

16                   We too, in our country, have cases of  
17 annihilation, such as the Bayotook (PH) people of  
18 Newfoundland.

19                   I lament the fact that this sort of thing  
20 has happened historically in our country. I would not  
21 lament the fact, however, if I was to say or if perhaps  
22 this were also to be the last Royal Commission on Aboriginal  
23 Peoples. I would not lament that. I hope that this is

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the last.

2                   Enough research has been done on Native  
3 people, more words and books have been expended on Native  
4 people than any other culture on earth. I don't know if  
5 the people here realize that, but if we were to take all  
6 the writings that were ever done on Native people, I don't  
7 know if we could put them all in one particular building.

8                   So I hope that one comes out of this will  
9 obviously be more paper, more tapes and so on, and that  
10 finally something will come to fruition and that  
11 self-government will be realized for Native people, and  
12 that it's more than something which came about as a result  
13 of the Oka Crisis, and I'm sure that's what all the  
14 Commissioners are working towards. So I thank you advance  
15 for your work. I am sure it's not an easy job.

16                   As Ed mentioned my interest, as an  
17 applied anthropologist, and my research took me to northern  
18 Ontario and I was very much interested in the linkage  
19 between adult education, self-government and also  
20 community development to see how those three things linked  
21 up.

22                   I brought with me today something that  
23 was written back in 1967, the Hawthorne Report, rather

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 large volumes. I'm sure you are familiar with that, that  
2 was 25 years ago, and here we are doing a Royal Commission.  
3 Again I want to reiterate the point and I hope that finally  
4 the conditions that are on the reserves today -- as has  
5 been mentioned much more eloquently than I can, and of  
6 course with much more force than I can by previous speakers  
7 that spoke today.

8                   So again, I hope that all this  
9 information and all the information that we arrive at today  
10 and tomorrow and subsequently will be of good use and that  
11 something wonderful will finally happen.

12                   I don't wish to talk any more now about  
13 the first phase, and when I entered the room earlier, at  
14 approximately noon hour, it is now time for dialogue and  
15 we are going to look at the issues for round two. In that  
16 particular pamphlet that I have here it mentions something  
17 about the fact that we should be working towards  
18 re-establishing relationships, relationships that have  
19 broken down.

20                   I guess over the years, having studied  
21 Native people and the relationships between Native people  
22 and non-Native people, I unfortunately have become  
23 somewhat of a professional cynic. A relationship is never

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 a given, it is something that occurs between two people  
2 or more, which is mediated of course by language and various  
3 symbols and so on. Unfortunately those relationships,  
4 the ones that I see and the ones that I've studied, between  
5 Native people and non-Native people, is still one of  
6 paternalism.

7                   Where I work at the moment, at Northern  
8 College, I can see that every day. As Edward mentioned  
9 I am interested in the fact that we are talking about  
10 basically an inherent right of Native people, an inherent  
11 right versus a social gift.

12                   The mind set of the people in power,  
13 whether they be in Indian Affairs, other institutions,  
14 including the one I work with, is still one where we give  
15 something to Native people. The metaphors that are used  
16 -- and I know John, before me, talked about his language  
17 containing many metaphors, we also in English use various  
18 metaphors -- there is still a sense even at the college  
19 level, the post-secondary level, that something is coming  
20 from non-Natives to the Natives in the form of a social  
21 gift.

22                   Northern College, for example, who has  
23 been for a long time in the business -- and education is



November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 a business -- of delivering curriculum packages to the  
2 north that conjures up the idea that education is bounded,  
3 it's packaged, delivering, bringing, those kinds of words  
4 are used. It is almost therapeutic in its format as well.

5 That is very much different from looking  
6 at curriculum, something that ought to be constructed from  
7 the grassroots, that is from the Native people themselves.

8 This kind of thing is still going on and this is the major  
9 dilemma, I think, even still in post-secondary education.

10 My premise for today basically is that  
11 I feel that anything short of control of post-secondary  
12 education will also undermine some of the aspirations  
13 towards self-government local control. There are now  
14 approximately 20,000 or more post-secondary students of  
15 Native origin going to post-secondary educations. In 1971  
16 there were about 1,000, so that increase is considerable.

17 Coupled with the fact that Native people  
18 have the highest birth rate in Canada, and that there were  
19 many baby-boomers of the '40s and '50s, and '60s who are  
20 now in their 30's, 40's and so on, and these are students  
21 that I meet, there is a lot of gold in them thar reserves,  
22 and this is how I think colleges are looking at means to  
23 capitalize on adult education for Native people.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   They don't know quite how to go about  
2   it, so what happens is that they establish some sort of  
3   what they call a working relationship between a Native  
4   political organization and the people at the  
5   administrative level at the colleges.

6                   It is assumed that the working relation  
7   will be an amicable one, that it will work out and that  
8   it will in some way plug into the aspirations of  
9   self-government, community development, local control.

10                  The problem is, as I see it, the  
11   relationship is still one of a paternalistic one. So what  
12   happens in the long run is the initial goal set by the  
13   political organization becomes somewhat subverted. There  
14   are a lot of well intentioned people at colleges and  
15   universities, who are non-Natives, and they want to do  
16   their best. The problem is that they attempt to present  
17   the curriculum in a very generic way, so that it is as  
18   if to say, "We will present you with sociology, psychology,  
19   et cetera, and then when you go out on your field  
20   replacement, or when you find your jobs by the mere fact,  
21   ipso facto, that you are Native you will be able to change  
22   it into some sort of Native format. That is, of course,  
23   not the case.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   What the Native students are basically  
2 asking for is a curriculum which can be utilized in their  
3 field replacement, in their future jobs. There are very  
4 many subtle things that non-Natives cannot provide in these  
5 institutions to those students.

6                   So what we need, in fact, are Native  
7 people at these colleges and universities, very much like  
8 you were mentioning, Mr. Blakeney, concerning the  
9 Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. I believe their  
10 students are even met at the door by elders and there are  
11 sweetgrass ceremonies, you have sweat lodges and so on.

12                  The other thing that non-Natives, like  
13 myself, and administrators are not really good at is  
14 understanding that many of the students are not just coming  
15 there for an education, but it seems that they are also  
16 coming there for a healing. The healing of course stems  
17 from either direct linkages to residential schools, we  
18 call that the residential school syndrome, or indirectly  
19 involved by way of the parents or grandparents or whatever  
20 to the residential school syndrome. This has a snowball  
21 effect and has affected them and they are suffering to  
22 some extent from that.

23                  That of course makes an impact on their

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 academic success. Colleges are not able to deal with that  
2 unless we have on our campuses elders, people with the  
3 skills in oral tradition, people with skills in sweat  
4 lodges, with sweetgrass ceremonies and so on. Because  
5 psychology classes, sociology classes, and so on, by  
6 themselves cannot offer that kind of healing, I believe.

7 And this is what many of the students are talking about.

8                   The other thing that is going on, since  
9 there are so many potential adult students out there, the  
10 colleges are vying with each other for getting those  
11 students, hence a competition is created amongst colleges,  
12 which further undermines the real intent or the purpose  
13 of Native education.

14                   The unfortunate thing is when the  
15 programs do get under way there is still the notion of  
16 paternalism and that is the basis of the conflict that  
17 may ensue, as it did in the college where I teach, between  
18 non-Native people have some sort of power at the college  
19 and those Native teachers.

20                   In the case of my college a lot of the  
21 conflict occurred as far back as 1983 and consequently  
22 we do not have any Native teachers there, nor was there  
23 any more attempt to hire any more. Now it has taken

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 approximately ten years of my efforts, along with Native  
2 students, and finally perhaps we can re-establish a Native  
3 department of sorts, controlled by Native people.

4 But I would like to see something further  
5 than that. I would like to see some federal help in perhaps  
6 establishing a Native college in the north. I think that  
7 would be just wonderful because then they can develop their  
8 own curriculum and truly have a good fit between curriculum  
9 and jobs that are out there.

10 We do have something of that sort at the  
11 JBEC campus, that is the James Bay Education Centre in  
12 Moosonee, where some of the courses do immediately plug  
13 into the needs of the local economy. But at our campus  
14 here in South Porcupine we really don't have that, and  
15 that is something we hope to develop.

16 One of the things that I hope to do and  
17 I hope that many of my other non-Native colleagues will  
18 do, and that is to make ourselves redundant. I think this  
19 is the job of Phase II, vis-a-vis the Native people and  
20 the interaction with non-Natives, I mean redundant in terms  
21 of the relationships that is patterned on a relationship  
22 of paternalism and wardship. That is the kind of thing  
23 that has to go.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   Unfortunately, again, my professional  
2 cynicism points out that if there is a devolution of that  
3 kind of relationship it must be devolved from the top.  
4 So my problem is: How do I change the thinking of some  
5 of my colleagues who have power either in the classroom  
6 or have power as administrators. This is a very difficult  
7 thing to do, particularly when their mind set is in  
8 paternalism, and when they use or resort to a language  
9 which is replete with statements that pertain to a social  
10 gift, as I mentioned before.

11                   Anyway, I won't take up any more of your  
12 time. These are the aspirations that I have for the Native  
13 people in terms of those relationships.

14                   I would like to end with a quote from  
15 a rather, at least for me, a famous person who was an  
16 anthropologist who lived in the United States. His name  
17 is Alfred Kroeber. Alfred was asked, after he studied  
18 Native people in the United States for about 40 years,  
19 and he lived with them and learned their languages and  
20 so on, they said, "Well Alfred, what did you finally learn  
21 about Native people? What is it that you -- what do they  
22 want? What did you learn?" He says, "Well, I came to  
23 an astonishing conclusion", he said, "They are waiting

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 for us to go way." Actually he says, "They think of us  
2 as guests who never left and then took over our house."

3 So perhaps what we have to do now is  
4 devolve those kinds of relationships that were patterned  
5 for 200 years on paternalism and wardship.

6 Thank you very much.

7 **TOM MILLS:** Good evening.

8 A couple of weeks ago I was approached  
9 and asked whether I would be interested in saying something  
10 at the hearing and for a couple of days I thought about  
11 it and I thought yes, it would be good for me, maybe not  
12 good for you because this is the first time I've ever had  
13 an opportunity to speak at something like this and be  
14 listened to -- and it feels good.

15 At the time I was trying to think of what  
16 the most important issue in my opinion was and that the  
17 top of the list I had health and it is still at the top  
18 of the list. I believe health is an important issue right  
19 across the whole country, not only for Native people but  
20 non-Native as well.

21 However, as a future drug and alcohol  
22 counsellor possibly I got to thinking that it's okay to  
23 work with Native people on a one to one basis or as a group,

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 and say that everything is going to be okay as soon as  
2 you stop using and doing what you're doing, you are changing  
3 your behaviour, but in reality that is not true.

4 I remember working a couple of years ago  
5 as a volunteer at Montief (PH) Correctional Centre, not  
6 too far from here. I spoke with a lot Native inmates there,  
7 I used to like going to talk to them, and they taught me  
8 a lot. One of the things they asked me was: "Tom, what  
9 do we do when we get out of here?" I said, "I don't know,  
10 what are you going to do?" And they said, "There is  
11 nothing." I asked them where they were going to go and  
12 they said, "Back home." I said, "Well, what are you going  
13 to do?" "Nothing."

14 I went to Kirkland Lake -- I graduate  
15 this year and then I am on a placement after Christmas.  
16 I went to Kirkland Lake to a treatment centre and I spoke  
17 to the Assistant Director there and I asked her what type  
18 of follow-up -- was she aware of the treatment facility  
19 used with the Native clients they had that were leaving?  
20 She said, "Oh, excellent follow-up, really good. We  
21 really keep track of them." I said, "Well, that's nice,  
22 that's good. Can you tell me what they do after they leave  
23 here?" She said, "Well, some of them go on to halfway



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 houses and some of them go on to try and get a job somewhere  
2 and some of them go home." I said, "Well, what happens  
3 to them after that?" She said, "Well, I don't know."

4                   There is a problem with unemployment  
5 with the Native people and that unemployment, for me,  
6 directly affects not only the physical but the  
7 psychological health of Native young people. I have been  
8 fortunate.

9                   In one way I've been fortunate, I didn't  
10 go back. In another way I feel bad because I didn't go  
11 back to where I was born. I lost something in order to  
12 gain something else. I don't know if it was worth it.  
13 I went back home two years ago before I quit my job and  
14 went back to school. I went back home to do a quick  
15 contract job up there and I found out why I cried when  
16 I left, and I found out why I cried to stay away, because  
17 I didn't want to go back and face things up there. I knew  
18 there was nothing there for me.

19                   Native people talk about needing our  
20 culture, having our own culture. Well, the non-Native  
21 population in the country has its own culture and that  
22 culture is made up of values, beliefs, language,  
23 institutions and laws. At one time the Native culture

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 had the same thing, the only difference now is that the  
2 non-Native culture has control over the mode of production,  
3 and that is the only difference. They have the jobs and  
4 we don't. They -- when I say "they" I can identify myself  
5 as a Native Canadian, when I say "they" I mean non-Native  
6 people. They have control over the resources. They have  
7 control over the land.

8 Can the Native culture -- it's coming  
9 back, it's going to rise again -- can it survive without  
10 a base, without a mode of production, without an economic  
11 base for our young people, for the next generation to go  
12 on? Or are we just going to have a vicious circle all  
13 the time when it comes to what happens when the next  
14 generation grows up.

15 I say we can't survive without having  
16 a base. I say we need our own land, we need -- when I  
17 say "we" I mean in Treaty 9, this is my group, these are  
18 my people in Treaty 9. I can't speak for anyone else  
19 outside that treaty because that is my boundary.

20 Peter Sackney mentioned something  
21 about the Mohawks this afternoon, and that's true, they  
22 have their own way of doing things. They have a different  
23 environment down there, they have arable land. We are

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 speaking of regional differences in the environment as  
2 well up here. We do things differently.

3 Now traditional Native ways of making  
4 a living up here are gone. We can't survive on the fur  
5 trade any more because it's gone. Why? A number of  
6 reasons. We can't live off the land any more.

7 As Native people we need to take over  
8 and take that right and say that, yes, this is our land,  
9 and that is all we have to say. If non-Native people say,  
10 "No, it's not. We took it." Well we made arrangements  
11 for that, okay? We have treaties to cover that, even  
12 though they weren't really honoured.

13 I like what one of the Commissioners,  
14 Angela, said this afternoon when she admitted to being  
15 from an abused background as well. Like in any other  
16 relationship if you want to make up you have to say that  
17 you're sorry. I haven't heard any government in Canada  
18 say, "We're sorry." They will say they're sorry to the  
19 Japanese but not to our own Native people. That's where  
20 you start making amends, you say, "I'm sorry", it's simple.

21 But are we ever going to hear that, "I'm sorry"? And  
22 are we going to say, "Yes, we really are brothers and  
23 sisters, it doesn't matter what colour the skin is."

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
3 very much.

4 I am interested in what was said about  
5 control of the curriculum. I completely agree that only  
6 Native people can produce a Native curriculum for  
7 educational purposes. I think we all agree that that is  
8 so. In one small Native community that I happened to go  
9 into the Native people had done just that. The parents,  
10 the elders and the teachers had got together and produced  
11 a curriculum for their children at the elementary level.  
12 I found it absolutely fascinating because they started  
13 with the children at age 2 and said that this is the  
14 appropriate time to teach children to speak their Native  
15 language.

16 Then, at a later stage, 3 to 4, they  
17 provided for instruction in their history and their  
18 culture. They explained the role of the elder and Native  
19 spirituality. Then they talked about governing yourself  
20 and governing your community. They had these various  
21 stages all set out and ages attached to them to show the  
22 progression in the curriculum for these children.

23 Obviously this was sparked by one person

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 with wonderful leadership qualities in that small  
2 community and they were proceeding on this basis. Not  
3 only that, they were encouraging the Native people in all  
4 the little communities around about to review the  
5 curriculum that they had come up with to see whether they  
6 thought it would be a good idea to adopt in their local  
7 elementary school.

8                   Now I think this is how it should happen,  
9 but that happened only in one place. People have said  
10 to us, over and over again, "We have to have a special  
11 Native curriculum for our schools at different levels."  
12 And I say to them, "And who is going to produce that?  
13 Because I agree 100 per cent with what you have said, that  
14 it's not a Native version of a non-Native curriculum that's  
15 going to be any good. It's got to be a Native curriculum  
16 produced by Native people.""

17                   Therefore it seems to me that what we,  
18 as a Commission, are looking for is those initiatives being  
19 taken by Native people with the relevant expertise in their  
20 own communities. That is what I think self-government  
21 is all about and that if it is going to happen, this is  
22 how it is going to happen.

23                   So I must say I have some concern about

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 the criticism of the kind of educational system that  
2 doesn't go along with it. A constructive approach of "this  
3 is what we ought to be doing" because frankly I feel that  
4 only you can do it, and only you should do it.

5                   As I say, this is my concept of  
6 self-government in the area of education, and I think the  
7 same is true in health, and the same is true in justice  
8 and probably on other aspects of our terms of reference  
9 as well. So when we said about our second round of public  
10 hearings that we have heard the concerns expressed and  
11 we have heard the criticisms and now we are looking for  
12 the solutions, a great many Native people have sort of  
13 thrown up their hands and said, "Well, what's the use?"  
14

15                   The whole thing is, as you put it, a  
16 paternalistic system. I don't want a paternalistic system  
17 for Native people. I want their system, but we need help  
18 -- we need help. We have indicated that we appreciate  
19 that Native people don't want solutions foisted on them,  
20 this is what they've had in the past, a diet of that sort  
21 of thing and the time for that is now over.

22                   When we say we are looking for a new  
23 relationship that's what we mean. We think that now is

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 the time and the opportunity for complete change in the  
2 way that Native people and non-Native people live together  
3 in Canada. I would just like to make that point in spades  
4 that we are not going to come forward with ideas as to  
5 what the solutions are, and this is what should be changed,  
6 and this is how it should be changed. I think we've had  
7 enough of that, that's what I think is meant by paternalism.

8 So we want the ideas coming this way,  
9 and as I say, this is what I think self-government means.

10 I will ask Mary if she has any comments  
11 she wants to make.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Can I go  
13 home, please?

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** It won't  
15 be long, Mary, it won't be long.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Almost.

17 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
18 like to thank you both very much. I know it has been a  
19 long day for you and you've been very, very patient. For  
20 that I thank you.

21 I noticed that you have read our "Framing  
22 the Issues". Elijah Harper too said, at the Winnipeg  
23 Lodge, "I hope this is the last Commission".

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   Just one question. As we have crossed  
2 this country we have heard calls and very, very strong  
3 arguments favouring the need for a separate school,  
4 separate post-secondary school. We have heard, for  
5 example, that many, many Native kids drop out of school,  
6 they don't even get to university. I mean university is  
7 not the only thing. Even if they do get that university  
8 is not necessarily for everyone, so why should you invest  
9 those kinds of resources into that.

10                  We have heard some of the reasons that  
11 people don't get extra training, go to university, is that  
12 it is too far away, they get homesick, they can't adapt  
13 to the city, they have cultural barriers. But in the north  
14 I find that a lot of people just -- it is very, very  
15 difficult getting them to leave their communities for  
16 extended periods of time to go to university to take  
17 post-secondary education. So there has been talks about  
18 how can you bring the educational system to them.

19                  But anyway, my short question, after  
20 that long intro, is this: There have been so many  
21 recommendations the reality is that there are limited  
22 resources. So if you had a choice, what would the choice  
23 be, in terms of institutions? Because as one wise man



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 said, "It's not sermons that make changes, it's  
2 institutions."

3                   **TOM MILLS:** Well, I don't know if it  
4 should be up to me what I would like to see. I am a social  
5 scientist and I pick at things, but the solutions come  
6 from the grassroots obviously, but this is what I've heard.  
7 Elders are telling me that we need two kinds of curricula  
8 which can be merged, and they are talking about various  
9 levels. Of course, my knowledge is mostly from the  
10 post-secondary level.

11                   One is based on oral tradition and of  
12 course that includes all the myths and legends and stories  
13 and those kinds of traditions that are conducive to those  
14 societies, tribal societies, band level societies.

15                   On the other hand we need a curriculum  
16 that is based on text. If we have only curriculum based  
17 on text the culture is out of context so to speak. There  
18 is a recognition that both curricula are to be implemented  
19 because when the perspective graduates do graduate there  
20 will be -- in other words, what the elders are saying is  
21 they want them to have that coat-switching ability, the  
22 ability to be firmly rooted in their own culture through  
23 oral tradition, as well as being able to coat-switch into

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 the non-Native society. And of course one thing that  
2 requires is bilingualism. So the language issue is  
3 crucial here. One sees one's culture through a language,  
4 there is no doubt about that, as an anthropologist I  
5 understand that very well.

6                   So both curricula are to be presented,  
7 both languages are to be taught. This is something that  
8 some of the students and myself are pushing for at the  
9 college where I teach now, is to establish at least  
10 elementary forms of either Cree or Ojibway -- likely Cree  
11 because most of the students are Cree.

12                   So in recognition of that at some point  
13 you do leave that place and then there is that world out  
14 there, it's either going to be "back home" or it is going  
15 to be in an urban setting. Then being able to coat-switch  
16 in both cultures, having both languages, and curricula  
17 that fit both is a tremendous asset.

18                   I have some students who come to us from  
19 Quebec who are trilingual, it's just marvellous. And this  
20 is the kind of thing I think we should be working towards.

21       And yes, language learning, as my friend, Angela, knows  
22 very well, starts very young, but I would like to see that  
23 continue. There are students at the college who are

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 screaming and asking for -- non-Natives as well, Angela  
2 -- and that has been going on for some time.

3                   The thing is, it has been tried before  
4 but it was put at the end of the day when everybody is  
5 tired. There are moms in there, there are dads in there,  
6 kids have to be picked up at 4 o'clock and they are unwilling  
7 to stay until 5:00. It has to be made as part of the  
8 curriculum in the morning or early afternoon or whatever  
9 and a permanent staff member who can also perhaps teach  
10 not only the language but perhaps oral tradition and this  
11 kind of thing, history and culture. This, I think, is  
12 what I am hearing is what is necessary for the future.

13                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Would you  
14 like to make any other comments?

15                   **MARINUS DIELEMAN:** I tried to do some  
16 research before I came here and did some statistics on  
17 unemployment, the average income, the amount of Native  
18 self-owned business and band-owned businesses in northern  
19 Ontario, and guess what, I couldn't get anything.  
20 Statscan was the only place that may have the information,  
21 but they wanted to charge me between \$30 and \$50 an hour  
22 to do the research, that is if they have any and I would  
23 have to pay either way.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   But I did get something from Gilbert  
2 Cheechou and it is "Towards the Framework for Native  
3 Economic Policies and Programs in Ontario". It covers  
4 everything that you guys were talking about this afternoon.  
5     The main word that I saw in all of the things here, one  
6 word stood out more than anything else and that was  
7 "inadequate".

8                   So, I think what is going to happen here  
9 is you talk about self-government, well like in any other  
10 country where people are put down and held down for too  
11 long, I think what is going to happen is you are going  
12 to see our young people really get up, they're not going  
13 to take it any more and I don't blame them, and I will  
14 join them.

15                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I hope  
16 that's what we will see, that's what we would like to see.

17                   **MARINUS DIELEMAN:** I just hope it's not  
18 like Oka.

19                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** No, I hope  
20 not too.

21                   Allan, please?

22                   **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have  
23 just one thought and then a comment/question.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   The first thought has to do with  
2 curriculum. I am always puzzled about how that could be  
3 handled, how paper-bound educational systems such as we  
4 have could handle the oral tradition. Gradually, that  
5 question is being partially answered by the videos and  
6 these sorts of things, who could, rightly handled, get  
7 the teachings of elders on tape and could be at least partly  
8 transferred to students in a semi-oral form. It isn't  
9 necessary to attempt to reduce the paper, what elders are  
10 saying when they recount the myths and the stories that  
11 make up the history of an Aboriginal community. So I  
12 thought, well, technology is our friend there.

13                   I have felt that it probably should not  
14 be beyond the wit of our society if goodwill is maintained  
15 and somewhat increased to find a way for Aboriginal people  
16 to control education, health, child protection, welfare,  
17 policing and justice matters in Aboriginal communities,  
18 a little rub there in spots, but those strike me as --  
19 conceptually I can figure out how that is going to happen.

20                   The one I have real trouble with is  
21 conceptually figuring out how there is going to be  
22 sufficient control over the means of production to provide  
23 employment for most Aboriginal people. Most of them live

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 in rural areas and there are not enough jobs for the people  
2 who grow up in rural areas, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal,  
3 and they just keep streaming out of the rural areas and  
4 into the urban centres.

5 I have seen a large number of methods  
6 tried to get the economic development and community  
7 development in rural areas. This is not to suggest it  
8 can't be done. We are down in an Apache area of New Mexico  
9 and saw a band there of 3,300 people, 3,000 of whom lived  
10 on reserves and did all manner of things. They ran tourist  
11 operations and ski hills and saw mills and you name it,  
12 and you could see all manner of activity.

13 But I thought, "Boy, that's going to be  
14 awfully difficult to replicate in -- I was thinking in  
15 prairie terms of looking at those reserves and how we could  
16 possibly get jobs, and they don't have to be on the reserve,  
17 they can be off the reserve but controlled by Aboriginal  
18 people. I thought, "Boy, that's going to be a real tough  
19 one", because practically no one else has managed it, we  
20 Canadians can't manage to provide Canadian-owned and  
21 controlled industries for Canadians, the great bulk of  
22 them are controlled by somebody else. And I thought, "Boy,  
23 that's a tough one".

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 I would be interested in any comment you  
2 may have on the likelihood of having a self-contained,  
3 or more or less self-contained Aboriginal culture in the  
4 broad sense of not only language and culture, but the means  
5 by which we make our living.

6 **MARINUS DIELEMAN:** I know that we live  
7 in a small world, it's a global economy. I think there  
8 is going to have to be some type of relationship formed  
9 between Native and non-Native people in urban areas that  
10 will give a chance to the people who live on the reserve  
11 as well a choice of whether to stay on the reserve or leave  
12 the reserve areas.

13 The main problem is that once they leave  
14 their reserve area they lose something that they can't  
15 bring with them.

16 However, I look at my treaty area, in  
17 the broader sense if I look at it I say, "Okay, this is  
18 my reserve, the whole area". The only thing is the problem  
19 with things like that is you are entering into  
20 federal/provincial agreements and problems between the  
21 two and who has jurisdiction over what.

22 So if the province will allow Native  
23 people to take control of their own treaty area -- I'm

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 just speaking for Treaty 9, it is just an idea -- then  
2 why can't Native people start attracting their own  
3 investments, starting their own companies, under our own  
4 income tax rules. They want self-government. If you talk  
5 about self-government on the reserve what are they  
6 governing? I can say in Moose Factory the reserve isn't  
7 even owned by the Native people, it is owned by the Hudson  
8 Bay Company right now. What do they have? What are they  
9 governing? What does government mean?

10 Well, for me it means a family  
11 relationship. This is the whole idea of government is  
12 living together and sharing. I can see setting up, in  
13 the Timmins area anyway, a good chance of starting an equity  
14 situation for our people. This is where self-government  
15 should all start, in equity, in having something to fall  
16 back on. If we don't have control over what we want to  
17 do, get rid of some of the rules, let us start our own  
18 system of doing things, our way of doing things, and let  
19 us make our own mistakes, let us fall on our own face,  
20 if we do, at least we will learn and so will our kids.

21 I've gotten over the attitude of  
22 defeatism, giving up, and I have lots of hope now. Today  
23 I have a lot of hope. I can see a lot of areas that we



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 can really build on. Without that mode of production,  
2 without being allowed access to land in our own treaty  
3 area we won't have anything -- I mean allowed to move  
4 anywhere in our treaty area and develop a company, and  
5 develop anything, and hire our own people and pay them.

6 That's what makes people feel good is  
7 hard work. I know, I've worked hard in my life. I've  
8 done a lot of different jobs. I know what it feels like  
9 to work up a good sweat, and there is nothing like good  
10 hard work to make you feel good at the end of the day,  
11 and then you go home to your family. It also gives you  
12 a sense of pride and self-esteem. I'm sure that you guys  
13 know the feeling too. Well, that's what we need.

14 By the way, thank you for letting me  
15 talk.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
17 very much for coming and speaking to us. You have  
18 certainly given us food for a lot of thought. We  
19 appreciate it very much.

20 **ED SACKENEY:** There is one more speaker,  
21 and this is our last speaker, Andrew Rickart. We know  
22 him as Andy, he has been around.

23 I thank Andy for his patience, for

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 waiting around.

2                               For the people who don't know Andy he  
3 is a former Chief of Moose Factory, a First Nations  
4 community. He is also the former Vice-President of the  
5 Union of Ontario Indians, as well an executive member for  
6 Ontario in the Assembly of First Nations. He is the  
7 founding Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe-aski Nation. He  
8 also served on the Ontario Human Rights Commission as a  
9 Commissioner. He is a graduate of the Masters Program,  
10 Environmental Studies, York University. And he is  
11 currently working for Osnaburgh, Ojibway First Nation and  
12 other First Nations on the issue of Aboriginal  
13 self-government.

14                           Today his presentation is on behalf of  
15 Osnaburgh First Nations Community. Osnaburgh is 400 miles  
16 north of Thunder Bay. So again, I thank Andrew for his  
17 patience.

18                           **ANDREW RICKART, OSNABURGH FIRST NATION:**

19       (Native language - no translation) (Translated) ... and  
20 what they are doing right now when they discuss their  
21 problems, some of the issues.

22                           I know these issues are very complex.

23 I know it has been a long day and tiring and listening,

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 and there were lots of issues that were discussed.

2 It was only today that we were given a  
3 chance to outline, because there are lots of times that  
4 you -- your forefathers have been here for a long time.

5  
6 We came from the James Bay area 300 years  
7 ago, that was the first time the white man came and set  
8 foot in our communities, a long time ago. You have  
9 listened to various issues and stories have been told to  
10 you. I'm sure you will appreciate some of the hardship  
11 that we went through when we were trying to speak because  
12 it has been a year now since this Commission was established  
13 and you have a chance to go across the country to listen  
14 to our people. I am sure it is going to take you another  
15 two years in order to complete this session. And right  
16 across the country, as you go across the country, it's  
17 going to be talked about, all those things that happened  
18 for the last 300 years. Like for today, if you look at  
19 it now it is only 8:45, I should have been in my pyjamas  
20 by now.

21 Those things that you are talking about  
22 now, some of the issues that are going to be discussed  
23 here. I know these things bring great pain when we discuss

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 all these issues that were discussed, and it's true,  
2 hopefully by going through this exercise of taking in these  
3 issues I am sure that in the future things are going to  
4 look brighter for our people.

5                   It is very unfortunate that we feel that  
6 so many times we are not able to communicate in the Native  
7 language. I realize that we have different dialects,  
8 different ways of speaking, but it is very interesting  
9 that you should learn our language because lots of us have  
10 learned to communicate with you in English. That's what  
11 the frustrating part for me.

12                   The language is not respected because  
13 lots of times the elders, when I listen to them, I sit  
14 down with them, they are saying to me, "How come you are  
15 always trying to be like a white man, trying to speak the  
16 same language as them" because they tell me that I was  
17 put here by a creator and he gave me my own language to  
18 express myself, and sometimes even the elders sometimes  
19 -- just because we have learned to speak the language of  
20 an animal, just like we would be able to call moose and  
21 that's why when you talk to them about the languages, the  
22 certain things that you use, that language is very  
23 important.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   So I am going to speak in your language  
2   so you can appreciate the issues I want to talk about and  
3   it should be short, and then after that I want to ask you  
4   one question. Like these people that I am representing  
5   right now, the Osnaburgh First Nation, there are lots of  
6   things that they are working on right now. Also they go  
7   through certain things that frustrate them and that's why  
8   they are going through that exercise right now. Like for  
9   instance, they have a constitution that I won't talk about,  
10  the constitution is considered Treaty 9, and also when  
11  you talk about these commercial areas, commercial issues,  
12  they are talking about the area of fishing. As well I  
13  want to talk about issues also in the area of the local  
14  government. It's not the first time that local government  
15  has been practised and even today we don't want to discuss  
16  things about certain problems because you have heard them  
17  before, but it is important to really outline some of the  
18  issues and some of the things that they want to talk about  
19  some of the problems that they have in terms of issues.  
20  They are trying to confront some of these issues.

21                   I am not going to talk very long, but  
22  it is important for me to bring them out to discuss them  
23  in front of this committee.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1                   I am kind of glad that the news media  
2   -- most of them are gone now. Sometimes they have a  
3   tendency to -- I have been here in Timmins for a long time,  
4   because I'm -- I will be able to see how far back our people  
5   -- because of the fight that -- lots of racism being  
6   involved between two nations.

7                   And now I would like to speak in English.

8                   Thank you for the opportunity to share  
9   something with you. I have two main objectives here.  
10   One is to share a number of points and to ask you one  
11   specific request upon my conclusion of this presentation.

12                   I work with the Osnaburgh people, the  
13   Ojibway people of Osnaburgh, north of Thunder Bay. I was  
14   a mercenary and a hired gun -- that was supposed to be  
15   a joke, but maybe you can't be humourous this late at night.

16                   So essentially what this community is  
17   all about it almost has all the basic ingredients of all  
18   the problems and challenges and the crises and the issues  
19   facing our people across the country. There is a treaty  
20   involved; there are hunting and fishing rights; inherent  
21   rights of Aboriginal self-government; land; water;  
22   environment; resources use; there is also the exploitive  
23   activities of land -- or I should say resource-based

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 industries; the flooding of land; access of roads through  
2 the territories of these people; and the tragic  
3 consequences resulting from all these disruptions.

4                   When I look at that situation and work  
5 with these people there are many, many things that are  
6 part of all these social disruptions. When you examine  
7 these things and look at them in terms of how these things  
8 should be approached you will find that you have to accept  
9 one thing, and that is that there is a basic fundamental  
10 difference between our people and the value system of  
11 mainstream Canada. Unless we accept that difference I  
12 don't think we will be able to achieve the kinds of things  
13 we are all talking about for our people in this country.

14                   In some respects we could look at what  
15 happens in our own backyard, so to speak. I will sort  
16 of express gratitude that the media is not here -- we don't  
17 call our people media, we just tell the story how it is  
18 so I'm not making any remarks that don't recognize their  
19 coverage. I am talking about the dramatization of the  
20 public media.

21                   There is a lot of racism in this country,  
22 even right in the city, even this hotel. We used to check  
23 into this hotel before and they used to put us in what

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 they called the Indian side, that's just the far side over  
2 here and the other white people used to enjoy a more modern  
3 section of this hotel. So these things exist.

4 I am also on the Board of Governors of  
5 the local college here. I daresay that there is also  
6 racism in that college. Almost every segment in this  
7 society in this area. I don't say these things to complain  
8 and say how bad things are, all I am saying is that we  
9 acknowledge these discrepancies and we are dealing with  
10 them. The best way to challenge, and deal, and resolve  
11 issues that are hindering the progress of society is to  
12 admit what they are all about, and what they are, and what  
13 you intend to do about them.

14 If you look around you will find out how  
15 many of our people are in these various institutions?  
16 How many work in a bank, for example, the various banks?  
17 How many people are teaching or training in these various  
18 positions.

19 So these things I believe have to be  
20 acknowledged, and that's what I'm doing. I'm not  
21 depressed for a moment that they exist. I think everybody  
22 is entitled to an opinion. For example, you heard a  
23 presentation sometime this morning from one of the



**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 proponents of the mining industry. If you look at the  
2 appendix of that presentation they told you that they did  
3 a survey in 1991. A number of areas concerning various  
4 aspects of northern Ontario, how people feel about these  
5 different things, there were many questions that were asked  
6 in this survey, a survey conducted by a committee to ensure  
7 a future in the north for our children -- I think that's  
8 how it was phrased. To ask questions like: The three  
9 most important issues facing them, for example, the  
10 attitudes, solutions to the problems -- all the way down  
11 and then all of a sudden they said, what about matters  
12 -- I'm not sure exactly what it says, but matters that  
13 bother you or you think about, sort of like a hinderance,  
14 what are the constraints. There is one question here that  
15 says, Natives seeking our lands or something to that  
16 effect. "Our lands" what do you mean by that? Thank God  
17 it's the bottom of the list, 1.2 or 1.92 per cent of the  
18 people thought it was important.

19                   So that's what I mean, these racist  
20 overtones are reflective of what the situation was out  
21 there in 1990/91. As I said earlier, that's not bad,  
22 that's okay, it's all right to be racist, it's all right  
23 to have your opinion.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   So my own premise of all this is that  
2   the only way that we can resolve and understand each other  
3   is by educating our children collectively. In a debate  
4   on the Constitution we had a lot of opportunities to reflect  
5   on all aspects of our concerns of how this country should  
6   be set up in terms of all these issues that affect our  
7   people in this country. And yet our people, on the one  
8   hand, didn't really understand the implications of what  
9   was taking place. For example, again the elders of  
10   Osnaburgh, we asked them, "What do you think we should  
11   do about this referendum?" Now we joke around a lot, even  
12   though this challenge is so serious, one guy said to us  
13   in our discussions, "You know what happens if you take  
14   the "f" out of "referendum", it spells "reerendum", I think  
15   that's what they are trying to do to us." -- that's supposed  
16   to be a joke again, maybe it's late at night.

17                  So the elder said, "You know, you guys,  
18   in 1905 somebody came around here from Canada and Ontario  
19   and told us to sign almost a blank sheet of paper, carte  
20   blanche. He said to us, "If you sign this we will live  
21   in peace and harmony and we will share the land and all  
22   these good things will happen to you." He said after over  
23   many, many decades we found out that they took all our

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 land, all of a sudden we were supposed to have given up  
2 our Aboriginal rights to our land and resources. So the  
3 old man said, "There's no way I can sign another piece  
4 of document, 50 or 60 questions and either yes or no.  
5 I can't find the thought of saying yes again to a leap  
6 of faith." By our experience it would never happen anyway.

7

8                   So these are some of the attitudes that  
9 we have to live with.

10                   On the other hand we also believe in the  
11 positive aspects of what we are trying to do. You see  
12 what we are trying to here is that we are talking about  
13 Aboriginal self-government. It is going to take a long  
14 time to try to explain that, especially the inherent rights  
15 to Aboriginal self-government, because the definition  
16 cannot possibly fit in with the context of the legal  
17 framework or legal system of this country.

18                   And yet we are told to define it and set  
19 it up, which is almost an impossible task to do. This  
20 is why many of us believe that perhaps it might require  
21 another generation before we really talk with informed  
22 decisions as to what should happen. We have too many  
23 cobwebs in our thinking. We have been programmed to think

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1   that perhaps there is always one way, and that is the white  
2   man's way.  Until we de-program ourselves along enough  
3   just to keep our heads above the water, and perhaps our  
4   children will have a better concept of working together,  
5   forging new directions of self-determination and  
6   co-existence in this country, maybe that is the direction  
7   we're going.

8                   So as far as this community is concerned  
9   that we are trying to promote, that we are in fact  
10  developing, to respond to all these questions.  You know:  
11  How are you going to set up your system of government?  
12  How are you going to finance your government?  How are  
13  you going to relate to the rest of your own First Nations,  
14  vis-a-vis the provincial and federal areas?  Well these  
15  things are all evolving.

16                  In terms of, for example, this paper I  
17  gave you, I share with you, we do talk about some of the  
18  challenges that this community has gone through in terms  
19  of the crisis, the constraints, the obstacles.  For  
20  example, the community has an unemployment rate of 97 per  
21  cent and everybody panics in Canada when you have  
22  unemployment over 10 per cent.

23                  They also talk about widespread alcohol

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 and substance abuse, where the community is almost  
2 decimated to a life of non-existence.

3 I share these points because on the one  
4 hand they want to acknowledge that they are very, very  
5 big challenges to overcome in dealing with these problems.  
6 They talk about housing, health services being adequate.  
7 They are talking about over-utilization of the court  
8 rooms. They talk about public expenditures over \$1  
9 million a year for that community for the courts, the  
10 judicial services and so on. And comparable to a larger  
11 community there is almost seven times more than a much  
12 larger non-Aboriginal community would spend.

13 So I mention these things because they  
14 have to be acknowledged. They are also saying here that  
15 they have a strategy and how they want to deal with the  
16 situation. They have no illusions in terms of how long  
17 it is going to take, but they are absolutely certain that  
18 they want to do this on their own terms and at their own  
19 pace of development. Working with the existing agencies,  
20 they even acknowledge that they have to share some of the  
21 white man's tools, processes, legal systems, bureaucratic  
22 structures to help us, as well as all these other necessary  
23 governing components that exist out there in society.

**November 5, 1992****Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 These are the thing that they are saying, and they are  
2 also saying in the process that they have a treaty, a  
3 government to government relationship treaty with Canada,  
4 which Ontario is part of as well. They said, "We  
5 established that in 1905. We said we would have a  
6 relationship in terms of peace, friendship and respect  
7 for each other." This is how the old agreement was  
8 understood by our elders, and this is the basis on which  
9 this community, along with others I'm sure, are moving  
10 to become self-sufficient. It is going to take a long  
11 time because this community has gone through a tragic  
12 legacy, as outlined in this summarized version of the  
13 overall strategy of this community. It will take a long  
14 time because it took over 70 years for these things to  
15 develop, and many, many things have happened in that  
16 community. I have seen a lot of communities across the  
17 country, this community has all the necessary factors that  
18 destroyed our people in many, many different areas. This  
19 community believes that it will achieve self-sufficiency.  
20 They are going through what we're all going through,  
21 including our people who live off the reserves or urban  
22 people. That is the healing process. We are spiritually  
23 bankrupt. And you will find that many, many of people

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 are getting back to that root, the central root of survival  
2 that is absolutely necessary for anyone to have the  
3 strength to build and promote self-respect, integrity and  
4 all these necessary human elements that makes a person  
5 whole. So these things are happening.

6                   What is very, very difficult in this  
7 process -- for example, when we are dealing with government  
8 we are crossing from one world to another world in order  
9 to communicate exactly what is being planned or developed  
10 locally. So we sit down with the elders, and there is  
11 pretty close to 80 elders in that community, and they say,  
12 "Okay, we want this, because of these factors, because  
13 of these things." It's very simple. We tell them, okay,  
14 what you are saying makes every sense. We are going to  
15 now translate this language into a kind of language that  
16 white people like to hear. We will use the most technical  
17 and sophisticated terminology, no matter how ridiculous  
18 it may sound, in order to convince them of what we are  
19 trying to do in effect is what perhaps they were always  
20 talking about.

21                   So that's what we are doing. We are  
22 developing a strategy here made out of common sense,  
23 sitting down with our people, which doesn't take very long

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 what we want to do, translate it into a language that  
2 bureaucracies, the government systems of this country can  
3 understand, and then we come back and translate again back  
4 to our people. So that's what we're doing.

5 But the bottom line is this: Having  
6 done that, you see the government refuses to move on a  
7 lot of things. They take a long time because of some of  
8 the complexities involved in this is that a government  
9 has certain holes or squares or circles that they fit in  
10 all these things that are happening out there. From your  
11 past experience, Mr. Blakeney, as the Premier of your  
12 province you probably know what I'm talking about.

13 So if you haven't got anything to fit  
14 in these various policy strategies, then they don't fit  
15 in there so we can't do anything about them. So when that  
16 happens we have a stalemate, we have a problem, we have  
17 an impasse, a Mexican stand-off. So our people are  
18 thinking: What can we do to convince these people that  
19 we have to deal with these things?

20 We have a number of options:

21 1) We can negotiate and discuss  
22 logically, as human beings, what is being tried here.  
23 And this is what a lot of our people are doing, it is called



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 a straightforward approach.

2 But while we are doing that a lot of  
3 people cannot be convinced that this is a serious problem  
4 that we are facing in our communities.

5 The second option is civil disobedience.

6 We don't want to break laws, but somehow we are forced  
7 to because the human spirit and human rationale reaches  
8 a breaking point, and that's why you see Okas and other  
9 disruptions like that. I don't think our people condone  
10 violence, because like any human being, people like to  
11 live in peace, harmony because that's what brings peace  
12 and harmony to whole families. So nobody perpetuates or  
13 deliberately promotes violence, but these things are  
14 inevitable if these problems are not significantly dealt  
15 with.

16 Now we are moving ahead and this may  
17 sound negative in some aspects that I just mentioned.  
18 There is progress. There is no question, there is  
19 progress. We are going to see more progress because of  
20 the kind of input a lot of our people had in making  
21 presentations to this panel and your subsequent report  
22 to government, will perhaps enhance the kind of response  
23 mechanisms they need to deal with these issues.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   So that's where a lot of our hopes are.

2     But one thing for certain though, a lot of our white  
3     brothers are well meaning, they want to help us. I have  
4     attended a lot of meetings during the pre-constitutional  
5     strategies and I found a lot of lawyers -- and I have no  
6     disrespect for lawyers, they have a place in our society  
7     -- control our strategies. White consultants are taking  
8     over our leadership roles in many parts of this country.

9     Now I don't want to sound like I'm a racist or anything,  
10    but sometimes we surrender our leadership to a lot of white  
11    people because perhaps the intentions are good, but  
12    sometimes we misconstrue a lot of these things.

13                  I think that will be overcome because  
14    a lot of our people are achieving education. As a result,  
15    again, of the opportunity to share these things with you,  
16    I hope they are not taken out of context, what I said,  
17    I'm not here to offend anybody. If I do I am only offending  
18    myself, but I wanted to share the extremities of the  
19    situation.

20                  Now the question -- the favour, I guess,  
21    what I am requesting is this: The community of Osnaburgh  
22    is requesting from the Commission to do a case study of  
23    their community in respect to what happened as a result

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 of mining developments, hydro wire diversions and  
2 flooding. And the infusion of funds from governments to  
3 mining companies, without any reference to our own people.  
4 What happens as a result of this situation.

5                   They want an impartial case study to be  
6 done so that we can use the conclusions or the observations  
7 of that particular analysis, if you will. Because we have  
8 been trying to tell them that these are the problems that  
9 exist, using all kinds of statistics and there are a lot  
10 of negative statistics, which I'm not even mentioning here,  
11 which the people are trying not to think about because  
12 it is very tragic: suicides, tragic deaths and so on, those  
13 kinds of things.

14                   So that's what I have been requested to  
15 do is to ask you that one -- I think the request is not  
16 a monumental request in terms of massive infusion of money,  
17 we are asking that an impartial analysis be done by way  
18 of a case study in that area. This will be followed up  
19 by a letter from the Chief and Council and the elders of  
20 the community.

21                   So this is what I wanted to share with  
22 you. I know it has been a long evening, and as I said  
23 earlier, we are feeling the pain of what is unfolding here,

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 and quite rightly so because we want to tell a story across  
2 this country within three years of your mandate, of the  
3 last 300 years of contact with an alien culture that was  
4 different from ours.

5                   If you are looking ahead, I think we are  
6 moving in the right direction. And just by listening,  
7 I suppose, to each other -- I have been listening to you  
8 all afternoon, the rest of my colleagues, my own people,  
9 my brothers and sisters, other interested groups and you've  
10 been listening all day and I'm sure you are ready to retire,  
11 the evening that is. That's what I wanted to bring across  
12 here.

13                   I have a tremendous respect for each and  
14 every one of you and I'm sure that you also have respect  
15 in a lot of these things that you hear from all our people  
16 across the country. I can't even begin to talk about all  
17 the things that are necessary to substantiate all these  
18 points I just mentioned, but I hope that we will be able  
19 to articulate these in days, weeks and months to come,  
20 as you conclude your hearings across this country.

21                   With that I would like to thank you very  
22 much and if you have any short questions I will provide  
23 you with short answers.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 Thank you very much.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you  
3 very much for being so patient in waiting to make your  
4 submission to us. We appreciate it.

5 I am very interested in what you said  
6 about Native self-government and the difficulty Native  
7 people have understanding and having it explained to them,  
8 and I must say that I think non-Native people have exactly  
9 the same problem. I don't think that it is realistic to  
10 think that it can be defined, I think it is clearly  
11 something that is going to evolve.

12 It is interesting though that as we've  
13 gone across the country, and a lot of the presenters we've  
14 heard from talked about Native self-government. Some of  
15 them said, "We are ready for it now." Others said, "We've  
16 already got it in our community." And others still said,  
17 "It's going to take 20 years at least before we are going  
18 to be ready."

19 So I don't know whether this reflects  
20 different stages that communities are at, or whether it  
21 reflects different concepts of what self-government is.  
22 I suspect that it is the latter, that people have a  
23 different concept by what is meant by self-government.

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1                   I think that we all agree that  
2 self-government, without self-sufficiency, is no  
3 self-government at all. The two things, I think, we are  
4 persuaded, we've heard this said in many places, that the  
5 two things must go hand in hand, otherwise the  
6 self-government is really an illusion. I think that's  
7 probably correct.

8                   I would just like to make a brief comment  
9 about what you said in reviewing the options that civil  
10 disobedience was one, and of course it is one, but we would  
11 hope that people of goodwill on both sides would not have  
12 to resort to that because I don't think it advances the  
13 cause of a better relationship and an equal partnership  
14 between Native people and non-Native people in the country.

15       It is more of a divisive thing than a constructive thing.

16       So I would hope that there would be better ways to go  
17 than that.

18                  As far as the request you made for a case  
19 study of your community, I think we would be delighted  
20 to do that. If the Chief is going to write to us in that  
21 connection I think that would be very favourably received,  
22 and particularly if there was an indication of who we should  
23 be working with and suggestions as to how we should go

November 5, 1992

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario**

1 about that. I think we would be very happy to entertain  
2 that idea.

3 I will ask Mary if she has any questions.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would  
5 like to say meeqwetch and say that I got the impression  
6 from when you were talking that you thought that our final  
7 report wouldn't be -- our full recommendations wouldn't  
8 be available until the fall of 1994. Just to let you know  
9 that we do have the ability to issue interim reports if  
10 there are issues that warrant that. For example, we've  
11 heard much about treaties, we've heard much about the  
12 dissatisfaction that Native people feel about the federal  
13 government not fulfilling their treaty obligations, and  
14 we have talked about what we could do in connection to  
15 the treaties, and we have discussed, but not yet decided,  
16 about the possibility of having maybe a Round Table or  
17 a discussion paper. But just to let you know that we do  
18 have that ability to make recommendations prior to 1994.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

20 Allan, please.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Two quick  
22 questions.

23 Could you tell me the approximate

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 on-reserve population of Osnaburgh?

2 **ANDREW RICKART:** It is approximately  
3 between 700 and 800 people there, it fluctuates, and maybe  
4 another 200 or 300 off the reserve, away from their  
5 communities.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** The next  
7 question is: Would you have any name to suggest as someone  
8 who might be suitable for an impartial analysis to which  
9 you referred? I don't necessarily think you would have  
10 it, but if you have it we would be interested.

11 **ANDREW RICKART:** We always have an  
12 inventory of so many people that can be accessed to do  
13 certain things, be it legal, be it economic, social,  
14 whatever, or judicial. They are available and we always  
15 have these at our disposal.

16 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** So if  
17 anyone is writing to us about this community case study,  
18 and if they have any ideas that they would like to suggest,  
19 we would think it a good idea to hear from them because  
20 time would be of the essence, you know it sounds like we  
21 have endless time, but in fact we don't.

22 Thank you.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you



November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 very much indeed.

2                   **ANDREW RICKART:** Can I add one more  
3 comment?

4                   **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes, of  
5 course.

6                   **ANDREW RICKART:** I have to say this.  
7 You mentioned awhile ago about the definition of  
8 self-governments and all this. In our own language, as  
9 I learned to speak it, there is no term of self-government,  
10 we just simply existed in our pharmacy out there, our  
11 tabernacle and everything else. So if we are talking about  
12 self-government we have to sort of create a word,  
13 "polisinano" (PH), literally meaning we are running --  
14 our affairs are running, you know, the way we do things.  
15 So there is no concept whatsoever in that light.

16                   The second point is that I'm not saying  
17 that we totally have to do everything ourselves, a great  
18 socialist once said, "You don't have to be a chicken to  
19 make your omelet". I heard that, but that's one thing  
20 that always stuck in my mind, and that's true. And that's  
21 why our people will continue to utilize all the expertise  
22 available, but they have to be community-driven, community  
23 decisions and so on.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1 I thank you very much for allowing me  
2 here. I wish you well in all of your deliberations.

3 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you,  
4 we appreciate that.

5 **ED SACKENEY:** Thank you, Andy.

6 I would like to really thank you  
7 Commissioners for going through this long day. On behalf  
8 of the Race Relations Committee that wanted to make a  
9 presentation, all they said was that a lot of the issues  
10 they wanted to discuss were talked about today, and they  
11 wish you people well in your continued efforts.

12 For me the only thing I can say is that  
13 we are moving in the right direction because of all the  
14 various Aboriginal people that came here was quite  
15 impressive. To have those human resources out there  
16 signals a lot of hope and to have you people sit and listen  
17 to us also stresses that point.

18 In closing I would like to bring Mr.  
19 Andrew Wesley to say a closing prayer and I will ask the  
20 Creator to look after each one of you in your travels.

21 Thank you very much, Commissioners, and  
22 the Community Commissioner.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

November 5, 1992

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples  
Timmins, Ontario

1

2

(Closing Prayer)

3

4 --- Whereupon the Hearing adjourned at 9:30 p.m.