

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR  
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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Manawan, Quebec

---The hearing begins at 12:16

Thursday, December 3, 1992

**(Opening Prayer)**

**GILLES OTTAWA:** Good afternoon everyone.

I would like to welcome you to these hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples here in Manawan.

We will now continue with the presentation, with a word of welcome from the Manawan Chief, Mr. Henri Ottawa, here, in Manawan.

**HENRI OTTAWA, CHIEF OF MANAWAN:** Madame Commissioner and Mr. Commissioner, it is a very great pleasure and an honour to welcome you among us in Manawan.

On behalf of the entire population as well as the Grand Council, I welcome you and wish you a pleasant stay with us...

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We have a problem with the translation, it will not be long.

**HENRI OTTAWA (Translation):** I thank you for having agreed to come to Manawan. Thank you for coming to listen to us. We, the Attikamek, have aspirations, and do not want to forget the past, and our past experiences, and our current difficulties with the other culture. You will have the opportunity to hear several

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Matawans who will tell you about the problems we are experiencing and have experienced in the past.

This is why we are happy to welcome you here so that you can fulfill your mandate, so that we can tell you a little bit about the Attikamek way of life, our history, as well as our aspirations, our directions, in order to look to the future, for the future generations, and not forget the land.

I hope that many will come to the hearing.

That is all for the moment. I thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you, Chief Ottawa, for your words of welcome.

I would like, on behalf of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, to say how happy and proud we are to be able to come and meet you here at Manawan, where you live, on the Attikamek land, as well as to have to opportunity to receive presentations from two other Attikamek Band Councils.

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Let me introduce myself. I am René Dussault, Co-Chair of the Royal Commission. I have with me here, this morning, Mrs. Viola Robinson, who is a Commissioner, who is a Micmac from Nova Scotia. Before her appointment to the Royal Commission, she was president of the National Council of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Also on my right, Mr. Paul-Émile Ottawa, who is acting Commissioner for the day, and I will have more to say about his role in a moment.

At this time, I would simply and very briefly like to remind you that the Royal Commission was created at the end of August 1991, following a consultation conducted by the former Chief Justice of Canada, the Most Honourable Brian Dixon, who was appointed by the Prime Minister of Canada to consult the populations, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, as well as the public at large, in order to make recommendations regarding the mandate of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples and its composition.

It is important to note that this is the first time that a Royal Commission in Canada was created in this way. It is the first time that the mandate was

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not drafted by federal government officials, but by an outside person and after a broadly based consultation.

The Commission consists of seven members, of whom four are Aboriginal people and three are non-Aboriginal people. I am a Quebec Court of Appeal Judge and I co-chair the Commission with Georges Erasmus, former president of the Assembly of First Nations. Mrs. Robinson, whom I just introduced to you, is a Commissioner.

The other Commissioners are Mary Sillett who is an Inuk from Labrador and Paul Chartrand who is a Métis from Manitoba and a professor at the University of Manitoba.

My two non-Aboriginal colleagues are Allan Blakeney, who was Premier of the Province of Saskatchewan for many years, for more than a decade, and Mrs. Bertha Wilson, who sat on the Supreme Court of Canada, and who was the first woman to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada. She sat during the entire decade of the 80s and was involved in some very important decisions in the area of Aboriginal rights.

The Commission has undertaken a very large process of public consultations, as well as a considerable research program, without a doubt the most considerable one on Aboriginal issues that has ever been undertaken

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in Canada. The Commission is holding its hearings in three distinct groups, three very separate units because we want to meet with people from the largest number of communities possible in Canada. Therefore, today, while I am here with Mrs. Robinson, there are other Commissioners who are on the coast of Labrador and an other team that is in northern Ontario.

Everything that is said at the hearings before the Commission is recorded, word for word, and available to the public. Of course, the Commissioners are listening to people all over Canada. We make summaries of what we hear after each of the sessions.

The mandate of the Commission is considerable, drafted in 16 points that deal with political issues, political organization, such as self-government; the issue of the land needed to support self-government; the issue dealing with the process of the land claims, generally and specifically; the whole

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issue of treaties; also economic development because it is impossible to talk about self-government without talking about economic self-sufficiency -- it is necessary to be self-sufficient, a large measure of economic self-sufficiency, before the concept of self-government has any meaning -- accordingly, Aboriginal economies are a considerable element of our mandate; the affirmation of Aboriginal languages and cultures, and I will be returning to this point; social issues in the areas of justice, health, social services, education; the difficulties many communities are experiencing in the social context of living conditions; problems with alcoholism; problems involving family violence; health problems such as AIDS; and problems related to the high suicide rate.

These are all issues that are of the greatest interest to the Commission and are included in its mandate. The mandate is very broadly based, but without a doubt the main contribution of the Commission, thanks to this mandate, which covers nearly all the issues involving the Aboriginal peoples in Canada, there is no doubt that the main contribution of

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the Commission will be the fact that the Commission will be able to provide an overall picture, establish links between social issues and economic issues, between social issues and the issues involved in self-government.

For example, the management of health services, the management of social services, the management of justice systems must be considered as themselves, but they must also be looked at in the context of self-government. Needless to say, social problems are frequently due to problems with economic development.

What you have the opportunity to do today is essentially to give us an idea of your concerns, an idea of what you think are the priorities for your community and for the Attikamek people.

We would like to start a dialogue. This is why we have undertaken four rounds of public hearings.

Since the creation of the Commission, we have toured the ten provinces, the ten provincial capitals, the two territories for two reasons: we wanted to meet each of the Premiers of the Canadian provinces -- in fact, we have met with eight out of ten -- and all the ministers in charge of Aboriginal matters.

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We wanted to tell them two things: on the one hand, we wanted to tell them not to use the Commission as an excuse for not doing today what could be done immediately. The needs are too urgent, too important. The Commission will adapt, do not use our existence as an excuse for inaction. We also wanted to make sure we had the support, the co-operation of provincial governments, because the mandate of the Commission, even though it is a Canadian federal commission, because of its very scope, touches upon provincial jurisdictions to the same extent. All you have to do is think of the sectors of justice, health, education, social services, etc., the issue of land.

The reception we got from the Premiers and the governments was very encouraging. Essentially, they told us, "we need help, if you make concrete, practical recommendations, we will not bring up the question of jurisdiction, we will not get involved in the federal/provincial jurisdictional argument. The

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Aboriginal issue is a priority and we are interested in cooperating with the Commission".

We also met with provincial Aboriginal organizations to plan the public hearings, and it became rapidly apparent that this Commission, in view of the fact that it is a Commission on Aboriginal peoples and not a commission on something like passenger transport -- there is a Royal Commission that reported 15 days ago -- a commission on Aboriginal peoples makes certain demands on the people.

This means that there must be a very high level of dialogue. And this is why we decided, after the initial consultation, to plan our public hearings in four rounds of public hearings all across Canada, in all the provinces and in all the territories each time.

After each round of public hearings, we will publish a discussion paper. For example, in

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October 1992, we published a document entitled "Framing the Issues", which essentially contains a summary of what we heard during the first round of public hearings and which also raises the issues that we thought came out of what we had heard, in an effort to achieve more focus in the discussion during the second round of public hearings, in an effort to spend less time on problems and perhaps more time on solutions, as well as focusing on priorities.

With this in mind, we undertook, the day after the referendum, this second round of public hearings; we felt that it was important to get the work under way right after the referendum, because we knew that, whatever the result of the vote was, there was an enormous amount of work to be done. The Commission's work is based on the communities. We are convinced that we have to work within the communities and build on what exists already and not from the top down or in a theoretical fashion. We will hold two other rounds of public hearings in the first part of 1993, until the beginning of next Fall. We want to test out our

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solutions, elements of solutions based on the experiences in the communities that are brought to us during the presentations. Our aim is to carry out our work in such a way that we will be able to submit our final report in September 1994, provided that there are no major surprises, provided that the dialogue will have enabled us to get an idea of what is working and what is not working, and in fact, in the communities, people know what will work and what will not work. They have the experience that we cannot have in our offices in Ottawa.

Parallel to this process involving public hearings, we will also visit young people in schools, young people and also the not so young, but unfortunately there are too many young people in the federal penitentiaries, in the provincial prisons. We will visit people in hospitals. In fact, when we are in the communities, we will try to be as available as possible to meet people wherever they are. We are also available for private meetings. We know that there are frequently sensitive issues that people do not want to discuss with us in public and this is why we also hold these private meetings. We are available to meet people in their homes, to see the housing conditions.

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So, I would like, once more, to ask that the whole community feel at ease about talking to us, about telling us their concerns, about exchanging views with us.

We have undertaken an extensive research program. The way that we have approached our mandate is a holistic one. We have a 16-point mandate and we have grouped them under four themes: the issues involving government matters and public management (Governance); issues involving the Aboriginal lands and economies (Land and Economy); socio-cultural issues (Social/Cultural Affairs); and the entire issue of the North which must be looked at very specifically (The North). We are looking at these themes from the historical perspective that is fundamental to the Aboriginal issue, also from the urban perspective. This is a reality that has not stopped growing, the reality of the Aboriginal people who live in urban settings, in small-, medium- and large-sized cities, also the perspective of women and the perspective of young people. We are very conscious of the fact that

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women and young people have a very important role to play in the public debate that must take place at the level of this Commission, both on the part of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

The research program is based on a hundred or so community studies where we work with the communities to look at Aboriginal economies, in an effort to work on the basis of success stories, because there are success stories in the Aboriginal communities, in an effort to find some lessons that will serve us for other Aboriginal communities. We are also working at the level of justice systems, pilot projects that are already in place across Canada. We are also working at the social and cultural level. A lot of effort is being put in at the cultural and the linguistic level in the communities, also on the issue of the land claims. So, we hope that, through this research program, we will be able to leave something with the communities and not only do research for the purpose of the recommendations that the Commission will be making.

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The Commission has a staff of 90 or 92 persons. Sixty-five percent of the staff are Aboriginal people, from the four Aboriginal peoples of Canada, from all the regions of Canada. We thought it essential to ensure that Aboriginal people have an opportunity to work together amongst themselves and that they also have an opportunity to work together with non-Aboriginal people in an efficient way to recommend a restructuring of relations with the public, with governments and also, of course, between Aboriginal peoples.

We hope that this will be one of the legacies of the Commission, the fact that we were able to do this. We also hope that it will be possible to bring solutions, in fact, to transmit the solutions that, essentially, will come from the communities in terms that are acceptable to the public and to the governments.

At this point, I would like to tell you that people talk to us, of course, a lot about the lack of funding, money problems and we know that this is a very important reality, but also we realize that

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frequently solutions do not only involve money. They are, in fact, solutions that require the community to think, to get involved, the parents, the Aboriginal leaders, in educational matters in particular, how to persuade the young people that they should finish high school, undertake post-secondary training in fields such as health sciences, in particular, where there is a very great shortage. We are very conscious that in a great many situations the solutions come from various sources. There is a need for support programs but there is also a need to work on the very important matter of education.

I would simply like to say that the position of acting commissioner for the day proved a very useful idea in the first round of public hearings. Throughout the hearing, the Commission sits with a member of the community who has exactly the same role as the Commissioners of the Commission, who asks the participants questions. We exchange ideas with the Commissioner of the day in order to be sure that we have a correct understanding of the community context

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and also that we can get the most out of what we understand, that we interpret properly what we hear. We also hold discussions at the end of the day, in order essentially to make sure that we get the most out of the public hearings.

In conclusion, I would like to say that a Royal Commission, even if it has an important sounding name, can only give back what the participants put into it, in terms of effort, working together, cooperation. We hope that, not only your community, we are convinced of it, but also that the public, that the young people, that the women and the elders, as well as the Aboriginal leaders, will put forth its maximum effort to contribute to the elements of the solution, to ensure that the Commission will be able to draft a report that will not gather dust on the shelves and that the Commission will be able to draft a report that governments will find irresistible.

We are, of course, working in the long term, but also on the way of reaching our objectives in the long term. We consider it very important that we be able to propose solutions, to recommend a transition

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toward an objective that can be much larger, more desirable, which will basically require a certain number of stages at the level of the communities.

We see our mandate, and it is repeated to us all across Canada, do not put all your efforts into self-government, this is not a miracle solution. We are frequently told that social problems will have to be solved, employment problems within the communities, before going on to this stage. Women, children, in particular, insist very strongly on this. We hope that the Commission will be able, in the very short term, to make a rapid improvement in the living conditions in the Aboriginal communities in Canada, but also we hope that the Commission will be able to ensure that relationships will be established on a basis that will avoid past situations that were only too common -- ie, bad government policies.

I am thinking of the policy on residential schools, the policies involving the relocation of populations. These policies, and we can list a large number of them, frequently, independent of the government's intentions, came about because of a lack of understanding, a lack of comprehension about what Aboriginal peoples are. We think that the major contribution of the Commission will be to

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re-establish and perhaps to re-establish this vision, so that government policies in the future will more often than otherwise and as much as possible, be on the right side of the fence, something that has not always, unfortunately, been the case in the past, on the contrary.

Therefore, I would like to, once more, thank you for welcoming us to your community and I would like to tell you that we are available to meet with you, hear your presentations and I hope that you will feel comfortable enough to make your presentations in whatever way you feel is suitable, in the words that belong to you.

We have simultaneous translation from Attikamek to French and then to English and also between French and English and vice versa. Naturally, we feel that it is essential and very important that we be able to work in the Aboriginal languages, which are in many cases very much alive and it is certainly the case here with the Attikamek.

So, I would like to thank you and ask Mrs. Robinson to say a few words to close our remarks.

Mrs. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:**

**[ENGLISH]**

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**COMMISSIONER PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** As I am proud of my language, I will address the hearing in the Attikamek language. **(Translated from the Attikamek)** You have listened to Mr. Dumas because he comes to admire the Commission, the mandate of the Commission.

Today, they came to Manawan to listen to you, what we have to tell them, our aspirations. I think of the opportunity at this time, the opportunity that we have been given to say what we have to say, what we need for the future, our directions and our aspirations.

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Also, it is important for the work of the Royal Commission -- it will not sit forever -- that we can say what we have to say, that we can talk from his heart. I will try to help the discussion along in order that the Commission can faithfully reflect what we will say before it. I want to be sure that we all have the same understanding of the presentations. I am confident that we will have the help of the Creator to do our work today.

Now, let us look for a while -- I think that there are going to be a few small changes. I think that there will be a small change in the plans.

Thank you.

**GILLES OTTAWA:** We had planned the overview of the communities at 2:00. We will cut this part out, since every Band Council will make a brief presentation, and they will include an overview of

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the community in their presentations. As for the high school visit, we could perhaps plan to visit the school around 2:30.

Now, I will turn the floor over to Mr. Lucien Ottawa for the presentation on Attikamek history and language.

**LUCIEN OTTAWA:** Thank you very much.

In order to make the presentation more understandable, I will do it in French. We have an Attikamek translator who also took part with me -- I got out of the work with the other interpreter -- and also, I was a little at a loss as to how to do this presentation on the history of the Attikamek Nation, because there are really no documents to present, but I will improvise a little to the best of my knowledge, although my education did not deal very much with ethnology and anthropology.

To begin, you could say that the Attikamek Nation has always lived in the Haute Mauricie. If you look at the writings since the colonization of Canada, you can say that the Attikamek people have lived there since time immemorial, according to the tales, the legends or even the stories that were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Therefore, the Attikamek

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Nation, here, you can see that it has settled more towards the Trois-Rivières area. When Trois-Rivières was founded, with the relations they had with the Jesuits, you could say that there was a lot of contact between the Attikamek people and the missionaries and also those who came to settle in the colonies.

More and more, the settlers made inroads into the Aboriginal lands, and as a result the Attikamek were pushed much farther inland which resulted in the recognition of the territory of Haute Mauricie. The Attikamek, in the beginning, were a very peaceful nation.

To be sure, there were some skirmishes with other Nations in those days. However we will not go into details on this aspect. The Attikamek, also, accepted a lot of trade between the other Nations, their Algonquin brothers, with the Hurons, and also a lot with the Montagnais and the Cree.

It is a Nation that, at one time, was almost exterminated by sickness and by the skirmishes.

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Between the 17th and the 18th centuries, there was very little mention of the Attikamek. Towards the end of the 19th century, there is once again talk of the Attikamek.

Since that time, the Nation has continued to grow. Today, there are 3,500 to 4,000 individuals living in three communities, Manawan, Obedjiwan and Wemotaci. Therefore, it is a Nation undergoing a demographic explosion, so to say.

By the same token, when you speak of the Nation, you can also speak of the language, the Attikamek language is an aspect of the Aboriginal culture, you might say. Here, we preserved our language by not really being in constant contact with the colonizing people. We lived much deeper in the woods, as I was saying before.

The Attikamek language is spoken by the majority of the population. However, when we look at other documents, for example, here, we have a document, it is marked "Towards Linguistic Justice for the First Nations".

It is a document that was published by the

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PM and I can tell you, having consulted the document in question, that there is no mention either of the Attikamek Nation or the Attikamek language. Thus, there must have been some kind of an omission, I do not know, but in doing this presentation, I would also like to recommend to the Co-Chairs that we be given back our place as an Aboriginal people that has a language. I think it is very important from our point of view, and for the others also, that all the Aboriginal Nations of Canada be recognized. If you say that there 535 or 540 Aboriginal communities, are the Attikamek included in that, I do not know. Furthermore, if you do an inventory of Aboriginal languages -- in 1980 or towards the end of the '70s, the National Museum of Man did a study. An anthropologist or an ethnologist did an inventory of Aboriginal languages and there is no mention of the Attikamek language. So, it is something that comes to us by right, we should by all rights be considered a Nation with its own language. If you talk about our mother tongue -- earlier I mentioned the fact that we had not been in constant contact with the white people and it is precisely in order to promote and advance this language that we included it in our education system.

Shortly someone else will make a presentation about the

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education sector. I have a feeling they will also say a few words about the language.

I have tried to be as brief as possible.

As I said before, there are no documents. I had to do a lot of improvising.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Ottawa. Very briefly, I would simply like to say that we are aware of the fact that the Attikamek people, have frequently in the past, and I think that it is a good example from the point of view of the Assembly of First Nations -- the Attikamek people have to a certain extent been not forgotten, but overlooked.

Also, we are aware that, even in the province of Quebec, very frequently, the concerns deal with the Montagnais to a certain extent, for geographical and other reasons.

I simply want to say that, as far as the Commission is concerned, right from the start, we felt that it was extremely important to make a distinction and to come and meet you in your community.

I would perhaps also like to simply stress the fact that the Quebec Conseil de la langue française has recently published a study that contains some very

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interesting data on the Aboriginal languages in Canada, which was published, basically only a few months ago, at the beginning of the Fall and which, as far as I can remember, did not forget to take into account the Attikamek reality. Thus, I simply wanted to say to you at this moment that we are aware of what you are saying and that we hope that the fact that the Commission is in your community and what you are going to tell us today will inspire the Commission in its recommendations and in its reality.

I simply want to say, in conclusion, that we hope to do more in our report, in our recommendations, than merely use the best quotations. We hope that our choice of words, the way that we will express ourselves, will enable a large majority of Aboriginal peoples to see themselves in our report. Thus, obviously, it is easier said than done, but that is our intention and we will try to do whatever is necessary to ensure that this is how it turns out.

Once more, thank you for your presentation. I understand that we are going to have a presentation about education later on this afternoon. Thank you.

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**GILLES OTTAWA:** I thank you very much.

Now, I would like to announce that it is time for lunch.

We will go down to the village, to the Arts Hall at the Wabush School (PH). We have arranged for a lunch to be served, to our guests, to our workers, to the staff, the media, the members of the Attikamek Band Councils and also any other persons who are invited for lunch.

The hearing will continue here at 2:30 with the presentation of Simon Awashish, from the Council of the Attikamek Nation. After lunch, we will perhaps take the opportunity to tour the Manawan High School. Mr. Yvon Flamard is at your disposal for any visits you may want to make.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So, the session has been adjourned until 2:30 pm.

--- Hearing adjourned at 1:12 pm.

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---Hearing resumes at 3:20 pm.

**GILLES OTTAWA:** The president of the Council of the Attikamek Nation, Mr. Simon Awashish.

**SIMON AWASHISH, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ATTIKAMEK NATION:** Good afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, Madame Commissioner, above all, I would like to convey my greetings especially to members of the Commission present at this hearing, but also to all the members who are part of the group and who are elsewhere in the country taking testimonies. It is an honour to welcome the Commission to the Attikamek communities.

The Council of the Attikamek Nation is a regional organization within which the Band Councils from all the Attikamek communities pursue their common political, social and economic goals, arrange for shared services and undertake joint projects. At this time, the Council of the Attikamek Nation manages programs with a view to providing services to the Attikamek communities.

These services cover such areas as public administration, education, social services,

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community services, economic development, forestry, and more.

It is not our intention to repeat what was said during the first round of public hearings. We feel that the testimonies that were gathered reflect the situation of the Attikamek people in the areas that were described.

In our presentation, we would rather like to spend more time discussing certain points of the mandate of the Commission and try to respond to the questions that were asked in the document entitled "Framing the Issues".

Self-government and land: the right of the Attikamek Nation to govern itself is a right that results from its political, social and economic organization. This organization is an ethnic entity, a culture that developed on a piece of land a long time before its first contacts with the white man.

This vision of self-government is at the origin of the certainty felt by the Attikamek people that they exist and that they existed before the white man arrived, a certainty that has been acquired through a history transmitted by the elders from generation to generation.

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In its political context, the Attikamek Nation has always affirmed its rights and continues to affirm them.

Contact with the white man had a considerable impact on the social and economic organization of the Attikamek people. The progressive loss of control over activities on our ancestral land constitutes for us the major element of our evolution.

Every society, at some point in its evolution, makes contact with another society. It is at this precise moment that a mutual relationship is established between them. From our point of view, the development of good relations must acknowledge the principle of mutual respect as the context in which each society will be able to develop. If one of the societies imposes its evolution on the other, the latter society will react with hostility adopting an adversarial attitude because it will feel restricted where its most fundamental right is concerned, that of self-government. We believe that a dominant society has the responsibility to protect its minorities from eventual assimilation.

As far as the Attikamek Nation is concerned, self-government means: being master of its

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destiny, its evolution. Being master of its destiny, of its evolution means: orienting and deciding on its own social and economic development. Orienting and deciding on its own social and economic development means:

adopting and enacting legislative and economic measures.

Adopting and enacting legislative measures means: exercising a right and practising self-government on a specific territory.

The Attikamek people are conscious of the enormous social and economic upheaval caused by the intensive development during the past 30 years that has taken place on the ancestral land. The experience of the Attikamek people in this regard has been traumatic: the numerous social problems that are surfacing daily in our communities are tangible evidence of a culture shock.

The numerous non-Aboriginal users of the land exercise strong pressure on the Attikamek people's way of life. The traditional economy has been disrupted.

When you want to understand how a society works, there is no way you can dissociate economics from the social aspects. I will go so far as to maintain that if the economy of a society is disrupted it will result in social disequilibrium.

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A disrupted and threatened economy means that the Attikamek people have lost control of activities on their land.

Loss of control over development activities means that new non-negotiated rules of operation have been established. The establishment of new non-negotiated rules of operation means that it is impossible for the Attikamek people to exercise self-government.

The establishment of new non-negotiated rules of operation means that the Attikamek people have lost control over economic development on their ancestral land.

A loss of control over economic development means that the Attikamek people are no longer masters of their decisions, that they can no longer take charge of their future.

The establishment of new non-negotiated rules of operation means that there is a disequilibrium in the relations between the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal peoples.

The disequilibrium in the relations between the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal peoples

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means that the non-Aboriginal society is imposing its standards and its rules on the Aboriginal society through government activities.

The imposition of standards and rules means that a non-Aboriginal government acts within the framework of the a constitutional agreement signed in 1867 to which the Aboriginal people were not a party.

In 1867, non-Aboriginal governments split up the territory and the resources of a country which is now Canada. The agreement gradually led to a dependent relationship between the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal peoples.

The Accord of 28 August 1992 raised a lot of hope among many of our members. The clause that stipulated the recognition of the right of self-government met one of the objectives pursued by the Attikamek Nation.

Rejection of the Accord on 26 October 1992 last left us wondering about the intentions of Canadians with respect to the Aboriginal people.

Recognition of the right to self-government still remains one of the objectives we are pursuing.

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Attikamek government: in the Spring of 1989, the Attikamek Nation conducted a general consultation with its population. This exercise, which lasted five months, was designated as the "Attikamek Estates General".

The consultation dealt with the following areas: community services; economic development; forestry; employment and professional training; income guarantees and social assistance; health and social services; administration of justice; education; land and the Attikamek government.

Out of these consultations emerged some principles, directions and objectives that should be negotiated with the governments. I have to say that the Estates General Project is within the framework of the land claims negotiations. The Attikamek Nation is presently negotiating with the two levels of government.

We would like to share with you the thoughts that have emerged from this consultation, particularly regarding Attikamek government, land and social and economic development.

Attikamek government, in order to control its own economic development, will have to focus on an

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integrated development of the resources on its ancestral lands, on uniform developmental structures, on unique territorial regulations and obtain, through negotiations, the possibility of offering financial advantages to its business partners. Fiscal sovereignty over its ancestral lands will confer upon it a direct advantage.

The jurisdiction of the Attikamek government will cover ancestral lands whose area is about 62,000 km<sup>2</sup>. In order to enforce its jurisdiction, the Attikamek government will have to have legislative, executive and judiciary powers.

The structure of the Attikamek government will be both national and local, that is to

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say that certain aspects of its authority will be exercised at the level of the Nation and other aspects of its authority will emanate from each of the three communities.

As in all good government, the principle of self-financing is of great concern. All sources of financing will be put to use: taxation, subsidies, transfers, income from resources, land rental, compensation, revenue from capitalization and equalization payments.

The land belongs exclusively to the Attikamek people. There is currently a territorial organization whose division is based on the principle of family clans. At its head there is a principal guardian and his role is to manage the clan lands. Generally, the principal guardian is the patriarch of the clan. The clan lands are then divided among the families of the same clan.

This land structure is comparable to the RCM and to the administrative divisions of a province.

Use of the land is shared between traditional activities and developmental economic activities.

The lands should come with full freehold titles.

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Land management will be the responsibility of the Attikamek government which can delegate it to an organization of its choice under its jurisdiction.

Harvesting the wildlife resource still constitutes the principal activity of the Attikamek people. Other resources are available on the land. In this connection, the Attikamek Nation has resolved to diversify exploitation of the resources on its land and not limit the exploitation to only one resource.

The principle of economic development should aim at self-sufficiency of individuals and the Attikamek Nation by the creation of profitable businesses and by the creation of jobs.

Historically, the Attikamek economy has been a subsistence economy, which must today be oriented towards the development of a market economy, that is based on respect for the environment, respect for the developmental aspirations of each community and

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the capacity to produce of the members of the Attikamek Nation. The developmental concept must also be based on economic viability as opposed to an economy based on transfer payments.

It will, therefore, be necessary to work out a land agreement that: promotes control over ancestral lands and their resources; aims at putting in place a plan for the integrated management of land resources; promotes the notion of sharing with others, in other words, a partnership; provides for the implementation of an extensive guaranteed income program which will ensure diverse activities and provide jobs and a presence across the ancestral lands; provides for a systematic training program for workers according to the sector of activity involved; permits cultural, social and economic development of the Attikamek society.

In conclusion, what the Attikamek Nation seeks to obtain through land claim negotiations is summed up in the following objectives: obtain greater independence by establishing an Attikamek government responsible to the people; obtain a guaranteed method of financing for the Attikamek government; obtain recognition of our land claim rights; obtain jurisdiction for the

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Attikamek government over land and resource development; obtain compensation for the violation of our territorial rights.

I thank the Commission members for their kind attention.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that you have presented a picture of your vision for the future of Attikamek government, a very clear picture. I must say that it certainly fits in with what we are looking for during this second round of public hearings, we want to see how the Nations, the Aboriginal communities view the organization of their future government.

I must say that we have not, up to now, had the opportunity to hear a presentation that gives such a precise vision. I understand that you have the advantage of being on very well identified ancestral lands, of having an organization, as well because of the land claims -- which gives your three communities a framework for working together. One of the issues that has come up and which is very important, this is the basis for the future Aboriginal governments, by Nation, by community, by territory where there are people who signed the treaties

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and we are very conscious of the fact that several formulas are possible and we are also very aware of the fact that, in certain cases, there is a somewhat federative formula where one Nation could have a certain number of powers at the level of the Nation and ensure that the communities have another level of powers.

If I understand your presentation correctly, and this is my first question, during the 26 October referendum, did this community vote in favour of the Charlottetown Accord?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Yes, I think that the people who voted, it was the Yes vote that carried the day.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** That was of those who went to vote.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** That was it, yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** What was the turnout for the vote here?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** I cannot give you the exact figures. I know that I remember in the case of Manawan, out of a possible 600 voters, it was more than 300, I think, who came out, who came to vote. The same applies to Obedjiwan, out of a possible 700 voters, over

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200 went to vote and the proportion was also the same for Wemotaci.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I understand that your proposal for self-government is intimately related to your land claims.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** That is it. I think that the accord that was negotiated in August reflected one of the objectives that we are pursuing, in this regard, the recognition of our right to self-government, that this right be enshrined in the Constitution. A second point is, that for the first time I think that the Aboriginal peoples were able to participate in the discussions leading up to this Accord being considered. It is the first Accord in this country. I think that the fact that we were invited to discuss at these discussions, this was the first time for us.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** From the point of view of financing a future Aboriginal self-government, the financing is linked to the success, in part -- if I correctly understand your point of view -- of the Attikamek-Montagnais land claim.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Yes, this is what we had in mind when we looked at whether at one point in time,

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in order to be able to launch Aboriginal self-government, it will take a financial basis to start with. When we analyzed the mechanism of a government, a country, the people, I think, that they became more aware of the situation. If they really want to have their own self-government, it is the people that will have to provide the financing. Obviously, when we look at the situation of the Attikamek in their community, we have to be realistic, the people do not have jobs, so, asking them to participate financially, in the financing of a government, this is unrealistic.

This is why we rely heavily on the compensations that we will receive through our negotiation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Now on page 6 of your presentation you state that "the Nation has

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resolved to diversify the exploitation of resources on its territory and not limit itself to one". This implies a readiness to work with various stakeholders towards the economic development of the territory.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Yes, the approach we favour is partnership. Obviously, as I was saying at the beginning of our presentation, up to now, the Attikamek people, their economy was based on traditional activities -- i.e., the harvesting of a single resource. A market economy necessarily implies that you must exploit the other resources.

In this connection as well, the people have been made aware of this type of economy, and obviously, since we do not yet have enough expertise at the level of human resources, we must necessarily call upon our neighbours and at that point in time suggest to them some form of partnership.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Exactly, in that context, the document that we published following

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the first round, the first series of public hearings, under the heading "Aboriginal government", there are a certain number of questions and perhaps the most difficult questions are question no. 10 and question no. 11.

Question no. 10: "Would Aboriginal governments have

authority over non-Aboriginal  
people living within their  
territory?

And question no. 11: "Would those non-Aboriginal people

participate in Aboriginal  
governments? Would these  
governments then take the form  
of public governments?"

I understand that the Attikamek Nation and the communities have a cultural basis that is currently very strong for historical reasons. I would like to see how you would approach the two questions that we have raised.

How do you see a future Attikamek  
government in relation to non-Aboriginal people living  
on the ancestral lands and this whole issue of ethnic

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government in relation to the notion of public government?

You say from the outset in your brief, and you are right, that you are an ethnic group, etc. Can you tell us more about that?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Obviously, we have to look, I think, at the evolutionary context. At this point, if we compare the level of development in the Aboriginal communities, if we go back 40 years into the past, they were still living in communities that were isolated as much geographically as culturally. About 30 years ago television appeared in our communities. Since that time, during these past 30 years, evolution has progressed very rapidly. Today, it is a traumatic cultural shock for the Attikamek Nation.

It is also part of it, depending on the results of the negotiation. If at a certain point, the Attikamek Nation, an Attikamek government obtains jurisdiction over an area of ancestral lands measuring 62,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it is probable that the people we are negotiating with will have to deal with that issue, of an ethnic, non-ethnic government. The challenge that

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faces us at that moment is how to protect the identity of the Attikamek Nation, if at a given moment, we open the door to the democratic principle and also to the people who live there and give non-Aboriginal people the same voting rights as Aboriginal people. These are things we will have to look at with the people we are negotiating with and to see how this could come out, this issue of ethnic and non-ethnic government.

For the moment, the evolution has been such that people have a greater tendency to support an ethnic government. Now, as far as we are concerned, the agreement that we are preparing to negotiate with the governments of Canada and Quebec will have to provide for mechanisms which will mean that, at a given time, the people who live on the ancestral lands of the Attikamek will have the same right to be heard as the Aboriginal people.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** One of our concerns, and you touched upon it in your presentation, you do not exclude any mode of financing, including taxation, which impacts equally, without a doubt on the Aboriginal people living on the ancestral lands of the Attikamek, as well as on the non-Aboriginal people.

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**SIMON AWASHISH:** That is exactly right.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And that is where, I think, and this was brought up several times at various public hearings, that there is a very concrete and difficult issue, to be in the position of the non-Aboriginal people living on the ancestral lands of the Attikamek who are being taxed by an Aboriginal government without having any representation in the government.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** That is it. I think that this is the central point, how to set up that government, and that is the fear that has been expressed -- i.e., at a specific point in time, the Attikamek government, this is how we refer to it, can have non-Aboriginal representatives who sit on the Attikamek government. At that moment, there could be a small problem in this regard. There is the issue of majority rule, I think, that will have to be developed when we want to implement Attikamek government.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I will take the opportunity, in conclusion, for one, to stress that you are in any case, in a certain way, at the forefront of the thinking for various reasons on a concrete structure

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for Attikamek government and the Commission would certainly appreciate it if you could, together with the Commission, pursue your thinking on the issues that I have just raised, because they appear to us to be perhaps the most difficult issues that have to be brought up in our public discussions, in our discussions with the federal and the provincial governments.

There are certainly a lot of adjustments, a lot of solutions, many ways of approaching our objectives. Obviously, everybody, tells us, the Nunavut, for example, and they give it as an example, will have a public government in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories. Obviously for the moment, the Inuit feel secure as the majority, but they are ready to move ahead in that direction. I think that you are certainly well placed. We hope that people do not rely on the Commission alone for finding solutions to such problems at this one.

I will conclude here. I encourage you to continue your work along this line of thinking in order to try to see how it might be possible to respond both to the concern regarding the maintenance of the culture and preserving it from dilution and at the same time remaining open to new ideas.

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**SIMON AWASHISH:** I do not think we have invented anything new, your Honour. When we examine the Government of Quebec which has exactly the same concerns as we do -- i.e., preserving the Quebecois language and the French-Canadian identity. When we look at an example, Bill 101, even if it causes upheaval, it still yields results. Regarding this issue, I think in this regard that if we implement a public Attikamek government, there will always be the issue of the majority which will have to be looked at, so that even though it is called the Attikamek government it is moulded within a majority that is foreign.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** If I understand correctly, you are not completely averse to this possibility? You have not reached that point yet.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** It is an avenue that will have to be explored.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well.

I will ask Mrs. Robinson to continue.

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COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:

[ENGLISH]

**SIMON AWASHISH:** The agreement we want to sign with the government, it is not a closed agreement, such as the approach that the federal government and the Quebec government appear to favour; the kind that, once it is signed, is impervious. What we are looking for in the agreement, is an evolving agreement that will follow the evolution of the Attikamek Nation, both socially and economically.

When I say that the people today, it has after all been 30 years that they have been in contact with development, there is a mental evolution that is taking place. At this moment, you cannot come today, tomorrow morning, tell them, here you are, we now have negotiated for you a public Attikamek government and now everyone who lives on the reserve has the same rights as every other non-Aboriginal.

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I think that we should examine the clauses stipulating that as people continue to evolve, this is what should happen in the future.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:**

**[English]**

**SIMON AWASHISH:** When we look at the current situation in the communities, in the three communities together, the principal sources of revenue currently that have characterized the economy of the Attikamek -- when I speak of an economy other than the harvesting of wildlife resources -- it is above all the programs, the subsidies that come from the federal government.

In the past twenty years, the Attikamek in the three communities have received between fifteen and twenty million dollars per year, annually, from federal programs. As far as federal funds are concerned there

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are the programs. I think that depending continually on federal assistance or government assistance discourages a society from wanting to develop its own economy. I think that we will have to create new sources, additional sources of funding in addition to the programs and we will have to develop businesses that will bring new sources of funds.

When we analyzed the possible sources of financing for the Attikamek Nation, we started with the forestry resource. When we examined the statistical data of the provincial government, when we examined the development plan of the provincial government for the territory involved in the land claim, the main source that was identified was the forestry resource. Ninety-five percent of the territory involved in the land claim constitutes, for the Government of Quebec, a productive forestry zone.

The calculations we did was the following: if we could, like the provincial government is currently doing, collect a cutting fee for each tree, this would give us an annual revenue of thirty million a year, compared to what we currently receive from the federal programs which is fifteen to twenty million a year.

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Obviously, I have not mentioned the hydro source. A dam is going to be built on our ancestral lands.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:**

[ENGLISH]

**COMMISSIONER PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** I can only commend this testimony by President Awashish. So, I have only one question to ask him. It is a general interest question.

We speak of self-government and my question is the following: has someone already considered the issue regarding what structure should be used as the basis for the economy in the context of self-government?

We were talking about resources. Is there one resource in particular that would have to be emphasized in order to finance the self-government?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Could you make your question a little more specific?

**COMMISSIONER PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** I mean that in order to benefit everyone, we know something about what the resources are on our land. There are thousands of trees, and thousands of trees that fall on our land. But then, what will happen is that the forestry companies

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will move out of the territory leaving desolation behind them, which means that there will be nothing left for us.

My question therefore is: have you looked at other ways of generating funds with a view to developing the economy and to financing our self-government?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** To be sure, when we look at the development that has taken place on our ancestral lands as far as clear cutting is concerned, because we are looking at the process of clear cutting, there are obviously still possibilities for forestry development in the area. Not everything has been cut yet.

As to which will be the main resource, the main activity as far development goes, and which will be the main resource that will be exploited, it is certain that we will have to find a resource to use as the basis for giving the economy a kick start. We had the choice between the forestry resource and also Hydro Quebec.

As I was saying there is a project by Hydro Quebec that will be coming up. There will surely be some negotiations with the government in this regard. The project has interesting possibilities as regards partnership. We were talking about compensation a while

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back. It is a possibility that will have to be examined when the discussions on this project start.

Obviously, we cannot just limit ourselves to these principal resources. If we also look at the tourist resource, there are projects under way in this regard in the communities. It is an area, that, I think, should be further explored.

The potential of the tourist resource is huge on our land and especially the more specific Aboriginal aspect which could be developed. All this means that at a given time, we nevertheless have possibilities for developing our ancestral lands if we look at all the resources that are available on these lands.

It is obviously distressing to see the way our ancestral lands have been exploited up to now. Obviously, we participated in a reforestation program. I think that these trees will mature, and will provide an economic basis. With this in mind, the agreement will have to be looked at in terms of fifty years.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** Thank your very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** One quick last question.

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Yesterday, we had a presentation by the Algonquin of Barrier Lake regarding their project, the draft for a tripartite agreement which was signed for the development of multiple uses of the forest. We were told about the difficulties they experienced with this draft which was signed by the two governments, several ministers of the Government of Quebec and also by the Band Council of Barrier Lake.

Since you mentioned partnership with forestry companies, have there been any discussions, have you been talking with the forestry companies regarding the possibility of developing programs that will enable the forestry companies to take into account the traditional uses of the forestry resource at the same time as they exploit the resources for their business purposes, basically, in an effort to harmonize, to reconcile uses that are different, but not necessarily incompatible?

**SIMON AWASHISH:** My thinking on that is, I do not want to get into too much detail. I think that we will soon be presented with a project that will provide the precise answer to the question you have asked. Obviously, we have already approached the Ministry of Forestry to have Bill 150 on the forests amended, to amend

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the intervention standards. Now, the political will has not followed, there are people who will be presenting you a project in this regard.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well. So, I thank you very much for your presentation. Once more, I encourage you to pursue your thinking on the issue of a place for non-Aboriginal people in the future Attikamek government, because it is a fundamental issue as regards the implementation and the continuation, the carrying out of the project.

**SIMON AWASHISH:** Thank you very much.

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

So, I would now like to ask Vice-President Ernest Ottawa of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council to step forward and make a presentation.

Good afternoon. You may start when you are ready.

**ERNEST OTTAWA,**

**VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE ATTIKAMEK-MONTAGNAIS COUNCIL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Robinson, Mr.

Dussault, Mr. Ottawa, it is on behalf of the

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Attikamek-Montagnais Council and as Attikamek vice-chairman and member of that community in Manawan, that I am pleased to participate in this Commission.

Our organization represents three Attikamek communities in Mauricie and nine Montagnais communities in Lac St-Jean, the North Shore, the Lower North Shore, and Shefferville in the North. Its principal mandate consists in coming to an agreement with the Governments of Quebec and Canada on the settlement of comprehensive land claims. I am, therefore, addressing you from that perspective, you who are examining the precarious situation in which several

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Aboriginal peoples, including ourselves, have ended up as a result of too many years of relationships based on colonialism.

We are reassured and happy to note that your Commission is focusing its work on formulating future recommendations because we, and surely other Aboriginal peoples too, are weary of having to make grand historical demonstrations and never-ending pleas concerning the situation that afflicts us.

As you are certainly aware, comprehensive land claim negotiations aim at defining and implementing a new, durable and mutually satisfying relationship between the Aboriginal peoples and both levels of government. Following the rejection last October 26th of the Charlottetown accord, we consider this to be one of the few mechanisms at our disposal today that will allow us to ensure our political, economic, social, and cultural development.

As far as political and economic development is concerned, governments must realize and accept that we wish to exercise jurisdiction over our respective nations, our lands and our resources. The agreement which we are contemplating will have to

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allow us to participate truly in the management of our lands and resources. For us, this is linked to the essence, which is our social development and cultural blossoming. The recognition of our political and economic rights is the key to ending the colonial attitude of governments towards us, which surely has no longer any reason to exist at the dawn of the year 2000.

A major irritant is complicating our task enormously: this is the formula demanding that we extinguish our rights. The Federal Government considers that the definitive character of an agreement and the certainty that this agreement must provide, still demands the use of that formula.

In our opinion, it is possible to provide sufficient legal certainty without having to abandon and extinguish our ancestral rights. In terms of legal certainty, it would be sufficient to ensure an orderly improvement and development of the land and its

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resources. It would be sufficient to put in place land and resource management mechanisms based on a real partnership. With respect to that issue, we would like your Commission to examine attentively the concept of co-jurisdiction. We would be very interested in any opinion or approach that you may propose in this area.

As you most probably know, the traditional Attikamek and Montagnais way of life has always consisted of utilizing natural resources. That's how it is still today and how it will always be.

In fact, we are seeking a real involvement in the control of resource development and exploitation. The advisory role in this matter, given to us reluctantly, limits us to having to put up with all development projects, whereas we wish to be actively involved in controlling the development of resources so that we can finally benefit from them, while still facilitating the economic development of the Quebec and Canadian societies.

Today is more than ever the time to advance on these points. Not only should we

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have a say in the area of resource development, but we should also be able to improve the decisions taken in this area. At the present time, our knowledge of the land is not adequately being used to contribute to the management of natural resources.

Planning a comprehensive management of resources is a way of using the knowledge that the Attikamek and Montagnais have in resource exploitation. In fact, Mamo Atoskewin, the Association of Attikamek Trappers, is at the present time developing such a project. It is also, in part, an honourable compromise, which is so essential to the conclusion of an agreement regarding our comprehensive land claims.

I thank you for listening to me and hearing what I had to say, and if you have any comments or questions, I am at your disposal.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Ottawa.

I think that you have put your finger on a fundamental question that is undoubtedly the stumbling block in the entire

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process of land claims in Canada and, of course, in Quebec.

This famous issue of extinguishing land rights initially and having precise rights granted later. It is a clause required by the government, as you mentioned, to provide legal certainty. We are perfectly aware that the requirement to renounce the right to ancestral lands at this point only to have it reinstated again is difficult for the Aboriginal peoples.

The Commission has launched a detailed study in an attempt to find alternate solutions to the extinguishment clause, and it needs to be said that it is not simple or easy. When you say that - it is on page 4 of your paper, paragraph 3 - when you say:

"In our opinion, it is possible to provide sufficient legal certainty without having to give up and extinguish our ancestral rights."

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We completely agree that it should be possible and we are searching for an appropriate formula. You say,  
"In legal terms, it would be sufficient to ensure an orderly improvement and development of the land and its resources."

Could you specify a little more what you are saying there, because it still seems vague to me and I think your report, in fact, puts a finger on a major obstacle to the acceleration of the land claim process. Could you elaborate on your alternative solution, one that would provide reasonable legal certainty?

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** Yes, I could at least try to elaborate. It is the fact that the Federal Government's requirement that we extinguish our rights has an impact on comprehensive land claims.  
We

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have tried to identify possible solutions. Among the possible solutions we have identified, there is complete recognition of the ancestral lands of the Attikamek and Montagnais residing on the land, total jurisdiction over the land, complete jurisdiction over the resources, and total authority by all the people that live there. In other words, it's the replacement of the Quebec Government by an Attikamek and Montagnais government. This is one way that has been considered.

But this is a somewhat drastic and unrealistic solution.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** Listen, just as an aside, I would like to say that one often hears that, after all, the Crown's territorial right, which belongs to the provinces, well, the rules of the game should be changed and the land should belong to the Aboriginal peoples, and then there would be retrocession to put development in place so that everyone can benefit from it.

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Obviously, as you say  
yourself, this solution has massive implications.  
Could you continue, please?

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** Yes,  
well, we looked at that solution, we didn't attempt to  
implement it, but simply observed and considered it.

Among other  
solutions, other methods that could be used to bypass this  
famous requirement to extinguish our rights, we have not  
found very many, unfortunately. Among those that appear  
to us most honourable and fair would be to develop a concept  
of co-jurisdiction, not necessarily over all the land,  
not necessarily over all of the people on it, not  
necessarily over all of its resources, not even necessarily  
in all the areas of competence. In other words, a form  
of sovereignty-association. That was another approach  
that we considered and tried to develop.

There is, of course,  
the other one, the one proposed by the Federal Government,  
which, at the first glance, seems to us, if I may express  
it this way, it is unsaleable, it cannot be imposed on  
our communities, the nations of Attikamek and Montagnais,  
it's a formula of exchange, the exchange of our ancestral

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rights for new ones, clearly defined and applied in precise areas. That's more difficult. One would need to look at all the items which would be negotiated in order to consider this.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** We encourage you to continue thinking about it. As for us, as I have stated at the outset, we have initiated important research to try to find a way of somewhat squaring the circle in which we are trapped, and which, basically, is blocking the settlement of land claims.

In another matter - and I would like to ask you, you have after all considerable experience on the Council - you have been participating in these negotiations for 12 years. We know that you find this lengthy and that you are not the only one in Canada who does.

Our mandate requires that we recommend a negotiation process which would be more efficient and speedier, and the question of

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extinguishing your rights is an important one, but if you have any thoughts on your past experiences which you could share with us, on the way that the process could be managed differently, we would certainly be interested in hearing them, because, once again, we know that, in addition to that question of extinguishing your rights, there are other problems -- of course, that takes political will, technical formulas, arbitration formulas -- we would certainly be happy if you could share them with us.

And so I will let you talk about that, but I would also like to ask you if you think that the recent appointment of a new negotiator by the Quebec Government has any chance of accelerating the process of your negotiations?

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** Yes, the appointment of a special negotiator for the Quebec Government seems to indicate to us that there is at least some political will to undertake these negotiations in a more serious way.

If you consider the experience

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for a bit, you're talking about 12 years of experience in negotiating with governments, in fact, one cannot say that there have been 12 years of negotiations. Firstly, there were many years of preparation, research and preliminary discussions. Then, there were different formulas, i.e. different approaches attempted by governments, among them a negotiation that was much more administrative than political.

There was also an attempt for many more conciliations -- maybe not conciliation, but -- I don't know what term I could use -- much more mitigation, many more exercises in mitigation that were attempted. They have not necessarily been serious negotiations during those 12 years.

Now, with the appointment of a new Quebec Government negotiator, we think, we discern, in any event, a certain political will of the Quebec Government; we are conscious of that and we are trying to be better prepared for it. We are impatient to start real negotiations.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ

**DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

COMMISSIONER

Robinson.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA

**ROBINSON:**

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[English]

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[English]

**COMMISSIONER**

**PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** Just one question, Mr. Ottawa, for my personal understanding of the whole question of land and global negotiations.

You say on page 4 of your paper, second paragraph: "the formula about extinguishing our rights". I find it a little ambiguous, the way it is used. I thought we first negotiated the recognition of our ancestral rights and here you seem to be telling us that the government requires that these rights be extinguished.

Why negotiate it if there is someone at the start who recognizes it, at least in the government?

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** In fact, I understand to a certain extent your lack of comprehension. We have also asked ourselves many questions about what we were to expect at the very outset

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of the negotiations, at the beginning when we were discussing these issues with the governments, when we were analysing the politics of comprehensive land claims. We've asked ourselves the same question.

On the one hand, we are considering negotiating the recognition of our territorial rights, while on the other, the Federal Government agrees to negotiate. But when the time comes to conclude an agreement, that's when the exchange happens.

Now they are talking about exchanging rights. In fact, they are still using the term "extinguishment clause" because they are extinguishing our ancestral rights in exchange for new ones, very precisely defined and applied to very precise locations. You will extinguish your ancestral rights, they say. They are seeking certainty.

That's why they insist on the extinguishment clause.

There will be a precise moment when that will have to happen. It happens at the signing of an agreement, when your ancestral rights don't exist any more because they are replaced by the rights you've negotiated. In other words, ancestral rights seem to exist for the Federal Government

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during negotiations and become extinguished immediately after. There seems to be an informal recognition, a basic recognition of the existence of ancestral rights. But of which ones? The Federal Government says that they are not clear, and these questions are not clear either.

We need to negotiate all that. It may seem paradoxical, the way you contemplate this question, the way you question, you consider it. We also find it paradoxical; at one moment there is recognition and then a fraction of a second passes and immediately after that the recognition is not there any more because it has been replaced by new precisely defined rights.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** I think that this is precisely a very good simplified description of the legal process of the extinction of rights, which has caused so many difficulties.

If you have any other ideas, please don't hesitate to communicate them to us.

As for us, we are going to pursue the process aimed at trying to find a way of circumventing this difficulty, one that would satisfy the governments, which are seeking

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certainty, and the Aboriginal peoples, who do not wish to renounce their ancestral rights.

Thank you for your presentation.

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** I'd like to make a final comment.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** Yes.

**ERNEST OTTAWA:**

First, I'd like to thank Ms. Robinson for her encouragement and tell her that the issue of co-management does not seem sufficient to us, at least on the basis of the consultations, discussions and thoughts we have had on that subject hitherto. We prefer the co-jurisdiction formula. It seems to be difficult from the point of view of the Canadian law, the Common Law, and also from the point of view of the Civil Code. The question of co-jurisdiction seems to be a difficult matter.

For us, what we would prefer is co-jurisdiction rather than co-management, because in co-management, one must be careful, one must keep an eye on the position of the Quebec Government in this matter, when we talk co-management.

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There is the concept of delegation of powers that comes to play here. And that, the question of the delegation of powers of the Quebec Government, seems inappropriate in our claims.

That's what I wanted to add. Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** Very well, thank you. We are also going to look into this concept of co-jurisdiction which, in fact, is not easy. It means two legislative powers on the territories. What will happen in a case of disagreement, etc.?

Thank you.

**ERNEST OTTAWA:**

Maybe arbitration would be required or, as an alternative, rotation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** You mean "alternation".

**ERNEST OTTAWA:**

Alternation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ**

**DUSSAULT:** Each one in turn.

**ERNEST OTTAWA:** Yes.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ

**DUSSAULT:** Very well, thank you.

I now want to call on Chief Hubert Clary of the Obedjiwan Council to make a presentation.

Good afternoon.

**HUBERT CLARY, CHIEF OF THE OBEDJIWAN**

**COUNCIL:** Good afternoon, Sir. Good afternoon, Madam Commissioner, Mr Ottawa and dear friends.

It is a great pleasure for us to testify before this Commission in the name of the Obedjiwan community.

During our testimony, we shall not hesitate to try to show you the nature of the problems that our community has to face every day, since all of the testimony you are going to hear will be presented by different witnesses, working in different fields, this will give you an idea of the these problems in their entirety.

In order to help position the members of the Commission, let me give you a brief geographical description of the Obedjiwan community. Obedjiwan is located 400 kilometres north of La Tuque. A hundred kilometres further north is the town of Chibougamou.

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Obedjiwan is a community with 1,600 people. It is located on the shore of the Gouin Reservoir, which is the source of the St. Maurice River.

Obedjiwan occupies a territory that was very well suited to forestry development. Today, most of the territory has been over-exploited. This over-exploitation includes the flooding that occurred during the construction of the Gouin Dam. It also includes over-exploitation of the forest resources, which have been clear-cut right up to the boundaries of the reserve. And it includes over-exploitation of wildlife resources, as well.

On this last point it should be remembered that there are more than a hundred private fish and game clubs, all of them located on lands that every member of our community used to visit regularly. Each family has land that has been allocated to it, and that still serves today to meet its needs.

But in fact all this exploitation has had a terrible effect on every member of the community. The greed of the companies accompanied by government complicity, has caused disruptions that in certain

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cases are now irreversible. Look at the sad record of the number of suicides in the community, compared with the communities of Manawan and Weymontachie.

The excessive greed that governments have shown to date is the main cause of the scope of the problems that our community is now facing.

The greed of governments eager to exploit a territory that used to enjoy a tremendous wealth of resources of all kinds, has made them forget that the Attikamek of Obedjiwan lived on this land.

In the same way, they have committed the fundamental error of neglecting to provide alternatives for the Obedjiwan people, that could have helped reduce these negative impacts on the entire population.

It is often said now that they came, they destroyed, they left - but we, we are still here.

We have to say that, as far as resource management goes, this has been a total disaster in Quebec for the white population as much as for the

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Aboriginal peoples. However, they are the ones who had the power. As for us, we didn't have a word to say about it. They had the power to make laws, to make rules, to make agreements with the companies. We were simply ignored, with all the consequences that implies.

When we try to put forward solutions to these problems to the people in power, we run up against walls of laws and regulations that do not necessarily correspond with our view of things. So as far as this is concerned, we have to conclude that the real will to deal with our problems has not yet matured among the people of Quebec, nor at the government level either.

To find major solutions to the dramatic situation of the Attikamek people of Obedjiwan there is a major requirement - and that is good will, good faith and respect, all of which are essential to parties that really want to come to mutually satisfactory and lasting agreements.

I have to point out - and this has already been said by previous witnesses - that, as a member of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council, Obedjiwan has been negotiating with the Government of Quebec now for 17 years.

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So you see it is hard for us to believe that there is a real will to come to an agreement in these negotiations.

Finally, as we have implied, we do not have the powers we need to resolve our problems for ourselves. That is why it is essential for us to have complete freedom of action, so that we can satisfy our deepest aspirations in accordance with our customs, our traditions and our culture.

Furthermore, so as to remedy the results of excessive development, we dare to hope that governments will listen to us, so that we can participate as full partners in any future developments that are going to occur. You know, Obedjiwan is not basically anti-development. But we want to be partners so that we can guard against the kind of impacts that we have lived through and that we continue to suffer from today.

In closing, we want to make some comments before this Commission about the countless studies and commissions that there have been of all kinds. It is enough to mention the various reports

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that have already been submitted to governments, and which have been of no use that we can see in advancing the Aboriginal cause in Canada.

We would like formal commitments from the federal and provincial governments to implement the basic recommendations that this Commission will produce.

As an example of the kind of commitment that governments could give to Aboriginal peoples, this Commission could continue its work beyond the term of its mandate, so as to ensure that its recommendations are followed up.

Otherwise, if there is no formal political will to give us the means to solve our problems, then this will be just one more case of arousing false hopes among Aboriginal people. What will become then of our families, what future will our children and youth have? What will happen to our elders? Will we be able at last to hope for a more promising future for them?

You must have been aware during the course of your work across the country that here is a people in real distress that is addressing you. Please give this tragic message to governments. Tell them that now is the

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time to act; if not, it will be too late and they will be watching a tragedy for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Leaving you with this terrible thought, I wish to thank the members of the Commission for having taken a few moments to listen to us.

Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you, Chief Clary. Before taking up your main message, maybe I could ask for a little additional information. The community you represent has 1,600 people?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Yes, that's right.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Are all of them, or the majority, on the reserve?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Generally, they are a people who leave, come back, leave and come back. There is always some coming and going in the community.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In terms of the Attikamek language, is it pretty much the same situation as we find here at Manawan?

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**HUBERT CLARY:** It is exactly the same thing.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** The language is alive and strong.

**HUBERT CLARY:** The language is alive, that's right.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Do you have schools in your territory?

**HUBERT CLARY:** There are some schools on the reserves.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Primary and secondary?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** How many young people are there in your schools?

**HUBERT CLARY:** I think we have - it's very new for us, we only took over secondary schooling this year, and I would not want to mislead the Commission by naming a figure, but we do have a lot of students.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You spoke of private fish and game clubs on your lands. Do some members of your community work these clubs?

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**HUBERT CLARY:** As far as I know, there were only two or three this summer who worked for just one private club.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Two or three?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And this summer was the first time?

**HUBERT CLARY:** No, it's been two or three years. Before that, there were no jobs for Aboriginal people in the clubs on our lands.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I suppose some of these clubs are pretty important organizations?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Yes, in fact they are very important organizations. They have club properties located here and there throughout the province. Some of them are associations, as I said, and some of them are private.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Is there an association for all these private clubs? Have you talked with them about employment?

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**HUBERT CLARY:** Well, we only joined the Band Council about a year ago, and are we still in the process of reorganization at the Council. We have not had the time yet to analyze this aspect of the problem.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I see. Because once again, we are trying, through public hearings, to convince these associations representing the private clubs to come and talk with the Commission. They have not said no, but so far it has not been possible. For us this is kind of an anomaly, that they do not have any relationship, and no employment relationship, with the Aboriginal people in the area. I say that, not only with regard to this region, but you know we were in Sept Iles in the Côte Nord region, with the Montagnais, and there it was the same thing.

You talked about social problems, like the high level of suicides. How are things concerning the organization of health services and health generally, how is that working? How are you organized for that?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Well, we have social workers and health workers located in the community, but the organization itself is managed at the regional level by the Attikamek-Montagnais Council.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Do you see this situation as being stabilized, as being under control, or is it still a problem?

**HUBERT CLARY:** No, that is the real problem, as I said earlier, it is always at the government level. When they try to regulate or solve problems, it's always at the government level that we run into these different rules and laws that say we are not recognized as being an established entity. That is really where the problem lies.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** But let me come back to the question of the level of suicides, basically, where you said that the situation in your community is worse than in the communities of Manawan and Weymontachie. How do you explain that?

**HUBERT CLARY:** Well, the way we would explain that, one of the causes -- I talked about the over-exploitation that took place at the start, and how

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all this had caused a problem. At the start, people used to work in the bush. And now, with this over-exploitation, the forestry companies are slowly withdrawing from the region, and jobs are becoming more and more scarce. And that gives rise to social problems of all kinds, including the suicides, and the other impacts too, I mean, the cultural shock, the contact. That means that this is the aspect where the problems originate.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you  
Mrs. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** [English]

**HUBERT CLARY:** The average age right now,  
it would be about 15 to 20 years.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** [English]

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**HUBERT CLARY:** Madam Commissioner, I think that on that question you will be hearing from one of the witnesses here, who will testify in closed session with one of our elders. I think they will be able to explain this subject to you more thoroughly.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** [English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would just like to add to what Mrs. Robinson said, when she mentioned that of course there is no guarantee, the

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Commission cannot have any guarantee in advance that its recommendations will be followed. Still, I should remind you that the Commission was created with the active support of the three parties in the House of Commons. Also, we should remember that the Commission was created at a time in the context of the constitutional affair that, in spite of its failure, had a great impact on educating the public about Aboriginal questions, and also allowed an exchange of good will between governments and Aboriginal associations - this was a major step that we were able to take in the management of the relationship.

I think that in any case it is a context that gives reason for optimism. I must add - and the Commission is very conscious of this - that it is essential for us to carry on our work in an effective manner. That means that we cannot be content just to put to government recommendations containing only fine principles. We are going to have to respond to some difficult questions that are being raised here, and that have not been answered by earlier commissions

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of inquiry. The section on justice is one example. The question of Aboriginal self-government is another. We saw this during the constitutional negotiations. We are going to have to clarify the concepts, and provide some models.

Certainly, there will be room for negotiations between Aboriginal peoples and governments, but they will have to be concrete and specific, and the only way to assure that is to do what we are doing this afternoon and to accompany that with a program of substantive research. But we can't avoid tackling and dealing with some difficult questions. One of these that was mentioned earlier is the question of ethnic government and public government etc. There were others that were mentioned, on the question of co-management of resources. We are going to need concrete solutions based on a vision and on principles, but there will have to be some real answers.

I think from that starting point, that is the best guarantee we can give, for having a chance to make real progress. We have to recognize too that this is always a problem with Commissions of inquiry,

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that once they have finished their work, they disappear. So we have to leave behind some tracks, that is to say, we have to make sure that some groups in Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal society take up the cause and push governments to act. We intend to make sure that they will follow up the leads we have marked out, and that they take up the cause after the Commission has finished its work.

So, once again, that's about what I wanted to add to your message, and you can rest assured that we will transmit it, and basically we will try to do so effectively when we make our recommendations, which naturally we hope everyone concerned will subscribe to.

Thank you very much for your presentation.

**HUBERT CLARY:** Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We are now going to have the presentation by Chief Marcel Boivin, of the Council of the third Attikamek community, Weymontachie.

Good afternoon.

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**MARCEL BOIVIN, CHIEF OF THE WEYMONTACHIE**

**COUNCIL:** Good afternoon, greetings to the members of the Commission. It is an honour for us and for my community to address the members of the Commission.

I don't have any written document to distribute. I am just going to spell out some of the situations that persist in my community. I shall also give you some factual data about the community of Weymontachie.

Weymontachie is a community located at the junction of the St. Maurice and the Manawan rivers. In area, it is the largest of the three communities. In population, it is the smallest. Right now, we have 995 people. The population is very young. people in the age group 0 to 24 years account for 63.4% of the total population. That makes one think a lot about what those young people need in the way of employment for the future, first of all. Currently, the community is experiencing social problems, just as I guess they are everywhere in the Aboriginal communities.

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Finally, we have -- the figures that I'm going to give you, these are not figures that were compiled by outsiders nor official statistics, they are just ones that we remember -- if you look back six months, there were three suicides and thirteen attempted suicides in Weymontachie. That is to say, the situation is really alarming, especially since the population is very young. We have to find solutions for the future of our community.

Certainly, as far as the problem we are facing goes, there are solutions. The community has begun to attack this problem. Of course, there are some immediate solutions that can be applied, but we do not have sufficient resources. There are also federal programs in existence, but they are not adequate, in our opinion.

If you look at the national child-care program, for example, or at youth housing; take the child-care programs, the federal government has standardized its programs right across the country. It takes for granted that every community has buildings

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that can easily be converted. But if you look at the age pyramid in our communities, the population is very young, and we already lack spaces in our schools. The secondary school will only start two years from now. The federal government takes it for granted that there are schools that can be converted, because elsewhere in Canadian society, the student population is in free-fall, that is the birth rate is very low, so there are schools that are standing idle, that can be converted. So, there are very few financial resources provided in the programs for the construction either of child-care centres or of youth housing. You have to go and look for funds from the regular housing construction program in order to put child-care systems in place. That is an example of something that could, in our opinion, be quickly and easily corrected.

For sure in the long term, if you look at the solutions that could be applied, the first thing you have to do is identify the problem. The problem that afflicts the majority of our communities is

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chronic unemployment and this, I think, is the root of all the problems that we are facing right now. people often think that addiction and alcoholism are the causes of these problems, but in fact these are just the triggers. If you look at marital violence, the cause is not alcohol. The causes are deeper than that. You can list a few, like the problem of chronic unemployment. There is also very little hope of job offers for our young people.

As was mentioned earlier, we are in the process of negotiating with governments. One of the questions being dealt with, and maybe one of the solutions that could be applied to the situations listed, is Aboriginal self-government. At present, we can not really apply our priorities according to the situation, the problems that we face. The programs we have to work with are decided in advance with fixed budgets. So there is little room to manoeuvre, to apply the priorities that we might choose.

Certainly, there could be lots of solutions. It has also been pointed out that land claim negotiations could help us to put in place a system of

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economic development that would be based on our resources. At present, the Band Councils' jurisdiction is limited to the Indian reserve. If you look back to the past, our ancestors survived on the basis of the resources existing on the land. Because there were few people at that time, the land was enough to meet the needs of the community and of the Attikamek nation.

Right now, the population is ten times as great, and as for the land, it is the same, even though it has been raped because of the powers of the Government of Quebec that can set up fish and game clubs, controlled harvesting zones, big private properties that have been given away without informing us about it. One morning we wake up and find them on the map. I discovered the fact that the forestry companies own big properties, right while we were negotiating, during our land discussions, the very heart of the negotiations. That was in 1987. We were in the midst of negotiations.

These are problems we have with Quebec's jurisdiction. Of course it is constitutional, jurisdiction over resources belongs to the provinces, according to the Canadian constitution. At the same

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time, Aboriginal rights are protected, but we never manage to define them exactly. This was talked about in the previous testimony, where these facts were noted. We have been negotiating for a long time. We have spent a lot of energy and resources, without really accomplishing anything.

We must have tried everything. We tried the constitutional conference route, that was a bust. Now, there are the land claims negotiations. And we have high hopes for the work of the Commission, which might be able to bring about a noticeable improvement in Aboriginal communities, and might also help establish relations between Aboriginal peoples and the people of Canada. At least, that is what we hope.

In fact, we were talking today about development. In the past, our communities survived on our resources, while today, you can survive by exploiting resources, but not just in any old way. Up

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to now, we have submitted to any kind of development that took place on our land. We simply submitted to it. That is not too strong a word. We were there, without having any influence whatsoever or even any time for negotiation. We tried, as our chairman has said, to change the methods of operation of the forestry companies on our land. That was a failure, and it produced no results.

Now, we have to sit down with the companies, and try to become partners with them in the supply contracts that they have been granted. As to partnership, it is mainly the Trappers' Association that they talk with. Unlike at Rapid Lake, there are no agreements with the government about multiple use of the forests. There is a project underway currently, the so-called integrated resource management. It is being developed by the Trappers' Association.

As was also mentioned earlier, when you talk about development, we can compromise. You cannot be against development for ever. You have to compromise. There certainly are compromises to be made,

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and in my opinion it is possible to have development in our communities, but we have to be involved in that development. In this way, we will be able to control all developments that take place on our land, and try to protect our traditional activities, protect the wildlife habitat, and also by the same token protect the Attikamek culture.

Those are basically the points I wanted to bring to the Commission's attention. We are aware - at least at the level of elected community officials - that our population is young, and that we absolutely have to find something for our young people. Right now, we have no future to offer them. We have no hope to offer them. If we put a lot of emphasis on economic development, we could probably offer them at least some hope.

Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation, Chief Boivin.

You mentioned that the secondary school will be set up only in two years. What happens to the

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youth of your community after primary school now? Do they go to the city?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** Right now, we have Secondary levels I and II in the community. All secondary courses are at levels I and II. From Secondary III level on, they have to go outside, because the space available does not allow us to set up -- sometimes you need laboratories, and there is no space for them. So, our youth have to go away -- we have agreements with the school boards, the one for Haute Mauricie.

Our students go to La Tuque now, but I must say that the toughest part to get through, is precisely the Secondary III level. Our kids find that they are all blocked at that level. Most of the time, they come back to our communities, because if their funds for the current year are already committed, if it is after the month where the official list of children as of the 30th of September is in force, then there is nothing that they can do for these kids, to try to give them catch-up instruction or create other courses so

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that they can pursue their studies locally, because the budgets are already committed. So we are caught in a system that does not allow us to resolve this situation in the short term.

That means that we have very few young people who go beyond the Secondary II level. It is a ceiling that is very hard for them to break through. Maybe the explanation for this is the fact that they are adolescents, and also that they have a cultural identity that they still have to define, and maybe they need the community to define it for them. Anyway, that is the situation that we face now.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Does the Band Council have someone working with the school boards to arrange support, to arrange a welcome, to make sure that the transition is easy?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** Yes, we have some employees who do that work. We have contacted the Aboriginal Friendship Centre at La Tuque, which provides liaison between the school and the students. There is lodging for them, especially in the first year, but there are problems of adaptation. There is a home that has been reserved for them. But in spite of that, the system is -- it's hard

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for our young people to function inside a school. Most of the time, they are isolated in one class, and that is part of the difficulty.

There are liaison agents. We are in the midst of renegotiating agreements with the school boards, but they have told us it is impossible to overcome the problem of budgets that are committed on September 30. But we wanted to make sure that they too would help by making resources available to us. That is how we wanted to tackle the question immediately.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** When you look at the statistics you have given us, 63.4% of your people are younger than 24, and I presume that 50% are less than 18, as is the case in other communities, and furthermore when you compare that with the fact that the great majority do not get past the Secondary III level, and with the situation you describe about the level of attempted suicides and the actual suicides in the last six months, that is really a major problem.

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Clearly, for us as a Commission, you referred to improving the quality of life, we feel a certain responsibility to make recommendations that will help to try at least to improve a situation like that, and to make specific recommendations, and I get the feeling that in many respects it is not necessarily a question of money. There is a cultural adaptation problem, there is a problem of the values attached to education by parents, by the community and by the leadership.

You have described for us the way you are trying to deal with the problem, but again, I have the feeling that there are many solutions that may be small in themselves, but when you put them all together they can make a real difference in a situation like that. I like to think we could help you. There is the financial aspect, but there is also the aspect of the future, of offering young people a future, that is a job.

What I would like is for this to be a beginning, and although we meet here today, we will be

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at work for the next year, the next year and a half, and not only if you have further information, but if you feel the need to talk with us further about the ways we can try to face up to these facts, [I hope you will come forward]. We are certainly at your disposal, and we are extremely interested in doing whatever we can to improve things, because it really is a major problem.

In the meantime, your land claims negotiations with the governments are continuing. You know, we have more and more the feeling in the Commission that the next few years are going to be crucial for young Aboriginal people and we are looking for ways with the communities to find how to take steps forward.

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** In the Weymontachie community now there is certainly a heightened awareness, which means that in the last six months people have been asking questions, and we are in the process of finding solutions. There is a community effort to find solutions. It will certainly not be

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painless. A healing process can lead to other actions that will have to be taken with professional help, which is what we are doing now.

Our community workers are overburdened, too. Every time there is a suicide, for sure, everyone feels guilty. There has been a real difficulty in facing up to that, on the part of everyone involved, including the Council. But with the resources we have had from the Attikamek National Council, in the field of social services, we have succeeded nevertheless in attempting to mobilize all those who can get people to help each other. So, we have already started. Except that there, we are stuck. We don't have community halls or places where people can get together to organize themselves.

There are already some professional nursing services or community workers, but people who want to organize have very few places to work. We can use space at the school, at the dispensary, as well, at the nursing station, and at the Council office, but

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we really need another centre, a community centre as people call it, where there is not only a room where people can have fun, but rooms where people can have organizational meetings as well. That's about what we are doing now, with this heightened awareness that is making itself felt in the community.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** As to social services, is there good co-operation? Do you get any response?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** Social services, of course, it is the Attikamek Nation that provides us with that. There is some support there. The social workers are employed by the Attikamek Nation Council, but they are people from the community. So, we get good support from them, except that sometimes we can run into questions of jurisdiction with the province.

This is one sector where we have not been able to make any headway. These are social services as such, except that they look like social development. It is not seen as a global thing. Here we

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start to touch on more delicate issues like the question of provincial jurisdiction, though it is still in federal hands, and it is not so easy to transfer it, it seems, because it raises the question of the protection of youth. Now that is a question of jurisdiction. The Young Offenders Act is a federal law, but one solution that we could try would be to have the federal government transfer responsibility, not to the provinces, but to the National Council, so that it would have real control over the solutions that can be offered to young people.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Another question, concerning police services in the three communities, I understand that there is a police force, we saw them this morning - do you have your own police force? How do you handle that?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** At the moment, the three Attikamek communities are part of what is called the Amerindian Police Council. I am a member of the Police Board. There is a new policy coming out now to create a three-way agreement, federal and provincial. But the

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problem we have now is that most of the police officers that we have in our communities, either they do not have the training or they have not been sworn-in. There are a few who have been sworn, who can act.

In emergency cases, for example a case of marital violence, you have to have someone come who has been sworn in. So, once more the question of jurisdiction arises. The authority of the Amerindian police is limited to the Indian reserve. The Quebec Provincial Police has authority up to the limits of St. Michel des Saints, I guess, if you take the example of Manawan. So, between the two of them, no one has any security. No one has jurisdiction. They have it, but they can't exercise it. So that is one of the aspects that we want to include in the discussions in an effort to reach agreement about extending our jurisdiction over the areas where our communities live.

It is the same thing for the other two Attikamek communities. I don't know what is happening right now, but despite the many requests that our

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Police Board has made about swearing in policemen, the officials keep delaying, and nothing gets done. In the meantime, we have problems and situations that cannot be quickly brought to court, for example, marital violence.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Problems with the Amerindian Police?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** Problems with the Government of Quebec.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Problems with being sworn in?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** Exactly.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Is it the training program that is causing the delay?

**MARCEL BOIVIN:** It's not a question of the police officers who are trained, but besides the swearing in, they find all kinds of administrative excuses to delay. And training, too, that's another thing that is lacking, since according to the federal program in force now, the training of police officers is supposed to be financed directly from the operating budgets.

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So that is missing too. I would say they refuse to recognize ours as a proper police force. We are discussing this question now with Minister Claude Ryan, about a proper police force. I think the Government of Quebec probably does not want this, but they don't even want to talk about it. He thinks the Quebec Provincial Police are already equipped for this, and what they want to establish is independent police forces in each community, with no relation to each other, whereas the vision that we are trying to develop is a police force where people can move around as well, and so gain some common expertise. That's what our communities and the members of the Amerindian Police want.

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

Mrs. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON** [English]

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I think we should take a short break now. (?) [sic] The Chairman of the Board of Education of Manawan, Marcel Ottawa on the subject (?) [sic]

I just want to say for the record that we have received a submission from the secondary school.

Thank you. We'll begin again in seven or eight minutes.

---Meeting recessed at 5:30 p.m.

---Meeting recommences at 5:42 p.m.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Now, please take your seats. We are going to return to the presentation of Chief Henri Ottawa.

Mr. Ottawa is accompanied by Mr. Grégoire Flamand.

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**HENRI OTTAWA, CHIEF, MANAWAN GRAND**

**COUNCIL:** Thank you, Your Honour.

I am accompanied by Grégoire Flamand who will describe a Manawan community. I will then read my text.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Good morning, Mr. Flamand.

**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND, DIRECTOR GENERAL,**

**MANAWAN ATTIKAMEK COUNCIL:** First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples for allowing me to present a summary of the various social and economic aspects of the Manawan Community.

Our hope is that, at the very least, this presentation, through your intervention, will sensitize those government agencies which, at this time, still have certain decision-making powers with regard to our future.

You have certainly had the opportunity to become aware of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Aboriginal communities that you

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have visited so far. Manawan is very similar to many of them.

On 30 October 1992, Manawan had a total population of 1,509 people, i.e. Indians registered under the Indian Act. There are 1,373 residents, while non-residents, commonly referred to as off-reserve, amount to 136 individuals.

There are 573 individuals under 15 years of age, i.e. approximately 38 percent of the total population. The proportion of the population under 35 years of age constitutes approximately 81 percent of the population, i.e. 1,222 individuals. These demographic statistics clearly indicate that Manawan has a very young population.

The infrastructure for accommodating such a population of this type must, therefore, be planned so as to support the demand which, most probably, will remain high during the next 20 years. What is available is not sufficient to meet a demand which is conditioned by the speed of demographic

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growth. What may appear surprising in an Aboriginal community, such as Manawan, is that it is not migration which plays a decisive role, but rather demographic growth based on births. In fact, the average growth rate based on a three-year period is calculated at 9.18 percent for the past twelve years.

The weaknesses and deficiencies in the infrastructure accommodating the Manawan population is a source of major concern to local authorities. Not only must housing be found for the population, but we must make every effort possible to stimulate economic expansion and to plan an employment structure which will consolidate the strengths, while limiting the weaknesses of our socio-economic environment.

As regards the question of housing, in spite of the efforts by the Band Council in housing planning and development, the occupation rate per housing unit remains high. Recent statistics actually show that the occupation rate is approximately 7.4

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persons per housing unit. At this level, the available stock will not be sufficient to meet the demand.

Over the last four years, 108 residential single-family units have been built with the financial resources equivalent to 100 units based on the same period.

Let me emphasize that the effort at this level is commendable. Apart from the objective to increase the amount of housing units, we are also aiming to improve the quality of housing, built by closely adhering to the applicable building standards.

As regards the socio-economic situation, the Manawan active population, i.e. the 15 to 64 year old segment, amounts to 890 employable individuals, i.e. approximately 59 percent of the total population. Over the last five years, the unemployment rate has reached approximately 85 percent, with most of the jobs being in the service industries which is not very likely. In spite of the apparent abundance and diversity of resources on our territory, the resource industry is a poor provider of employment. The manufacturing industries are mainly concentrated around

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the urban centres, and we have difficulties in competing, in the market because of the remoteness and isolation of our community which, even as the crow flies, is located at 255 km from Montreal. The quality of the road infrastructure which links us to the provincial road network only inhibits our efforts to develop.

The school environment: In a modern society, schooling is a phenomenon which has been around for several decades. At Manawan, those who are now 50 years old were, somewhat the pioneers on the school bench, since schooling was only introduced in the fifties. As told by these pioneers, the education offered at that time was far from being stimulating, with barely two months of teaching being offered over the entire year.

It is not surprising to find that it took a long time before any stimulating education developed, and the Attikamek communities as a whole and not only in Manawan, reached a more encouraging competitive economic level.

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Today, we have 428 pupils attending primary and secondary schools here in Manawan. The grades taught are from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 11. We have 27 individuals attending post-secondary institutions, i.e. 17 students at the college level and 10 at the university level. Although their numbers are restricted due to restrictive post-secondary funding policies, their fields of specialization are relatively varied. In the future, we can certainly count on administrators, educators, health professionals, etc.

Here again, supported by an educational infrastructure which we have demanded for longer than can be remembered, we could certainly enhance our aspirations for development and self-government.

Contrary to a community in full expansion, the efforts that we are making to improve our destiny are more of a preventive nature, i.e. we are constantly trying to curb the high level of school dropouts, of juvenile delinquency and suicides, among other things.

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To illustrate the school situation in Manawan in figures: only 12 percent of the population had a secondary school diploma in 1980. Twenty-five percent of the population have not even graduated from Grade 9.

On the other hand, there have been certain improvements over the last five years, during which approximately 30 percent of the population claims to have succeeded in obtaining their secondary school certificate. These figures can be explained by the real increase in the school population in a demographic pool which is definitely growing.

We are anticipating that, in the year 2000, approximately 45 percent of the population will be able to compete in the labour market. We hope that the challenge which socio-economic agencies, government and industry and so on, have taken on will yield positive results. For our part, the outcome of our efforts towards self-government will certainly include in the assumption of responsibilities normally belonging to a government.

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You have heard the reports of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council, and I believe that they are leaning in the same direction.

As a conclusion to the presentation of the Manawan picture, the consolidation of forces in the community are based, among other things, on a definite feeling of belonging, an increasingly pronounced self-awareness, a move towards dialogue, solidarity and mutual assistance, supported by a growing consensus and all of this certainly, constitutes a measure of success.

On the other hand, the weaknesses apparent in the Attikamek community, such as the lack of a structured economic infrastructure, the low educational level of the population, the lack of employment and absence of openings, etc., are drawbacks which a minimum of concerted efforts will certainly manage to overcome.

As regards Manawan, as with the other two Attikamek communities, the directions chosen make us believe that the efforts have begun, that the problems are being defined, and that socio-economic development is on the drawing board, in partnership with others or individually. We can certainly conclude that there are bright prospects for the Attikamek population of Manawan.

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Thank you.

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

**HENRI OTTAWA:** First of all, I would like to commend the members of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples for having taken the time to come and visit us in order to hear what we have to say before this Commission.

It is an honour for us to receive you in our community. In spite of the fact that the Canadian population is increasingly aware of the problems of Aboriginal peoples in this country, we as the Attikamek people, have the responsibility to inform you of some of our difficulties.

First of all, after having lost a major part of our autonomy in the area of development, after having lost almost all our territory on which our autonomy was based, after having sacrificed a major part of our cultural resources, and after having had

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imposed on us another completely alien lifestyle, which we have difficulties adapting to, we are still accused today of living off white society.

We have lost almost everything, and today our people are aware of the enormous difficulties involved in rectifying the situation.

We would like to develop within this new system. We would like to participate in Canadian society as a proud people. We would like to develop according to our own idea of things. We are capable of thinking.

We are capable of expressing our ideas. We are capable of great things, but we are not given the opportunity. We would like to regain our lost territories. We would like to have the right to establish our own laws. We would like to manage our programs according to our own lifestyles. We would also like to develop our economy while respecting and remaining in harmony with our environment. We are prepared to have discussions with and respect those around us. We believe that we are prepared to undertake this immense task of rebuilding our society, but we demand that people listen to us, understand us and, above all, respect us.

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Here, at Manawan, we have a population of 1,509 inhabitants, a large part of which consists of young people who claim the right to a more promising future.

Our population is currently in full growth demographically speaking. We are representing our population and are counting very much on the Commission to hear and understand us.

We thank you for having given us the opportunity to express ourselves. Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you, Chief Ottawa, for having come to deliver this message to the Commission, and also, through Mr. Grégoire Flamond, to have given us, in writing, an invaluable and striking picture of the Manawan community.

Clearly, when looking at the road followed in the area of schooling, particularly during the fifties, one becomes aware of, and it also explains the situation a little, of the value attached to education, and all this is being achieved very rapidly,

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and there is also a tradition to be created. We were very pleased to be able to visit the primary school at the same time. We are going to make a more extensive tour this evening and, also, to review in more concrete terms the status of the secondary school on which we have been given the documentation

I may have a question for the speaker this evening, namely the Mamo Atoskewin Attikamek Association, or maybe not. You might tell me, Chief Ottawa. It was mentioned earlier, that there was a Trappers' Association which has initiated discussions with the forestry companies, directly with the logging companies, independent of the government.

Could you provide us with more information on this matter of the discussions, with the forestry companies for the development of the area, since I believe, what we are constantly coming back to, namely the economic development, and the fact that, in spite of the developments, and the clear-cuttings undertaken, the forest resource still remains an important resource, Could you, therefore, elaborate on this initiative? I do not want to anticipate any information that may be given

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by another speaker this evening, and I am therefore asking this question, if you are able to answer it.

**HENRI OTTAWA:** Your Honour, at the risk of giving you false information, I believe that the organization in question would be in a better position to reply to this question, since it has the file.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** This is the organization that we will hear this evening. There is no problem.

As a last piece of information, there are ten students currently studying at university. Could you tell us about some of the disciplines in which they are involved? You have told us that they are future administrators, educators, health professionals. Do these students intend to return to the community?

**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND:** Most of the ten students are involved in the humanities, particularly education and teaching, for example history, geography, for the secondary level. Some are studying communications. In the health area, the students

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involved in this field are at the college level. I am hoping that, at least, they will continue their studies at the university level.

Up to this point, there is one student who has a nursing diploma and who is currently working in this field. I believe that the other student is involved in the same area, and I hope that he will concentrate further on the health sciences at the university level.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Are you presently aware if the forestry companies of the region are giving grants to students at the college level, or in forestry, or at the university level? Do you know if such measures are taken by the logging companies in the region with regard to Aboriginal peoples?

**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND:** The contact that we had here in the region, or in the adjoining region of Manawan, was involved in logging various areas. I have learnt that he has left Manawan and, therefore, we have lost track of our contact, in the logging company. I do not know in which area or in which region the company is currently logging.

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At the moment, there are several small forestry companies logging sites here and there, but there are no large logging companies.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So there are no grants.

**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND:** That is right, there are not any.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Once again, it appears -- and this applies to electricity which was discussed with the Crees during public hearings, again referring to forestry resources -- that when you talk of partnerships with companies, with people involved in the territory, that there would be interest and significance in trying to promote post-secondary education in the technology which is being used in the territory.

Are any attempts being initiated here to try to make students direct their studies towards

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these sectors? During our visit to the secondary school, we were informed of the difficulties, the lack of laboratories in physics and chemistry, and the resulting difficulty in teaching. The same considerations were apparent with the Montagnais at Sept Iles, where we were three weeks or fifteen days ago, at the CEGEP of Sept Iles.

There the teachers of the CEGEP came to meet us with a presentation, and the conclusion was the same, i.e. the difficulty to attract Aboriginal people. The same questions are asked in the health sciences, as well as in physics technology at the CEGEP level. Essentially, I share your concerns in this area. Often, the barrier is at the secondary level.

**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND:** That is true.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So then, I understand. We have seen the problem and it is related to the secondary school situation. In any case, it is a reality and I believe that I do not have to bring it to your attention, since you are well aware of it. I believe that we must try to find some solutions.

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**GRÉGOIRE FLAMAND:** You are right. As far as we are concerned, we have at least tried to turn words into action instead of continually trying to encourage our young people to turn especially towards the sciences.

We have at least entered discussions to translate words into concrete actions. We have approached organizations which are active in the Attikamek territories, trying to find areas of agreement that could encourage our young people to choose the sciences in particular. I believe that they themselves would like the managers to take the first step.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you.

Mrs. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:**

[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you for your presentation.

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I would now like to request that the representatives of the Regional Council on Education and Culture, Geneviève Neashit and Thérèse Niquay come forward and make their presentations.

**THÉRÈSE NIQUAY, REGIONAL COUNCIL ON  
EDUCATION AND CULTURE:** Good evening, Mr Commissioner and Madame. I would, first of all, like to speak on the topic of culture. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today and be able to explain the vision of our communities on cultural issues.

The Attikamek people want and are determined to take into their own hands their development, including their cultural development. Today, the Attikamek culture, like Aboriginal culture in general is experiencing a significant rebirth. Up to a certain point, it was able to resist the deculturalization deliberately forced upon it by the government and the Church.

Only up to a certain point, because the Attikamek people, like all other Aboriginal peoples, have suffered many forms of alienation. This was because there was a desire by the conquerors to impose on them a God that was inaccessible, a vengeful God who came from another

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place, even though for Aboriginal peoples the Divine Being resided in all the elements of creation and the Great Spirit is, above all, a protective Spirit.

This is how they wanted to destroy a form of spirituality which has, nevertheless, re-emerged. And the state, in order to instil in them a different lifestyle, seized their children and placed them in residential schools and entrusted them to the servants of the Church who were supposed to be the servants of God, but were, in fact, the servants of the state. Yet again, the Attikamek culture suffered a blow, similar to the process of settlement which forced us to live on the land called Crown Lands so as to give free reign to the development favoured by the State, and to the detriment of the Aboriginal peoples.

There has been and remains today, a willingness to dispossess us of a territory which constitutes a heritage resource of prime importance. This resource is the basis of our culture and we are clinging to it. Our goal is not to lament our fate, but to demonstrate to you that, despite all the prejudices, despite major cultural upheavals, the Attikamek culture is experiencing today a significant revival.

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In particular, this is despite an alarming opinion expressed in the report of Michel Foster, published in 1982 by the Commissioner for Official Languages, and confirmed by other subsequent reports, which concluded that of 53 Aboriginal languages, only three had any assured future. Attikamek was not even mentioned in the study.

However, it seems that our language is an important component of our culture.

Just recently, with the official adoption of the Attikamek educational policy by our authorities, the Attikamek language is becoming the first language of instruction in the schools. Although the desired educational system is still-developing and being implemented slowly but surely, it is finding expression as a project of a society in the process of self-definition.

We have our own values, our own traditions and this is where we are placing our emphasis. We are in favour of all forms of development which respect us for what we are. The task that we, Attikamek, have undertaken, in common with all other Aboriginal peoples, is not an easy one. It is, in fact, extremely difficult.

Despite a degree of distress that we are experiencing in facing our future and, in particular, the future of

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our young people, the solution for us lies in the consolidation of our identity as an Aboriginal people. This identity is rooted in our culture.

Since 1982, our efforts in the areas of educational and cultural development have largely hinged on the development of a program of bilingual teaching, as well as on the development of an Attikamek educational system. The official recognition of the Attikamek Linguistic Institute in June 1986 by our authorities confirmed their recognition of the work accomplished in the linguistic areas.

The development of our language and literature constitutes an important component of the educational and cultural field. The CAN, the Council of the Attikamek Nation, in order to better define the needs and to provide itself with a cultural development plan, which would be integrated with other areas of intervention, established a cultural service in 1991-92. This service is partly funded by the Cultural Centres Program of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Quebec ministère des Affaires culturelles.

Even though we recognize that we are still in the early stages of expressing our needs there has been

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since the establishment of a relationship with our main partners, a growing recognition of the specific nature of our needs in the educational and cultural fields.

The desire is there, even though the resources available to us often seem to be limited. In addition to encouraging new forms of cultural expression, that is, in the broad literary and artistic domains, we are also aiming at encouraging traditional forms of cultural expression, the enhancement of the role of women, elders, and artisans in the transfer of our cultural heritage.

In addition to the Regional Council on Education and Culture, we have regional working groups who form the cultural panel, which acts as the advisor to the Regional Council on Education and Culture in cultural matters. It seeks the protection, the conservation and the dissemination of our heritage, the promotion of various forms of artistic expression, and the training and development of our artists and artisans.

There is also the motivating group which represents the elders who are the guardians and the transmitters of cultural heritage in our communities. The motivating group intends to play the role of sponsor

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to our young people and their parents in order to assist them in gaining a cultural, moral and spiritual force that will allow them to consolidate their identity. This will allow them to interact with those of other cultures while maintaining their own.

We wish to develop programs which respond adequately to our reality, such as for example, an assistance program to help artists train their successors and an intervention program in the archaeological field; as well as other programs that will provide our communities with adequate cultural tools to meet our requirements. These include setting up houses for transmitting culture in each of our communities.

We are also intending to establish partnerships with other stakeholders in the cultural or related areas for training in the arts, culture, the development of museology and the enhancement of culture as part of tourism.

This all requires time and certainly adequate technical and financial resources. We believe that given the prejudices suffered in the past, it is now the duty of the State to facilitate the development of mechanisms and tools that will allow us to more easily

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pursue our own directions in the approaches we have taken in cultural development.

Mr. Commissioner, Madame, thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you very much for your presentation and the explanation you have given on educational policies. There is another presentation?

**THERÈSE NIQUAY:** Yes

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** All right, then I will let you finish your presentation and we can have a discussion afterwards.

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**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT, REGIONAL COUNCIL ON**

**EDUCATION AND CULTURE:** My name is Geneviève Neashit.

I am with the Regional Office of the Educational Services of the Council of the Attikamek Nation in La Tuque.

I am happy to be here today and to have the opportunity to express the vision of my working group on Attikamek education, language and culture. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to express our views, which fit into our initiative on autonomy in education.

The Attikamek Nation is increasingly aware of its identity and it wants to become the master of its own destiny, in order to give back to its children a sense of pride and dignity. To achieve this, it must integrate, within its educational system, its values, culture, language, philosophy of life and history. The Nation is aware that education is a fundamental component of the effective management of its collective plan. It is the hope of the Nation. The Attikamek school will be, above all, the guardian of cultural heritage, it will be an instrument for autonomy, for taking charge and for equality of opportunity. When I say "will be", this will be when we have succeeded in taking charge of all areas of education. I am going to describe to you in the next

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paragraphs those areas in which we have begun to take charge.

The Attikamek school must also be oriented towards the realities of the modern world and towards the preparation of young people for this modern world. This is the twin challenge facing the Attikamek school.

Over the last decade, the Attikameks have worked systematically to provide themselves with the tools for action and the structures to achieve these objectives.

Firstly, the communities took on the responsibility for education. Secondly, the Council of the Attikamek Nation was created to offer regional services in various sectors.

In education, these services are provided by a team of educational counsellors, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who ensure that there is pedagogical support for the teachers and who design the curriculum in all areas of their responsibility.

In language matters, we have the Attikamek Linguistic Institute which has three Attikamek linguistic specialist and consultants, who are currently working to develop an Attikamek grammar and dictionary, the base tools for teaching the language. These individuals are

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responsible for training Aboriginal teachers in reading and writing Attikamek.

The pedagogical panel includes the heads of primary and secondary school and the regional coordinator. This group plans, organizes and co-ordinates the development and implementation of programs, participates in evaluating these and identifies the requirement for training the teachers, on the basis on the overall goals established by the Regional Council on Education and Culture.

The cultural panel and the motivating group previously described by Ms. Niquay, form part of the sector. All these activities are supervised by a regional educational council composed of the directors of education of the three communities, as well as the chairpersons of the local councils and myself as the regional education director.

Thirdly, the Regional Council on Education and Culture has recently issued an educational policy statement on the Attikamek school: its values, its focus, the curriculum, the role of stakeholders, management, teachers, parents, as well as the community at large. This is the document that we have attached to

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this presentation and that has just been ratified by the General Assembly of the Nation last week. Last week there was a special meeting on education; we worked one day with the band councils of the three communities in the General Assembly to present our document which was unanimously accepted.

Fourthly, there was the institution, in September 1990, of the teaching of the Attikamek language in kindergarten and the first three years of primary school. The implementation of this program is a gradual process. Last year, we started it at the Minic kindergarten; this year it will be grade 1; in 1993-94 it will be grade two; and in 1994-95, it will be grade three. This program is now in place in the three schools in the three communities and reaches all students at these levels. It is not a pilot project, it is a program directly implemented.

In the middle school years, we are planning to set up teaching, with 50 percent in Attikamek and 50 percent in French as a second language.

Fifthly, there is the systematic effort and the long term job of training and developing Attikamek

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teachers, through university studies, work experience, seminars and professional development days.

This summarizes the major steps taken by the Attikameks in order to ensure that they have control over their educational system, to maximize the chances for success in school and to promote the development of culture within the area of education.

In addition, the three communities already offer some secondary courses and plan to offer all of them in a few years, as is already the case in Manawan. However, to achieve this goal, we have to build or extend our secondary schools and have the necessary funding to develop the professional sector, as with the other programs of study.

To continue the effort started at the

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primary and secondary level and to sustain the development of those programs already undertaken, we must be assured that the government authorities are fully committed and that they support us completely, whether these be Aboriginal, federal or provincial governments.

Without this political commitment, all the efforts undertaken to date will be useless. This implies a global vision of the Aboriginal reality and of the future of the communities, as well as a profound sense of conviction and the courage to act. This commitment must translate into unreserved political support and adequate funding so that we do not have to beg each year.

There is too much work to be done to waste the time of the people involved in lobbying and an unending search for funding, such as for example, is the case with the national underfunding of post-secondary education. On many occasions, we have gone to Ottawa to apply pressure through the Assembly of First Nations and the Education Council of the First Nations of Quebec.

Then the next week, we want to have an interview with Mrs Janic Cochrane to express our points of view and, on each occasion, we are disappointed and we are nearly certain that the next week, she's going to

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talk to us about a three percent cut that was just announced yesterday.

The other areas in which we would also like to see an increase in funding are specialized education and the funding formulas for the development of materials, because the others on the National Council are funded to a large extent by the Department of Indian Affairs. However, they draw this funding from the financing base of each community. Thus, at some point you get into a conflict situation, because the communities are already limited and then this part is cut. I know it is for the communities, but we need more. For example, we have not yet trained educational consultants for the Secondary level and this is certainly an immediate need.

Now the communities themselves have their own share of responsibilities: eventually, the communities themselves must demonstrate their vision

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and act. It is for us as Amerindians to assume all the responsibilities which accompany autonomy. This is as true in the area of education as it is at the social, political or individual level. We are the ones who must ourselves first believe in education. It is us who must take seriously the school that we are giving ourselves.

It is us who must motivate our children and who must offer them the best possible living conditions to assure their development as human beings and as future citizens, as future workers and as future leaders.

Currently, we have so much work to do, but we are living with the reality of our society, something that we will see during the testimony of the social services, with which we are experiencing difficulties. Sometimes, there are people who have difficulty believing in our programs because they have only succeeded, I would say, about 50 percent. But we have to live with our reality, our teachers who live in this society, where there is suffering, the same reality for the children who are there every morning.

We must have the strength to overcome the wounds that recent and less recent history has inflicted upon us. To do this, we must return to our traditions,

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our spirituality, our language, not in order to close ourselves off from the world, but rather to reinforce ourselves and then open ourselves up to others. I believe that this is a movement which will come later, because our students that will soon be sent to secondary or post-secondary institutions, if this movement to self-identification is not sufficiently strong, they will return having become disappointed and discouraged; and it is in this situation that they will have difficulty in dealing with the present.

This opening to the outside world could be accomplished through exchanges amongst young people, parents, teachers from other Aboriginal Nations, because we believe it to be essential to have exchanges with other Nations. This enrichment is essential throughout Canada and even the United States, as well as with other Canadians.

We would also like to have intensive training to learn English. Perhaps you will find this strange, but when we want to have exchanges with other Nations or with other Canadians, English is extremely

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important and we regret our limitations in this area. Thank you. I would now like to give the floor to Mr. Charles Coucou, this morning, who performed the opening ceremony. Mr. Coucou has been a source of inspiration and encouragement for us. He is continuing to work alongside us and I would now like him to have the opportunity to speak, please.

**CHARLES COUCOU:** Thank you, Commissioners. In accordance with the teachings of our ancient oral traditions, I would first of all like to bid you welcome in a few words of my language. [Native language, no translation available].

I will touch on the subjects that the ladies have just read about. This is partly to demonstrate the importance of oral teaching in the communities and I am going to provide a brief overview on traditional and modern education and the consequences that these have for us, both positive and negative. I hope to keep it quite brief.

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As far as traditional education is concerned, if we go back some years, starting from 1900 when the missionaries were increasingly present, traditional education was still conducted in the context of the land, the environment and nature and spanned history, the legends and the belief and also the teaching of traditional ceremonies.

Religious education was superimposed on this traditional teaching. This was not necessarily a bad thing. It had a place in the circle of teaching, in the circle of life. It is probably this welcome that has led to us keeping our Catholic traditions, even to this day. We have become aware that the problems that have been brought out by careful reflection, by questioning and also by research conducted by competent individuals in the social field, these problems began to develop starting in the mid-Fifties; this is also a bit of classic history that is widely known throughout the Aboriginal world of today.

I do not wish to linger for too long on the history of the residential schools, but I would, nevertheless, emphasize certain facts that have

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affected me, and generally young people of my age, who have now become parents. How do we feel about ourselves?

I still remember, I was about six years old, when I left for ten months. But before we left, the elders knew -- the elders wanted to sacrifice three months of their hunting year to allow the young people to be educated within the community. It is extraordinary how the elders... They wanted to have discussions with the missionaries and the representatives of the Department, but it was always the case that if you did not allow the children to go, the Mounted Police would come, so we went just like that.

I still remember how they thought about me, how they robbed me of my human dignity and just thought of me as a number. I still remember that number. I am number 31 and with the rules that had to be taken into consideration -- I am a little distressed, Commissioners, at talking about this, but the memory is still really vivid.

Later in my statement, I will be much more positive. However, you will soon understand the reason for my distress.

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This is what we have experienced and what I have experienced. I know that it was not all bad. I do also appreciate the education that I received. I appreciate reading and all the concepts that are necessary to exist in the modern world of today. We know this, but it was the manner, the dehumanizing experiences we suffered that still causes us pain. And this is to some extent, the result when representatives come and talk about current problems we have in our communities.

I spent 18 years like that and when I left the residential school, I was ready to join the labour market, to join those companies. I had learnt everything, but I had endured the first racial slurs, the first facts of segregation. I therefore asked myself: what's going on here? I had accepted the education that they wanted to give me, and yet they still did not accept me.

What had happened? During 18 years of living in a residential school, I did not have any roots. I was held in a sort of vice, under some kind of pressure, because I did not know my traditions, the history of my people.

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I did not recognize the authority of the elders. When the elders wanted to talk to me, I told them: "Whoa, grandpa, I have been to school. I know how to do maths, write, all those things, while you, you have always lived like a savage in the woods. You don't know a thing and you don't even know how to write. While I, I have been to school, why are you trying to teach me something? Get out of my way." I was always like that towards the elders. I had a swelled head and I was caught in that trap. I was not accepted. Yet I had received all that teaching that would allow me to go to work, but I could not get any work. I could not go to the elders.

You can understand what was the state of mind of young people who had been in the residential schools, what black thoughts could run through the minds of these people. A rope, a rifle, we no longer know what a rifle represents. Put simply, we only know it in one way: taking it and putting it to our heads. This was our reaction. But, on the other hand, there was a small deep voice within me which said, quietly, "why don't you go back and see the elders?"

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I was sick; I knew I was sick. To hide things from myself, to relieve my pain, I drank alcohol, because I had such inner grief. I took drugs. I considered that wonderful time of the Seventies when the youth around the world, when I could become part of that world youth which was beginning to reject authority, whether in the church or in other areas.

I had a good time, but this was also the time for experiencing an in-depth research into the human soul. And I overcame that and I recognized that I was sick and that I was in the very depths. I tried to escape but a little voice said to me, why do you not go back and see the elders? How arrogant I had been to have insulted the elders; I did not dare to go back and see them.

One day, I decided, because I had had enough. The rifle was always there. The rope was always there. So I went to see the elders and the first thing that I said was "Do you remember the young man with the big ideas? The one who claimed that he was educated? One thing he realizes, is that he lacks the

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most important teaching". Then I begged the elders' forgiveness. They forgave me. This is how I quietly discovered what I had never learnt, that, in fact, society today lacks the most important thing, the human being, the spiritual being that it never tries to understand and that it tosses out in school.

The elders told me that when I had spoken to an elder when I was sick, I had listed the ways that I knew of how to get out. All the specialists were there, but I might end up in a locked box and be considered to be a moron, an idiot. It's that system that made me more idiotic.

When you take something like a residential school, you have to recognize our responsibilities and the wrongs that go with such a system. If those wrongs are not recognized, then we are a stupid government because I am stupid. Slowly, the teachings of the elders allowed me to find myself again. The elders told me, "Charles, you were never sick" and that was an astonishing explosion.

How to

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say I had never been sick and that I had experienced it, thus the little traditional counsels of telling me "why not go out into Nature, you will find something marvellous there. Sit down at the foot of the tree". I followed their counsel and saw myself grow up. I found myself again. I discovered that little inner voice. It was empty, it was murdered. I still speak of that tiny light that is within each human being, but my fire has no more light, but there are still the glowing embers there.

The elders communicated to me, through traditional teachings, about the ceremonies and the spirituality, I was able to regain my zest for life, and I was able to appreciate the other culture which had been before me and to take what was good to enrich myself and that is how I got into the field of education as a volunteer, and becoming more and more involved with the young people.

There are fits of hope, and you must not miss these fits of hope, because when we were at a residential school, and problems occurred, we simply passed on our wounds to our children. We simply rejected our parental responsibilities. We no longer knew how to be a parent, because it was never learnt and we had lived ten months, with two months per year, to regain contact.

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It was not enough. Today, we have simply passed on our sickness, our disease, to our children. More and more, throughout the educational system, we are incorporating spirituality and traditional teachings, to heal individuals first of all but also a communal healing. But we want that this healing be complete. And we want -- these are perhaps suggestions, but I am still so wound up -- we want that this order be recognized by the federal government.

We want this to be a public statement, a public apology. The Bishops of Canada have already done this, but the Bishops are not the government. It is just for moral support. We want a public apology. Probably, this apology has already been made, but I recently saw in a report that Prime Minister Mulroney and Minister of Indian Affairs Tom Siddon, had denied these facts. What idiots!

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We want a total change. We don't want to heal halfway. We also want to heal at the national level. There, that is a bit about that issue, very briefly, as I emphasized, about the area of education. Increasingly, we are becoming aware of, getting closer to this fit of hope and I believe that our young people, with the involvement of our spiritual leaders, the natural leaders, traditional ones, working in a common cause, that each person will do his own individual healing; we believe that a short time from now, our children will learn how to say, I am proud of my father, I am proud of my parents, I am proud of my grandfather.

Here I end. I still retain hope, even if we have lived through so much suffering, I retain hope.

I harbour no ill feelings in emphasizing certain organizations, because of the teachings of the elders, I do not have any ill feelings; to know is to forgive, and for us, to affirm the wrong of the residential schools by the federal government, we will regard this as a sign of forgiveness, and we can improve and go forward and might ourselves better prepare the

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Aboriginal government that we hope to implement very soon,  
a sound government, balanced and harmonious.

There, I conclude on this favourable note.

Thank you!

**THERÈSE NIQUAY:** I just want to mention  
that in order to paint the entire picture, there will be  
two more people who will speak before we will proceed with  
questions.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** That's fine.  
I simply want to take this opportunity, because I believe  
that this is a good point to say that the Commission's  
hearing is being broadcast live on Manawan community radio  
on CKMK-FM, 93.1.

**DANIEL NIQUAY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AT  
MANAWAN:** I would first of all like to thank the  
Commissioners. I am the Director of Education of my  
community here in Manawan. My name is Daniel Niquay.  
I would like to thank you for allowing us this opportunity  
to express ourselves about our daily problems. I believe  
that we have heard all sorts of things up to now, but not  
everyone has expressed their opinion. That is why

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I would like to present one of our young people, Jimmy Flamand, who will give you an overview of the whole vision of our young people, as it relates to their current problems, their fears for the future and their hopes.

Thank you.

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** Gentlemen, Madame, Commissioners, good evening. We are happy to welcome you here. I am appearing before you to let you know about our thoughts about our daily life as Aboriginal students in secondary school, living in the community that has welcomed you today.

I will tell you about a reality which faces us and which does not allow us to see in the near future a net improvement in our relationship with other Canadians.

Like all other young Canadians, we have our dreams, our ideas, our aspirations. We want to be people who fully participate in the country's development, complete human beings, but for whom the cultural difference is strong.

However, we should tell you that as the

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situation is today, and that is as true at the educational sector as it is at the social level, we do not have the same opportunities as any other Canadian student to achieve our goals in life, attain our dreams, our aspirations.

First of all, in the area of education, there are many things lacking as far as physical and human resources are concerned that actually prevent us from having access to higher education. We have an under-equipped school that is not at all functional, built in 1959 to standards then in force, but that does not meet today's requirements. For one thing, it is designed to accommodate fifty students or so, so we are packed like sardines in a tin and, for another, it was built for primary school students. This school does not meet the minimum standards of hygiene. There is no ventilation system at all in the various classrooms. The heating system is inadequate. What would you think of science classrooms that are not worthy of the name laboratory where the fan just swirls the air around that is then expelled to go through the entire school? A secondary

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school that does not have its own library, although this is necessary, nor a gym. Each day, we have to walk nearly a kilometre to have access to these services. There is no rest area as there is everywhere else. No meeting rooms that would allow us to have group activities. We could talk about this for a long time, but we have simply listed a few facts.

As far as the programs and the support services that are regularly offered at a level such as ours are concerned, they are nearly non-existent. I am talking about guidance, education counsellors, psychological services. We know that our directors and others in charge are working hard and want to develop these things, but the bottom line is that it is still the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs that claims not to have any funds available. If any of us want to continue on in higher education, what will happen to those who want to get into the professions? They will need to leave and become expatriates in the urban environment and return completely lost, destroyed, without any identity. Do you think we have

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any truly equal opportunity with other young Canadians?

Do you think that we have this equal opportunity that will allow an improvement in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people? It is improved federal and provincial funding of education that will improve the situation because the will, on the part of the Aboriginal people is there and it is very strong.

Another of our preoccupations as young Attikameks are our lands. We are talking about self-government. As young Aboriginal people, we believe in that. We are a Nation that wishes to be master of its own destiny, but this autonomy cannot be achieved without access to land. We are aware and we know it and our elders have told us that we used to have a large territory where we could conduct our traditional activities. For us, practising of our traditional activities on the land accentuates our sense of belonging to a specific cultural group. We believe in our culture, in our language and in our Nation.

However, now that we see our lands

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invaded more and more by fish and game clubs and controlled harvesting zones for ever greater numbers of fishermen and hunters, who are not always people who respect the environment, and by forestry companies who overexploit our forests, and the result is -- and this has been proven by numerous studies -- the destruction of the flora and the fauna.

Do you think, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, that we could ensure our autonomy in a devastated territory? Do you think that we could strengthen our identity, preserve our culture and pass it on to our children in such an environment? When we see that, it causes within us a sense of frustration, a sense of once more being a powerless victim. This will never allow us a better understanding, a better relationship between the Aboriginal Nations and the non-Aboriginal peoples. There must be a change.

I will conclude by thanking you for listening to our claims and now we will pray to the Creator to share his wisdom with you. I thank you in

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the name of the entire community and of the Aboriginal students.

Thank you!

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you!

Thank you all, each of you for this presentation which certainly contained a message of hope and was constructive.

I would like first of all, quickly, because time is running short, point out something on the subject of the residential schools. Clearly, this is a question that comes up almost constantly, the residential schools and culture, the loss of culture, that comes up almost constantly before the Commission wherever we go in Canada.

We are aware, obviously, of the necessity of a healing process related to the reality that has passed during the preceding generations. The way in which the Commission handles this issue, the issue of the residential schools at this time, is as follows: we believe, because there have been many request to favour, basically, the appearance of the people who would come and tell about their experiences in the residential schools.

We wondered about that for some time, and in the end we decided not to do anything specific about

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it, because ultimately we realized that we risked causing more harm than good, leaving behind a lot of pain, basically, and encouraging people to express their troubles and sorrows without having any mechanism. We realized that we had no mechanisms to offer for taking charge, and we did not want the Commission's visit to cause more unhappiness than it had intended to.

Of course, we receive regular testimonies, and you have given us one this evening in the oral tradition, which is always very impressive and heart-felt, but the Commission is going instead to take up the question of residential schools to try to find out basically what its impact has been, the impact of this extremely harmful government policy, in fact, on the loss of cultures, on the loss of parental ties, on the loss of aboriginal languages. We have young people as such come to us and say that they came home, and

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could no longer talk with their grandparents. In some cases, they couldn't even talk to their parents any more.

So, we're going to try to do something that has not been done up to now, to really examine the consequences in depth, the collective consequences for aboriginal peoples, not just for individuals, case by case, and on that basis, we shall try to draw up some recommendations where nothing is ruled out obviously. So that is the step that the Commission has decided to take.

On this theme - and it is related in general terms - the theme of culture and languages, of family problems and residential schools, on the question of culture and languages, this is in fact the most universal theme that we hear about, identity, the need to restore some equilibrium to their identity.

The difficulty of making the transition - that's what the young people are saying - to the modern world, caught between two worlds, and you know we have had many hearings in provincial prisons, in the

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penitentiaries, and it is really shocking. The young people say exactly the same thing and they often tell us, we find our identity when we get to jail, because there are many young people there with us, and we were finally able to have access to our elders and develop ourselves on a spiritual plane.

Now, what I want to say right now, is that the question of language and culture is a major one, because it is front and centre. It is central for finding solutions to several problems. Clearly, in some cases it is harder than in others, the fact is that here in Attikamek territory, in spite of the gaps in the studies, life is totally the reverse. We were with the Algonquins since the beginning of the week, and they talked to us a lot about language and culture, but that had nothing to do with the presentation you have given us today, because here we are in a situation of trying to bring back something that has been lost.

It is clear that we are going to try to find some ways to ensure that culture, the affirmation of culture, can be accomplished, not only for culture

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but because it is central to a whole package of other problems, and this is what people have been telling us, basically. I am just translating what we have heard.

I would certainly like to thank you for that presentation, and maybe as a piece of technical information, I can ask you about the Regional Council on Education and Culture that is part of the Attikamek Council, and is financed in part by projects of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, in part, as you said, and also by the budget that the Department of Indian Affairs gives to the communities. What kind of budget does that represent in the final analysis?

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** It represents about \$400,000. That's because there is, in addition, the post-secondary education for adults. That is on top. But for developing programs, that is about \$400,000. Since we are always working at the level of the three communities, there is travel, often there is lots of travelling, by the teachers, the directors, the panels,

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for education, language and culture. So, it is still an insufficient amount of money. And we have not even touched the secondary level, or the issue of psychology, as student counselling puts it.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Is your Council located in La Tuque?

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** Yes

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** What do you have in the way of personnel?

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** We have educating consultants at the primary level, in mathematics, measurement and evaluation, French, second language. There is a curriculum writer. There is a graphic artist. We have someone who advises on the Attikamek language, too, who teaches programs for the first grade. She is working on her second grade program, to start using it in the second grade program next year.

In programs that require less time, like catechism, visual arts, we ask the communities to help us to participate in these programs.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Now, if I understand correctly, I am looking at your primary school program. In fact, this morning you mentioned that in the

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primary school here in Manawan, teaching is done in the Attikamek language.

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** At the pre-school level, and in the first grade.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Only there?

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** Yes. We also have a teacher for Attikamek as a mother tongue, but he is a specialist who teaches the other primary grades one or two hours a week.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So then, your project is in fact aimed at expanding it to cover the primary level.

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** That's it, except that in the second grade, it will be done 50% in Attikamek.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Bilingual.

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** That's right. We can't put it in place all at once, because we don't have the resources to conduct the programs in the Attikamek language.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And it is your organization that supplies the teaching material?

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** Yes. We pay the bills too, the fees, the photocopies, then the printing, and the communities also help out by buying the materials, which are very expensive for us, since they are made on such a small scale. We made the rounds of the ministries to ask for money, and they told us the project was crazy, that it is unrealistic because it is for only 3,500 people in the whole world. It is as if sometimes there are even some Aboriginal people who do not have their language, who find it painful to believe in it.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I think we are now getting to the heart, the very heart of the question. In the context of a living language, this is even more obvious, and I can assure you that the Commission is going to study this question, because it is fundamental. This is where we get into the need for public education and getting governments and the public to understand what it all means.

In this sense, your contribution is certainly important. I thank you for it. If you have

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some additional thoughts in the coming year, we would appreciate if you keep in touch and send us any documents or further ideas. This is a major subject.

**GENEVIÈVE NEASHIT:** Thank you

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would also like to say to Jimmy that I think we are aware, when we were talking about professional studies, that you have to go away for post-secondary studies. I think that was what you meant when you talked a bit about the nation expatriating itself to the outside world. What I wanted to verify is in connection with post-secondary studies, it seems to us, this is a question that we are trying to discuss with the young people, how to succeed.

We were just with the Wassanipi Cree (PH) and there was a group of young people who came to testify before us and they told us, bring us a CEGEP to the reserve, bring a university to the reserve, then we'll attend it. And then we had a good discussion essentially to say that in the short and medium term it does not seem very realistic to think that there is going to be a university on the reserve. Still, there

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is Chibougamou nearby, and when you are in the northern communities, it is even tougher, because you are so far away, and that brings us to the whole discussion of the transfer of support in order to go and do post-secondary studies, that often have to be done outside the community - with a view to having the choice to come back and take up jobs in teaching, in health etc., or otherwise to do something else.

In the end, the question that I am asking, I know, people tell us, they say, we are going to lose our soul if we leave the community and in a certain way, we were being told that just now, but it seems to us, in the Commission, that together we have to find a way of making sure that this can be done, without in fact losing your identity, and the transition can take place. This is not just a question of money, but one that is much broader. We feel, in any case, that we need to have suggestions from the communities to help us come up in the end with some

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recommendations that will be concrete and that will be able to make this possible.

I don't know if you want to explain a little of what you think about this, because you are at the Secondary IV level, and eventually you will have to face the question next year, that is to say what you are going to do afterwards about your post-secondary studies?

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** Expatriation, you know, is one of the main causes for the failure of aboriginal students in school. It doesn't just affect you externally. There is a psychological effect inside the individual himself. That has a real impact, loss of identity like the loss of our culture, and sometimes even the loss of our language.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In secondary school, after primary school is certainly very early, but basically, the question I am asking is that, well, in two years there is not going to be any CEGEP in Manawan. There is not going to be a post-secondary training institution. So, what are you going to do then? Do you mean that it is unthinkable to go away temporarily to get a post-secondary education? Do you feel you don't have enough support? How do you see that as far as you are concerned

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yourself, and how do you see it for your colleagues whom you are representing?

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** It is a fact that may not be very pleasant, but you have to face life. It is one of the realities, one of the harsh realities. Personally I think I can make it through, but for some other students, I think they are going to have real difficulties.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** If you could think about what you would need, what would be useful for you and the others, to help, to make it easier, from your point of view, it would be useful for everyone to be able to talk about that, because it is you young people who have to live with the situation. I certainly don't want to say that the ideal, the objective of being able to do it in your own community should not be there as a goal to be reached, but in the short run, you have to live with the situation as it is.

So, if young people like you could think about what they need, what they are lacking to be able to take a step, to think that they can do it, to try to do it without becoming disconnected, or as little as possible. In any case, that is part of our discussion and we would like to have it with the public also, because

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it is an important preoccupation in the area of the host communities.

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** May I make a suggestion?

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes.

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** Maybe if we could integrate a CEGEP into a reserve somewhere, an Amerindian reserve, maybe that would make things easier in some ways, to set up a program such as they have at Chicoutimi, or at Quebec, but this time on a real Amerindian reserve, and really build a program.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Even if it were not necessarily in the Attikamek community.

**JIMMY FLAMAND:** Even if it is not necessarily with the Attikamek reserve, provided that all the students from all the other reserves could have access to it. That's what I think.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well, thank you.

Mrs. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:**

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[English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you. That brings us to the end of our work for this afternoon. Clearly we are having a bit of a problem with our schedule. I suggest that after this, if everyone agrees, we should start our work about 8:45 p.m., maybe at 9:00 p.m., because we have requests for private meetings with some women's groups and we still have four presentations, the Council of Health and Social Services, the Mamo Atoskewin Association of Attikamek, the General Council of Attikamek Women and the Chamber of Commerce.

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Well then, I suggest we start again by 9:00 p.m. at the latest. We shall break and adjourn the hearing for dinner and to allow the Commission to hold its private hearings.

Once again, we apologize for the fact that we have to start again rather late, but it's very important for us, and I think for the community as well, that we really be able to give everyone an opportunity to present their point of view.

Well, thank you. We'll see you again shortly.

--- Hearing adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

--- Hearing resumed at 9:05 p.m.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We are going to resume the hearing with the presentation by the Atikamekw Health and Social Services Council, Ms. Joan Moore and her colleagues.

Ms. Moore.

**JOAN MOORE, ATIKAMEKW HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL:** I wish to express my particular thanks to the Commission for allowing us to give our opinion on health services and social services.

This presentation is called "Autopsy of a Genocide". The problems currently experienced with

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alcohol, drugs, violence, suicide, unemployment, housing, etc. are in fact the consequences of a basic situation that shows itself to be a holocaust. The real problems originate with profound wounds leading to a genocide, leaving the people in a fragile shell, emptied of their identity and without an age, without spirit, dehumanized.

The injuries, boarding schools, loss of identity, dignity, abuse, being deprived of the family core; the control, on the reservations; the values that have been destroyed concerning the elders, territories and traditions. These wounds are the very essence of the fundamental problem, resulting in a loss of identity.

The current services are: depersonalization as a number and a file; taking charge, and depriving people of responsibility; responsibility centred on the responsibilities assumed by teams in charge of making decisions.

This state of affairs is reflected in an increase in costs that are inversely proportional to the effectiveness of the results obtained.

The real needs are: services of prevention and of life organization adapted to the

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Aboriginal Peoples; traditional ideals and models, adapted to the present context, that concern the elders, man, the sacred role of woman, the family, work and shared responsibility; encouraging individuals to take charge of themselves, and the community to take charge of itself.

One conclusion is that consequences are not problems. Money and services are at this time being used to deal with consequences, and they pass by the fundamental problems. It would require a general mobilization of active aboriginal forces to break the current cycle of suffering, violence and power.

I thank you for having heard me.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation, for having come to communicate what I receive as a message of anguish. We have listened all day to presentations that have described problems, but have also offered some elements of a solution. I understand that you are a director of health services and social services for the whole group.

**JOAN MOORE:** For the Atikamekw Nation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** For the Atikamekw Nation as a whole, and thus you are under the authority of the Council that heads the three nations.

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**JOAN MOORE:** Absolutely.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Perhaps, over and above this message that, as I mentioned, reflects a certain anguish in regard to the situation that is experienced in terms of social services, I would like to ask you what kind of support, of assistance you receive from medical services outside the three communities, and also from social services?

**JOAN MOORE:** At the present time, as far as health is concerned, the fact is that the programs we receive in terms of money are not adapted to the problems we are experiencing if we think of the issue of suicide, for example, which is on everyone's lips at the moment, which represents a multi-faceted set of problems.

This money must be allocated for strict programs, where controls have to be put on activities. In relation to the workers in the field, in relation to the powerlessness of the population in asserting its needs, we must object when people want to say, about prevention programs at the Health and Welfare level at this time, that these programs are adapted to what we want at least to have control over.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** At the present time, you have on staff a certain number of workers who are part of the service. Could you tell us a little about this?

**JOAN MOORE:** We have workers who have been trained, and who in addition to that, have been with us since the beginning of the Council of the Atikamekw Nation. At the present time, however, we are not assured of replacements for them. The team must be reconstituted, because the problems are multi-faceted. The problems they have to deal with are not just simple ones, and they are becoming professionals. And this responsibility is imposed on them.

They are being kept like hostages, in a way, and made responsible for the whole operation of a community. They are not able to handle the pressure and also be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in their own community, to intervene in their own family.

It's very difficult. To ensure a future then, we have to be able to say to those who want to take over from these workers that, yes, there is support from the entire community. That's why we speak of shared responsibility.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Essentially, if I understand you correctly, this is really a kind of cry for help, given the scope of the problems.

**JOAN MOORE:** Absolutely. And people must contain themselves in the media.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** At the community level, obviously. This afternoon, when we were talking with one of the workers, and we were being told about the number of suicides, it was mentioned in particular that the young people do not get beyond the third year of secondary school, or do so with difficulty, at the age of the population. It is obvious that what you are saying to us, essentially, is that this creates enormous pressure in terms of social problems, alcoholism and situations of family violence, and that you feel overwhelmed.

**JOAN MOORE:** We are overwhelmed at the present time, because the positions are not occupied. There is a desire to fill these positions with Atikamekw.

It may be necessary to call upon external resources for the moment, until replacements are ready. We want to ensure this future for our young people, who believe in a better community. But if you keep the community in a

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condition where children remain children from birth to old age, without assuming any responsibility, there will always be dependency, and the members of the community will always be dragging along with these problems, than being subject to programs.

They have to be conscious of the fact that they have a responsibility, that they have their own solutions. They can be supervised, and they can be brought into situations where there have been suicides. Recourse has been made to outside professionals, but only on an ad hoc basis. There is a more profound problem of identity.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I have a final question for you. I know that a great deal of energy has been invested in community rights over the last few years, in territorial claims of course, which are seen as the key to the economic development that is the basis for resolving a certain number of the problems you describe.

My question was basically to say that and to tell you that I am interpreting your message as a call to work on both fronts at once.

**JOAN MOORE:** Absolutely.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** One cannot neglect one to the benefit of the other.

**JOAN MOORE:** There must be constant concerted efforts, because my workers will be bringing pressure to bear. They are not miracle-workers. Society, or each community, must take charge of itself, must provide us with its solutions, and we shall be there to participate. Otherwise, we have the feeling that we are being victimized. We become the victims of not being able to do the whole job, and this pressure is felt continually, because we are the ones who should have solutions.

However, these solutions are not obvious. It is necessary to work with the individual. It is necessary to work with the Band Council. It is necessary to work with the Council of Women, with the clinic. Interdisciplinary teams are needed. Without them, we won't be able to cope. People have to be given responsibilities; they can't be kept in within the orbit of the child who assumes no responsibility and who expects to be given everything, because we should not be working on the consequences.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** But what you are saying to us essentially is that the communities must mobilize themselves to deal with these problems.

**JOAN MOORE:** Yes, because their future is at stake.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And not enough is being done in this area.

**JOAN MOORE:** The need isn't felt.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** The workers you spoke of, are they people from the three communities?

**JOAN MOORE:** Yes, from each of the three communities.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** How are they trained?

**JOAN MOORE:** They have taken courses. For a time, there was a course set up in intervention.

On the other hand, on the Health and Welfare side, people in community health and substance abuse are provided. But I don't have the second wave to supply replacements.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So you don't have any replacements in the community.

**JOAN MOORE:** At the present time, there are no trained replacements.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Are certain qualifications required for this work?

**JOAN MOORE:** People have to believe in education. Despite their problems, people have to acquire skills, because it's not just a matter of willingness to do the job. We are associated with professionals, and we want to be professionals too; it's a matter of autonomy.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** For how long have you been the director of this service?

**JOAN MOORE:** I have been director for two years, and I'm starting my third year here.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And what did you do previously?

**JOAN MOORE:** I worked in hospitals. I have 25 years of experience in large hospitals in Montreal.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I see. Thank you.

**JOAN MOORE:** Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Ms. Robinson.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank you. It is a sad picture that you paint here. It is one that we are quite familiar with. I wonder if you could change it, or if you had the authority and the power and

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you could change it, what would you do? To begin changing, do you have any ideas on what this Commission could do to help you?

**JOAN MOORE:** The fact that some people die has to be accepted, as difficult as this may be. However, we have to move in the direction of prevention.

At the present time, I only act on consequences, and for as long as I will be placing people, as I will be kept dealing with emergencies all the time, I will need to have a vision. I have to move things so that people can act on prevention, to intercept problems. There will be victims for a certain time. But it will have to be accepted that there will be victims, and that people cannot question us in order to make us assume responsibility and victimize us through these victims.

We must have prevention, and the money spent must be adapted to our needs. We know that there is suicide and that there is this money for prevention.

But beyond suicide, there's more to it than that. There is violence, abuse, incest. These things must be denounced, not dutifully kept unspoken. It is thus necessary to be in a state of confidence, to achieve a quality of life to which every individual is entitled in

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his or her community. The elders also have a right to supervise their grandchildren.

I think that each of my workers who is accompanying me at this time could give you the same message, if you allowed them to.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I have one other question. You spoke about elders. This problem is one across the country and as it surfaced, many, many people came forward and said that the healing has to take place before any self-government can take place. That is the opinion of a lot of people in the communities across this country. They are looking towards their elders for help.

I think that in order to heal, you have to heal from within as a person, as a human being. in their spirit, in their mind and their soul, and those people rely a lot on the elders and their teachings. They feel they are full of resources right in their communities and all they have to do is to use that, because the connection between the elders and the youth is lost, it has been lost somewhere along the way. Do you think that this might be a possibility of that working?

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**JOAN MOORE:** Elders know their community, they know their people. They have to be allowed to speak. They are going to have their avenues, and the young people are going to imitate them. This is the whole question of tradition, of the empty shell I was speaking of a moment ago. The way to give a favoured position to the elders is to fill this empty shell with spiritual values, with traditional values. We have these values.

Our friends are also there to make this known, to guide us, and to enable them to end their days in our communities.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well, I thank you but I think that it is a message that has to go to the communities. You have certainly given that message to us here, so that you.

**MARY COON, SOCIAL WORKER OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL:** My name is Mary Coon. I am a worker in the area of substance abuse intervention and prevention. You were asking a moment ago what changes, what means were expected. At the present time, there are no professional resources to help the people who are working in the communities to make more progress in human relationships. They presently have to hire people, professionals, from outside. That certainly costs a

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great deal of money, because there is a crisis situation in the communities. It was from this point of view that we were speaking of education for young people. If young people see the workers in a crisis situation, see that even the workers are experiencing a crisis, if they see the workers, I wonder if we are going to make any progress, to get the young people to dream about being workers in health and social services. At the present time, at Wemo, it's been three years that I've been working for Wemotaci, and we've gone through five social workers because of burnout.

Now we have social workers who have no training, but they have been put there because somebody is needed. That's why the workers are obliged to stick together more, because they are seen as individuals, as workers in the community who are professionals, even as people who have a great deal of knowledge in many fields concerning social problems.

At Atikamekw, there are no professionals who can help us in the area of intervention, to give a direction to intervention and to provide a better quality of service, who could help us with intervention, with giving a direction to intervention, with giving a better

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quality of service for people. It is for one of these reasons that the workers are under the pressure of burnout.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would like to thank you for having come to give this testimony. I think that you have not only shared with us an observation that health and social services workers are suffering from fatigue and burnout because of the scope of the problems they face, but have made it clear that the community must, in part, find resources to respond and to establish priorities for coping with its problems. Furthermore, it is obvious, as you say, that there are difficulties involved in adapting the services, the programs that are available from outside the community.

This is not the first time that this has been mentioned, but I would simply like to say that the Commission is going to hold a Canada-wide round table in March, a national round table on health services. One of the reasons, we held a round table on justice last week and a round table in June in Edmonton, on the situation of Aboriginal Peoples in urban areas, and one of the reasons for doing this in regard to health services, concerns just the very thing you are saying to us.

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It is recognized that in a number of communities, an exhaustion factor is at work because of the magnitude of the problems faced. In a certain number of communities, it is difficult to establish priorities and to determine the steps that could be taken to emerge, ultimately, from the tunnel as it were. On the occasion of this round table, we are going to bring together professionals, but also people in the field who are familiar with the problems and who may be able to glimpse, with the Commission, some solutions that could be adopted in a less political and more technical framework. We hope that this is going to help us, to enable us to develop recommendations in an effort to get past this stage in any case, to get out of a situation, to emerge with our heads above water. That's really pretty much what people are talking about between the lines, and even in what they actually say.

Well then, I would simply like to say that we are engaged in a process of dialogue, and if you have any additional ideas, you will no doubt be contacted again in connection with this round table. In the meantime, I wish you good luck.

Thank you.

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I would now like to ask Mr. Jean-Pierre Mattawa, of the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association, to present the brief of the Association.

Good evening. You may proceed when you are ready.

**JEAN-PAUL NEASHIT, VICE-PRESIDENT OF  
THE MAMO ATOSKEWIN ATIKAMEKW ASSOCIATION:** In the first place, allow me to apologize. Mr. Jean-Pierre Mattawa was unable to come, and has delegated me to replace him. I primarily want the man at my left to make the presentation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Can you identify yourself for the purposes of the recording?

**MICHEL ARÈS, PROJECT DIRECTOR FOR THE  
MAMO ATOSKEWIN ATIKAMEKW ASSOCIATION:** Certainly, Mr. Dussault. My name is Michel Arès, and I am the Project Director for the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association. On my left, on my extreme left is Mr. Richard Basile, the Association's wildlife technical specialist, Mr. Gaston Moar, Vice-president of the Association, Mr. Jean-Paul Neashit, also Vice-president of the Association, Ms. Carmen Newashish (PH), Secretary of the Association, and Ghyslaine, her husband, who is a student in forestry.

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To begin with, Mr. Dussault, I would simply like to give you a brief overview of the Association.

In the first place, on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Association, I would like to thank you for having given us this opportunity to speak in the context of this Commission.

The Mamo Atoskewin Association was founded some two years ago. The Association is a non-profit organization representing the interests of the Atikamekw hunters and trappers in the three communities.

The membership of the Association is rather large, because "Atoskewin Nation" means all the resources of the territory, and "Mamo" means to share these resources, to share them together. Our membership is thus very large, including each and every person who is involved in activities in the forest.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In practical terms, how many members are there approximately? Do you have any dues? How does a person become a member of the Association, by applying for membership?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** Yes, on that subject, we take an essentially Atikamekw approach. In other words, because we can't have an aboriginal charter for our

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corporation, membership is determined on the basis of Atikamekw philosophy. This means that up to the present time, the Board of Directors has seen fit not to ask its members to pay dues, and to welcome everyone to its general meetings.

This system reflects the wishes of the Board of Directors and of the people in the communities.

More specifically, the Board of Directors is made up of 15 persons, five for each community, and these people have been delegated by the members to sit on the Board of Directors. They serve as directors for a period of three years. It should be noted that more than half of them are elders.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association was created two years ago.

For a long time, the elders, the trappers had been asking that an association be able to represent them. The mission of the Association is, first and foremost, to protect and to exploit our traditional hunting, fishing and trapping territories and the wildlife resources contained in these areas, which constitute the ancestral Atikamekw territory, about which people have told you, I'm sure. There are several references to the ancestral Atikamekw territory,

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such as the Nikastinan (PH) study, which shows the extent of the territory and its occupation.

With such a broad mandate, the Association necessarily has a number of different terms of reference. Today, we are going to submit a brief to you that only deals with certain technical aspects, tools for territorial management that are going to be presented to the Commission. The Association is necessarily concerned as well by other aspects, but other speakers have previously mentioned them and have presented their own briefs on these matters. One can mention, in particular, the education of young people, one can also talk about the marketing of furs, and one can also talk about supplying of equipment, access to the territory and the political problems associated with those aspects.

Without further delay, I am therefore going to begin to present the brief entitled "Integrated Management of Resources: From Utopia to Reality". The Atikamekw are currently negotiating, with the provincial government and with the federal government, an agreement in principle concerning the territorial rights of their Nation, and also the various compensations and royalties

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that the governments must assume for the use of the territory by third parties.

This brief has been developed in accordance with a policy of partnership and development of resources that is compatible with all the users of the territory and with the supportive capacity of the ecosystems in the Upper and Lower Mauricie region. This brief reflects the projects that the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association has been advocating for nearly three years, in respect of the protection and exploitation of wildlife resources.

If you will permit me, I should first like to offer you a brief description of the ancestral territory of the Atikamekw. This territory extends from Lake Caopatina, north of the Gouin Reservoir, south to St. Michel des Saints, and west from the Mégiscane River, the headwaters of the Mégiscane River, to La Tuque on the East. The Atikamekw already occupied this territory in the 17th century. Its approximate surface area is 62,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

From generation to generation, Atikamekw families have lived on these lands, practising activities of hunting, gathering, fishing and trapping.

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Each multi-family group frequented a territory recognized by the other groups, and meetings could be organized as needed. At that time, the Atikamekw were the only, or almost the only, users of the territory.

However, with colonization and industrialization, the traditional Atikamekw way of life was significantly disturbed. This process began in the 19th century.

In 1945, an order in council of the Chamber of the Executive Council of the Government of Quebec decreed the creation of the East Abitibi Beaver Reserve. This reserve was intended exclusively for use by the Atikamekw, for their hunting and trapping activities. This reserve had to be created to protect and restore the populations of beaver, which had been decimated by over-exploitation. From this time on, the Atikamekw enjoyed an exclusive right to trap within the Abitibi Beaver Reserve.

Since that time, the lifestyles of Atikamekw hunters and trappers have been profoundly disturbed by forest industry operations. Timber, then pulpwood was harvested to an excessive degree, threatening the wildlife potential of the Atikamekw territory and

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destroying the living environment of many Atikamekw families. The impact of forest operations on the Upper and Lower Mauricie is unquestionable, and this activity is the determining factor that has led the Atikamekw to withdraw to their ancestral territory.

Today, the Atikamekw live in communities called Indian Reserves. The Atikamekw population comprises some 4,000 individuals distributed among the communities of Wemotaci, Manawan and Opitciwan. The Atikamekw remain in these communities, but have not abandoned their territory or lifestyle for all that.

Furthermore, when they were free to pursue their activities on their ancestral territory, the Atikamekw lived in harmony with their environment. They were conscious of the resources that they exploited, and they used these resources in a rational way, in order to preserve them for future generations. In those days, the Atikamekw in fact already practised sustainable development of the territory.

The Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association has been established precisely to pursue this mission of protecting the territory. The primary purpose of the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association is to protect

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and exploit the traditional hunting, fishing and trapping territories of the Atikamekw, and to protect and exploit the wildlife resources that these territories contain.

Regarding the *Forest Act* and its impact on our ancestral territory, the Atikamekw hunters and trappers are very concerned about the application of the *Forest Act* and about the awarding of 88 forest management and supply contracts on the territory of their ancestors.

They worry about the process for awarding these contracts and the norms of intervention that govern them, especially since these norms apply uniformly to the entire ancestral territory of the Atikamekw, including the Abitibi Beaver Reserve.

The process of awarding forest management and supply contracts on the territory is based exclusively on the principle of giving the forest industry a stable supply of ligneous material for the next 25 years.

The forestry companies have been awarded these supplies provided that they can ensure a sustained yield from the forest in exploiting their respective management units.

In this context, maintenance of forest potential has been the major concern of the Quebec Department of Energy and Resources in developing plans for allocating public lands.

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These allocation plans are approved by the Quebec Cabinet and become the framework that the County Regional Municipalities employ in preparing their development schemes. Through this process, the *Forest Act* is linked to the *Lands in the Public Domain Act* and to the *Land Use Planning and Development Act*. Land allocation thus becomes a purely governmental affair, without any tradition at the decision-making level.

For example, the plan for allocating public lands for the County Regional Municipality of Upper Saint-Maurice subjects more than 90 per cent of the Municipality's territory to classification as a forest production zone.

A forest production zone is defined as a territorial unit where the main activity is the production of ligneous matter. However, this definition takes into account the territory's other natural resources whose biological and physical aspects are maintained by forestry practice.

Faced with this allocation of their ancestral territory, and knowing from personal experience what forest operations have done over the last 30 years, Atikamekw hunters and trappers are worried and sceptical

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about the possibility of continuing to pursue their way of life in such circumstances. In fact, the pursuit of their activities is threatened by this unilateral decision to allocate the territory to satisfy the forest industry, without taking their needs into account, and especially without considering their rights to manage and exploit wildlife resources within the Beaver Reserve. Because their exclusive right to trap, and the areas where they carry on their activities, are not defined and recorded on the plan for allocating public lands, the respect for and protection of these areas and this right become uncertain, subject to the goodwill of the forest companies.

The Regulations on norms for intervention in forests in the public domain contain no standard of intervention that deals with or protects use of the forest by Aboriginal Peoples, whether these be Atikamekw, Montagnais or Algonquin. None of the forest activities of these peoples is protected, except perhaps for the protection accorded to a trapping camp built in accordance with the standards laid down in the *Forest Act*.

In order to fill the gaping hole in the *Forest Act* in respect of Aboriginal rights, and to ensure that Atikamekw hunters and trappers will be able to pursue their activities, the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association

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intends to make a proposal to the forest companies operating within the Manawan, Wemotaci and Opitciwan division of the Abitibi East Beaver Reserve. This proposal will be to establish a system for the joint management of all forest resources in the region. As a first step in this process, the Association has had an integrated resource management plan prepared. This plan, which contains the general principles and development concepts advocated for the sustainable development of the territory, is contained in an appendix to our brief.

I must slow down, I am, I'm also excited.

I must slow down to allow our discussions to be interpreted.

Well then, the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association is now proceeding with an examination of the technical and financial feasibility of these management plans, and also with an analysis of the economic consequences for each partner. This second phase, which involves concerted action with our forest industry partners in gathering information, will lead to negotiation of agreements to implement the revised plans.

This integrated approach is designed to mitigate the impact of forest industry operations on the activities of Atikamekw hunters and trappers. The

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development concepts and standards of intervention proposed by the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association are based on the recommendations of its members and on the comments made by the various presenters at public hearings on forest protection strategy. Moreover, the plans for integrated management based on these concepts and standards of intervention presuppose that the Atikamekw hunters and trappers will first identify the various sites of living areas to be protected, and also the different wildlife habitats to be protected and/or developed by the forest industry operator.

This work of identification constitutes the very basis of the principle of integrated management advocated by the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association. The fundamental values of the Atikamekw hunters and trappers in regard to the protection and use of the territory emerge from this geographically referenced identification.

This work of identification entitled "Identification and Protection of the Atikamekw Use of the Forest" is the cornerstone of the partnership between the Atikamekw and the various users of the territory. This work is currently being carried out by the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association in the context of an

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environmental study commissioned by the Vice-president  
- Environment , Research and Supervision Branch,  
Hydro-Québec.

The aim of this study is to accumulate the data provided by Atikamekw trappers and hunters by means of a spatially referenced information system, commonly known in English as a Geographic Information System (G.I.S.). When the information has been geographically referenced, it is then analyzed and classified in terms of potential for wildlife habitat and for human occupation. This study will be carried out in three phases: test on a pilot area (Phase I); application of the system of analysis to the entire ancestral territory (Phase II); report summarizing the study results (Phase III).

Phase I covers all the stages in the initial project. The aim at this point is to establish mechanisms for gathering, validating and systematizing data in a spatially referenced information system.

The first stage of Phase I consists of preparing two reference documents allowing validation and/or justification of the information contained in the inventory maps.

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The reference document concerning the Atikamekw human environment has made it possible to draw up a list of elements in the human environment, to describe the nature of each of these elements and to show how these different elements constitute useful and necessary developments for living on the territory and exploiting its wildlife resources. This document will also enable people to evaluate the quality of the available data, to define the operations for clarifying and adding to this information, and to plan the integration of the elements of the Atikamekw human environment into a spatially referenced information system.

The reference document concerning wildlife habitats defined the scientific protocols for analyzing these habitats, in order to determine their potentials and locations. These protocols therefore specified the list of biophysical characteristics recognized by the scientific community and cited in scientific literature.

In the second stage of Phase I, all the data collected by means of the scientific protocols were incorporated into the system, for validation and localization. This information was then processed by the system, to determine the level of potentiality of the

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wildlife habitats that had been identified. The elements of the human environment are simply actualized and inventoried by the system.

In the third stage, a report was written to summarize what had been done in the first phase of the environmental study. This report made it possible to evaluate the performance of the spatially referenced information system, from three points of view. In the first place, the system was evaluated in relation to the validation and evaluation objectives established by the reference documents. Secondly, the system was assessed in terms of the mechanisms for gathering and systematizing data that had been set up as part of the organization of the project. Thirdly, the system was considered in relation to the tangible results obtained through completion of Phase I, in terms of technological transfer and skills acquisition. These evaluations include a set of recommendations and a number of measures to be applied in Phase II. You have in hand the report I am speaking of, the summary report.

Many results have been achieved through the work that was carried out in Phase I. We believe that in evaluating these results, one must take into account the fact that this is an innovative project, because it

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attempts to bring together and to use two different types of knowledge in order to assess the quality and the potentiality of wildlife habitats. Here in Quebec, this vision of a qualitative management of wildlife habitats is still at the experimental stage. Trappers and biologists have made concerted efforts to validate the information on wildlife habitats, and we should look upon this collaborative venture as marking the beginning of a new era in wildlife management.

Involvement of users in locating and following up on wildlife habitats can only lighten the workload of scientists and of the Government in their search for information. The results that we are obtaining from this first phase have been derived from the trappers' knowledge of their territory. This aspect must be considered as a recognition of the role that these people play and of their importance in ensuring sound wildlife management in the Upper and Lower Mauricie region.

One other aspect of the results should be stressed. This is the design and management of a spatially referenced information system used for biological, administrative and environmental purposes. This aspect is also innovative because for the first time in Upper Mauricie and Lower Mauricie, it will be possible

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for an unlimited bank of information to be created, by Aboriginal people moreover. With this bank of data, we can develop a new form of collaboration in the area of information exchange and sharing, with the stated purpose of getting all the users in a particular territory to develop and protect wildlife habitats.

On behalf of the Atikamekw hunters and trappers, the Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association has developed a collaborative approach based on respect for values and on the sustainable development of the ancestral territory.

The use of modern techniques goes beyond the traditional techniques of management. The projects that the Association is carrying out in the area of development are being done in good faith, with the intention of integrating Atikamekw values into the Quebec and Canadian community.

The situation is becoming more and more critical, and the resources of the territory are shrinking day by day. The Atikamekw hunters and trappers are witnesses of the ever worsening decline of wildlife resources on their territory. The Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association is concerned about the survival of its members' trapping, hunting and fishing activities.

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Despite the cooperative efforts made by the Association, the provincial government is doing very little at present to encourage and support our initiatives in regard to the integrated management of resources. It should be understood that the provincial government has rights in respect of the management of public lands. This government has responsibility for public lands. In the field of forestry, the Department of Forests has jurisdiction, in particular. The Department of Recreation, Hunting and Fishing is also involved.

The Association is concerned about the worsening decline of wildlife potential, and about the weakness of the regulations of the Department of Forests and of the Department of Recreation, Hunting and Fishing that are supposed to perpetuate this potential.

The Association wishes to participate fully in wildlife management on its ancestral territory, in particular within the Abitibi Beaver Reserve, using modern management tools in a spirit partnership. This means being a full partner.

The Mamo Atoskewin Atikamekw Association also wants to be a partner in the development and exploitation of the territory. The Association is aware of the significant economic benefits that forestry

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and wildlife development will procure for the Atikamekw communities, but is also conscious of the need to preserve the current potential of our wildlife, recreational and forest resources for future generations.

In closing, I would like to quote Chief Seattle, who said:

"We love this land as the newborn loves its mother's  
heartbeat. Take care of it as we have  
taken care of it. Keep the memory  
of the earth. Love it and preserve  
it for all children".

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I wish to thank you very much for your very clear presentation. It was all the clearer for us because we had occasion to get somewhat acquainted with this issue, with the Barrier Lake Band Council. This was in quite a different context, obviously, but the concern was essentially the same, namely to reconcile exploitation of the forest for production with consideration of wildlife and other uses.

Obviously, the issue was discussed in the context of a trilateral agreement, with its attendant problems of interpretation, which had been signed by four ministers of the Quebec government, by the minister

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responsible at the federal level, and by the band. If I understand correctly, this agreement provided, in a way, for the kind of studies you are undertaking here regarding the quality of wildlife potential and the sensitive areas that should be taken into consideration in any exploitation of the forest. This experience has perhaps enabled us to grasp the scope of your project more quickly this evening. We also touched briefly on the subject this afternoon with another speaker. If I understand correctly, your approach is to try to negotiate a partnership with the forest companies on the territory, or in short a situation where your concerns could be taken into account in forest management.

I do have one question. You mention precisely that you intend to propose to the forest products companies that you take back the lands within the East Abitibi Beaver Reserve at Manawan, etc., under a joint management system. How many forest products companies are in the Reserve?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** We can say that within the Abitibi Beaver Reserve, there are some forty forest supply and development contracts. A number of these contracts cover several different places. On the other hand, the same company may have several contracts.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** How many companies would this represent?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** We could say that there are approximately 12 to 15 companies.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Have you initiated this process of discussion with these companies?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** The discussions that we have had to date have been of a rather introductory nature, if you will. How can I put it? They have not been on a very technical level. The approaches we have made were intended to find out what interest there was in these companies, at the corporate level.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And at this time, is there a generally positive response?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** Well, the fact is that in the process, in Phase II, we have to establish the technical and financial feasibility of our plans. And in this regard, the forest industry companies are necessarily reticent about having people come in from the outside, to criticize and comment on their management plan. The companies would be much more inclined to collaborate with the Association and to participate within a partnership framework. And in this regard, yes, the companies did inform us of their interest. In this regard, they made

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comments to the effect that the Association could become a partner to discuss these issues.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You mean partner in a possible management arrangement? What do you mean by partnership, because to discuss...

**MICHEL ARÈS:** Well, the nature of partnership, that's precisely the question that we also are asking ourselves. We're working on it to evaluate exactly what it is that people want you to be, or whether it's the approach based on full partnership. In the contacts we were able to have, they expressed to us the idea of being members in a club. So this would mean being a full partner, namely having a right of veto over development plans, of having a right of veto over the plans.

When one is a partner, one necessarily gains something and gives something, when one is a partner, at the business level. In our view, these aspects must be judged and then evaluated attentively. This is what we are doing at the present time. We are maintaining regular contact with the forest products companies concerned.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Now if I understand rightly, you have been able to start this work and finance this work through Hydro-Québec, in connection with an environmental study?

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**MICHEL ARÈS:** This is in fact the case.

As we mentioned in our brief, the cornerstone is identification, the identification project. This project is the foundation on which we rely for making comments, for seeing to things, for developing our management plan.

We use our project to target places that are sensitive areas, to point out to the companies that in such places, it is preferable to have a certain type of development.

We are conscious of the fact that certain parts of the territory have now reached a dangerous threshold. If we take the case of the moose, people are talking, sir, about a density of 0.6 moose per ten square kilometres. Six moose, and then the numbers will drop like a stone. At the present time, people in the Department of Recreation, Hunting and Fishing are asking themselves some serious questions about this matter.

As far as the process of revising standards goes, the new standards will not come into effect until 1994. That means that for two more years, we are regularly going to see the process of exploitation that is causing such ravages at this time. The Forestry Act is a first step, but it does not amount to a comprehensive action. It is important to mention that there is a project, not of integrated resource management, but of

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development of integrated resource management, which is being carried out by three departments of the Quebec Government on an annual basis. They have two control zones in that project. One of these zones is in the Laurentides Wildlife Sanctuary, and the other is in Mastigouche Park.

In neither place is there any use by Aboriginal Peoples.

So there is talk of integrated management of resources, but are people really getting to the bottom of things? Are they really talking about integrated management?

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Essentially, what you are trying to do because the situation is, as I understand it, as follows. On the one hand, the *Lands and Forests Act*, which was recast in 1987, did not provide for integrated management of resources, and hence did not provide for multiple uses. The supply contracts were signed. Now you are intervening to say, we are there and we have our uses of the forest, and we think that these uses can be reconciled with the use that is made of the forest for the purposes of supply contracts. However, this must be done by taking the realities of the situation into account, by being very familiar with these realities.

Basically, if I understand correctly what you are trying to do, you're looking for something

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different from the situation we are familiar with at Barrier Lake, where there was in fact an agreement signed, but a problem of interpretation arose afterwards. In that case, the Government seems to be saying, my law applies and takes precedence over the plan, over the trilateral agreement that was signed. You, on the other hand, seem to be going the route of investing in the forest product companies that have supply contracts, to try to come to an agreement within a partnership framework, so that your concerns will be taken into account. Is that right?

**MICHEL ARÈS:** In effect, the principles of sustainable development are based first and foremost on respect among users and on their shared values. And then, after all, we weren't the ones who invented the concept. These are principles that are clearly applied, not only in Canada, as you know, Mr. Dussault, but throughout the world. Well then, it's on that basis that we are approaching the forest product companies, for we know very well that if we go through government channels, we will have to face bureaucracy, and then technicalities. That doesn't get you anywhere. However, we're aware, the trappers are aware of the systematic depletion of the territory's wildlife potential. It's constantly diminishing.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Your presentation is clear, in regard to the result and the solution, and I think that we can very well see what it's about. Yesterday, it was suggested to us at the Commission that we look upon the context of the trilateral agreement as a pilot project, as a model that could be developed throughout Canada, because the problem, essentially, is not peculiar to Quebec, here in Abitibi, or in the region where we were yesterday. The basic principle is certainly the same. I think that your presentation has helped to enrich and complement, here in a context that is your own, what we heard yesterday. We are definitely going to read your brief, and attempt to use it to our benefit which is, in a way, everyone's benefit.

Well then, considering the hour, I don't think that we can go any further than that with the presentation. I think you have made a clear presentation of where you are at. You are presently in Phase II of your project. Let me, then, thank you for your presentation, which is clear and also interesting, because you, the people concerned, have taken it in hand.

I don't know whether my colleague, Ms. Robinson, wants to expand on or add to my comments.

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Thank you for this presentation, and we hope that we can be of help to you. Thank you. At heart, we're dealing with what is useful for everyone in Quebec, not just for the Aboriginal Peoples. Your concern is shared by a very large proportion of the general public.

**MICHEL ARÈS:** Thank you for your attention. We hope, precisely, that the work we are now doing will benefit the community.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would now like to ask the representatives of the General Council of Atikamekw women to come and speak to us.

Good evening.

**JEANNETTE BOIVIN, DIRECTOR OF THE  
GENERAL COUNCIL OF ATIKAMEKW WOMEN:** Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jeannette Boivin, and I am the Director of the General Council of Atikamekw Women. The General Council is an affiliate of the Association of Women of Quebec, of the Aboriginal women of Quebec. With me are representatives of the Manawan Council of Women, who also have a brief to present. I shall begin.

Lady and Gentlemen, I am honoured to come before you to deliver my talk. I should like to emphasize that the words you are about to hear come from various sources, and in particular reflect the concern expressed

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by women at our annual meeting of the General Council of Atikamekw Women, which was held at Manawan this fall. My remarks will also reflect the concerns raised by the various agencies, committees and councils to which I belong as a member of the community of the Atikamekw Nation and as a worker in the social and economic field.

I believe in democracy that respects our traditions. However, I maintain that the objectives which Atikamekw society has set for itself, including self-government, can only be attained through the participation of everyone in the process of defining our society. The orientation of the Atikamekw Nation has been defined by developing estates general through consultations. This definition and these actions have been beneficial for all of us. We are providing protection against shocks and political changes.

For this reason, prior consultation must also figure in the definition of our society at a time when we are intensely involved in a negotiating process that must be completed within the deadlines set by governmental authorities. Consultation has been our great strength, and has won us the support of the members of our various communities. Our leaders must meet great challenges. In particular, they will have to define the

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structure that will enable our Atikamekw government, as advocated in our estates general, to guarantee its members fair treatment and respect for their integrity.

It is desirable to have decentralization of decision-making powers in a situation of self-government. In our case, decentralization would foster greater participation of our members in community and national matters in which they are deeply interested, such as education and socioeconomic development, to name only two.

Broadening the responsibilities of our elected representatives, who will have the difficult role of government and of guiding the destiny of our Nation, does not leave room for the option of centralized power, because we would lose in efficiency what would be maintained in quantity. We have to be on guard against the danger of reproducing the same paternalistic system that has been so often criticized. Moreover, if we create agencies or councils without really developing them and defining their powers, we will make the mistake of delegating responsibilities without conferring on these bodies the authority required to fulfil their mandate.

What seems of utmost importance, however, is to establish an appeal system, for cases where

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individuals feel that their rights have been infringed.

This system, which might take the form of a parity committee or an ombudsman's office, would benefit from full recognition of its authority without interference, in keeping with existing rights and legislation.

The past year has been difficult for our Nation, which has experienced a high rate of suicide and situations of violence that have been hard to bear. It is important that the solutions to these problems come from the community. The deficiencies identified in the existing system are usually the same: loss of cultural identity; loss of individual dignity for economic and social reasons; lack of formal education; non-recognition of the existing police force; inadequate or incomplete training, and hence an inability to intervene effectively.

Training and education are the guarantee of self-government. Unfortunately, the DEIC program as a road to success, in the economic development strategy of the Aboriginal Peoples, is proving to be a restricting framework both financially and institutionally.

Financial assistance for education is equally restricting.

In the present circumstances, implementation of self-government and economic self-sufficiency for the

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Aboriginal Peoples will be difficult unless additional funds are invested.

Transition from paternalism to self-government does not imply that governments will be relieved of all responsibilities, but rather that concerted action will be undertaken to guarantee that we take charge of our destiny as a people. This autonomy is indissociable from the territorial foundation essential to any independent government. We of course believe in partnership and in joint jurisdiction and management for certain territories, but we nonetheless want to take full control of a certain part of the territories in question, which is necessary for establishing our autonomy.

In our dealings with the federal and provincial governments, the relationships that must be fostered are of the kind that exist between governments. Recognition of an Atikamekw government requires the establishment of a relationship between equals.

Lady and Gentlemen, I thank you for having listened to me.

I shall now turn the microphone over to the others.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. If I understand correctly then, you have another brief?

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**JEANNETTE BOIVIN:** Yes, a second brief.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Still by...

**JEANNETTE BOIVIN:** No, this brief is from the Manawan Council of Women.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well, proceed.

**THÉRÈSE OTTAWA, MEMBER OF THE MANAWAN COUNCIL OF WOMEN:** Good evening. My name is Thérèse Ottawa. I am a member of the Manawan Council of Women.

Lady and Gentlemen Commissioners, in the first place let us thank you for having come to Manawan to hear our comments, which are at the centre of the concerns of our community.

We realize that the day has been a long one, and that a number of groups have already expressed their comments to you. However, if you have agreed to hear us, it is because you realize that the viewpoint of women is important to your inquiry concerning Aboriginal Peoples.

The Manawan Council of Women has many concerns, but today, we shall present only those that, in our opinion, are most urgently in need of consideration.

These are, essentially, all the problems associated with violence, with sexual abuse, and with the abuse of drugs

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and alcohol. We, the women and children, are always, as you know, the primary victims of these problems. This is why we have chosen to speak to you about these problems and about the steps which, in our view, should be taken to resolve them.

Our community, like all communities of Aboriginal People, suffers from the scourge of violence.

Many women are victims of violence at the hands of their husbands, and this violence takes many forms: physical, verbal, economic, psychological, sexual. Women live in fear with their children. If they make a complaint, they suffer reprisals. It's always the same sad routine.

The justice system provides no solutions. The aggressor receives a mild reprimand, but no real help.

We recommend that there be more severe sentences. Communities must be encouraged to mount programs to help aggressors and their victims.

When there is conjugal violence, Health and Welfare will not pay the transportation costs of the victim unless certain criteria are met. The victim must have physical injuries. Such criteria are totally insane, when one knows that the victim has already suffered much.

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Too often, the social services reply to us that they do not have the money to evacuate victims of violence.

In regard to victims, we recommend that the departments involved, namely Health and Welfare and Social Services, jointly provide budgets to communities for evacuating victims. We also recommend the establishment of an emergency committee, made up of local people working with the community: a social worker, a community health representative and a representative of the Council of Women. It is this committee that could decide on criteria that would be adapted to the realities of the community.

When there is economic violence, there are also criteria for deciding that the husband's share of social assistance benefits will be separate from the share of the mother and children.

There are women and children who hardly have anything to wear, because the husband controls everything. Women have to grapple with multiple problems: a feeling of powerlessness, defeatism, depression. Alcoholism is widespread, among men, women and teenagers.

In cases of conjugal violence, it is always the victim who leaves home, either to go into a

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hostel or to seek refuge with relatives, where there are often a number of people already living.

We recommend conducting an experiment.

Instead of removing the victim, remove the aggressor. We can't spend our time getting victims out of their homes and doing nothing about the aggressors. Without treatment, nothing will change.

People feel a need to talk about this, and they need support from local resources and community leaders. You cannot not listen to us, not support us. People are deciding to talk, and it's an opportune moment to help us, because if people feel that they are not supported, the situation is likely to regress. People will close in on themselves, and we will not be any farther ahead.

We are carrying on a battle to denounce what is being experienced. To do this, we need professional support. We are asking the Government and our leaders to give us the means to resolve our problems.

We have to look around us. If nothing is done, things are going to explode everywhere. It will be like what happened in Great Lake Victoria, which was a real crisis, like an explosion.

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When women organize and come together to discuss their concerns, there are reprisals on the part of husbands in many cases.

We recommend: that efforts to increase awareness be continued; that discussion groups for men be organized; that the Government recognize women's committees set up in communities; that the Government give more funding to women's groups, and assist them with competent resources; and that the political authorities be made aware of this.

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY, MANAWAN COUNCIL OF WOMEN:**

My name is Délima Niquay, and I am a member of the Council of Women. I am going to continue the presentation, and deal with sexual abuse.

There are many cases of sexual abuse, and people who have experienced it as young people reproduce this behaviour. This is still a taboo subject.

We think the time has come to break the circle of silence.

Victims of sexual abuse are marked for life, and the abuse affects their personal development.

Women live in a state of anxiety, in fear, because they fear for their children. Sexual abuse is a major concern for us mothers. But we are not sure this concern is a priority for the local political authorities.

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As far as funding programs are concerned, people always receive the information at the last minute, and there is never enough time to prepare anything. I am going to give you an example of this: a conference on family violence in February 1992. All in all, a month, but after three weeks, the conference had to take place and the last week was for preparing the report, making inquiries for speakers. They all told us that they already had engagements.

We recommend: that bands or other organizations be notified within a reasonable time; that there be more concerted efforts among government departments concerning the allocation of budgets, for the evacuation of victims for example; and that when they provide funding, a teamwork approach be encouraged in the communities.

Regarding drug and alcohol abuse, we note that alcohol has been used to relieve feelings of malaise. Many people in a bad way have employed alcohol to deaden a social pain caused by various factors in the dominant society. For a number of people who have developed a strong dependency, alcohol has now become, as it were, a way of life.

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We know what goes on in our communities.

We also know that the solutions are to be found in our communities. We have spiritual leaders. We have elders, but we also need funding and human resources from outside our communities.

To help find solutions, funding should correspond to the reality of the community. It should not be up to the communities to meet the criteria of governments in regard to funding.

On the subject of the Church, we can say that the Church has played an important role in bringing us to the situation in which we find ourselves today. Because of the Church, we have lost many of our values.

I think that if the Church wanted to help to repair the damage that has been done to us, it could apologize to us. However, that is not really sufficient, because too many people have been traumatized. Many have had their lives ruined.

We know that the Church has a great deal of money. It could send money to the Aboriginal communities, and these funds could help, in one way or another, to develop aid programs in the communities. This money could be used, for example, to build a hostel or

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to develop a program of therapy for the perpetrators of violence and their victims.

On the subject of the role of women, we note that women have multiple roles to play when they wish to become involved in the community. A number of women work, and also have a family and a house to look after.

The situation becomes very difficult for them, because they don't have any resources, any day care facilities, any place to gather. If there is one thing that is positive, it is surely our desire to do something to improve the lot of our community. This is the endeavour in which we need to be supported. We are asking that we be given the means to accomplish this goal.

I thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for these two briefs. Your two presentations have much in common.

In the first presentation, it was mentioned that within the framework of self-government, it would be necessary to have systems of appeal, responsibility and accountability. This would be necessary to make sure that women, in particular, would be in a position to assert their rights. This is a comment that we have heard right across Canada, namely that we

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must make sure that self-government does not place Aboriginal women in a situation of greater dependency than that in which they now find themselves, while under the *Indian Act*, appeal mechanisms between elections are not necessarily there. This is a remark that is regularly made to us. Furthermore, in the last paragraph of your brief, you mention the difficulties that the community has experienced over the last year, in terms of suicides, violence, etc.

In the second brief, there are some interesting, concrete recommendations, which we are going to examine carefully because abuse and violence are a major problem. I would, however, like to ask you two questions.

Just a short time ago, when we resumed the hearing after the dinner hour, we heard a presentation from the Health and Social Services Council. This was a rather difficult presentation, in which we were told, in somewhat veiled terms, that people were exhausted by trying to deal with the problems in the community, and that it was very difficult to ensure that there would be a second wave of replacements to provide resources for the community in future.

Essentially, my question is as follows.

Do you, the Manawan Council of Women and the General

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Council of Atikamekw Women, have dealings with the health services administration, namely with the Atikamekw Health and Social Services Council, in regard to the problems that the community has been experiencing?

**JEANNETTE BOIVIN:** Not as Director of the General Council of Women. But yes, I do have dealings with Ms. Moore. We did have, following the second suicide, I believe, that took place in the community. An awareness seminar had been organized, which lasted a week. I had dealings with her regarding a grant application. So in our case, yes, I can say there have been dealings over these issues.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** My second question relates somewhat to the remarks on sexual abuse in your brief submitted by the Manawan Council of Women, on page 3, and perhaps goes a bit beyond these remarks as well. In the last part of the second paragraph, you say, and I quote:

"But we are not sure this concern is a priority for the  
local political authorities".

Here then is my second question. Are you able to define this concern within the community system, within the Atikamekw Council? Do you have the room you need to manoeuvre in order to put across your point of view? On

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the other hand, you say that the solution belongs to the communities, and you also say that you need help from outside, etc. So at that point, what you are saying is... well, it's not contradictory exactly. However, you are saying that in a certain way, the matter belongs to the communities, but on the other hand, you are not sure that your concern is given the priority you would like by the local political authorities.

Can you explain this point a little more fully?

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY:** I am going to give you an example to help you understand what we're saying. In September, there was a group of women who got together precisely for the purpose of working on the cause of sexual abuse. Then there were some people from outside who -- the women asked for help from outside, and then a meeting was held at St. Michel des Saints. At that meeting, there were people from all over, from St. Jerome, Montreal and Joliette in particular, from the FAQ, from the FAQ branches.

At that first meeting, a date was set for a second meeting. However, I had to cancel that second meeting because there were not enough participants; in particular, the two representatives of the Band Council

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did not attend. They had gone to another meeting. The date for our meeting had been set as October 6, and on that date, the Band representatives preferred to go to another meeting.

That is why I say that we are not sure that this concern of sexual abuse is a priority for the local political authorities. They say that they want to support us, that they are going to be there, but when the time comes, they prefer to go elsewhere.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Do you speak to meetings of the Council?

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY:** Well, I have spoken to a woman who is a councillor.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Here in Manawan, how many women councillors are there, out of how many councillors altogether?

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY:** There are twelve.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And in the other communities?

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY:** There are none. There are only women directors.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In the area of professional work.

**DÉLIMA NIQUAY:** Yes.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You say -- and I think you are right to do so -- that it is fundamental to find the beginnings of solutions to these problems within the communities and that this basically involves, as your brief indicates, making recommendations with respect to the outside, in regard to funding for example, but also, as I understand it, recommendations that are addressed to the world outside the communities. That is more or less the message that I see in your brief.

I think it important that you have come to share these concerns with us here, in the context of the Commission's public hearings. The issue you have addressed is of major importance, as I think everyone recognizes in all the communities across Canada. There was a committee specifically set up to examine the issue of violence towards women. This committee toured all around Canada, and has recently submitted its report. We are aware of the fact that the problems in this area are interrelated, and that their causes are complex. However, the Commission is obviously going to examine this issue very closely in terms of the structure of responsibility, accountability, internal democracy and priorities. We are certainly always very interested in

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receiving concrete suggestions, and your brief contains a number of them.

Thank you very much. I shall perhaps ask Ms. Robinson to add a few words.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I just want say that certainly women's concerns are included in the Commission's mandate in looking at women's issues. We are doing special research just for women's concerns.

As has already been said, there have been a number of studies that have been done, some in Native communities and others have been done outside of the Native community.

I guess it accentuates the kinds of things that you say.

It is the same thing that we keep hearing just about in every community where we have gone, that is a concern.

So that anything that is presented to our hearings, everything that we hear is going to the researcher and is being documented. So all the recommendations that you have made will certainly be put forward to the women's research that is going on and will be considered.

I want to thank you for coming forward tonight and making your presentation. Thank you.

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

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We have a final presentation by the Chamber of Commerce. Afterwards, we always try to have an open forum, because people do attend the hearings of the Commission, often for an entire day, and in the course of the proceedings find that they have something they want to say to the Commission, at greater length. You can understand that because of the lateness of the hour, we are obviously going to have to do this quickly. There are three people who will be given a few minutes to make short presentations after the presentation by the Chamber of Commerce. I understand the Chamber of Commerce itself will make a rather brief presentation. Of course, I'm not trying to intimidate you.

Good evening.

**JACQUES GIRARDIN, OF THE CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Madam  
Commissioner, Mr. Ottawa.

We are pleased to accept the invitation of the Commission and of the representatives of Manawan, our neighbours to the North, to present our points of view. Since the deadline was rather tight, we shall be sending you a written brief in the coming weeks. Tonight, we simply wish to express our interest and the consideration we have for our partners.

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I would first like to explain to you the mission of the Chamber of Commerce. This mission is to foster dialogue and concerted action among business people, by bringing together all the people within the territory of the Chamber who are interested in working for the economic, civic and social well-being of the community and for the development of our resources. These are the principles and values that guide our activities.

Another principle of ours is the desire to develop a positive approach to the realities of people, to develop take-charge attitudes, attitudes of respect for individuals, and of openness, welcoming and coexistence, while respecting differences. We also have the aim of creating a climate favourable to development, innovation and investment in the industrial, commercial and tourist sectors. The Chamber also wishes to provide moral, technical and financial support for members within its territory, to promote the success of the group and of individual members, to be a force in the community, to know how to take risks at the right time, and to take action to meet the collective, reconcilable aspirations of people in its territory.

The territory of our Chamber of Commerce includes the whole northern part of the County

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Regional Municipality, Matawinie, St. Zénon, St. Michel and Manawan, and the unorganized territories. We are proud to draw attention to the fact that our members include the Council of the Atikamekw of Manawan, the Owapan (PH) Economic Development Corporation, and the Manawan store, which have recently joined the Chamber of Commerce as full members. In the structure of the coming year, there will no doubt be a place on the Board of Directors for the Manawan members.

Well then, these are the principles and values that guide us, and we are sensitive to and aware of the fact that we are involved in a process of new relationships, based on respect for peoples and for their inherent rights. Where to begin? We sense the issues and the needs, and we are very aware of them. We recognize the importance of a political and legal status to provide a framework for these new relationships and to stabilize them, so that we can get on with other things.

The new relationships must, in the first place, be developed among ourselves, the immediate partners. We must get to know each other better, improve our understanding of one another, recognize our needs and realities, and acknowledge the hopes of peoples in a context of peaceful coexistence. We are going through

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a break-in phase. We are looking for partners, and at the present time, we are more focused on requirements in the tourist sector. On the weekend, we are going to have an orientation seminar on tourist, industrial and commercial development throughout our territory. Our three partners, St. Zénon, St. Michel and Manawan, have answered the call and will be making presentations on directions for developing their respective territories.

For us, this is an important point in the recognition and mutual understanding that we must develop. This, then, is one of the ways in which we are fostering partnership at our level.

We have another means of communication.

This is a monthly newsletter, which contains news from each of our communities. We really try to make sure that each community is represented in each monthly edition of the newsletter. We also have a joint project, to open a tourist information office at the entrance to our territory, where each community will be represented by its culture, its tourist attractions and its infrastructures.

We have another project to propose.

This is to connect the territory from North to South by means of a snowmobile trail, which will allow tourists

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to move about, to make use of our infrastructure and to contribute a large portion of necessary income.

A regional community centre is also being developed to meet common needs, and we shall share any solutions we find for meeting these needs.

In conclusion, then, we are glad to be able to sit down together at a round table, not just facing one another, but learning to live together, to grasp issues facing us, to understand our needs and to develop a common point of view.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation. I just have a quick question for you. How many members do you have in the Chamber of Commerce?

**JACQUES GIRARDIN:** We have 134 active members, 145 in all. We get new members every day, and we represent not just the commercial sector, but the industrial, forest, tourist, hunting and fishing, accommodation and restaurant sectors as well. And it should be said that we are involved in a structure of interdependence that comprises Manawan and St. Michel. This is a kind of osmosis that is just looking to grow and to develop, based on respect for the two identities.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** How many people do you have on your Board of Directors?

**JACQUES GIRARDIN:** At the present time, we have 13 directors. The Chamber of Commerce has been restarted. It has been in existence since 1963, but it was started up again on January 28 of this year. And at our very first meeting, we enrolled the three territories in our Constitution and By-laws. At the next elections to the Board, places will be reserved for each of the territorial parties, with the same rights and the same powers.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I am noting that you are going to send us a more detailed brief.

**JACQUES GIRARDIN:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you for your preliminary presentation.

**JACQUES GIRARDIN:** Thank you very much.

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

That brings us to the open forum. I would now like to ask Paul-Yves Weizineau (PH) of Opiticiwan to come forward and address us. If he is not in the room, we shall call upon Mr. Maxime Ottawa.

Good evening.

(Open forum)

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MAXIME OTTAWA (Translated from the

**Atikamekw):** There's something I want to talk about, I have a word to say. I have always liked having visitors here. However, it's the approach and the contacts that one must feel. I have listened all day to the briefs that were presented. Many things have been said. Problems have been aired. There have been discussions about the kinds of problems that people are having, about finances, about government. Local and regional leaders have also been discussed, and all sorts of things have been made responsible for what is happening to us. We are going to talk for a long time about that if we continue in this direction. We are going to find all the possible reasons to explain the origin of our problems.

I think that all the same, I've been trying to help my neighbour for a good long time now. I think that if every one of the Atikamekw, men, women and children became aware... I would like them all to become aware, in order to change directions psychologically, so that we can have a better future. If people don't change their way of thinking, we are going to see a lot of things.

We have listed quite a number of negative factors. I think that all the people who are present here tonight should take a good look at themselves, so that they can

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orient themselves, decide what directions they want to take, what it's going to take to make progress, what language they're going to speak, what education they're going to acquire. All these things have to be thought over by the individual. Above all, the individual has to have pride.

I believe that we are going to have better opportunities, self-analysis is being done. I think, personally, that if we are going to improve, we are going to have to stick to individual self-analysis, even taking the whole world into account. I believe that after this exercise, we will be able to approach a group, like the Royal Commission and other organizations at the governmental level. We have to change first; then we can approach them to find solutions.

There has to be respect for the education provided by our elders. That's all I have to say for now.

Thank you for having heard me out.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for your presentation. Mr. Weizineau, you have the floor.

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** Please excuse me for being late. I am going to speak in French.

What I want to emphasize is the problem of communication for implementing intervention programs.

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We often have to wait, and often we cannot respond because the translation can take four months. This is a problem when preparations have to be made and there is a deadline.

The deadline can be in April or in May. The problem we experience in this area is that there are periods of time during which we want to prepare a program, but these preparations are presently being done in a makeshift manner. Here the problem of communication I want to address is in English, then in French.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Excuse me, are you talking about programs of the federal government?

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** Yes, of the federal government.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You don't get the translation in French. Often, you only have it after the deadline has passed?

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** Sometimes, we don't even have a month, or sometimes just two weeks. Sometimes -- this was a few years back -- we only had two days to do the project. We had to work practically all night to present the project, because the time by which the project had to reach a certain place was already fixed. This is often the kind of problem that prevents us from having a real prevention program, either in the field of conjugal

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violence or in the area of substance abuse. We are often discouraged, even if there is an amount of money allocated for the project. We are not Superman.

There are times when one gets discouraged. We are interested in doing business, but the time that the French translation takes... Sometimes it takes them three or four months to translate the materials into French. That's the point that I would really likely to emphasize tonight.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** These are not just isolated cases? This happens frequently?

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** No, no, it happens in everything.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** In the whole field of prevention?

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** Let me put it this way. Where I work, everybody is Francophone. Perhaps other groups are fortunate in being able to understand English, even to read and write English. They're the lucky ones.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Have you already made this comment to the Department?

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** Yes, we've already done it. I worked on a strategic committee with Health and Welfare, and the same problem was raised that I am

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raising today, in regard to the program, or rather the new adaptation of the PAP program for Aboriginal Peoples.

At the present time, one of my colleagues is working on the fetal alcohol syndrome. The only resources we have in this field are in English, but when I think of fetal alcohol syndrome, I realize our entire future is at stake. I could say that perhaps our future is being jeopardized by this situation. There is nothing that exists on the Francophone side to intervene in regard to the fetal alcohol syndrome, and yet, this syndrome is two-edged sword. At the moment when we start to intervene in this area, there are going to be parents who are going to be made to feel guilty, because fetal alcohol syndrome is a problem that should not be neglected.

At the present time, the only programs that we can find are always in English.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. The issue you raise is one on which we can follow up. We are going to do a follow-up to see what the problem really is, what is going on with the Department, and we will contact you again. Someone from our staff will recontact you if you leave your address and phone number with Mr. Roger Farley, who is here with us at the table.

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We shall get in touch with you to let you know what the situation is.

**PAUL WEIZINEAU:** In the area of translation, I know that there is legislation, but services are mostly provided in conferences or seminars, where simultaneous interpretation has to be provided, but I'm talking more about printed documentation. Is there an organization that could translate documents, to which we could send programs or documents that are in English? Translation is one of the major problems we confront, as workers.

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

Well, if there are no other speakers, the time has come for me to thank the members of the three communities who have welcomed us here, for this day of public hearings, and to thank particularly the people who prepared the meals. It's always an extraordinary experience to taste local cuisine, even if sometimes it's hard to come back and resume the session after dinner, when one has been sitting for so many hours. However, both the members of the Commission and the Commission staff always greatly enjoy these kind of experiences, and we greatly appreciate the work done by those who prepare the

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food, by the welcoming committee, by the organizing team and by our commissioner of the day, Paul-Émile Ottawa, by the Secretary of State and Atikamekw interpreters. We are aware that the arrangements we require don't necessarily correspond nicely to the provisions of collective agreements, and we always appreciate such services as were provided here by Manawan's community radio, schools and police security service.

I would simply like to reiterate how important it is for us to have the opportunity to having these meetings, and in particular today's meeting, to have the chance to come into your community. This is a process that is going to be continued in next year. You know, and many people in your community know, how to get in touch with us. We have a toll-free 800 telephone number. You can phone us and record messages. We will be back in touch with you. We would appreciate hearing from you if you have any additional ideas to round out what has communicated to us in the briefs. If you have any ideas, call us.

Once again, we are planning to stay in touch until the process is completed. We do not intend to go back to our offices and spend a year or a year and a half writing our recommendations. We are going to stay

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in touch and keep testing possible solutions up to the very end of the process, to avoid any surprises and to make sure that our aim is as accurate as possible. And when I say "we", I am really talking about everybody, because the Commission is going to give what days like today are going to enable it to give.

So once again, I would like to thank all the communities for their participation, and I wish you well in all your endeavours.

Thank you.

I would like to ask Ms. Robinson to say a few words to you.

**VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would like to thank everybody here for your generous hospitality as well as your patience in sitting with us all day. We really appreciate that. What we have learned today will be very helpful to us as we move into our report certainly, it will be something that I will remember, as I am sure, for a long, long time to come.

Thank you.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL-ÉMILE OTTAWA:** I shall try to be brief in my remarks. I have listened with great interest to the presentations that various groups have made during the day. Some presentations were tinged

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with pessimism and scepticism, while others reflected optimism and hope. Some presenters have very forcefully described to us their loss of identity, their pride, their dignity as human beings, and their loss of territory which is not, in my opinion, a loss of territory exactly, but rather a loss of control over territory, at least in the eyes of the conquering peoples, as they like to style themselves.

I believe -- and evidence to this effect has been presented to the Commission -- that we have essentially lost nothing. I am convinced, I feel in my inmost heart, I have the conviction that we shall take back what has been plundered from us. Basically, the English-speaking and French-speaking peoples may have dispossessed us of our land, but they have left us speech.

That is to say, they have given us the opportunity to speak and to dialogue with them, in their own language.

It is this language that is going to enable us to recover what has been taken away from us. We are going to use their language, their institutions to re-create what has been ruined.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to the Commission for having traveled to Manawan to hear us, and I am hopeful that they will submit a very good report to

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the Government. I am also hopeful that the Government will be able to take appropriate action to deal with the problems that the Commission will describe in its final report.

Thank you.

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

Before declaring this public hearing closed, I would simply like to add that for the record, I have a brief from Mr. Yves Léger, an anthropologist, who has asked us to file his brief with the Commission. Well, that's that. Thank you.

**GILLES OTTAWA:** There is just one more thing before we close with a prayer. We have something to give to the Commissioners for their participation here, at the Manawan hearings. We have two chiefs here, the Chief of Manawan and the Chief of Wemotaci, who are going to present you with a small gift, as a souvenir of your visit.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Well, thank you very much. This has been an unforgettable day, and I will certainly cherish this souvenir, as I'm sure my two boys will. Thank you.

**COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would like to thank you for the gift. It is a very pleasant

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surprise for me. It was worth waiting for all day. Thank  
you.

**(Closing prayer)**

-- The hearing was adjourned at 11:12 p.m.