

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: NISHNAWBE-GAMIK FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
SIOUX LOOKOUT, ONTARIO

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"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

1376 Kilborn Ave.

Ottawa 521-0703

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**Royal Commission on
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1 Sioux Lookout, Ontario
2 --- Upon commencing at 2:00 p.m., Monday, November
3 2, 1992.

4
5 **CHARLES FOX:** Good morning. My name is
6 Charles Fox and I am the Moderator for this session here
7 in Sioux Lookout for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
8 Peoples.

9 This morning we have an elder from the
10 Bearskin Lake First Nation to do the opening prayers.
11 Her name is Mrs. Georgina Fox. I won't reveal her age,
12 except to say that she has seven full-grown children, 27
13 grandchildren and approximately nine great-grandchildren.
14 She says that she feels very privileged to be able to
15 make the opening prayer for this session.

16 So with that I will turn it over to her.

17
18 **(Opening Prayer)**

19
20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mrs.
21 Fox.

22 Before I proceed with the first speakers
23 with respect to their opening remarks, I will introduce

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1 the head table.

2 I will start off with Mrs. Bertha Wilson.

3 Commissioner Bertha Wilson is a former Supreme Court
4 Judge. Right beside her is Commissioner Paul Chartrand.

5 He is a professor from the University of Manitoba. Beside
6 him is the Commissioner of the Day, Mr. Stan Beardy from
7 the Muskrat Dam First Nation, a former Chief and President
8 and Chairman of the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council.

9 For the opening remarks we have the Mayor
10 of Sioux Lookout, Mr. Lawrence Martin; Mr. Frank McKay,
11 the Chairman of the Windigo Tribal Council; and Mr. Bob
12 Nault, the Member of Parliament for the Kenora-Rainy River
13 Riding.

14 Could the gentlemen take the table,
15 please.

16 The order of the speakers is Mayor
17 Lawrence Martin, Mr. Frank McKay and Mr. Bob Nault. So
18 I will turn the microphone over to the Mayor of Sioux
19 Lookout, Mr. Lawrence Martin.

20 **MAYOR LAWRENCE MARTIN, THE TOWN OF SIOUX**

21 **LOOKOUT:** Meegwetch. Thank you.

22 Welcome to everybody that is here this
23 morning, and especially to the Royal Commissioners, Paul

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1 Chartrand and Bertha Wilson. On behalf of the Town of
2 Sioux Lookout I welcome you all here to our community.

3 I am especially proud to be here this
4 morning, to also be one of the presenters to talk a little
5 bit about Sioux Lookout in a little while, and to show
6 many of the things that Sioux Lookout is involved in, that
7 the work that the Royal Commission is doing reflects a
8 lot on the type of questions that it is seeking and the
9 kind of things that we are doing here.

10 So I am very proud to have you here, I'm
11 glad that you took our invitation that I had extended to
12 Georges Erasmus and Viola Robinson last year when I saw
13 them up in Moose Factory.

14 Thank you.

15 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

16 The next speaker is Mr. Frank McKay,
17 Chairman of the Windigo Tribal Council and Windigo Chiefs'
18 Council here in Sioux Lookout.

19 **FRANK MCKAY, WINDIGO TRIBAL COUNCIL:**

20 I want to also thank the Commissioners from the Royal
21 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples for coming to listen to
22 our people express their concerns and to also try to find
23 the solutions that require our people to break away from

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1 the dependency that we have on the Government of Canada
2 and the Government of Ontario. I think we have always
3 expressed that we have the ability to determine our own
4 destination and your task is very important to our people.

5 I also want to say that the Windigo
6 Tribal Council has played a small part in your task here
7 by coordinating the speakers and setting up the meeting
8 tables. We really hope that you have success in your task.

9 Thank you very much.

10 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

11 The last speaker with respect to the
12 opening remarks is Mr. Bob Nault, the Member of Parliament
13 for this riding, Kenora-Rainy River.

14 **ROBERT NAULT, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,**
15 **KENORA-RAINY RIVER:** Thank you very much.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, and of course are
17 special guests who are here today and we are very honoured
18 to have you here.

19 One of the things that we, in the North, pride ourselves
20 on is hospitality and we will certainly do everything in
21 our power to make you feel at home. We started that off
22 this morning by starting a little late because we know
23 that we don't like to start early -- it is hard on our

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1 eyes to get up so early in the morning. So we are pleased
2 that we are starting a little late to get everything normal
3 for us in the North. This is northern time, just so you
4 know. So relax, enjoy yourself, and we will try and make
5 things easy on you in that respect.

6 I just want to make a couple of quick
7 comments, if I can, to the Commission and to the people
8 from Kenora-Rainy River who will obviously be following
9 your work very closely. We, in the North, have some very
10 unique difficulties that you will come across as you travel
11 to Big Trout in the next few days. You will also notice
12 that there are a very many Aboriginal communities in this
13 area. Whereas you may find in the South that there are
14 large populations in one community, the very reverse is
15 true here in the North where we have -- for example, I
16 represent 46 Aboriginal communities as a Member of
17 Parliament, the most of any Member of Parliament in Canada.

18

19 One of the things you will notice is that
20 every Aboriginal community has a different history, a
21 somewhat different dialect and different traditions, but
22 at the same time there are a lot of commonalities. So
23 I would stress that the Commission be aware of that.

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1 I want to, on behalf of the people of
2 Kenora-Rainy River, take this opportunity to thank you
3 very much for coming. We are always very pleased to get
4 such distinguished guests in our area. We know that we
5 are somewhat out of the way, but that makes us unique in
6 our own right and we would like to share that uniqueness
7 with you in the next few days. We will be here at your
8 beck and call.

9 I would just like to say, Charles, in
10 wrapping up, that I have a very special relationship with
11 Mrs. Wilson. My wife works for Mrs. Wilson so I keep tabs
12 on her through a very different source. My wife tells
13 me that Mrs. Wilson has been working very hard on the
14 Commission and has taken her work very seriously.

15 We are expecting very great things from
16 Mrs. Wilson and the Commission as it relates to the
17 recommendations that will come of it. This is a very
18 important part in our history as a country and we all
19 understand that the relationship between Aboriginal people
20 and non-Native Canadians has to change. This is an
21 opportunity, through this Commission, to set the ground
22 work for those changes and we look forward to those very
23 far-reaching recommendations.

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1 So, thank you very much for coming to
2 our part of the country.

3 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

4 I will turn the microphone over to the
5 Commissioners for their opening remarks. Mr. Paul
6 Chartrand, please.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
8 you, Mr. Fox.

9 It is certainly an honour and privilege
10 to be here and to be made so welcome. We certainly
11 appreciate that very much.

12 I am looking at the agenda here and I
13 see that individuals are making welcoming remarks and then
14 coming back and making more substantive presentations.
15 I find it rather difficult to follow their good example
16 of being very, very, very brief because I do not plan to
17 come back and make any substantive presentations myself.

18 But I would, at this time, like to make
19 a few comments by way of introducing to the community here
20 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and to tell
21 you something about its job and how it came to be. But
22 I want to start first by thanking the people who have given
23 us a good start here this morning: Mrs. Georgina Fox for

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1 saying the opening prayer; and we have with us the
2 Commissioner Of The Day, Mr. Stan Beardy, who will be
3 assisting us in his capacity as a Commissioner here in
4 Sioux Lookout; and of course our Moderator, Mr. Charles
5 Fox.

6 We have a number of people who work for
7 the Commission assisting us. Some of them are sitting
8 over there to my right. We have Les Clayton there; Tammy
9 Saulis -- she's busy doing something. Tammy is the Team
10 Leader. We also have Delores Comegan somewhere in the
11 crowd busy at work; and Hugh McCullum, also somewhere busy
12 at work.

13 You will see other people with exotic
14 looking technical equipment, things on their heads and
15 pointing what appear to be ominous looking lenses
16 everywhere. Some of them I know are from the National
17 Film Board. They are proposing to make a documentary film
18 about the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and we
19 see them here, we see them there, we see them everywhere.

20 We are making friends with them. Of course it is in our
21 interest to make friends with them because you know the
22 power of people who have your pictures in all sorts of
23 embarrassing poses. So, those are some of the people who

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1 are here with us.

2 We are going to have public hearings here
3 all day. But who are we? And what is this Commission?
4 Who is on it? Why are we here? I am going to spend just
5 a very short time telling you about that.

6 A number of people for a number of years
7 had suggested that given the present circumstances of
8 Aboriginal peoples in Canada, given the present
9 relationship of Aboriginal individuals and groups with
10 other people in other communities in Canada, something
11 had to be done to make change.

12 Then many considered the way that things
13 worked now and the way that problems are resolved -- by
14 means of the political institutions, by means of the court
15 system -- and many were of the view that change could be
16 better moved if a particular institution called a Royal
17 Commission were to be established to take a wide look at
18 the circumstances of the Aboriginal peoples and to make
19 recommendations to the federal government, which has had
20 a particular historic relationship and responsibility
21 respecting Aboriginal peoples -- to make recommendations
22 to the federal government on how it ought to move, how
23 it ought to make policy, how it ought to be involved in

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1 making changes.

2 So, the Prime Minister moved in that
3 direction and appointed, in 1990, the former Chief Justice
4 of the Supreme Court of Canada, Brian Dickson, as a special
5 representative and gave him the task of consulting widely
6 about the establishment of a Royal Commission. He was
7 asked by the Prime Minister to go around the country and
8 to consult people about the mandate of the Commission.
9 What should it do? What should it deal with? Who should
10 be on it?

11 The Chief Justice did that and in a
12 report, which is available from the Commission -- in
13 fact this is what it looks like -- the Chief Justice
14 outlines the mandate of the Commission and in it he
15 outlines, in detail, the way in which he went about drafting
16 his recommendations. So I'm not going to deal in the
17 detail that is available there for you.

18 He made these recommendations to the
19 Prime Minister and the Prime Minister accepted the report
20 in its entirety. So the Commission was established in
21 August of last year with a very broad mandate, the mandate
22 to suggest to the federal government how things should
23 change.

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1 I think all of us on the Commission are
2 dedicated to that goal, to make the changes, but what we
3 need help. And why we have to be careful, and to consider
4 very carefully and very seriously our mandate, is we have
5 to convince ourselves of what is the best way to make those
6 changes. How should things change? Who should do what?

7 Who are the people on this Commission?

8 There are two Co-Chairs. One is René Dussault who is
9 a Judge of the Quebec Court of Appeal. The other is Georges
10 Erasmus, who was formerly the Chief of the Assembly of
11 First Nations. He is a Dene from the Northwest
12 Territories.

13 There is Viola Robinson. She is a
14 Micmac from Nova Scotia. When she was appointed she was
15 the President of the Native Council of Canada.

16 There is Mary Sillett. She is an Inuk
17 from Labrador and at the time of her appointment she was
18 the President of the Inuit Women's Association.

19 There is Allan Blakeney, who was the
20 Premier of the Province of Saskatchewan for quite a number
21 of years. He now has a position at the College of Law
22 at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. He is
23 very well known in Canada.

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1 As our Moderator, Mr. Fox, said this
2 morning, to my right is Madam Justice Bertha Wilson, the
3 first woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada and
4 who was involved in a number of significant decisions in
5 that Court with respect to Aboriginal rights.

6 My name is Paul Chartrand. I am a Métis
7 from the Inner Lake, as I was telling Stan Beardy here,
8 asking him about his relatives in Manitoba and he was asking
9 me about some Chartrands that he has bumped into. I grew
10 up and received all my education of various sorts in the
11 Inner Lake area of Manitoba. I then went on and studied
12 at a number of universities, including Australia and
13 Saskatchewan. My main field has been law. I have been
14 at the University of Manitoba since 1983.

15 Let me tell you just a little bit more
16 about the mandate of the Commission. It is a very broad
17 mandate and perhaps that is a good thing. One reason is
18 that it is more difficult to challenge our mandate to
19 examine any particular issues if we have a broad
20 comprehensive mandate. But perhaps more importantly, it
21 permits us to see the relationship between all of the
22 various issues.

23 Of course there have been quite a number

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1 of task forces and other groups and committees given the
2 mandate of looking at various issues pertaining to
3 Aboriginal peoples and to make recommendations -- quite
4 a number of them to the federal government over the years.

5 But the scope of their mandates have been relatively
6 narrow.

7 This is the first Commission that has
8 an absolutely broad mandate, so we can see the
9 relationships between things because very often, it seems
10 to me, that change in one area requires change in other
11 areas as well. It is good to have a global look at things.

12 What is in that mandate? Well,
13 everything. Self-government is there, because people say
14 we are unique. Some of the people who made the opening
15 remarks have said to us that there are different histories
16 and different traditions amongst the Aboriginal peoples
17 across the land, and everywhere people can stand up and
18 say to us, "This is the way we do things around here."
19 It's not necessarily the way you do things elsewhere, but
20 people want to live by their history, and want to live
21 by their tradition, and want to live by their languages,
22 and want to have institutions in place that can permit
23 them to say, "This is the way we do things around here."

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1 So, self-government is a very important part of our
2 mandate and probably reaches into every other part.

3 While we are studying that, of course,
4 we have to study the history of the relations between
5 Aboriginal peoples and the rest of this country because
6 they are unique. They have to be understood. If we are
7 going to make suggestions for the establishment of a new
8 relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of
9 Canada we have to assist in providing some understanding
10 of the past relationships in order to understand the
11 present. That includes the treaties. You have to
12 understand the nature and the history of the treaties and
13 their significance to date.

14 There are many other important issues,
15 economic issues for example, how is self-government to
16 be supported by way of resources, financial and otherwise?
17 Resources always include people and that is the most
18 important issue, it seems to me. We must not forget the
19 significance of the human resources necessary to shore-up
20 institutions of self-government, in whatever shape they
21 might take. We have to look at the very real issues, the
22 everyday things, the things that matter in an everyday
23 way in fields such as health, education, in other social

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1 contexts and cultural contexts, and particularly the
2 importance of language because language is so important
3 for the identity of people, personal identity and group
4 identity.

5 It is very much a part of "This is the
6 way we do things around here", because this is the way
7 people speak in particular places; this is the way people
8 exchange ideas; this is the way people express their
9 feelings. It is difficult to conceive something more
10 fundamentally important than that to determine how things
11 are done around here, in any particular place in Canada.

12 So why is the Commission here at Sioux
13 Lookout? It has to do with the way that we have organized
14 ourselves in order to make these recommendations on how
15 things must change. We can't sit in a room and think and
16 come up with recommendations on our own. We can't do that
17 unilaterally. We have to find out what would work. There
18 is no sense making recommendations that would be rejected,
19 recommendations that will not work. We are not being fair
20 or just to anyone if we make recommendations that will
21 not work.

22 What will work? How do we know? I do
23 not know what will work, so I have to ask. We have to

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1 ask you. We have to ask the communities. So we have to
2 ask by way of research and we have a research program,
3 our own research program. We have a special program, the
4 Intervenor Participation Program which assists the
5 finances of research by Aboriginal groups so that they
6 can do their research and tell us how things must change.

7
8 But we don't want to hear only from
9 organizations. We do want to hear from organizations,
10 and we hear from organizations, but we must hear from the
11 everyday people. What is it that is important? What is
12 it that is worth keeping? What is it that must change?
13 What is it that makes life difficult? But perhaps more
14 important: What is it that makes life good? What are
15 the things that must be kept and the things that must be
16 made stronger? We want to hear from you about that.

17 And when we have heard enough that we
18 think we can fulfil our mandate we will make our final
19 report and we will set our own internal goal right now
20 to try to make that report, to give it to the federal
21 government late in the year of 1994. It's a large job.

22

23 We have been going around the country,

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1 we started the first round last April and we went to the
2 end of June. We then issued a paper which sets out only
3 some of the things that were said to us in the first round
4 of hearings from April until June. This is not the views
5 of the Commission. This is saying what the people told
6 us.

7 Now we are into a second round of
8 hearings which started on the 27th of October and will
9 go on for one more week into the month of December, to
10 give us some time to have meetings before Christmas. And
11 we will have other rounds in the next year. We will be
12 able to take advantage of the results coming from the
13 research being done by way of the Intervenor Participation
14 Program, as well as our own research as it gets wound up.

15 So we will keep issuing documents, telling the public
16 in Canada, "This is what we are hearing." And in time,
17 as we are developing our views on particular issues, we
18 will see what issues are important, and we will start
19 thinking about some of the changes that can be made. We
20 wish to bring the public, everyone in Canada along with
21 us in our emerging solutions. We think that is important.

22 So that is why we're here, to hear from
23 you about the things that matter, and particularly to hear

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1 from you about those things that should change, or those
2 things that should be kept and made stronger. In
3 particular, we welcome your advice on what changes must
4 take place.

5 With that I will now turn it to our able
6 Moderator, Mr. Charles Fox. And Mr. Fox, let me just tell
7 you that I come from a long line of practical jokers and
8 this morning when you said, "Please take the table" I was
9 thinking of a few buddies of mine who would have asked
10 you where they should take it and they would have wanted
11 to run out with it.

12 I hope we have a good day, Mr. Fox, and
13 thank you very much.

14 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
15 Commissioner Chartrand.

16 I will turn the microphone over now to
17 Commissioner Bertha Wilson, if she has a few words to say.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.
19 I will be very brief.

20 I would just like to say that I feel very
21 privileged to be one of the non-Native members of the
22 Commission. I would also like to say that I am very well
23 aware that there are many Native people across the country

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1 who are quite cynical about the Commission. They tell
2 us that there have been many commissions and many inquiries
3 prior to this one and they tell us that nothing has
4 happened. They say, "We have been studied to death, we
5 are tired of being studied, we want action" and "What makes
6 you people think that this Commission is going to be any
7 different?" And indeed this view was expressed yesterday
8 evening.

9 I think what I would like to say to that
10 is that I think the difference is in the public will.
11 I think, probably for the first time, the general public
12 is very conscious of the injustices that have been done
13 to Native people in the past. They want to put a stop
14 to that and they want the situation to change.

15 As you know, the only thing that moves
16 governments is public pressure. Governments don't move
17 unless there is pressure from the public to do things.
18 This is why I am optimistic that we can achieve something
19 because I have the sense -- as a non-Native person I have
20 a feel for how white society is thinking today. I think
21 a good illustration of that is the reaction of a lot of
22 the public to our government when it is thinking about
23 giving aid to other countries. It sort of says to them,

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1 "Look, we're not going to give aid to you because you have
2 a very bad human rights record and you have to prove your
3 human rights record before we are going to provide you
4 with any aid." I think the public in Canada is now saying,
5 "Who on earth are we to go and say that sort of thing to
6 other countries in face of our own human rights record
7 here at home in the way we have dealt with our own Native
8 people."

9 I think that there is that feeling out
10 there now that things have to change and that we have to
11 develop a different kind of relationship between our Native
12 people and other Canadians. Obviously that new
13 relationship is going to require a lot of change in thinking
14 on the parts of government, and that's not easy to achieve,
15 but personally I think it can be done.

16 I think, for example, that when the
17 Charlottetown Accord was rejected that it was very
18 significant that many government leaders in the country
19 rushed in to say, "This does not mean that we don't believe
20 in the inherent right of Native people to govern
21 themselves". They were most anxious to come out very
22 quickly after the vote with a statement saying, "We still
23 think that there should be Native self-government and we

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1 think that we should get on with it." I thought that was
2 a very positive sign.

3 So, what we are really looking for, as
4 we go across the country, are the ideas of Native people
5 as to how this change is going to take place, because I
6 don't think we are looking at just tinkering with this
7 and tinkering with that. I think we are really looking
8 at major change.

9 We have discovered that in many
10 communities it has already started and it's happening.
11 Many communities are exercising their own initiatives.
12 Someone said, at a session on justice that we had last
13 week, "Just do it." "Just start." "Just do it." "Don't
14 wait for another long protracted discussion on the
15 Constitution." I think that has to be the way to go.

16 So, I am fairly optimistic. I think we
17 are going to be able to achieve something, but as my
18 colleague says, we are going to have to have an awful lot
19 of help from the Native people. We have to get their ideas
20 as to what they think they can do in the area of
21 self-government, in the area of justice, how to make
22 education more appropriate for their kids, health care
23 -- all the subjects that are on our terms of reference.

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1 We need your thinking on these issues. As Professor
2 Chartrand has said, we can't sit in our offices and dream
3 this up, we have to get it from you.

4 So, I am just delighted to see so many
5 people out here and I am looking forward very much to
6 hearing what you have to say.

7 Thank you.

8 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
9 Commissioner Bertha Wilson.

10 I will turn the microphone over to the
11 Commissioner of the Day, Mr. Stan Beardy.

12 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
13 Meegwetch, Charles.

14 I just want to make my comments very
15 brief. First of all, I would like to say that I am very
16 honoured to be here. I am very honoured to be the
17 Commissioner of the Day and participate in this important
18 process for Native people.

19 I realize that the other Commissioners
20 have mentioned that Native people have been studied, and
21 have been studied to death, and we have had a lot of
22 Commissions that have been carried on over the past years.
23 However, while as Native people we are struggling for

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1 self-determination and self-administration and
2 self-government, I still feel that it is very important
3 that we participate in the various processes that have
4 been developed by the governments. In Canada, through
5 the treaty-making process, the relationship has been
6 defined, but for Native people I think it is important
7 that we define how that relationship should work. We need
8 to define, between the non-Native people and Native people,
9 how to make that relationship work for all of us.

10 When we have commissions I realize that
11 a lot of times, as Native people, we have a tendency to
12 dwell on our problems and carry on and on about what our
13 problems are, but at the same time I think it is very
14 important that we be prepared to offer solutions and
15 alternatives to ensure that what our aspirations are can
16 work for us.

17 It is also very important, if we are
18 going to realize some sense of self-government for Native
19 people, that we need to play a key part in public education
20 to make the non-Native people aware of what our situations
21 are, and to help them understand what our problems are.

22

23 As the Commissioner of the Day it will

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1 be my role to help the Commissioners clarify the
2 presentations that will be made during the day, and also
3 to help bring out the key points of those various
4 presentations that will be made here today.

5 That is all I have to say. Thank you.

6 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
7 Commissioner Beardy.

8 Thank you very much, Mr. Nault, Mr.
9 McKay.

10 Getting on with the presentations, we
11 have the Mayor of Sioux Lookout, Lawrence Martin, to make
12 a presentation on behalf of the Town Council. The Mayor
13 is also employed as the Executive Director of the Nishnawbe
14 Wawatay Communications Society. He is, by coincidence,
15 or by nature, or by election-wise, the first Native Mayor.
16 He has that distinguished honour of being the first
17 Aboriginal person to hold that office here in Sioux
18 Lookout.

19 So with that I will turn it over to Mr.
20 Martin.

21 **MAYOR LAWRENCE MARTIN:** (Native
22 language -- no interpretation).

23 It gives me great pleasure to be here,

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1 and as Charles has pointed out, just in case you didn't
2 notice, I am an Aboriginal person holding the job as Mayor
3 in this town. I am quite honoured to be able to do that.

4 Whether it was by design or not is something I guess we
5 would have to look back to what happened last year.

6 But I think it also reflects the way the
7 community of Sioux Lookout is growing, and the way that
8 Aboriginal people are slowly moving into the community
9 and taking part in what is happening here in this town.

10 Not only here, but also on a regional basis that affects
11 all the other communities around this area, the Sioux
12 Lookout district.

13 When we look around at the population
14 of Sioux Lookout there is about a 30 to 35 per cent Native
15 population here now. That is a significant number. This
16 is one of the reasons why Aboriginal people here in this
17 community are ready to take part in the development of
18 this place.

19 On the other hand, the community itself,
20 from the town side of things -- this is also what was spoken
21 to in the elections last year for Mayor and Council. When
22 I got elected, that to me was a signal that the town was
23 saying, "We're ready. We're now ready to talk. We're

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1 ready to do business. We're ready to start working
2 together." And that has always been my focus, ever since
3 I've been Mayor, to emphasize that, to go out there and
4 be that link between the two cultures that exist here,
5 to provide the linkage so that people will begin talking
6 to one another.

7 It has been slow, but after a year of
8 being in office -- I have two more years -- I have the
9 sense now of the talks just starting to happen. I see
10 workshops taking place, joint venture workshops where
11 people are saying, "Let's now do business."

12 So, that's one of the basic things on
13 where to start from. It is from that.

14 When I entered this job of course I came
15 in with my background from the traditional perspective.
16 I was raised up in Moose River, up near James Bay, where
17 I was taught that traditional pursuits were very important,
18 the whole idea, the basic values of sharing and respect
19 and honesty and trust. Those were the kinds of things
20 that I was taught and I came in with that.

21 As well, as my job at the Wawatay Native
22 Communications Society as Executive Director, being
23 involved in that media, that also gave me a different way

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1 of dealing with things. From the media side, I am always
2 trying to find the other side -- trying to listen to what
3 the other person is saying. So, I come in with that.

4 Speaking of Wawatay, we are broadcasting
5 right now to the 35 communities that are north of Sioux
6 Lookout. So whenever anything takes place here in the
7 community there is always Wawatay there to broadcast the
8 event, not just here locally through the radio, but also
9 throughout the whole region.

10 In preparing my presentation I was
11 looking at the questions -- and I have been carrying this
12 around for some time trying to find answers to some of
13 the questions. It is often very difficult to try and do
14 so. So, what I have done here is get the town's perspective
15 started and what we would like to do is have a written
16 submission following this.

17 But I would like to talk a little bit
18 about some of the issues that affect us. I want to present
19 them so that the people here will be able to get a chance
20 to see what position the town is in with respect to
21 Aboriginal affairs and so forth.

22 I took a look at self-government, being
23 one of the first questions outlined here. This is the

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1 question that has been talked about from time to time by
2 Council. It is a question that we feel needs to be explored
3 and needs to be answered, because we see the community
4 make-up expanding, with the Native sector becoming larger
5 all the time. We wonder exactly what self-government
6 would mean to the status people that are going to be here
7 in the community or are here already?

8 We support the whole idea of
9 self-government, even though we don't really know exactly
10 what it means. I think we all have different definitions
11 that we, ourselves, have taken on. In support of that,
12 we believe that it is the right of Native people to have
13 their own self-government, to grow to be self-sufficient
14 as people in their community.

15 What we would like to see happen with
16 the self-government issue is that there be some
17 involvement. We would like to be part of the discussions
18 on self-government and be able to speak to the leadership
19 in that regard. We would like our community to become
20 part of those talks so that we are therefore able to respond
21 and set plans together on what self-government would mean,
22 rather than something that would be defined elsewhere.
23 We are unique. We are together at this point and therefore

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1 planning for that needs to happen.

2 Because we are surrounded by Native
3 communities and many of the Native issues that are being
4 discussed, we also want to be part of the negotiations
5 involving lands and resources in the area of Sioux Lookout.

6 This is needed for a number of reasons. One being that
7 it is part of the education process. This is so we can
8 educate ourselves and the non-Native sector here about
9 what the self-government talks are all about, and what
10 these negotiations are, and how it affects everybody here.

11 We also want to do so for the reason of
12 presenting ourselves, our help and our assistance in
13 perhaps working on a government-to-government basis, and
14 to establish that partnership so that we are looking at
15 working at this together.

16 It becomes more difficult, as I see it,
17 to really differentiate our issues, whether they are
18 non-Native or Native, especially in this setting where
19 we have a real mixture of population within the town.

20 We all get confused about the term
21 "self-government". A lot of times we see many of the
22 Native organizations here in town -- of which there are
23 many in this small community -- a lot of times I hear

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1 comments from non-Native people saying, "Isn't that
2 self-government?" "Aren't those organizations
3 themselves running the organization, or being controlled
4 by the Native people, they are being accountable to their
5 people? Isn't that a form of self-government that already
6 exists?" Why are we always looking for the magic answer
7 to self-government when we just have to take a look around
8 and we see it taking place.

9 Being in Sioux Lookout, and being close
10 to other Aboriginal communities around the area, we know
11 that there are many differences among different bands,
12 different communities that exist around the area. We
13 can't keep waiting for that magic self-government answer
14 when we know that there are different bands here, different
15 dialects, different languages, different needs. We can't
16 look for a blanket form of self-government for everybody
17 across Canada. It needs to be defined by the particular
18 band.

19 We look at a band from a different
20 perspective, as individual bands, as opposed to always
21 painting the whole Aboriginal population with one brush,
22 saying, "Oh, Indian people are all the same across Canada."
23 Well, that's not true. Here in Sioux Lookout many of

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1 the non-Native people are starting to recognize that, that
2 Sandy Lake is different from Big Trout Lake, it's different
3 from Moose Factory and Attawapiskat. These are all
4 different bands. That recognition is being made.

5 Again I stress that self-government is
6 very important to the town's people here because of our
7 make-up, but the thing is we would like to be part of
8 defining, of being able to work and being able to achieve
9 that self-government here at this level. We need to be
10 part of that so that we can not only co-exist in the
11 harmonious way, but also be able to set-up partnerships
12 so that we are working together in lobbying together and
13 being able to form that strength, that force, as
14 Northerners, as people from this area. Many times this
15 is a similar but different argument about the North and
16 southern parts. I think up here we get thrown together.
17 We should be planning and working that out a lot more.

18 What I see as being important also in
19 the self-government process is the fact that involvement
20 must take place. To me, the key to participation is being
21 involved. After all, I am here as Mayor because I decided
22 to become involved in the local politics. The same thing
23 must be taking place throughout, that Aboriginal people

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1 must take part, must become involved in all levels of
2 government, and other communities must get involved in
3 the provincial matters, federal, and so forth. Those
4 things must happen.

5 We must not only get involved in
6 politics, but also in education, the Board of Education,
7 because a lot of the schools here in the community -- again,
8 the percentage of Native students in these schools, in
9 the elementary and high schools, are very high. Sometimes
10 even 50 per cent and more now.

11 So, as leaders and as individuals,
12 Aboriginal people must get involved in education in many
13 aspects. Also in the health systems. And pretty well
14 everything that affects our lives.

15 Recently, here at Sioux Lookout, the
16 negotiations for the health services began, including the
17 construction of an amalgamated new hospital. This is
18 where talks have been going on for years to begin
19 negotiations. We have two hospitals here in the
20 community, one run by the federal government, a zone
21 hospital for the Aboriginal people, and the other one being
22 the General Hospital funded by the province.

23 What took place here, in regards to that,

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1 was quite interesting to me, in that the Aboriginal
2 representatives said that these negotiations will take
3 place now, and that they will take place among the four
4 levels of government: Aboriginal government, the municipal
5 government, provincial and federal. From that day, this
6 summer, those negotiations began in that form, as four
7 levels of government sitting at the table. Nobody said
8 anything, nobody denied it and there were no objections.

9 I thought at the time, "Wow, that's great. Somebody just
10 made a declaration that Aboriginal government is here and
11 now we are negotiating on that basis."

12 Ever since then we've been doing that.

13 That process has worked very positively because now we
14 have all four levels of government sitting at the table
15 discussing the welfare of everybody here in the community
16 and also in the region. So, those kinds of negotiations
17 taking place are all of a sudden here and it has proved
18 itself so far to be for the benefit for everybody in the
19 area.

20 So, that is the kind of thing that I'm
21 talking about, when we are involved in self-government
22 discussions that the town is also involved, because of
23 where we are and who we are here in the community.

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1 Again, we often get so lost in trying
2 to define what this magic definition must mean and I think
3 we just have to take a look around.

4 When I came into this job -- of course
5 I come from the community of Moose Factory, the Moose River
6 area, where it is also a reservation system, and to talk
7 about self-government from that perspective, I was always
8 striving for that self-government. Then when I got into
9 this job I realized that the struggles are basically the
10 same. We are also looking for that local autonomy, local
11 control of our own resources. Our arguments are basically
12 the same towards the other governments, the provincial
13 and federal governments.

14 So, I haven't changed my quest, my desire
15 to have self-government take place, but it has given me
16 a different angle to take a look at it. I think that a
17 lot of it is here already, it's just how we govern ourselves
18 and how we participate.

19 Another area I would like to touch on
20 briefly is on rebuilding the relationship. Of course it
21 has been said many times in your travels, I'm sure -- and
22 you have already pointed it out this morning -- that the
23 education process has to happen with the general public

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1 as to exactly what the issues are, what the factors are
2 that are being considered when these problems are outlined.

3 But my belief is that it also needs to happen on the other
4 hand, it needs to happen so that that education process
5 also takes place among the Aboriginal people about the
6 mainstream society, the values within that society and
7 the systems that exist in that society. That has to be
8 reversed, it can't always just be the other way around.

9 One of the things that I was throwing
10 around in my head during the last few days, when I took
11 a look at the community in trying to prepare something
12 for this presentation, is in regards to the relationship
13 question. One of the things that I believe needs to happen
14 here, and would be unique, is some sort of a cross-cultural
15 centre, whether it be an institution or a facility or a
16 number of services amalgamated to provide that. A
17 cross-cultural centre in Sioux Lookout, I believe, is
18 needed because one of the outstanding issues and problems
19 in the community has been trying to mesh the two different
20 cultures. There is no real group that is behind it to
21 try and deal with that factor.

22 This is the basis for understanding one
23 another, whether it be learning materials about the

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1 different cultures, focusing on the local and regional
2 people. There could be various exchanges happening among
3 the various governments. I could maybe be Chief of Muskrat
4 Dam for a while and Frank Beardy could be Mayor of Sioux
5 Lookout for a while. Having the counsellors working with
6 one another and having exchanges, so that there is a real
7 understanding of the different governments and the
8 different systems that exist.

9 I think that whole idea of a
10 cross-cultural centre would be a starting point and I would
11 like to see this as part of my recommendation. Hopefully,
12 the Royal Commission will take that seriously and will
13 maybe want to explore it and make a recommendation towards
14 that, that Sioux Lookout be looked at to have a
15 cross-cultural centre because of its uniqueness in having
16 the two different cultures coming together here at this
17 point, a community trying very hard to find ways to be
18 able to work together. I think that warrants the research
19 to try and set up that sort of thing up here.

20 Also in the community we have the Race
21 Relations Committee which is trying to work with that sort
22 of idea, to try and deal with the race relations tensions
23 that do exist, and that have existed at a higher rate

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1 before. After speaking to some members, just a few days
2 ago, I feel that the tension has lessened, but the work
3 still needs to be there. The Committee still needs to
4 be active here in the community.

5 That particular committee, I think,
6 requires help, not just from the local resources. I would
7 like to point out that it should be the responsibility
8 of the country to deal with these kinds of issues and to
9 finance and fund a Race Relations Committee of this sort
10 so that it can deal with these kinds of issues. Therefore,
11 it could help to provide harmony and to provide a starting
12 point for a working relationship among all people.

13 Another institution here is this
14 building that we are in. This is the Friendship Centre
15 and it is funded by the Secretary of State. Another
16 organization in Sioux Lookout is the Wawatay Native
17 Communication Society, which is also funded by the
18 Secretary of State. Both of these organizations are in
19 a unique position to be able to provide -- the kind of
20 services they now provide to Aboriginal communities, I
21 believe, should be extended more towards the
22 non-Aboriginal population here. But these organizations
23 also need that funding support and they also require

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1 support from the federal government so that they can
2 continue and expand the work they are doing.

3 As I mentioned earlier, Wawatay
4 broadcasting is live to all 35 communities, including Sioux
5 Lookout, and that in itself deserves recognition and
6 deserves more support.

7 Another kind of unique committee, a
8 group that is here in town, is the Street Patrol, again
9 dealing with the kind of issues that sometimes arise in
10 a community of this nature. They are here and they've
11 been having a really rough time in being able to work in
12 the community because they don't have the funding support
13 to be able to do things.

14 I think if they were not here we might
15 find ourselves like the streets of Winnipeg, where we have
16 a lot of homeless people, where we have a lot of crime
17 taking place, where we have a lot of people that don't
18 have places to go and end up dying or end up being sick.

19 But at least the Street Patrol here in the community is
20 trying to do something about it. And again, I ask for
21 support for them to be able to carry on their work.

22 These things may be small, but these are
23 very important things in making the community work. It's

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1 not just politics of the community that makes the community
2 thrive, it's the small committees, just handfuls of people
3 that make it work, but they are a very important part.
4 These are the ones that are usually neglected and don't
5 get the kind of support they need.

6 So, I would like to make those
7 recommendations, that these groups here: the Race
8 Relations Committee, the Friendship Centre, Wawatay, and
9 of course the Street Patrol be part of that review, that
10 they be funded by the federal government to further their
11 work and to be able to build that bridge amongst the two
12 different cultures here.

13 Lastly, one of the things that I have
14 been missing a lot on is the Native input in the history
15 of Canada, in the history books of Canada, whether they
16 be in the schools or in other forms. Just to have that
17 missing part -- it's a real shame.

18 So, what I would like to see happen is
19 that the Native involvement that took place, the reality,
20 the truth of Canada now needs to be implemented. It needs
21 to be put into the history books. Maybe we will have to
22 rewrite history in a lot of cases, but without that we
23 are missing a great big part of our nation. This has to

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1 happen even at the school levels, elementary school levels,
2 high schools and so forth. The curriculum needs to reflect
3 a lot more of the Native involvement in Canada. There
4 is so much Native knowledge and skill that can easily be
5 adapted and be implemented to be part of the curriculum.

6

7 When I take a look around, from my
8 background, where I come from, I look at the medicine and
9 I look at the science part of things and the astrology,
10 the spirituality, the environment, the philosophies, the
11 legends -- the Native culture is very rich in these, but
12 somehow they are not part of the make-up, and not part
13 of the learning process of this country. I think those
14 have to be looked at, those have to be part of that education
15 system so that we get the Native input into the curriculum,
16 into the education system through that method.

17 Again, it comes from having to get
18 involved. As I said earlier, the key part is getting
19 involved, and perhaps this can be a way for people to take
20 it upon themselves to have that take place within the
21 curriculum of the schools. But nevertheless, I would like
22 to make it a point here that the Royal Commission should
23 take a look at this, if it hasn't already, and hopefully

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1 it will be part of the recommendations in the final report.

2 I see some of the schools in some of the
3 communities around the area developing Native language
4 curriculum. I would like to see that expanded so that
5 the material they are developing can also be utilized by
6 other schools in urban centres, that there be a
7 facilitation happening to share what has already been
8 developed.

9 Lastly, what Commissioner Wilson said
10 earlier about the way the country goes around the world
11 opposing apartheid and other wrong doings to other humans
12 in the world. Yes, I see that taking place, and yes, I
13 do agree and support that whole notion that Canada must
14 first of all take a look at what it is doing to its First
15 People, and must take a look and start making the
16 corrections here, instead of always going around the world
17 preaching that other people must do it.

18 In closing, I commend you in your work.

19 I know the work of the Royal Commission is very important,
20 and a lot of times it is just as important as it takes
21 place. Maybe the final report will be very important in
22 what it says. I'm sure it will be.

23 There is always the risk and the danger,

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1 that has been pointed out, that it will not be utilized,
2 will not be acted upon, will not be implemented. This
3 is why I believe these hearings themselves are very
4 important. This is the time to publicize what you are
5 doing, the time to create that dialogue. So, I believe
6 this, to me, is one of the highlights of the Royal
7 Commission, to have the hearings take place and have the
8 people actually listen and take part in what is taking
9 place.

10 With that I thank you very much and I
11 hope that your stay in Sioux Lookout, although it may be
12 brief, be very warm for you.

13 Meegwetch.

14 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
15 Martin.

16 Are there any questions from the
17 Commissioners to clarify any points?

18 Commissioner Wilson, please.

19 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** This is
20 not really a question, but just from listening to what
21 you're saying and from reading some of the material in
22 the briefing book that we received from our staff about
23 what is going on in the community, it occurs to me that

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1 you have a lot going for you here because it is a small
2 town and you have both the Aboriginal people and the
3 non-Aboriginal people living together and having, as you
4 point out, a fairly good relationship.

5 Clearly one route to self-government,
6 and probably the best route in a community like this, is
7 what you are doing -- getting elected as Mayor, getting
8 Native people on the Council, forming committees, dealing
9 with education and health, and so on, is obviously one
10 way of gradually becoming involved in these areas that
11 Native people should be having more control over.

12 First of all, I should say that in a lot
13 of Native communities that we have visited on reservations
14 there is just no opportunity to go that route because there
15 isn't a mix of population, and there isn't an opportunity
16 to move into the existing structures.

17 So, that is a different kind of situation
18 and I would think it would be much harder to achieve a
19 measure of self-government in communities like that, as
20 compared to this one. I am wondering whether when you
21 do your written brief is there any possibility that you
22 would be outlining some kind of a model that you see for
23 towns like this, which do exist all across the country?

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2 This is one way, it seems to me, one
3 initiative that Native people can take to become more
4 self-governing, through infiltrating, so to speak, the
5 existing structures and hopefully having an opportunity
6 by doing that to influence policy-making.

7 As we've moved across the country many
8 Native people and groups have said to us, "Well, we are
9 starting to participate in the administration of some of
10 the services, but we don't feel we really have control
11 over the policy decisions", for example, in something like
12 education. You are saying that you are concerned about
13 what self-government means to a great many Native people
14 that have come and talked to us. It really means control
15 over the policy, being able to make the decisions about
16 what form the education should take, having control over
17 the curriculum at the various levels and so on. Similarly
18 with health, that it is control over policy-making that
19 is fundamental to self-government, as opposed to just
20 being, as it were, an agent of the provincial government
21 in order to administer the services.

22 So, I was wondering if, when you do your
23 brief, it would include the kind of thing you have just

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1 said to us, of how this is one route to self-government
2 in a town like this where you have those opportunities
3 to move in. That is obviously one route, and the more
4 Native people who get on to the council, get on to these
5 committees, obviously the more chance there is for getting
6 into the policy-making roles.

7 I would just ask if you could perhaps
8 keep that in mind because what you are doing may provide
9 some kind of a model for communities of this size across
10 the country, for a route to self-government in a community
11 of this kind. It would be great if you could keep that
12 in mind and tell us just how you have accomplished what
13 you have accomplished because it is obviously
14 considerable. When I think of many of the Native
15 communities we've been in, there has just been nothing
16 there and really no opportunity, no mechanics for Native
17 people to assert themselves and become involved, but here
18 you've done it. So, we would really appreciate hearing
19 about that.

20 Thank you.

21 **MAYOR LAWRENCE MARTIN:** I certainly
22 will be making that point when we put the submission
23 together. I want to point out also that the process to

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1 be able to arrive at such a model is something that needs
2 -- that's going to take a little bit of time to work with
3 the Aboriginal groups here in town to establish that.
4 That is something that we are working on. We may not have
5 a model now, but the intent right now is certainly there.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
7 you, Mr. Martin, for your presentation and I do look forward
8 to your subsequent brief.

9 Let me make some brief remarks, if I may.
10

11 First, I want to express my agreement
12 with your points on the value of history and the need for
13 change in the curriculum of the schools. I agree with
14 your view that this is something that is shameful, and
15 this is certainly one of the things that must change.
16 I know that some work is being done in some places, at
17 the university level, with respect to incorporating the
18 traditional knowledge of the Cree people in the area of
19 the use of medicines, for example. But these are very
20 slow endeavours that certainly ought to be speeded up and
21 this should be part of bigger changes in the curriculum
22 itself.

23 I know that the oral traditions and the

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1 oral history tradition of many Aboriginal people is
2 something that is now excluded from the curriculum, and
3 I think much to the detriment of the whole country. I
4 know that back home there is one particular individual
5 who is a talented storyteller. He is the Shakespeare of
6 the Métis. I think it is an absolute shame that
7 individuals with these sorts of skills are not to be found
8 in the schools, that they can't work their craft in the
9 schools as a part of the curriculum. It seems to me that
10 doing something like that would be a significant
11 contribution to the appreciation of local identity, of
12 local culture, of local language and also appreciation
13 of the tremendous humour of people which exists far and
14 wide.

15 A couple more brief comments. You are
16 in a unique position, as has already been mentioned, as
17 an Aboriginal person who is also Mayor of a town like this.

18 I will make two points.

19 The first one is that you, and people
20 in your position, can be of some assistance, I hope, in
21 moving change in the minds of the public so that the report
22 or the changes proposed in the report can, in fact, be
23 put into action. That is, that the report not gather dust

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1 on the shelf, as has been said, but move the kind of
2 political will to put these things into action. As has
3 already been said, governments feel pressure from people,
4 from elected officials like yourself and your colleagues.
5 So, I would make that point.

6 There are a number of fundamental
7 questions that arise from the things you have talked about,
8 but I am reluctant to ask you these big questions, to put
9 on your shoulders the invitation to deal with them. But
10 let me just propose another area that might be very useful,
11 because of your unique position, to include in your
12 presentation. It has to do with developing the political
13 relationships between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of
14 Canada.

15 As I think you indicated, there are four
16 levels of government: federal, provincial, municipal and
17 Aboriginal. How are we to sort out these relationships,
18 particularly in the context of the existence of treaties
19 and the view that some take that the treaties comprise
20 a particular relationship with the Crown? And who was
21 the Crown for the purposes of straightening out, if you
22 wish, or making clear the nature of the treaty
23 relationship? Maybe I don't understand this properly,

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1 but it seems to me that one of the difficulties in trying
2 to straighten out -- if I can use that expression -- or
3 to make it clear so that people understand it, is what
4 I mean, the nature of the relationship between Aboriginal
5 people and the rest of Canada is the uncertainty
6 surrounding that treaty relationship. It seems that some
7 are reluctant to engage in discussions with other levels
8 of government, other than the federal Crown, because there
9 is a reluctance in some quarters to deal with provincial
10 governments and certainly with municipal governments
11 because of that overhanging uncertainty.

12 So, what is the significance of the
13 treaty relationship on the future of political discussions
14 or negotiations or participation between Aboriginal
15 governments and the provincial and municipal governments
16 in particular? It seems to me that is a particularly
17 difficult and important issue and I think you are in a
18 unique position to assist us with that.

19 I may conclude by saying that we have
20 heard the same point made elsewhere, the one that you have
21 made, that people should participate at this level to make
22 self-government happen and to make it effective and there
23 ought to be discussion between local levels of governments

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1 with Aboriginal levels of government.

2 So, it seems to me that it is a very
3 important issue, there are all sorts of ramifications and
4 my comments are simply an invitation for you to assist
5 us in developing our thinking in that area.

6 And I thank you in advance and I do thank
7 you for your presentation today.

8 **MAYOR LAWRENCE MARTIN:** Thank you.

9 If I may just comment on that part, not
10 so much to try and answer the question but to illustrate
11 that there is something happening in regards to treaties
12 and how the municipalities are becoming involved in it
13 in a very direct way.

14 This is going back to when I talked about
15 the hospital, the amalgamation and discussions that are
16 taking place. In those negotiations there are treaty
17 factors to that whole process because when we are dealing
18 with the federal government, the zone hospital and the
19 aboriginal communities there is a treaty factor in there.

20

21 In the municipality we are becoming
22 involved in that, in having to look at that particular
23 relationship, and yes, in trying to facilitate the process

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1 so we can deal with it and maybe come up with a way to
2 have it work when we do have a new hospital here in the
3 community.

4 So, I guess what I'm saying is that all
5 of a sudden the municipality finds itself in the struggle
6 that is taking place between the federal government and
7 the treaty people. We are finding ourselves part of that,
8 not so much the negotiation, but part of that ongoing
9 discussion on how to define it. We can more or less say
10 we are being dragged into that fight, if I can call it
11 that, we're being dragged into that because of where we
12 are.

13 This is why we want also to participate
14 in other discussions that are going on in other matters
15 so that we can help, because we are going to be affected
16 every time something like that takes place.

17 So, there is no answer at this point,
18 but we are going to be dealing with that directly as a
19 municipality quite shortly.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
21 Martin.

22 Do you have a question or any comments,
23 Commissioner Beardy?

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1 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**

2 I guess one of the things is that the Mayor is correct
3 in stating that as soon as he was elected into the position
4 of Mayor that a leadership surrounding Sioux Lookout that
5 was an indication that the town was willing to start working
6 with the Native people on a serious basis.

7 However, what I keep noticing,
8 especially in terms of education, we have outside governing
9 bodies that still make decisions that affect or hinder
10 what the town is trying to accomplish for the people that
11 live in the town, when they try to improve the services
12 for Native peoples.

13 I just wanted to mention that that is
14 one area that still needs to be worked on collectively
15 with the Native leadership and the Town of Sioux Lookout.

16 I don't have any questions, I just wanted
17 to state that.

18 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
19 Commissioner Beardy.

20 Thank you very much, Mayor Martin.

21 For the next presenters we have
22 representatives of the Windigo Chiefs Council. I would
23 ask them to come up to the table.

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1 The gentleman, of course, you have
2 already met. Mr. Frank McKay is Chairman of the Windigo
3 Tribal Council. He is a member of the Sachigo Lake First
4 Nation.

5 The guy with the nice looking hat and
6 the shades is a counsellor from Cat Lake First Nation,
7 Gerry Wesley. And the Elder is Jowin Quequish from Weagoma
8 (PH) First Nation. He is a former chief of Weagoma for
9 a number of years. He is now an elder.

10 I will turn the microphone over to the
11 Chairman, Mr. Frank McKay.

12 **FRANK MCKAY, WINDIGO FIRST NATIONS**

13 **COUNCIL:** Thank you, Charles.

14 It is a privilege to be here to address
15 the Commissioners in their task to find solutions to the
16 problems our Native people have had over the years.

17 I have with me, as Charles has mentioned,
18 an elder who wants to speak about our conditions, our lands
19 and resources and our way of life. I also have with me
20 a counsellor from Cat Lake First Nation who wants to talk
21 about some specific concerns they have in relation to their
22 situation in Cat Lake. But I want to make an overall
23 presentation at this time.

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1 The Windigo First Nations Council
2 represents the First Nations of Sachigo Lake, Bearskin
3 Lake, North Caribou Lake, Cat Lake, New Slate Falls and
4 New Saugeen. These First Nations are located in
5 northwestern Ontario.

6 This organizations was established to
7 assist our member First Nations in the areas of social,
8 cultural, economic, educational, recreational and
9 spiritual life of our members in a collective effort to
10 effectively sustain the cultural and traditional fabric
11 of our communities and to evolve toward self-sustaining
12 units. This is an enormous task.

13 We have lived in this area for as long
14 as our people can remember and beyond. For centuries we
15 lived in and on this land without the benefit of the
16 organizational structures known as the Government of
17 Canada and the Province of Ontario. We have traditions,
18 laws, morals and ethics, arts and music. We learned to
19 live with the land and have become keen observers and
20 practitioners of nature's laws and ways. We learned to
21 take our rightful place in the great scheme that is the
22 Creators' world. We believe that the Creator meant us
23 to live in the land, to care for the land and to respect

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1 all things in it and on it.

2 Like Aboriginal people everywhere we
3 want to improve the standard of living for our people while
4 preserving our heritage, culture and way of life. Our
5 right to self-determination comes from the Creator who
6 supplied us with the means to survive in this land forever.

7 The land is our life. As the First
8 Nations of the land we must be involved in every new land
9 use or development from concept, to operation, to
10 distribution of revenue. Our First Nations must be
11 involved individually and through their regional
12 organizations in government-to-government communication
13 and negotiations.

14 Local control and involvement is
15 essential. We are the only people who know what is needed
16 and how it should be provided. All solutions must be
17 community-based and community-controlled. However, in
18 matters of common interest, First Nations will work
19 together, as they have in the past, to have our collective
20 voice heard and our position respected.

21 We have worked with the province and the
22 federal government and industry on resource development
23 agreements so that our people can achieve as much of the

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1 benefits while protecting our lands. We have had limited
2 success, but one in which we want to continue and improve.

3 With the failure of the Charlottetown
4 Accord, Native people are left once again without a voice
5 in the governing of the country, and most importantly,
6 without a voice in the policy and decision-making processes
7 which affect every aspect of our lives. Though the
8 inherent right to self-government has been recognized by
9 both the provincial and federal governments, this
10 recognition is a meaningless gesture unless it is
11 accompanied with appropriate recognition of our existing
12 and continuing modes of governance.

13 Our First Nations have always been and
14 continue to be self-governing. This is not an issue to
15 be debated or an authority to be awarded. It always has
16 and always will exist. Recognition is merely the removal
17 of political blinders which have suited the ends of the
18 federal and provincial governments.

19 We have practiced our forms of a justice
20 system, an education system and a social order which suited
21 our needs and our way of life. These systems were not
22 invented, they come to us traditionally through the
23 teachings of the elders who learned them from their elders

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1 for as far back as we can remember.

2 Our problem is not the invention of a
3 form of governance. Our problem is establishing a
4 relationship on how our systems can integrate with the
5 current legislative framework governing these areas.
6 These laws must accommodate our form of governance.

7 Our First Nations are members of the
8 Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. There are self-government
9 negotiations by individual First Nations, and the
10 Memorandum of Understanding among the Nishnawbe-Aski
11 Nation, the Government of Canada and the province of
12 Ontario.

13 Local self-government negotiations,
14 under the federal government, may be described as
15 self-government, but in view of the area of jurisdiction
16 and the reserve lands which come under the control of the
17 First Nations, they are merely self-administration on a
18 very small scale. Usually the agreement reached and the
19 authority given is applicable only within the bounds of
20 the reserve in question, which can be as small as 500 acres
21 or as large as 79 square miles.

22 It is foolish to pretend that
23 self-government can be practiced without a land base and

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1 resources to support the society and the administration
2 of that society. Seventy-nine square miles will not
3 provide the resources needed to support the people of the
4 communities. Our people will require more land to move
5 forward in areas of tourism, forestry, fisheries, mining
6 and other economic development activities in which that
7 First Nation wishes to pursue.

8 The present self-government
9 negotiations may amount to nothing more than taking over
10 responsibility for the administration of federal and
11 provincial government programs at the local level. Though
12 local control and creation of a local system, such as
13 justice, may be allowed if not encouraged, the system
14 developed can still be superseded by the existing
15 provincial and federal laws and legislation.

16 The continued funding of local
17 self-government negotiations is not confirmed. The
18 history of the planning and negotiating process is anything
19 but bright. Communities wait in line for their turn to
20 plan and negotiate their self-government with the federal
21 and provincial governments. At the present rate, local
22 negotiation on self-government will not be completed by
23 the end of the next century. What will our people do in

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1 the meantime? We will only be further deprived and
2 degraded from our way of life.

3 The alternative at the moment is the
4 Nishnawbe-Aski Memorandum of Understanding with the
5 federal and provincial governments. This memorandum has
6 been in place since 1986 and has still to bear any real
7 fruit. The scope of the agreements under the memorandum
8 are greater than those possible under local
9 self-government negotiations and the geographic area of
10 influence is also greater.

11 Though the Memorandum of Understanding
12 could result in a Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Act, we do not
13 want a form of self-government that is subject to all of
14 the existing laws and policies of the federal and
15 provincial governments, but one that co-exists equally
16 and recognizes our needs. Justice and policing authority
17 would be expanded in the Native community but could
18 continue to be a partner to federal and provincial justice
19 and policing systems. Control over lands and resources
20 would be expanded under joint management systems with
21 boards developed to give the Native community a voice in
22 decisions regarding resource development and land use,
23 including the development of methods of tax and revenue

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1 sharing.

2 Social services and health care could
3 very well be controlled locally by NAN or the local
4 community if such services do not continue to be shaped
5 by federal and provincial agreements regarding funding,
6 or lack of them, and policies of the departments and
7 ministries.

8 Otherwise, if given only administrative
9 authority of program and service and not the policy and
10 decision-making ability, the net result would be just
11 administration on a grander scale. This is hardly
12 self-government.

13 So what is the solution? What do we
14 want?

15 Windigo First Nations Council is looking
16 to the recognition of a system of governance which would
17 provide true control over our lives, based on our inherent
18 and continuing right to self-government, free of influence
19 and interference from the federal and provincial
20 government. This system does not need to be invented,
21 it has always existed. We have no need to appropriate
22 the system of other cultures, we have our own social,
23 education and justice systems that we have always had.

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1 We are not interested in becoming part of another
2 bureaucracy. Rather, we wish to have our inherent right
3 to self-government recognized by the other governments.

4 In order to achieve this recognition:

5 The inherent right to self-government
6 must continue to be the focus of discussions on Aboriginal
7 issues to amend the Constitution. Currently, all federal
8 and provincial laws and legislation, including the Indian
9 Act, shackle and obstruct our people in every area. These
10 laws have not worked for us.

11 The rectification of our treaty to be
12 initiated by the federal government will be a sign that
13 governments are serious in correcting 125 years of
14 injustice. We did not give up our land but agreed to share.

15 Proposals by our people are on the table on how we can
16 co-exist on this land.

17 Self-government must be more than just
18 self-administration, but must encompass our form of laws
19 and policies based on our culture and way of life.

20 Where such areas as education, health,
21 social services and justice are segmented in this society,
22 the holistic approach of our way of life must be
23 re-incorporated to heal our Nation.

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1 Our people want to regain their
2 self-esteem and be proud as a Nation once again, but current
3 conditions degrade our self-image. Our people must escape
4 the shackles of being dependent and work towards
5 self-sufficiency. The key toward regaining our pride and
6 self-sufficiency is education. Our most important
7 resource, our people, must be educated to compete in all
8 levels of employment and professions. We need skilled
9 workers, planners, health care workers, engineers,
10 teachers and so on, so we can have hope for the future.

11 But before we can proceed, the
12 relationship with the federal and provincial governments
13 must be corrected based on our treaty. The treaty must
14 be implemented in the spirit in which it was made from
15 the viewpoint of our people. Our elders tell us that the
16 agreement was to share the land with the newcomers, not
17 to surrender it for a handful of beads and a few scraps
18 of land. It is inconsistent with our long history and
19 our fundamental philosophy to suggest that our
20 grandfathers would trade the birthright of their unborn
21 grandchildren for a few trade goods and the confines of
22 a reserve on some useless piece of land.

23 The confrontation and conflicts our

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1 people have had with the federal and provincial governments
2 is anchored on the root of this misunderstanding. This
3 must be the first order of business if the governments
4 are serious in addressing our problems. This unrest can
5 further be exasperated if federal and provincial
6 governments continue to ignore our rights.

7 Thank you.

8 **CHARLES FOX:** We will proceed with the
9 other speakers on the panel here, Jowin Quequish.

10 **JOWIN QUEQUISH (Translated):** I would
11 like to say a few words. Some of the issues that we face
12 at the community level we have already touched on in the
13 presentation, but I still want to say something. I want
14 to put in my view, my understanding and I understand that
15 if you have a view that you can present it.

16 What I am presenting is at the community
17 level. When the Charter of Rights existed or came about
18 to our communities within the country of Canada, when it
19 was established, the community levels have faced a lot
20 of struggles, where a lot of people are starting to --
21 there are certain situations happening at the community
22 level where community individuals are using this Charter
23 of Rights. Sometimes as a community, when you are striving

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1 to do something together it is very difficult to strive
2 and achieve what you are trying to do because of these
3 individuals utilizing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

4 In the 1950s our children were looked
5 after by their parents, they were controlled by their
6 parents until he was a teenager. There seems to be a lot
7 of problems occurring at the community levels. Young
8 people are faced with a lot of problems to the point where
9 they are taking their own lives. That is what I call a
10 problem.

11 We have those problems at the community
12 level and I have been thinking about ways to try and stop
13 the situation at the community levels. When I was the
14 chief I worked on various issues pertaining to suicides.
15

16 There seems to be a lot of people
17 utilizing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms at the
18 community levels. It is okay for somebody to take care
19 of themselves and be free in their own decision-making,
20 but I think a lot of people are starting to misuse this
21 Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

22 When I worked as a leader I always
23 believed that the community people should start looking

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1 at their own decisions and control at the community level,
2 and that is how they should have utilized this Charter
3 of Rights and Freedoms, at the community level. During
4 the 1950s there was never anybody on an individual basis
5 starting to make decisions on their own. Young people,
6 they were looked after by their parents, their mother,
7 their father, not by themselves.

8 This is a concern to me. There has to
9 be something done about this, regarding the community
10 levels as far as decision-making control. There should
11 be a mechanism set up where the whole community is involved
12 in certain decision-making processes. This is my thinking
13 in this area and this is what I would like to see happen
14 in my community.

15 I would like to speak about now is if
16 a community wants to set laws they should be recognized
17 by the government, if the Native people want to start
18 establishing their own laws at the community levels. If
19 there are situations now where, for example, a community
20 will set up a by-law indicating that they don't want any
21 drugs in the community or anything to do with bad music,
22 if there is a by-law saying that is not allowed in the
23 community, the community should be able to make these kinds

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1 of decisions for their people instead of individuals
2 deciding.

3 Another area of problems that occur is
4 gas sniffing. If there is a by-law in place to prevent
5 gas sniffing the community should be making this decision
6 at the community level. If we want to prevent alcohol
7 from coming into the reserve we should, as a community,
8 be making that decision. It should not be an individual
9 making that decision.

10 If we have somebody come to the airport
11 to look at the possessions of a person coming into town,
12 to try and prevent alcohol from coming into the community,
13 sometimes it is viewed as vandalizing the individual's
14 rights, I guess, but some of these decisions should be
15 at the community level and should be decided by the
16 community people.

17 Another thing that I think about is the
18 treaties that are in place. There were signatories to
19 that treaty in the 1920s. What I see now is that there
20 was no understanding amongst the people that signed the
21 treaty. There were non-Native people and Native people
22 involved and when they signed the treaty I don't think
23 they totally understood each other about what they were

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1 getting into. There was nobody that took the time to
2 explain to the Native people what this treaty was about.

3 There was a misunderstanding from the Native people and
4 from the non-Native people.

5 The way the government sees this is that
6 the Natives had given up their land when they signed this
7 treaty, but from the Native perspective it is not why we
8 signed the treaty. The reason we signed was because we
9 wanted to have the non-Natives who came into our society
10 to be able to stay within the land, but not giving up the
11 land and the resources. I wanted to brief you a little
12 on this, regarding the treaties.

13 I have another point, when a community
14 was given their education by the federal government they
15 gave us education in schools. What happened is that the
16 Native students go to the federal schools and the federal
17 government is paying their tuition or paying for their
18 education. As part of the education process there should
19 be a little bit more that the parents want their children
20 to be taught, that they should respect and that they should
21 learn at the schools, and that they should respect the
22 spirituality, to respect the workers, the police, the
23 nurses, marriage and the way of living. These are some

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1 of the things that the children should be taught at the
2 schools.

3 These are some of the things that their
4 parents are teaching the kids. It is my hope to see this
5 happen and I hope, as a community leader, I had asked the
6 federal government to have the school in my community.
7 Once the federal government responded they did not have
8 any funding to have that kind of curriculum or that kind
9 of teaching at the community level. Because there was
10 no funding from the federal government I, myself, have
11 started a school. I utilized a building in the community,
12 renovated it, and I have set up a curriculum that is
13 relevant to the kind of teaching that I pointed out earlier.
14 The reason I want to teach the children these aspects
15 of life is because it will decrease the nature of problems
16 that will exist in the future and I don't like to see any
17 problems exist.

18 We have to teach the children what to
19 respect in the beginning when they start school. That
20 is my hope. When I started this school in the community
21 there were kids that came to the school -- we have 20
22 students at this school. We have this little building
23 that we have utilized in the community. This school was

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1 a self-started initiative, there was no assistance from
2 the federal government. The kids went to school for three
3 years and the federal government did not provide any
4 assistance.

5 With the promise of providing education
6 to the Native children by the federal government, and
7 having to establish this for three years without federal
8 assistance, as far as funding for the students, this is
9 not right.

10 My concern is that if there is already
11 a promise from the federal government to assist these
12 children in education, over three years there was no
13 funding assistance from the federal government. I wonder
14 where this money would have gone to? It was the
15 initiatives of the parents and they paid for the education
16 of their kids and there was already a promise from the
17 federal government to provide education to the Native
18 children. This is the fifth year that the school has
19 existed.

20 If there is an initiative started at the
21 community level by the Native people then there should
22 be a mechanism in place where the federal government would
23 assist these people and the rest of the Native people.

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1 I'm not too happy with the situation that
2 has occurred. The parents should have been reimbursed
3 for the costs that they incurred when they paid for their
4 kids to get this education for the past three years.

5 I have one more thing, I have a concern
6 about some of the problems that we face at the community
7 level. We are establishing a home in the bush. The
8 initiative there is to try and assist young people, to
9 take them out there, to talk to them, counsel them, that
10 way the problem that exists does not happen again. I have
11 not approached any funding agency for assistance. I have
12 worked for the past ten years as a chief. I have seen
13 other chiefs approach the funding agencies for funding
14 in order for them to be able to get their homes -- that
15 is one of the other initiatives that Native people are
16 trying to do. Again, I would like to emphasize that the
17 federal government should assist these people, that way
18 if they want to take their youths somewhere to counsel
19 them, teach them the way of living on the traditional
20 grounds then it should be done.

21 **CHARLES FOX:** The next speaker is Gerry
22 Wesley, Counsellor from Cat Lake First Nation.

23 **GERRY WESLEY:** Thank you very much.

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1 I don't know if I can speak too quickly
2 because I have a really bad cold, but I am here to do a
3 brief presentation to the Royal Commission especially
4 emphasizing on the justice system which is a problem in
5 our community.

6 I discussed this briefly with our chief,
7 who told me to attend this meeting. Some of the problems
8 that we have in the community are alcohol, solvent abuse
9 inhalants and family violence.

10 These problems have a social impact that
11 creates a lot of problems in the community. There is no
12 law that has been implemented on solvent abuse. Solvent
13 abuse seems to be recognized as the biggest problem arising
14 in the community. It leads to a lot of impacts, like
15 suicide attempts, deaths, rejections, and it falls into
16 the category where they have the realities of stealing,
17 break and enters.

18 We feel that the First Nations should
19 develop a law in terms of that area to protect the
20 communities and the safety of the people from gas sniffing.

21 In terms of alcohol communities have had
22 liquor by-laws for many decades. They are laws that don't
23 really meet the standards of the community on how the law

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1 is set up. We do have a lot of drinking -- even we have
2 that law. We do have officers, but the law indicates that
3 the officers cannot search anybody who is carrying liquor
4 on his body.

5 So what I was thinking when attending
6 justice meetings is that the First Nations should develop
7 a First Nations Criminal Code, to be recognized as laws
8 for self-governing in the communities. This is what I
9 feel the communities should do.

10 Last week I went to a justice NAN
11 meeting. We were talking about how the justice system
12 is supposed to be implemented in the communities. But
13 apparently they are having some problems with the working
14 group. So we are unable to work with NAN because of these
15 problems.

16 Another thing I was going to mention is
17 the court system, the provincial jurisdiction. Our
18 communities have monthly courts. What they have done in
19 the communities for assault charges, all the charges that
20 relate to -- it doesn't really help the people, the victims
21 who come to court, at all because they will be remanded
22 to another court date, and another court date, and
23 eventually all the charges end up being thrown out the

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1 window and this has happened many times to Native people.

2 It is a struggle in the justice area on the part of our
3 community and I think it is time that there should be some
4 substantial changes on behalf of their justice system and
5 the court system. But first we have to find the answers
6 on how to improve it.

7 I was rushed in making this presentation
8 and I was unable to make a real agenda because I was told
9 to leave all of a sudden and I didn't have any agenda.

10 So, thank you very much.

11 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
12 Counsellor Gerry Wesley.

13 I think you have an opportunity, Mr.
14 Wesley, to make a written submission to the Commission,
15 if you feel you didn't have enough time to put all your
16 thoughts on paper and to portray this to the Commissioners.
17 You have that opportunity to go back and make a written
18 submission and send it over to the Commission's office.

19 If there are any questions from the
20 Commissioners, I will turn it over to them.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
22 very much, all three of you, for your presentations.

23 I would like to begin by asking one

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1 question for information from Mr. McKay, the Chairman,
2 and then ask two other questions to the other presenters,
3 or perhaps requests.

4 Could you assist us by describing the
5 relationship between NAN, the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and
6 the treaties in the area, that is, is it the same? Is
7 it the same people? The same area? Or what is the
8 relationship?

9 **FRANK MCKAY:** In the NAN area we have
10 Treaty 9 that was signed in 1905/1906, adhesions were made
11 in 1929. Some of our communities that fall within that
12 territory are from the Treaty 5 bands, which are towards
13 the west, toward the Manitoba side. In the NAN
14 organization we have 46 communities within which the
15 Windigo First Nation is a member.

16 In relation to our treaty, our treaty
17 was signed by people from the Nishnawbe-Aski communities.
18 On behalf of the Crown it was signed by the federal
19 government as signatory, and included as a signatory was
20 the provincial government.

21 We've always maintained that whoever
22 signs the treaty also approved the terms and conditions
23 of that treaty in relation to our understanding, from our

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1 people's perspective. The province has yet to act in the
2 best interests of our people, it has always protected their
3 own interests in the areas of lands and resources. We
4 always seem to be in conflict when it comes to lands located
5 outside our reserves, on our traditional areas. So that
6 is one contested area that we want to pursue and look at
7 in terms of how we can resolve that issue.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** So there
9 are two treaty areas involved in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
10 organization.

11 **FRANK MCKAY:** Yes.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I was
13 looking at your presentation and in there you were
14 emphasizing the centrality or importance of the treaties
15 in establishing the ongoing permanent relationship between
16 the government and Aboriginal peoples. And I think that
17 is one of the important questions that we have to deal
18 with. We hear many different views on this, that is how,
19 in implementing self-government, are we going to establish
20 these relationships? Who is going to do it?

21 You and I think the other presenters as
22 well have talked about the great importance of local
23 initiative and that things that work are decided by the

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1 people in the community -- all right. But you've also
2 emphasized then the need for people working at a bigger
3 level, at a treaty level. And then we also have the NAN
4 organization, and we have other treaty groups in the
5 country as well.

6 So, one of the questions that I have is
7 to do with: What do you see developing down the road for
8 making more effective use of self-government? Treaty
9 organizations that are based on treaties, to develop a
10 form of treaty federalism? Or the development of other
11 organizations like NAN? Or the integrating of more
12 Aboriginal peoples, perhaps all of the Aboriginal peoples
13 -- some people have suggested one Aboriginal province,
14 for example?

15 The point, and I think it is founded in
16 your paper as well as elsewhere, that for some purposes
17 you want to get together, but how many people are going
18 to get together for those common purposes? And how big
19 is going to be that group that gets together? That, I
20 think, is one of the big questions.

21 So, I just wonder if you might have any
22 additional comments to make at this time about that?

23 **FRANK McKAY:** Our people have always

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1 lived at the land. Their's was a nomadic way of life.
2 The way they governed themselves was through contact with
3 other people. We did not live in a central location like
4 we do now, like where we have reserves. Our territory
5 was a large area where we lived and we moved from place
6 to place. That was the way of our people.

7 Now we have reservations, we are
8 confined to a reserve. We were forced into changing our
9 way of life to adapt to a modern way of life. So we have
10 to look in relation to keeping with the traditions and
11 the values of our people. How do we govern ourselves?
12 How do we make decisions? We have adapted to the Indian
13 Act in relation to how we select our leaders -- by election.
14 Then we have organizations that are being developed to
15 represent as a collective effort on those issues that that
16 group wants to address.

17 So for us, working together is a more
18 powerful voice than any individual effort. So we look
19 at it as a collective effort in our effort to resolve the
20 issues surrounding the treaty.

21 In relation to self-government, we are
22 looking at various forms of this collectivity. As a NAN
23 organization we want to consult with our people to see

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1 how a structure, like having a NAN organization without
2 being a top-down organization, but rather to develop an
3 organization that would focus on the needs at the local
4 level. So we are debating or discussing these structures.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
6 for that. That is very helpful.

7 What I would like to say next is this,
8 and there is one comment or request directed at each of
9 the other speakers. First, with respect to the issue of
10 local education initiatives that Elder Quequish told us
11 about, it seems to me that that is another of the very,
12 very important issues that we have to deal with, how to
13 provide an education that makes sense in the small
14 communities? That makes sense, that is, for the purposes
15 of the local community. How can education serve the
16 educational purposes of the local community?

17 You have given us some details here of
18 what appears to be some important ways that the local people
19 can develop these things on their own. I think it is the
20 kind of thing that we cannot ignore. I think those kinds
21 of initiatives are fundamentally important for us. I
22 think, from my side of things, that they are just the kinds
23 of things that point to us, how it is that people can start

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1 things for themselves in the communities. Then for us
2 the question is: How can we help? What can we tell the
3 federal government to help the people to pursue these
4 educational goals?

5 So, it would benefit me a lot anyway in
6 developing my thinking to have more information, more
7 details about this particular initiative.

8 I mentioned in my opening remarks that
9 there is an Intervenor Participation Program that has
10 funded a number of organizations and I'm wondering, in
11 the air, if it is possible that we can hear about this
12 initiative and if there are similar initiatives as well,
13 if we can hear about that and hear about the details and
14 what it is that people would like to see done. What should
15 the federal government do precisely to promote this. I
16 want to make sure I emphasize this on the record, partly
17 for the purposes that our staff should be able to pick
18 this up and to ensure that our work follows up and does
19 not let go of this particular thing. But the point is
20 that I also invite you to pursue this point and to assist
21 us further in developing initiatives such as this.

22 I will just mention my other point
23 because then I will be finished. It has to do with the

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1 point made by the Councillor about the law, the substantive
2 law and changes that are needed in the law, and changes
3 having to do with the enforcement of the law. The
4 circumstances that you describe, it seems to me, are
5 intolerable. I think they are the kind that we need to
6 be informed about, and in the present circumstances would
7 you not have the time today to give the full discussion
8 that is needed? I think a full discussion is needed on
9 this, but right now it is very difficult to do that.

10 So, I am asking if you can assist us in
11 telling us how we can pursue these issues, pursue them
12 in detail. I wonder out loud if the Intervenor
13 Participation Program is the way out. So, I am inviting
14 your response on all these things and I am sorry for having
15 gone on so long.

16 **CHARLES FOX:** Maybe we can invite the
17 presenters to send in written submissions. I realize that
18 the Chairman of the Tribal Council does have a written
19 submission, but maybe the other two. It would be helpful.

20 **FRANK McKAY:** We have a request in to
21 the Intervenor Funding Program to provide more specific
22 details on the things that we spoke about in this
23 presentation. We can't cover all the topics within this

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1 time space and hopefully in the next round we can present
2 you with more specific details in relation to the items
3 that we talked about, and other details that you are looking
4 for in your task.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** And that
6 is the NAN?

7 **FRANK McKAY:** No, we have our own, the
8 Windigo First Nations submission.

9 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
10 very much.

11 **CHARLES FOX:** Commissioner Wilson,
12 please.

13 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
14 just like to make one or two brief comments. The first
15 one has to do with what you said about self-government.

16 I certainly agree completely with you
17 when you say that self-government has to be something more
18 than administration, which is really a delegated form of
19 authority and that is really not consistent with the
20 concept of an inherent right to self-government. So, it
21 has to be something more than administration. It has to
22 be the authority to make policy and make decisions.

23 I think that was why some people thought

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1 the route to go was through the Charlottetown Accord, and
2 through getting into the Constitution, the recognition
3 of the inherent right, and to get into the Constitution
4 the idea that Native self-government would be a third level
5 of government, along with the federal and provincial levels
6 and would have its own areas of jurisdiction. That was
7 rejected and didn't go through, but there are, of course,
8 other ways of accomplishing the same thing without
9 constitutional change.

10 The Commission is currently looking at
11 what these other ways of doing it might be, and we are
12 hoping to produce some kind of a document as a kind of
13 a response to the Charlottetown Accord of what other
14 options do Native people have in order to exercise the
15 kind of self-government that you are talking about, namely
16 in the area of policy-making and making your own decisions
17 about things like education, justice and so on. In effect,
18 making your own laws and having the authority to enforce
19 them. So, that is one thing I wanted to mention.

20 The other thing I wanted to mention
21 because it is really such a serious thing, and we are
22 hearing it all across the country, and that is the problems
23 that young people have today. I don't know what the answer

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1 to this is, but we've heard from a lot of young people
2 in various communities that they feel they have a foot
3 in two worlds, so to speak. They are really quite torn
4 and quite confused because they obviously want to adhere
5 to the traditional values and culture of their people,
6 this is very important because this is where their identity
7 comes from, from their traditional language and culture
8 and history. So, they very much want to be part of that.

9 At the same time they are subject to
10 tremendous pressures from the modern world, through
11 television, through their friends at school, and all the
12 other influences that are, what you might call, giving
13 them the foot in the other world. It is not in the least
14 surprising to me that they are finding life difficult.
15 I suppose the real question that Native people are
16 addressing is: How do you preserve the best of the culture
17 and traditions and Native spirituality, and yet acquire
18 the knowledge and the skills and so on that are going to
19 fit you to live in 1992? This is what people are asking,
20 and in effect, how to be an Aboriginal young person in
21 1992. I can see that that is really a very, very difficult
22 problem that young people face, and it doesn't surprise
23 me that they are in a state of confusion.

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1 I don't know what the answers are.
2 Obviously it would be a disaster if they were to lose
3 everything that goes to who they are. That is very
4 important that they have that. It is also important,
5 however, that they become viable citizens and be able to
6 participate in the economy and get the necessary training.

7 So, I agree with what was said about
8 education. Education, I think, is the basic necessity.

9 I think without that self-sufficiency isn't going to come,
10 self-government isn't going to come, so that it is
11 absolutely fundamental. I think that anything that you
12 are able to tell us in that area we would certainly welcome
13 because we don't have the answers to that, we just recognize
14 that this is a tremendous problem and it's a tremendous
15 problem for the young people.

16 On the Commission what we are doing is,
17 in addition to looking at the various subject matters like
18 self-government, justice, education, health, land claims
19 -- in addition to looking at all those various items we
20 are also looking across them from the point of view of
21 young people, to get the young people's perspective on
22 all these things, and we are looking at them from the point
23 of view of women, to get the women's perspective also on

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1 all of those things because we feel we need that kind of
2 grid. We need the study of the subject matters, but we
3 also need the views of Native people, looking at it from
4 the women's point of view, looking at it from the young
5 people's point of view. So, we are trying to get that
6 as well.

7 On the issue of justice, I think we are
8 all agreed, certainly the Commission has stated that the
9 existing justice system is just not working for Native
10 people. It is not appropriate. It doesn't reflect Native
11 values. The emphasis on punishment, the emphasis on
12 guilt, indeed the adversary nature of the process in the
13 ordinary courts doesn't seem to be appropriate for Native
14 people.

15 What we are interested in, of course,
16 as a Commission, is what Native people are doing by way
17 of exercising their own initiative and setting up their
18 own courts. We heard quite a bit about that at the meeting
19 on justice that we had last week. We heard about the
20 various experiments and pilot projects that were going
21 on across the country. People were setting up their own
22 courts, no professional people involved, no lawyers, just
23 the parties, the extended family, the community and the

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1 elder or other person who is respected in the community
2 sitting and hearing and coming up with some kind of a way
3 of dealing with the offender that is going to bring back
4 harmony in the community and reconciliation, as opposed
5 to emphasizing punishment and so on.

6 So, there is a lot of that going on in
7 various communities. We are interested in hearing about
8 those experiments because we would like to come up with
9 some models that seem to be more appropriate for Native
10 people in the justice area. So, I just wanted to mention
11 that we are very interested in working in these areas.

12 Thank you.

13 **FRANK MCKAY:** In the question of
14 education, the elder here has spoken about how he wants
15 to pursue addressing that area. We have that problem
16 within our communities, but we send a Native person out
17 to school and then he comes back and can't fit into his
18 own community. Then we have a person in the community
19 who is raised in the community and learns our ways, but
20 can't fit into the modern world. So, we have that problem.

21 The elder here has spoken about how he
22 wants to pursue the development of an education/training
23 centre, a culture centre, he wants to pursue that area

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1 on his own. He is always talking about how he constructed
2 his own school classroom to educate his student, so he
3 went and did that on his own.

4 So those are the areas that we can
5 further expound on in our further submission to the
6 Commission, some further details on those points. And
7 also in the area of justice that we think are pursuant
8 to the future. We can do that. We can answer those kinds
9 of questions in that area. We are also seeking answers
10 of how we can develop approaches for our communities.

11 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** We are
12 very interested in hearing about that because we have heard
13 in several communities how parents, teachers and elders
14 have got together and created their own curriculum and
15 just started. Of course the problem is funding always
16 and we realize that. That is something that the Commission
17 obviously has to address.

18 **CHARLES FOX:** Are there any comments or
19 questions from the Commissioner of the Day?

20 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
21 Meegwetch, Charles.

22 I just want to make two brief comments
23 or questions. The first one is to maybe add some

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1 clarification on Chairman McKay's presentation when he
2 mentioned resource development agreements. Maybe you
3 could clarify for the Commission the nature of those
4 agreements, whether they are administrative in nature or
5 whether they touch on the question of jurisdiction on our
6 traditional lands, and whether you feel those resource
7 development agreements, or arrangements between both
8 levels of government, is adequate in addressing our
9 customary and traditional lands?

10 **FRANK MCKAY:** We have agreements with
11 the mining companies and the federal government and
12 provincial government and the First Nations that is
13 directly involved in that area. When we begin
14 negotiations or discussions on such an endeavour our First
15 Nations first have to agree that such an activity can occur
16 within their traditional area. Then we begin discussions.

17 However, we had to resort to the laws
18 of the Province of Ontario to get the company and both
19 levels of government to the table to seriously consider
20 the concerns of the First Nation involvement. We usually
21 have a set of objectives that we try to achieve in relation
22 to -- if a mining activity was to proceed in the traditional
23 area, here is what the Native community is concerned with.

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1 They want to get the full benefits as a result of the
2 mine being there, in relation to employment, training,
3 environmental protection, compensation and so forth.

4 So, those are the issues that we sit down
5 at the table and try and negotiate to the satisfaction
6 of the parties involved. Thus, only in an interim way
7 can we, at this time, negotiate when a resource activity
8 comes into a community.

9 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
10 McKay.

11 It is 11:15, Commissioners, and we need
12 to break for coffee.

13 **FRANK MCKAY:** I want to thank the
14 Commissioners for the presentations that were made here
15 and I would also like to invite the Commissioners to our
16 territory, to our one of our member First Nations
17 communities in the future, when another round of hearings
18 is considered. We would like to be considered as one of
19 the locations for your hearings.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

21 We will break for coffee.

22

23 --- Upon recessing at 11:15 a.m.

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

2

3 **CHARLES FOX:** We have two presenters
4 coming up. For the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council
5 we have Mr. Bill Nothing, who is the Executive Director
6 and Mr. Isaac Beaulieu. Can I have them come up, please?

7 Mr. Nothing is a member of the Bearskin
8 Lake First Nation. He has served in various capacities,
9 the Deputy Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and
10 he is now, as I stated earlier, the Executive Director
11 of the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council here in Sioux
12 Lookout.

13 The gentleman to his left is Mr. Isaac
14 Beaulieu. He is from the Sandy Bay First Nation in
15 Manitoba and he is currently working here as a Native
16 Language Project Coordinator.

17 So, I will turn it over to Mr. Nothing.

18 **BILL NOTHING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,**
19 **NORTHERN NISHNAWBE EDUCATION COUNCIL:** Thank you,
20 Charles.

21 Good morning, Commissioners. I am very
22 happy to be here to make a presentation.

23 As Mr. Fox has said, I have been involved

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1 in working with the people from Nishnawbe-Aski for
2 approximately 20 years. During those years I have worked
3 in a variety of capacities with different organizations.

4 The presentation that I am making this
5 morning reflects not just the concerns of Northern
6 Nishnawbe Education Council, where I am currently the
7 Executive Director, but reflects my personal views
8 acquired through the 20 years of experience in Aboriginal
9 affairs.

10 Over the years, and in particular in the
11 last ten years since I have been involved in
12 self-government negotiations, I have given a great deal
13 of thought to the situation of the people of NAN,
14 Nishnawbe-Aski, and, for that matter, across the country.

15 I have, I feel, developed some practical approaches and
16 some ideas so that we, as Aboriginal people, can have our
17 inherent right to self-government recognized and
18 implemented to improve our lives.

19 I will just give you a caption of where
20 the Nishnawbe-Aski territory is. As you heard this
21 morning, the Nishnawbe-Aski people are the members of the
22 46 Ojibway and Cree First Nations who reside in remote
23 northern Ontario. We share the land on which we have

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1 traditionally lived. We have hunted, fished and trapped
2 throughout the NAN area. We speak Ojibway, Cree or a blend
3 of the two, known as Oji-Cree. The Nishnawbe-Aski
4 territory encompasses about 210,000 square miles,
5 stretching from Manitoba to the Quebec border and from
6 the height of land to the shores of Hudson and James Bay.

7 Most of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nations is
8 covered by the James Bay Treaty 9 and its adhesions in
9 29 or 30. Most NAN First Nations have a common
10 relationship with Canada and Ontario. A few
11 Nishnawbe-Aski First Nations are covered by Treaty 5, which
12 also goes into Manitoba. However, being in Ontario they
13 have many things in common with the other NAN communities,
14 and have chosen to belong to the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation.

15 The majority of NAN communities are
16 accessibly only by air. Over the past 20 years airstrips
17 have been built in most of the communities and people and
18 goods are flown in from service centres by scheduled
19 aircraft. Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay are the primary
20 service centres for the northwestern part of NAN with
21 Pickle Lake also being a freighting centre. Timmins and
22 Moosonee are the key centres for the James Bay area and
23 the eastern portion of NAN.

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1 As isolated communities NAN First
2 Nations share common problems: high cost of living, lack
3 of economic opportunities, difficulties in access to
4 services and so on.

5 The Nishnawbe-Aski Nation is the
6 political organization which represents the
7 Nishnawbe-Aski people. It was established by the chiefs
8 as Grand Council Treaty 9 in 1973 and renamed the
9 Nishnawbe-Aski Nation in the early 1980s. NAN has served
10 its member First Nations in various capacities.

11 Since Grand Council Treaty 9 was formed
12 in 1973, the chiefs have talked about self-government.
13 Over the years, the chiefs have passed numerous resolutions
14 dealing with the concept and philosophy of
15 self-government.

16 During the early 1980s, the
17 Nishnawbe-Aski Nation was actively involved in the fight
18 for constitutional recognition of our Aboriginal and
19 treaty rights, including our right to self-government.
20 In 1982, the Aboriginal people of Canada were successful
21 in having Aboriginal and treaty rights recognized in
22 section 35 of the Constitution. A constitutional process
23 was undertaken in an attempt to gain further constitutional

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1 recognition of our rights, especially our right to
2 self-government.

3 During our participation in the
4 constitutional process, NAN leadership became aware that
5 whatever constitutional arrangements were agreed upon
6 there would still be a requirement that the specific
7 negotiations, and probably legislation, would be required
8 to implement. Therefore, they needed a vehicle to
9 continue that process.

10 Therefore, on February 24, 1986, Ontario
11 and Canada agreed to negotiate with the Nishnawbe-Aski
12 Nation, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding on the
13 Indian government. The two page memorandum contains one
14 major goal, and that is:

15 "The parties are prepared to review the
16 conditions and agreements between
17 Canada, Ontario and NAN with a view
18 to providing for the present and
19 future self-government needs of
20 the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, and to
21 make such further provisions and
22 agreements as are consistent with
23 the rights and aspirations of NAN."

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1 The participants at that time agreed to
2 begin immediately and end negotiations on 11 separate
3 subjects by February, 1988, that is, within 24 months of
4 the signing. The subjects included: fishing, trapping
5 and hunting, band status and lands for reserves, housing,
6 community infrastructure, education, health, social
7 services, economic development and powers and institutions
8 of self-government.

9 The original timetable for negotiations
10 was not met and several early attempts at negotiations
11 floundered. However, in 1989 the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
12 spearheaded a major effort to get the process back on track.

13 This renewed activity resulted in the signing of the
14 parties in December 1989, of an addendum to the original
15 memorandum. This addendum reconfirms the commitment of
16 the parties to the process of negotiating self-government
17 within confederation for the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation.

18 The Memorandum of Understanding is a
19 unique document. It is the first agreement in Canada which
20 provides for comprehensive negotiations to recognize
21 self-government.

22 Because the MOU is unique, it does not
23 fit within federal government policy. They have a policy

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1 of community-based self-government negotiations, but they
2 were thinking of self-government for a single First Nation,
3 or a small group of First Nations. Therefore, there scope
4 was very limited.

5 The federal community-based
6 self-government negotiation process is limited to 15 First
7 Nations negotiating at one time. This process will take
8 a very long time for all the First Nations in Canada.
9 It is clearly inadequate to meet the needs of First Nations.

10 At one point I had asked one of the senior
11 negotiators in Ottawa why there was only 15. The reply
12 was, "Well, that's all we have enough people to negotiate
13 and resources." So I said, "What happens to all the other
14 bands or reserves that are ready to begin the
15 self-government negotiations?" And at that point there
16 were two seats left within the 15 and his remark was, "Well,
17 I guess it's going to be a horse race to get the other
18 two positions filled." I mean that is hardly an attitude
19 worth considering.

20 When the MOU was signed, the Province
21 of Ontario had no policies in place for self-government
22 and was unprepared to negotiate. It is was not surprising
23 that in the first few years of negotiations the MOU did

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1 not achieve any results.

2 The Nishnawbe-Aski Nation feels that if
3 it is to achieve the kind of goals that the Nishnawbe-Aski
4 Nation have been talking about over the years, the MOU
5 has to be elevated to a political level. Governments must
6 be prepared to deal with it, not on the basis of their
7 policies, but as a political agreement. The importance
8 of the talks must be recognized by governments and
9 adequately resourced to facilitate the NAN participation.

10 It appears that the commitment of
11 governments across the country to negotiating
12 self-government has increased. In particular, the NDP
13 Government of Ontario has indicated that they are prepared
14 to negotiate Indian self-government and to recognize the
15 inherent right of Aboriginal people to self-government.

16 This inherent rights language is very appealing to
17 Aboriginal people because for the first time governments
18 are using the language used by Aboriginal people.

19 However, we must be cautious about what Ontario means when
20 they talk about inherent rights. One senior Ontario
21 policy maker said that Ontario's interpretation of an
22 inherent right to self-government means internal
23 self-government within your own group or community,

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1 similar to band government under the Indian Act. This
2 is not the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation's view of what
3 self-government is.

4 The MOU approach is totally consistent
5 with the recognition of our inherent right to
6 self-government. In all negotiations NAN is insisting
7 that no new government is being created, no powers
8 delegated. Self-government legislation by Canada and
9 Ontario will only recognize NAN self-government, it will
10 not create it. Legislation will clarify Indian
11 jurisdiction and allow Canada and Ontario to surrender
12 their jurisdiction to NAN government.

13 The approach being taken in the MOU
14 discussions is consistent with the constitutional
15 recognition of our right to self-government. Our
16 experience in the 1980s taught us that any constitutional
17 recognition of self-government will be in broad and general
18 language and will require specific regional legislation
19 in order to implement it.

20 I would like to briefly touch on the
21 treaties, at least as it relates to the MOU.

22 In the treaty discussions in this area,
23 the First Nations agreed to share the land with the

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1 understanding that they would continue to have the freedom
2 of movement to continue their hunting, trapping and fishing
3 lifestyles. These off-reserve rights of our people must
4 be protected. We must have the right to control the
5 allocation of resources to others so that our rights do
6 not become a hollow shell.

7 All MOU negotiations are being done
8 without any reference to our treaty or our treaty rights.

9 In the past they have talked about renegotiating or
10 renovating the treaty. However, when the draft Memorandum
11 of Understanding was presented to the Chiefs in 1985, all
12 reference to the treaty was removed at the request of the
13 chiefs. The MOU process is not a treaty-based initiative.

14 Despite the written text of the treaty,
15 First Nations did not agree to surrender land. One judge,
16 who is involved in the RCNE litigation case stated that
17 we had a claim which my not yet have been legally recognized
18 to the ownership of a vast area of land.

19 The treaty will remain intact and all
20 options for dealing with the treaty are still open to NAN.

21 Work on legal challenges for the treaty, treaty
22 implementation or treaty interpretation, can and should
23 continue.

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1 I am told I have five minutes so I had
2 better speed up the process I guess. Maybe I can try to
3 encapsulize.

4 During the negotiations with the MOU
5 there was talk about a concept of regional government in
6 the North. We talked about who lived up there and it
7 appears that outside of some teachers and so on, that areas
8 is inhabited only by our people. We began looking at what
9 were the possibilities of establishing a regional style
10 of government, where we would share jurisdiction with other
11 inhabitants? A case example is when we negotiated the
12 Tikinagan Child and Family Services. Their jurisdiction
13 is an area and they are responsible in this geographic
14 area for anybody, whether they be green, orange or purple.

15 So, they have jurisdiction over these
16 people and those are the kinds of things that I think need
17 to happen so that that particular area is indeed being
18 governed by the people who live there.

19 I would like to deal with some of the
20 education issues. With the five minutes that I have I
21 would like to key in on some of the key points -- you do
22 have my presentation.

23 It is very clear that the education

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1 system, as the elder said, is failing our students. We
2 feel that education is an inherent right as well as a treaty
3 right and we feel that that jurisdiction should be given
4 over to our people.

5 Even if you recognize the fact that the
6 federal government has handed over the federal schools
7 to the First Nations, they do not have the decision-making
8 power. They do not have control. They do not have the
9 ability to make their own policies. So in that respect
10 there must be legislative changes.

11 Maybe you've heard that the
12 post-secondary education has been capped and to us that
13 is very important. We've had to turn back approximately
14 84 students this year because of lack of funding. Because
15 it has been capped we find ourselves in the predicament
16 where we are administrating education and we bring our
17 people from the far North to go into major centres, such
18 as Thunder Bay, and because we are limited in funding we
19 are forced to pay or fund our students at a much lower
20 rate. Therefore, a lot of them live below welfare
21 standards.

22 I think part of that problem needs to
23 be addressed in the sense that if we are doing education

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1 why are we then forced to do social welfare as well? Those
2 policies must change in order for us to stretch our
3 education dollars as far as we can.

4 Another area I would like to touch on
5 is the quality of our teachers. We have less than 10 per
6 cent, approximately 160 teachers in the district which
7 are Native. We must have more programs to train First
8 Nations teachers. We find that most of our teachers are
9 new graduates from the Maritimes and their average length
10 of stay is usually two or three years. It takes them
11 approximately two years to learn how to teach English as
12 a second language, by then they are ready to go so we get
13 another batch of teachers. So, it affects our students
14 and it affects the quality of education.

15 Another area that I would like to touch
16 on lightly is in the area of health and education and how
17 we can raise the student awareness. There is a disease
18 called Otitus Media, or middle ear infection and it has
19 been reported since back in 1985, that 40.7 per cent of
20 students, both north and south, have affected by this.
21 It was also brought out, when there was the health panel,
22 that little action has been taken.

23 Another critical area is in eyesight.

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1 Ninety to ninety-five per cent of our students require
2 glasses. The majority don't wear them or can't get access
3 to them. So changes have to be made there.

4 I heard again this morning about social
5 problems. We find ourselves when we take students from
6 the North that they come down with a high number of social
7 problems. They come from broken homes, families that have
8 a history of drinking and violence and we have to try to
9 deal with them. Professional help for these students,
10 both on and off-reserve is hard to find. So, we must
11 address this problem and come up with some alternatives.

12 In conclusion, I have some
13 recommendations here and maybe I can just read them out,
14 there are four of them and then maybe give two minutes
15 to Isaac here.

16 So the recommendations are that I think
17 there has to be a return to the constitutional table.
18 I think that the Aboriginal people have a desire to be
19 recognized in the Constitution, even if it is just on the
20 basis of dealing with Aboriginal issues. The media has
21 said that Canada did not throw out the Charlottetown Accord
22 because of Natives, but because there were about 60
23 different items on there. There was a brief talk this

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1 morning about Canada's perception in the world. So maybe
2 if they dealt with the Aboriginal issue maybe that could
3 bring some light to Canada's position in the world.

4 I think that a commitment by the federal
5 government and the provinces to negotiate self-government
6 arrangements, which are consistent with our inherent right
7 to self-government. In our negotiations, we are currently
8 seeing a political commitment at the highest level, but
9 this is not being translated into true self-government
10 arrangements in such fields as education.

11 Self-government: Only by allowing
12 Aboriginal people to have their own jurisdiction, to
13 develop their own policies, to establish their own
14 institution, will appropriate solutions to our problems
15 be developed.

16 Last but not least, there has to be
17 adequate resources to secure a financial basis. What we
18 found in negotiations, at least at the federal level, is
19 that they are willing to negotiate self-government only
20 if it will not cost the federal government any more money.

21 I think if you look at the situation that we are trying
22 to climb out of, it only makes sense that there is going
23 to be some additional finances required.

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1 Anyway, I'm sorry to have to make my
2 brief short, but the Moderator is tough. You have the
3 written text and so maybe I will give Isaac a couple of
4 minutes here to wrap things up.

5 I thank you very much.

6 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Bill.

7 As Mr. Nothing has stated you do have
8 the written text so it is on record.

9 Isaac Beaulieu, please.

10 **ISAAC BEAULIEU:** Thank you very much.

11 "Our Creator has given us a language to use. We must use
12 the Aboriginal language to teach
13 our children. We must take
14 control of our languages. The
15 Creator will guide and help us in
16 our efforts to retain our language
17 and preserve it through our young
18 people. It is very important to
19 use our Aboriginal languages as our
20 own."

21 Those are the words of Eli Taylor, an
22 elder from Sioux Valley, Manitoba.

23 Commissioners, I am Isaac Beaulieu and

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1 I coordinate the special project here for the Northern
2 Nishnawbe Education. I'm not going to say much about
3 myself, because I would take the rest of the time to do
4 that, except to say that I was the Commissioner for the
5 inquiry into Bill C-31. We were so often advised that
6 we were to listen and ask specific brief questions. We
7 were not to make speeches, sermons, opinions, and we tried
8 to abide by that. In that way I think we can get things
9 moving very rapidly here.

10 The other thing that I would like to
11 mention is that the Charlottetown was defeated, I guess,
12 but if it was actually a real referendum -- what it was
13 was a plebescite, and I think lawyers and noted people
14 will know that it was actually a plebescite. It was an
15 opinion. If it was divided into at least six or seven points
16 each into legislative words I know that self-government
17 would have gotten very extensive support.

18 Self-government is a recognition of all
19 aspects of the community and language is basic to culture
20 and spirituality. Those are the things that make a
21 distinct society. I often hear the words "best of our
22 culture" when it goes to integrate programs in education.

23 I would like a culturally-relevant curriculum to be

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1 developed. I believe that we do not have a catalogue of
2 items of culture. The entire Ojibway-Cree culture is all
3 best. We can't really eliminate this part or that part,
4 but I think best of your culture is irrelevant and shouldn't
5 be used very often. I have heard said that the Métis
6 people, who are half Indian and half white -- I think they
7 are fully Indian and fully white, they are dual
8 personalities rather than half-breeds. I think these are
9 the terms that we should start to correct at these places.

10 Everywhere the Aboriginal people are
11 expressing the need to sustain the language in order to
12 keep their identity and culture and spirituality. These
13 are the factors that will influence Indian
14 self-government. No matter how they are organized -- and
15 the question was raised about that -- we have basic
16 organization, school boards, committees on the reserve,
17 band councils and so on. Those go right on organizing
18 the tribal councils, provinces into the AFN and right into
19 the, currently being organized, North, South and Central
20 American alliance of Aboriginal people and we, of course,
21 have the world indigenous organizations, so it is not --
22 sometimes we feel that we maybe alone in doing these things
23 and the questions of some of the more specifics of how

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1 people are covered.

2 I just thought that I would mention that
3 because language is the main factor or the one that is
4 commonly running through all these things. I was
5 privileged to attend the United Nations meeting in Geneva
6 with the indigenous people and it was very unfortunate
7 that we had to speak English, French and Spanish. There
8 was not one Aboriginal language that was recognized, yet
9 some of the Aboriginal languages from South America are
10 much greater in population than that of Spanish or any
11 other language.

12 In recent years it has become only too
13 clear that our languages will eventually disappear unless
14 we take some constructive action for their retention.
15 It is in fact too late for some, they have become relegated
16 to historical artifacts. The Ojibway and Cree languages
17 have an excellent chance of surviving if we act now.

18 As early as 1975 the federal government
19 recognized the need to resource Native language programs
20 as defined by program circular E-5. Unfortunately, this
21 support is limited only to teaching of Aboriginal
22 languages. Extensive resources are now required to
23 establish the basis of teaching the language, develop

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1 resource materials, create literature and music, promote
2 the use of the languages in the community, in business
3 and in organizations.

4 There are certain processes that have
5 to be entrenched in the school systems and in the
6 communities, such as:

7 A. Teach in the Aboriginal language:

8 1. Teach in the Native language when
9 it is most relevant, like Social Studies and History.
10 This does not mean that teachers have to speak the local
11 language -- even though this may be desirable eventually
12 -- but resources would be made available.

13 2. Language training by high school
14 students to the elementary grade students. It would give
15 them an opportunity to learn the language better.

16 3. Students assist at tribal meetings
17 by translating, this would also familiarize students with
18 tribal matters.

19 B. Immersion at the early childhood
20 education level:

21 1. Practice general proficiency for
22 speakers of the local Native language.

23 2. Teach the language to non-speakers

1 of the language.

2 C. Teaching the language at the high
3 school level to speakers of the language:

4 1. understanding what makes up a
5 language;

6 2. cultural implications of the
7 language;

8 3. historical developments;

9 4. literature in the language.

10 There was some discussion by our Mayor
11 here about historical developments and the language is
12 so important to do that.

13 D. Make the language the working
14 language of the community:

15 1. in the band council and tribal
16 meetings;

17 2. in the organization of the tribes;

18 3. businesses on the reserves and
19 surrounding communities -- again our Mayor talked about
20 the possibility of having people speak the language that
21 serves the people here;

22 4. relevant government services;

23 5. increase use of the language in the

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1 media.

2 These simple suggestions are, in fact,
3 a complex set of actions that need to be carried out in
4 an intensive organized system, and as such the following,
5 among others, may be recommended:

6 A. set a National Aboriginal Languages
7 Commission;

8 B. encourage tribal areas to establish
9 local language commissions;

10 C. intensive research in each language
11 area with adequate financial support;

12 D. develop resource materials in all
13 forms for use in the school and in the communities;

14 E. establish language training
15 programs for business people and employees.

16 Those are the recommendations I have and
17 based on -- I know that as members of the Commission you
18 have heard a lot of these matters before, and I know with
19 my experience you always hear these things, but I hope
20 that somehow I have added another dimension to solving
21 the problem of languages.

22 Meegwetch.

23 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.

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1 Beaulieu.

2 If the Commissioners have any questions
3 maybe we can turn the floor over to you.

4 Commissioner Wilson, please.

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

6 One of the things that I think the
7 Commission realizes is that the general public is well
8 disposed towards Native self-government in principle.
9 Where the problems arise is when they start asking, "But
10 how is it going to impact on me?" "What is it going to
11 cost?" "What are my taxes going to go on?" -- this kind
12 of thinking. We have heard that to the extent that we've
13 heard presentations from non-Native people.

14 The thing that occurred to us was to ask,
15 "What is the existing system costing governments?" Nobody
16 seems to be asking that question. Here we have a system
17 that clearly does not work and Native people are not happy
18 with it, it deprives them of their pride and their
19 self-respect, and yet it is obviously costing governments
20 a great deal.

21 So, one of the things that the Commission
22 is hoping to do, with the assistance of some economists,
23 is try to get a handle on what the existing system which

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1 doesn't work is costing. Now this, we realize, is not
2 going to be easy, it's not going to be easy to get all
3 the information that will be required from all the
4 different government departments, federal and provincial,
5 what all the various programs are costing, welfare
6 payments, unemployment insurance, all this adds up to what
7 this existing bad system is costing.

8 So we are going to try and see if we can
9 get a handle -- it will require the cooperation, obviously,
10 of the other levels of government -- to get a handle on
11 what the existing system costs and then have these
12 economists make some projections, to the extent that that's
13 possible, as to what a new system, hopeful a better system
14 would cost.

15 That is one of the things we would like
16 to do in this area of cost. We would like to get at least
17 some feel for whether the system would be more costly,
18 equally costly, possibly less costly than the existing
19 system. That is one point I wanted to make.

20 The other point I wanted to make, and
21 it really emerged out of a symposium that was held in
22 Saskatoon a few months ago in relation to the right to
23 education. The Native people, of course, were arguing

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1 that they had the right to education, although their treaty
2 simply spoke about a school house in every community.
3 Their point was that today, in 1992, the right to education
4 must include advanced education -- post-secondary,
5 university education, education for trades and so on,
6 should all be viewed as part of their right to education
7 on a liberal interpretation of that word in their treaty.

8 Again, the question came up of cost and
9 government people then said, "Well, this is going to cost
10 a fortune. Your taxes are going to go up." The usual
11 argument that is made. There were some accountants there
12 from Coopers & Lybrand and they put before us some charts
13 dealing with the value of the land that was alleged to
14 have been surrendered at the time their treaty was entered
15 into: what the land was worth then; what it's worth today;
16 the value of all the resources that have been taken out
17 of that land, in which they've had no share and no
18 participation. They came up with a figure as to what that
19 was worth, what the Native people gave up at the time they
20 entered into their treaty in exchange for these various
21 rights, including education. They concluded that of
22 course it was astronomical and that there was no way that
23 even adding all the benefits together that had been

1 provided by governments to the Native people covered by
2 that treaty, they added up to nothing like the value of
3 the land they had lost and the resources they had given
4 up.

5 So, the submission that was made was that
6 governments should look upon that, the surrender of those
7 lands, as an advance payment made by the people covered
8 by the treaty, an advance payment towards all the benefits,
9 all the service, everything that had been provided since
10 the time the treaty was made and it still would be a fraction
11 of what had been given up at the time the treaty was made.

12 Now, it seems to me that that sort of
13 thing is what has to be communicated, both to the general
14 public and also to governments, so that they realize that
15 these are not gifts, this is not something that they're
16 doing for Native people. This is just a small percentage
17 of the value of what was given up. I think that we probably
18 have to address that and try to communicate that as part
19 of the public education role of the Commission.

20 So there are those two things that we
21 can usefully do, addressing the big picture not necessarily
22 dealing specifically with different regions or different
23 treaties, but just the principle: How do you look at that?

1 What is the proper fair way to look at that when the white
2 society complains that their taxes are going to go up and
3 so on.

4 So, I just wanted to mention that we are
5 hearing this and it is a totally different way of looking
6 at the treaties. I think, personally, it is a very sound
7 way of looking at the treaties. So I think that part of
8 our role is to try to turn people's thinking around so
9 that they look at these things differently and get them
10 in their proper perspectives.

11 So, I just wanted to mention these two
12 things in relation to cost.

13 Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
15 both for your presentations.

16 Mr. Beaulieu, I appreciate your written
17 submission here and the many good points that you make
18 in it. I want to say that the Commission has an information
19 bank system so everything is fed into it, so you can be
20 assured that the substance of your presentation will be
21 incorporated into our work.

22 I may say that I grew up across the lake
23 from Sandy Bay, a straight line, in the community of St.

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1 Laurent and I've had the occasion of sitting in the audience
2 once or twice in forums where you were speaking. So it
3 is most interesting to see you here today and welcome that
4 opportunity.

5 I remember too, when I was young,
6 venturing around the lake and going to Sandy Bay and playing
7 baseball against the local team. I want to leave you with
8 your beliefs as to who used to win those games.

9 **ISAAC BEAULIEU:** My fondest memories
10 are going across the lake in mid-winter to a dance.

11 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Right.

12 So, thank you for that and it is
13 definitely a pleasure to see you.

14 Mr. Nothing, thank you for your very
15 comprehensive presentation. It too contains so many
16 points and as I've said we have no time to discuss them
17 here, but I assure you that with impressive clarity you
18 have brought up quite a number of new points that I have
19 not seen before in submissions. So, it is particularly
20 important.

21 I was intrigued by the reference to
22 Otitis Media as a middle-ear infection. I have never heard
23 of that before, but I do remember, when I was little, waking

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1 up in the middle of the night with a severe earache and
2 my father blowing smoke from his pipe into my ear. I don't
3 know if that had anything to do with Otitis Media or not,
4 but I do know that my hearing isn't the best.

5 I want to comment very briefly on one
6 or two things in your paper to highlight their importance.

7 The reference you make about the changes
8 in education and trying to get control over your own
9 educational system, and the means that are put there so
10 that they prevent you from getting that. You are really
11 caught in a bind, as you were explaining to us in good
12 detail here, that as you take control nevertheless you
13 become caught in this bureaucratic web and you find that
14 the province is now taking control of the things that you
15 say you ought properly have control over. It presents
16 us, does it not, with dilemmas. What about accreditation?

17 So if First Nations take control of their own education
18 and are indeed to develop their own appropriate curriculum
19 for their purposes, then how do we deal with the matter
20 of accreditation, so that First Nations students, having
21 received such an education, can then go on and compete
22 everywhere.

23 So it seems to me that that is an area

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1 that will require cooperation and certainly is an important
2 one and one that we have to focus on. But I thank you
3 particularly for having brought out those good details
4 that are very helpful to us in understanding exactly what
5 is going on and exactly what it is that we have to deal
6 with. So, that is particularly important.

7 I also highlight another point, that of
8 your discussions within your own organization with the
9 basis for self-government lying in the communities and
10 the people in the communities, but at the same time the
11 need that you recognize and discuss for getting larger
12 groups together because the small communities do not have
13 the power in dealing with the bureaucracy and the large
14 systems. So, you have to find a way, if self-government
15 is going to be meaningful, in terms of getting real power
16 and to make use of other First Nations, of other larger
17 organizations. You've talked here about a form of
18 regional government, much more advanced from the
19 perspective of First Nations than the government's own
20 plan, you do recognize that. And there are other models
21 that have been advanced as well elsewhere, that of an
22 Aboriginal province, for example, across Canada so that
23 all Aboriginal peoples can be united nationally, for some

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1 purposes, as you've pointed out, not all purposes but for
2 some purposes. Others have proposed the model of a
3 federation of all treaty areas would get together, again,
4 to pursue their common purposes, such as finances and so
5 on, and also to secure, of course, the same jurisdiction
6 across the board then to deal with their problems. Once
7 you have the jurisdiction you can deal in your own
8 particular ways with the local issues.

9 But, as I said, there is not time here
10 to discuss them, but they do warrant full discussion and
11 I will insist that, in the fullness of time, as we develop
12 our mandate, through further discussions through our
13 Intervenor Participation Program and through our research
14 function and further rounds of public participation, that
15 we will tackle these issues that you have brought before
16 us.

17 It only remains for me to thank you again
18 most sincerely for your most significant contribution,
19 both of you.

20 Meegwetch.

21 **CHARLES FOX:** Do you have any questions,
22 Stan?

23 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**

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1 I would like to make some comments. I know we are running
2 out of time. Thank you, Mr. Fox.

3 One thing I would like to just share with
4 the people that are present here is that I used to be a
5 chief in Muskrat Dam when I was much younger. I have spent
6 a lot of time down south and when I first went up to Muskrat
7 Dam, after I became a chief, I used to go to my elders
8 to seek their advice and some direction, some guidance.
9 I used to go to them and they would take the time to listen
10 to me and give me the opportunity to ask them some
11 questions.

12 But after awhile I noticed that they
13 would be reluctant to take me in and take the time to listen
14 to me. After awhile one of them said, "When you seek
15 knowledge, or when you seek advice, or when you need some
16 direction from Native people, you don't go in there and
17 do all the talking. You learn to listen."

18 So, I can relate to what Isaac mentioned,
19 that when people are out there to look for some advice
20 there is that value in our culture that people need to
21 listen.

22 I just want to make some brief comments
23 on the presentations that were made by Mr. Nothing and

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1 Isaac Beaulieu. One of them is that when we talk about
2 education and the social problems of our young people.
3 We have more severe social problems that are young people
4 are faced with and when you talk about NNEC, or a Native
5 organization that is supposed to provide education
6 services for our young people, we are burdened with trying
7 to deal with problems that are mandated by that particular
8 organization.

9 So, we are trying to establish a course
10 system for our young people, but we find that it does not
11 meet the government policy where we can access resources
12 to develop the support system that is required to provide
13 proper opportunities for our young people so they can get
14 the education that they need.

15 I just wanted to point that out, that
16 there is a lot of work required to begin to make the policy
17 changes to reflect the problems that our young people are
18 faced with.

19 I guess the other comment I just wanted
20 to make briefly is on the presentation by Mr. Beaulieu
21 about Native language. Regardless of what we talk about,
22 when we talk about our culture, when we are talking about
23 our traditional lifestyle or the language, everything is

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1 focused on the land. By displacing the Native people from
2 their traditional activities and their traditional lands
3 -- because the language is based on what is visible on
4 the land and what is visible to you when you're on the
5 land, there is the danger that by removing the Native people
6 from their traditional customary lands that you are, in
7 a sense, depriving them of practising their language.
8 When we have the so-called take-over of education control
9 in our communities the funding agencies dictate what kind
10 of criteria or what can be taught.

11 So there needs to be policy change that
12 will allow the First Nations to determine what the
13 curriculum should look like and also to allow the First
14 Nations to incorporate into those curriculum to allow our
15 people to teach their children the traditional activities,
16 so that the language and the knowledge and values and
17 history of our people can be passed on to the younger
18 generations.

19 Thank you, Charles.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

21 Mr. Nothing, Mr. Beaulieu, thank you.

22 I think at this point in time it would
23 be advisable to break for lunch. The last presenter this

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1 morning has agreed to make her presentation after lunch,
2 so with that maybe we will reconvene at 1:30 and I will
3 have to crack the whip after that.

4

5 --- Upon recessing at 12:20 p.m.

6 --- Upon resuming at 1:35 p.m.

7

8 **CHARLES FOX:** We are ready to resume.

9 The next presenters are Nellie Beardy and Janet Gordon
10 from the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority.
11 Could I ask them to come up, please.

12 Nellie Beardy is the Executive Director
13 for the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority and
14 Janet Gordon is her Executive Assistant.

15 So with that I will turn the microphones
16 over to them.

17 **NELLIE BEARDY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,**

18 **SIOUX LOOKOUT FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY:** Good
19 afternoons, Commissioners and ladies and gentlemen. As
20 was stated earlier, we represent the Sioux Lookout First
21 Nations Health Authority.

22 I would like to speak to our paper.

23 We've handed in several copies of our full submission,

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1 so I will not be covering everything that is contained
2 in the submission.

3 The federal government, National Health
4 and Welfare, Medical Services, has administered a health
5 care system to the First Nation communities since 1945
6 when the National Health and Welfare Act was legislated.
7 To date, the First Nations are still experiencing Third
8 World health conditions, and that is the First Nations
9 of the Sioux Lookout zone.

10 The Sioux Lookout zone covers a large
11 area. The zone is one-third of Ontario and is known as
12 the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, West. We have a total of 30
13 communities that fall under our zone and under our
14 jurisdiction.

15 The establishment of permanent
16 settlements and the influence of the European society has
17 brought significant change into the lives of the First
18 Nations people. The process has had a dramatic impact
19 on the First Nations communities by disrupting and
20 eradicating a distinct cultural and traditional lifestyle.

21 Because of the community locations the
22 cost of living is exorbitant with transportation, food
23 and other necessities being well beyond the income of its

1 residents. The results of the substandard community
2 infrastructure are high unemployment, compromised health
3 status and excessive psychosocial problems.

4 The last two decades have witnessed the
5 emergence of overwhelming health problems, such as:
6 cardiovascular disease; respiratory disease; renal
7 disease; poor nutrition; cancers; dental carries; ear,
8 nose and throat infections; high risk pregnancies; birth
9 anomalies; multiple mental illnesses; poisonings and
10 injuries; communicable diseases; and the reemergence of
11 tuberculosis.

12 Any disease category related to the
13 First Nations is two to three times higher than the national
14 figures. There is still within the Sioux Lookout zone
15 a poor immunization status which inflates the communicable
16 diseases profile. Many people from the communities have
17 noted the lack of change in health status and relate these
18 to a loss of traditional values and a change in lifestyle
19 patterns.

20 Over the last decade non-insulin
21 dependent diabetes mellitus has been recognized as a major
22 disease among Aboriginal communities across North America.

23 In the Sioux Lookout zone, approximately 1,095 people

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1 of the population over 25 years of age and 2,040 people
2 of those greater than 55 years of age are known to be
3 diabetic. It is significant that 50 per cent of the cases
4 have been diagnosed within the last five to ten years.

5 Another alarming trend is that the
6 average age of onset appears to be declining in the Native
7 communities as compared to the caucasian population. The
8 appearance of this condition in children and pregnancy
9 reinforces the importance of early intervention.
10 Presently, a diabetic program is struggling to become
11 active in delivering a comprehensive service to Native
12 clients on an outpatient basis. There are 800 identified
13 cases to date with only two provincially-funded positions
14 to meet the communities' needs.

15 Children under 15 years of age
16 constitute 40 per cent or about 6,000 of the zone
17 population; injuries and violence account for 40 per cent
18 of the deaths in this age group.

19 Based on observations from the field,
20 it appears that the vast majority of injuries, violence
21 and poisoning deaths are alcohol and solvent abuse related
22 and are one of the most significant factors in the poor
23 health status of the First Nations people in the zone.

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1 The implications of higher rates of sexually transmitted
2 diseases and the connection with alcohol and other
3 substance abuse is cause for considerable concern when
4 considering the potential for the spread of AIDS and other
5 communicable diseases.

6 Tuberculosis has become, once again, a
7 significant health concern in the First Nations of our
8 area. We have about 100 cases per 100,000 compared to
9 eight cases per 100,000 which is the national average.
10 The federal government has initially responded to the TB
11 epidemic by providing personnel to contain the outbreak
12 in a few identified communities, and is now in the process
13 of considering the possibility of a much needed long-term
14 commitment to delivering a preventative TB program.

15 I will leave the nursing stats with you.

16 Both nursing station personnel and
17 physicians are predominantly treatment-based. The overall
18 prevention and promotion of health is isolated. The Sioux
19 Lookout zone and hospital operating costs totalled \$18
20 million in 1992, and that was excluding capital costs,
21 with only a small amount of these dollars being channelled
22 towards preventative community health programs. As a
23 result of both the high volume of treatment services and

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1 the required financial funding, community-based health
2 programs receive inadequate attention and resources.

3 In January of 1988, five members of the
4 Sandy Lake Band began a hunger strike at the Sioux Lookout
5 Zone Hospital. The purpose of this hunger strike was to
6 draw attention to years of frustration, meaningless
7 consultation, worsening health and deteriorating
8 relations between Aboriginal communities and the Medical
9 Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada.

10 Negotiations to end the hunger strike
11 resulted in an agreement to a process of reviewing health
12 services in the Sioux Lookout zone. A three member panel
13 was appointed, Scott, McKay and Bain, and work began in
14 June of 1988. This was a one year process which resulted
15 in a Health Panel Report released in June, 1989.

16 An official response from the
17 Nishnawbe-Aski Nations chiefs stated their general
18 disappointment with the limited vision of health expressed
19 in the report. Out of the 94 recommendations contained
20 in this report, the single recommendation accepted by the
21 NAN leadership was for the creation of an Aboriginal Health
22 Authority.

23 This recommendation was accepted for the

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1 following reasons:

2 an Aboriginal Health Authority is in
3 line with our goals of self-government and
4 self-determination;

5 an Aboriginal Health Authority provides
6 a mechanism to address unresolved issues; and,

7 an Aboriginal Health Authority provides
8 us with the opportunity to design the kind of health system
9 our people want.

10 We, the Sioux Lookout First Nations
11 Health Authority, are an example of an organizational
12 framework that has been created by the chiefs to coordinate
13 Aboriginal health services development and delivery to
14 the Sioux Lookout zone First Nations. At present, we are
15 under the jurisdiction of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and
16 report to a board of directors. We are in the process
17 of becoming autonomous through incorporation. The
18 present staff consists of an Executive Director and
19 Executive Assistant and one support staff.

20 The Health Authority has adopted a
21 primary health care model similar to the World Health
22 Organization, which involves a holistic approach
23 consistent with First Nations beliefs. This model serves

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1 as a framework, or will serve as a framework for present
2 and future health care planning.

3 The Health Authority has been frustrated
4 with their efforts to progress as an autonomous
5 organization. We are required to expend valuable time
6 and energy submitting justifications in the form of funding
7 proposals for any type of organization expansion. The
8 impression we are getting is that the federal government
9 is paying us lip service and not demonstrating a sincere
10 commitment to the First Nations people.

11 For example, the government sets our
12 operational mandate instead of allowing us to develop as
13 an organization to meet First Nations priorities. Also,
14 to succinctly identify the communities' actual needs and
15 how the community prioritizes the needs, we have submitted
16 a proposal for a participatory research project several
17 times and have been refused funding, though the government
18 agrees that it is required.

19 We have concerns regarding government
20 commitment to transfer of health services because of the
21 difficulties in accessing information from the present
22 health system and our obvious lack of involvement with
23 Native health program planning. It is evident that the

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1 government is prepared to transfer control of programs,
2 but are maintaining the real power through control of
3 capital.

4 The Indian Health Policy of 1979
5 identifies three pillars for increasing the level of Indian
6 Health. The second pillar identifies that the Indian and
7 federal government relationship must be strengthened by
8 opening up communication with the Indian people, and by
9 encouraging their greater involvement in the planning,
10 budgeting and delivery of health programs. We, the Health
11 Authority, are in a position to carry out this mandate
12 when the federal government is prepared to address this
13 issue.

14 We, as the Health Authority, plan to
15 operate a credible organization by adopting a strong
16 management-based approach and committing monies to ongoing
17 training and development of qualified managers and senior
18 administration to meet this mandate. We have set out a
19 five year strategic plan and should be allocated capital
20 to operate accordingly without having to request and
21 justify funding for every expansion of service.

22 We see the need to restructure the
23 current community-based programs and develop new programs

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1 to be more coordinated and appropriate to the communities'
2 needs. For example, a Dental Educator, wellness clinics,
3 comprehensive prenatal programs that are
4 traditionally-based are under consideration.

5 We also visualize, because of the
6 population served and size, having a First Nations Health
7 Council recognized as an equivalent to the Kenora-Rainy
8 River District Health Council, and a member of the Ontario
9 Health Council.

10 We have been directed by the Board to
11 start the process for assuming administrative control of
12 the interpreter services and the present hostel. At
13 present, the hostel is designated 50 beds and is
14 overcrowded and not self-contained. There is a lack of
15 adequate housekeeping resources, antiquated heating,
16 non-existent storage space, limited bathroom facilities
17 and no privacy. This is an example of a health concern
18 that is within our mandate to address with the federal
19 government on behalf of the First Nations.

20 If the federal government is truly
21 committed to the First Nations Health Authority, they would
22 recognize our value in assisting them to circumvent
23 potential issues by instituting a Native Health Board for

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1 the Zone Hospital. In this manner issues important to
2 the First Nation peoples would be addressed before reaching
3 critical levels that would jeopardize relations.

4 In conclusion, we are an example of an
5 organizational framework created to coordinate Aboriginal
6 health services development and delivery. The federal
7 government, in their 1979 Indian Health Policy, stated
8 their commitment to First Nations peoples "increasing
9 level of health in Indian communities, designed and managed
10 by First Nations". The federal government has had the
11 opportunity to provide hospital and health services to
12 the First Nation communities and, unfortunately, we are
13 still facing Third World health conditions.

14 The First Nations Health Authority needs
15 to be given the opportunity to carry out its mandate,
16 recognizing that we will not be infallible, but will have
17 involved the communities and gained their support. We
18 require the capital to function as a credible organization
19 and we feel that it is essential that the government be
20 prepared to turn over all power regarding First Nation
21 health programs and services.

22 Finally, we need the government to
23 further demonstrate their commitment to health services

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1 transfer by educating their employees regarding transfer,
2 as there is still evidence of territorial protection of
3 health programs within our zone.

4 Thank you.

5 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

6 If there are any questions or points of
7 clarification from the Commissioners I will give you that
8 time now.

9 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
10 like clarification. Does the Authority itself get
11 involved in delivering health services, or is it purely
12 an administrative body?

13 **NELLIE BEARDY:** The Health Authority
14 has been in existence for two years and up to this time
15 we have not been involved in actual service delivery,
16 although that is within our mandate. But because of the
17 limited amount of funding and the short-term oriented
18 funding that we have had -- an example would be that we
19 are always struggling for funds and we've been given
20 funding for up to two to three months at a time and that
21 can't be involved in service delivery, given that amount
22 of funding.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Perhaps

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1 you could tell us a bit about what institutions there are
2 here. I believe there are two hospitals, am I right?

3 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Yes, there are. There
4 are two hospitals. The District Health Centre and the
5 so-called zone hospital and both -- I didn't catch the
6 Mayor's presentation this morning, but we are involved
7 in the negotiations for a combined hospital as well.
8 Primarily because the chiefs only consented to the idea
9 of a combined hospital if ongoing funding for an Aboriginal
10 health authority came from the federal government. So
11 that savings realized from a combined hospital would go
12 towards the development of community-based programs, and
13 that process has been identified as what we have called
14 the Participatory Research Project.

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Are there
16 Native people on the boards, or whatever the governing
17 bodies are of these institutions? Are Native people on
18 the boards of these institutions?

19 **NELLIE BEARDY:** The federally run
20 hospital, the zone hospital, does not have a board. We
21 are proposing that there be such a board to govern the
22 affairs of the institution, but the District Health Centre
23 doesn't have its own incorporating board of directors.

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1 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** What area
2 do these institutions serve? All the communities or just
3 in the immediate vicinity of Sioux Lookout? Do they
4 service the whole area?

5 **NELLIE BEARDY:** The Sioux Lookout Zone
6 Hospital mainly services the northern communities, which
7 are north of here. The District Health Centre services
8 Sioux Lookout and the area, like Hudson and Pickle Lake,
9 but they also will service communities up north.
10 Predominantly all the people from up north go to Sioux
11 Lookout Zone, which is a federally run hospital.

12 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** You
13 mentioned that there were people who were victims of family
14 violence, are there facilities for looking after those
15 people? Are there women's shelters or places for children
16 who are victims of abuse to go?

17 **NELLIE BEARDY:** There is no such
18 facility in any of the communities up north, but there
19 is one in Sioux Lookout which services everybody at the
20 present time. We don't have anything to do with that at
21 the present. I'm not sure what the numbers are, but the
22 area they service is Sioux Lookout.

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

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1 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you.

2 Commissioner Chartrand, please.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
4 for your brief, which is most interesting and which raises
5 some important issues.

6 With respect to the hostel here, when
7 I saw that I thought I had seen something else about a
8 hostel, and it says here in the materials that:

9 "Directly in front of the zone hospital is the zone hostel,
10 a 46 bed facility which provides
11 accommodations to Native people in
12 a warm home-like atmosphere. The
13 hostel is staffed 24 hours a day,
14 seven days a week to meet the needs
15 of its residents who are admitted
16 there for various reasons..."

17 and so on.

18 You have provided us with a rather
19 different picture, the overcrowding and it being
20 non-self-contained; the lack of adequate housekeeping
21 resources, antiquated heating, non-existent storage
22 space, limited bathroom facilities, no privacy and so on.

23 So, thank you for drawing my attention

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1 to that and I will pursue the matter to find out where
2 we get the various sources of information.

3 In dealing with health issues in the
4 northern areas -- two questions before I get to that one.

5 I am just trying to understand the structure, so I have
6 one question falling on discussions that have taken place
7 so far about the governance of the hospitals.

8 Does the district hospital have a board
9 that looks after its operation?

10 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Do you mean the District
11 Health Centre?

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes.

13 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Yes. We are
14 incorporated provincially.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Who are
16 the people or how are they selected? The individuals who
17 sit on that board, how are they selected? Are they
18 appointed by the province?

19 **NELLIE BEARDY:** No, they have a public
20 membership drive and then the members are voted to the
21 Board of Directors from the membership by the members
22 themselves?

23 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Who are

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1 the members?

2 **NELLIE BEARDY:** The townspeople,
3 predominantly the townspeople

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** And the
5 zone hospital serves pretty well the northern Aboriginal
6 communities, I have that right?

7 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Right.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** And that
9 hospital, how is it controlled? There is no board?

10 **NELLIE BEARDY:** No, there has never been
11 any board in place. I guess the governance of that
12 hospital comes down from the Medical Services Branch itself
13 from Ottawa, but there has never been any involvement from
14 the communities.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** So do we
16 have here another example of bureaucratic control of
17 people?

18 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Right.

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I'm
20 trying to understand the involvement of government with
21 Aboriginal people in various ways and we know that there
22 is the Department of Indian Affairs and it has all forms
23 of bureaucratic control.

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1 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Yes.

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Your
3 understanding -- and I'm trying to understand this -- there
4 is bureaucratic control in the governance of the hospital,
5 which is controlled by bureaucrats and which does not
6 provide input from community people in the same way that
7 the other hospital, the district hospital is so organized.
8 I just wanted to make sure I understood that. So, that's
9 correct.

10 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Yes.

11 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
12 for that.

13 Just a question which doesn't refer to
14 anything that you directly mentioned here but which you
15 may have some knowledge about. In some other places there
16 have been experiments with fly-in programs to promote
17 sports in northern communities.

18 It is done in Manitoba. For example,
19 the University has a program that flies people in and
20 administers sports programs, recreational programs. It
21 arises in the context of health, of course, because it
22 seems that the involvement in sports and recreation is
23 been seen to have a significant positive impact on young

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1 people in these communities.

2 I am wondering if there is anything like
3 that, in your experience, in this area?

4 **NELLIE BEARDY:** To date there has not
5 been any and possibly one of the reasons for that is because
6 throughout our development we have not been able to do
7 the actual work that we would like to be doing, primarily
8 because we have not had the funding to carry out the work.

9 The Health Authority staff is just Janet and I, with one
10 support staff and I think one of the comments we made this
11 week is that we could have been halfway through a research
12 project if we had the funds, if we did not spend all of
13 our time hunting down funds and writing proposals.

14 The one particular proposal I'm talking
15 about, I think there has been four revisions made to it
16 and we still do not have that funding. But we could find
17 out from this research if the communities wanted mobile
18 programs, mobile treatment programs or mobile recreational
19 programs.

20 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
21 for that.

22 Just to clarify my questioning, I didn't
23 mean to suggest that I expected you had a role in that,

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1 I was just wondering if perhaps you had some information
2 about the existence of such a program.

3 I thank you for elaboration.

4 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
5 Commissioner Chartrand.

6 Do you have a question, Mr. Beardy?

7 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
8 Meegwetch, Charles.

9 I just want to make one comment and maybe
10 get some clarification. On page six of the presentation
11 that was just made, where it states:

12 "We are in the process of becoming autonomous through
13 incorporation."

14 I think we need a little clarification
15 there because when we look at incorporation and how it
16 is governed by the provincial or the federal legislation
17 it does not make a First Nation autonomous, incorporation
18 by itself does not allow First Nations to control the
19 funding, or the services, or the programs. I just wanted
20 to point that out that maybe we need a little clarification
21 on what that line really refers to.

22 **NELLIE BEARDY:** Clearly within the
23 Sioux Lookout area all the Native organizations that have

1 been developed and are in place have had problems accessing
2 funding and accessing programs, or developing further
3 because of the restrictions placed on them by the
4 provincial incorporation governing structures that we have
5 in place.

6 It is important to note here that the
7 chiefs of Nishnawbe-Aski have recognized the difficulties
8 that the Health Authority and other groups, such as ours,
9 responsible for education, social services or economic
10 ventures, have experienced. They have given us the
11 mandate to come up with another incorporation process that
12 would be more beneficial to the Native communities.

13 In other words, they have asked us to
14 research various incorporation structures or various
15 relationships, possibly trust agreements between the
16 federal government and First Nations. This has been in
17 response to the recognition that provincial incorporation
18 by-laws do not further the concerns of the Native
19 communities.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

21 I gather there are no more questions and
22 I would like to thank the presenters for their time and
23 I'm sure we will be getting back to you with respect to

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1 your submission.

2 The next presenter that is slated is
3 Laura Wynn, the Executive Director of the Nishnawbe-Gamik
4 Friendship Centre. I will ask Mrs. Wynn to come up,
5 please.

6 You have the floor, go ahead.

7 **LAURA WYNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,**
8 **NISHNAWBE-GAMIK FRIENDSHIP CENTRE:** Good afternoon
9 everyone.

10 The Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre
11 organization has been incorporated since 1971. The major
12 source of funding comes from Secretary of State. We are
13 one organization assisting and serving Aboriginals that
14 does not have a head office on a reserve, therefore we
15 have been paying taxes for years. The inflation trends,
16 dwindling economy, budget cuts and restraints causes us
17 much concern and uncertainty.

18 In order to seek ways to become
19 self-supporting we need to access a funding source, i.e.
20 grants, loans -- just the same as the other various
21 organizations and First Nation communities. We must plan
22 and implement programs that will benefit our people, as
23 well as create employment and provide services which are

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1 non-existent in the North. For example: treatment centres
2 for drug and alcohol abuse; day care centres; long-term
3 care facilities for elders; sewage treatment plants; sewer
4 and water in northern communities; power and electricity
5 in northern communities; youth treatment centre; business
6 ventures, for example a diaper service; wilderness
7 excursion and canoeing trips; Native tourist outfitter
8 camps; and Native training and educational institutions,
9 for example colleges.

10 Land Base: The Aboriginal people will
11 no longer be blinded by federal government's false intent
12 to keep Aboriginal people as second- class citizens. The
13 Constitution package, recently rejected by Aboriginal
14 people and Canadians, showed the lack of faith in our
15 political leaders to look after the Canadian people's
16 rights. Aboriginals had no guarantee that our existing
17 rights under the Indian Act would be protected.

18 For new treaties that are being
19 negotiated the government intends to restrict First
20 Nations people further by not permitting expansion of land
21 base by acquisition. The future of our children must be
22 considered. As our tiny nations grows in population the
23 need to expand the existing land base may be necessary.

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1 By choice, those who choose to remain living on their
2 individual reserves will need to find employment that is
3 long-term and not seasonal or based on government band
4 aid programs.

5 Tapping of natural resources will be
6 limited and restricted, based according to parcels of land
7 designated as reserve property. The traditional life and
8 way of earning a living is of the past, as the North opens
9 up and grows. Trapping will only sustain the retired
10 individual who has other means of support.

11 Fur market trends are declining. The
12 garments and man-made materials on the market today are
13 far superior and cheaper, as only the wealthy, the rich
14 and the famous can afford the luxury of furs.

15 Aboriginal Self-Government: A
16 mechanism needs to be established that ensures all First
17 Nation people have equal and fair representation.

18 The Aboriginal committee and area
19 management board that administers and approves work-based
20 training and employment initiatives is working. A similar
21 plan for self-government would ensure fair and equal
22 representation for all Aboriginal people.

23 Existing funding that is pumped into

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1 government agencies should be given to Native people to
2 administer their own programs, providing a transition
3 phase is allowed to enable the committee to work out
4 problems and eventually assume full responsibility for
5 education, health, et cetera.

6 Urban Indians: The trend in migrating
7 Aboriginal people to urban centres will continue to grow
8 as people seek employment, training, an education, or a
9 better way of life. The urban Native people have to be
10 part of all the current negotiations and future decisions
11 since it has an affect on all Aboriginal people, regardless
12 of where they live.

13 Thank you for allowing me to speak on
14 behalf of the Friendship Centre.

15 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mrs.
16 Wynn.

17 If there are any questions from the
18 Commissioners I will turn it over to you?

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
20 for your presentation.

21 Let me ask two or three brief questions,
22 if you don't mind, to seek some clarification.

23 On the second page under Aboriginal

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1 Self-Government you refer to an Aboriginal committee and
2 area management board. You say it is working. Is that
3 the initiative that was established by the federal
4 government under the program that it calls "Pathways to
5 Success"?

6 **LAURA WYNN:** Right.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I wanted
8 to make sure of that because we have received a number
9 of submissions elsewhere respecting that initiative,
10 including some scathing criticisms of the program. So
11 it will be incumbent upon us to examine closely the program
12 and its implementation and the various views that are held
13 with respect to it. So I wanted to make sure that this
14 was indeed the program that we were concerned with here.

15 With respect to your other statement on
16 the same page:

17 "Aboriginal peoples had no guarantee that our existing
18 rights under the Indian Act would
19 be protected."

20 You are talking about the constitutional
21 context here. Would you mind elaborating a bit on the
22 specific rights that you believe are valuable, that are
23 provided by the Indian Act, and what your view is about

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1 those rights and why they ought to be kept?

2 The reason I ask is that we get a lot
3 of submissions about the Indian Act. Generally, from my
4 perspective, we hear a rejection of the Indian Act
5 suggesting that it ought to be replaced. This is an
6 important issue, so I wonder if you might take a moment
7 to give us a bit more detail about your view of the Indian
8 Act and about why you believe you ought to be protected.

9 **LAURA WYNN:** When the constitutional
10 hearings took place here and we had a committee member
11 come, plus we had Cheechoo, the Grand Chief come and do
12 a presentation to the people. In his questioning on our
13 rights and our protection under the possible revisions
14 in the Constitution, I think a lot of people got the
15 impression and the assumption that there would be no
16 guarantees. In other words, I don't feel that there was
17 any commitment and I also think that a lot of people felt
18 they had no faith in the constitutional process, in that
19 we would have no guarantee that there would be any
20 implementation of what was in the packages.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I think
22 I understand better, and let me try to repeat to make sure
23 I do understand, and this is a question.

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1 You are referring, are you, to a general
2 concern of people with new proposals in light of the
3 relative security that people have under the existing
4 scheme? So, when you talk about the Indian Act you tend
5 to refer to the general scheme under which things are run
6 today. Is this the interpretation that you put on this?

7 **LAURA WYNN:** Well, under the Indian Act
8 we still have our basic rights and our inherent rights
9 to health care -- whatever. And I think under the proposed
10 Constitution that those inherent rights were not
11 protected.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** May I
13 just ask one more quick question, if you don't mind. You
14 were referring to proposals for constitutional change and
15 you described the Friendship Centre's own role in the
16 provision of services. Of course, the provision of public
17 services is an essential function of governments, I
18 suppose, self-government. So there are a number of
19 Aboriginal organizations who are involved in negotiating
20 self-government.

21 Are there any discussions going on
22 between your organizations, or organizations such as yours
23 and these other political organizations, with a view to

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1 co-operating on the delivery of services?

2 **LAURA WYNN:** No, there is little. I
3 think this is a complaint of all urban Aboriginal people,
4 that we have no voice, we have no route, we have no
5 consultation process in any changes that might affect our
6 lives as Aboriginal people, even though we live in cities
7 and towns -- we don't live on reserves. Most of those
8 benefits that Native people receive on reserves, we don't
9 receive those same benefits.

10 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Just for
11 the sake of information to try to understand the picture,
12 if someone asks, "Who represents the political interests
13 of the Aboriginal people who live in Sioux Lookout?" who
14 would answer, "I do" or "We do"?

15 **LAURA WYNN:** Sioux Lookout is quite
16 unique. We have different tribal councils in town. They
17 deliver services to the North for their own respective
18 reserves that they serve. We have many organizations in
19 town that deliver services to Native people. We are all
20 separate and we all do different things. I can think of
21 only one way that there is equal representation, is through
22 our local area management board, are committee which
23 delivers work-base training and those kinds of programs

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1 to Native people. That is the only board that I know of
2 that has equal representation from all the organizations
3 and the North.

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
5 you.

6 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Could you
7 tell me something about the original role of the Friendship
8 Centre and whether it has changed over the years?

9 **LAURA WYNN:** The first role of the
10 Friendship Centre was for migrating peoples, that is the
11 mandate, to deliver services for migrating peoples and
12 provide a place for people to use, such as having Commission
13 hearings. We have a meeting place and we have kitchen
14 facilities and we have a conference room, those kinds of
15 facilities.

16 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Has that
17 changed? We have heard from many friendship centres that
18 they think that they are ideally suited in the urban centres
19 to provide training programs and services, and that they
20 should be the focal point for that. Is that a role that
21 you think you are suited for?

22 **LAURA WYNN:** As I said, there are many
23 organizations in town and there is the Anokewin-Ganomody

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1 (PH) Training Centre and they deliver training programs.
2 They have a college.

3 For our friendship centre, in terms of
4 being self-supporting, and without relying on government
5 funding and possibly cuts, that we have to look at
6 alternatives that will provide a service to Aboriginal
7 people in our community. We have programs at the centre,
8 we have the court worker program and we have a Little Eagles
9 program. I would also like to say that we deliver some
10 of the -- we have a contract with the zone medical services
11 to administer our program. That is a transportation
12 officer position and an airport interpreter position, and
13 the hostel.

14 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** One of the
15 issues that has been raised over and over again before
16 the Commission in other urban communities has been the
17 business of a service delivery to Native people who have
18 migrated into the cities and whether all Native people
19 should be entitled to the same level of services so that
20 you can have one administration for services to all
21 Aboriginal people, or whether you have to have separate
22 administrations servicing Status Indians, servicing
23 Métis, servicing Inuit who have moved into the city, and

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1 particularly servicing treaty people who look to their
2 actual treaties. Of course if the service delivery was
3 to be on an individual basis it would* have to be quite
4 a complex administration of services, depending on to which
5 group the person belonged.

6 Have you given any thought to that
7 problem? It is one of the major things that we have to
8 struggle with.

9 **LAURA WYNN:** Yes, I have. I've thought
10 about it and my answer simply is that there should be one
11 service that provides a service to all the people. Why
12 should urban Indians be separated and why should they not
13 have the same benefits that they are entitled to?

14 A lot of Aboriginal people who are
15 working in cities and towns they don't have the same
16 opportunities in the work force. They might be employed
17 in Indian Affairs, but might not be at a management level,
18 and therefore not making the better income. They are not
19 the middle-class people. They are low wage earners and
20 they struggle too. They might be employed, but they have
21 to pay rent and they have to pay utilities, and it's a
22 struggle. If they purchase homes they have to pay
23 mortgages.

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1 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** A number
2 of people who made presentations to us in Edmonton, when
3 we held a round table on urban issues, I can remember one
4 very moving presentation that was made by one person.
5 She didn't want to be lumped in just as an Aboriginal person
6 entitled to services. She thought that she wanted to
7 belong to her distinctive group of Métis people and feared
8 that if there was one administration servicing all Native
9 people that her unique identity as a Métis person would
10 soon disappear in the city.

11 **LAURA WYNN:** I agree that the Métis
12 people have been given the short end of the stick for years.
13 I don't believe that is the route to take. I think we
14 have to work collectively on making changes and come up
15 with consensus and agreement. It takes everyone working
16 together. Financially you can't spread the pot to 100
17 pots.

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you
19 very much. You've been very helpful.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Mr. Beardy, do you have
21 any questions?

22 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
23 I just want to make a few comments and maybe some questions.

1 The first one is that on the first page
2 where you mentioned paying taxes for years, what is
3 preventing the Friendship Centre from establishing a head
4 office on a reserve?

5 **LAURA WYNN:** I think we pursued that at
6 one point and I think it is because we deliver programs
7 to urban Aboriginals. I know some centres have head
8 offices on reserves, but I think because of our programs
9 we would not be qualified also.

10 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
11 My second comment is in the second paragraph where you
12 mention that we must plan and implement programs that will
13 benefit our people, create employment and provide services
14 for the North, how did you get that mandate and when did
15 you get that mandate to start providing these types of
16 services for the North?

17 **LAURA WYNN:** I'm not designating the
18 Friendship Centre, I am talking about Aboriginal people
19 as a whole, that that should be their common goal to pursue
20 the lack of services that are available. I listed some
21 of the examples of services that are badly needed in the
22 North and services that the North lacks. We are not on
23 the same scale as southern Ontario, we don't have treatment

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1 centres for youth, for one thing. The youth have to travel
2 to Minnesota for treatment for mental health problems and
3 I would like to see better services for the people -- for
4 all people. I'm not particularly pointing out one special
5 race, I think these are things that are needed for the
6 whole North, for people in general in our area, in northern
7 Ontario.

8 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**

9 Okay, that tells me a lot. I just needed some
10 clarification on the statement.

11 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
12 Beardy.

13 Thank you, Laura, for your presentation.
14 We appreciate it.

15 The next presenter is Mr. Jeremiah McKay
16 making a presentation on behalf of the Keewaytinook
17 Okimakanak, translated that is the Northern Chiefs
18 Council.

19 Jeremiah, please.

20 Mr. McKay is an elder for the Council.
21 He was a former chief of Kasabonika.

22 Accompanying him is a staff person from
23 the Council, his name is Mr. Abe Kakepitum. He works on

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1 Fire Management for the Keewaytinook Okimakanak.

2 So, with that I will turn the
3 presentation over to Mr. McKay.

4 **JEREMIAH MCKAY, KEEWAYTINOOK**

5 **OKIMAKANAK/NORTHERN CHIEFS COUNCIL (Translated):** I will
6 speak in my Native language.

7 We have our presentation in a written
8 form for the Commissioners and everything was completed
9 in the papers to be given to the Commissioners. What we
10 will do is just go over this paper.

11 I am representing seven chiefs and their
12 wishes in the things that they wanted for us to present
13 in this afternoon's meeting. I will have my co-worker
14 here make a presentation here and he will go over the paper.
15 I will give him the floor and he can begin.

16 **ABE KAKEPITUM:** I'm here representing
17 seven chiefs who would like things to go right. As the
18 land that we live on is very important to us, we as people
19 who choose to live here, are not destroying it, but get
20 life from the land that we live on.

21 The lakes that are here on the land also
22 gives life. The chemicals that have been put into the
23 water from different sources has changed the animals that

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1 take from the water, along with the people who have eaten
2 from the lakes. The dams have been put there by people
3 who have changed the water boundaries, these effects have
4 brought changes in the way the people have hunted on the
5 land that was there before.

6 Trees have been brought down by pulp
7 mills and mining, chemicals have been spilled, sawdust
8 spread around from the mills, all this has been affecting
9 the land and the people in the North.

10 In operations such as the above
11 mentioned, this must be controlled by people concerned
12 in the area, so that we can continue to live off the land
13 with our hunting, fishing, trapping, this is our
14 livelihood.

15 Natural forest fires have been left
16 alone to take their course. When this happens, property,
17 valuables and land are destroyed for many years. Animals
18 that have been living in the area are also destroyed along
19 with their young, which cannot be replaced. When this
20 happens the people who have trap lines are affected by
21 the destruction and must learn to cope without the animals
22 and the land they used.

23 The Creator gave us this land and animals

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1 and we would like to hold on to these things that were
2 given to us. The government has given us land and
3 promises, this we would like to hold on to along with the
4 services to our people.

5 The people would like to see the
6 communities built up towards self-government, so that the
7 people may have independence on the decisions on their
8 government such as laws, courts, training, education,
9 health, et cetera.

10 We would need the support of the Ontario
11 Government in monitoring our independence on making
12 decisions. We can no longer allow people to come and
13 destroy our land, and influence our people with
14 non-traditional ideas and ways.

15 Through the past we have learned of the
16 government's policy on how to run our communities. This
17 may not be right for our people. With independence come
18 people who can make the right decisions for the betterment
19 in our northern communities.

20 This is why our people have been talking,
21 to be able to go forward towards self-government in our
22 communities.

23 The next page I will just read through

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1 here.

2 I'm here representing seven Chiefs
3 through Keewaytinook Okimakanak who have many concerns
4 regarding their communities and the people who live there.

5 I'm bringing you these concerns from the
6 different communities and am asking you, the Royal
7 Commission, to take action on the issues that have been
8 brought before you here today.

9 I understand that it is part of the job
10 of the Royal Commission to listen and seek out the issues
11 for our people, and we trust that you will work out the
12 solutions for the concerns and problems that the people
13 have in the northern communities.

14 We still respect our culture, language,
15 and Native ancestry. This is very important to our people
16 to have respect for such things, as non-Native people have
17 respect for their culture and language.

18 Native people have respect for the laws
19 that have been passed on from our ancestry, so must the
20 non-Native people have respect for their laws that they
21 follow through their daily lives.

22 **JEREMIAH MCKAY (Translated):** We will
23 go over further the next portion of this paper and we will

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1 go over these documents that the seven chiefs have desired
2 for me to bring to his meeting and we will continue on
3 through the next section for whatever time that we have
4 this afternoon.

5 **ABE KAKEPITUM:** I will continue the
6 reading of our presentation. We don't have much time to
7 read all of it, so I will read maybe just a couple of pages.

8 When the treaties were signed between
9 the Government of Canada and the Native people of this
10 area, the people did not have an opportunity to see the
11 content of the document. The treaty party told us what
12 was supposed to be in the document and this was interpreted
13 to us. Our people signed the agreement based on the
14 understanding that we were agreeing to share the land and
15 that we would live together in peace.

16 Since that time the Canadian Government
17 and the Province of Ontario have made rules and regulations
18 which prevent us from living our traditional life and have
19 cut us off from our traditional lands. We are reduced
20 to living on small scraps of land that are barely large
21 enough to hold our houses and other buildings. We are
22 subjected to the controls of the Ministry of Natural
23 Resources and are often arrested and fined for pursuing

1 our traditional ways.

2 Lately we had the referendum on the
3 Constitution. It seems nothing has changed. We were
4 asked to vote on a document that we did not get to see.

5 We were not given time to understand it or to decide how
6 it would affect our lives and the lives of our children.

7 We had to decide on the Aboriginal
8 package, that would have been like a second treaty, along
9 with a great many other factors and issues that we were
10 told were important. Nothing has changed. We always seem
11 to have to decide on the entire future of our people in
12 a hurry. This is not our way.

13 We have always had our own form of
14 self-government. Our communities govern themselves based
15 on our traditions and the teachings of our elders. Since
16 we signed the treaty we have had to obey the laws of the
17 Canadian Government and the Government of Ontario. When
18 we break these laws we are punished by the Government of
19 Canada or the Province of Ontario.

20 How can we be self-governing if some
21 other government makes the laws and punishes those who
22 break them? Our communities are populated by our own
23 people; our laws and governments should be based on our

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1 ways, our traditions and our customs. If the control of
2 the provincial and federal governments were removed our
3 own governments would re-emerge and be re-developed by
4 the people.

5 The problem is not so much how to design
6 self-government, it is more a problem of deciding how our
7 governments would interact with the Government of Canada
8 and Ontario. Give us the space and freedom and our
9 self-government will become obvious.

10 Some government people would like us to
11 have governments like towns or cities, with a mayor and
12 a town council. This would be appropriate if all they
13 were to govern was the village, but our people cannot create
14 a living from the small pieces of land granted to us under
15 the government's interpretation of the treaty. We need
16 a government that can manage the resources of the region
17 of land that was ours when the settlers came. Each
18 community requires enough land to support it's people.

19 Until recently all of our people
20 practised the traditional pursuits of hunting, fishing
21 and trapping. These activities continue to be essential
22 to our way of life, but the modern world is very expensive
23 and demands that people have cash to buy the things they

1 need. We must have access to and control over our
2 traditional lands so that we can benefit from the resources
3 they contain. We must be developers or joint venturers
4 in lumbering, mineral extraction, commercial fishing and
5 tourist operations. We must have control over all aspects
6 of development in our traditional areas.

7 Our communities are sometimes described
8 as being remote. It is true that they are only accessible
9 by air and by winter road. However, it is difficult to
10 describe your home as being remote. This is where we are
11 and where we have always been. Hospitals, doctors, high
12 schools and other services are located at some distance
13 from us. Our building supplies must be brought in by
14 winter road, otherwise the cost of building a house is
15 increased by some 40 per cent. Since there is no extra
16 money we wind up building 60 per cent of a house.

17 When young people come of age to go to
18 high school, they must move out to an urban centre.
19 Sometimes their parents go along. This causes problems
20 for the whole family and the community. Perhaps the most
21 difficult effect of the remoteness of the communities is
22 the problem created by health care.

23 We have nursing stations or clinics

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1 staffed by community health workers or nurses. This
2 creates a problem when a serious illness is to be diagnosed.
3 The patient may not be sent out to a doctor until the
4 situation is very serious. In some cases, the disease
5 or illness has progressed to the critical point. Often
6 the nearest urban centre, such as Sioux Lookout Zone
7 Hospital, is not able to treat the complaint and the patient
8 is sent further away, to Winnipeg or Thunder Bay. This
9 is difficult enough for young people who speak English,
10 but in the case of our elders, many of whom do not speak
11 English, the situation becomes critical.

12 **CHARLES FOX:** If you wanted to wrap-up
13 your comments on the rest of your presentation. It is
14 written anyway so the Commission will have that on their
15 record for documentation. If you just want to summarize
16 with maybe a comment.

17 There are many things that we put in,
18 that the languages are disappearing, the culture is
19 disappearing and also the people need to be given the
20 opportunity, the jobs when they've graduated from high
21 school and other educational institutions. These are the
22 things that we tried to put in our presentation.

23 **JEREMIAH MCKAY (Translated):** This

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1 presentation that we've made this morning, I want these
2 documents, these papers, these ideas that we have given
3 to the Commissioners, we want them to make sure that they
4 look into these concerns. We would like to see them
5 included as they progress in their mandate.

6 That is one of the reasons why we put
7 our ideas and our concerns into a written form, so that
8 the Commission could have the presentation. But these
9 are the concerns and ideas that came from the seven chiefs.

10 These papers will provide some of the
11 concerns, as well as the answers to some of the questions
12 that they might have. The Native people need to understand
13 that they are needed to give their input, to give ideas
14 to the Commissioners here, so that they can come up with
15 solutions and the answers that they are looking for. It
16 is very important when there is such funding for work such
17 as this one to take place, it is very important that they
18 accomplish what they are commissioned to do. That is one
19 of the reasons why we have taken the time to give our
20 presentation in that written form as well.

21 I thank the Commissioners for visiting
22 our northern communities and I trust that they will
23 seriously look into our ideas and seriously consider the

1 concerns of our Native people, the problems that our people
2 are facing today up north. That is my desire.

3 That is all I have to say. These are
4 my comments.

5 **CHARLES FOX (Translated):** We regret
6 that we have to cut a lot of time and a lot of these are
7 on paper. These documents will be presented to the
8 Commissioners and they will look at your points.

9 I will turn the floor over to the
10 Commissioners for any questions.

11 Commissioner Wilson, please.

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

13 I would just like to say that it is an
14 excellent brief, you have covered almost all the things
15 that the Commission has to address under its mandate.
16 So this is very useful for us to have this.

17 There was only one question that I had
18 and it had to do with the comment -- I'm not sure exactly
19 where it was in the brief, but you suggested somewhere
20 that you needed the Province of Ontario to supervise --
21 yes, it is right on the first page you say:

22 "We would need the support of the Ontario Government in
23 monitoring our independence on

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1 making decisions."

2 That sort of puzzled me. I was wondering why you thought
3 that you needed the Ontario Government when you were really
4 struggling to attain self-government for your own people?

5 I wonder if you could just enlighten me as to what you
6 meant by that?

7 **ABE KAKEPITUM:** (Native language --
8 no translation).

9 **JEREMIAH MCKAY:** What we are talking
10 about here is how the Native people would begin to set
11 up the guidelines and we need the governments to support
12 us in establishing the self-government. The federal
13 government must financially support it, as well as the
14 provincial government. As the Native self-government
15 comes into form, as it sets up its policies, its guidelines,
16 we need the support of these governments. When we talk
17 about the natural resources we need the help of the
18 provincial government to set up these guidelines.

19 That is what we are referring to when
20 we talk about the help or the support from the governments.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
22 for your presentation. You have dealt with some very
23 important issues here dealing with self-government, in

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1 particular the need for resources of self-government.
2 Your emphasis on people resources, that people are
3 necessary to focus on education. I particularly like your
4 expression that perhaps if you can't stop the machinery
5 of the non-Aboriginal people, perhaps you can control it
6 and then put it to your use.

7 You also referred to the need to develop
8 your own professional resources for self-government and
9 it struck me that this is what we have heard elsewhere
10 too, not only here in Canada, but we were in the United
11 States last month, the Pueblo people said the same thing.

12 A few people up there want to have self-government, that
13 really means something. You go and ask your own
14 professional people to assist you, because as you say here,
15 they have the proper insights. So it is quite striking
16 that you would say this.

17 Your paper also contains some matters
18 that are always very sad to contemplate that exist today
19 in Canada. You refer to old people who speak their
20 language and they were forced because of poor health to
21 go somewhere where people did not understand them. Canada
22 has not been able to provide a system to provide these
23 people with decent care, and as you say, that they die

1 alone, away from home. It seems to me that is a
2 condemnation of Canada in this area. It is very clear
3 to me that, on issues like this, no one will be able to
4 defend practices like this.

5 Thank you for bringing these things to
6 our attention and you can be assured that we have to be
7 committed to doing our best with your assistance, with
8 your advice, in trying to change these things.

9 Thank you very much.

10 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

11 Do you have any comments or questions,
12 Commissioner Beardy -- you will notice I use "Commissioner"
13 Beardy all the time because it's the only day that he's
14 going to be a Commissioner and we might as well make the
15 most use of it.

16 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
17 you, Charles.

18 I just want to make some comments to the
19 presentation that was made by the Northern Chiefs Council,
20 Jeremiah McKay. The presentation deals with the land,
21 self-government, training and treaty promises.

22 I guess when we talk about Treaty 9, we
23 are talking about the Native people's perspective, their

1 view of that treat-making. We are talking about the spirit
2 and intent of that treaty where our ancestors, our
3 grandfathers agreed to share the resources and the land.
4 They also agreed to have a peaceful co-existence with
5 the Europeans and also a key point here, from our view,
6 is that we never surrendered the land.

7 I guess when we talk about tradition and
8 our pursuits it is our understanding that we should be
9 able to continue to pursue hunting, trapping and fishing
10 as it our understanding of those traditional activities
11 that we are able to pass on the teachings, the values of
12 our culture to our young people.

13 I just wanted to highlight those
14 comments and also I would like to thank Elder Jeremiah
15 McKay for his presentation and the interpreter.

16 Meegwetch.

17 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

18 Meegwetch, Jeremiah. Thanks to you,
19 Abe.

20 The next presenter is Sarah McKay. She
21 is with the Shibogama First Nations Council. Sarah is
22 the Health Liaison Worker for Shibogama.

23 **SARAH MCKAY, SHIBOGAMA FIRST NATIONS**

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1 **COUNCIL:** I believe you have a copy of my presentation.

2 **CHARLES FOX:** It's all your's, Sarah.

3 **SARAH McKAY:** My presentation today is
4 going to be on the cause of youth suicide in the Shibogama
5 First Nation. My name is Sarah McKay. I have worked for
6 four years as the Health Liaison Worker for Shibogama First
7 Nations Council. Shibogama First Nations Council is
8 comprised of four First Nations: Wawakapewin, Wapekeka,
9 Wunnumin Lake and Kingfisher.

10 Incorporated since 1984, Shibogama
11 First Nations Council provides advisory services to their
12 member First Nations in the areas of economic development,
13 health, social and political development. The head office
14 is situated in Wunnumin Lake and the administration office
15 is in Sioux Lookout.

16 Today, Shibogama First Nations Council
17 is confronted with a serious problem: massive youth
18 suicides and numerous attempted suicides. The problem
19 is epidemic in proportion and requires immediate
20 attention.

21 For the past four years, most of my time
22 has been spent on dealing with crisis situations brought
23 on by suicides and attempted suicides of youth within

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1 Shibogama communities. My work has not been easy. It
2 is difficult to attend funerals of young people that have
3 taken their lives with their own hands. It is often
4 overwhelming and painful to comfort a parent, a friend,
5 a grandparent or the community members as a whole when
6 a sudden and shocking tragedy such as the death of a young
7 person occurs. This is the reality of working in the field
8 of suicide prevention.

9 For the time that I have worked in this
10 area I have made several observations and conclusions for
11 the reasons why suicides occur. This is my personal
12 opinion and should be understood as such. I just want
13 to be clear on that and really be heard on that sentence.

14 Many service agencies comprised of
15 Aboriginal organizations and non-Aboriginal institutions
16 have attempted to assess the problem and to find
17 alternative measures. Yet the reasons why a youth takes
18 his or her life has never really been ascertained because
19 most service agency personnel that provide assistance to
20 a crisis situation in the Shibogama communities can only
21 provide a band-aid solution to a problem that is deeply
22 wounded with years of colonization, genocide,
23 assimilation, institutionalization and finally,

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1 annihilation of youth through suicides.

2 Many reports written today about the
3 suicides of youth in the Shibogama area outline in great
4 detail the contributing factors that lead to suicide.
5 Yet the reports fail to clearly identify the reasons why
6 suicides occur. The contributing factors identified such
7 as sexual abuse, family violence, alcohol and drug abuse,
8 solvent abuse, satanic practice, deterioration of family
9 structures, lack of proper leadership, et cetera as causes
10 for suicides are only the symptoms of a bigger and more
11 devastating cycle of oppression and depravation.

12 I will expand on why I believe the
13 problem is greater than what is obvious in the communities.
14 I will attempt to explain why I believe that the cycle
15 of oppression and depravation is the most obvious cause
16 of suicides and attempted suicides in the Shibogama area
17 today.

18 Before I endeavour to offer any
19 explanation to my reasoning for the cause of youth
20 suicides, I will present statistical information on
21 numbers of suicides, attempted suicides, methods of
22 suicides and range of age groups and time periods in which
23 suicides have occurred.

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1 Shibogama First Nations have suffered
2 the loss of eleven young lives since 1987. The method
3 used by the youth to take their lives in the Shibogama
4 area is by hanging themselves using whatever is available
5 at the moment of complete despair.

6 Within the Shibogama communities alone
7 there were 135 reported suicide attempts between 1987 to
8 1991. In 1992, Kingfisher reported another 22 attempts
9 between January and August. Altogether we had 157
10 attempts.

11 The methods used in attempted suicides
12 are either by hanging or overdose. Many other attempted
13 suicides have not been reported and are not recorded.
14 Most of the victims of suicides and attempted suicides
15 range in the age group of 14 to 25 years of age. Most
16 of the victims are males, single and unemployed. The
17 survivors of attempted suicides are either counselled by
18 Nodin Mental Health in Sioux Lookout or by the local
19 resource workers. Most of these attempts are serious
20 enough for medevac. Most of the victims have never
21 received proper counselling due to lack of resources.

22 Nodin Mental Health Services is expected
23 to provide counselling to 28 First Nations with a budget

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1 of \$55,000. Because of the high demand for their services,
2 the Nodin Medical Health Counsellors and local resource
3 workers are experiencing severe burn-out. More dollars
4 are required to hire and train more community-based workers
5 in the area of suicide prevention. Most importantly, more
6 funding is required to deal with the issues that give rise
7 to suicidal tendencies.

8 This leads me to express my observation
9 and understanding of why suicides occur in the Shibogama
10 area. Previously stated, contributing factors for
11 suicide and suicide attempts such as abuse, violence, to
12 mention but a few, are only symptoms of a greater problem
13 global in magnitude.

14 Suicide is not unique to Aboriginal
15 people. Suicides occur in every nation. However, the
16 cause of suicide differs with each nation. For the
17 Shibogama communities, the cause of suicide is deeply
18 rooted in the cycle of oppression and depravation first
19 initiated with colonial contact in 1492.

20 For the people of Shibogama colonialism
21 has been an outright exploitation of the lands, resources,
22 and culture. The exploitation of people of Shibogama has
23 led to genocide; the systematic killing of a nation of

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1 Aboriginal people by the non-Aboriginal people who now
2 control their lands and resources.

3 Attempts to destroy the people of
4 Shibogama has occurred in many government policies, but
5 has not been unique to governments. The churches of Canada
6 have been instrumental in carrying out the policies of
7 genocide. The means by which this was accomplished is
8 assimilation by education, health, social development and
9 political development. The road to destruction was being
10 bush whacked -- I guess you will ask questions about that
11 later on.

12 The residential schools were used to
13 absorb Aboriginal minds into the cultural traditions of
14 non-Aboriginal people. This alienated the Aboriginal
15 people from their own culture, traditions, beliefs and
16 customs. The road to suicide was being paved.

17 The residential schools and other
18 assimilation tactics used by the governments and churches
19 institutionalized Aboriginal people. They are unable to
20 live independently of the non-Aboriginal structures or
21 policies instilled within them throughout the years.
22 Within the communities of Shibogama, for the sake of
23 survival, many older people who were institutionalized

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1 in schools, hospitals, and prisons, have normalized the
2 destruction of their culture, tradition, lands and
3 resources. They have become a nation of people who have
4 normalized their oppression.

5 Yet the youth struggle daily with the
6 lack of conformity to this normalization. To briefly
7 review my train of thought: first came colonialism, then
8 genocide, then assimilation, then institutionalization
9 and normalization. This is the cycle of oppression and
10 depravation. The 500 year old process that has led to
11 suicides of young people today.

12 Oppression means to rule over with
13 tyranny; to treat with unjust hardships; to cause to feel
14 mentally or spiritually burdened or physically as though
15 suffocating. Suffocating one's life with hanging
16 themselves is an act of escaping oppression.

17 Years of oppression has led to the
18 immoral behaviours manifested today in the suicides of
19 youth. Depravation meaning corruptive behaviour or
20 perversion. For the people of Shibogama, taking one's
21 life is an immoral act. In any given situation, oppressing
22 one's right to be themselves will gradually lead to
23 self-destruction.

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1 The contributing factors such as sexual
2 abuse, family violence, abuse of chemicals, to mention
3 but a few, are born out of oppression. Immoral acts or
4 behaviours are born out of oppression and lead to
5 self-destruction; the final outcome of the cycle of
6 oppression and depravation.

7 In summary, I want to clearly express
8 that I am not putting the blame on any given organization
9 or government agency present here today, rather I am trying
10 to explain the path of destruction that has altered and
11 destroyed the life journey of youth today.

12 My personal recommendation is as
13 follows: before we can begin to implement any
14 self-government policies for Aboriginal people we must
15 have healing in the communities. And/or the first
16 priority of self-governance must be healing. We must
17 break the cycle of oppression and depravation. We must
18 heal from years of suffering from the symptoms of the
19 oppression: sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, family
20 violence, low self- esteem, et cetera. We must stop the
21 immoral behaviours caused by oppression.

22 We must stop the suicides that are
23 occurring amongst our youth today. We must journey off

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1 the path that we have been forced to walk upon by our
2 non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters who are visitors to
3 our land. We have our own red road of life. We must return
4 to it because it is the path that leads to life for
5 Aboriginal people. It is a path that was designed by the
6 Great Spirit for the people of the Shibogama area.

7 Self-government means walking the red
8 road of life that the Great Spirit has ordained for
9 Aboriginal people. Self-government does not mean walking
10 the foreign path of the non-Aboriginal people.

11 Finally, my recommendation as an
12 employee of an Aboriginal organization is that funding
13 must be made available by the federal and provincial
14 governments to assist Aboriginal people to deal with the
15 problem of youth suicide in the Shibogama area. This
16 funding must be given as an act of compensation for the
17 years of oppression and depravation. This funding must
18 not be perceived as a hand-out to the Aboriginal people
19 by the government or by the Canadian society as a whole.

20 Meegwetch.

21 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
22 Sarah, for a very well thought out presentation.

23 I don't know if the Commissioners have

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1 any observations or comments or questions to make, but
2 I will give it over to you.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I'm not
4 going to ask you a question.

5 I just wanted to thank you though for
6 your presentation. I read a lot of books and articles
7 and newspapers and magazines and I hear a lot of
8 presentations, as we travel across the country, but I can
9 assure you that it's not often that we hear a presentation
10 that has the perceptive insight and the eloquence that
11 you have given us here today.

12 I will just cite one of the many things
13 that I am going to wonder for a long time, and I can use
14 because they are such sound arguments.

15 "In any given situation, oppressing one's right to be
16 themselves will gradually lead to
17 self-destruction."

18 There is a lot in that and it can convince people about
19 many things that need to change in this country, and I
20 really thank you for it.

21 **SARAH MCKAY:** You're welcome.

22 **CHARLES FOX:** Do I hear any other
23 comments?

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1 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I just
2 wanted to mention that in the course of our travels across
3 the country we have visited quite a number of
4 penitentiaries and of course, as you know, the Native
5 people are disproportionately represented in our prisons.

6 It was very interesting to hear the
7 presentations made by the Native inmates. We had some
8 of the finest presentations that we've heard made by Native
9 inmates in the institutions. One of the things that they
10 told us, and asked us to do for them, was they told us
11 that of all the different people who were brought into
12 the institution to help, the psychologists, the doctors
13 and so on, that the most useful person was the elder.
14 They pointed out to us that the elder was not accorded
15 the same respect and prestige as these other so-called
16 professional people, the psychiatrists and the doctors,
17 and was not paid on the same level as these other people.
18 They asked us to try to have that changed.

19 So because this request was made to us
20 in so many of the institutions we wrote to the federal
21 Justice Department to say that we had been told this by
22 the inmates that the person who services were the most
23 useful, and that they valued the most, were the elders.

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1 It was kind of ironic, I thought, that many of them told
2 us that for the first time they really discovered who they
3 were and where they came from, and began to appreciate
4 their own identity through the discussions with the elders.

5 I thought, "Isn't it ironic that the Native inmates had
6 to commit an offence and be incarcerated in order to stop
7 to think about their identity and where they came from."

8

9 Certainly I was pretty well convinced
10 that this is where you have to begin in trying to deal
11 with the kind of problems you are talking about, that either
12 cause people to go to desperate lengths and suicide, or
13 to get involved in the criminal system and find themselves
14 behind bars.

15 There is no doubt in my mind that it is
16 tremendously important that the Native young people get
17 the message of who they are and that they learn about their
18 culture and their history and their traditions and build
19 up their own sense of identity. It seems to me that has
20 to be the answer to counteract the anti-social behaviour
21 and these terrible desperate lengths that they are driven
22 to of taking their own lives. So, I just mention that.

23

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1 It is an excellent brief that you have
2 submitted and obviously this is a real, real problem and
3 a very urgent one that we have to try to address.

4 Thank you very much.

5 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
6 Commissioner Wilson.

7 Do you have any comments, Commissioner
8 Beardy? No comments at all?

9 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
10 No.

11 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
12 Sarah, for your presentation.

13 **SARAH MCKAY:** The only thing I wanted
14 to say that I left out was how I present the cycle of
15 oppression and depravation. I had it handy in case you
16 wanted to ask questions about it.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Do you
18 happen to have a copy of that?

19 **SARAH MCKAY:** Yes, but it's a rough
20 copy.

21 Meegwetch.

22 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
23 Sarah.

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1 We will now break for coffee and stretch
2 our legs and rub our sore backs.

3

4 --- Upon recessing at 3:25 p.m.

5 --- Upon resuming at 3:40 p.m.

6

7 **CHARLES FOX:** It is time to resume.

8 The next group to be making a
9 presentation is the Equay Wuk Women's Group here in Sioux
10 Lookout. The presenter will be Daisy Hoppe, a board member
11 of the Equay Wuk Women's Group and Vice President and
12 Chairperson.

13 So I will turn it over to Daisy. It's
14 all yours.

15 **DAISY HOPPE, VICE PRESIDENT, EQUAY WUK**

16 **WOMEN'S GROUP:** I am just waiting for my Treasurer to come.

17 She had told me she would be sitting here with me.

18 What I have done in the meantime is I've
19 given you the presentation that we drew up and included
20 is also the pamphlet that we hand out to the public and
21 to the members.

22 The other thing that I would like to do
23 later on, just so you get an idea as to what some of the

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1 activities that Equay Wuk has been doing, is to give you
2 the 1989 and 1990 Equay Wuk Women's Conference Report.
3 It is a report that is entitled "Minobaymadesewen (PH)
4 - A Good Way of Life". This is the copy if you would like
5 to pick it up later.

6 I don't know if I should go ahead and
7 just ---

8 **CHARLES FOX:** I would advise that maybe
9 you should just go ahead.

10 **DAISY HOPPE:** Okay.

11 Equay Wuk was formed in 1988 by
12 like-minded women who were concerned about family violence
13 that was being experienced and encountered by First Nations
14 women in local and northern communities. They met to
15 discuss ways and means that family violence issues could
16 be brought out into public knowledge. It was from these
17 early meetings that the main purpose and objectives of
18 the women's group were formulated.

19 Women needed an advocacy group that
20 could speak on their behalf, a group who could plan and
21 formulate and implement forums whereby women of all ages
22 and experiences could meet to discuss and act on issues
23 that are impacting on our lives as individuals and

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1 families. To this date, we follow Equay Wuk objectives
2 with our organizational activities.

3 I have included examples of two
4 objectives that we follow. These are the objectives that
5 guide with our activities and our planning. At this time
6 I just want to read these two objectives:

7 "To organize forums and develop a
8 structure to enable women of the
9 North to have an opportunity to
10 express themselves, share concerns
11 and develop better networks of
12 communication."

13 The second objective is:

14 "To provide opportunities for Native women to share
15 solutions to common problems and
16 to explore ways to become more
17 assertive about their own needs
18 within their communities."

19 So these are just the two objectives that
20 guide us and help us to plan different activities that
21 we have.

22 At this point I would like to say that
23 I find it very hard to just sit here and read and I think

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1 from time to time I am just going to pull away from this
2 prepared format that I have. Again, at this time, I would
3 like to share just some of the facts about the communities
4 that our membership is drawn from, and I'm sure that the
5 Commission and the audience have heard a lot about the
6 communities that we draw our membership from.

7 These are communities north of Sioux
8 Lookout, and again these are communities that have
9 undergone many changes within the last 10 and even the
10 last 20 years. Lifestyles have changed within this
11 period. And again I want to stress that people within
12 this area are very traditional in their belief and value
13 structures. You might see it with the everyday life and
14 customs that they might follow, but in their way of thinking
15 and their spirituality they are very traditional. Our
16 communities are very unique in this manner. Again, I would
17 like to emphasize that it is only recently that Native
18 traditional customs commonly found among the Ojibway
19 people have been introduced, and some people say
20 reintroduced into these communities. As you people may
21 have heard there are many social and different kinds of
22 problems within these communities. So this is just a brief
23 description of the type of communities that we draw our

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1 membership from.

2 When we first got word that this panel
3 was coming to Sioux Lookout, that these hearings were
4 coming to Sioux Lookout we were given packages that asked
5 and requested recommendations. So, that is the approach
6 that we took and the recommendations that we came up with
7 are very practical, they are very simple, they're not too
8 complicated, and it is basically a way of getting back
9 into the Native way of life. So they are very, very simple
10 and very basic.

11 So I and the other members and the
12 executive of Equay Wuk drew up five recommendations and
13 I will just read them through:

14 Recommendation 1: Equay Wuk has always
15 followed certain protocol when planning delegate
16 participation at the workshops and conferences. We find
17 that these measures have been effective and we recommend
18 that other Native gatherings follow in our footsteps.

19 a) That each community send two
20 delegates, one young and one elderly. This way the
21 generation gap can be lessened if both young and old meet
22 on common ground;

23 b) That women be taught and encouraged

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1 to communicate during these workshops in their Native
2 language. Women are encouraged to speak on any topic that
3 will lead to personal and group healing;

4 c) That each woman share workshop
5 education and information with the rest of the community
6 on their return home;

7 d) That alcohol and other substances
8 be banned from workshop sessions. In its place, Equay
9 Wuk sets up culturally appropriate entertainment, planned
10 and performed by our delegates. We find that this is a
11 good way of bringing the group together as a unit and it
12 is also a time where we sort of take our hats off and enjoy
13 each other's company.

14 e) That the focus be on caring,
15 respect and sharing. Sharing of information and sharing
16 of gifts that complements the networking that often takes
17 place at these gatherings.

18 The second recommendation: Equay Wuk
19 recognizes the empowerment through education. Raising
20 awareness and educating delegates on the facts of family
21 violence is our ongoing activity. Educating and
22 facilitating should be carried out by positive Native role
23 models, para-professionals, professionals and elders.

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1 Whenever possible, we recommend that
2 young and old Native women be approached to teach at
3 workshops or forums where they can teach other Native and
4 non-Native people. We need to revive the old ways of
5 teaching where women were "respected and revered as first
6 educators and life carriers". That was taken as a direct
7 quote from one of the pamphlets, "Public Hearings", page
8 27.

9 Recommendation 3: Equay Wuk recommends
10 that healing strategies focus on the family as a unit,
11 and this is the recommendation that is very difficult for
12 us to talk about because sometimes we find that what we
13 are about to recommend here is not always possible, nor
14 is it always necessary or workable. Anyway, we recommend
15 that a woman should not have to flee from her community
16 and leave her children and husband behind to ensure her
17 physical and emotional survival. A woman cannot be healed
18 separately from her family. Whenever possible, the family
19 should be healed as a unit. Again, we want to stress that.
20 We know that this recommendation would be very difficult
21 to implement.

22 Recommendation 4: Equay Wuk had
23 initially educated the women of the North as a group.

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1 We believe that different factions within the community
2 need this education and awareness as well. It is to this
3 end that Equay Wuk had attempted to initiate partnerships
4 with political and policing leadership with its August
5 1992 conference. This is the conference entitled:
6 "Developing Partnerships with Political Leadership".

7 We also recommend that any workshops or
8 activities that promote communication, co-operation and
9 understanding between women, band councils and policing
10 groups be supported actively and positively by First Nation
11 political leadership and funding bodies.

12 Recommendation 5: Equay Wuk plans to
13 develop a manual called: "A Practical Guide for Dealing
14 with Family Violence" from its "Kush Kee Ho Win" project.

15 Right now this is a project in its planning stages. We
16 recommend that such teaching materials and kits that are
17 culturally appropriate and meaningful be supported with
18 funding dollars so that First Nations people can benefit
19 from these educational tools. Too often we find that the
20 teaching material that is available for teaching Native
21 people is non-Native oriented.

22 The last recommendation: Equay Wuk
23 also recommends that families that follow traditional

1 consensual practices be supported and encouraged to foster
2 at the family and community levels. Again, that is
3 something that our families and our communities used to
4 do at one time, and I think to some extent they are still
5 being done, but we thought we would bring it out at this
6 point just to again emphasize this point.

7 As an example one Equay Wuk woman tells
8 of a time when the grandmother of one extended family guided
9 the decision-making process by gathering everyone in a
10 circle and encouraging everyone within the circle to speak
11 on the issue to be decided upon. This grandmother was
12 the one who decided when this process should take place
13 and that everyone within the family should be given an
14 opportunity to speak for or against the decision.
15 Sometimes the issue of discussion was an upcoming marriage
16 between a family member and somebody else.

17 These are just some of the
18 recommendations that Equay Wuk wanted to relay to the
19 Commissioners for information and for their consideration.
20 We believe that these recommendations are practical and
21 that they are necessary for our people's well being and
22 growth.

23 Meegwetch.

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1 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
2 Daisy.

3 The lady who just joined her is Mrs.
4 Sarah Melvin, she is a Past-President of the Equay Wuk
5 Women's Group and she is currently the Health Liaison
6 Worker for the Windigo Chiefs Tribal Council.

7 If the Commissioners have any questions
8 I will turn the microphone over to you now.

9 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** This is,
10 of course, a very difficult issue. Family violence is
11 not confined to Native communities by any means, and white
12 society has the problem as well. But I think from what
13 I've read and heard, that Native communities find it more
14 difficult to deal with because of the emphasis on healing
15 and, as you say, treating the family as a unit. Whereas
16 I think that that has not been the approach in non-Native
17 society. The approach has been to take the victim of the
18 violence, whether it is women or children, out of the family
19 and try to help them apart from the perpetrator of the
20 violence. So, it is a very different kind of approach
21 that seems to have been taken in the white society.

22 But I would just like to mention that
23 as we've gone across the country and gone into communities

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1 at almost every public hearing that we've held, either
2 an individual woman or a group of women or a women's
3 organization has addressed the Commissioners on this issue
4 and emphasized what a difficult one it is to deal with.

5 The thing I suppose that interests me
6 most about this issue is that it is always the Native women
7 who raise it. That concerns me, I must admit. In the
8 non-Aboriginal society now you probably know that there
9 are groups of men who are acknowledging and recognizing
10 that perhaps, although the women and children are the
11 victims, the probably is really their's. I think that
12 is a very positive development that has been taking place
13 in the non-Aboriginal society. I must say that I have
14 been very concerned, as we've gone across the country,
15 I can't think of a single hearing in a single community
16 where Native men have come and raised the issue of family
17 violence. That concerns me a great deal.

18 So, I guess my question is: Does that
19 concern you also?

20 **DAISY HOPPE:** I will answer it first and
21 then Sarah can answer it too.

22 It really concerns us as individual
23 women, and also as a group, and again that is one of the

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1 reasons why we had formed this organization. It's not
2 a very large organization, but it is made up of women who
3 have gone through family violence, or who have known of
4 family violence or seen it -- not all of us have gone through
5 it, but a majority of us have gone through it as well,
6 have experienced it.

7 So, it is a major concern for us and most
8 of the educational workshops that we have are directed
9 to family violence. So what we've done is our initial
10 approach was to educate the women. Like I said in this
11 report, in August of 1992 we had attempted to meet with
12 the policing agents and the band council members, the chief
13 and councils, and at the time we had wanted to develop
14 some sort of networking with the male leadership -- not
15 that we're out there to take over the whole world, but
16 we just wanted to have some kind of a working relationship
17 because we think that it is very necessary if we are going
18 to combat family violence. I think even right now we are
19 thinking of taking our work -- well, I guess in the same
20 direction, just taking it further and that is to work with
21 young people because we find that we can't just direct
22 our focus on the women themselves, we have to take it
23 further. Like I said with one of the recommendations,

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1 that the family unit has to be treated as a group and we
2 found from experience that it's not always good to take
3 the women out, or take a client out and just work with
4 that client because we find that you have to work with
5 the family as a group.

6 Like you said, this is an issue that is
7 really important to us and I think in our role of mothers
8 and as nurturers and teachers it is very essential to what
9 we want to do as women. We want our families and our
10 communities to be healthy.

11 **SARAH MELVIN:** I'm sorry I was late.
12 I'm always on Indian time.

13 I am here to support Daisy and I'm not
14 here as a Windigo rep. I just want to make that clear
15 that I am here as an Equay Wuk member.

16 I would just like to add a few things
17 to what Daisy had said. When we first started in 1988
18 there was only about four of us. I am one of the founding
19 members of the Equay Wuk organization. Being the survivor
20 of family violence and many abuses I had the opportunity
21 to start this women's group with the help of many other
22 women that were interested in the same issue. Because
23 I know what I went through as a victim and I also know

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1 what it has done to my children and what it had done to
2 my family.

3 During that time when I was living back
4 on the reserve I experienced a lot of problems and I guess
5 the main reason why I wanted to start a women's group was
6 so we could start talking about these issues. If anybody
7 wanted to talk about these issues I figured it would be
8 the women, the women would be the ones talking about these
9 sensitive issues.

10 To me these problems are very, very
11 sensitive. There are other issues that may be important
12 to other people, but to me lives are more important.
13 Paperwork comes last. So that is why I was very keen and
14 worked very hard to try to get this organization going.
15 I am still very active in the organization, trying to
16 get funding in place, trying to educate the funders at
17 the same time when we are doing proposals. There are times
18 that we don't meet their criteria and that is my role is
19 to educate the funders that we cannot always abide by their
20 rules and regulations, that our needs are different from
21 what they put on paper.

22 So I guess in that respect I have done
23 a lot of ground work and I would like to see this

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1 organization continue because it is very dear to my heart.

2 This problem, this family violence and other sensitive
3 issues have to be dealt with, especially for moving towards
4 self-government, self-determination. We need healthy
5 people to run programs, to run organizations. We cannot
6 depend on governments, like Medical Services or DIA to
7 run the programs for us.

8 We have a lot of expertise in many areas,
9 like I say from the woman's point of view we do have a
10 lot of experience, we have a lot of knowledge. I know
11 we can do the things that we wanted to do. We have set
12 goals and objectives in what the organization wants to
13 do and we work closely with the grassroots women, women
14 from the northern communities. They come down here, they
15 meet with us, they tell us what they want, how they want
16 to see their communities.

17 So again, I would like to say that we
18 would like to continue and we would like to get as much
19 support from whoever wants to support the issue.

20 Meegwetch. Thank you.

21 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mrs.
22 Melvin.

23 Do we have any more comments from the

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1 other two Commissioners?

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Charles,
3 I see you standing there -- but I do thank you very much
4 for your presentation, both of you.

5 **CHARLES FOX:** Commissioner Beardy, any
6 comments or questions?

7 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
8 I just want to make one comment. In your presentation
9 under item number 4 where you mentioned the conference,
10 "Developing Partnerships with Political Leadership".
11 What kind of support, or what kind of response did you
12 get from the political leadership when that meeting was
13 put together?

14 **SARAH MELVIN:** Actually I almost went
15 under the table when you asked that question, not because
16 we didn't have a successful conference, but the
17 embarrassing part was that we did talk to the chiefs and
18 we wrote memos, we faxed information about this conference
19 and only one chief from Muskrat Dam came.

20 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
21 What is being done as a follow-up to get the political
22 leadership involved in this issue?

23 **DAISY HOPPE:** We've talked to Chief

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1 Bentley Cheechoo and he is willing to meet with the Equay
2 Wuk representatives to talk about family violence and we
3 are also available as the Executive and members to meet
4 with individual tribal councils and band councils to talk
5 to them about our organization, to talk about any things
6 that they want to talk to us about.

7 We have started that already. Last
8 month the Shibogama Tribal Council had invited Equay Wuk
9 to come in and do a little presentation to one of their
10 meetings with the chiefs and we were able to meet with
11 them. At that meeting we were able to talk about a lot
12 of things that they find of major concern to their women
13 who are abused, and some of the problems that come up when
14 women leave the communities. At that time we found out
15 that there is a lot of misinformation on their side about
16 us and we thought that we were able to straighten some
17 of those problems out, or we tried anyway.

18 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
19 Meegwetch.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Daisy
21 and Sarah, for your presentation.

22 The next presenter that we have on
23 schedule is Tikinagan Child & Family Services. The

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1 presenter is Mr. Charles Morris. He is the Executive
2 Director of Tikinagan Child & Family Services. Mr. Morris
3 is from -- my apologies, there is a presentation going
4 on here.

5 My apologies to Sarah and Daisy, I didn't
6 realize that you were handing out T-shirts.

7 Anyway, I will go back to my
8 introduction. The presenter for Tikinagan Child and
9 Family Services is the Executive Director, Mr. Charles
10 Morris. Mr. Morris is from the Big Trout Lake First Nation
11 and he has served as a band councillor of Big Trout in
12 his past.

13 With that I will open the microphone to
14 Charles. Go ahead.

15 **CHARLES MORRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,**
16 **TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES:** Thank you very much,
17 Charles.

18 Before I begin I would just like to make
19 a few explanatory notes here. Initially when we were
20 approached by Charles to make a presentation to the
21 Commission we had received a commitment from our Chairman
22 of the Board, his name is Saggius Rae, but at the very
23 last moment he was unable to come and make his presentation

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1 due to some events happening within his community.

2 Also, another comment that I would like
3 to make is that as I was coming into this building, and
4 when I further inquired as to what was expected of us
5 insofar as this presentation was concerned, I was notified
6 that you were primarily looking for recommendations as
7 to how we can achieve self-government, I guess within the
8 various spheres that we are involved in.

9 The fact of the matter is that we
10 neglected to do that. This speech that I had John outline
11 on which it was structured, deals primarily with the
12 description of our organization and only very briefly does
13 it deal with comments pertaining to how we can achieve
14 self-government.

15 The reason why we did that was because
16 I felt that achieving self-government is primarily a
17 political process and it has to be done within a whole
18 framework, so to speak. Once that self-government
19 framework is agreed to then the various disciplines, or
20 the various spheres of work that we are involved in as
21 Native people here, and the delivery of services to our
22 people, only then would we begin to pursue self-government
23 in that way.

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1 So, greetings, my name is Charles
2 Morris. I am the Executive Director of Tikinagan Child
3 and Family Services, and I am here on behalf of the Board
4 of Directors for our agency.

5 As I explained to you, my speech will
6 deal primarily with our organization specifics, however,
7 at the end I will be making a few comments regarding changes
8 that we would subscribe to, and which we feel would allow
9 us to have meaningful participation in the self-government
10 process. But by and large I will be describing who we
11 are, the mandate that we have, the geographical area that
12 we serve and the types of issues that we deal with.

13 Tikinagan Child and Family Services is
14 a non-profit, Native child and family services
15 organization serving 28 communities in the western and
16 central areas of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. It is governed
17 by a board of directors representative of the communities
18 within its geographic catchment area. Tikinagan Child
19 and Family Services is mandated under the Child and Family
20 Services Act to provide services into child welfare,
21 community support and young offender categories.

22 The geographical area served by
23 Tikinagan Child and Family Services comprises

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1 approximately 250,000 square miles starting from the
2 community of Ogaki-Marten Falls in the east, to the
3 Manitoba border in the west, from the community of Savant
4 Lake or Saugeen in the south, and to the community of Fort
5 Severn in the north.

6 The communities range in size of
7 population from 6 people to 1500 people. Service is
8 provided to the First Nations within this area, as well
9 as to the towns of Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Allanwater.

10 Few communities can be reached by road,
11 with the majority regularly accessible only by air.
12 Several communities do not have landing strips yet and
13 can therefore only be reached by float or ski planes.
14 The population for this area is approximately 12,000 people
15 and we're not sure as to that figure, it might be a little
16 bit more we figure.

17 The motto of our agency is "A Child Loves
18 Everybody First". The motto refers to a child, who in
19 the early years of life, accepts and welcomes people from
20 all walks of life without judging them on the basis of
21 their race, religion or creed. A child at this age is
22 innocent and has no boundaries in their love and trust
23 of others.

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1 During these early development years
2 parents impart to their children the necessary skills and
3 behaviours that their children will require.

4 Unfortunately, this is not always the situation. When
5 children are raised in these types of dysfunctional homes
6 then that is when our agency's assistance is required.

7 We believe that the Creator has
8 entrusted us with the sacred responsibility to raise our
9 families as we see accordingly for we realize healthy
10 families are the foundation of strong and healthy
11 communities. The future of our communities lies with our
12 children who need to be nurtured within their families
13 and communities.

14 Therefore, Tikinagan Child and Family
15 Services was one of the three child welfare agencies
16 mandated by the leaders of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation to
17 address our child and welfare needs and problems. And
18 this was done way back in 1984 when the Nishnawbe-Aski
19 Nation signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Province
20 of Ontario. As an evolving and developing agency, we are
21 striving to find ways and means to deliver culturally
22 appropriate services for our people.

23 The overall goal of Tikinagan Child and

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1 Family Services is to keep our children with us in our
2 communities. The goal challenges us to:
3 a) nourish the values and principles
4 of our people;
5 b) draw our strengths from the people
6 we serve; and
7 c) develop and identify human
8 resources at the community level to deal with child welfare
9 issues in the community.

10 As an evolving and developing agency,
11 we try to reflect the wishes and aspirations of our people
12 by subscribing to the following primary principles:

13 The major responsibility for the safety
14 and well being of our children is with the family; and
15 if this is not possible then the extended family should
16 care for the children.

17 At the community level, the safety and
18 well being of children is everyone's responsibility and
19 anyone who is aware of children in need of protection should
20 ensure that the children and their families receive
21 appropriate assistance.

22 Services should be community-based,
23 First Nation controlled and family focused. Through the

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1 use of customary care, which will be introduced shortly,
2 communities will have the major responsibility for the
3 care and well being of families and children.

4 Tikinagan Child and Family Services
5 will, under the auspices of the Family Counselling unit,
6 provide guidance and counselling for the family unit in
7 order to prevent children from being harmed and to keep
8 the families intact in their own communities.

9 In the community, Tikinagan Child and
10 Family Services is the final authority for ensuring that
11 children are safe and well. Recourse to the provincial
12 courts will be made only when all other efforts to protect
13 children have failed.

14 We provide you with the following
15 composite sketch of the people and communities that we
16 serve. Our communities have undergone enormous and rapid
17 political, economic, social and cultural changes within
18 the last decade. Accompanying these changes has been a
19 rather dramatic and disturbing increase in problems, such
20 as domestic violence, child abuse, alcohol and solvent
21 abuse, depression, grieving and suicide.

22 It has been well documented that the
23 First Nations are undergoing extreme crises that impact

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1 negatively on individual, family and community life. For
2 many years community members lived in relative isolation
3 and had little exposure to a western way of life.

4 However, with improved transportation
5 systems, there is greater mobility within the area and
6 points beyond. Advanced technology such as radio,
7 telephone, television, satellite dishes and fax machines
8 have exposed people to life outside of their own community.

9 The great contrast between life in the community and the
10 glimpses of life outside have not gone unnoticed by Native
11 people.

12 An alarming phenomena of youth suicide
13 has emerged. In the past five years there has been 37
14 completed suicides, 33 of these suicides were individuals
15 under the age of 25 years. Over that same period of time,
16 there were 437 documented suicide attempts. The method
17 most commonly used by both males and females are hanging
18 and guns. This rate of suicide is about three times the
19 national average. As well, a cluster pattern and suicide
20 pacts are apparent, which only increases the risk for
21 vulnerable young people.

22 There is a significant problem of gas
23 sniffing and other inhalants by adolescents in many of

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1 the communities served by Tikinagan Child and Family
2 Services. Most of the gas sniffers are fairly regular
3 in their usage, usually with a group of peers and usually
4 outdoors.

5 Communities are struggling to find
6 effective methods of intervening in this situation, while
7 the adolescents are being referred to Tikinagan for
8 treatment. Many of the adolescents have been removed from
9 the community and placed in residential settings.
10 However, the most lasting form of intervention occurs in
11 the community.

12 Treatment strategies must be social in
13 nature since gas sniffing is such a group activity. Group
14 and individual counselling should be made available at
15 the community level on a continuing basis, but both the
16 community and Tikinagan have limited financial and human
17 resources to intervene effectively.

18 Allegations of child abuse are ever
19 increasing, especially child sexual abuse, and this fact
20 is reflected in the types of services required by children
21 and families. The agency is having difficulty coping with
22 the investigations, protection issues, court appearances
23 and the need for intensive individual and family

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1 counselling.

2 As well, any disclosure of child sexual
3 abuse affects many people. Members of the extended family
4 and the political leadership become involved. The
5 community as a whole experiences a range of emotions.
6 Again, Tikinagan Child and Family Services has limited
7 financial and human resources available to combat these
8 issues in a proactive rather than reactive manner.

9 Demand for services continue to increase
10 and is reflected in the agency's statistics. Many
11 difficult-to-serve adolescents that are found to be in
12 need of protection exhibit suicidal tendencies, chronic
13 depression, solvent abuse and outward behavioral
14 characteristics stemming from victimization. The
15 agency's outside placement costs reflect the multitude
16 of needs these children and their families have.

17 Tikinagan Child and Family Services
18 would like to inform the Royal Commission of structural
19 changes that it wishes to see addressed in work Tikinagan
20 does in relation to both levels of governments and to other
21 non-Aboriginal entities. Under our present working
22 relationships with the above mentioned and which are,
23 incidentally, for the most part adversarial in nature,

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1 it would not be prudent of us to expect that a change in
2 the status quo would take place soon.

3 During our second last annual assembly
4 in Muskrat Dam, our elders directed us to seek more
5 authority and autonomy in the child welfare field based
6 on our natural and treaty rights as the First People of
7 this land. Their rationale was that the Creator bestowed
8 upon us the inherent authority to govern our own
9 relationships amongst ourselves in our communities, and
10 to structure our family support services in accordance
11 with our unique culture and customs and in a manner which
12 respects the genuine needs and priorities of our people.

13 We state categorically that the above is not possible
14 within the present framework.

15 Therefore, we seek meaningful dialogue,
16 vis-a-vis the two levels of government, in order to realize
17 requisite changes to the present system. We call upon
18 our indigenous political leaders to initiate the above
19 by defining a process whereby Native self-government could
20 be enhanced. This is a necessary first step.

21 When an overall framework for Native
22 self-government has been agreed to, and when discussions
23 in the field of child welfare begin, you can rest assured

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1 that those of us who are involved in that field will partake
2 in that process. We need a structure of government that
3 will reflect our traditions, where elders are accorded
4 their rightful place as community leaders per se and given
5 the respect that they deserve.

6 In the interim Tikinagan Child and
7 Family Services will continue to seek changes within the
8 present framework, however cosmetic these changes will
9 be. It was our misfortune to have received our mandate
10 when we did, in April of 1987, because of what has
11 subsequently transpired.

12 A five year organizational review was
13 conducted in 1990, and it showed the extent of our
14 unpreparedness. We became, for all intents and purposes,
15 a Children's Aid Society which was indistinguishable from
16 other white operated Children's Aid Societies, and to this
17 date we continue to emulate the practices of these
18 traditional Children's Aid Societies. We adopted a system
19 without question, we became incorporated to this system,
20 and today we perpetuate the practices of such a system.
21 This is despite our efforts to not do so.

22 We will be initiating soon the usage of
23 customary care in protection-related matters, which will

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1 be community based and co-managed by the local leadership
2 and Tikinagan Child and Family Services. This will be
3 a means for this agency to be more visible at the community
4 level and for empowerment and ownership of child welfare
5 matters to be claimed by local leadership.

6 Concurrent with the introduction of
7 customary care will be the need to develop culturally
8 relevant child welfare guidelines or standards. This will
9 not happen, however, until extensive consultation has been
10 done at the local level.

11 In closing, I wish to say that it has
12 been a privilege for me to speak before the Royal Commission
13 on behalf of Tikinagan Child and Family Services and I
14 am thankful for the opportunity to do so.

15 Thank you.

16 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
17 Morris.

18 Are there are any questions or points
19 of clarification, Commissioners?

20 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Yes,
21 perhaps you could explain a bit more what you mean by the
22 usage of customary care?

23 **CHARLES MORRIS:** There is a section in

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1 the Child and Family Services Act which the Province of
2 Ontario has, under part 10, which allows for Native bands
3 to use customary care in either prevention or
4 protection-related issues.

5 For the most part, since we received our
6 mandate in April of 1987, we have been using customary
7 care primarily for prevention purposes. Whereas all of
8 our protection work has been totally immersed in the white
9 man's court process.

10 What we want to do now with customary
11 care and the usage of protection-related issues is to set
12 up, in each and every community, Family Services Committees
13 and instead of relying on court documents to determine
14 the care of our kids, we will instead be utilizing band
15 council resolutions. The chief and council and the
16 members of the Family Service Committee will have total
17 involvement all the way in determining how their children
18 will be looked after.

19 Those are our plans, but they won't
20 happen for another couple of years or so.

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

22 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** You say
23 that the organization is an agency that is authorized under

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1 -- and this is a question -- is authorized under Ontario
2 legislation to provide the particular services it does?

3 **CHARLES MORRIS:** Yes. Under the Child
4 and Family Services Act of Ontario you have six service
5 categories. We have been mandated to deliver services
6 in three of those services. There is somewhat of a
7 misnomer here in that we are often referred to as a Native
8 Child and Family Services Agency per se, when in fact we
9 are not under the Child and Family Services Act, we receive
10 our authority from the province.

11 There is a void there insofar as Native
12 people having any legitimate say as to how we conduct our
13 affairs. That is partly my explanation when I said that
14 we had become somewhat immersed into the white man's court
15 system. That is a reality and that is something that we
16 are trying to get away from.

17 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That
18 legislative authority includes the power to apprehend
19 children, the power to take the children from their homes;
20 is that so?

21 **CHARLES MORRIS:** Yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In
23 assessing the standards which are to operate in carrying

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1 out your mandate, does the legislation include a test of
2 the best interests of the child?

3 **CHARLES MORRIS:** Well, that is
4 primarily what we look to when we have to make a decision
5 as to whether or not we should take a child out of his
6 or her community. We look at the best interests of the
7 child by having our protection workers assess the family
8 situation, and this is most often done in conjunction with
9 the other service providers that are to be found at the
10 local communities. Then only after has gone through some
11 scrutiny do we make, somewhat hesitatingly, the decision
12 to remove a child.

13 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In making
14 these assessments, of what is in the best interests of
15 the child, whose standards apply?

16 **CHARLES MORRIS:** I don't know if we
17 should be talking about standards. You have your own --
18 I don't know what you would call it -- your own natural
19 instincts, like if you were a protection worker and if
20 you went to a dysfunctional home and you saw what the actual
21 situation was, if the child was genuinely in need of
22 protection then our worker would make that decision.

23 But the answer to your question is that

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1 we are following the provincially mandated legislation
2 when we do make our decision, because the CFSA Act is a
3 provincial document.

4 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Do you
5 have a role in providing foster homes for young children?

6 **CHARLES MORRIS:** Yes, we do provide
7 that.

8 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In making
9 the decision as to whether any particular home is an
10 appropriate home for that child to live in, are there
11 certain standards that you have to meet and what are those
12 standards? Are they the standards that should operate
13 according to the communities or someone else's standards?

14 **CHARLES MORRIS:** Before we actually
15 make a decision to remove a child out of the community
16 what we are mandated under section 10 of the CFSA Act to
17 do is to look within the community and to approach the
18 next of kin of that child, or the family that is affected,
19 and to see whether or not they would be wanting to looking
20 after the affected offspring. If that is not possible
21 then we look -- this is the immediate family I am referring
22 to, the brothers and sisters and the parents. If that
23 is not possible then, within the same community again,

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1 we look to the extended family for help. Again, if we
2 don't have any placements to make there within the extended
3 family then we look to the whole community in general.

4 If we have exhausted all of those avenues
5 within that particular Native community then we look at
6 another Native community, and only as a last resort do
7 we bring a child out into our care. But when we do place
8 children with next of kin we sign what we call a "Temporary
9 Care Agreement".

10 So, every effort is made to prevent a
11 child from being displaced, as it were.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** As a
13 general point, I am just wondering, and I wonder if I might
14 wonder out loud to you, in looking for homes for young
15 people are what I would call living conditions, living
16 standards relevant? That is, putting it another way, are
17 there cases in which the poverty of people would drive
18 people away from Aboriginal homes into non-Aboriginal
19 homes because of the poverty?

20 **CHARLES MORRIS:** None of the isolated
21 communities that we provide services to, none of those
22 communities have the infrastructure to provide amenities
23 that we take for granted here in the south. I don't know

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1 of any community that has full running water, central
2 heating.

3 So, those are other mitigating factors
4 that would forbid us from placing children within our
5 isolated Native communities, because the living standards
6 are so poor. It seems as if we were forgotten a long time
7 ago, despite the best efforts of our indigenous leadership,
8 all of our requests for extra funds for housing, for roads,
9 to develop the infrastructure of the community, those have
10 been falling on deaf ears and that has been ongoing for
11 about 30 or 40 years, as far back as I can remember.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Well, I
13 think that is a particularly important point because one
14 like me, who does not know about these things, might believe
15 that some of those amenities might be less important than
16 the particular kind of care that that child could get in
17 the particular home. If you say that running water, for
18 example, is a necessity for a child to be placed in a
19 particular home, I would wonder out loud about that.

20 **CHARLES MORRIS:** I'm not saying so much
21 that running water would be a necessity, as a determining
22 factor for us making a placement within a particular home.

23 I was just primarily making a comment as to the conditions

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1 that we have to face, and also to give you an idea as to
2 generally, I guess, the living conditions that our people
3 have to cope with on a daily basis up north. The standard
4 of living is very low.

5 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
6 for your help.

7 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
8 I just want to make one brief comment. On your
9 presentation, at the bottom of page 6 where you're talking
10 about disclosures of child sexual abuse, when I read the
11 newspapers in other areas regarding Child and Family
12 Services this is a very touchy, sensitive area when we
13 start talking about child sexual abuse disclosures in small
14 communities. You mention that Tikinagan has limited
15 resources to deal with the issue, I was just wondering,
16 since you have limited financial and human resources, what
17 is being done to deal with the issue at the present time?

18 **CHARLES MORRIS:** One of the things that
19 we did about a year ago, in order to not waste the resources
20 that we have on hand, was to set up a -- I don't know if
21 you would call it an inter-agency protocol, but it is
22 certainly -- well, we involved the Medical Services, the
23 police and our agency in coming out with a protocol as

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1 to how we would conduct these investigations. As an agency
2 Tikinagan is always striving to train the people that we
3 have who are primarily responsible for the investigation
4 of these types of issues. We have recently hired our own
5 training co-ordinator to make sure that the training of
6 our workers is up to standards.

7 So, the answer is basically that we have
8 tried to co-ordinate the resources that we have here out
9 of Sioux Lookout and the investigation of these child abuse
10 issues, and also we have tried to provide better training
11 for our workers so that we can get the most for our dollar,
12 I guess.

13 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**
14 Meegwetch. That's all I have.

15 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
16 Morris, for your presentation. Unless there are any more
17 questions this concludes this session. Thank you for you
18 time and your effort.

19 The next presenters are with Nodin
20 Counselling Services with the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital.
21 It is a program at the University of Toronto.

22 The presenters are Donna Roundhead.
23 Mrs. Donna Roundhead is a Director of Nodin Counselling

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1 Services. With her will be Mr. Arnold Devlin, who is the
2 Manager of Clinical Services for Nodin Counselling
3 Services -- Mr. Devlin is shaking his head, I guess he's
4 not coming up. So Donna is alone here.

5 It's all yours, Donna.

6 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** First of all I would
7 like to say that I appreciate the opportunity to be able
8 to speak to you.

9 What I am going to talk about is an issue
10 that reflects the despair and the lack of future that exists
11 for some young people within the Nishnawbe-Aski
12 communities.

13 Since 1986 there have been 49 completed
14 suicides in the northern Ontario Aboriginal communities
15 within the Sioux Lookout zone. During the same period
16 of time there have been nearly 800 serious suicide attempts
17 that we have seen in Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital.

18 Our agency, which is called Nodin
19 Counselling Services, is an acute care service, which is
20 hospital-based. We also provide a short-term counselling
21 service for the Sioux Lookout area.

22 Our staff consists of six mental health
23 workers based in the north, and four mental health workers

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1 based in Sioux Lookout. We also have a voluntary crisis
2 team that is based in the community of Fort Hope. Their
3 role is to provide support, help and caring to communities
4 and families that have suffered a major loss, either by
5 suicide or accidental death or sudden death.

6 With this limited range of clinical
7 services that Nodin provides, we cover 27 communities with
8 a population of approximately 14,000 people. The
9 population of the communities range anywhere from 200
10 people to 1,500 people. With the issue of suicide, one
11 thing that we have found is when a community suffers six
12 or eight suicides within a year we have found that it has
13 a very traumatic effect on the community. One of the
14 things that happens is that in these communities a lot
15 of the community people are related and inter-related,
16 so the impact of the suicide is very drastic on that
17 individual community. It also puts that community at an
18 even high risk for more suicides if we don't intervene
19 in that situation.

20 Recently the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
21 identified ten communities as being very high risk for
22 suicide: Big Trout, New Osnaburgh, Kingfisher Lake,
23 Weagamow Lake, Summer Beaver, Pikangikum, Lac Seul,

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1 Lansdowne House, Wapekeka and Webequie were the
2 communities that were identified. These, in the last few
3 years, have had anywhere from six to eight suicides in
4 that community.

5 Other existing mental health
6 initiatives within the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation communities
7 include two community-based band administered mental
8 health programs in Pikangikum and Sandy Lake. There are
9 child and family counselling units financed by the
10 provincial government and managed by the Tikinagan Child
11 Welfare Agency.

12 Finally, the regional political arm of
13 the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation has developed a suicide
14 prevention project called Mamawianokiwin which means
15 "Working Together". This initiative includes a suicide
16 prevention team that provides educational consultation
17 as well as counselling services to the northern Native
18 communities.

19 I guess with what seems like a varied
20 range of services and programs currently being provided
21 by existing organizations, we find ourselves asking the
22 question of why our youth and young adults are committing
23 suicide and attempting suicide at an alarming rate?

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1 In the packages that we have given you
2 are the suicide stats and attempted suicide stats for the
3 area. When we look at the statistics one thing that comes
4 out very clearly is that in the population of 14,000 people
5 6,000 of them, if not more, are under the age of 29. Your
6 high risk group is the very young population.

7 As previously mentioned, the 49 suicides
8 in Nishnawbe-Aski communities, within the seven years,
9 we compared the suicide rate with other Aboriginal
10 communities in Ontario and we found that the suicide rate
11 was three and a half times higher than the provincial
12 average. When we compared it with the Canadian population
13 we found that the suicide rate was seven times higher than
14 the national average.

15 Of the 49 suicides, 42 of the suicides
16 have been male victims and seven females. The methods
17 used in the suicides were mainly by hanging. When we talk
18 about the suicides that is one of the most difficult issues
19 to deal with because of the type of suicides, the acts
20 of the suicides are so severe, the hanging and the firearms,
21 whereas when we compared it and looked at the other
22 populations it is usually by overdose. Within our area
23 it seems that people are really going to the extremes when

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1 they are feeling that they have to end their life.

2 When we talk about stats sometimes it
3 does show you one aspect of the problem, but what I thought
4 we would do is to present to you a case of an individual.
5 We have changed the name of the person and the community.
6 This is just to give you an idea of how difficult the
7 situation is for those individuals and the families of
8 those individuals.

9 On September 18, 1992 Abraham committed
10 suicide by hanging. He was found in his locked bedroom
11 by his uncle and brother-in-law who had to force open the
12 door. Abraham was on his bed in a semi-sitting position
13 resting against the wall with a chain around his neck.
14 His bedroom was a small cell-like room, approximately 4
15 x 8 feet, with a very small window. The room had a small
16 single bed and a dresser.

17 According to the people who had gone to
18 look at the room, the room was covered with heavy metal
19 rock posters and various writings on the wall. The writing
20 identified initials of individuals and rock groups. Also,
21 words were written all over the place, i.e. on the walls
22 he had mentioned his friends and his girlfriend and how
23 he had been having problems dealing with the relationship

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1 with his girlfriend. This young man's notes also talked
2 a lot about love and having a broken heart and being very
3 hurt from whatever was going on in his life.

4 Abraham was 16 and a half years old.
5 He lived with his maternal grandfather who was 73 years
6 old. He was the first child of his mother who is 33 years
7 old and his father was unknown. The mother had six or
8 seven other children. After she married Abraham was
9 placed with his maternal grandfather as the husband didn't
10 want to care for him because he was from another
11 relationship.

12 Abraham dropped out of school two years
13 ago and he hung around with a group of teenagers who
14 basically hung around listening to rock music. They were
15 involved in satanic rituals, dabbling with satanism and
16 he seemed to have a real preoccupation with death.

17 Abraham talked a lot about death and in
18 his own short life he had experienced death many times.

19 Two years ago two of his relatives had died by drinking
20 methyl alcohol; two of his cousins had committed suicide
21 within the last year, one in April and one in June of 1992;
22 and an uncle had also died of drowning within the same
23 year.

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1 I guess what we are pointing out is just
2 in terms of the boy's own stressors that he was dealing
3 with. Basically what we are trying to illustrate is how
4 these communities continue to suffer one trauma after
5 another and they never really have time to recover. I
6 really feel that our young people are hardest hit by it
7 for various reasons.

8 When we did a family history we also
9 found that there had been a lot of drinking going on in
10 that home for a long period of time and that this young
11 fellow had always talked about his difficulty in living
12 in that sort of situation, and that he had made comments
13 to his friends about his family and that the community
14 didn't really care about the youth, or didn't know how
15 to relate to the youth.

16 I guess one of the common things that
17 we see is that most of the suicide victims have either
18 experienced the loss of a parent or a caretaker. They've
19 had multiple losses or loss of a significant friend or
20 a loved one. They feel a social isolation. Not having
21 proper coping mechanisms or coping skills to deal with
22 stress and loss. Usually there has been some family
23 discord or some family dysfunction. A lot of times there

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1 has been a history of heavy alcohol abuse in the family.

2 This is not to make a generalization in
3 terms of the suicides, but we see a common thread in terms
4 of where the young people are coming from.

5 The latter has been a personal story,
6 but in other situations family violence, child and sexual
7 abuse factors, as well as issues of emotional dysfunction
8 directly related to the residential school experience play
9 a big part in how people are coping and dealing with life
10 stressors. When you add the socio-economic factors, such
11 as lack of employment, education and recreational
12 opportunities, poor housing, inadequate housing, clean
13 water and inadequate sanitation conditions, as well as
14 the historical factors of racism and discrimination we
15 can see the problem of suicide in the NAN communities would
16 be of greater magnitude if the existing mental health
17 services and programs were not in place.

18 Recently Nishnawbe-Aski chiefs declared
19 a state of emergency in their communities in relationship
20 to the social crisis caused by the alarming escalation
21 of suicides and suicide attempts. They called for a
22 federal inquiry into the suicides that the communities
23 were experiencing.

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1 I really feel that a federal inquiry
2 would provide the awareness of the crisis and would help
3 identify how wide-spread the problem is. I would also
4 challenge the NAN communities to ask the difficult
5 questions of why our youth are killing themselves. A
6 federal inquiry, as well, would provide a strategy for
7 governments to appropriately fund the development and
8 implementation of suicide prevention programs that are
9 community-designed and controlled. A federal inquiry
10 will also help the community to assume ownership of the
11 problem. As well, it would provide the context for the
12 development and knowledge of expertise on how to deal with
13 the problem.

14 The NAN communities need to have the
15 opportunity to look at their problems; they need to be
16 able to mobilize themselves and have a chance to challenge
17 themselves and to change the attitude and the mentality
18 of the people so that difficult issues related to the
19 community and family dysfunction can be addressed and
20 strategies for healing can be proposed.

21 A back-up network of Native mental
22 health consultants ought to be available to the community
23 resource people and the band, to assist in resource

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1 development, prevention programs and public education.
2 Funding should also be made available for education and
3 awareness training for community workers and members of
4 the community.

5 I know that recently one of the federal
6 initiatives was the "Brighter Futures" initiative, which
7 would -- I guess it was funding that was allocated for
8 children's mental health. When I looked at how much funds
9 each community would be allocated, especially in our area,
10 it was broken down anywhere from \$8,000 to \$10,000 for
11 the first year.

12 When I looked at not only how the suicide
13 affects the communities, but also the other issues that
14 I mentioned briefly, the historical issues and the family
15 violence issues, I think we need to go a lot further than
16 that. We need to be able to say that we really need a
17 mental health policy, we need some government mandated
18 to provide that specific service for the Native people,
19 because right now, the way it is, they give us bits and
20 pieces of funding and then everybody has to fight for it.

21

22 I know from working in the North for a
23 long period of time that there is already a great deal

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1 of fragmentation because of the lack of services. I really
2 feel that somehow we need to get across to the government
3 that there are inadequate services in the area of mental
4 health and that by giving us piecemeal solutions, like
5 "Brighter Futures", it only creates more of the
6 fragmentation and fighting over resources.

7 I think that is all I am going to say
8 about this issue. As I said, it is not an easy topic to
9 talk about, because it all hits us in one way or another
10 as service providers and as relatives of people that have
11 committed suicide. I mentioned that we really need to
12 set up some sort of -- maybe even a regional authority,
13 but somebody should be mandated to look at the mental health
14 issues, be it the Aboriginal Health Authority. But
15 somebody needs to take the ball and run with it because
16 right now everybody is dealing with this issue in their
17 own way. I think that if we had one organization
18 designated to deal with mental health issues we would be
19 able to develop a base in which we can work from. There
20 are a lot of organizations in the North, but unfortunately
21 everybody is reacting to crisis and there is no real
22 strategy in place right now in terms of mental health
23 initiatives for the North.

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1 I hope I made some sense in terms of what
2 I wanted to say to you, and I would really like to thank
3 you.

4 **CHARLES FOX:** The Commissioners usually
5 ask questions of the presenters, so if the Commissioners
6 have any questions?

7 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I just
8 have one question and that is: Have you given any thought
9 to what kind of a strategy -- you know, we are interested
10 in that? Obviously this is a tremendously serious crisis
11 and needs to be addressed on a fairly urgent basis and
12 I'm wondering if you have given any thought to what kind
13 of a strategy needs to be put in place?

14 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** As I said in my
15 statement, we are dealing with 27 communities. I think
16 that there needs to be dialogue done with the communities
17 in terms of coming up with a common goal or a vision for
18 the people. Where do the people want to be in five to
19 ten years from now, or 20 years from now?

20 We need to be able to have a forum to
21 talk. Each community is different; each community has
22 their own personality; and each community has their own
23 history, in terms of what has gone on in their community

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1 and what has happened to them. But I really feel that
2 somehow we need to bridge the communities together and
3 develop a common vision for the people. What we would
4 like our communities to be? How would we like to see them
5 look? How do you want the future of the children to be?

6 When we looked at the population of
7 Nishnawbe-Aski, probably 8,000 are under the age of 30,
8 and we need to begin to develop a future base for these
9 young people.

10 So when you ask me how it could be done?

11 I think it would mean getting resources to first get people
12 to get together and to start talking. The more we work
13 in fragmentation, the more we are not going to be able
14 to resolve any of the issues that are happening. It is
15 not only the suicides that we should be looking at, it's
16 what is causing the suicides. Get the communities to
17 identify what are the root causes? They need to look
18 inside themselves. I think once we give them the
19 opportunity to do that then they will be able to identify
20 what they need to do, because right now everybody responds
21 to crisis, people get paralysed when there is a suicide.

22

23 There is one community that has 250

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1 people and they've had eight suicides in that community.
2 They don't have time to get up because something else
3 always happens.

4 So when we are thinking of solutions,
5 sure we have to respond and deal with the acute situations,
6 but we also have to give them a forum in which they can
7 begin to develop long-term plans and strategies, and you
8 can't do that unless you have the resources to do it, and
9 somebody mandated to provide that specific service.

10 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I am just
11 wondering, by talking to those people who tried
12 unsuccessfully to commit suicide, whether any studies have
13 been done, discussions held with those people that would
14 throw some light on the underlying causes, so that one
15 would have a better handle on how to go about addressing
16 this issue. Do you know whether any work of that kind
17 has been done with unsuccessful suicide attempts?

18 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** I think the answer to
19 that would be that that would be the reason why
20 Nishnawbe-Aski is going for a federal inquiry, because
21 not only would you look at the completed suicides, but
22 you would also look at the suicidal behaviour in the overall
23 picture.

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1 I think that some organizations have
2 attempted to look at the underlying causes, like for our
3 organization, for instance, we are a mental health service
4 and we are mandated to provide mental health services.

5 In my opening comments I told you that
6 there are only nine of us and it something where you need
7 at least 50 people or 100 people that are trained and know
8 how to deal with it and ask questions and know how to help.

9 When you have only a small number of people providing,
10 not only a service to a large population, but also reacting
11 to the suicides, there is no time to do the other stuff
12 that really needs to be done, and that is identification
13 of problems and identification of solutions and long-term
14 strategies.

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** That was
16 why I was asking about a fairly concrete strategy for
17 addressing the problem. So that was why I was asking
18 whether, for starters, it wouldn't make a lot of sense
19 to -- obviously you can't speak to those who successfully
20 suicided, but obviously from the numbers you have given
21 us there is a large group of people who attempted to
22 suicide, people who would be available to be talked to
23 to see what kind of light that would throw on the underlying

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1 causes.

2 COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: Thank you
3 for your presentation. I have two or three quick
4 questions, if I may.

5 First, to satisfy my curiosity, Nodin,
6 is that an acronym, what does it stand for?

7 DONNA ROUNDHEAD: Wind.

8 COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: Oh, it's
9 one word.

10 DONNA ROUNDHEAD: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: Oh, I
12 see. I had it here with a period in between each letter
13 so I thought it was an acronym of some sort.

14 DONNA ROUNDHEAD: It is one word.

15 COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: So I see
16 it is one word. I will change that because names are
17 important and I want to make sure that I get them right.

18 A couple of points then. I am trying
19 to understand the institutional context of the issue here.

20 Your counselling services are run, at least partly, by
21 something provided by the University of Toronto, but under
22 the auspices of the zone hospital here. Is that right?

23 DONNA ROUNDHEAD: Yes, Medical

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1 Services.

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Right.

3 Then you referred in your paper, I think,
4 to a NAN project with respect to suicide. We were told
5 earlier that the hospital is run by the government
6 officials, it's not run by the people themselves, there
7 is no board.

8 Now, I am trying to understand the
9 situation here. Is there any relationship between this
10 NAN project and your services, or is there none at all?
11 What sort of relationship is there? What I am trying
12 to look for is: What opportunities are there? What ways
13 exist for the people in the communities to have input into
14 the creation of the strategies that you are asking for
15 to deal with suicide? How does the present system permit
16 people to do that? It is one way that I am looking to
17 understand that is to say, "What about this NAN project
18 and what is the relationship between it and your
19 counselling services?"

20 So I wonder if you might want to help
21 us by explaining that a bit?

22 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** The Nishnawbe-Aski
23 developed a suicide prevention team that they trained to

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1 help us respond to the suicide epidemic. Basically with
2 our staffing we just didn't have the manpower to respond
3 to every community. So, what they did a couple of years
4 ago was to train a suicide prevention team. What we do
5 is alternate communities, alternate going in. We do a
6 lot of the community management, co-management with
7 communities that are in crisis, and we do a lot of
8 communication in terms of what we are doing for the
9 communities and what they are doing for the communities.

10 Does that answer your question?

11 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** In a way,
12 but just a couple more things.

13 Your program, who is it funded by, by
14 the federal government through Medical Services Branch,
15 is that it?

16 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** Yes.

17 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** And this
18 NAN project, what is it funded by? NAN's own resources?

19 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** NAN's own resources
20 and -- I'm not sure, I can't remember.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Okay, but
22 the point that I'm looking for then is that the federal
23 government department, Medical Services Branch, were not

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1 able to provide the kind of assistance that the NAN project
2 needed for --

3 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** That's why I was
4 referring to a regional strategy because it seems to me
5 that there are things going on, like the NAN project, and
6 then Medical Services I know does fund certain activities,
7 rather than funding flowing through one organization
8 mandated to deliver that service. There doesn't seem to
9 be that structure in place.

10 So that is what causes the fragmentation
11 that I referred to earlier, because we don't have anybody
12 mandated to provide that specific service, the mental
13 health service or mental health development, or mental
14 health strategies. Although we are the mental health
15 service mandated to provide that, we don't have -- again,
16 you run into an issue of -- I mean you've probably heard
17 this all day, you know, lack of resources and lack of people
18 to deliver effective services, but it is a real reality.

19 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes.

20 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** But if we had an
21 organization mandated to deliver just that, I think it
22 would be easier to co-ordinate activities going on, and
23 initiatives going on in the North.

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1 I think we also have to respect the
2 communities in terms of what they want. Again, that is
3 where you run into a block because the communities have
4 their own ideas of what they want to do, and what they
5 want to see happening in their community and you have to
6 respect that.

7 So each community is going to ask for
8 their own mental health program and their own way of
9 delivering services and those are things that we need to
10 be prepared to begin to deal with, and to begin to talk
11 about. How are we going to do that?

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** That does
13 make a lot of sense, as you said, and it seems to me that
14 those ideas are also compatible with the goals that we
15 hear about self-government, because if you want
16 self-government you are talking about resources and the
17 need for resources, and that certainly includes human
18 resources, as you and others have pointed out, capable
19 human resources which means healthy human resources, and
20 power as well. To have power then you need to integrate,
21 to get regional, larger institutions to deal with the
22 issues and to develop strategies of the kind you are talking
23 about.

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1 So, as you say, it makes a lot of sense.

2 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** In closing I would
3 just like to say that we need to somehow develop a vision
4 for the people, a common vision and a common goal and if
5 you have a common thread going through the communities
6 it might now -- you can't develop a model that everybody
7 is going to be satisfied with and will use, because you
8 have to respect each community's personality and each
9 community's desire to develop and to govern themselves
10 or decide their destiny. On top of identifying those
11 things we have to give them that opportunity to do that.

12 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I thank
13 you and I think we will have to consider what we might
14 do, rather than wait for the final report at the end of
15 1993, to urge action perhaps, not to interfere with what
16 people are doing, but perhaps to urge government to act
17 on this area in the interim. But that is a matter for
18 the Commission, but I think it's a matter that we have
19 to examine because, as you said, this is not only a serious
20 matter but an urgent one.

21 **DONNA ROUNDHEAD:** Thank you very much.

22 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much,
23 Donna.

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1 The last presenter is Mr. Dick
2 MacKenzie. He is the President of the local Chamber of
3 Commerce here in Sioux Lookout.

4 Mr. MacKenzie, you're up.

5 Commissioners, I have to excuse myself
6 to go and pick up the elder for the closing prayer, so
7 I will let the Commissioner of the Day take over my
8 functions while I'm gone.

9 **DICK MacKENZIE, PRESIDENT, SIOUX**

10 **LOOKOUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:** Thank you, Charles.

11 Thank you for coming to Sioux Lookout
12 and I appreciate the opportunity to speak very briefly
13 with you. I don't have a grand plan of any kind, but from
14 the Chamber of Commerce I would like to relate to you a
15 pilot project, and one which is ongoing at this time, that
16 I think shows some promise and some very positive results
17 even to this point.

18 Our local Chamber is part of a regional
19 chamber group known as NOACC, the Northwestern Ontario
20 Association of Chambers of Commerce, representing about
21 24 communities from White River in the east to the Manitoba
22 border.

23 A couple of years ago we decided that

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1 we didn't have much Native representation in local
2 chambers, nor in the NOACC regional scheme. So we made
3 an effort and we had at one of our NOACC meeting Benjamin
4 Cheechoo and some other representatives, and it was mainly
5 just to talk.

6 Through that process came a pilot
7 project without any major goals attached to it, except
8 to communicate and talk on a commerce or an economic basis
9 as it was appropriate to the chambers. Through funding
10 of the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
11 we set up a pilot project which is in its final stages
12 right now. It twinned two sets of two communities, twined
13 were Sioux Lookout and Big Trout Lake and also the Fort
14 Francis Chamber of Commerce with the Couchiching band,
15 which is a reserve immediately adjacent to Fort Francis,
16 and we chose that because it was road accessible with two
17 sort of separate communities very accessible to each other,
18 and we chose Sioux Lookout and Big Trout Lake as communities
19 representative of northwestern Ontario being quite
20 separate from each other.

21 On October 6th people from Sioux
22 Lookout, from the Chamber of Commerce here, went to Big
23 Trout Lake and met with some of the economic development

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1 committee members and the band council in Big Trout Lake.
2 We stayed overnight with them and the following week four
3 representatives from Big Trout Lake came to Sioux Lookout
4 and met with the members here.

5 We didn't know what direction we were
6 going, we learned a great deal, particularly through Big
7 Trout Elder, Jeremiah McKay, who had a vision of economic
8 development for his reserve. That was that his reserve,
9 for years, had been consumers but not producers or keepers
10 of any of the wealth flowing through. They would like
11 to find a way to keep some of the money and income and
12 revenues for the good of the community.

13 I guess in a very brief way I would say
14 that if we are looking for a grand vision here, we are
15 looking at the wrong thing. If we are looking at building
16 a couple of small bridges with promise, I think that's
17 what we have.

18 The Couchiching in Fort Francis set of
19 talks with each other went a little differently than the
20 ones here in Big Trout Lake. But I think, in a general
21 way, what came out of the discussions was that we had people
22 with an economic outlook, a business outlook, talking to
23 each other and learning a lot about each other that we

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1 didn't know before, and it was a great learning experience,
2 both for the Chamber of Commerce members here and for the
3 Big Trout people.

4 Fort Francis and Couchiching have come
5 much closer together and their issues were a little bit
6 different in that they were still separated, actually
7 although not physically, and I think we will see some gains
8 in Native employment and in the Fort Francis business
9 community. It wasn't there before. I think we will see
10 a lot more sharing and one thing that came out of it was
11 the Mayor of Fort Francis is going to Hong Kong, I think,
12 but somewhere exotic. Out of the meetings came an
13 invitation for the chief from Couchiching to go with them
14 and they are going to go together as a united front there.

15 Here we have two members from Big Trout
16 Lake in town, they came down this afternoon because tonight
17 is our General Meeting and our Annual Meeting. We have
18 a couple of members coming down to participate with us
19 at the Chamber meeting tonight.

20 So I think some small bridges have been
21 built. I'm sorry, I didn't bring a written presentation
22 for you. I have a draft report which I can't leave either,
23 but I've brought that.

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1 I think I wanted to say that we
2 appreciated the government funding from OMNDM and it was
3 about \$22,000 just for the travel and the expenses of
4 bringing these groups together for a couple of meetings.

5 We appreciated that, but beyond that
6 there as no government involvement really, it was private
7 Chamber of Commerce people and it was the band
8 representatives, which do represent the band government
9 in some ways, but it was also private people. We think
10 that we made some real steps in getting to know each other
11 better and we are interested to see where this process
12 will lead. I can't help wondering out loud too if, even
13 though it's not a grand answer to a grand problem or a
14 grand situation, it is building some bridges and I think
15 it is very positive and very upbeat. Certainly it was
16 seen that way by all of the participants at this point,
17 and there is a real eagerness to proceed further and see
18 how we may cooperate and mesh our lives.

19 I think that is all I had to say. I did
20 want to relate it as a very positive kind of program, and
21 a very positive type of approach I think.

22 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**

23 Thank you, Mr. MacKenzie.

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1 The Moderator left to go and get the
2 elder to do the closing prayer and he asked me to take
3 over. He said he might come back, so I will turn the floor
4 over now to the Commissioners if they have any questions
5 they would like to ask the presenter.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank
7 you, Mr. MacKenzie, for your presentation.

8 It seems to me it is a very interesting
9 and perhaps very useful model. We've heard elsewhere,
10 for example, that one of the goals is to try to attract
11 money and to devise ways in which a dollar rotates around
12 the community as many times as possible before it leaves
13 the community in order to boost the local economy. That
14 has been described to us, not only in the context of
15 Aboriginal communities, but in the adjoining towns too.

16 So we've seen places where people are very interested
17 in co-operation of this sort, of course for the mutual
18 benefit of the communities. This we hear everywhere that
19 perhaps the most enduring structuring are those that seem
20 to be in the interests of the different parties.

21 It occurs to me that perhaps the kind
22 of project that you have been describing to us,
23 particularly the incident about the Mayor having the chief

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1 over into a foreign country. We couldn't provide just
2 those sorts of economic opportunities because in another
3 context Aboriginal people have talked about their desire
4 to participate more fully in the economy, not only in the
5 domestic economy but to have ways of getting hooks into
6 the international markets as well. People have pointed
7 to some international markets that could be tapped for
8 the benefit of Aboriginal people.

9 So, it seems to me that although, as you
10 say, it might not be an entire vision, but nevertheless
11 it might have some significant benefits.

12 I wonder if I might ask one or two very
13 brief questions because of your position and in light of
14 some of the things that we've hear elsewhere too.

15 In your experience are local merchants,
16 business people, concerned with the impact of the present
17 Indian Act tax exemption system? This is an issue that
18 has been related to us elsewhere, which seems to have been,
19 in some quarters, very poorly understood to begin with.
20 Its provisions appear to be rather obscure in some
21 quarters.

22 So, I wonder if you can tell us whether
23 this is at issue here in Sioux Lookout or not? If so,

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1 what kind of an issue might it be?

2 **DICK MacKENZIE:** I don't think it's a
3 big issue. I think the implementation sometimes can cause
4 misunderstanding this implementation and I do see signs
5 on counters and at the cash registers that if you are buying
6 this for use at the reserve, please show your band card
7 before we ring it up.

8 From the business community I haven't
9 heard anything that leads me to think it is a problem of
10 any kind, except for some minor technicalities of
11 implementation.

12 On the street I've heard some
13 resentments from some people who think it is being misused,
14 who think that people who are not eligible for tax exempt
15 status have either people purchase on their behalf -- I
16 guess that's what I hear every now and then. I haven't
17 heard it as a major problem, but I have heard that
18 resentment, not from the business community but on the
19 streets.

20 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you
21 very much for your presentation.

22 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I would
23 just like to comment that we were mentioning earlier today

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1 that public education was such an important aspect of
2 trying to develop a better relationship between Native
3 and non-Native people and it seems to me that I can't think
4 of a better way of engaging in the public education process
5 than the way you are doing it, "just getting to know you"
6 so to speak. And I would think any step, no matter how
7 modest, in that direction would be a plus.

8 Thank you for coming and talking to us.

9 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY:**

10 If there are no more questions or comments by the
11 Commissioners I would like to thank you, Mr. MacKenzie,
12 for your presentation.

13 Thank you again for coming.

14 I think that pretty well wraps up the
15 presentations, that was the last one that was on our list.

16 I guess while we are waiting for the Moderator, Mr. Charles
17 Fox, to come back, perhaps I can call on Mr. Bob Nault
18 to make some closing remarks.

19 **ROBERT NAULT, M.P., KENORA-RAINY RIVER**

20 **RIDING:** Thank you very much.

21 I would like to take this opportunity
22 to, first of all, thank everyone who has been here all
23 morning and all afternoon listening to some very

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1 comprehensive and important briefs to the Commission.
2 On behalf of the community, I would like to thank the
3 Commissioners for their attendance and their very
4 thoughtful questions to the presenters.

5 As you have seen this morning and this
6 afternoon, in a region as large as ours in northern Ontario
7 there are many diverse issues that the Aboriginal people
8 have to face. Of course you have listened today to the
9 mental health situation, of course, and the suicide rate,
10 issues that have been brought up in the House of Commons
11 on many occasions. We are still looking for responses,
12 of course. The issues of housing, infrastructure,
13 governance and the list goes on and on.

14 Of course your mandate, as mentioned to
15 me over lunch, is one that is broad enough, of course,
16 that you could attempt to fit some of these very complex
17 issues in your discussion papers, and we would very much
18 appreciate, as a community in the north, that you endeavour
19 to try and reflect on the kinds of institutions that will
20 be created through a self-government process, and of course
21 the resources necessary to make them work, in order for
22 Aboriginal people to pick themselves up and be part of
23 our society in the sense of having an economic base and

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1 being a partner in our partnership between non-Native and
2 Native people.

3 I would say to you in conclusion, it has
4 been a long day, of course being under the lights it seems
5 to be an even longer day and I commend you on holding up
6 so well. I notice Paul has decided to take his jacket
7 off. We don't normally wear suits around here, including
8 myself, I'm dressed up for the Commission of course, and
9 once you leave I will get back to my normal dress.

10 Thank you very much for coming and I
11 would like to say to Stanley, we are very pleased to see
12 he got a hair cut for the occasion. We noticed that he
13 wanted to have the younger look as a Commissioner for the
14 Day. Stanley, being very familiar with the area and the
15 issues, has played a very important role today and we thank
16 him for that.

17 Of course we are on our way to Big Trout
18 in the next few days to listen to further submissions from
19 Aboriginal communities and their leadership. And we hope,
20 if this is an indication of the kind of presentations we
21 will get, that you will hear much more on the kinds of
22 issues that Aboriginal people face in our part of the world,
23 and hopefully you will get some recommendations that you

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1 can use.

2 So, thank you very much for coming. We
3 are always pleased to get such distinguished visitors to
4 our area. Please feel free to come on a social trip
5 sometime. Our fishing is very good and our food is
6 excellent and we would love to have you.

7 Thank you very much.

8 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much, Mr.
9 Nault.

10 Do the Commissioners have any closing
11 comments?

12 I, as a Moderator, of course, would like
13 to say a few words, but I will yield the floor to you first.

14 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I would
15 like to take a short while, not a long time, to make some
16 closing remarks. I want to tell you how pleased and
17 privileged we have been to have our hearings here today
18 in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. We have certainly benefited
19 a lot from it. I am sure they are going to be very useful
20 in our work.

21 I want to express our particular thanks,
22 personally and on behalf of the Commission to a number
23 of people. I will begin by expressing my thanks to Mr.

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1 Bob Nault, the Member of Parliament, for his best wishes
2 and closing remarks. I would like to wish him well too
3 in his work, in particular on his important work on the
4 federal Aboriginal Affairs Standing Committee.

5 I want to thank our elder, Mrs. Georgina
6 Fox, for assisting us. She will be conducting the closing
7 prayer and honoured us in that way with an opening prayer
8 this morning as well. I hear that she is also been busy
9 otherwise providing Madam Wilson with advice, even before
10 the hearing started.

11 I want to thank the Commissioner of the
12 Day, Mr. Stan Beardy, who is a very modest man,
13 notwithstanding the comment about the hair cut. He
14 persuaded me not to introduce him my reading the very long
15 CV that we have here, but I imagine that he is quite well
16 known to you and we are very grateful to him for his very
17 able and well appreciated assistance.

18 We want to thank too our Moderator and
19 Community Representative, Mr. Charles Fox. I don't know
20 if you play hockey, but you certainly would make a
21 formidable defence man. At the same time you have
22 demonstrated here today, with your moderating skills, that
23 you would have all the skills of tact that would be required

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1 of a team captain. So we thank you most sincerely for
2 your able assistance.

3 I want to thank the translators that did
4 a very able job today, Margaret Keenaquanosh (PH) -- I
5 am sure I did not pronounce that properly, but I assure
6 you I did my best. And also Joshua Hudson -- I hope I
7 got that one right.

8 I want to thank your host group, the
9 Windigo First Nations Council. I thank also the people
10 who made available this meeting facility, the
11 Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre.

12 Thanks to the ISTS -- I'm not going to
13 ask what that means, but it is the sound people, technician
14 Joe Andreacho (PH) -- that's as hard as Ojibway for me
15 to say. I hope I got that right too. Again, I did my
16 best.

17 We thank the Court Reporter, the person
18 at the back here who was described so well in our opening
19 hearings by Chief Judge Murray Sinclair, in Winnipeg when
20 we opened the hearings, when he looked at the back of the
21 room to find the Court Reporter and described that person
22 as the one with the oversized ice cream cone stuck in her
23 face. That is Linda Gauthier.

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1 Thank you to the filming crew from the
2 National Film Board. I don't have all your names here,
3 but I think I know pretty well all of you and thank you
4 very much. It is good to see you everywhere we go, or
5 many of the places we go, not everywhere. And also Wawatay
6 Communication Society.

7 Finally, thank you to the RCAP staff.
8 That's RCAP stuff, that's short for Royal Commission on
9 Aboriginal Peoples. I was telling people we should have
10 these caps, all you need is a red cap with a big "R" on
11 it and be RCAP, but no one ever takes me seriously -- Les
12 Clayton, Hugh McCullum, Delores Comegan, Tammy Saulis,
13 who wrote herself down here last, but she's the Team Leader.

14 Thank you very much, you've made us very
15 welcome here. We've had a good day. I understand it's
16 not over yet, we are going to enjoy more of your great
17 hospitality. Thank you very much and thank you to all
18 of you who have come here today, you the people, the
19 Nishnawbe of the area.

20 Meegwetch.

21 **CHARLES FOX:** Commissioner Wilson,
22 please.

23 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I think

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1 Paul has said it all, but I would just like to say how
2 much we appreciated the fact that so many people came out
3 to talk to us and make presentations today. This is
4 exactly what we want, because as we said in starting, we
5 have to get your ideas and your solutions, and it has been
6 quite a heavy day, but it's been quite a wonderful day.

7 So, I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who
8 participated.

9 **CHARLES FOX:** Thank you very much.

10 It is time, Commissioner Beardy, do you
11 have any parting words?

12 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY STAN BEARDY**

13 **(Translated):** Meegwetch, Charles.

14 I would like to say a few words, that
15 I appreciate what has taken place and I guess I just desire
16 to see that all the presentations are brought to the
17 Commissioners that they would look upon these -- and I
18 hope that they have understood everything that we have
19 presented.

20 **CHARLES FOX:** Before we have the closing
21 prayers I just want to take this opportunity to thank the
22 Commission for this privilege to moderate this session
23 in Sioux Lookout. I must admit though that I had no

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1 intentions of moderating, so I have been dodging the
2 cameras all I day, I didn't comb my hair properly, I didn't
3 have my tie on, but nevertheless, thank you very much.

4 The session has gone well today, the only
5 problem we have is that we have arranged a dinner with
6 approximately 100 students, but because of weather
7 conditions outside they couldn't make it, so we have lots
8 of food to eat. So everybody eats for three or four or
9 five people.

10 But thank you very much and I will turn
11 it over to Mrs. Fox.

12

13 **(Closing Prayer)**

14

15 --- Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 5:45 p.m.