

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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**Royal Commission on
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1 **Thompson, Manitoba**

2 --- Upon commencing Tuesday, June 1, 1993.

3

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Ladies and
5 gentleman, good morning. I think we are ready to begin
6 now and I'm going to call on Mr. Nepin to say the opening
7 prayer.

8 --- **Opening Prayer by Mr. Nepin**

9 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
10 much, Mr. Nepin. We're ready now, I think, to begin our
11 second day of the Royal Commissions Hearings in Thompson
12 and I'm happy to have with me my fellow Commissioner, Paul
13 Chartrand and I'll ask Paul to say a word or two. Paul?

14 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very
15 much, Commissioner Wilson and good morning ladies and
16 gentlemen. Welcome all of you to the session of the Royal
17 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Thompson, Manitoba.

18 I want to begin by apologizing for not
19 being able to attend the Hearings yesterday. I was, my
20 attendance was required elsewhere for other work of the
21 Commission, that is, I was making a presentation to the
22 Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Edmonton and was
23 able to arrive here only subsequent to yesterday's
24 Hearings.

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1 I look forward to the recommendations
2 that are to be brought before us today by the people in
3 Northern Manitoba. Although I grew up in what is referred
4 to as the South, I do feel a particular affinity for
5 Northern Manitoba. I grew up along the Highway Number
6 6, which is, in these modern times, a route towards the
7 southern capital, I believe from Thompson, but my family
8 has very close connections with the North. My own
9 immediate family lived in The Pas area. My dad trapped
10 in The Pas Cumberland area during the 1930s and have various
11 relatives living in different parts of the North.

12 I was here myself in, I think it was 1970
13 to play baseball. It wasn't raining then, but while others
14 are enjoying the liquid sunshine outside we, in here, will
15 carry on with our proceedings and I look very much forward
16 to the days' events.

17 Thank you very much.

18 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you, Paul.
19 Is Mr. Adams here, Deputy Mayor? Could you come forward,
20 please.

21 **AL ADAMS, DEPUTY MAYOR, CITY OF**

22 **THOMPSON:** Welcome. Just let say at the onset,
23 Commissioners, I'm very happy to be on this Royal
24 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. On behalf of the City

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1 of Thompson, good morning again to you. Good morning,
2 ladies and gentlemen.

3 I would like to extend a warm welcome
4 to you from our Mayor Bill Comaskey, who has asked me to
5 express his regret for not being able to be here with you
6 today due to prior out of town commitments. Members of
7 City Council and the residents of Thompson would also like
8 to thank you for making the City of Thompson a place to
9 hold your third round of public hearings.

10 The City of Thompson was established
11 around the development of Nickel mining in the mid to late
12 50's. Formed in part through the Local Government
13 District of Mystery Lake, it has matured into the largest
14 commercial centre in Northern Manitoba. It is the home
15 to slightly less than 15,000 residents from many ethnic
16 and cultural backgrounds. This diversity has contributed
17 significantly toward the development of a greater
18 understanding and appreciation of the different needs and
19 aspirations of the many groups of people residing in our
20 city.

21 As a regional trade centre in Northern
22 Manitoba, we recognize the importance of our neighbouring
23 communities. Many of our residents are of Aboriginal
24 ancestry. We estimate the population of Thompson to be

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1 thirty to forty percent, and a significant portion of the
2 commerce and trade conducted in Thompson each day is
3 generated by the needs and desires of the twenty to
4 twenty-five thousand Aboriginal peoples living in
5 communities near our city.

6 As elected leaders, we are committed to
7 the continued growth and the development of the City of
8 Thompson. The quality of life for all of our residents
9 regardless of background is of prime importance to us and
10 constitutes a high priority in our decision-making
11 process. We also recognize our responsibility as a major
12 service centre in the North, the importance of establishing
13 the effective working relationships with other communities
14 located in our region. The future prosperity and
15 well-being of Northern Manitoba is based to a considerable
16 degree on the economic and social development of Aboriginal
17 peoples who call this region their home. Recognizing the
18 importance of all our constituents, but more specifically
19 the Aboriginal peoples in our future, the City of Thompson
20 continues to commit time and resources to a number of
21 activities that promote fair and equitable treatment for
22 all our residents living in the city.

23 The City, for example, is presently
24 participating in a City/Aboriginal Committee which is a

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1 coalition between the MKO, the Manitoba Metis Federation,
2 and the Northern Association of Community Councils. One
3 of the main objectives of this alliance is to develop
4 training and educational programs that will not only
5 reflect the needs of Northerners, but it will also be
6 administrated by them. Through our Race Relations
7 Committee and the Economic Development Advisory Committee
8 of Council we actively seek participation from Aboriginal
9 peoples in the city.

10 The City of Thompson, like other
11 municipalities throughout Manitoba are a creation of the
12 provincial government. Municipalities have a limited
13 taxation authority but they must generate sufficient
14 revenues to pay for the many programs and services required
15 and wanted by the local residents. To highlight a few
16 of these services, some of which are cost-shared by the
17 Province) recreation, economic development protection of
18 persons and property and social assistance to those in
19 need. All these programs plus the establishment and
20 maintenance of an urban infrastructure are essentially
21 supported through locally generated revenues. Only nine
22 and half percent of the total revenues received to operate
23 the City of Thompson comes from provincial grants. The
24 other 90.5 is raised from the realty taxes assessed to

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1 local businesses and residents of the city.

2 In essence then, the level of services
3 and the amenities enjoyed by our citizens are based on
4 their participation in our taxation system; we are, in
5 fact, almost entirely self-supporting. This is
6 accomplished despite the difficulties and overlapping
7 jurisdictions of the Municipal Act, the Assessment Act
8 and the Planning Act that place constraints on our
9 decision-making process. In fact, our ability to enter
10 into agreements and cost-sharing arrangements with other
11 parties is in many instances precluded by the Acts and
12 we must obtain discretionary authority from the senior
13 levels of government.

14 If the tax revenue that we do desperately
15 need to provide these services is lost, who will suffer?

16 Let me suggest that it will be you and I, the people living
17 in the North that are attempting to provide an adequate,
18 if not equal, level of services and job opportunities for
19 our children. Indeed, the ability to provide at least
20 some of the amenities enjoyed by Canadians living in the
21 more populous urban centres of the country. It is
22 important to recognize our shared destiny, the bundle of
23 interests that binds the future aspirations of Aboriginal
24 and non-Aboriginal people living in remote northern areas

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1 of Canada. I sincerely believe that it is in your best
2 interests and ours, to suggest to senior levels of
3 government that we, the municipal governments be
4 participants in developing long term solutions that will
5 properly address and accommodate the long term goals and
6 aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

7 The maintenance of an acceptable level
8 of public services is essential for the further development
9 of all our communities. It is only by working together
10 that we can strengthen the social and economic ties that
11 link the industrial and Aboriginal communities of the
12 North. We share a common destiny in the future growth
13 and prosperity of Northern Manitoba. It is essential that
14 all communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, be
15 provided with an opportunity to develop and prosper. In
16 terms of continued growth and prosperity of the City of
17 Thompson, it is essential that we preserve our revenue
18 base. An essential component of this present taxation
19 system is our ability to treat all property owners in our
20 city fairly and equitably.

21 As indicated earlier, taxation is just
22 one of the issues, there are many others. The pro-vision
23 of health care and medical services is one that could
24 benefit from our joint consultation and co-operation.

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1 We believe that the upgraded medical/health services could
2 and should be made available, in regional centres like
3 Thompson, which would benefit all residents of the North,
4 both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Specialized areas of
5 medicine, specifically related to the needs of Northerners
6 could be and should be established, such as a mental health
7 unit, providing counselling and care for the treatment
8 of substance and alcohol abuse. Another health unit could
9 focus on Environmental Medicine, specializing in the
10 treatment of parasitic and infectious diseases, that are
11 too common in the North.

12 These cooperative alliances, can and
13 should go beyond social programs and services. The
14 potential to form partnerships between Aboriginal and
15 non-Aboriginal businessmen should be promoted with the
16 objective to establish profitable new business ventures.

17 A few development opportunities that have proven
18 successful in other parts of Canada, should be expanded
19 to improve the infrastructure of Aboriginal communities.

20 Power dams, roads, bridges, water and sewer systems.
21 The technical skills of the commercial centres could be
22 united with the land, resources and manpower strengths
23 of Aboriginal communities. These joint ventures could
24 and would promote economic development of Canada's only

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1 remaining frontier, the North. Municipalities as the
2 junior level of government are not granted the same legal
3 status as the more senior levels of government and as a
4 consequence, cannot participate as a full partner with
5 the other levels of government and Aboriginal peoples in
6 discussing issues that are of vital importance and interest
7 to all Canadians. This is a cause of concern, as it has
8 the potential to place barriers and rifts within and
9 between communities.

10 In order for Aboriginal and
11 non-Aboriginal peoples located in the less populated areas
12 of Canada to more fully participate in higher levels of
13 learning, it is essential that these services be provided
14 closer to home. To accomplish this, Northerners must
15 unite to provide a common front, a single voice to persuade
16 senior levels of government to fund a Northern University
17 or a Technical College, with courses and subject matters
18 geared to the needs and lifestyles of our residents.

19 The whole area of social planning and
20 economic development requires, in my opinion, and I believe
21 that I speak for my colleagues on City Council, the
22 cooperative effort of all Northerners, Aboriginal and
23 non-Aboriginal, to develop a cooperative strategy that
24 builds on the strengths of all of our people. I believe

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1 that it is essential that if we are to effectively
2 contribute to the formalization of policies and programs
3 that vitally affect our lives, we must become organized,
4 as the population base we do have is limited. We can easily
5 be overlooked, and often are, when the needs and demands
6 of the more populous urban centres are relentlessly
7 presented and lobbied for by special interest groups.
8 The only way that we can play an effective role is by
9 cooperating and working together.

10 In summary, I thank you for your time
11 and your attention in listening to me and my
12 recommendations. The solution, in part, to these problems
13 lies in the establishment of a process, a method of
14 exchanging ideas, concerns, goals, based on the
15 recognition of each others' values and principles that
16 will enable us to jointly develop an overall effective
17 development strategy which will enable all residents of
18 the North, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to
19 participate more equitably and fully in Canada's future.

20 This, we believe, will not be possible
21 until the municipal level of government becomes a
22 legitimate principal in participating in the negotiations
23 which are presently underway. Our communities are
24 interdependent and our ultimate success or failure will

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1 be based to a considerable degree on the types of effective
2 alliances and partnerships the Aboriginal and
3 non-Aboriginal communities can establish throughout
4 Canada to promote common interests.

5 I thank you again for coming and I thank
6 you for listening to our brief overview.

7 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
8 much, Mr. Adams. Do you mind if we ask you one or two
9 questions?

10 **AL ADAMS:** I hope I can answer you,
11 Commissioner Wilson.

12 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. One
13 of the things I wanted to ask you about because I heard
14 quite a bit about it yesterday from the presentations that
15 were made then, has to do with the employment of Native
16 people in Thompson, and it was said that there was a fair
17 bit of racism in the community and that it was not easy
18 for Native people to get jobs, either in the mining industry
19 or in some of the stores. And one or two of the department
20 stores was specifically mentioned and that they did not
21 hire Native people. Could you respond to that? Are you
22 conscious that that is a problem in the city.

23 **AL ADAMS:** Commissioner Wilson, I can't
24 speak for the mining sector and I can't speak for individual

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1 stores, but what I can tell you in terms of the City of
2 Thompson's policy is, it is an equitable and fair policy
3 in which, that there is no discrimination involved in terms
4 of the hiring practices that we have. In my other capacity
5 as co-chair here of the Thompson Race Relations Committee,
6 I am cognizant of some of the problems that are certainly
7 being brought forward. And I think we are attempting,
8 through our community, to educate as best we know how,
9 to the merchants, to the business people, to the business
10 community as a whole, those unfair practices which either
11 may be known or unknown to them. And it's an ongoing
12 effort, and I can say to you that we are no where near
13 completion. And I hope that it is something in which that
14 we will certainly be focusing our attention on over the
15 next few years.

16 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you.
17 Could I ask you whether there are any Native people on
18 the Council?

19 **AL ADAMS:** I can tell you that there are
20 two, including myself. Counsellor Soldier and myself are
21 two. There are four on the Race Relations Committee.
22 There are two on our Economic Development Committee. We
23 try as best as possible, Commissioner Wilson, to encourage
24 as much participation as we can from our Aboriginal

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1 community within Thompson, on all sorts of committees,
2 including our Downtown Development committees.

3 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Are the two
4 committees that you mentioned, the City of Aboriginal
5 Committee and the Race Relations Committee, are these
6 actually committees of Council or are they a cooperative?

7 **AL ADAMS:** Initially structured by
8 Council, the Economic Development Committee is a committee
9 structured by Council for the benefit of economic
10 development within our community. And we recognize that
11 there is a tremendous potential in terms of economic
12 development with Aboriginal groups within our community
13 to establish businesses. And we encourage that process
14 and so that is structured by the Mayor, through the Mayor's
15 office.

16 The Race Relations Committee was
17 initially set up by Council to address a need. The
18 committee itself is now up and running with the full
19 endorsement and financial backing of City Council and
20 participation of Council, Council members on it. But the
21 committee is autonomous from Council.

22 I would like to ask Commissioner Wilson
23 a question, if I may.

24 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes, of course.

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1 **AL ADAMS:** Through your travels
2 throughout Canada, we often hear of business opportunities
3 and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and
4 municipalities. I understand that there has been recently
5 a situation in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where reserve
6 land was bought within the municipality. I'm interested
7 to know, although I've heard some about it, but perhaps
8 better either of you can elaborate how that structure works
9 and how you'd perceive that as working in other
10 municipalities throughout Canada.

11 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I'm not familiar
12 with that. Are you, Paul?

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I'm not
14 familiar with the details of any reserves in the Prince
15 Albert area, but I do know something about an urban reserve
16 in the City of Saskatoon within the limits of the City
17 of Saskatoon. And in that case the lands were selected
18 as a part of the entitlements arising out of, over century
19 old Treaties, Treaty Number 6 and the land that's being
20 developed, as I understand it, is mostly or perhaps
21 exclusively for commercial purposes and the relationships
22 between the city and the Band which owns the land and the
23 land has been dedicated as a reserve under the provisions
24 of the Indian Act, the relations including the delivery

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1 of services and the coordination of matters such as taxes
2 and so on, is conducted in accordance with an agreement
3 reached between three parties, that is, the Band, the city
4 and the federal government, in this case, so my
5 understanding is that, these are new developments in the
6 sense that new lands are being purchased as distinguished
7 from older established reserves that do exist within some
8 urban areas in various parts of Canada, such as Vancouver
9 and some Northern Ontario cities. So it appears that this
10 is a new trend and the Canadian Federation of
11 Municipalities, I understand, is looking at the issue with
12 keen interest and I was going to ask you, this will be
13 the next question, although I won't invite you to comment
14 on it; but while the point is being raised, I was going
15 to ask you if you would, that is, the City of Thompson,
16 would ensure that your points of view and the issues that
17 you're most concerned with are included in the brief that
18 I understand is to be presented to this Commission by the
19 Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

20 I'm sorry to insert that tangent, but
21 I've done my best to respond to your question, which is
22 my main goal here.

23 **AL ADAMS:** Commissioner Chartrand, was
24 the situation in Saskatoon, could you elaborate a bit on

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1 the method of fee for services? I mean, we are, I believe,
2 not that far away from that similar type of situation
3 happening in and around the City of Thompson due to the
4 Northern Flood Agreement and other land settlement
5 agreements that are about to take place. The importance
6 of municipalities to maintain that, as I tried to emphasize
7 to both of you today, that that tax structure is vital
8 to, for our healthy business community and I guess I would
9 like to know how that structure is worked out. Do you
10 know more about it or is it something in which that we
11 would have to go to Saskatoon or PA?

12 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** It seems to me
13 that you would want to pursue the details with the parties
14 involved and that is the City of Saskatoon. Materials
15 have been provided by the city. There was a presentation
16 made by the solicitor for the City of Saskatoon by the
17 name of Theresa Dust, and she made a presentation to the
18 Canadian - I forget the name of it - it's Canadian
19 Association of Municipal Administrators or something that,
20 associated with the Canadian Federation of Municipalities
21 and the Band is the Muskeg Band. But again, the main point
22 is that the tax issues are being hammered out by agreement
23 and I do recognize the nature of the problems that you're
24 concerned with, the potential differences in taxation

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1 rates and the consequent effects on commerce and so on.

2 But that is certainly a model that you
3 could look at. And I'm sure staff will be happy to assist
4 you with collecting the materials that have been made
5 available to us with respect to the Saskatoon situation
6 and I encourage you to tell us later on how you are doing
7 in that endeavour.

8 **AL ADAMS:** Thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Do you have any
10 other questions?

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** If I may, and
12 if you don't mind, I'd like to ask about a general issue
13 that it seems to me is important in a general way, not
14 only for the City of Thompson, but for other cities and
15 indeed I think for Canada, I think it's an important issue
16 for this Commission and it has to do with the way in which
17 the Aboriginal people are perceived by urban citizens.
18 And let me just take a minute or so to try to explain my
19 concern and I'm going to ask you for your opinion, for
20 your view.

21 The question essentially is, how do
22 people, I mean, the citizens of Thompson, who are not
23 Aboriginal people, how do they think about their Aboriginal
24 neighbours? How do they think about the Aboriginal

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1 people? What do I mean by that?

2 Well, I mean by that, the way that they
3 think seems to me would influence the kinds of relationship
4 that people would be happy to have, to accept, with respect
5 to their neighbours. Let me give perhaps two or three
6 instances of how one might think about one's neighbours
7 in this context.

8 One would be, in a manner of race
9 relations for example, and you've told us that there is
10 a Race Relations Committee that includes Aboriginal people
11 and that is a not uncommon form of relations across Canada
12 in a number of cities. The relations between Aboriginal
13 people and non-Aboriginal people are seen, at least, as
14 an aspect of race relations. There's racism. The issue
15 has been discussed. I don't want to discuss particular
16 details here. My point is that, the relations are at least
17 dealt with as a matter of race relations. Are they dealt
18 with as more than that? For example, in other parts of
19 the country, some cities and towns are associating
20 Aboriginal people in the same category as ethnic groups,
21 all right. So it seems to me then that different kinds
22 of policies might be adopted depending on the view that
23 one takes.

24 In the case of, if Aboriginal people are

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1 seen as a matter of race relations, we establish a Race
2 Relations Committee. Perhaps if people are seen rather
3 as, characterized as an ethnic group, we might look for
4 ways of protecting minorities, as is done in Canada.

5 On the other hand, some people point out
6 that Aboriginal people have been here for a very long time.
7 These are ancient societies living in very ancient
8 homelands and assert their existence, not as racists in
9 the genetic sense, not as ethnic groups in the sense of
10 groups that have immigrated here as individuals, but rather
11 as distinct political communities with whom a political
12 bargain has to be made within the Canadian Federation.
13 And if the neighbours are viewed in that way, then the
14 policy required, the policy changes would be very different
15 and we've seen, of course, that at the Constitutional
16 level, Aboriginal people have been invited to participate
17 in recrafting the basis of the Canadian Federation.

18 So, my question is that, what is your
19 perception about the way in which the citizens of Thompson
20 perceive their Aboriginal neighbours? Are they seen only
21 as neighbours who are different in the sense of race, that
22 is, a physical appearance as people and that these are
23 matters for understanding the need for harmonious
24 individual relations? Are they seen as an ethnic group

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1 like other ethnic groups or are they seen as distinct
2 political communities, the relations between which still
3 have to be ironed out, and I think that's important, as
4 I said, because it's important for us, I think, to assess
5 the kind of public perception that's going to be had with
6 respect to different kinds of policy recommendations we
7 might make. I don't know if I made myself clear at all,
8 but I'm just inviting your views on that?

9 **AL ADAMS;** I guess there are two views.
10 One in which is that certainly as I indicated to you,
11 that we have thirty to forty percent of Thompson's
12 population is of Aboriginal ancestry. I think that we
13 view our neighbouring communities as distinct political
14 groups and certainly, we understand the need and the desire
15 for self-determination, and we understand that political
16 process. What we don't understand is what it means yet.
17 And I think to a degree, we are all somewhat apprehensive.
18 You know, we hear about self-government and there's
19 tremendous talk from our Aboriginal neighbours about
20 self-government. Well, what does self-government mean?
21 And not having been part of that process in terms of the
22 negotiations with the federal or the provincial
23 government, municipalities are left in the quandary not
24 knowing how it's going to impact on our municipalities.

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1 So, naturally we stand back and we look
2 and we're unsure, but we do recognize, you know, that these
3 are our neighbours and we do recognize that we are in the
4 forefront. We are their neighbours, but yet, we are not
5 party to any of that discussion of what this all means.

6 And I don't know if I've answered your question, but I've
7 attempted to give you a view from the municipality's
8 perspective.

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Mr. Adams,
10 you've answered it very clearly. I thank you for that.
11 And if I may conclude by emphasizing that we, at least
12 speaking for myself, certainly look forward to receiving
13 the brief from the Canadian Federation and sincerely hope
14 that your city will have significant input into it, and
15 I invite you to ensure that that is so, and perhaps by
16 using direct correspondence if necessary, and then I invite
17 you to talk to our staff people who are here to assist
18 you in obtaining materials that at least are available
19 to us with respect to the situation with urban reserves
20 elsewhere.

21 I thank you again very much for your
22 presentation.

23 **AL ADAMS:** Thank you both. Thank you
24 for having me.

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1 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
2 much. The next presenter is Native Communications
3 Incorporated, Mr. Ron Nadeau.

4 **RON NADEAU, NATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

5 **INCORPORATED:** Good morning, Commissioners. I'm very
6 pleased to be here this morning. I'd just like to extend
7 greetings from our group. We are Aboriginal broadcasters
8 in Manitoba. We're the only Aboriginal broadcasting group
9 in this province.

10 The camera people, the camera operators
11 that you see directly behind you to your left and the
12 control staff at the back here; these are some of NCI staff
13 who are, have a contract with the Royal Commission to video
14 tape the hearings in Thompson and in Winnipeg. And I'm
15 very pleased that we are able to work out that contract
16 with the Commission.

17 I would, I guess I'm going to be
18 delivering a little, a few words following the Aboriginal
19 oral tradition. I'm sure that you've had hundreds or
20 thousands of written speeches and this won't be a speech.

21 I could come here today and whine about
22 government cutbacks, lack of funding, lack of resources
23 and I probably will do a little bit of that, but I'll try
24 to keep it to the absolute minimum. I'm sure you've heard

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1 a lot about that.

2 I would like to take a more pro-active,
3 positive approach and try to offer some solutions in our
4 sphere of operation, and I'd just like to briefly describe
5 what it is Aboriginal broadcasters, such as NCI do in
6 Canada.

7 We have been in operation in Northern
8 Manitoba for, it'll be twenty-two years this September.

9 We have the capability to produce television programs
10 in the Aboriginal languages. We produce TV programs in
11 Cree, Soto, the Island Lake dialect which is Ojibway and
12 Cree as well as Chippewa and well as English. There are
13 a lot of Native people out there especially in the urban
14 setting, such as Thompson, who no longer retain their
15 language and that is why we do English broadcasting as
16 well.

17 The importance of what it is we do, I
18 guess is, we are the communicators among, you know, among
19 the Native world as far as our signals reach and even beyond
20 where our signals reach in television and radio. We, as
21 well as producing Aboriginal content, Aboriginal language
22 television programs, we also produce radio programs, where
23 if you are out in one of the Northern communities here
24 in Northern Manitoba, you will quite often turn on your

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1 radio and you will be hearing our programming, our
2 broadcasting.

3 We have been doing networking with other
4 Aboriginal broadcasters in Canada, such as the Alberta
5 Native Communications group. We've been doing networking
6 with B.C., Saskatchewan. What we basically do is, we will
7 program on radio for twelve, thirteen hours a day and when
8 we're not on the air, we exchange programming. We will
9 take a feed, a satellite feed from Alberta, Saskatchewan,
10 British Columbia, even Northwest Territories, and we'll
11 listen, we'll take their programming when we're not on
12 the air, and we find that that's a good way for us to keep
13 in touch with out sister organizations throughout Canada.

14 We do programming that's very relevant,
15 both culturally and linguistically to the Aboriginal
16 audience. We do programs of legends in Cree, where an
17 elder will sit in front of a camera and talk about a
18 particular legend or story, story telling. That is a very
19 popular program and it's one way that we use to maintain
20 our culture. Young people, old people watch those
21 programs. They're popular.

22 In radio, we do broadcasting in
23 different Native languages that you will - I'm trying to
24 think of the right word here. It's a real job to be able

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1 to turn on your radio and listen to, you know, your
2 language, eh, your Cree language or Soto language and being
3 able to communicate in that way.

4 We do a lot to maintain the language.
5 We're broadcasters. We don't, we try to maintain the
6 integrity of the language. It's very important to the
7 Aboriginal people. And we broadcast maybe sixty,
8 sixty-five percent in Native languages on radio. And
9 that's very important. If you look at it - we look at
10 it this way. We don't want to be just another public
11 broadcaster, another, you know, we don't want to be the,
12 the many CBC doing all English programs, because we feel
13 that we would lose something in the translation and lose
14 something as far as the culture is concerned.

15 As we've been operating over the last
16 twenty-one odd years, we have a Board of Directors which
17 consist of Native people from throughout the Northern part
18 of this province. We have a staff of around twenty. I
19 was going to say twenty-five, but we just lost some through
20 the last cutbacks, and we find that we're no different
21 from any other, you know, group in this country where we've
22 been cut back consistently for the last five years or so.

23 This year it was a hundred and sixty, about a hundred
24 and sixty-five thousand dollars and that translates into

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1 many positions, a loss of jobs, a loss of people
2 contributing, eh, in this particular community. And it's
3 always very sad and often very devastating for the
4 individual who's caught up in that, that situation.

5 What we have been learning over the years
6 is that we wonder, you know, why the, you know, why the
7 cutbacks, you know, keep coming. We wonder - we've been
8 - we view ourselves as Native broadcasters in Canada.
9 We view ourselves as part, a very critical part, of the
10 public broadcasting system in Canada. The major public
11 broadcaster, the CBC, has, although it's been suffering,
12 you know, ongoing cutbacks for the past number of years,
13 we've been suffering the same kind of cutbacks and even
14 worse.

15 And I'd just like to make the point that
16 Aboriginal broadcasters in Canada, we are part and parcel
17 of the public broadcasting system and we feel that the
18 resources are not adequate, they have never been adequate
19 from whatever program that's been available, and in order
20 for us to continue to maintain our audience, our languages,
21 our culture, it is critical that those resources be made
22 available to us.

23 If we, if we expect to, you know,
24 continue for another twenty, you know, twenty-one years,

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1 we're going to need the resources.

2 We also are mindful of the reality in
3 this country, that we've been in a - what do they call
4 it? - a global recession. I guess us Aboriginal people
5 have been in a global recession for over, you know, a couple
6 of hundred years now, and we're, we're very adapted, but
7 sometimes it's pretty hard to adapt when there, there is
8 literally insufficient resources, eh, to carry on the type
9 of programming that, you know, we feel is critical for
10 the audience.

11 In other words, we've been looking to
12 your trying to define for us what we can do. Like, to
13 try to, you know, keep going and keep strong. And we,
14 after the most recent cutbacks, basically what you do is,
15 you look at it as a business. You know, it's quite often
16 a simple business proposition. If you don't have the money
17 coming in, you know, you have to cut back in certain areas,
18 but that's not all you do. You have to try to create more,
19 generate more revenue in other areas. The problem of
20 creating revenue in other areas is that, what we are looking
21 for and what we promote and we support is the implementation
22 of a proper infrastructure for us to be able to be in the
23 position of generating more revenue.

24 To be specific, we had been working on

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1 the development of a full low power FM radio network over
2 the past several years, and we were doing our little fund
3 raising efforts, we were hooked into a federal program
4 through the NNBAP, that's the Northern Native Broadcast
5 Access Program, and with the recent cutbacks, they
6 basically have eliminated that distribution program which
7 would enable us over a course of many years to have an
8 implemented network of low power radio stations. So, we
9 were caught, we've been caught in the position where we
10 got about eighteen of the sites up, you know, in places
11 like Red Sucker Lake, Cross Lake, Nelson House, Garden
12 Hill, localities, remote Northern communities, and then
13 we got the cutbacks. Now, the whole idea of the network
14 for us, the creation of the network, of course, was to
15 assist us in becoming more self-sufficient. I wouldn't
16 say "self-sufficient", you know, completely, but I would
17 say to the degree that maybe we could have been up to fifty
18 to sixty percent of our revenue would be generated by our
19 own operations with this network. And with the funding
20 cutbacks that Mr. Mazankowski announced in December, that
21 resource has been eliminated so we are just about not quite
22 one-third of the way through implementing this network,
23 creating this infrastructure which would enable us to
24 create more work for people, more jobs and that's been

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1 very devastating for us.

2 I'd like to tell you about how a local
3 radio station operates and I'd like to just describe what
4 the benefits that we expected to achieve and then I'll
5 tell you what the Plan "B" is, so to speak.

6 We've had radio stations up, say at Cross
7 Lake and Norway House, where a, close to twenty years.
8 Now, these communities, in each one, we put in a local
9 radio station and what happens is, the community will form,
10 they'll form a committee to operate that radio station.
11 They'll start hiring people to be announcers, and over
12 the past twenty years, those two particular radio stations,
13 which are Cross Lake and Norway House, they've ended up
14 hiring people, say around eight, eight staff of announcers,
15 full time and part-time. They've generated revenue by
16 getting some minimal advertising that's available and a
17 lot of fundraising through media bingo or break-open ticket
18 sales.

19 Now, with each of these communities,
20 they operate their station there seven days a week, twelve
21 hours a day from 9:00 A.M. till 9:00 P.M. and they are
22 a focal point of, of their particular community. That's
23 a communication system for the local community. They do
24 broadcasting literally one hundred percent of the time

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1 in the Native language. They inform the people. They
2 are a solidifying force in the, you know, in their
3 particular communities in terms of the, you know, the
4 people like being, it's kind of like bringing the people
5 together in the community. It's informing people what's
6 happening in the next, you know, Native community.

7 So, each one of these is a small low power
8 FM or AM radio site has created a lot of opportunities,
9 a lot of spin-off benefits in a terrific way. It's
10 employed people. It's been a very busy going concern.

11 Now, what we've been trying to do with
12 our expansion of our network is to amplify that in
13 fifty-five more locations throughout the province here
14 where we'd be literally helping every Native Metis
15 community, Indian First Nations community in the province,
16 so we've been stifled with the most recent cutbacks.

17 So, I implore the Commission here that
18 the Commissioners and the Royal Commission to take that
19 message, you know, back to the, you know, when you look
20 at your final recommendations, to provide the resources
21 to the broadcasters who are creating a lot of very
22 important, very important things for each of these, these
23 particular communities. We're maintaining the language.
24 We're maintaining the culture and the problem is with

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1 the lack of the infrastructure to do it, it's very
2 difficult.

3 We're looking at Plan "B" now. Over the
4 years we've been doing our own fundraising efforts and
5 we were planning to speak to the remaining communities,
6 that we can do this year and next year, you know, and we're
7 planning on getting as many low power radio sites
8 implemented on the basis of a cost-sharing formula
9 between NCI and the particular community. We're
10 scrambling around looking for other funding resources,
11 but they're very minimal or non-existent at the federal
12 level, and at the provincial level, we're just
13 investigating some avenues there. And it is all going
14 to have the network complete, because in addition to
15 providing the benefits, you know, the job benefits and
16 the communications needs in the individual particular
17 community, there are large benefits for ourselves to keep
18 everything operating.

19 With the network established, we could,
20 and we are presently doing more and more advertising and
21 trading more, generating more revenue that way. We're
22 able to do a wider media bingo operation, you know, with
23 this fuller, you know, complete network. We're also able
24 to do more contracts with government and industry.

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1 And the end result of all of this, of
2 course, for us is, it's quite clear that, to us, that we
3 could literally improve our ability to operate, maybe as
4 high as sixty percent of our, you know, core operations
5 would be revenue generated through this kind of a network,
6 and the resources, as limited as they are, we feel that
7 we are part and parcel of the Canadian Broadcasting System
8 and we'd like to see that reflected in some of the resources
9 that are applied across this country.

10 I don't know what more to tell you
11 really. It's fairly straightforward for us. We need a
12 division of resources, you know, at the federal level on
13 a more equitable basis, I guess is what we're saying, among
14 other things. We are a real part of the Canadian
15 Broadcasting System and we want the resources to continue
16 that.

17 How is that for the oral tradition?

18 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I think it's an
19 excellent example of the oral tradition. I think that
20 of all of the baffling policies of the government, this
21 is one of the most baffling. Why they would want to cut
22 back on the Native broadcasting system is really puzzling.

23 And I must say, I simply can't understand it at all,
24 because it's so basic and so fundamental, where you have

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1 people living in isolated areas across the country.

2 And certainly, we'll be addressing this
3 problem in our final report. I'm curious, do you get any
4 financial support at all from the mining industry which
5 seems to be one of the main activities that goes on in
6 this area?

7 **RON NADEAU:** We've never really sought
8 out any. We have, on occasion, been provided some
9 donations when we were, we have an annual event that's
10 called an NCI Country Jam. It's an annual televised talent
11 show, amateur entertainment show, and it's one of our most
12 popular special events that we hold each year and the local
13 company, Inco, has provided some funds to assist us in
14 that.

15 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** It's interesting
16 because more and more, I think, the message has got through
17 to the big corporations, that they have to be good public
18 citizens in the area in which they're conducting their
19 operations and that's a good message that seems to be
20 getting through to some, but ultimately, not to all, and
21 certainly this would seem to be something that could be
22 done here. I'll ask my colleague if he has any questions
23 he'd like to ask you.

24 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very

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1 much for your presentation. I certainly agree with the
2 remarks that have just been made by Commissioner Wilson,
3 about the value of the Aboriginal languages. I think for
4 all people, a language is an essential component of
5 culture, so you might say that language is culture. The
6 language certainly is essential for cultural transmission.
7 Language is the means by which we transmit ideas and values
8 and I think it's what makes us human, which is why it is
9 truly baffling to contemplate the situation that you are
10 in as a part of the Canadian Broadcasting System, and yet
11 in a position to have to struggle.

12 I would like to ask about two brief
13 issues, if I may. The first one is to ask if you have
14 any experience, either in the past or currently, in
15 examining the potential of your broadcasting enterprises
16 - I don't know if I'm using the right technical language.

17 By "broadcasting", I mean both radio and television -
18 for educational purposes. It occurs to me that perhaps
19 teaching of Aboriginal languages might be done too, by
20 elders, so that they would be made available wherever young
21 children might congregate to learn languages, schools,
22 kindergarten, or wherever.

23 So, I'm asking then, if you have any
24 experience with the use of media, radio and TV to assist

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1 in the promotion of teaching languages? That's my first
2 question.

3 **RON NADEAU:** Yes. We had been
4 approached maybe five years ago by the provincial
5 government, Department of Education, who were studying
6 the possibility of getting into what they call a "distance
7 education", where they would have video, video receivers
8 set up in each community and you would be able to have
9 a teacher in Winnipeg say, or Brandon and send the signal
10 up to the satellite down to each community and you could
11 have like professors, say, you know, professors,
12 university professors deliver courses throughout the
13 North. And I know that what came out of that was, the
14 Department of Education funded the Distance Education
15 Project where you can now receive your training at a
16 university level in some courses by, you know, by video
17 basically. And at the time they asked, they approached
18 us and asked us what our capabilities were, in terms of
19 television, could we do that? And the only problem with
20 doing that is, we didn't have the capability at that
21 particular time. For example, you'd need what they call
22 video uplinks. And a video uplink back then was starting
23 at five hundred thousand dollars just for the uplink, and
24 then for each downlink site, where you know, you'd put

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1 in your receivers to receive the, you know, the program,
2 maybe thirty thousand for each community. We didn't have
3 the resources and the other thing is, we often get left
4 at the starting line in terms of capturing some of these
5 opportunities they're cashing in on. I don't mean to use
6 the word "cashing in", but trying to, you know, gain these
7 opportunities, we often get left at the starting gate
8 because we don't have the financial resources to commit
9 funds, you know, to purchasing that kind of equipment to
10 set up that kind of a system, much like our radio network.

11 We don't have the resources, eh, to do it all. And if
12 we went to government and we have went to government.
13 We went to government ten years ago, nine years ago, and
14 we came up with a proposal to, in fact, put in such a video
15 TV network, and at that time, I think the price tag was
16 three million plus, and at that time, the government told
17 us that it wasn't feasible, you know, that it couldn't
18 be done or, not that it couldn't be done, but it just wasn't
19 feasible.

20 And then a couple of years later, maybe
21 two, three years later, they started looking in the
22 Distance Education and now it's been feasible. The only
23 difference is, it's the, I'm not saying the wrong people
24 have the resources to do it, eh, but I guess it's the

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1 question of what's, you know, what the priorities are.
2 Provincial government had the ability to do and that's
3 what they've done.

4 Now, we don't have that capability.
5 But, speaking about that, you know, the analogy I would
6 say is simply this, that, we're trying to do it, you know,
7 complete our radio network, our infrastructure. That's
8 nothing different than what the Manitoba Department of
9 Education has done with the creation of the, you know,
10 their radio network.

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you for
12 that, Mr. Nadeau, but I'm not going to let you get away
13 without probing a bit more about potential for the
14 development of language classes for young people.

15 I think you've talked about experience
16 at the university level, but if someone has never learned
17 Cree or Soto till they get to university, we're talking
18 about a different individual, so far as learning language
19 is concerned, and one that was learned three or four and
20 five or six years old. So, I'm wondering, do you or do
21 you know of anybody that has the experience in
22 contemplating the potential that could be there through
23 Northern broadcasting to teach Aboriginal languages across
24 Canada by the use of organizations that - could you do

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1 it if you had the necessary resources and cooperation?
2 Is this something that you would have the capacity to do?
3 Do you have an interest in doing this in pursuing this,
4 if somebody asks you?

5 **RON NADEAU:** You're very good at
6 probing. You must be a lawyer. Yes. We certainly have
7 the ability to, you know, to deliver Native language
8 instruction. I'll give you a few examples. In
9 television, which would be the primary way to do it, I
10 guess, because you could, you know, see the person. We've
11 had Native childrens series where we've done counting in
12 Cree, for example. That, you know, the ability for us
13 to do it is certainly there. We have many Native language
14 speakers. We have the, you know, the capability of
15 bringing in Native proper translation that's done, you
16 know, as well as can be done.

17 As to, you know, delivering that in a,
18 you know, a classroom setting or, you know, by way of
19 television, we could certainly do it. We have been, we
20 have been approached by the - I think it's called the
21 Native, Manitoba Native Language Association - and we
22 worked with them on various projects to, in fact, do that,
23 you know, create actual courses and, like material and
24 we've provided the announcers to actually, you know, read

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1 it out in Cree or Soto or whatever, our ability to do that
2 is certainly there.

3 I would say that that would be, you know,
4 a very excellent like, say, area for us to, to get involved
5 with. We're approached quite often by various government
6 agencies that, federal or provincial levels, and they ask
7 us, "Can we do translation services?" and we've always
8 provided that. For example, the last time there was, the
9 last federal election, we worked for Elections Canada.
10 We had a large contract to do a lot of translation services.
11 We even were able to provide translation services in Dene,
12 you know, syllabics, you know, Cree syllabics.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you for
14 that. Was the Manitoba Association of Native Languages
15 that you referred to and I'm going to ask our staff in
16 assisting us in determining whether we have received a
17 brief from them with respect to this project or whether
18 we will be hearing from them. It seems to me that this
19 is an issue that has tremendous potential to do the sorts
20 of things that we are hearing across the country are very
21 important to do, a very important function in promotion
22 maintenance of culture through languages.

23 I wonder if we might try to get back to
24 your experience by asking you about another issue that's

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1 come up in a number of places. It seems important for
2 the country and that is, the potential function of the
3 CBC with respect to the promotion of perhaps not only
4 Aboriginal languages, but Aboriginal image. Generally
5 speaking, do you know in your, in your experience, do you
6 know of the Aboriginal Content policies of the CBC, or
7 do you know if there are Aboriginal people involved in
8 the policy making or any of these things? At the CBC,
9 you're saying that you are a real part of the Canadian
10 Broad-casting Systems. I wonder if you have any
11 information to help us within that area?

12 **RON NADEAU:** CBC is a very, was a very
13 large corporation. It still is a large corporation with,
14 I guess less people, but, you know, they still seem to
15 be maintaining, you know, quite an adequate level of
16 services in TV and radio. My knowledge of their own
17 Affirmative Action programs, for example, having more,
18 you know, Native faces on TV, more brown faces on the tube,
19 more Native people on radio. I know that in Thompson here,
20 there is one of the CBC announcers. She's a very fine
21 announcer and she speaks the Cree language and she does
22 speak it a little bit, eh, on the program. I know that
23 in Winnipeg, I know and I have known Native people who've
24 been involved as, maybe hired as, training to be a

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1 technician in TV, a producer in TV, announcer, you know,
2 that kind of thing. And I don't know, I don't mean to
3 be too, don't mean these remarks to be caustic or anything
4 like that, but, I find that it's always been like the quota
5 system, you know, like, how many more Natives do we need
6 to, you know, have this month to make the quota, you know,
7 of how many Native faces should be on TV or, you know,
8 on radio. I think there is more that, a more genuine
9 understanding of the fact that Aboriginal people are part
10 of this whole nation and it simply goes beyond the fact
11 of quota systems and numbers, you know, and understanding
12 that we are part of the NCI, we are a part of the Canadian
13 Broadcasting System.

14 As such, you know, why aren't, why don't
15 we have the same resources say as CBC has on a, you know,
16 per capita type situation?

17 As far as Native people involved in the
18 policy level, in CBC I know of, I am not aware of anyone
19 that I have ever met whose been involved as, say management,
20 you know, playing a role in policy. I think that obviously
21 there is no reason why Native people cannot do that. I'm
22 a manager. I've been a manager for ten years and I'm a
23 good manager, and I know that there are many more of my
24 colleagues, we operate as managers very effectively, and

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1 we've done so for many years.

2 As to why it's not happening at CBC, I
3 really, all I can say is, I don't, they haven't, I can't
4 remember ever meeting a Native Aboriginal person at CBC
5 who was at the management level. I remember the late,
6 a good friend of mine, the late Ross Charles. He was the
7 first, he was an Ojibway man from Ontario and he worked
8 for Cancom and he was vice-president of Native Relations
9 and when Cancom first started, eh, some years ago. But
10 that's about the only person I can, Native person I can
11 think of that's ever been on the management team, if you
12 will.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very
14 much, Mr. Nadeau. I look forward very much to have the
15 briefs to fill in these important issues and we look forward
16 to hearing from organizations like Associations of Native
17 Languages and the CBC.

18 Thank you very much for your assistance.

19 **RON NADEAU:** Thank you, and good
20 morning.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you for
22 coming. I believe the next presenter is the Northern
23 Economic Development Commission, Mr. De Groot. Any time
24 you're ready.

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1 **ADRIAN DE GROOT, SR., PAST COMMISSIONER,**
2 **NORTHERN MANITOBA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:**

3 Okay. Thank you for giving me the
4 opportunity of making this presentation to you this day.

5 You might ask what does that vision have
6 to do with economic development? Economic Development
7 has many different meanings, none of which is more
8 important than security and a feeling of self-worth. Both
9 of which have an important role in the strength of our
10 communities in Northern Manitoba.

11 The Commissioners of the Northern
12 Manitoba Economic Development Commission chose as it's
13 central theme "Vision with Cooperation." One of the
14 fundamental realities of the 90's is that we must truly
15 share with each other the strengths and weaknesses for
16 our mutual growth. If we have not learned anything from
17 the mistakes of the past, then the future will hold a lot
18 more of the same.

19 Not unlike what is heard from in other
20 communities and regions, the northern residents of our
21 province are calling on a closer partnership to be
22 developed for their future. A partnership that supports
23 with the ability to maintain and enjoy a quality of life
24 that meets the needs and expectations. A partnership that

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1 will see an involvement to a greater degree amongst each
2 other as well as between governmental jurisdictions. A
3 foremost obstacle is the lack of appreciation and
4 understanding as to the contributions we as Northern
5 residents make to the entire Province of Manitoba.
6 Whether it's trapping or mining or growing wild rice; it
7 still takes people, and we want a greater say in the things
8 that affect our lives.

9 The appointment of the Northern Manitoba
10 Economic Development Commission was a result of many
11 factors. Mainly it was Northerners, all Northerners such
12 as the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. or MKO, Norman
13 Regional Development Corporation, and community leaders
14 indicating that they see a lack of sensitivity to their
15 concerns and needs, and a mechanism in place to address
16 them. The status quo and outdated methods of dealing with
17 symptoms of problems are just not good enough any more.

18 I do not want to paint an entirely negative picture.
19 There have been some interesting initiatives in the last
20 several years, such as the wild live co-management
21 agreements, forest fire protection agreements, and the
22 potential expansion of two Community Futures committees
23 in the region are examples of individuals and communities
24 working cooperatively with government and each other.

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1 The Commission was mandated with
2 basically two outputs. One is the preparation of a
3 Sustainable Economic Development Plan for Northern
4 Manitoba for the 1990's, which is no easy task to define.

5 Faced with cyclical resource dependent industries such
6 as mining and forestry; declining commercial fishing which
7 is further aggravated and influenced by processing outside
8 the region, which contributes to the higher costs, and
9 the international marketplace; as well as the negative
10 impacts, such as the anti trapping lobby) created against
11 the trapping industry. Yet there is optimism. Through
12 cooperation and commitment, we can influence and I say
13 we as Northerners, can influence a path towards a
14 sustainable quality of life in the Northern communities
15 of our province.

16 The Commission initiated two
17 independent research documents as well. Women in
18 Sustainable Economic Development and Enhanced
19 Post-Secondary Education, both of which was in response
20 to presentations to the Commission. I will be pleased
21 to forward these to you at a later date as the
22 Post-Secondary Education one is till at the printer.

23 Through a process of interaction the
24 Commission has listened to people who are desirous of

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1 making our region a fine place to live. Cold and
2 mosquitoes we deal with, not apathy or a disregard for
3 people's needs.

4 The second output is termed a
5 "benchmark" document. This document is supported by three
6 technical reports. The first report is an outline and
7 comparison of Northern Manitoba's overall economy
8 described in relation to the entire province. The second
9 report is a comparison of the urban/industrial and
10 tradition/remote economies, outlining strengths and
11 weaknesses of the two. The final report is an
12 identification of the role and impacts of government and
13 non-governmental organizations towards Northern economic
14 activity. I am pleased to share with you copies of the
15 "Benchmark" document which you have before you and
16 supporting technical reports which staff has with them.

17 Input for the first task, the
18 Sustainable Economic Development Plan for the 1990's, was
19 through a comprehensive public participation process.
20 This eighteen month process has seen the Commissioners
21 seeking ideas and meaning from all stakeholder that affect
22 Northern healthiness. Panel hearings, personal
23 interviews as well as written submissions have been
24 received and were actively sought out by the Commissioners.

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1 When we listened and talked to senior levels of authority
2 we were not looking for a narrow view when they brought
3 solutions to problems but rather one of vision.
4 Throughout the months of May through January of 1993, the
5 Commission sought input. Six regional workshops were held
6 from January through March of 1993 to solidify the plan,
7 to obtain feedback towards an implementation mechanism
8 for the North.

9 During this interaction with First
10 Nation peoples, Metis, and non-Aboriginal people,
11 Commissioners heard over 275 verbal and written
12 presentations, over 500 in total sat in as observers and
13 presenters. We also received approximately 625
14 recommendations. The Commission held hearings in 26
15 communities and 41 of the 111 communities in our region
16 participated. A map on page four of the "Benchmark"
17 illustrates the Region as well as identifies the
18 communities.

19 If I may vary from the text, the numerous
20 criticisms that was heard by the Commission, is very likely
21 the same with your Commission, that this is just another
22 report and it will, does our ideas go forward to government?

23 I have before me and I'll be pleased to send this to staff
24 as well, is a compendium of the public presentation, we

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1 said, we will not edit or take anything that is being said.

2 It will be presented to government in its full text, and
3 this is what we have here before us as well as the public
4 process which we undertook.

5 All of which was done within the context
6 of the terms of reference given us by the provincial
7 government through the Minister of Northern Affairs, which
8 I have attached, as well as through a mission statement
9 developed by the Commissioners, which reads as follows.

10 It's one of our first meetings that we developed this
11 mission statement. In responding to the Terms of
12 Reference, the Commissioner's activities will be directed
13 toward producing a report titled "A Sustainable Economic
14 Development Strategy for Northern Manitoba". You could
15 abbreviate it that way. Actually the plan is called A
16 Plan For Action.

17 In order to ensure that a Northern vision
18 of Sustainable Economic Development is produced, the
19 Commissioners will interact with individuals, groups,
20 associations, corporations, Aboriginal people and their
21 organizations, community councils, industries and small
22 businesses.

23 By examining the human and economic
24 potential of the region, the Commissioners have designed

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1 a process:

2 To maintain and enhance the quality of
3 life for Northerners through appropriate economic
4 development and;

5 To ensure that all Manitobans are
6 provided the opportunity to present ideas which may be
7 appropriate within a changing economic environment and;

8 To identify the obstacles and
9 constraints that exist to achieving people's economic
10 security and well-being and;

11 To ensure that education is culturally
12 appropriate and serves Northerner's needs for
13 self-development and;

14 To ensure that the training needs of
15 Northern Manitobans are identified in order to enable them
16 to participate in economic development initiatives and,

17 To build understanding and linkages
18 between people and institutions by strengthening the
19 Northern region and its economy.

20 This statement kept the Commissioner's
21 focused throughout the process.

22 The Commission was appointed, as I said,
23 by the Province of Manitoba under the direction of the
24 Minister of Northern Affairs, the Honourable James Downey.

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1 I might add that the Commission was given total autonomy
2 and freedom to act. From the outset, it was determined
3 that the process would be driven by the participants and
4 the Commissioners acted as facilitators to get to the end
5 results.

6 The Commission was made up of five
7 Northerners and a chairman, a former Northerner, Mr. Thomas
8 Henley, Professor of Natural Resources Institute,
9 University of Manitoba, was the chairman. Mr. Pascall
10 Bighetty, past Chief of Pukatawagan, Mathias Colomb First
11 Nation. Mr. Doug Webber, Mayor of Churchill. At the
12 beginning, Mrs. Helen Cook, Chief of Bloodvein First
13 Nations, who resigned for health reasons and was replaced
14 by Mrs. Susan (Sue) Lambert, past Councillor of The Pas.
15 Mr. Sonny Klyne, past Mayor of Camperville, and myself,
16 presently a city Councillor for the City of Thompson.

17 What did the Commissioners hear? They
18 heard that consensus was needed to overcome jurisdictions
19 and other barriers that keep Northerners from working
20 together. They heard that there was a need for venture
21 partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
22 entrepreneurs. That there is a need to develop and
23 encourage leaders of tomorrow, the young, that can see
24 the potential of the future. I am also pleased to bring

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1 forth a book called the Public Consultation Process and
2 a Compendium of Public Presentations. These contain the
3 ideas and words from those who chose to interact with the
4 Commission. Final printing will be finished on June the
5 7th of this month of this year, and will be forwarded to
6 you.

7 What is the Commission recommending?
8 In it's Draft Plan, the Commission identifies a set of
9 broad goals and objectives to be inherent in a sustainable
10 economic development plan for Northern Manitoba.

11 "To maintain and improve the quality of
12 life for Northern residents; to ensure that development
13 in the North looks after the economic, environmental and
14 other quality of life interests of Northern residents,
15 including the need to sustain viable economic bases for
16 Northern communities as a whole and for the people living
17 in these communities; to bring decision-making related
18 to Northern economic development closer to the people who
19 live in the North; to promote effective cooperation and
20 coordination of decision-making affecting Northern
21 economic development by all sectors of government,
22 industry and Northern communities."

23 The Sustainable Economic Development
24 Plan for Northern Manitoba for the 1990's simply called

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1 "A Plan For Action", which is at the printers now and I
2 will be pleased to send to you a copy when it becomes public
3 sometime in July, will contain a planning approach that
4 will support community-driven or community based economic
5 development initiatives. A planning mechanism that will
6 facilitate resolving conflicts around Provincial Crown
7 Lands resource use. A planning approach that will ensure
8 that natural resource development activities will meet
9 the needs at the community level as well as being
10 environmentally responsible. A planning recognition that
11 human development needs are a priority for community and
12 regional development. And finally, a planning approach
13 that recognizes the need for cooperation among all levels
14 and forms of government and people.

15 In closing, I would like to again thank
16 you for allowing me to share with you some of the material
17 produced on behalf of the people living in Northern
18 Manitoba. To say that there was no diversity of opinion
19 would be tell a lie. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
20 people at times expressed the need for what I term as a
21 Big Brother Syndrome, the desire for government or industry
22 to look after their needs. But resoundingly, in the main
23 there was an equation expressed by many leaders between
24 self-government and self-sufficiency, being able to look

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1 after our own needs, between finding opportunity and doing
2 something with it or removing barriers, whether
3 self-imposed or system imposed, and between respecting
4 each others views and getting the job done, Vision with
5 Cooperation.

6 Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
8 much, Mr. De Groot. As we've been visiting Native
9 communities and urban centres where Native people are
10 living, of course one of the main themes has been
11 self-government for Native people, and most of them realize
12 that self-sufficiency is probably a prerequisite for
13 self-government. It's hard to be autonomous if you're
14 dependent on some other government for your financing.

15 So, the subject of how to become
16 self-sufficient has been a very prominent theme at our
17 Hearings. And I'm wondering, since the Commission has
18 obviously devoted a great deal of time to this developing
19 this vision for the region, I'm wondering how you see the
20 Native people in Northern Manitoba playing a role in the
21 economic development of the region.

22 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** One of the things,
23 Commissioner Wilson, and it comes out in many presentations
24 from community leaders, is the need for human development

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1 within their communities as well as the infrastructure
2 to support that, whether it be hard infrastructure like
3 water and sewer or education or the support mechanisms
4 within the community of people, certainly was on a high
5 list that these are the things that needed to be addressed
6 before, even before self-sufficiency and self-government.

7 Many times the community, the leaders
8 in the community residence, talked about by the equal
9 partners in the process of, equal partners in the
10 opportunity. Things as basic as all weather road
11 connections to the community to allow them freer access
12 to education, to trade centres, to the outside world and
13 things that happen. And these things need to be supported.

14 The viability of Norway House and Cross Lake or the
15 continued liability is based on the all weather road, on
16 getting a bridge, you know, something like placing a bridge
17 and setting that priority. And this is what the Commission
18 heard on a number of occasions, that there's a need for
19 this cooperative approach, to have government set
20 priorities as to what is needed. What is needed for the
21 North rather than being flown in and parachuted that
22 certain things are going to happen, let's bait these
23 priorities and the things that are consistent with the
24 aspirations of the community of the people, what they see,

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1 knowing well that there are only so much monies that are
2 available, but let's funnel these and focus these monies
3 where they are needed the best and most.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** One of the
5 problems that we have described in many places, is the
6 difficulty of that Native people have in not being able
7 to raise money and not being able to mortgage land, not
8 being able to get funding in order to realize on the
9 entrepreneurial skills to get business ventures started.
10 And obviously that is a major problem. Most members of
11 the white society just go to the nearest bank and get a
12 loan and mortgage their land and house and so on.

13 This seems to present one of the major
14 problems that Native people have in getting started up
15 in business activity of almost any kind.

16 Would you like to comment on that,
17 because it seems to be a rather fundamental problem when
18 we're trying to talk self-sufficiency.

19 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** It definitely is and
20 unfortunately, I guess the systems are set up and the
21 processes are set up in order to support certain definable
22 mechanisms and what we're seeing now is the desire to,
23 for self-sufficiency and do things in the mainstream now
24 on reserve land and by Native people, are finding it

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1 difficult because the process has not been changed or the
2 regulations, the rules and things like that. I think by
3 things like this Royal Commission and the Economic
4 Development Commission are bringing these areas to the
5 forefront in hopes that they will be changed. I understand
6 that in B.C. there is an individual that obtained a mortgage
7 on reserve land for a house, so these things are starting
8 to happen. There is some light at the end of the tunnel.
9 Hopefully they will happen quicker than, you know, than
10 the pain in going through the various processes, but, we
11 have to go in front of people and let them know during
12 the process of the Commission Hearings. We have the
13 Canadian Banking, the vice-presidents of the Canadian
14 Banking Association, the question that we asked them is,
15 why aren't there more banks on the reserves especially
16 larger ones that can sustain the activity that is required.
17 If you go by a per capita within the City of Thompson,
18 two to three thousand people would indicate there it's
19 viable for a bank and we're glad to say that there is more
20 activity with the larger reserves in order to provide the
21 basic banking services, and as they become more customer
22 oriented, perhaps the next step is to ensure that equity
23 for security of loans can be recognized and that the rules
24 will be changed, and I think, you know, these things will

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1 happen in due course and hopefully quickly and I think
2 it's through these efforts that they will change.

3 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Could I ask
4 whether any of your reports address those problems that
5 make it difficult for the Native community to participate
6 in the economic development of the region? Do you address
7 that? We obviously will be addressing that, but I'm
8 curious as to whether a body like yours addresses those
9 kinds of things?

10 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** In our final report,
11 yes, it will be addressed that these are the problem areas,
12 that these are things that are required to encourage
13 self-sufficiency, encourage the validity and the
14 strengthening of the communities. It is also fair to say
15 that, in some places, there may not be economic
16 opportunity. That communities have to deal with those
17 things as well as many other communities throughout Canada
18 are facing that, as industry is being restructured and
19 things like that. So, these realities are in smaller
20 communities, as well, but yes, it will be addressed. What
21 we are looking at. There's an implementation mechanism
22 as well within the report, which some reports failed to
23 do. In order to say yes, it's easy to identify them, well,
24 what can we do about them? And hopefully our report will

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1 address them, that people can see a way of dealing with
2 it and that government can support those mechanisms, as
3 well.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I'll
5 ask my colleague if he has some questions?

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you.
7 Well, thank you, Mr. De Groot, for your presentation.
8 We look forward to reading your final report. I wonder
9 if I might ask you a couple of brief questions to see what
10 I might anticipate in its contents.

11 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** Sure.

12 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** First, one of
13 the concerns that have been, that has arisen in other places
14 is where lands are to be taken to fulfill the various
15 Treaties or perhaps in Northern Manitoba with respect to
16 the need to compensate people for lost land by flooding.

17 For example, there's been a concern
18 voiced by people with existing interests, such as mining
19 leases, agricultural leases, so will your report contain
20 these solutions to the likeness with respect to the
21 resolution of those conflicting interests?

22 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** Whether they will
23 bring forward solutions or mechanisms to get to the
24 solution, I think that is more important that it sets up

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1 a mechanism for dialogue and for cooperation, and
2 unfortunately the reality of life is that some people do
3 not want to cooperate and quite often it's in their best
4 interests not to cooperate. And I think in order to, to
5 get it resolved, you have to set up this mechanism in order
6 to do that, and these things are happening presently with
7 resource, with the resources, with Repap in some of their
8 cut areas. They are discussing arrangements with First
9 Nations rights.

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very
11 much. That's certainly what I intended to mean by
12 solutions as opposed to the idea that we can impose in
13 these structures and in anticipation that this is going
14 to resolve many problems. I certainly appreciate that
15 point.

16 The other issues I understand as
17 important has to do with the potential for
18 access to international markets and part of local or
19 regional economies, so is this an issue that's going to
20 be dealt with in your final report? For example, the
21 potential access for freshwater fish to the international
22 market, perhaps the Asian market. Are these issues with
23 NAFTA and the general trend towards greater globalization,
24 and the economy; these are very important issues we'll

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1 have to grapple with, so, I'm wondering if you will have
2 dealt with this in your report, access to international
3 markets?

4 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** Not specifically as
5 to the methods and how it will be done, but certainly to
6 support the desires of the fishermen, you know, the
7 commercial fishermen within the area. We recognize that
8 access to international markets is very important,
9 especially with the profile that the Port of Churchill
10 has and certainly the lack of support by the federal
11 government towards them. It's necessary to provide access
12 to world markets for not only fish products but also mining
13 products, forestry products, other resource products as
14 well, and we certainly encourage the approach that will
15 be taken through our report is that, we start to coordinate
16 these efforts. If we have trade missions that go from
17 the Province of Manitoba we want to ensure that it also
18 is representative of the region and the commodities that
19 it has within the region, that is, has to offer to world
20 markets and not only to serve the interests of the Southern
21 portion of the province which has so often happened.

22 So, we want to make sure that these
23 interests are in the forefront and they will be with us.

24 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you, Mr.

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1 De Groot.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
3 much for coming and talking to us about the work of your
4 Commission. We appreciate your coming. Thank you.

5 **ADRIAN DE GROOT:** Thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** We're going to
7 have a short coffee break now, ten to fifteen minutes before
8 we resume.

9 (THE HEARING TOOK A BRIEF RECESS)

10 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I think we're
11 ready to start. The next presenter is the Ma-Mow-We-Tak
12 Friendship Centre. We're going to hear from Mr. Soldier.
13 Okay, anytime you're ready.

14 **LARRY SOLDIER, MA-MOW-WE-TAK FRIENDSHIP**
15 **CENTRE:** Good morning, Commissioners, Royal
16 Commission staff, members of the audience.

17 As I was thinking of this presentation,
18 a lot of things came to mind. You have travelled across
19 the country hearing different presentations. Listening
20 to stories, listening to recommendations. The task that
21 has been undertaken is quite extensive. The challenge
22 of developing recommendations that are realistic and at
23 the same time acceptable by all concerned is a very
24 difficult task to meet.

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1 In developing my presentation, I thought
2 of my grandfather and how he provided advice to me. He
3 provided advice to me through stories of how he handled
4 different situations. This generally assisted me in
5 dealing with my situation. My presentation is simply what
6 happens in Thompson and how we have been able to deal with
7 different situations.

8 There are no easy solutions to many of
9 the challenges facing Aboriginal people today. In
10 Thompson, we have been very fortunate that we do not have
11 many difficulties that much larger urban centres have to
12 face. The problems with HIV/AIDS, hard-core drug use,
13 prostitution, the homeless, and gang violence are not as
14 open in Thompson.

15 I want to give you a background of the
16 Friendship Centre. I know you've travelled across the
17 country and your experience with friendship centres is
18 quite extensive. But in Thompson, the population of
19 Thompson is just under 15,000 with a total trading
20 population of 35,000. Thompson is generally referred to
21 as the "Hub of the North" and is the regional centre of
22 Northern Manitoba. Although the most recent demographics
23 are unavailable on the population of Thompson, it is
24 generally accepted that 40% of the population are of

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1 Aboriginal descent.

2 The Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre is
3 celebrating its 17th year of operation. It was
4 incorporated as a Friendship Centre on June 15, 1976.
5 For seventeen years, the Friendship Centre has provided
6 support to Aboriginal people in Thompson, whether they're
7 visitors or residents.

8 The Friendship Centre is maintained by
9 full-time, part-time and volunteer staff and is governed
10 by policies set by the Board of Directors. The Board of
11 Directors are made up of eleven members who are drawn from
12 the City of Thompson and are elected at the Annual General
13 Assembly. The Board of Directors consists of a President,
14 Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and seven other
15 Directors, one of which is a Youth Board Member.

16 We offer many programs and services,
17 such as a Hostel, Interpreter/Escort, Fine Option,
18 activities for youth and elders, leisure recreation
19 programs, education projects, relocation, counselling and
20 cultural events, such as Aboriginal Awareness Week,
21 Ma-Mow-We-Tak Games, etc. And I attached a detailed list
22 of the programs and services to the end of my report for
23 this past year. We were able to assist 33,000 participants
24 in our various programs and services.

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1 In order to meet the growing needs of
2 the organization, the Friendship Centre has undertaken
3 a very active role in becoming more self-sufficient. The
4 Friendship Centre has become involved in three major
5 initiatives along with its fundraising activities.

6 The Friendship Centre has operated a
7 Hostel since its inception in 1976. The profitability
8 of the Hostel has increased steadily to the point where
9 it generated ninety-three thousand (\$93,000.00) in net
10 profit for the fiscal year ending March, 1993. This
11 surplus was utilized to cover the deficit in federal and
12 provincial government funding.

13 The Friendship Centre is also the sole
14 shareholder of the Northern Inn & Steakhouse Incorporated
15 which was purchased in November, 1987. The Northern Inn,
16 which is a hundred and eight seat restaurant and twenty-two
17 room hotel, was in receivership at the time of purchase.

18 The Friendship Centre invested thirty thousand dollars
19 (\$30,000.00) of its own money and assumed the existing
20 mortgages of two hundred and seventy-three thousand
21 dollars. (\$273,000.00) This was an excellent investment
22 during the initial three years, but has not done as well
23 during the past two years. I am confident this will
24 improve.

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1 In April of 1990, the Friendship Centre
2 purchased and renovated an office building at a total cost
3 of four hundred and eighty thousand dollars.
4 (\$480,000.00), utilizing funds from the Friendship Centre,
5 Northern Inn and three hundred and fifty-eight thousand
6 dollars (\$358,000.00) in bank mortgages. The building
7 is fully leased until 1995. All funds from rental payments
8 are currently used to reduce the mortgages.

9 These business ventures have enabled the
10 Friendship Centre to step closer to the goal of
11 self-sufficiency. The proceeds of these businesses will
12 eventually go back into the community by providing the
13 Friendship Centre with the financial resources to delivery
14 programs and services.

15 During the past ten years, the
16 Friendship Centre has grown from thirty-five thousand
17 (\$35,000) in assets to over 1.9 million dollars. Our
18 annual revenues have increased from three hundred thousand
19 (300,000) to over 1.7 million dollars. We play a major
20 role in the city in many respects.

21 Our involvement in the community has
22 increased as staff are encouraged to join external
23 committees such as City Council Committees, Advisory
24 Boards, School Board Committees and various other

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1 community groups. This, we feel, assists the other
2 organizations as well as provides input into issues of
3 common concern. The committees, groups and organizations
4 that the staff of the Friendship Centre are involved in
5 are as follows:

6 The School District of Mystery Lake with
7 the Aboriginal Student Needs Committee; the Race Relations
8 Committee; the Northern Harmony Cooperative which is a
9 disabled housing project; The Thompson Downtown
10 Improvement Committee; Nickel Days Corporation;
11 Winterfest; Manitoba Winter Games; the Alcoholism
12 Foundation of Manitoba; the Thompson Crime Prevention
13 Committee and many others.

14 And I guess on a personal level, a lot
15 of the involvement that we have had in the community has
16 given me a base, I guess, to seek a position on City Council,
17 which I was elected in October.

18 This type of involvement comes with a
19 price tag. The recent budget cutbacks has reduced the
20 number of staff and the demands of my staff's time and
21 expertise is increasing. We are looked upon by the
22 community as a valuable resource but this resource has
23 been reduced. The recent funding cutbacks has created
24 a loss of approximately seven positions in the Friendship

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1 Centre.

2 The Thompson General Hospital recently
3 advertised for potential Board Members. During its first
4 advertisement, there were no Aboriginal candidates for the
5 position. It was reported that 65% of the hospital's
6 patients are Aboriginal and the Board wanted Aboriginal
7 representation despite having no special provisions for
8 such representation.

9 We have found in the City of Thompson
10 that Aboriginal representation is sought, but it is
11 difficult to find Aboriginal people willing to make that
12 commitment.

13 The role of the Friendship Centre in an
14 urban setting is essential in a number of areas. They
15 are as follows:

16 Race Relations: The Friendship Centre
17 acts as a buffer between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal
18 people within the City of Thompson. The increase in the
19 urban Aboriginal population creates more of an opportunity
20 for racial incidents to occur. We feel the Friendship
21 Centre's involvement within the community in the area of
22 cultural awareness, programs, services and business
23 ventures has played a part in projecting a positive image
24 of Aboriginal people.

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1 My staff are currently involved with the
2 Race Relations Committee of the City. The Committee will
3 play a role in identifying potential problem areas and
4 will attempt to resolve them. Although there are
5 incidents, this is not a major issue in the city and we
6 feel, however, this will not last much longer. We feel
7 that a lot of people have no place to take their complaints
8 and we, the Race Relations Committee will develop a process
9 where those complaints could take place.

10 Under Youth: The Friendship Centre
11 provides programming for youth orientated recreational
12 activities, but we do have the resources to address the
13 social problems facing the youth of our community. The
14 resources required to address the concerns of the youth
15 in the areas of education, training programs, employment
16 as well as dealing with social issues such as suicide,
17 teenage pregnancy, racism, solvent and substance abuse
18 are enormous. And I think the Friendship Centre has in
19 the past have taken a role in trying to address some of
20 the problems facing the youth. We made a special provision
21 on our Board for a youth board member and this position
22 has been in place for the last five years.

23 Elders: The Friendship Centre has a
24 very active elder group of forty-five members which meet

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1 on a monthly basis for supper and on a bi-weekly basis
2 for recreation activities. Our staff of one is
3 supplemented by School of Social Work Students and they
4 provide numerous services for the elders.

5 There are numerous concerns of elders
6 in the areas of health, elder abuse, accommodation, and
7 interpreter services that must be addressed. The number
8 of elders in our community has increased due to the need
9 for medical treatment and improved living conditions.

10 Cultural Programming: There is a need
11 to provide culturally appropriate programming that will
12 meet the diverse needs of the urban Aboriginal people,
13 many of which are second and third generation. The
14 Aboriginal culture needs to be shared with the
15 non-Aboriginal community to develop an awareness as well
16 as developing pride amongst the Aboriginal people.

17 We provide one week of Aboriginal
18 awareness programming at a cost of eleven thousand dollars
19 (\$11,000.00) and this barely scratches the surface of what
20 can be done. We had attempted to secure resources for
21 a cultural worker for the Friendship Centre but to no avail.

22 Given the cost, the Friendship Centre's
23 role will be to assist the adult groups in developing
24 programming that is relevant to them. We feel the

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1 individual has to take ownership of learning his or her
2 own culture and passing that on to their children. For
3 the past three or four years, there has been a group of
4 individuals that have undertaken the spring ceremonies
5 and fall ceremonies at Mile 20 and these initiative was
6 on their own, on their own initiative. And without
7 government support, and I think we need to encourage a
8 lot of that. I don't think the needs of the elderly people
9 are so vast in this area and with the diverse needs of
10 each individual group, it is difficult to find one that
11 is acceptable to all.

12 Self-Government: The role of
13 Friendship Centres in the question of self-government
14 would be providing information and facilitating discussion
15 on the meaning of self-government and its impact on
16 Aboriginal urban people.

17 We do not see our role beyond this. The
18 definition of self-government will generate a lot of
19 discussion and controversy across the country and will
20 take the energy of a lot of people before this issue is
21 resolved, if it is ever resolved.

22 Housing: We currently have a
23 relocation program which assisted over nine hundred
24 clients last year. This program assists in other areas

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1 such as banking, school registration, employment,
2 orientation to the city, and other relocation related
3 matters.

4 The majority of the Aboriginal people
5 in Thompson are in rental property as they lack resources
6 to purchase their own homes. The concept of home ownership
7 is new to many of the Aboriginal people moving into the
8 city.

9 Addictions: The Friendship Centre
10 needs to be more directly involved with services necessary
11 to support the needs of Aboriginal people in the area of
12 substance abuse treatment, prevention and education.

13 The recent acquisition of the Moak Lake
14 Facility opens the opportunity of becoming more involved
15 in the addiction field. This camp will be an ideal
16 location to do family related counselling. This
17 initiative will be pursued.

18 The need to reestablish the Nightrider
19 program which assisted intoxicated individuals seeking
20 shelter in the city. There has to be a better method of
21 dealing with intoxicated people who create problems simply
22 because they have no where to go. The submission that
23 we had made to the Provincial Committee of Alcohol, Drug
24 and Substance Abuse in Manitoba is attached to my report

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1 and it's a, we made presentation in February of '91, and
2 it outlines our concerns in this areas. In it are our
3 requests from the province and the federal government for
4 financial assistance to the Nightrider program has been
5 to no avail. The City of Thompson, we're the only ones
6 that had committed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00)
7 of their funding to this program. But we needed a larger
8 base of funding in order for this project to get off the
9 ground.

10 Education: The Assistant Director of
11 the Friendship Centre is currently the chairperson of the
12 Aboriginal Student Needs Committee, a School Board
13 Committee. This committee tries to address some of the
14 issues concerning aboriginal students. This is an
15 important committee as Aboriginal children comprise forty
16 percent of the student population in the city.

17 The area of education for Aboriginal
18 people is a very high priority item, and as well, there
19 are a number of issues that need to be, that will require
20 the work of a lot more people as well as financial
21 resources. The number one issue is the high dropout rate
22 for Aboriginal students.

23 Given our experience, we have found that
24 we have gained a lot of respect within the community for

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1 the work that we have done in the past. We provide programs
2 and services at little or no cost to the individual
3 participant. We have developed a positive image of
4 Aboriginal people within the community. We were able to
5 develop our business ventures with no government grants.

6 The success of the Ma-Mow-We-Tak
7 Friendship Centre is a result of a lot of work by numerous
8 individuals through a number of years. We earned the
9 respect of the community because we do good work and we
10 are accountable to the people. And we just completed our
11 annual meeting on Thursday, and, well, we provide a report
12 to the community, as well as providing financial
13 information. We did not wait for things to happen. We
14 made things happen.

15 Thank you for this opportunity to speak
16 to you today and I will be pleased to answer any question
17 you may have.

18 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you, Mr.
19 Soldier. It's wonderful for us to hear a real success
20 story. We don't hear too many of those as we visit the
21 communities and certainly your Friendship Centre seems
22 to be one of those and that's, you and the people involved
23 are certainly to be congratulated on the initiatives you've
24 taken. That's really wonderful. There are one or two

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1 things I'd just like to mention. You indicate that racism
2 is not a major problem, but incidents do happen. I'm
3 wondering, when you say that there's nobody to deal with
4 complaints, whether you've considered having a local
5 ombudsman. A number of places have tried that and it's
6 surprising how many of these matters can be cleared up
7 just with a word to the wise by somebody who's good at
8 human relations and can talk to people about that problem,
9 so you might want to consider that.

10 I'm concerned about what you say about
11 self-government and that you see it as a limited role in
12 relation to self-government. The reason that concerns
13 me a bit is that, self-government for Native people in
14 urban areas obviously presents far more difficult and
15 complex problems than self-government on a reserve, and
16 strange as it may seem, we've really got very little input,
17 very, very few ideas or suggestions as to how
18 self-government might operate in an urban setting. And
19 we're really very anxious to get ideas from the cities
20 on this issue because we have been told that we should
21 not rely on the suggestions and ideas and models that are
22 advanced by the large Native political organizations, that
23 we would be making a mistake if we relied completely on
24 what they have to say to us about the form that

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1 self-government should take.

2 So, we've noted that caution that's been
3 given us about relying on the political organizations,
4 so that means that we really very much need to get the
5 ideas of communities like Thompson and from people like
6 yourself on how it might operate. So, we'd really
7 appreciate if you could apply your mind to that. One of
8 two towns have done it. I was in Orillia, Ontario a
9 few weeks ago and the Native people there had spent a few
10 years thinking about what form self-government might take
11 in their community and had come up with really a very,
12 what seems like a very good model that they thought would
13 work in their area and it was really nine separate clans
14 in and around the City of Orillia that had got
15 together. They had formed self-government committees and
16 got together to try to come up with a model that they though
17 would work, and I've had a good look at it and it seems
18 like an excellent model and they're now working on what
19 they think the costs would be of operating this particular
20 self-government model.

21 So, I'm sure if they can do it, you can
22 do it. So, I'd really encourage you to try to do some
23 work on that.

24 The other thing I'd like to raise with

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1 you really arising out of some of the submissions that
2 were made yesterday, particularly by the women, and I'm
3 wondering whether among the various services you provide,
4 is there a women's shelter in Thompson?

5 **LARRY SOLDIER:** Maybe to, just to answer
6 in order your questions; there was the question of
7 self-government. Friendship Centres by its nature and
8 by its mandate has always been non-political,
9 non-partisan, and we've been able to enjoy success based
10 on that basis, because we won't align ourselves with one
11 particular political group or political organization, and
12 this allows us to go through a wide spectrum of people.

13 Because I think the question of self-government is
14 something where, when you're looking at the Metis
15 organizations, the First Nations organizations, there's
16 going to be conflicts and there's going to be a lot of
17 debates and maybe territorial that they want to protect
18 what is theirs and for the Friendship Centres to get
19 themselves aligned in a situation like that, will not
20 benefit. Those will not benefit the people that we serve,
21 because we are able to serve everybody, it doesn't matter
22 who comes in through our doors. And I guess our role,
23 we see our role as just being, providing information and
24 being able to facilitate discussion and maybe being able

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1 to bring say different parties together and to try and
2 resolve conflicts that may arise due to a self-government
3 and being involved within the municipality. Just being
4 able to go to each different group. We basically see our
5 role as a mediator or facilitator of discussion and I don't
6 see our Friendship Centre diverting from that.

7 You've asked a question regarding a
8 crisis centre. There is a crisis centre in the City of
9 Thompson and it has its own separate board and operates,
10 I'm sure it has operated for a number of years,
11 approximately ten years.

12 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Is that a
13 non-Aboriginal shelter?

14 **LARRY SOLDIER:** I'm not sure if it's
15 non-Aboriginal. The board of directors are, there are
16 some Aboriginal members on the Board and a lot of the
17 clients are served, serve Aboriginal people so, I'm not
18 sure in what context you mean if it's an Aboriginal shelter.
19 There is Aboriginal people on the Board and there's
20 Aboriginal clients and I believe the majority of clients
21 are Aboriginal.

22 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you.
23 Paul?

24 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very

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1 much, Mr. Soldier, for your presentation in which you
2 describe some excellent involvement in the Community of
3 Thompson.

4 I would like to ask one or two very brief
5 questions, if I may. How many Aboriginal people are there
6 on the Friendship Centre Board? Putting it another way,
7 how many non-Aboriginal people?

8 **LARRY SOLDIER:** There's one.

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** One non-
10 Aboriginal.

11 **LARRY SOLDIER:** One out of eleven.

12 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yeah. One
13 out of eleven. One out of eleven non-Aboriginal?

14 **LARRY SOLDIER:** Yeah.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** And the other
16 question is, with respect to the School Board, are there
17 Aboriginal people on the School Board?

18 **LARRY SOLDIER:** No. Unfortunately Mr.
19 Nadeau, the previous presenter, had ran for the School
20 Board and was unsuccessful.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I see.

22 **LARRY SOLDIER:** And there's no
23 Aboriginal people on the School Board. I have tried to
24 assist other people, and in fact, that was kind of my first

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1 feeling was to run for the School Board, but I was kind
2 of convinced to go to City Council, so I ran for City
3 Council. But, we feel that that is an issue, an area that
4 we want to pursue and hopefully at some point assist another
5 individual getting on the School Board.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you for
7 that, and I want to wish you continuing and expanded success
8 in these very worthwhile endeavours that you have described
9 to us. I know that you're involved, as well, in sports
10 and other capacities and I think all this sort of
11 involvement by yourself and the other individuals with
12 the Centre, are indeed very helpful and in your words,
13 in assisting to provide a positive image of Aboriginal
14 people, and assisting and indicating to young people that
15 they, too, can do things that they're inspired to doing,
16 either in their home communities or elsewhere.

17 Thank you very much for the presentation
18 in which you're assisting to make the neighbourhood a
19 happier, healthier place. Thank you very much.

20 **LARRY SOLDIER:** Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I can give an
22 unsolicited testimonial to a restaurant where I had a
23 delicious breakfast this morning. Thank you very much
24 for coming. Well then, our next presenter is the Sayisi

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1 Dene First Nations. May I ask Ida Bussidor to come up.

2 Perhaps you can tell me if I'm pronouncing that properly?

3 **ILA BUSSIDOR, SAYISI DENE FIRST NATION:**

4 First of all, I would like to introduce
5 myself. My name is Ila Bussidor and this is my daughter,
6 her name is Holly.

7 Ladies and Gentlemen of the Royal
8 Commission, it is with honour that I am able to appear
9 before you today on behalf of my community of Tadoule Lake,
10 Manitoba.

11 My name is Ila Bussidor, a former Chief
12 of the Sayisi Dene First Nation, and currently a student
13 at the Keewatin Community College here in Thompson.

14 I would like to concentrate my
15 presentation on the two major concerns that, as a people,
16 we know we have to bring to the attention of Canadians.

17 Number 1. My people were moved by the
18 federal government from Little Duck Lake to Churchill in
19 1956. This relocation destroyed our independence and
20 ruined our way of life. After fifteen years of neglect
21 and despair in Churchill, we could begin to count the dead.

22 More than one hundred of my people, one-third of our
23 population, died in the Churchill Camps because of this
24 unplanned, misdirected government action. This didn't

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1 happen a thousand miles from here, or a hundred years
2 ago...it happened to my people, my family, thirty to
3 thirty-five years ago. It seems like only yesterday, and
4 it affects us still today.

5 Number 2. Our title to our traditional
6 homelands in Manitoba and North of 60 have yet to be
7 recognized by any valid Treaty. We need a guarantee of
8 land enough for our needs, now and for our children's
9 future. We have been denied title to our share of the
10 land. We protest the outright theft of over fifty thousand
11 square miles of traditional Dene territory, a theft
12 orchestrated by the federal government...a government that
13 right now, is concluding a deal that awards the Inuit people
14 title to our lands North of 60, as part of Nunavut. It
15 is clear that this is fundamentally designed to benefit
16 the powerful resource interests that stand behind
17 government policy. It is a deal created to pave the way
18 for the kind of extractive, colonial-style development
19 that has already destroyed much of Manitoba, and much of
20 Northern Canada. We oppose them. We oppose development
21 that threatens to flood our lands and poison our rivers.
22 Even if we must stand alone, even if the government tires
23 to rob us of our title, we will protect our land with all
24 our power. Look around you...you can see what so-called

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1 development has brought us...you can drink to despair at
2 the bars in town, or you can go to the reservations that
3 sit like tiny islands in a blasted, burnt and flooded land.

4 This is the future the government has planned for all
5 of us; after they have exhausted all the riches of the
6 land. We need our land. It is our key to an independent
7 future. We need land that is truly our own, not a
8 reservation swindle.

9 To go with this presentation. We are
10 known in the Dene Nation as the Sayisi - the Dene from
11 the East. We possess a history as rich and vast as the
12 land which we inhabit, we are descendants of historically
13 renown leaders like Mattonabee and Bekeelshies. The
14 leaders played an important role in the development of
15 the Fort Prince of Wales, on Hudson Bay. My people have
16 lived for thousands of years along the coast of Hudson
17 Bay. Our traditional land extends from the 58th to 64th
18 Parallels. Our country always was, and still is, largely
19 empty for most parts of the year, except when the migratory
20 caribou herds come through.

21 Through the many changes imposed upon
22 my people over the past few centuries by outside forces,
23 we have always managed to adapt and adjust. There was
24 a time when our people numbered to over ten thousand.

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1 Today our population is over four hundred. Somehow we
2 endured the ravages of the small pox epidemics that claimed
3 over nine-tenths of our people in the 1780s, and the deadly
4 waves of epidemic disease that followed our European
5 discovery.

6 For over two centuries our ancestors and
7 forefathers have toyed with this beast called "progress"
8 when it moved North, with the creation of the Fort Prince
9 of Wales that became the seaport town of Churchill. Upon
10 contact, it was trapping and trade that reduced the
11 independence of our people - altering their lives and
12 travel patterns. Our reliance on the caribou and the
13 north/south seasonal round was distorted by trapping and
14 trade. Trapping drew people south to beaver country, and
15 trade pulled people south and east to the trading post.

16 This made it more difficult to stay with the caribou making
17 people more dependent on the Fort. The fur trade was very
18 lucrative, but only for the Hudson Bay Company. The Sayisi
19 Dene were exploited...kept in a position of perpetual debt
20 and dependency by the greedy Hudson Bay Company. Our
21 forefathers did not realize that this "beast" with which
22 they traded, would one day consume them and almost destroy
23 them.

24 Although it was the fashion of the time

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1 to be party to the Friendship Treaties that were sweeping
2 the North, it was evident by our elders' testimony and
3 by the contents of the Treaty document itself, that the
4 two parties were complete strangers to one another's custom
5 and cultural. No Dene translators were present at this
6 signing, and even by today's standards, it would be almost
7 impossible to translate much of the text into Dene. There
8 are no words in our language for Treaty. It was only
9 recently that our people realized that they were supposed
10 to have given up ownership of all our traditional
11 homelands, in exchange for guardianship by a distant
12 foreign government in Ottawa that knew next to nothing
13 about us. They didn't care care about us, as long as they
14 got our land. The text of the Treaty, even the signatures
15 on it, were made by the government. The validity of the
16 Treaty is still very much in question among most of the
17 Band members today. The elders saw it as good will, a
18 Friendship Treaty; it had nothing to do with land.

19 For almost fifty years, after the Treaty
20 ceremony of 1910, our people continued to live as before.

21 Looking back now, at the many clauses in the Treaty
22 designed to agriculturalize us, to turn us into
23 farmers...it had to be a joke. Each family of five was
24 to receive a hundred and sixty acres of land with which

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1 to grow crops. They would also receive cattle and pigs.

2 Surely the government had to have been as naive about
3 us, as we were about them. We had complete dominion over
4 our lands for thousands of years as hunters and gatherers.

5 The Europeans called our lands barren lands. To the Dene,
6 our land was far from barren. Our people had the caribou
7 and our culture was perfectly adapted to caribou migration
8 over the full extent of their annual range--tundra in
9 summer and forests in winter. Can you imagine us driving
10 a herd of pigs across the tundra?

11 Well, isn't it equally ridiculous to
12 think that we would willingly sell our land to anybody
13 that would suggest such a thing?

14 Today our land claims are
15 unextinguished, but the land itself is being reduced and
16 exploited by outsiders. Our power to protect the land
17 and its natural resources is being hampered by governments
18 dedicated to serving mining interests and committed to
19 short-term, non-renewable development. We need a land
20 base sufficient to the real needs of our people, our way
21 of life, the future of our children. We need a strong
22 voice over the development that takes place on our
23 traditional homelands north and south of the treeline--the
24 land of the barren ground caribou.

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1 We need much more than the twelve
2 thousand acres of reservation so unrealistically proposed
3 and never translated in the treaty document. We are asking
4 for parcels of land, fee simple, in our traditional
5 homeland north of 60, and lands sufficient to our needs
6 south of 60 and north of the Churchill River. We need
7 land above and beyond that miserable treaty allocation,
8 which the fine print reveals, "reservation land" is not
9 even owned by the people, but held in trust by the
10 government until they need it.

11 We ask why the government does not come
12 to us with the same kind of deal they have offered the
13 Inuit? Let us propose a comprehensive claim for the Sayisi
14 Dene on the pattern of Nunavut, where we would retain
15 one-fifty of our traditional homelands fee simple, mineral
16 rights and a comparable measure of control over the rest
17 of the land, lakes and rivers.

18 Instead we are offered this. From a
19 traditional land use area of more than eighty thousand
20 square miles, we stand to receive less than nineteen square
21 miles, or one four-thousandth (.025%) of our traditional
22 homeland. This is reservation land, land not really owned
23 by the Dene. Think of it. One-fifty, one
24 four-thousandth. Why do we apparently deserve so little?

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1 Are those not our ancestors whose graves are on the land
2 they sell? This is an insult to our people, and a crime
3 against our unborn children.

4 The Government of Canada has been
5 courting the Inuit with the idea of Nunavut since the early
6 '70s, at a time when the real owners of much of that land
7 were struggling to survive the Churchill dump. In 1989,
8 the consultants and federal negotiators that have directed
9 the creation of Nunavut suddenly moved the proposed land
10 claims border southward to the 60th parallel. They saw
11 an opportunity to gather more land to barter with the
12 government, back pay for their twenty years of fees,
13 perhaps. The consultants and lawyers though, accurately
14 it seems, that the federal government and the Canadian
15 people would turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to this
16 injustice.

17 The first boundaries of the proposed
18 Nunavut were more respectful of our lands, and we supported
19 the creation of Nunavut and the promise it held for the
20 Inuit people. It was only after the boundary was
21 arbitrarily moved south to the 60th parallel in 1989 that
22 we saw the greed that had taken hold of the land claims
23 process and we realized the consultants were out to grab
24 whatever they could get. By then, the Inuit and the

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1 federal government were pushing for arbitration and rapid
2 settlement of Nunavut's new boundaries and terms.

3 Our people were relocated by the
4 government to Churchill in 1956. We were dropped off on
5 a rocky peninsula on the outskirts of Churchill, with no
6 means of building shelters for our families. The first
7 winter was spent trying to survive the bitter cold, without
8 the caribou, without good winter clothing made of fur,
9 deprived of the log cabins that sheltered our families
10 on the traplines around Little Duck Lake. These they could
11 not bring. The dog teams starved first. The people spent
12 the first Churchill winter in their tents. They survived
13 by scrounging from the dump. There were no jobs for a
14 people that spoke no English and were unfamiliar with
15 routine. For three long years the Department of Indian
16 Affairs was undecided about what to do with us, or where
17 to put us. In 1959, they decided to build "Camp 10" n
18 a windswept hill between frozen Hudson Bay and the town
19 graveyard. By this time, our people were in total cultural
20 shock. Alcohol slowly crept into a once proud people's
21 lives and took control of them. Death and destruction
22 followed almost immediately, all under the wary eyes of
23 an uncaring town of white, Cree, Metis and Inuit residents.
24 May of my people died violently all of alcohol related

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1 deaths, from small babies to young people to elders. Can
2 you imagine that how in twenty short years, a Band of people
3 were just about wiped out. In this period, there were
4 very few births, and many people died every year. Alcohol
5 took control of our once proud parents and grandparents,
6 who were once able to hunt and travel the wide open tundra
7 of our land, without any help from the white man's material.
8 They were able to feed one whole community with caribou,
9 fish and fowl. Our people were given something alien to
10 them, by the government, welfare handouts. When this ran
11 out, we could not go and receive more, like the wild food
12 which were were used to collecting from the land with the
13 guidance from the Great Spirit. Slowly, ninety percent
14 of our people turned to alcohol and collecting food from
15 the town dump. They would buy expensive meat like steaks,
16 roasts, etc., with welfare food vouchers and sell it to
17 the white people in town, enough for a cheap bottle of
18 wine. Then there were many children like myself, who were
19 starving, afraid of violent drunken parents and ended up
20 running for our lives. We watched our parents destroy
21 themselves.

22 Thousands and thousands of years ago,
23 my people lived and travelled all over the land on foot.
24 They never suffered or froze to death, they had the

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1 knowledge to live this way. They could move a whole camp
2 at a moment's notice and it was no threat to their
3 livelihoods or their lives. This was the way of my people.

4 It was wrong for the government to enforce their wishes
5 on my people. This atrocity never should have happened.

6 If there was proper translation for my people, our parents
7 would never in their lives have agreed to set a death trap
8 for us, their children. Just like your children whom you
9 must love very much and want to protect from any evil and
10 danger.

11 It became almost routine for those of
12 us born in this era to see and hear our younger siblings
13 and friends scream as they perished in house fires, while
14 their parents were elsewhere drinking. Some of us found
15 parents or relatives, brothers and sisters, dead from the
16 cold with tears frozen on their cheeks, or we would see
17 bloody messes on the highway where our people were run
18 down by motorists.

19 In the classrooms of the schools, we
20 faced unimaginable racism and discrimination, in our
21 tattered clothes, dirty faces and unkept hair. No one
22 saw the terror in our eyes, or knew of the horrors we
23 experienced at home, after school, the abuse, physical,
24 mental, emotional and sexual. Many of us relied on the

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1 trash cans behind the stores and hotels for food. The
2 dropout rate was extremely high among Dene students, even
3 in elementary school, and there was no wonder why. Every
4 member of my generation has a personal account of brutal
5 hardship and despair. We came to believe as children that
6 we were the last Dene people in the world, since our parents
7 could not talk anymore. We were the object of
8 discrimination from every direction. We came to believe
9 at any early age that we weren't Indians, we were lower
10 than that.

11 This situation was becoming
12 embarrassing to the Department of Indian Affairs, so they
13 decided to move us once again, in 1966, to an area where
14 we would be less conspicuous, to "Dene Village", three
15 and a half miles out of town behind the Inuit hamlet of
16 Akudlik. By this time, there was very little hope left
17 in the people, and all their aspirations were gone. Our
18 parents continued to die off. We found many adults frozen
19 beside the long cold road to Dene Village, drunk and unable
20 to make it home. During the cold winter blizzards, many
21 houses burned to the ground with those inside. My mom
22 and dad perished this way. On a bitter cold day in
23 December, 1972, three days before Christmas. I left my
24 parents to go to a movie with friends. When I returned

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1 home there was no home left, just a foundation and burning
2 ashes. I miss my mom and dad so much, the pain is still
3 very fresh and the memory is something that will haunt
4 me for the rest of my life. Although I was a young teenager
5 at the time, I realized that what was happening to my
6 people was wrong. My father, Artie Cheekie, was one of
7 the youngest chiefs. He was proud and carried himself
8 with pride and dignity, in everything he did, as a provider
9 for his family, as a leader for his people. He stood tall,
10 he was handsome and strong, but when the relocation took
11 place, he was stripped of everything he stood for along
12 with all the rest of his people. When he died in a drunken
13 state in Dene Village, he was just another victim. But
14 as long as I live in this world, I will carry on and fight
15 for his rightful place. The grave where he is buried in,
16 is an unmarked grave. Any leader in this country is buried
17 with respect, so why is it that my people had to suffer
18 so much and even when they died, they were not even given
19 the dignity to be laid to rest on their land. Over one
20 hundred of my people are buried this way in Churchill,
21 Manitoba. I would like the government of Canada to
22 acknowledge this and place a monument in memory of all
23 these innocent children and adults that died needlessly,
24 all because of one stupid mistake. It was their decision,

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1 and plan to move my people. It is time for them to accept
2 the responsibility of the great mistake they made and pay
3 respect to people like my father. It is a hard reality
4 to lose your parents in an instant, especially when you
5 are a child, at Christmas.

6 The younger people who could, found any
7 way possible to get away from the madness of Dene Village
8 and Churchill. Many turned to crime and ended in reform
9 schools or prison. Anything was better than this. A
10 handful of us used education as an avenue of escape,
11 although given the circumstances, it was undeniably the
12 most difficult.

13 Among the many ethnic groups that
14 resided in Churchill during the 60s and 70s, the Sayisi
15 Dene were at the bottom of the heap, in other words, we
16 were the underdogs, and were constantly reminded of it
17 by the other Aboriginal groups. Even our Inuit neighbours
18 at Akudlik, a half a mile away, looked down at us in utter
19 contempt and disgust. They were, after all, prized,
20 pampered and protected by Northern Affairs, and showered
21 with all the comforts available. What good was out Treaty
22 to us then? Akudlik was built to provide the Inuit with
23 educational and employment opportunities. Opportunities
24 that were denied to the Dene. The Inuit were housed in

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1 milled log cabins with running water and flush toilets.

2 The Dene had rusty water barrels and ditches to dump their
3 waste in. Akudlik homes had central oil heating, the Dene
4 had wood stoves, with wood so scarce that if a home in
5 Dene Village became vacant, it was used for firewood.

6 If the Inuit became tired of living in Churchill, they
7 could always go home to their growing Northern communities.

8 The Dene were stuck in Churchill, our land and caribou
9 a fading memory.

10 The older children became cold and
11 hardened by all that was happening around them and most
12 were out of school. We hung around in mobs for protection.

13 We slept under buildings, in attics and abandoned cars.

14 We were despised by all the townsfolks, and we were often
15 chased away on sight. There were people that unleashed
16 their dogs on us when they saw us coming through Akudlik.

17 We have no animosity or hatred toward
18 the Inuit people. It was not they that created the cruel
19 double standard that the government displays, but isn't
20 it time for this systemic discrimination to end?

21 We faced terror even in our homes from
22 drunken parents. This is now most of my generation grew
23 up. We always thought it was normal because we knew of
24 no other way. My generation started to drink alcohol at

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1 a very early age, seven to nine years old and up. We
2 thought this was the most normal thing to do. It was all
3 we seen around us. This was our environment, our destiny,
4 created by the government. Today my generation is
5 struggling to regain our culture, traditions and language.
6 We need help from the outside and other Native groups,
7 like yourselves, in this very room. My people deserve
8 compensation from the federal government for the injuries
9 we have suffered as a people.

10 It was during this time, in the early
11 70s, that people managed to come to terms with their
12 predicament, and somehow made it out of Churchill, largely
13 by their own initiative, to North and South Knife lakes.

14 Due to the limited resources there, and with the new
15 communities growing larger every day, the people continued
16 to look westward, in search of a better and and the caribou,
17 which they found in plenty, at Tadoule Lake. Although
18 south Knife Lake was ninety miles from Churchill, it wasn't
19 far enough in the minds of the survivors. That was how
20 Tadoule Lake was born. We moved as far away as we could
21 from the pain and humiliation, and today we live a hundred
22 and sixty-five miles from the nearest community, in exile
23 from our heartland, Duke Lake and Caribou Lake. People
24 slowly drifted together at Tadoule Lake, and from the

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1 fragments, we came to be a community of people again.
2 Tadoule Lake is now twenty years old, but there is still
3 a feeling of emptiness in our hearts. The generation of
4 people that we relied on to teach us the Dene way, are
5 all dead. Our living parents are now old and feeble, and
6 they never fully recovered from the perils of the ordeal.

7 Therefore, we are alone again as a
8 generation, to rediscover our traditions and to rebuild
9 our culture. In all, years have passed, but the feeling
10 of community is slow to materialize. We have no spiritual
11 leaders or ministers to help us heal. To physically remove
12 ourselves from the destruction was easy compared to the
13 task of psychological repair.

14 It was then, that the reality of the
15 atrocity began to sink in, when we began to count the sheer
16 numbers of people, most in their prime, who died so
17 needlessly. All because of a massive blunder by the
18 government, in its attempts to settle a group of people
19 about which it knew nothing. We know of no relocation
20 more destructive.

21 We have begun the process of rebuilding.
22 We embrace the policy of self-government in principle,
23 but only if we have land and resources to govern will our
24 future be more than perpetual poverty, landlessness and

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1 dependence.

2 For twenty years now, we have been hoping
3 for an apology from the government, some acknowledgement
4 of the blunder, to no avail. Rather, we are received by
5 agents of the government as being difficult. Are we not
6 justified to feel some bitterness? We are not an
7 unreasonable people, we are just a people who have been
8 pushed an unreasonable distance. We are determined to
9 rebuild our way as a people for our future generation and
10 so on. Although we have very few resources to draw on
11 as we pursue compensation for what we can only call
12 genocide, we will persist. We hope we can count on the
13 understanding and support of the members of the Royal
14 Commission.

15 Recommendations that are included, not
16 on the presentation you have, but I will get copies for
17 you. My Band members are not able to be here as a return
18 airfare, most cannot afford, but this does not mean that
19 their prayers are not with me. There are a few Band members
20 here, mostly students, but there is one elder here. Her
21 name is Majorie Kithethe (ph) and I'd like you to
22 acknowledge her.

23 This lady here was a young woman when
24 the relocation took place to Churchill. She is a living

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1 example of pain. She was burned by gasoline twice, over
2 sixty percent of her body, by her drunken common-law
3 husband. Her oldest son, Ronny Kithethe, he became our
4 first member in the Band, as an RCMP. He was about
5 twenty-one, twenty-two years old and shortly after that
6 he was killed here in Thompson in about 1984. And a month
7 later, her daughter, Nola Kithethe that lived in Toronto,
8 committed suicide while she was about two, two to three
9 months pregnant.

10 So this lady is just one of the examples
11 from my people. The Sayisi Dene are requesting the Royal
12 Commission to hold a public hearing in Tadoule Lake. You
13 are the people who will be reporting to the government.

14 It is crucial that you hear first hand from the people
15 who hold that story, a story not documented, but a living
16 memory. There is no words to describe that urgency of
17 this request on behalf of the five surviving elders, who
18 personally witnessed the first Treaty payments. This
19 Treaty signifies honour, trust and respect. Instead they
20 now remember the government abandoning the Sayisi Dene.
21 They felt the despair. They witness the needless deaths
22 of their children, the children's children and so on.

23 It is important that the Sayisi Dene
24 renegotiate the Treaty to suit the needs of our children

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1 in the 21st Century and other Aboriginal groups across
2 Canada. It is crucial that the Sayisi Dene regain control
3 over their education, their health and social services.

4 Through education we can teach Aboriginal and
5 non-Aboriginal about our history so that this type of
6 injustice would not happen to our future generation.

7 Through economic development, we will
8 build our future, our way to renew pride and dignity and
9 hope to our youth. Most of all, our health can only be
10 regained through our own efforts, with resources from the
11 outside.

12 My people need a permanent healing
13 centre, permanently funded to heal ourselves from the
14 psychological damages effected by this relocation.

15 We need to have equal recognition, an
16 equal voice in the development of our unsettled land
17 claims.

18 A national public apology to our people.

19 And most of all, we would like to see funding being put
20 in place to put a monument in Churchill, Manitoba where
21 many of our people are buried in unmarked graves. An
22 eternal flame, a memory so that nobody will forget what
23 was happened in Churchill.

24 With this, I would like to thank everyone

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1 for listening to our story. On behalf of the Chief and
2 Council and the Band members of the Sayisi Dene First
3 Nation, Ma See Ceo.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
5 much for coming and telling us about what happened to your
6 people. You are certainly a very eloquent spokesperson
7 for your people and it's a very tragic story. We have
8 been looking at this issue of forced relocation of native
9 people. We have been looking at it in relation to the
10 arctic exiles and also in relation to the people of Davis
11 Inlet, and we've been having our staff do some research
12 in the area as a basis for recommendations to be made
13 generally on the issue of forced relocation and the tragic
14 aftermath of these government policies and we'll certainly
15 be very pleased to include in that the relocation of your
16 people. So any further information that you can give us
17 that we can pass on to our research staff so as to include
18 in our overall discussion of forced relocations of native
19 people we'll, of course, be very pleased to have and we
20 will certainly take your request back to Ottawa for a public
21 hearing in Tadoule Lake. We've just held a public hearing
22 in Ottawa on the arctic exile situation and had the exiles
23 come down to Ottawa in order to tell their story at a
24 location where it would be most effective in terms of media

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1 coverage and so on.

2 We had earlier been up, a group of us,
3 to Inukjuak in Northern Quebec and heard the testimony
4 of some of the exiles up there, but they had indicated
5 a willingness to come to Ottawa to participate in a hearing
6 in a place where they thought it would be most public,
7 receive most public attention and media coverage, but we
8 will certainly take your request back to Ottawa with us
9 for a public hearing in Tadoule Lake and also your request
10 for an apology from the Federal Government and for funding
11 for the healing process and for a monument for those who
12 died and any other recommendations that you are making,
13 we will take back with us and share with the other
14 commissioners.

15 I want to thank you very much for coming.

16 It's a very, very tragic story and a very moving one.
17 I will ask my colleague whether he has any questions or
18 comments he would like to make. Paul?

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Hello. I,
20 too, want to thank you very much for your presentation.
21 It was an issue that I had heard about and has received
22 some publicity, but it seems not nearly the kind of
23 publicity that and attention that it deserves to get by
24 Canadians.

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1 It strikes me that the situation that
2 you have described to us exemplifies in many ways the very
3 brutal policies that were followed by the Federal
4 Government with respect to the relocation of people in
5 this country and to the shock, I think, of many reasonable
6 minded Canadians is still being today defended by some
7 officials.

8 I echo the words of Commissioner Wilson
9 that you told us a very moving story. It is interesting
10 to note that historically governments have taken away
11 things from the Dene, from other aboriginal peoples by
12 using the power of the pen. You have indicated yourself
13 in your presentation that treaties took away the land and
14 that the signatures that appeared on the government's
15 documents did not represent the peoples own signatures.

16 I've been informed how government officials held the pen
17 and asked people to merely touch it as they signed, not
18 only treaties, but other documents by which people gave
19 away their rights and this was a feature quite recently
20 in transactions. I think you were showing that changes
21 are taking place; that you are now holding a pen and that
22 you are now telling your people's story. You are doing
23 it on your own. There is no government official holding
24 your pen. It is your action. These are your words that

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1 you are writing down and that you are telling us and it
2 seems to me that this is one of the most important things
3 because it is very difficult to improve the effects of
4 these brutal policies but it does seem that publicity is
5 one of the means available to assist governments and
6 perhaps, hopefully, doing better but certainly in not doing
7 again by putting these matters to public light.

8 It seems that some of the
9 recommendations that you make would assist your asking
10 for a hearing, for example, in Tadoule Lake and as has
11 been indicated, that is certainly a recommendation that
12 we will take back to the other commissioners. Of course,
13 there are two of us here. We travel in different panels
14 across the country, but your very powerful story is one
15 that often in the history of peoples is kept not only in
16 stories, but in songs for the reason that it needs to be
17 publicized so that the brutal policies can be exposed and
18 I certainly hope that you will be able to get some redress
19 for these great wrongs that have been inflicted in the
20 name of the people of Canada.

21 I want to thank you myself for your
22 presentation. We take very close notice of the
23 recommendations that you make and we will be more than
24 happy to take them back with us. Thank you very much also

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1 to your daughter and the elder for coming to assist you
2 here today. Ma See Ceo.

3 **Ila Bussidor:** One request that I would
4 like to say is that I would like what you have just stated
5 there, is it possible to get a letter to the Chief and
6 Council as soon as possible stating here what you just
7 said? Is there, you know, can there be a letter drafted
8 up and signed by you, both of you, and sent to my community
9 as soon as possible?

10 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes, we'll do
11 that.

12 **ILA BUSSIDOR:** Thank you very much.

13 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you for
14 coming and bringing your daughter. Thank you.

15 We're going to beak for lunch now, but
16 we will resume at 1:15.

17 (THE HEARING TOOK A RECESS AT
18 11:50 AND RESUMED AT 1:25)

19 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** We're going to
20 resume and I think our first presenter is the Manitoba
21 Hydro. Would Mr. Riehl, Mr. Wonnick and Mr. Shanks come
22 up to the table. Is it Riehl? We are ready to hear from
23 you when you're ready.

24 **DENNIS RIEHL, MANITOBA HYDRO:** My name

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1 is Dennis Riehl. I'm the Vice-President of Personnel and
2 Services at Manitoba Hydro. I've been employed with
3 Manitoba Hydro in a wide range of corporate activities,
4 ranging from construction to customer service and at the
5 present time, I'm in the personnel and supply part of the
6 organization.

7 In the course of my career, I spent
8 twelve years in Northern Manitoba and I've had the
9 opportunity to work with Aboriginal people and most
10 recently I played a role in revamping corporate policies
11 directed at the participation of Northern Aboriginal
12 people in business and employment opportunities created
13 by our corporation.

14 With me today is, to my immediate right
15 is Fred Wonnick, Division Manager of Services and he's
16 responsible for procurement and business opportunities
17 in our company related to Aboriginals and next to him is
18 Bill Shanks, our Northern Region Division Manager
19 headquartered in Thompson and he is responsible for
20 customer service in Northern Manitoba.

21 I just mention that the Commissioners
22 have been provided with a copy of an earlier submission
23 which was made on October the 6th of 1992 to the Northern
24 Manitoba Economic Development Commission by our President,

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1 Mr. R.B. Brennan. That document is still current and
2 reflects the corporate perspective and initiatives
3 relative to our past and future relationship with
4 Aboriginal peoples.

5 We are pleased we have been invited to
6 make a presentation to the Commission today.

7 I want to say a little bit about Manitoba
8 Hydro. Manitoba Hydro is an electric utility with the
9 mandate to supply power to the people of Manitoba. We
10 are the fourth largest electric utility in Canada and serve
11 three hundred and eighty thousand residential and
12 industrial customers and we have a little over four
13 thousand employees. About ninety-nine percent of
14 electricity generated is from eleven Hydro electric
15 generating stations on the Winnipeg, Saskatchewan and
16 Nelson Rivers. All areas with significant Aboriginal
17 populations. These projects have enabled Manitoba Hydro
18 to provide large quantities of reliable and low cost
19 electricity to Manitobans and to produce thousands of job
20 opportunities, particularly here in the construction
21 phases. Unavoidable, however, some of these past
22 developments have led to flooding of over one thousand
23 square miles and has also led to changes in the water
24 regimes on many additional miles of waterways. So, that's

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1 a bit of a perspective on where I'm coming from.

2 I want to talk about linkages of Manitoba
3 Hydro to the Aboriginal peoples. By virtue of its
4 widespread service area and heavy reliance on Hydro
5 electric power, Manitoba Hydro's activities have had a
6 marked influence on Aboriginal people, especially in
7 Northern Manitoba.

8 Talk about project impacts. The most
9 notable influence has resulted from our use of resources
10 to produce Hydro electric power. In doing so, we have
11 affected areas of water and land traditionally used and
12 occupied by Aboriginal people. And have affected
13 opportunities for traditional resource harvesting and
14 traditional lifestyles. Experience with those effects
15 have significantly influenced the outlook of Northern
16 Aboriginal people towards Manitoba Hydro. The recent
17 impression in the Aboriginal community at Manitoba Hydro
18 is uncaring and insensitive to their interests in the
19 environment in which they live, and that Hydro cannot be
20 trusted to keep its promises.

21 This has resulted in Northern Aboriginal
22 communities feeling alienated from Manitoba Hydro, and
23 I'll speak a little more about, later about our desire
24 and actions as a result of that feeling.

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1 Last and overlooked but perhaps the
2 greater importance for the future are other connections
3 between Manitoba Hydro and the Aboriginal community.
4 Electric service itself is one of those. Manitoba Hydro
5 supplies electricity to every Aboriginal community in the
6 province including those in the remote North. And that's
7 also those that do not have road access. The provision
8 of this service has resulted in a more comfortable and
9 convenient lifestyle for residents of those communities.

10 Although concerns exist especially in Northern Manitoba
11 is about high electricity bills. In spite of the fact
12 that Manitoba Hydro rates are among the lowest in North
13 America, and, of course, bills are related to consumption.

14 Jobs and business opportunities.
15 Manitoba Hydro employs a significant number of Aboriginal
16 people in its activities. In total, between two hundred
17 and fifty and three hundred of our employees in the
18 corporation have declared themselves as Aboriginal, and
19 in a declaration survey in 1991, about twenty percent of
20 our permanent Northern workforce of six hundred and fifty
21 people have declared themselves to be of Aboriginal
22 ancestry.

23 We are also an important source of
24 business opportunities for Northern Aboriginal

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1 businesses. During the past year, about sixty-five
2 business contracts were awarded to these businesses. Some
3 of the most notable projects were the construction of a
4 hundred and thirty-eight thousand volt transmission line
5 from Kelsey Generating Station to the Split Lake Community
6 for a cost of about 3.7 million dollars. Some of the works
7 were totally done by the Split Lake Band Construction
8 Company and the line construction itself was handled in
9 a joint venture involving the Split Lake Band. Another
10 one was the Cross Lake Road project costing almost eight
11 million dollars and that was undertaken as a joint venture
12 between a Winnipeg firm and the Cross Lake Band
13 Construction Company. This joint venture was highly
14 successful, coming in on schedule and within budget. From
15 ninety-two percent of the workforce were Aboriginal.

16 Environmental Assessment. Manitoba
17 Hydro as part of the environmental review process has
18 sought to involve Aboriginal communities in the siting
19 of the north/central and Split Lake transmission lines
20 through local community and open house meetings, to
21 encourage community involvement, information materials
22 have been translated into local dialects and video tape
23 presentations have been prepared to assist communications.

24 Compensation. Manitoba Hydro is

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1 committed to addressing adverse impacts to Aboriginal
2 people resulting from our activities. The resolution of
3 outstanding issues and grievances has been accelerated
4 in an attempt to respond to concerns that the corporation
5 was not acting quickly enough. We recognize that much
6 more still needs to be done to remedy the losses to
7 livelihood and traditions that our projects have
8 contributed to. An indication of that is that, Manitoba
9 Hydro has spent over one hundred million to date on
10 compensation payments and has reached major settlements
11 with Split Lake First Nations and First Nations in Grand
12 Rapids for the areas such as Chemawawin and Moose Lake.

13 Work is well underway on a major
14 settlement with the Nelson House First Nations. The
15 settlements all recognize the importance of Aboriginal
16 self-determination through conditions that gave First
17 Nations maximum latitude in the use of the settlement
18 funds. Manitoba Hydro recognizes that its relationship
19 with Aboriginal people to date has not been satisfactory,
20 and it is highly desirable to improve this situation.
21 We know where this progress is made with the federal and
22 provincial governments toward Aboriginal self-government
23 and an associated land base. Our function as a provincial
24 public utility serving Aboriginal people in Manitoba will

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1 have to be reexamined. New jurisdictional frameworks will
2 develop, but for now, we must address present realities.

3 One of those realities are a need for reconciliation with
4 Northern Aboriginal interests.

5 Part of the reconciliation process is
6 addressing outstanding issues. The other part is wanting
7 to address future opportunities. We know that there is
8 much to learn in this regard. Some initiatives that we
9 have undertaken or are contemplating in this regard are
10 as follows.

11 Number one. Implementation of revamped
12 Northern employment and purchasing policies that
13 strengthen measures for maximizing Northern Aboriginal
14 participation in our Northern jobs and contracts.
15 Economic self-sufficiency is crucial to achievement of
16 Aboriginal aspirations. Our policies provide a useful
17 mechanism to enable Manitoba Hydro to contribute to this
18 objective. We believe that our policies in the area of
19 joint ventures between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal
20 business interests, represents one of the most effective
21 means of strengthening the Aboriginal business community.
22 Our experience with the application of this policy, may
23 merit further consideration by the Commission.

24 Number two. Involvement of potentially

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1 affected Aboriginal communities early in the planning of
2 potential projects. During the early planning stages of
3 a project well before any commitments are made, a wider
4 range of options are considered and more flexibility exists
5 in the choices that can be made. By using this approach,
6 Hydro can develop a fuller understanding and appreciation
7 of the communities' interest and concerns, which should
8 result in decisions that are mutually acceptable to the
9 community. Our first initiative of this type recently
10 got underway with the Split Lake First Nations regarding
11 potential development of water power sites at Bithay (ph)
12 and Gull Rapids on the Nelson River.

13 Under this process, Hydro and the First
14 Nation are studying potential effects of project
15 alternatives before selecting a preferred alternative.
16 The process includes joint determination of the Terms of
17 Reference, joint selection of professionals and regular
18 meetings of a working group. We are already seeing
19 evidence in this process that it has the potential for
20 making improvements in our relationship with Split Lake.

21 Number three. Standardizing
22 electricity rates across Manitoba. Presently Hydro has
23 different rates for different residential customer groups.
24 By standardizing rates, concern about unequal treatment

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1 by smaller Aboriginal Northern communities will be
2 addressed. A recommendation will be taken to the Board
3 in the near future. If approved, a submission will be
4 made to the Public Utilities Board. Manitoba Hydro
5 appreciates there is no easy road to improve relations
6 with the Aboriginal community. From a corporate view,
7 we are working to build a positive relationship. We will
8 have to demonstrate our respect for the rights and
9 interests of Aboriginal people and work diligently
10 involving Aboriginal people in a meaningful way in our
11 planning and operations. Manitoba Hydro is prepared to
12 contribute more practical to future Aboriginal development
13 and to make adjustments in its policies and practices to
14 better reflect emerging Aboriginal rights, entitlements
15 and interests.

16 We hope your Commission succeeds in
17 clarifying a vision of a better future for Aboriginal
18 people in Canada.

19 Thank you very much.

20 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. Are
21 either of the other gentlemen going to be...

22 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Well, we thought if you
23 had any questions that we would undertake to answer them.
24 As they're involved in our corporation in the issues,

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1 I thought they should be at the table with us.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I'm
3 interested in what you were saying about consultation
4 process with the Native people prior to making a decision
5 to go ahead with a project, and I'm wondering, I'm not
6 too knowledgeable in this area; is there other choices,
7 is there a range of possibilities when you're talking about
8 major projects like this, of the conditions such that
9 really they point to a specific area for a project. Are
10 there alternatives? If the Native people are consulted
11 and they are able to indicate that they're going to, there's
12 going to be a very negative impact if a project is located
13 in a certain place, are there other choices, other
14 alternatives as to where to locate these projects?

15 **DENNIS RIEHL:** In most cases there are
16 some alternatives. If you were to examine alternatives
17 on whether or not you should construct, design and
18 construct a nuclear generating station as compared to an
19 electric hydraulic electric station, there certainly are
20 choices there. In all of our situations it's been the
21 most economical route to go to the North to develop the
22 Northern rivers and in that context, there are some choices
23 in terms of where you would site a project, and the level
24 of the head and that type of thing, so there are some choices

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1 in terms of how you would develop a site.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** So, consultation
3 ahead of time with Native people could be meaningful.

4 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Very meaningful.

5 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** We've heard since
6 we came here a plea by some groups that they feel they
7 should get their electricity free of charge in light of
8 the impact of the development and I'm wondering, in view
9 of the fact that many, it's a real drain on the resources,
10 I imagine, to pay these bills, is this a realistic
11 possibility as part of the compensation? In other words,
12 doesn't involve their dipping into their pockets but rather
13 be being forgiven the cost that they would otherwise have
14 to pay; is that a possible...?

15 **DENNIS RIEHL:** I suppose anything is
16 possible. To this point in time, our Board or our
17 Executive have not entertained a move in that direction.
18 There is virtually no one that gets electric energy free
19 of charge. The return on the resource is in other ways,
20 in the low electricity rates and that type of thing. We
21 do have some initiatives in terms of energy conservation
22 programs that customers can avail themselves to and those
23 are underwritten by the corporation. But, I assume that
24 if, that there is possibility, you know, if there are

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1 adverse impacts and there are settlements, there is nothing
2 to say that those monies can't be used from some trust
3 in order to pay MG accounts, I suppose.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I'll ask my
5 colleague if he has any questions or comments. Paul?

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you, and
7 thank you gentlemen for your presentation. The
8 circumstances involving Manitoba Hydro and the parting
9 of a thousand square miles that you've referred to in the
10 relationships with Aboriginal communities here is a fairly
11 long and certainly a complex history and it's one that
12 it seems to me we will have to study very carefully. I,
13 you know, I think this is a form in which we can conduct
14 the kind of inquiry that's necessary to have the sufficient
15 understanding of the issues to be able to get to the point
16 where we can make sound recommendations, but we will have
17 to get to that point. It seems to me that this is one
18 of the, a number of issues that we find in the country
19 where Aboriginal people were faced with enterprises which
20 might be called state enterprises, huge projects, where
21 the people had no real choice. That is, whether the thing
22 was going to happen or not going to happen and so the system
23 has been struggling to deal with the consequences of these
24 large projects and issues are so complex and many have

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1 expressed to us the hope that the country that gets the
2 benefit to this ought to act with a generosity of spirit
3 where peoples, ancient societies have been living in
4 homelands for a long time and now being disturbed and are
5 in the possession of lands, and it's very disastrous
6 consequences. You have told us that more needs to be done.

7 This is certainly an ongoing issue and I think it's one
8 of those issues that reveals to us that it's not possible
9 for anybody to wave a hand over an issue and expect that
10 things will be resolved simply, but, it's definitely a
11 part of a large category of issues that we must examine
12 very carefully.

13 I would like to ask a couple of specific
14 questions to try to gain a better understanding of your
15 hiring policy, if I may. As I said, I don't think we will
16 get very far with a thorough examination which we must
17 do in the long run about the whole issues, and I'm referring
18 now to your employment policies. There's a couple of small
19 points that puzzle me a bit.

20 Why is the reference to persons of
21 Aboriginal ancestry? You refer to twenty percent of the
22 six hundred and fifty people here as persons of Aboriginal
23 ancestry. I was wondering what relevance ancestry might
24 have here for these purposes?

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1 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Well, under our
2 definition of, I guess anyone that declares themselves as
3 Aboriginal is, under our definition, Aboriginal.

4 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Good. So,
5 there is no need to refer to ancestry?

6 **DENNIS RIEHL:** No.

7 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** It's simply
8 referred to as an Aboriginal person.

9 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Yeah.

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yeah. So,
11 generally, one will have ancestry, but not necessarily.
12 One might have been adopted, for example, at birth and
13 that's just one example, but I see the word fairly common
14 and I was trying to probe how, in practice a policy like
15 that would be implemented, but you've answered the question
16 by use of self-declaration.

17 **DENNIS RIEHL:** I would say that the vast
18 majority do have Aboriginal ancestry.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Right. If I
20 may, there's another very small point. On page three of
21 a summary that we have, it may not be your summary, there's
22 a reference, a preference for what is called "Project
23 Training, Employment and Purchasing Opportunities." And
24 there's an order. First - opportunities to Northern

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1 Aboriginal residence and businesses. Second is Northern
2 residence and businesses and third, to other Manitoba
3 residence and businesses. It seems to me there's a little
4 logical gap there. There is not a preference in the third
5 category for other, where you have other Manitoba
6 residents. Let's assume these are Southern people.
7 Aboriginal people say, from the South, are not head of
8 other Manitoba residents?

9 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Fred, do you want to
10 address this?

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** As a Cree from
12 Winnipeg, we have no preference compared to another
13 Canadian who's not Aboriginal; is that right?

14 **FRED WONNICK:** I'll try and answer it
15 this way. If you're talking purely about our hiring
16 practices for people that will be our employees, Aboriginal
17 is Aboriginal. It doesn't matter where in the province
18 and so we have a preference for hiring Aboriginal people
19 as employees. In looking at business opportunities and
20 business contracts, we do have policies that are proposed.

21 We are sharing them with the Aboriginal community and
22 with the hopes of getting input before we finalize them.

23 Those policies do provide for preferences for firstly,
24 Aboriginal businesses in Northern Manitoba and we have

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1 written those policies to cover Northern activity, not
2 just major projects, but anything we do within the Northern
3 Affairs boundary. The preference is aimed at Northern
4 Aboriginal businesses because that's where we do most of
5 our work, related to Hydro electric generation and
6 transmission lines and those kinds of activities. And
7 fifty-four percent, as I understand it, of the population
8 in Northern Manitoba is Aboriginal and we felt it
9 reasonable and correct and right that we have proper
10 policies for those Aboriginal businesses.

11 So therefore, if, for any work we do in
12 the Northern Affairs boundary, we will look to the
13 Aboriginal communities in the vicinity of the North. If
14 there is an Aboriginal business that is capable of meeting
15 the schedule, the quality and price within reason,
16 remembering we have a preference on price, we pay a little
17 extra premium, if that's necessary. That's not always
18 necessary if the Aboriginal business can handle the work,
19 we will sit down and negotiate a contract with them.

20 Our second preference then would be for
21 Northern businesses, Northern Aboriginal and lastly would
22 be Manitoba. Sorry, next would be Manitoba businesses
23 and then other businesses. So we arrange the preference
24 policies in that regard.

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1 In the last year, year and a quarter,
2 we've done about sixty-five business contracts with
3 Aboriginal firms. So they appear to be working, even
4 though they're proposed policies, we're trying them to
5 see if they will work.

6 **DENNIS RIEHL:** I guess I could say one
7 more thing to add to that Fred, is that, anywhere that
8 we have worked and it's adjacent to a small community,
9 we would give that community preference in the
10 specification. It's only natural practice that's how it
11 works.

12 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very
13 much for your assistance. I was indicating the view that
14 the issues involving Hydro are very important ones and
15 I'm assuming that our research people are involved in
16 studying these issues. I don't know if you're aware
17 whether Manitoba Hydro as an entity will be making some
18 formal presentations to this Commission or if you're
19 involved in any of the particular case studies that have
20 been undertaken by the Commission. I'm just asking you
21 here. I don't know. I'm wondering if you might know if
22 there are any direct involvement in the other work of the
23 Commission?

24 **DENNIS RIEHL:** I'm not aware of any

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1 other direct work with the Commission.

2 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Okay. Well,
3 in any case, I look forward to whatever it is we will be
4 doing to study the issues and I want to thank you for your
5 assistance today.

6 **DENNIS RIEHL:** Thank you very much.

7 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
8 much. I apologize for the delay. We're having some
9 linguistic problems here, but I believe that Marguerite
10 Sanderson is about to arrive to make the next presentation
11 on behalf of the Northern Women's Resource Service. So
12 she will be here in a minute or two. Yes, we're ready
13 to hear from you any time you're ready to start.

14 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON, NORTHERN WOMEN'S**
15 **RESOURCE SERVICE:** Well, first of all, thank you for
16 waiting.

17 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Not at all.

18 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Thank you.
19 Hello. My name is Marguerite Sanderson, President of the
20 Northern Women's Resource Services.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I wonder If you
22 could move the mike over a bit so that people can hear
23 you.

24 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** On behalf of the

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1 Northern Women's Resource Services, collective boards,
2 staff members, we thank the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
3 Peoples for the opportunity to express our interest,
4 concerns that pertain to this situation of Aboriginal
5 people in Canada.

6 I'm going to be using NWRS, short for
7 Northern Women's Resource Services, because I find it
8 pretty long.

9 NWRS is a regional non-profit
10 organization committed to improving the situation of the
11 Northern women and their families, in the social, economic
12 and political spheres. We work towards these commitments
13 through a base office in Flin Flon, which opened in 1989
14 and the Opasquia Women's Resource Centre in The Pas which
15 opened in 1990.

16 The Opasquia Women's Resource Centre
17 focuses on the needs of Aboriginal women in the North.
18 NWRS believes in the right of all women to participate
19 equally in society. Our commitment is to work together
20 for the advancement of women in the social, economic and
21 political spheres. NWRS is constituted as an advocate
22 for Northern women and their families living North of 53
23 parallel.

24 Furthermore, the provision for the

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1 opportunity in the North to network and establish links.
2 Northern Women's Resource Service's main objectives are,
3 to end violence against women, to foster the development
4 of education and employment opportunities in the North,
5 to assist, encourage and support Northern communities in
6 the development of community resources. To be a clearing
7 house for information or issues affecting women in the
8 North. To respond to the request of Northern women through
9 direct service delivery. After saying all that, that
10 tells you a little bit about what Northern Women's Resource
11 Service is about.

12 Moving on, this presentation will focus
13 on the needs of Northern Aboriginal women. Secondly, in
14 reference to conference reports and annual meetings
15 certain topics will be reviewed pertaining to the situation
16 of Aboriginal women in the North. Thirdly, the impact
17 of residential abuse on women and their families will be
18 discussed, and last several ideas, solutions will be
19 presented.

20 The needs of Aboriginal women are many.
21 For example, the need for resources. More funding to
22 be made available for economic development. Resource
23 material distribution. Adequate libraries and learning
24 centres. Increased subsidies for day care and day care

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1 facilities. Funds for services to youth and elders in
2 establishing a support network. Training employment and
3 opportunities and also settlement of land claims. To
4 establish a banking system for women in the North.

5 In terms of support. Need for a
6 healing process to establish support groups. Adequate
7 public and medical services. To establish networks and
8 links. Revitalize the positive relationship between
9 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Need for child
10 care. Need for recreation centres. More safe homes and
11 crisis centres on reserves operated by Aboriginal women.

12 Shelter or residence for abusive men,
13 so that they can leave abused families and seek
14 counselling. Aboriginal hearing centre in the North.
15 To look after spiritual needs of youth. There's also a
16 need for support groups for women. To work together and
17 support other organizations and we also need support from
18 our leaders.

19 In terms of equal opportunity. More job
20 opportunities for women. More business opportunities.
21 Aboriginal women must participate in decision-making,
22 leadership and politics. Culturally appropriate
23 programs, and also a need or preserve cultural values and
24 beliefs. To develop and establish a voice. For

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1 self-determination to ensure protection of rights and they
2 are also to be defined by Aboriginal people.

3 In terms of training. Need for lobby
4 skills. A need for upgrading programs, literacy programs,
5 parenting skills. Aboriginal teacher training programs.
6 More public education dealing with abuse, physical,
7 emotional and sexual.

8 In terms of legal justice issues.
9 Support the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice
10 Inquiry. Also, more legal information workshops in the
11 North. Restructuring of existing legal system for fair
12 and equal treatment of Aboriginal peoples. Support and
13 research the aspects of the Aboriginal Justice System and
14 also to utilize the elders who are part of the tribunal.
15 Proper cross-cultural training for police, judges,
16 lawyers and other service providers in the justice system.

17 Support services for women whose spouses are
18 incarcerated. Improve legal representation services.

19 And in terms of education. Culturally
20 relevant curriculum in schools. Utilization of elders,
21 community people who assist in schools. Develop
22 strategies to preserve the right to strengthen the
23 language. Mobilization of the communities. Once
24 support is shared, research should be conducted in the

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1 area of community resources to work toward common goals.
2 Teaching methods that are a critical for effective
3 community control over language education. The need to
4 establish a language program that integrates a holistic
5 view of the entire learning process because it's the
6 joining force for the children's total development. Also
7 there's a need for tools in terms of technology.

8 Technology can significantly extent the range of teaching
9 techniques, learning aids, for example, computer, video
10 and tape recorders, computer network and distance
11 education programs.

12 There is also a dire need of more
13 facilities on reserves and also in terms of health and
14 services. The medical services branch needs to be more
15 accountable in providing effective services. The need
16 for clean running water to combat disease and infection.

17 Nutrition awareness to be promoted. Afer care homes on
18 reserves and also in the urban settings. Involvement in
19 decision-making process will benefit the medication
20 distribution to Aboriginal peoples.

21 Transportation needs a large
22 improvement. The increase of interpreter and escort
23 services. Mental health workers on reserves are needed.
24 Self-examination workshops for women. Establishment of

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1 traditional healers and also to recognize - we need to
2 be recognized. And we also need a self-defence workshops.
3 Offenders abuse counselling. We also need suicide
4 prevention and intervention counselling provided to the
5 youth. Better quality housing on reserves. The shortage
6 of housing is still ongoing.

7 And in terms of policy changes. There
8 was a discussion on Aboriginal self-government. I'm going
9 to be saying some stuff on Aboriginal government later.
10 Effective process to address and recognize the issues
11 and needs of women and their families and also to become
12 active and participate in policy change. These needs were
13 expressed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women at our
14 second annual conference. It was called The Gathering
15 of Northern Women Speaking Out. It was held in Thompson
16 in September, 1991. Most recently, Northern Women's
17 Resource Services hosted its third annual conference of
18 Northern women gathering to empower and heal themselves.
19 In particular, these two conferences have proven to be
20 effective in terms of exploring the needs and issues,
21 solutions and the start of a healing process.

22 The topic of self-government was
23 discussed at our last AGM in Flin Flon on September of
24 '92. The results were self-government has to be defined

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1 by Aboriginal people. To be secured by establishing a
2 mechanism to ensure equal representation at all levels
3 of government. Most often Aboriginal women are faced with
4 the difficult question such as, what is self-government?
5 Will Aboriginal women be included in the process? Will
6 there be a mismanagement of funds? The main portion is
7 accountability. Who is going to be accountable? An
8 opportunity is not being provided to all Aboriginal people
9 to explore the aspects of self-government in Canada.

10 The issues of Bill C-31 impact on
11 Aboriginal women have not yet been resolved to date. This
12 must be resolved in order for starting a dialogue on
13 self-government. Furthermore, the outstanding land
14 claims and the security of our land are to be resolved
15 before self-government can be implemented. The land is
16 considered very important to Aboriginal people. Without
17 this foundation, how can we hope to govern ourselves
18 accordingly? Furthermore, there were four aspects of
19 self-government that were discussed.

20 Definition. To define it and to define
21 who would be part of the self-government process.
22 Resources, and who's paying for that? Jurisdiction.
23 Authority to make laws and to enforce them and relationship
24 with other governments.

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1 The impact the residential era has
2 caused more lasting affects on Aboriginal people. We are
3 still struggling to deal with the continuous cycle of
4 physical/sexual abuse that is prevailing in our Northern
5 communities. Those communities lacking services and
6 healing, although these difficulties were not always met
7 with compassion, understanding and tolerance in the
8 residential homes operated by the Roman Catholics. It
9 has a lot to do with the federal government responsibility
10 for providing education to Aboriginal people. Yet, it
11 is difficult to attribute specific responsibility to any
12 given individual or group. The issues are very complex
13 and span over many years. It is not easily understood.

14 Furthermore, NWRS understands that the
15 convocation of Catholic communities have recently come
16 up with a fund of half a million dollars to be augmented
17 by the other community parishes. This money will be used
18 within the five year span. A funding committee composed
19 of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals will be formed to
20 determine criteria applications from community based
21 native groups.

22 However, the convocation of Catholic
23 communities are inviting other Catholic organizations and
24 societies to join and enter dialogue with other Aboriginal

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1 people in their regions. To assist in bringing problems,
2 in bringing wholeness to their people. Aboriginal people
3 need to collaborate with other organizations and
4 societies. Residential abuse is just one of the methods
5 that was used for cultural genocide. There are other
6 systems in place that contribute to many social problems
7 faced by Aboriginal women in the North. Just recently
8 the provincial administration of Social Assistance has
9 cut back on training funds for single parents. It is very
10 difficult to improve your life situation when you are on
11 social assistance. You cannot afford to pay for your own
12 training.

13 A need to establish a formal process
14 whereby Aboriginal women and their families can come
15 together and make plans for the future. The vision is
16 still there for the future generations to take and carry
17 on with pride and self-determination.

18 I, for one, work towards improving the
19 situation of my environment, as well as many Aboriginal
20 women. Our contribution must be recognized in a
21 respectable manner and must be adhered to when dialogue
22 commences between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal.

23 In essence, I have expressed the needs,
24 issues and a few solutions to the hardships faced by

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1 Aboriginal people in the North. But the work is not
2 complete. NWRS will be hosting their AGM in the late fall
3 of this year. At that time, a report will be presented
4 to the members. This report will contain recommendations
5 to be adopted by the General Assembly.

6 At this time, I am not prepared to submit
7 any form of recommendations until further advisement from
8 my members. A preliminary report on our third annual
9 conference will be made available sometime in August.
10 NWRS will ensure that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
11 Peoples receive several copies.

12 I thank you for your time and your
13 patience. Do you have any questions?

14 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes. I'm
15 interested in what we've been hearing while we've been
16 here about the non-consultation with the women when
17 decisions are made, and that I find very disappointing,
18 because as we've travelled across the country going into
19 various communities, it seems that most of the initiatives
20 that have been taken in these communities, particularly
21 in the area of services, have come from the women and not
22 from the Native man. I'm not sure why that is so, but
23 it appears to be the case, that the Native women seem to
24 be the ideas people who have come up in many communities

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1 with various solutions and various suggestions with
2 respect to education, counselling, health, a whole variety
3 of areas, the initiatives, have come from the women in
4 the communities. And when I hear that the process does
5 not seem to involve the participation of the women, I get
6 very concerned about that and I'm wondering, I agree with
7 what you say, that decisions of such magnitude as
8 self-government, whether it should come about or not, if
9 women don't participate in those kinds of major decisions,
10 particularly affecting children and grandchildren, I think
11 that's something that is very serious, and I'm wondering
12 what steps can you take or your organization take or women
13 generally in the community take to get that participation,
14 to insist that you have a role in the making of decisions.
15 What is open to you to do about a situation like that,
16 because it's obviously a very serious situation? And
17 we're constantly told that women are fifty percent of the
18 population.

19 I see for myself what a very important
20 role they're playing in the life of communities across
21 the country. So, I'm wondering, have you given thought
22 to how that can be changed and how you can, how women can
23 get into it, get involved in the decision-making process
24 in communities?

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1 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** As a matter of
2 fact, their last conference that we held just several weeks
3 ago, this had come up in our discussions, in our group
4 discussions, workshops with the women. And it was stated
5 at that time, there was a recommendation put forth by one
6 of the elders from The Pas, who had stated that the women
7 go home, back into their communities and honour the men
8 who are supposed to be leading them, in terms of their
9 position as leaders and we're supposed to give them back
10 that honour, and that we are to encourage and support our
11 men. And that, to me, stands out at our last conference.
12 We are looking for solutions to improve the situation
13 in terms of relationship between the men and the women,
14 the Aboriginal men and the women. There has to be a process
15 in place whereby the women are recognized equally and where
16 they will be invited and respected to participate and to
17 have input on matters that affect them also on that reserve.
18 Most of the reserves, we have women that contact our office
19 in the Opasquia Women's Resource Centre, at least ninety
20 percent of our clientele are Aboriginal women. And we
21 find that there are conflicts and the mediation aspect
22 of it all is what concerns us. We see NWRS working in
23 that, towards that, in terms of mediating between, but
24 it's the community that has to come forward and to make

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1 a request to have workshops and we can only do so much.
2 We only have two and a half staff people working for our
3 organization. And a lot of the women that are assisting
4 in our organization are volunteers, also the collective
5 board is a volunteer, are volunteers.

6 And a lot of times we struggle amongst
7 ourselves. And at this last conference, we were
8 struggling with the budget. We had asked for funding to
9 have a conference to bring in most of our members from
10 the Northern communities, especially the isolated
11 communities. And not too much money came in from Sixstate,
12 women's programming. That's where we had, but they did
13 give us some and we also received contributions and that
14 was very, that was very good. I saw support there because
15 I was the one that coordinated the conference and there
16 was a lot of support out there and it's starting to change
17 now. Things are starting to happen in the North. I can
18 feel it and women that are coming out and this, speaking
19 out. It has to be done at this time, because there's the
20 uncertainty that's happening in Canada in terms of the
21 relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
22 is escalating, and it's not very good.

23 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I suspect that
24 it's going to be the women in both groups who are going

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1 to carry the responsibility of the creation of that new
2 relationship.

3 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** We have to do
4 that for our children.

5 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes.

6 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** We have to
7 ensure, we have to protect our children's future and we
8 don't have, we're in a position where we have to do that
9 now. When I think about children, as a mother, I have
10 five children, I often wonder what are they going to have
11 when they get older, when they become adults? What can
12 we secure for them now that they will have? That's my
13 main concern, and also in terms of what's happening in
14 Canada with the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
15 We have to come together and start learning from each other.
16 We have to share our resources. It's always been a vision
17 carried by our elders. But there are obligations and
18 responsibilities that are fulfilled which causes the bad
19 blood and Aboriginal people, for a long time now, have
20 expressed their concerns and they just want to get things
21 going. And they're asking for something that is entitled
22 to them. And we've got to find a solution here. We've
23 got to, because if we don't, we're in for a rough ride
24 and things are not going to get better. Instead, they're

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1 going to get worse. And before it escalates, I don't my
2 children hurt in any way or threatened, and as women, we
3 have that responsibility.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I agree
5 completely with what you've said. I'm interested in some
6 of the specific things that you've mentioned. You
7 mentioned the cross-cultural training for those involved
8 in the justice system and it's interesting that that also
9 is starting to happen and two of the judicial research
10 centres in the country, one in Ontario and one in British
11 Columbia have now, they've been involved in the production
12 of videos and which the scenes in court are portrayed and
13 these are shown to the judges, they're shown to all newly
14 appointed judges. They're also shown to existing judges
15 and they are asked to see how many discriminatory things
16 they could see in the video happening when perhaps a Native
17 person is testifying or is the accused person or a woman
18 witness is being examined by counsel and there a whole
19 number of things shown in the video that are cruelly bad
20 and are cruelly discrimination by the lawyers or by the
21 judge against the minority group. And it's interesting
22 that in one of these videos, there were about twenty such
23 incidents happened in the little scenario that was on the
24 screen, which were clearly discriminatory and quite a

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1 number of the judges who were watching that could only
2 spot three out of twenty. So, it proves the need for that
3 kind of instruction and through the video is perhaps the
4 most effective way of doing it, so that kind of training
5 has started now for the judges. Obviously we need it for
6 the lawyers as well, but at least it's happening and the
7 programs are being created and produced.

8 The other thing I wanted to ask about
9 was the issue of family violence because this is something,
10 of course we have this problem in white society as well,
11 and I'm wondering, I mean my view on this has always been
12 that while the women are the victims and the children are
13 the victims of this kind of violence, the problem is really
14 a man's problem. They're the source of it and that's where
15 the problem needs to be addressed and I'm wondering, what
16 is being done in your communities to address that issue.

17 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Well, many of
18 the women view that their spouses are in need of help and
19 that help is not being provided in terms of counselling.
20 We cannot blame the victim per se because the abuser is
21 a victim, and there needs to be an educational awareness
22 in the communities for families in terms of family
23 counselling. That has been brought up by many women.
24 The most important thing for women is to keep a family

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1 together and the man is there as your companion and as
2 your friend, and he's to assist you with the children,
3 in the home. He's there for you and you're there for him.

4 If it could only be seen that they are to compliment each
5 other and not work against one another, blame one another,
6 I think there can begin a healing process and also to
7 maintain the relationship, and I think that's the women
8 are asking for. It's been brought up quite a few times
9 and a lot of times there's women that are hurting real
10 bad from men and they are afraid of the men for long periods
11 of time, and the healing process, it takes a long time
12 to heal. So within that time that you need a healing of
13 some kind, all individuals or all, the whole family unit
14 should be receiving that help and that's where the healing
15 centre comes in.

16 There's a healing centre concept that
17 has to be developed and there's been some that have been
18 already. It's just a matter of getting those proposals,
19 those programs off the ground.

20 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes.

21 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** And applying
22 them. So that it can be a model for other communities
23 to begin a healing process, because that, that's very
24 important. If you're not healed then the violence, the

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1 violence cycle continues on. There has to be an
2 opportunity for healing and there has to be support for
3 that and resources made available for it. And once we
4 begin to heal, when we start to think about securing our
5 future, getting a job, when you're hurting and you're
6 breaking up inside, you cannot concentrate on going out
7 there and talking education and it's very difficult to
8 do that. And I find because of the lack of resources and
9 services to Aboriginal women, in particular, because they
10 face a high rate of family violence, and it's a known fact,
11 and a lot of these, a lot of the men in their leadership
12 roles tend to want to turn away. They don't really want
13 to deal with the issue because it's so close to home.
14 They might have been, they might have been abused or lived
15 in the kind of environment when they were growing. And
16 also the men don't recognize the symptoms and the effects
17 of family violence and how it causes the break-up and how
18 it contributes to the development of the children. That's
19 very important.

20 So that education is very important and
21 it's needed. And this is what NWRS will, we're trying,
22 with the help of the women, we'll try to combat or eradicate
23 family violence. And to work closely with other
24 organizations that work in the same area and then what

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1 we do is, we gather our resources and then we work on the
2 problem, once we have the support and the respect of what
3 we're trying to do.

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
5 much. I think that, I hope that you're successful in all
6 your endeavours. I admire you for your courage and your...

7 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** One other
8 objective that Northern Women's Resource Service has is
9 to promote harmony in terms of having a secure environment
10 for the women and their families. And that, to me, appeals
11 to me. That's why I'm involved in the organization. The
12 organization serves all women, not just Aboriginal women.
13 But you'll find in Northern Manitoba the Aboriginal
14 population is quite high and so our clientele tends to
15 be, at least sixty-five percent Aboriginal women. So,
16 we have to gear towards the women who are expressing these
17 concerns the most, and that's the Aboriginal women. So,
18 we're in a position to do things in the future and work
19 on it, and it's these presentations that will assist us,
20 because your recommendations that we'll be following, in
21 your report following your discussions and dialogue with
22 Aboriginal people will, I hope, will assist us in pursuing
23 our common goals.

24 They say that we don't have a lot of faith

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1 in the Commissions. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was,
2 is a good example. Not much has been done since then.
3 Very little has been done. And the failure of the
4 Constitution talks is another matter that's been brought
5 up quite regularly. We want to get on. We don't want
6 to leave things hanging, just because the Constitution
7 did not go through, we can't, all those concerns that were
8 brought forward and no solutions, should be worked on
9 further.

10 I thank you for your time.

11 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I'll
12 ask my colleague if he has any questions.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you.
14 Thank you for your presentation. I'd like to understand
15 a bit better the nature of your organization and its goals.
16 Can you tell us briefly the origins of your organization?
17 When were you established and why did you get established?
18 First of all, what goals did you set down for yourself?
19 What did you want to accomplish and what motivated you
20 to get established and how did you get to be funded and
21 how do you raise the money for your operations?

22 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Okay. The
23 Northern Women's Resource Service Collective. That's the
24 original name. That's the first name that it got. It

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1 was started by a few women who represented several women's
2 organizations here in Thompson. There was approximately
3 eight women involved, and it was a working committee, to
4 establish a resource centre for Northern women.

5 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Sorry.
6 What's a "Resource Centre"?

7 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** The Northern
8 Women's Resource Centre. To establish...

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I'm wondering
10 what that is. What's a "resource centre"? I don't know
11 what you mean by that.

12 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** A resource
13 centre is a centre that's providing information, referral
14 services, program support, support counselling. I'm
15 talking about Northern Women's Resource Services and what
16 kind of services we provide. Is that what you're looking
17 for?

18 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes, that's
19 what I wanted to know.

20 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Okay.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Because I
22 don't know what a resource centre is. It's a general term
23 and I wanted to know what

24 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Okay. Like I

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1 said, the Northern Women's Resource Service is a regional
2 organization and we provide information, referrals,
3 support counselling, advocacy, and we also have a lending
4 library. We also have formed support groups. And we also
5 have training and workshops and we developed training and
6 workshop packages and we have quite a few...

7 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Training to do
8 what?

9 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Communi-cation
10 skills, stress management, woman abuse, prevention,
11 decision making, problem solving, legal advocacy,
12 supervisory skills, cross-cultural training, community
13 development, crisis support counselling, assertiveness
14 skills, sexual assault and harassment, development,
15 self esteem, reproductive rights, support groups,
16 facilitation training, presentation skills and public
17 speaking.

18 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** How do you do
19 that? That's a tremendous workload it seems. How do you
20 do that?

21 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** It is, very much
22 so. We use our volunteers. We also have an executive
23 director who is qualified and also the coordinator who
24 made a presentation yesterday, Evelyn Ballantyne. These

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1 are training packages that we've developed over the years
2 since we've come into existence. And that was in 1989.

3 And in 1986, that's when the discussions about forming
4 this organization started. It took at least three years
5 of planning plus conducting surveys to find out the needs
6 of Aboriginal, not Aboriginal, the needs of Northern women
7 in Manitoba. And it was based on those studies that were
8 held within that two year span that our proposal was
9 developed and submitted here to the Department of Secretary
10 of State.

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** That's how
12 you're financed by the Department of Secretary of State?

13 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Yes. We get our
14 primary funding from the Secretary of State where there's
15 programming. No, Family Dispute Services, pardon me.
16 Family Dispute Services contributes a hundred and
17 twenty-three thousand eight hundred dollars to our
18 organization. We've received a cutback, by the way of
19 3.8 percent this past year. And we do, and that budget
20 operates our total offices. It's supposed to be for one
21 office, but we've extended, we've stretched our budget
22 to carry on the satellite centre in The Pas, and we're
23 in the process of establishing one here in Thompson.

24 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Some-thing

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1 that has perplexed me and I think has concerned people
2 is the perceived need to coordinate the work of various
3 agencies that are established from time to time. The
4 Province of Manitoba, itself, was conducting some
5 examination into the matter some years ago and it was
6 discovered that, I think, in the City of Winnipeg alone
7 there were, there was a large number of organizations.
8 The number one hundred and sixty some comes to mind, but
9 that may not be right, but, there are many, many, many
10 and apparently very few institutions in place to coordinate
11 the work that's been done by these various, various
12 agencies, many of which are doing the same sort of services,
13 although I think there are student councils that attempt
14 to do that.

15 Given your experience, I wonder if you
16 have any thoughts about that? The advantage that you might
17 see regarding the proliferation of various service
18 agencies in towns and cities?

19 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** We made contact
20 and we established links with organizations in the North.
21 We do have, we do work closely with the - we have affiliate
22 organizations within NWRS which is the Thompson Crisis
23 Centre is one. We also have the Aurora Crisis Centre in
24 The Pas and KTC has done some work along with NWRS. And

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1 we do receive support and encouragement from other
2 organizations that are not directly affiliated with our
3 organization. And we're always looking, like, Northern
4 Women's Resource Services, we have to be resourceful.
5 That's the business we're in. So, a lot of times we're
6 opposed with these funding problems and when we want to
7 start something and we want to go after funding, we do
8 ask for contributions and donations, and we find that with
9 the provincial cutbacks this year, we're already looking
10 at a few more this year that we're going to be approaching
11 for our next funding.

12 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I wonder if I
13 might impose on you and just ask a couple more very brief
14 questions.

15 The first one is to try to clarify a
16 point. I can visualize a university student down the road
17 looking at our transcripts and papers of this Commission
18 and I think we have to try to have some clarity. You're
19 referring to, somewhere in your presentation, to
20 interpreter and escort services.

21 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Services.

22 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** You are, are
23 you not, referring to medical services in this context?
24 Is that that right?

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1 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** Yes.

2 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I wasn't sure.

3 Thank you. I wanted to establish that. And my first
4 question is this. You listed in your presentation a number
5 of enterprise aspirations, that is, goals of NWRS, certain
6 things that they would like to see, I think, arising out
7 of a conference that you referred to, and they seem to
8 be different kinds of enterprises. Some of them do not
9 appear to have anything in particular to do with women
10 as women, but that's understandable. I'm not suggesting,
11 I don't think anyone is suggesting that women ought to
12 be concerned only with issues that are, that tend to women's
13 interests alone. Fine. That's not my question.

14 You did mention something though and I
15 wonder if you might assist me in understanding. You refer
16 to a recommendation for a banking system for women. That
17 I don't understand. I wonder if you can explain to me
18 what you have in mind?

19 **MARGUERITE SANDERSON:** We start very
20 small at the bottom. A lot of the women need education
21 in terms of how to manage their funds. We also need the
22 opportunity to go into a bank and establish our own account,
23 without the permission of our spouses. We find that we
24 run into that problem. That's also been discussed in the

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1 Northern Economic Development Commission. That's where
2 Hari Ashton had been the researcher for that particular
3 study and she, she had mentioned that in her study.

4 There was talk at one of our workshops
5 about the banking system itself. We need to have access
6 to a banking system. That's what I'm saying, that will
7 cater to our special status. I guess you could say, I'm
8 not sure on that particular one for their own banking.
9 What I had mentioned there are those needs and issues that
10 were discussed at our conference in AGM. I also have
11 workshops. And a lot times Northern Women's Resource
12 Services that, it conducts these workshops, conferences
13 and AGMs, we have a lot of issues that are challenging
14 us and also needs and because we do not have the resources
15 and the staff people to take each of these items - I only
16 wish we could do that, but to take these items and develop
17 proposals and to plan, strategize, we would most certainly
18 do that.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you very
20 much.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
22 much for coming and speaking to us. Thank you. Next on
23 my list is the Communities Economic Development Fund,
24 Loretta Clark. Anytime you're ready.

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1 **LORETTA CLARK:** Good afternoon.

2 Chairpeople, Commissioners and guests, we are pleased to
3 participate in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

4 My name is Loretta Clark and I am the General Manager
5 of Communities Economic Development Fund. I am a Northern
6 Manitoban. I have lived here and worked here all my life
7 and as such, economic development based on the principles
8 of sustainable development are very important issues, not
9 only to our organization, but also to myself.

10 As a representative from the Communities
11 Economic Development Fund, I am here to comment on the
12 economic conditions and opportunities or lac of the same
13 for Aboriginal peoples rather than to comment on some of
14 the issues raised in the discussion questions. As the
15 Communities Economic Development Fund does not have
16 policies on issues raised such as self-government, land
17 claims etc., these are not topics that I shall be addressing
18 on behalf of the CEDF.

19 The Communities Economic Development
20 Fund is a provincial Crown Corporation and it was
21 established in 1971. The purpose of the Fund was to have
22 lending access to small business development in Northern
23 Manitoba and at that time, in particular, to remote and
24 isolated communities who could not access or establish

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1 credit in the regular banking system. It was based in
2 Winnipeg until 1990 and the Minister Responsible, the Board
3 and Management, concurred that decentralizing the head
4 office to Northern Manitoba would better serve the needs
5 of our clients. So the decentralization process was
6 accomplished in August of 1990. Decentralization has been
7 very successful, bringing the staff, management and
8 services closer to the clients who are served. A better
9 understanding of the economic climate and the needs and
10 concerns of the people of the area has been developed.
11 The program has become a more meaningful tool in economic
12 development. And as a development agency, we at CEDF
13 become involved not only in the enterprises or industries
14 that our clients are involved in, but further, we meet
15 with the association such as the Fishing Associations,
16 and agencies such as Freshwater Fish, a marketing
17 corporation as far as our fishermen loans are concerned
18 and as far as our business loans are concerned, we meet
19 with business organizations and we get involved to try
20 to create a fairer playing field for Northern people, both
21 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

22 Our agency is not set up specifically
23 for either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people. It is
24 available to all Manitobans living within our designated

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1 lending area.

2 Our mission statement is to provide
3 financial and other assistance to entrepreneurs in support
4 of small business creation and expansion in Northern
5 Manitoba and the commercial fishing industry in Manitoba
6 under Part III of the Fisheries Act.

7 Our mandate is to perform as an effective
8 instrument in the promotion and expansion of sustainable
9 economic development in Northern Manitoba, specifically
10 providing services in lending, networking, industry
11 development, and business and information distribution.

12 Our corporate goals are to provide an
13 effective, efficient service to all inquiries and
14 applicants. To provide complete and concise analysis on
15 all loan submissions. To provide financial assistance
16 to all qualifying applicants. To effectively monitor all
17 financial assistance in a manner that is responsible to
18 the client and to the Fund. To administer controlled
19 collection procedures on all disbursed funds. To be
20 informed of all sources of economic development assistance
21 and opportunity offered by other agencies and so that we
22 can convey this to our clients. To develop and maintain
23 an open and effective dialogue with all client groups.
24 To be fiscally responsible to the Province and to be a

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1 good corporate citizen.

2 Communities Economic Development Fund
3 has provided approximately forty million dollars in loans
4 to individuals and community development corporations for
5 small and medium sized businesses in its twenty-two years
6 of existence. Approximately twenty percent of that money
7 has been written off as bad debt expense. The current
8 portfolio on our business loans program is seven million
9 dollars. Ten million dollars is are in the Fishermen's
10 Loan Program. Our objective is to have our clients attain
11 long term benefits from the loans to enhance the quality
12 of life for Northerners.

13 CEDF's financing includes seventy-five
14 to eighty percent Aboriginal clients. Most of the
15 financing is in term loans, although approximately fifteen
16 percent includes bridge financing for Aboriginal
17 business development grants through Aboriginal Economic
18 Programs delivered by the federal government.

19 We provide some management assistance
20 and aftercare to our clients, however, as staff is limited,
21 we look to other agencies for this support as well. Within
22 our program, our off-reserve loans are fairly successful.

23 Historically there are problems with
24 financing on reserves. Some of these include, security

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1 problems under Section 88 and 89 of the Indian Act which
2 prohibits taking chattel mortgages and security on
3 reserves. Problems such as a lack of training and
4 education, as well as a lack of business experience, does
5 not provide strong candidates for management or for loan
6 applications, and as a result the success of some of the
7 business operations is limited on reserves. Lack of
8 understanding of private ownership and commitment to debt
9 are other deterrents to borrowing. Collections also are
10 very difficult from loans made on a reserve.

11 Basic criteria for loans and successful
12 entrepreneurships include strong management skills,
13 viable projects having a market or client base for the
14 business, good business plans that are workable, equity
15 positions and commitment to repayment of debt.

16 It has often been very difficult to
17 address entrepreneurship development on Native reserves
18 due to an underlying inability to meet sufficient criteria
19 as just identified.

20 We at CEDF have been working with local
21 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations to better
22 understand these underlying issues and work at developing
23 solutions to these problems. Some issues that are being
24 addressed or that require addressing are the following:

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1 A change or repeal of the Indian Act based on securities;
2 A better quality of training and education in schools on
3 the reserve including business training to better equip
4 the young people who consider entrepreneurship as a career
5 option; Work experience opportunities in off-reserve
6 settings to obtain a better understanding of business
7 operations and management including financial, marketing,
8 and service. The skills learned in off-reserve work
9 experience can be used when the individual returns to their
10 community to take an active role in economic development;
11 We require more hospitality/service sector training to
12 better prepare for jobs in the tourism sector which has
13 a great future with the Aboriginal culture and art; Also
14 training in cottage industries such as arts and crafts
15 or other small cottage industries that people can create
16 goods with their own hands; There is a need for resource
17 harvesting development or food gathering; And a need for
18 more aftercare/monitoring of financed businesses to ensure
19 that financial accounting records are maintained on a
20 current basis and to ensure follow through of business
21 plans as closely as possible. This is achieved with
22 monitoring and assistance provided by our consultants and
23 other consultants in the field.

24 Most of our current loans to Aboriginals

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1 are off-reserve at this time. The business loans program
2 has an overall success rate of over eighty percent. The
3 Fishermen's Loan Program is experiencing approximately
4 seventy-five percent current status rate at this time.
5 Repayment in the Fishermen's Loans Program is through
6 Check-Off Assignment on Sales through Freshwater Fish
7 Marketing Corporation and this has provided a sound basis
8 for the credibility of the ongoing continuation of the
9 Fishermen's Loan Program.

10 CEDF's success rate on on-reserve loans
11 to small business has been quite low. Loan repayments
12 are difficult to enforce and many times the business or
13 equipment financed is not functional after a short period
14 of time. Due to the collections problem and business
15 management skills, CEDF is more cautious in approving loans
16 on-reserve.

17 Addressing the issue of
18 self-sufficiency, our belief is that in order to attain
19 self-sufficiency, one has to attain financial independence
20 and that is why our organization exists.

21 Individual financial independence of
22 the greater part of a society or segment of society leads
23 to independence of the group as a whole.

24 Skills training and development and

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1 education are key issues that are being addressed and
2 continue to need to be addressed.

3 Location is key to the success of
4 industry development. Most non-Aboriginal communities
5 were established in areas where an industry was located
6 or being developed.

7 Since the civilization of man, people
8 have moved to where they could make a living by hunting,
9 fishing, trapping, farming, mining, etc.

10 No one groups of people in the civilized
11 world has had the privilege of remaining in one place and
12 maintaining the ability of being self-sustaining over the
13 long term.

14 When mines or mills close, people are
15 forced to move on to look for employment. Unfortunately,
16 Aboriginal peoples cannot remain exempt from this basic
17 rule of mankind and Aboriginal peoples in the past moved
18 as required to be self-sustaining. The reserve system,
19 implemented by non-Aboriginals of the newly formed
20 Canadian government at the time of the signing of the
21 Treaties, has not created a realistic situation for the
22 Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal peoples.

23 Not all, and indeed, not many, reserves
24 in Northern Manitoba are situated where industry can be

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1 developed for an economic base for the community due to
2 transportation costs and lack of infrastructure.

3 Infrastructure is costly and funds may
4 not be available to develop the necessary infrastructure
5 that a community may require.

6 Non-Aboriginal Canadians as well as
7 Aboriginal Canadians are faced with huge deficits in the
8 provincial and federal government levels.

9 As we know, governments do not generate
10 wealth - individual Canadians and businesses pay taxes
11 from their earnings to governments in order to support
12 the fiscal demands of our country. Currently, taxpayers
13 are not able to keep up to the demands of meeting our annual
14 budgets, without considering the ability to reducing our
15 long term debt.

16 It is very necessary for all Canadians
17 to adopt the principles of sustainable development in which
18 environmental concerns as well as financial and industry
19 concerns are balanced.

20 In the absence of industry development,
21 Aboriginal peoples should look at the local options such
22 as food gathering and alternate food harvesting products
23 for self-sustaining communities. There is also an
24 international market for such products as seneca root,

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1 wild mushrooms and other local products that should be
2 developed. Correct harvesting techniques must be
3 developed in order to ensure there is no destruction of
4 the plants in the long term.

5 Financial independence for Aboriginal
6 people is very important. It requires a shared management
7 or partnering with industry and non-Aboriginal peoples
8 in order to encourage sustainable development.

9 In industrial communities, industry
10 development has side benefits for the economic growth of
11 a community. A market is created for services when
12 industry is developed. Example. In Thompson, with the
13 development of the mine, a community arose. Small
14 business came from that and a tax base was established
15 further increasing the development of our education and
16 health care and government services.

17 In non-Aboriginal communities,
18 incubation techniques for cottage industries should be
19 developed and food gathering, wild rice harvesting, Native
20 arts and crafts, tourism, etc., should be considered as
21 options to develop local economies and skills.

22 The relationship between Aboriginal and
23 non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada is based on mutual
24 respect.

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1 It has been very encouraging to see this
2 type of relationship developing in Northern Manitoba
3 through co-management boards, joint committees and
4 informal organizations.

5 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples
6 earn the respect of each other through cooperation and
7 joint management. Honesty, a sense of concern for each
8 other, understanding our differences and building on our
9 similarities, are the goals that help us succeed.

10 We feel that it is important to realize
11 that we are all Canadians living and working in one country.
12 We are not two countries or a group of many countries,
13 but we are Canadians and as Canadians, we must help each
14 other build on each other's strengths.

15 As Canadians, we have a responsibility
16 to our country, to each other and to ourselves to balance
17 the needs and interest of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
18 people.

19 Needs and interest should be separated.
20 Needs are requirements that must be addressed for all
21 Canadians. Currently Aboriginal peoples have special
22 needs such as developing the ability or skills to be
23 financially independent and emotionally and mentally to
24 feel their own self-respect and confident. Some

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1 non-Aboriginal peoples also have these same needs.

2 Education and training are key to
3 self-respect and independence. Personal success goes a
4 long way in helping an individual develop self-worth.
5 Accomplishment is a wonderful step in pride and confidence
6 building. The desire to access education and training
7 programs is and must be continued to be developed and the
8 programs must be functional and accessible. Standards
9 cannot and must not be compromised as it is not fair to
10 offer Aboriginal peoples a lower standard of education
11 and training than non-Aboriginal peoples. The Aboriginal
12 person deserves the same standards as other people to equip
13 themselves in today's competitive world.

14 In summary, Aboriginal and
15 non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada have embarked on a path
16 of mutual respect and understanding of each other and the
17 principles of sustainable development. We have seen many
18 improvements in our understanding and sharing of each
19 others cultures and backgrounds. Education and training
20 will empower our young people to become entrepreneurs and
21 look for personal satisfaction and success in the small
22 business world. Small business continues to be the
23 background of our great country of Canada and it is
24 important that have Aboriginal peoples share in the success

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1 and satisfaction of small business ownership. Cottage
2 industry development is often a key nucleus for building
3 an economic base.

4 Education programs are being reviewed
5 through institutions such as the Keewatin Community
6 College. The school system should be reviewing programs
7 in the interests of providing skills that are required
8 in teaching self-reliance in such areas as guide training,
9 nature, culture, and other topics that may well serve as
10 necessary resources in the development of tourism.

11 Organizations such as the Canadian
12 Council for Native Business needs to develop a more
13 grassroots level of participation for local peoples.

14 Our mandate at CEDF will be to continue
15 to strive to provide a more fair playing ground for Northern
16 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to work together
17 in a healthy, functional environment ultimately leading
18 to a mutual bonding and respect promoting individual and
19 community fiscal independence.

20 Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
22 much. I'm wondering about the Fishermen's Loan Program.
23 Is that program available to Aboriginal fishermen?

24 **LORETTA CLARK:** Yes. The Fishermen's

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1 Loan Program is available to all commercial fishermen
2 within the Province of Manitoba and eighty percent of our
3 clients are Aboriginal clients living in communities, a
4 lot of them in the Northern communities.

5 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Could you explain
6 how that works, and perhaps it's the technical terms you,
7 on page four, I'm not quite clear on, how that program
8 - could you give me some idea of how it works? Right in
9 the middle, "Most of our current loans", it starts and
10 then you have a reference to...

11 **LORETTA CLARK:** I'm talking about the
12 business loan program there. In the Fishermen's Loan
13 Program, I would think that probably where sixty percent
14 of the loans are in Aboriginal reserve communities.
15 Because we have a system called the "Check-Off Assignment"
16 when they deliver the fish to the Freshwater Fish agent
17 and a certain portion of their income comes to loan
18 payments, well then securities aren't as big an issue as
19 they are in small business, and so the security issue isn't
20 as relevant in the Fishermen's Loan. We do have different
21 criteria and really it's just based on past production
22 and at what level of loan that we'll supply monies to buy,
23 you know, equipment such as boats and motors, snowmobiles
24 and there is different criteria for the business loan

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1 program as compared to the Fishermen's Loan Program.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** So, you don't run
3 into the problem of security on chattels or anything like
4 that. It's simply the money is deducted...

5 **LORETTA CLARK:** That's right.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yeah.

7 **LORETTA CLARK:** And it's a very
8 successful program. It's been in existence since 1969
9 and I believe, you know, because of it, well currently
10 we have fifteen hundred clients, but at times there's been
11 twenty-two hundred clients and like I said, eighty percent
12 of those people are Aboriginal people that are our clients,
13 so, it has been a very functional loan program for employing
14 Aboriginal people.

15 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I'll
16 ask my colleague if he has any questions. Paul?

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Well, thank
18 you for your presentation. Looking at it with keen
19 interest, I do have a couple of small questions, but I'd
20 also like to take the opportunity to comment on a few of
21 the statements that you've made here. I find some of them
22 a bit challenging.

23 On page five, you say that, "No one group
24 of peoples in the civilized world has had the privilege

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1 or remaining in one place and maintaining the ability to
2 be self-sustaining". Would you assert that as an
3 historical fact with respect to France or England? I
4 wonder if you might expand on what you mean?

5 **LORETTA CLARK:** Okay. Historically,
6 you know, we have looked back at the movement of people
7 throughout history and there has been a migration from
8 the Mediterranean area up into Northern, up into Europe,
9 in Northern Europe and from there to North America and
10 a small group of people remain, but really populations
11 get to a certain level and then the rest of the people
12 have to move on. Like, it doesn't, say France, where you
13 have a population that remains stable and they may continue
14 to have offspring and everything and there's not enough,
15 like, you can't just keep on generating more and more people
16 in that area, you know, they have to move to make a living,
17 so, you know, there is always movement of people. I think
18 any area in the world can only sustain so many people.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I see.
20 You're talking about the capacity of an area to...

21 **LORETTA CLARK:** To sustain people.

22 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Do resources
23 for government.

24 **LORETTA CLARK:** Well, for themselves.

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1 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** For
2 themselves. I understand the point which I think comes
3 later that there are some places that, themselves, do not
4 generate much wealth. That's a bit more difficult to try
5 to relate that to historical migrations of peoples as I'd
6 like to think about, but, I'm not convinced there's a
7 necessary relationship there.

8 On page six, you refer to a statement
9 that I think represents the perception of many, many
10 Canadians. In Number 1 toward the bottom of the page you
11 say, "It is important to realize", when you say that, of
12 course you're serving it as an unquestioned fact, that
13 we're all Canadians living and working in one country and
14 so on. We're Canadians and as Canadians, we must help
15 each other. I think implicit in these statements, the
16 notion of some sort of equality for all who happen to be
17 within the borders of Canada, there are many Aboriginal
18 people across Canada who would not accept the assumptions
19 that lie behind that. What they would do is, they would
20 look at the history. Here they would be tempted to look
21 at history and they would ask themselves how is it that
22 these political boundaries that come to be put where they
23 are, and by what legitimate process then has political
24 power been exercised over them within these boundaries?

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1 And you see when you ask that question
2 and then it does a little bit of damage to the assumptions,
3 I think, that are between that. So for people who assert
4 these ideas, they're more concerned to ask about how the
5 concerns of the people for the exercise of political power
6 over them might be obtained, and some were involved, for
7 example, in restructuring the Constitutional basis of the
8 country as to legitimize that difficulty.

9 You seem to be accepting yourself, on
10 page seven, that "Aboriginal, there are Aboriginal peoples
11 who deserve as groups", because you say peoples, "same
12 standards as other peoples in today's competitive world".

13 And you have many people, Aboriginal people agreeing with
14 you on that point, was that, people say, for example, that
15 whereas five thousand dollars a year might be allocated
16 for the education of Canadian children generally, that
17 the federal government will provide for those that it
18 defines as Indians under the Indian Act if they provide
19 less than that. And so you will find a lot of support
20 for your suggestion that they ought to be treated equally
21 in a competitive world.

22 I'm wondering, I'd like to ask you about
23 a couple of points. The cottage industries; now, I think,
24 I've seen others, heard others, read about others, you

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1 have asserted as you do the very significant role of small
2 privately owned businesses in the economy, an economy which
3 would include - you mention things as Aboriginal
4 self-government and you give some examples here, arts and
5 crafts for example and so on, and a number of people have
6 talked about that. How can we initiate better arts and
7 crafts, production and distribution, airports, through
8 tourist outlets and so on. I wonder if you have had
9 experience yourself, what kind of interest is there for
10 people to work in their own homes and naturally generate
11 income for themselves without ever having to leave their
12 homes. Given the modern technology, it seems there's a
13 lot of potential there, but, is there any interest up there?
14 How do the Aboriginal political organizations around here
15 feel about that? I wonder if you might give us a bit of
16 information about that.

17 **LORETTA CLARK:** Okay. Basically my
18 initial exposure to this was when I was working with the
19 airlines and I did some work up in the Keewatin area of
20 Canada and also I was working with the Northwest
21 Territories group on tourism development etc. and at the
22 time I was working in that area, well then, the coops that
23 were formed in places like Baker Lake and the arts and
24 crafts that were developed, and in fact, they just had

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1 a meeting about three weeks ago with that coop and you
2 know, they have been quite successful and tend, you know,
3 to feel there's more on that and at the same token, about
4 a week after I had spoke with them and they were asking
5 me to identify more markets for them. I had the opposite
6 phone call from a group that wanted to access more products,
7 so I was able to connect the two. But, I have had several
8 different demands and interest from people - Aboriginal
9 art is very much valued and you now, it certainly is a
10 product that is saleable and we talked to people in the
11 German market, even in Ontario, Southern Ontario market,
12 and even as far as the Japanese market where they're very
13 much interested in the arts and crafts that are the
14 Aboriginal products. I sit on the Split Lake
15 Co-Management, Resource Management Board and one of the
16 board members and we were discussing at the board meeting
17 on, you know, the ability to set up some of these coops
18 that exist up in the Territories, because there is interest
19 in that type of product, if it's a quality product, and
20 so, I feel that there is a good market for it, and certainly
21 the potential to develop the market further and I think,
22 in a small way, when we talk about cottage industries,
23 that really is how a small business got started in the
24 first place, is somebody could bake better bread than

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1 someone else or someone could do some - make better jam,
2 and there are, you know, areas that attended meetings and
3 I also connected the business world on that. And I did
4 believe we can develop a market for whatever products that
5 we can get as long as the quality is there. And I do think
6 it's a potential market that has not been explored enough
7 in Northern Manitoba.

8 I don't know if you know Barry Parker
9 from the, he's the Executive Director of Canadian
10 Aboriginal Tourism, and he was up here speaking on and
11 touching on tourism development and that's certainly
12 something that not only promotes tourism, but promotes
13 a pride in producing something that's very unique and very
14 special, and there is a market for it.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. I
16 was...

17 **LORETTA CLARK:** Training does have to,
18 I think, speaking of Split Lake, they felt they only had
19 a few people that really had these skills in the community,
20 but you know, then we were saying, well, maybe there should
21 be training within the school system, you know, as an
22 optional course to take it so that the skills will come
23 back. Just like in Northern Manitoba, we have a lady that
24 does Birchbark biting and it's beautiful work and there's

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1 only very few people in the world that do it, you know,
2 and it's lovely. And it's our products like that that,
3 you know, I'm sure that would enhance the various
4 communities.

5 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. At the
6 same time, I was informed recently by one of the
7 cooperatives that you're referring to that they were having
8 difficulties and, in particular, they were making
9 representations to the federal government for assistance,
10 and my recollection is that one of their difficulties too,
11 was in marketing. In marketing their...

12 **LORETTA CLARK:** In marketing.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** But I don't
14 know the details. But I hear you say you're confident
15 that markets can be developed, but it occurs to me that
16 there are certain circumstances, a lot needs to be done
17 to...

18 **LORETTA CLARK:** That's right. These
19 are things that, you know, we have to work together to
20 increase.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** And for us,
22 when we have to search is, what are some of the
23 recommendations are we to make to the federal government
24 in this area? That's our concern and it occurs to me that

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1 we need to understand something about how to generate
2 interest. The interest in the establishment of cottage
3 industries like this sort, so I hope that you and others
4 like yourself are able to assist us. I don't know if you're
5 already working with the Commission or research staff,
6 but it seems that from many groups we hear that the issue
7 of small businesses, especially private businesses, is,
8 it's very important. I think we need to take a good look
9 at it.

10 One further point, if I may, has to do
11 with what is certainly a very important issue concerning
12 the present difficulties associated with trying to get
13 security on property on reserve lands and I think you're
14 suggesting changes to that legislation in the Indian Act.

15 I wonder if you don't see a inconsistency between that
16 and the aspirations for notions of Aboriginal
17 self-government, that is, if you're intrigued by asking
18 that reserve lands be treated as something that can be
19 put up as security, are you treating them as being not
20 as compatible with the way the governments are treating,
21 or are they going to lose their land if they don't - I
22 wonder if you can assist us. I think there's a difference.

23 **LORETTA CLARK:** I agree that it
24 certainly needs to be looked at and what could be done,

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1 but maybe if we talk about chattels or buildings if - I
2 can give you an example, that in one Aboriginal community,
3 we have a pool hall and the people don't run it, and you
4 know, it's sitting there, you know, and we don't have the
5 ability to go in and sell it to somebody else. I'm not
6 saying that we want to repossess the land, you know, and
7 maybe land should be exempt.

8 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Or
9 surrendered, yes.

10 **LORETTA CLARK:** But, I would say that
11 the difficulties of - it sorts of breeds lack of commitment
12 because you know, and I'm not, that's not from everyone.
13 I don't want you to misunderstand it, but when you can
14 secure something and people realize that it has a
15 vulnerability then, you know, that - lots of time there's
16 more care given to it and more attention given to it.
17 We found that, because we finance a lot of Aboriginal people
18 off-reserve. We don't have this kind of an issue with,
19 you know, like there's a sense of responsibility to the
20 business seems to be a little stronger because of the fact
21 they have signed some papers that make a commitment and
22 I think that there are chattels that should be able to
23 secured. I know there's conditional sales agreements,
24 but then there's Band Council resolutions etc, that are

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1 so much paperwork for the person, the small business person
2 going into borrowing. I think that we frustrate them very
3 much with too much technicality and there's so much
4 technicality in financing on a reserve if you want to go
5 through the whole, you know, procedure and I got a
6 commitment from the person, a commitment from the Band
7 to their own business.

8 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** You don't mean
9 that, certainly you mean that generally the same, you would
10 apply your reasoning to the individual businessman as
11 opposed to government, right?

12 **LORETTA CLARK:** Right.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Because
14 you're saying the same thing. Are you saying the
15 proposition must apply equally to the federal government
16 and the Manitoba government as it does to Aboriginal
17 government?

18 **LORETTA CLARK:** No, if they...

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So there's
20 more care exercised generally on the part of the private
21 owners, is that the proposition?

22 **LORETTA CLARK:** Yes.

23 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I just wanted
24 to make sure. It seems to me that if it's good for the

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1 goose it's good for the gander.

2 **LORETTA CLARK:** Right. And I think
3 that the whole point is financing small businesses to put
4 the Band at risk, it's to have the commitment from the
5 person to succeed and then community benefits.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. I think
7 that's the point. Not to put the community...

8 **LORETTA CLARK:** At risk.

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** The community
10 at risk. The assets, that's the problem, the community
11 and risk.

12 Again, thank you very much for assisting
13 us in very important issues.

14 **LORETTA CLARK:** Thank you.

15 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you.

16 We're going to have a short coffee break now. Maybe ten
17 minutes.

18 (THE HEARING TOOK A BRIEF RECESS)

19 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Ladies and
20 gentlemen, I think we're ready to resume our hearing, and
21 the next presentation will be on the Split Lake Cree First
22 Nation and I understand that Mr. Mike Garson is here
23 standing in for the Chief and also we have Mr. Samuel
24 Garson, Acting Chief. So, as soon as you're ready to

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1 start, we'll begin.

2 **MIKE GARSON, SPLIT LAKE CREE FIRST**

3 **NATION:** Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, I am very
4 honoured to do this presentation on behalf of the people
5 of Split Lake. I have with me here Sam Garson who's the
6 Acting Chief and I will read this, you know, on behalf
7 of the Chief. I am the local community planner for Split
8 Lake. Also the Co-chair for the Resource Management Board
9 of Split Lake Resource Management area.

10 So, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and
11 honoured guests, I am pleased to be able to make this
12 presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People.

13 I am hopeful that what I have to say here today may
14 contribute some answers to the enormous challenges that
15 we, as Indian people, face in Canada today.

16 My name is Mike Garson, as I said, and
17 I'll read this over again. I'm from Split Lake Cree First
18 Nation. Split Lake is located on the Nelson River and
19 the Burntwood River, about eighty miles northeast of
20 Thompson. The population of Split Lake Cree First Nation
21 is approximately about twenty-two hundred people and
22 fifteen hundred people living on reserve and seven hundred
23 off.

24 The conditions on our reserve are

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1 similar to that of many other reserves in Northern Canada.
2 Our traditional way of life has been changed drastically
3 over the past fifty years. This has been caused by
4 changing social and economic conditions in Canada
5 generally and more recently by the giant Nelson River Hydro
6 Project and by new technology such as TV's, telephones,
7 electrical power. The population on the reserve has also
8 risen rapidly over the past fifty years.

9 Today, we exist a crisis situation. As
10 in all crisis situations, there is the possibility of
11 disaster and the possibility of opportunity. This
12 precisely the situation for the Split Lake Cree First
13 Nation today. I believe that this is the situation for
14 most First Nations in Canada.

15 I will make some general observations
16 and outline some basic principles which I believe are
17 important to our concern and desire for self-determination
18 and self-government. We want self-determination and
19 self-government because we believe that they can lead to
20 a better life for our people.

21 As Indian people, we were already here
22 at the time of the white man's first invasion into our
23 land. We occupied and obtained our livelihood from this
24 country which today is called Canada. Slowly but surely,

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1 beginning with the fur trade, the invasion of Canada
2 proceeded, taking over our lands, lives and livelihood,
3 as the white man needed more land for settlement, for
4 agriculture, for timber, for minerals and for hydro power.

5 This expansion affected some Indian people much earlier
6 than others, but today there is no part of Canada where
7 Indian people have not been affected by the invasion of
8 the white man.

9 A society with different values has
10 gained control over our land, resources, and our
11 livelihood. How we regain control of our land, our
12 resources, and our lives is the challenge we all face,
13 as Indian people. The manner of control of these elements
14 is the ultimate test of self-determination and effective
15 self-government.

16 Today the world is changing as it always
17 has, only faster. We, as Indian people, have managed to
18 survive in this land by adapting to change and by working
19 with our total environment, cooperatively not
20 adversarially. I believe that this formula can still work
21 today.

22 We need to acquire a sufficient land and
23 resource base for our people, now and into the future.
24 We need to ensure that our young people become educated

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1 so that we can provide all our own services and employ
2 our own people. We need to have business development and
3 meaningful employment for our people on the reserves.
4 We need to be able to compete on an equal basis with all
5 segments of Canadian society.

6 Today, we limit our opportunities by
7 importing people and material for the services and other
8 needs on the reserve, thereby ensuring that our money
9 leaves our community never to return, and that
10 opportunities for training and educating our people are
11 lost.

12 I believe that the Indian model of
13 government has always been, as someone has said, "A
14 government of the people, by the people and for the people."
15 We have lived in a world for the past one hundred years,
16 where the government of Indian people, has not been by
17 Indian people and has not been for Indian people.

18 We have lost the power to make decisions
19 on these matters most affecting our lives. Everything
20 on the reserve is ultimately decided by the federal
21 government. Everything off the reserve is under the
22 control of the provincial government. We, as people, in
23 effect have been powerless on those matters which affect
24 our land, our lives and our livelihood. We have to spend

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1 too much time in reacting and not enough time in doing.

2 The Split Lake Cree First Nation signed
3 Treaty, as an adhesion to Treaty #5 in 1908. At that time,
4 we still had some independence and were following our
5 traditional way of life. Also, at that time, we did not
6 appreciate the significance and meaning of Treaty #5, in
7 terms of what we had given up. Later,
8 when Canada and Manitoba began to exert the powers that
9 they had acquired under the terms of Treaty #5, such as
10 the control of the land, water and natural resources, we
11 began to realize what it was that we had given up. We
12 no longer controlled our traditional land, water and
13 resources.

14 What we really need now, is to sit down
15 with the provinces and Canada to review and renew the spirit
16 and meaning of our Treaties. Our grandfathers did not
17 give up our inherent rights in the land, water and
18 resources. They were prepared to share with the white
19 man, the land, the water and the resources. It was never
20 their intent to surrender those rights which they saw as
21 gifts from our Creator.

22 However, this is not the way Canada and
23 the provinces have viewed the Treaties. They believe that
24 they have the paramount control of the land, water, and

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1 resources. Since the Signing of Treaty #5, Canada and
2 Manitoba have always acted as if they own and control the
3 land, the water and the resources. We need only to look
4 at what has happened to many First Nations across Northern
5 Canada to realize the enormity of what was taken by Canada
6 and the Provinces, when the Treaties were signed.

7 When the land, water, and natural
8 resources that we signed away come valuable to the white
9 man's government and institutions, the only resource we
10 have to bargain with is the direct impact of the project
11 on our reserve lands. Even then, under the present Indian
12 Act, Indian lands can be expropriated without the consent
13 of the Indian people. We have some rights for the use
14 of the land and wildlife resources off the reserve, derived
15 from Treaty #5, but these rights have never been clearly
16 defined and are controlled by the provincial government.

17 Under present conditions we can only
18 negotiate for the loss of the use of the land, the water
19 and the natural resources, not for the total intrinsic
20 value of the land, water and natural resources, including
21 the electric power produced from the land and the water.

22 It is the destruction of our land, our resources, our
23 way of life, and the use of our water that makes the
24 production of electric power viable for the provinces and

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1 their power corporations.

2 We, the Indian people of Canada, need
3 to be working together for a new arrangement with Canada
4 and the provinces whereby our sovereign rights in the land,
5 water, and the resources are recognized. This is not a
6 new or startling concept. This is a position that is
7 recognized in the courts and in the statutes of the United
8 States of America.

9 The Split Lake Cree First Nation is
10 prepared to work with other First Nations to accomplish
11 the goal of self-government. However, we believe that
12 one of the most important tasks for each First Nation is
13 to use the resources, presently available, to make itself
14 as self-sufficient and self-reliant as possible.

15 The Split Lake Cree First Nation has
16 recently signed and ratified the Northern Flood
17 Implementation Agreement to implement the Northern Flood
18 Agreement which was ratified in March of 1978. The
19 Northern Flood Agreement was an agreement to compensate
20 the Split Lake Cree First Nation and the four other First
21 Nations for the adverse effects of the giant Nelson River
22 Hydro Project upon their lands and their livelihood. The
23 Northern Flood Agreement is an agreement-in-principle,
24 not a definitive operational document which could

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1 implement the promises and obligations contained in the
2 Northern Flood Agreement. Consequently the
3 implementation of the Northern Flood Agreement became
4 mired in a continuous round of claims, and endless
5 arbitration hearings to consider each claim.

6 By signing the Northern Flood
7 Implementation Agreement as it did, the Split Lake Cree
8 First Nation believe that for the first time since the
9 Northern Flood Agreement was signed, there are tangible
10 and substantive benefits for the Split Lake Cree First
11 Nation.

12 The Split Lake Cree First Nation has not
13 surrendered any of their Treaty rights. The Split Lake
14 Cree First Nation has acquired funds, controlled by the
15 Split Lake Cree First Nation, which will be used to fulfill
16 the obligations of the Northern Flood Agreement. The
17 Split Lake Cree First Nation does not lose any of its normal
18 funding from governmental programs because it signed the
19 Northern Flood Implementation Agreement.

20 Also, the Split Lake Cree First Nation
21 has acquired a greatly expanded land base, both in new
22 reserve lands and fee simple lands with our traditional
23 resource areas. It has negotiated a joint land use
24 planning and resource management arrangement with the

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1 Province of Manitoba in its traditional resource area.

2 Manitoba Hydro promises or continues to
3 be responsible for any new, unknown, or unpredicated
4 adverse effects of the project.

5 Also, Manitoba Hydro continues to be
6 responsible for any injury or accidental death, related
7 to the project.

8 Manitoba Hydro continues to be
9 responsible for any sickness or death from the ingestion
10 of mercury caused by the project.

11 Manitoba Hydro continues to be
12 responsible for future obligations of Hydro under Articles
13 18.4 and 18.5 of the Northern Flood Agreement and any other
14 provisions of the Northern Flood Agreement, as such relates
15 to project employment.

16 The Split Lake Cree First Nation has
17 negotiated the Northern Flood Implementation Agreement
18 for the Northern Flood Agreement without compromising the
19 position of the Northern Flood Agreement First Nations.

20 The Split Lake Cree First Nation supports the efforts
21 of the other Northern Flood Agreement First Nations in
22 their efforts to arrive at an implementation arrangement
23 for the Northern Flood Agreement.

24 We, as the First Nations of Canada, are

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1 scattered throughout Canada. Because of this, it has been
2 difficult to organize a unified political voice for our
3 people. If we are to survive as a people, then we must
4 first survive as individual First Nations. However, we
5 must all work together as an organized unity for
6 self-government, whatever our individual differences may
7 be. Whatever our historical, geographical, linguistic,
8 social and economic differences are, we can help each other
9 most effectively by negotiating for self-government as
10 a unity.

11 I believe that we should be seeking for
12 a third order of government as a basic and fundamental
13 requirement for Indian self-government. We need to have
14 an effective political presence within Canada. We need
15 to have a clear, unequivocal presence within the
16 Constitution of Canada where our rights to self-government
17 as Indian people are recognized as being equal with that
18 of the federal and provincial governments.

19 Unless we are able to speak as one to
20 Canada and the provinces, the road to self-determination
21 and self-government will continue to be very difficult,
22 if not impossible. We, as a wise man once said, must learn
23 to hang together, or most certainly, we will hang
24 separately.

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1 So, in conclusion, on behalf of my
2 people, I wish to thank the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
3 Peoples and others for permitting me to make this
4 presentation.

5 And that's it. Thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
7 much, Mr. Garson. I notice that you indicate that you
8 do favour self-government for Native people and my
9 understanding is that it has not found favour with all
10 Native people. That their response, Native people were
11 somewhat ambivalent. Would I be correct in assuming that
12 those who voted against self-government did so mainly
13 because they didn't feel that they had had an opportunity
14 or long enough time to study it and think about its
15 implications? Was that the reason rather than that they
16 were opposed to it in principle?

17 **MIKE GARSON:** I would think so. Also
18 maybe in relation to some of that Northern Flood stuff
19 that I mentioned earlier, that Split Lake had signed an
20 agreement with the four parties, the other three parties,
21 Hydro, Canada, and the province. It's in, pretty well
22 in direct relation to the question you have in relation
23 to self-government. At the time Split Lake, I think, at
24 the time, needed something like that. Something where

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1 you could be more self-sufficient in terms of, mainly in
2 terms of employment and having more of a say in what happens
3 within your resource area. And a perfect example of that
4 is the joint management, Resource Management Board, which
5 I'm the Co-chair with - there's five members from Split
6 Lake and five members from the province and it's at its
7 infancy stage, really. It's about six months old and we
8 recognize the enormity of the job and so that, yeah, I
9 would agree that some people do need time, more time to
10 consider their own individual options in your own First
11 Nation.

12 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Some of the
13 Treaty people, I think, were concerned about what the
14 impact of self-government would be on their Treaty rights.
15 In fact, in quite a number of communities, we were told
16 that the Treaty was their Constitution and that they were
17 nervous that if they went along with the concept of
18 self-government they weren't quite sure what the effect
19 of that would be on their Treaty rights and they thought
20 maybe they were better off to stick with their Treaty rights
21 than to move to something new that they weren't very
22 confident they understood. Was that feeling expressed
23 around here?

24 **MIKE GARSON:** Well, see, it's a lot

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1 more, as a young person, you tend to expand your mind
2 through schooling. More so, the older people, they're
3 more, I guess you'd say, the Treaty is the thing that,
4 you know, they cherish most in terms of having that
5 relationship with Canada, with the government and you can't
6 tell them otherwise that this, you know, that this was
7 wrong. You know, and that anything that has been done,
8 like I mentioned in the presentation, a lot of the stuff
9 that the Indian people enjoy now is not, they weren't a
10 part of that when all this stuff was being done, you know,
11 supposedly on their behalf. And that through history,
12 I've learned that it hasn't worked. And, but they do see,
13 the older people they tend to see more of it now, I guess
14 maybe because the generation has, like in Split Lake
15 itself, there are more young people in there than the older
16 people. There's about sixty-one percent under
17 twenty-five years old. And that's quite high. That's
18 a high number and you can only see it growing more rapidly
19 and it's growing very fast. And one of the things that
20 I've noticed about the older people, since our Native young
21 people become more educated, you know, they tend to listen
22 more and society has changed for them drastically, you
23 know. They know now, for example, trapping, they know,
24 we don't know. Maybe by next year there won't be no more

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1 trapping; those kinds of things, you know. That's the
2 only life they know. Whereas young people are more, you
3 know, into a few, we know what's going on more or less,
4 but there is need for a change for the Native people in
5 Canada, in many ways.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** There's no doubt
7 about that, I think.

8 **MIKE GARSON:** No doubt.

9 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Everybody
10 agrees. Both Native and non-Native, I think, agree to
11 that proposition. I'm wondering whether your Band has
12 given any thought to what form self-government would take.
13 As you know, there's been a lot of questions asked about
14 what does it mean? Can it be defined? Can we have a clear
15 picture of how it would work and so on? And we've been
16 struggling with this and our research staff on the
17 Commission have been looking at models, have been looking
18 at models of self-government that are in being and working
19 in other countries, in other places, to see if we can get
20 a feel for what alternative forms of self-government there
21 might be. Has your Band given any thought to that?

22 **MIKE GARSON:** Yeah. It's like any
23 other First Nation Band. It's such a broad issues, you
24 know, it really is and like you say, you know, what do

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1 we need to define it? And there is a lot of different
2 opinions and I think it would take, it will take our Band
3 a little more time to, you know, maybe fully, we don't
4 know if we understand what it is that self-government
5 needs. This agreement I think is sort of a start. You
6 know, we're doing stuff for ourselves, like, more than
7 we did in the past. It's helped in some ways and in some
8 ways maybe it hasn't and in terms of too much, you know.
9 You know, that they could also, I think, hinder a few
10 of the local First Nation activities in terms of - or going
11 crazy, spending crazy and stuff, but there are mechanisms
12 within the control of the monies that we have now. It's
13 very controlled and I think that's great. And reasons
14 being that the children will eventually, you know, the
15 whole idea behind the whole thing was that, you know, as
16 we grow older, the children will have something there when
17 they grow up.

18 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Do you see it as
19 something that will sort of start from the grassroots in
20 the community by communities gradually taking over more
21 and more control, for example, of the delivery of services
22 to the people? Will it start that way at the sort of
23 grassroots and gradually develop from there or do you see
24 it starting from the top and getting something in the

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1 Constitution or getting some kind of agreement in place
2 between the federal government, the provinces and the
3 Native people? Do you think it's something you can create
4 the format in that way, either by agreement or by changes
5 to the Constitution or do you think it's something that's
6 just going to happen over a period of time by communities
7 taking more and more charge in more areas like covering
8 their own Board of Education and having their own health
9 service delivery program? Which of those two do you think
10 is more likely to happen?

11 **MIKE GARSON:** Well, agreements. An
12 agreement is something people agree on. And given the
13 Northern Flood Agreement as an example, how long has it
14 taken for any of the commitments to come to light? Sure,
15 I firmly believe that there is a need for a change in the
16 Constitution in relation to Native people and how they
17 should run, you know, themselves. Agreements tend to take
18 long. Also, I'm not saying that changing the Constitution
19 would take long in relation to Native people, but, and
20 I also believe that yes, it has to start from the
21 grassroots, right from the reserve itself. I know
22 recognizing what is the need of the people? The need
23 within the surrounding area, because there are different
24 needs in different areas.

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1 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** It seems to me
2 from the travel we've doing in and the visiting in the
3 communities that a great many communities see it happening
4 as a gradual process, starting with a gradual take-over
5 of various services and that this is part of the reason
6 why it's hard to define it, because it will take different
7 forms and different communities, according to the need
8 and according to the pace of the change and how soon.
9 Some people say, this is going to take twenty years to
10 happen in our community. Other people say, we're ready
11 for this now. We want to create our own boards of
12 education, our own health commissions. Just give us the
13 money and we will administer it and we will create the
14 policies that we think are appropriate for our people,
15 and a lot seem to feel that that is the realistic way for
16 it to happen and I just wondered if you had any thoughts
17 on that?

18 **MIKE GARSON:** When I was with the
19 Council, I was there for about five years, what I noticed
20 was that in terms of trying to get something to happen
21 within the reserve, in terms of maybe health, through the
22 health portion of it, you have to be very careful, you
23 know, because there's that mistrust, you know. I see a
24 lot of mistrust, speaking only on behalf of my people,

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1 with the governments. There's a lot of that and then
2 they're just so eager to grab whatever it is that's offered
3 to them. And I think what we have learned also during
4 the time that it took to implement the Northern Flood
5 Agreement on the Split Lake part, is that the longer it
6 took, the smarter we got. So, that's sort of the positive
7 side of that, that happening.

8 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I'll
9 ask my colleague if he has any questions. Paul?

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you for
11 your presentation. I understand that Split Lake has
12 signed this agreement and the other members of the Northern
13 Flood Committee have not. I'm not now well informed on
14 the circumstances. I wonder if you would explain to us
15 what is it that the differences of view revolve on?

16 **MIKE GARSON:** Oh. Again maybe the
17 immediate area, the different locations. There's
18 different impacts. Different impacts within different,
19 within the different First Nations and, you know, they
20 were so spread out. However, take for example some of
21 the Bands felt that maybe what one Band - and I'm not naming
22 none of the Bands - what I'm saying is, some of the Bands
23 felt that one Band, while we were still as five, you know,
24 while we were still negotiating as five at the time, felt

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1 that this one Band was getting too much and they should
2 be getting more, type of thing, and it's sort of, you know,
3 from then on and different, like I say, different adverse
4 effects in each area. Again different ways of life, I
5 guess. Different needs.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** You're
7 saying, I think, in your paper that Manitoba Hydro is going
8 to remain responsible for unpredicted adverse effects of
9 the project. Is that the term that was in the original
10 agreement? My understanding is that the agreement
11 contained some provision for compensation with respect
12 to future damages that might be created as a result of
13 future flooding. Do you still have an agreement...

14 **MIKE GARSON:** Yes. For this we do, yes.
15 In our, some portions of all fine agreements it was
16 ratified under this agreement, not all. Some of it is
17 still out there and it's still - any future development
18 will have to be negotiated on. They would have, you know,
19 in the same process this one went through.

20 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** One thing I
21 think would interest many parties across Canada is the
22 significance of the arbitration clause that I understand
23 was in the Northern Flood Agreement. People across the
24 country have signed a number of different kinds of

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1 agreements and most of them without any arbitration clause.

2 And you have an arbitration clause and you say it's not
3 working. I think many of you would be interested in
4 understanding why it is that this arbitration clause which,
5 when one looks at it, seems to be an excellent thing that
6 the people want, was not working. Why was it not working?

7 **MIKE GARSON:** Well, it was taking too
8 long.

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Why was it
10 taking so long?

11 **MIKE GARSON:** One person having too many
12 things to do. It's just simply too many claims. I have
13 five Bands throwing in their claims and just the one
14 arbitrator looking after everything, and that process
15 itself was too long.

16 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** The, on page
17 five, you refer to the Northern Flood Agreement as "An
18 agreement in principle not a definitive operation
19 document." I wonder if - I'm not sure what that means.

20 An agreement in principle for a lot of Canadians who would
21 read this without much knowledge about the particular
22 circumstances, it would probably ascribe to the agreement
23 in principle the meaning usually given to agreements in
24 principle with respect to comprehensive claims, such as

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1 in the Northwest Territories, for example. I presume it
2 means something different here. I wonder if you might
3 explain what you mean when you say, it is "An agreement
4 in principle." You're not referring to the binding legal
5 nature of the document, are you?

6 **MIKE GARSON:** I don't know how I should
7 answer that one. I thought maybe when I came up I wasn't
8 supposed to answer all these questions, but anyway...

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** You don't have
10 to answer.

11 **MIKE GARSON:** An important point and I
12 think maybe that question in itself I would maybe refer
13 that to the authorities, like the Chief and Council and
14 that's fine, okay, as a written response.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** You don't have
16 to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

17 **MIKE GARSON:** Okay, no more questions.

18 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I can ask
19 them, you don't have to answer them. Let's see if I have
20 any other ones. There's something that's not very clear
21 that you may not want to tell me about, you're talking
22 about the need for cooperation to reach the goals of
23 Aboriginal self-government, and you're talking - the paper
24 states, rather, "The value of the need for cooperation

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1 to meet self-government." I wonder if you would clarify
2 what it is that you have in mind as the Nation or the
3 relevant unit for Aboriginal self-government. If I might
4 put it that way. One of the problems that we have is
5 there's quite a number of words, terms that are being used
6 in different places by different people, and people don't
7 always mean the same thing when they're using them, so
8 that's why I always feel it's important to clarify them.

9 The First Nation Band, for example, when I look at the
10 title of the paper, Split Lake Cree First Nation. What
11 do you have in mind as the Nation? Are you referring to
12 a Band as a creature of the Indian Act? Do you have in
13 mind the Split Lake Community? Do you have in mind the
14 Cree people and perhaps you might like to tell us what
15 is your definition of, for your people?

16 **MIKE GARSON:** I - well, yeah. I think
17 that refers to all the Native people in Canada, more or
18 less, you know, as a whole. And that's all I'm answering.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Okay. Okay.
20 And you're using "Indian" in the text, as well.

21 **MIKE GARSON:** Yeah.

22 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** What do you
23 mean when you say that? Some people have adopted that
24 term, others reject it.

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1 **MIKE GARSON:** Yeah, exactly. I don't
2 know why it's in there.

3 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yeah.
4 Okay.

5 **MIKE GARSON:** I prefer Native myself.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Okay. Well,
7 I want to thank you. The issue of, not only the issue
8 of flooding, the issue of Resource Management, but the
9 consequences of flooding are issues that face many
10 Aboriginal people in many places in the country, and they
11 have very serious consequences. That is why we must take
12 a particular interest in these issues. It seems to me
13 that the circumstances in one phase must be studied,
14 because they must be helpful to understand circumstances
15 in other places I mentioned. For example, the arbitration
16 clause, you say, we must have an arbitration clause. So,
17 and we have to acquaint ourselves, well, what are the
18 advantages of arbitration clauses? What are the
19 disadvantages of arbitration clauses? What
20 recommendations should we make? You see, so we have a
21 big job of trying to inform ourselves sufficiently to come
22 up with some sound recommendation, but I do want to thank
23 you both for coming up here in the community and for making
24 this presentation.

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1 **MIKE GARSON:** Okay. Thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. I
3 think Mr. Garson, the way you deal with questions, you
4 should have been a lawyer.

5 **MIKE GARSON:** Okay. Thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
7 much. I think our next presenter is the Keewatin Tribal
8 Council, Joe Michel, is he here?

9 **JOE MICHEL:** I don't have a written
10 presentation. Somebody asked me for a written
11 presentation, but I says that's what the Councillors get
12 paid for, big bucks to write down what I have to say.

13 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I hope you're
14 right about that.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** That's news to
16 me. We're more than happy to hear your oral one.

17 **JOE MICHEL:** What I'd like to know,
18 there's been so many studies done on Indian people as a
19 whole that you know, one of these days they're going to
20 study us to death. There's so many recommendations made
21 in that Bennett Report on Aboriginal self-government from
22 the First Nations point of view and the communities that
23 they visited and there's a lot of good recommendations
24 there and then yet there's another commission to do another

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1 study on what self-government is, when it was already -
2 to me it was already defined in the previous Bennett Report
3 that was done, and I just wanted to know how serious this
4 Commission is and how - like, or is it just a political
5 ploy by Prime Minister Mulroney to say something good to
6 the Native people so he'd get reelected.

7 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Well, I can tell
8 you that we're very serious. I don't know whether Mr.
9 Mulroney was very serious or not. There's no way that
10 we can know that, but I can tell you the Commissioners
11 are very serious and we're working very hard on this and
12 I think we feel a fair degree of confidence that we're
13 going to be able to change something. We're certainly
14 going to try our best, but we sure need help from people
15 like yourself.

16 **JOE MICHEL:** This is, I guess as a Native
17 person, it's very frustrating to read all these reports
18 that have been done and come back here again and come up
19 with the same recommendations that have been done time
20 and time again. They probably don't even look at them.
21 They're probably just collecting dust and things like
22 that and it's very frustrating as a Native person, I guess
23 when you look at the things you're looking at is the
24 relationship between the government and to me, in order

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1 for self-government to work, there has to be a third order
2 of government where Native people have to see power because
3 that's the way things were at one time. We didn't have
4 to answer to any governments. We had our own governments
5 set up even before the coming of the white man and then
6 they just imposed their view, their views and ideas on
7 us and we adopted them and now how do we move around our
8 people to go back to their old ways and do things the way
9 things were done.

10 To me, that would be one of the
11 recommendations I would make, is to take a serious look
12 at having a third level of government.

13 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Well, I think
14 that was what was attempting to be built into the
15 Constitution through the Charlottetown Accord but as you
16 know that didn't find favour with Canadians it didn't find
17 favour with many Native people either. So, it didn't
18 happen. So we'll have to find other ways now.

19 **JOE MICHEL:** I think it's a power
20 struggle to me, the white man giving power to the Indian
21 unless, but, you know, to me it's not Native people not
22 wanting it. Self-government is the white government not
23 wanting to let it go. And they have to take a serious
24 look at that. In order to act as government, we have to

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1 have a government that's just as, that can look after our
2 people, just like the white people look after their own
3 people. We're just like any nationality that looks after
4 their people. We have to help that and when we're here
5 first, I mean, something has to give. It's a give or take.

6 I mean, you know, we've been giving, giving all these
7 years. We've been getting nothing but abuse on what forms,
8 whatever form that is and it's a frustrating...

9 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I don't blame you
10 a bit for being frustrated at the process, but I do feel
11 and I could be wrong about this - I do feel that the general
12 public realizes the injustices that have been done to
13 Canada's First Nation People and are quite serious about
14 wanting to change the situation and try to develop a
15 different kind of relationship, one, one of partnership.

16 I believe the white society is anxious to do that and
17 I think that we are one of the tools, I guess, that is
18 being used to see if we can come up with ideas and
19 suggestions as to how that relationship may be developed
20 and this is why we're on the road all the time, trying
21 to find out how Native people think this can be achieved.

22 We can't, we don't blame Native people for their reaction
23 to our Commission being rather negative and suspicious
24 and so on, but I don't know what more we can do than assure

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1 you that we are an independent body. We are not the federal
2 government. We are an independent body. The government
3 took an unusual step in relation to this Commission when
4 it retained the services of the former Chief Justice Dixon
5 in order to set up the Commission, appoint the people,
6 decide what the terms of reference should be and so on.

7 It was a very unusual thing for the government to do and
8 I think they were quite genuine that they wished us to
9 be viewed as an independent body and that is why there
10 are a majority of Native Commissioners on the Commission
11 which, I would think, would give solid assurance to Native
12 people that something might come out of this process this
13 time, when the majority of the Commissioners are Native
14 people and are drawn from the various groups of Native
15 people across the country. So, there are signs that I
16 think perhaps should give you some confidence that we are
17 serious about this.

18 **JOE MICHEL:** Well, even at that it's
19 still hard to believe. It's been done before where we've
20 been used as tokens you know, I'm sorry to say that, but
21 I mean that's my own personal point of view. Like, we've
22 been done an injustice for so long like when do you come
23 to believe unless you see that it, that's the way you think
24 it is. That's one of the things as a former Residential

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1 School person, where you can bet it has a negative effect
2 on our lives. And you look at that, the Aboriginal
3 self-government, it was there. Like, you know...

4 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes.

5 **JOE MICHEL:** And to have that equal
6 powers that the governments have and they don't want to
7 give up the power because it's all a power struggle, because
8 they can't see Native people succeeding. That's an
9 injustice in itself. To correct that injustice is giving
10 over the power to do things ourselves to write our own
11 policies, to make our own mistakes, I guess. Because the
12 mistakes that have been made, because the Indian Act, it's
13 just like, I guess, they wouldn't like it if they had the
14 white man act to follow, and I think that's a prejudiced
15 on any legislation that's put out by the governments.
16 It's always been like, you know, we'd rather give you
17 welfare than give you a job.

18 So, you know, like how can you employ
19 people when all they give you is handouts all your life?
20 Like, sharing the resources would be a nice way of sharing
21 that, that's what the country was here for, to share it.
22 That's the Native way, is sharing. When they shared with
23 the first coming of the white people, when the Chief said,
24 when they came here with the Bible and we had the land

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1 and they said, now that we have the Bible, we have the
2 land. It's so true the way you look at it. It's a, you
3 know, like how do you - we have to go back to be able to,
4 to make our own decisions and the destiny of our children
5 and the destiny of our people.

6 Decisions on our own destiny without
7 anybody deciding for us what's good for us, to build a
8 good communication, everybody has to sit there and listen
9 with an open ear like everything, everything has been done
10 from the top down, so there's no foundation there to be
11 built on, everything collapses. You have to go back to
12 the ground, to the grassroots people. This is what the
13 people have to see and build up from there, and things
14 will work, because you have a foundation that you can build
15 on. Where the other way, there's no foundation. So, like
16 you know, how can you make the policies work when they
17 come from the urban people in Ottawa that never lived on
18 a reserve, and say, and write policies that this is how
19 you should live? And then the policies should be made
20 by asking the people, what is it that you - you listen
21 to the people what they want and write on from there instead
22 of doing it the other way, because it'll never work.

23 And that's one of them things that has
24 to be revisited.

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1 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** That's exactly
2 what I was trying to say to the last presenter, that most
3 of the communities that we visited, seem to be of that
4 view, that self-government will not come from the top down,
5 that it will come from the grassroots up and be a gradual
6 process of Native people taking over control of all aspects
7 of their lives. And as you point out, at the time the
8 Europeans came, the Native people were self-governing and
9 one of the things that our research staff engaged in was
10 a history of what happened, what life was like in the
11 country prior to the advent of the Europeans and how the
12 Native people were self-governing and had had quite
13 sophisticated forms of government and of justice and so
14 on, and trying to get that message across through a study
15 of the events at that time, conducted by Aboriginal
16 scholars instead of, as is the case at the present time,
17 all the histories of Canada are written from the white
18 society perspective, and not from the perspective of the
19 Native people.

20 So, there's an amount of a distortion
21 involved in the history and this is what's being taught
22 in the schools for years, and we realize that something
23 needs to be done about that, and that's one of the aspects
24 of the research that we're doing. But, to come

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1 back to what you were saying about the grassroots, this
2 is exactly why we've spent a couple of years going into
3 communities all across the country and up in the North
4 to hear from all kinds of people and groups as to how this
5 change in relationship is going to be brought about.

6 Now, the recommendations that we come
7 up with, based on what we have heard may not be accepted.

8 They may be rejected by governments. We don't know.

9 We have no guarantee that they will adopt our
10 recommendations, but, we feel that this is the right way
11 to go, to go into the communities and hear what the people
12 have to say, and then put together a report on the basis
13 of that and try to do the most we can to influence
14 governments to adopt our recommendations. And many of
15 those reports that you mentioned that have gone before,
16 they have stopped at the recommendation stage. They've
17 made the report, then it ended with the recommendations.

18 They've moulded on the shelves, as you say, so what we
19 thought we would like to do was, after we had set out our
20 report, set out our recommendations, then continue by
21 setting out the mechanics for implementing the changes
22 that we are recommending, what the various steps are to
23 achieve the change and attaching some timelines to that,
24 so that, you know, governments should have achieved this

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1 by the year, two years, three years, so that there can
2 be some kind of monitoring of what progress is being made
3 in relation to achieving the change in the relationship.

4 Now, whether that will work or not, I
5 don't know, but we think it's worth a try. So, this is
6 how we propose to proceed.

7 **JOE MICHEL:** Just as long as it's not
8 another fruitless effort. No matter what, you know, you
9 could do a presentation too when you do your interim report
10 where there's no, your findings are not listed, so you
11 cannot make recommendations on what has been founded when
12 you look at the interim report, there's no findings on
13 what - from the hearings that you held in these other
14 communities. It's hard to see what other people are
15 saying.

16 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Well, there's no
17 attempt made to make findings or make recommendations.
18 Those reports that we've been issuing are simply to put
19 on paper what we have heard in the communities, because
20 many of the communities have said to us, well, we've put
21 in a lot of effort, we worked very hard to make
22 presentations to you, a lot of Natives have been involved
23 in this, and will anybody ever know what we have done?
24 And we said, yes. Everybody will know what you've done,

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1 because we will produce a record of what has been told
2 to us in the communities.

3 That was the sole purpose of these
4 documents, is to record all the effort and the ideas that
5 people have come forward with in the communities, but,
6 of course, in order to come up with our recommendations,
7 we are anxious to hear from the many groups that have been
8 funded in order to come up with their presentations, and
9 we've heard from a few, but not very many yet, and our
10 research program. We don't want to recommend things that
11 we find when we get the research were not workable. So
12 that we are not attempting at the present time to come
13 out with recommendations. We are only trying to document
14 what the Native people have told us as we've gone across
15 the country.

16 **JOE MICHEL:** I guess another - we're
17 funded by the federal government as a Tribal Council.
18 Before, I guess, the Tribal Council or Indian Governments
19 took over their own administration, like, you know, we
20 keep repeating to Indian Affairs that they have thousands
21 of people working for their departments, where all they
22 give us is a skeleton to work with, and expect us to do
23 the same kind of work that they used to do with thousands
24 of people. And they take all the meat and give us the

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1 bones again. And, you know, things like that have to
2 change. You know, they have to consult with us before
3 they - all they gave us was one engineer and we have to
4 service eleven Bands and how many did they have when they
5 were running it and they just moved it over to Public Works?
6 They moved all their people there so we can't get any
7 work. The same with medical services. What medical
8 services is doing. Like, you know, by the time we take
9 it over in whatever way, all we're doing is that, making
10 like puppets there. Like, we're just like puppets. We're
11 just doing what they want us to do. It's not doing what
12 we can for our people. Because we still have to live under
13 their policies and everything. And we can't - in order
14 for our governments to work, we cannot work under the
15 present policies that are set out by the Indian Affairs
16 and the bureaucrats.

17 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** That's why we're
18 here listening to your ideas.

19 **JOE MICHEL:** I guess what I'm saying is,
20 give us the same kind of service that they had instead
21 of just giving us the bones and picking out the meat.
22 You know, I mean, they have to give us the, the same kind
23 of - when they were running it. And, you know, they do
24 things like that. When they give something to the Indian,

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1 they take it away on the other hand. And when you look
2 at that healing aspect of the people that went through
3 the Residential Schools - I went to the Residential School
4 myself for ten years of my life. Ten years of my life,
5 that was lost in the institution that was no different
6 that a prison.

7 So, how do you go around - like, we need
8 to, to have a healing centre, say one in the North and
9 one in the South, where people that went through the system,
10 can air out their anger, their frustrations and deal with
11 the sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse and all
12 of the abuse that went on in the Residential Schools.

13 And it has to - when you look at the people out in the
14 streets, anywhere you look throughout Canada, all the
15 people that you see on the streets that people call "bums",
16 those are our people that went to a Residential School.

17 As we move from one system to another system, where you
18 cannot fend for yourself, it's just like taking a wild
19 animal from the bush and putting him in the cage. Like,
20 you know, how is he going to be able to go back into the
21 wild and live off the land? It's the same with our people.

22 Where they put us, in taking us from a life of fishing
23 and trapping and educated us, and the next they expected
24 us to move back into the community. We didn't fit in.

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1 We couldn't live off the land. We weren't taught how to
2 do those things.

3 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I appreciate
4 that, and we've been into penitentiaries and spoken to
5 the Native inmates and we heard sad stories of childhood
6 and upbringing and their parent's upbringing and so on,
7 but we have to put that behind us at some point, if we're
8 going to move on, and try to create the different kinds.

9 **JOE MICHEL:** What I'm saying is, they
10 need some kind of a centre where these things have to be
11 dealt with.

12 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Oh, yes. Oh,
13 yes. Yes, I understand.

14 **JOE MICHEL:** I'm just sharing some of
15 my - maybe you heard it time and time again.

16 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** We have on the
17 Residential, yeah.

18 **JOE MICHEL:** Maybe something can be done
19 about it.

20 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yeah. Sure.
21 And we'll certainly be addressing that in our report.

22 **JOE MICHEL:** I guess that's, that's all
23 I have to say. I'd like to thank you for giving me the
24 time to do my presentation.

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1 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
2 much. Perhaps if Mr. Chartrand wants to say a word or
3 two.

4 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Do you mind if
5 I ask you for your advice on something? I just want to
6 offer a comment or two on what you said, if you don't mind.

7 **JOE MICHEL:** I don't mind.

8 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** First, about
9 the comments that you made about the Commission and the
10 past Commissions. I, too, understand that there are very
11 good reasons for being concerned and not entirely
12 optimistic. We've heard the expression, "We've been
13 studied to death" many times, but there are also some very
14 good reasons. Many of them said to us, by the people,
15 why we should do our work, and one is that, it is not all
16 the Aboriginal people that have been studied to death.
17 Some people have called themselves the "forgotten people"
18 because they have been totally ignored. And they have
19 said to us, we would love to be studied. So, that's the
20 one point.

21 The other point is that, it seems that's
22 there two issues. Even though people have been studied
23 in different degrees, there's still matters of government
24 policy, they're bad government policies that deserve to

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1 be exposed, be put to the light so that Canadians understand
2 the bad consequences of these policies and if there's going
3 to be public support for change, to make things better,
4 many people view that the public has to know about these
5 things. So, for many, that's an important part of what
6 it is that we're able to do. And the difference between
7 this Commission and many of the other ones, for example,
8 the Penner Commission, is that, it's broader. The Penner
9 Commission, for example, dealt only with the people on
10 reserve, people that the federal government defined as
11 "Indian". The Penner report that no man need to deal with
12 the Cree people. The Penner report that no man need to
13 deal with the Ojibway people or the Micmac (ph) people
14 or the Native people as defined by themselves.

15 They only had the mandate to deal with
16 those who were defined by the government as "Indian
17 people." So, our mandate is very broad and it includes
18 looking at all Aboriginal people and all the issues
19 hopefully. And hopefully you'll be able to see the
20 relationship between the different issues and hopefully
21 understand them in a better way. And what's important,
22 of course, is always a problem. How do you measure public
23 support for issues? Through polls? All right. But,
24 others have warned us about support far away. I read

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1 recently about an opinion that used the expression "Not
2 in my own back yard." That is, people must support their
3 land rights in the next county or the next province, but
4 not close to home, if it involves their interest, you see.

5 So, that's one of the problems with trying to gauge public
6 support.

7 What I'd like to ask you about is this.

8 You've said that you would prefer, if I understood you
9 right, that we not have a report that gathers dust on the
10 government shelf. And we've heard this so many times and
11 so did the Chief Justice. I wonder what that means. What
12 kind of a report do we make that will not gather dust?

13 Well, some people have replied to that
14 and said, well, it would probably have to contain the kind
15 of recommendations that the federal government and the
16 provincial government and maybe the municipal governments
17 will accept, because they're going to have to be involved
18 in implementing these things, if things are going to
19 change, because they have the power. And I agree with
20 entirely when you say, "Oh, yes, it's a matter of power."

21 And unfortunately, political power. It's not the
22 Aboriginal people. It's Canada power, provinces and
23 municipalities. So, we have to try and find a way around
24 that.

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1 And so, on the one hand, people say we
2 don't want a report that gathers dust. So, we say, does
3 that mean we have to make the kind of recommendations that
4 are going to be accepted? Do you want that? Others say,
5 no, that would be horrifying. We don't want that. Some
6 people have said, we have certain principles. For an
7 example. I'll just give you an example and you can take
8 it as a hypothetical, because I don't want to explain
9 anyone's position for them.

10 Where you might have a relationship by
11 way of Treaty with the British Crown and that's a basis
12 for a relationship. If it's perceived that the law of
13 Canada or the Canadian Governments are going to accept
14 that, then they would not want, they would not advise us
15 to put something in our report of undue violence to their
16 principles.

17 So, for me, that's a dilemma and I wonder
18 what you might have to advise us on that, about what to
19 put in our report. Is it something that we think the
20 governments are going to accept so that it doesn't gather
21 dust? What about if that does violence to the ideas that
22 people have? I wonder if there's some thoughts on that?

23 **JOE MICHEL:** The ideas, many of the
24 ideas that the government has is to have control over you.

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1 They have to relinquish that control back to where it
2 originally belonged, to give the power back to the people,
3 the original people that were here, that signed, like you
4 say, in the Treaties. Like, you can't, you can't make
5 a report to satisfy the governments just for the sake of
6 satisfying them. That's not what I meant by "collecting
7 dust." That you listened to my comments earlier where
8 it has to come from the grassroots, and you have to listen
9 to what the people say at the grassroots. Like, you know,
10 you can't just, for the sake of satisfying the governments,
11 this is what they want. That's not going to resolve the
12 issue.

13 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. I
14 understand. The problem is, I wonder what kind of
15 recommendations that are going to give us some confidence
16 the government will give the power back to the people?

17 **JOE MICHEL:** You only have to look at
18 the Treaties. They were just - I guess they were there
19 to look after us, but they looked after us in the wrong
20 way, they abused us, and they took everything away that
21 we had. That has to be given back to us to let us do these
22 things for ourselves. That's a strong position that has
23 been argued before us, but I started to despair when I
24 looked at what was contained in the Constitution, and I

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1 saw that there were language rights there that had been
2 there for over one hundred years and nobody had done much
3 about them. And I looked through some of the Metis rights
4 in the Constitution of Manitoba since 1870, so just by
5 putting something in the Constitution, doesn't necessarily
6 mean that they're going to do anything about them. So,
7 it's proved to be big problems.

8 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** How would the
9 government deal with, if we were to come up with a way,
10 okay, to say that you have to give some power back to the
11 people and people have to give the power to govern
12 themselves, who would that be?

13 **JOE MICHEL:** Well, the people would have
14 elected a spokesperson, I guess, to speak on their behalf.
15 Like, it has to be the people from the community. I guess
16 you'd say, just like the Prime Minister or the Premier
17 for each province. I mean, like it's a third level of
18 government, like putting it up there. Like, you have
19 federal, provincial, like the federal, and then you'll
20 get government and provincial under it.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So, who
22 would...

23 **JOE MICHEL:** Co-ownership.
24 Co-ownership of the lands. We were there first. And then

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1 they came in and imposed it, so, now you know, why can't
2 we live together in harmony, like you know, a partnership
3 or whatever? That's what the Native people were looking
4 at and how do you make a partnership work? We have to
5 come up with...

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. I
7 wonder if we might get them to identify the partner. For
8 example, is it the Keewatin Tribal Council we are to deal
9 with or is it or who is it? You see, when there's First
10 Nations...

11 **JOE MICHEL:** Yes, there's First
12 Nations, that's where the votes would come from to elect
13 a spokesperson, whoever they elect, to speak for them on
14 their behalf. If the government's in place already, you
15 just have to give them the powers to, to do what has to
16 be done, I guess. That's all.

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So, you're
18 advising us that our recommendation should lean towards
19 having the existing Band communities decide for themselves
20 how they would unite?

21 **JOE MICHEL:** Yeah, it has to come from
22 the people, to see how they want to run their, their
23 business. Whether it just be at the Band level, bring
24 maybe the Tribal Councils - those Tribal Councils just

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1 came from the States. They were just adopted from the
2 States. It wasn't Indians that put them there. It wasn't
3 Native people. It wasn't First Nations people that put
4 them there.

5 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** That's why
6 you're so keenly aware of where the power is?

7 **JOE MICHEL:** I'm just a director. I'm
8 just directing traffic. That's all I'm doing. Like, I'm
9 not there to - like, I'm not elected by the people.

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Precisely.

11 **JOE MICHEL:** I'm just hired by the
12 administration that's run by the Chiefs. I guess that's
13 the way it is.

14 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So, we're
15 wrestling to see how that power can be transferred?

16 **JOE MICHEL:** Transferred to the right
17 people, I guess.

18 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. We're
19 trying to find out who are the right people. And we have
20 your advice with respect to the people covered by the Indian
21 Act and the reserve system, and I guess we'll have to find
22 out about the others who do not have their mandates, but,
23 your contribution here this afternoon has been very
24 helpful, and I want to thank you for it.

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1 **JOE MICHEL:** Thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
3 much. Our next presentation will be from the School of
4 Social Work Program, Kathy Jensen. Anytime you're ready.

5 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. I just wanted to
6 speak to this for a few minutes here.

7 What I wanted to talk about was
8 educational opportunities in the North and just to talk
9 about it from the perspective of the Faculty of Social
10 Work at Thompson's experience.

11 We're part of the University of
12 Manitoba. We're one of two satellite programs. The
13 others, our sister program is located in Inner City
14 Winnipeg. We're part of a network of access programs of
15 which there are eight university access programs, and we're
16 one of those eight university programs.

17 We were started in 19 - we came into
18 existence in 1983 and got our first group of students in
19 1984. I'm giving you just a little bit of background
20 information, so that you can sort of put this in a bit
21 of a context.

22 By an access program, we have, it means
23 that we have a priority group of people that we're focused
24 on in terms of entry into the program. These are people

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1 from the Province of Manitoba who have previously been
2 excluded from post-secondary education opportunities and
3 who have a great need for these opportunities, because
4 of lack of financial resources, lack of educational
5 qualifications, and preparation, and have experienced
6 barriers to their participation in the past, and whether
7 success in going through university program, either by
8 virtue of being located in a remote location in the Province
9 of Manitoba, because of cultural differences, because of
10 language differences, or because of personal circumstances
11 that prevented them from taking advantage of
12 post-secondary opportunities.

13 The kind of students that we have coming
14 into our program are a group of people who participate
15 in universities at a rate far below the provincial average
16 and who, when they're admitted, don't have very much, don't
17 usually have high rates of success in programs.

18 We've got three main goals in terms of
19 our program. One is to increase the minimum range of
20 university opportunities for people who have previously
21 been excluded from university education programs, to
22 contribute through their education to the development and
23 self-sufficiency of the communities of which they're a
24 part of. And to hopefully, at some point down the line,

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1 bring about educational change at an institutional level.

2 So that is the broader goals of access programming of
3 which we'll want to make programs.

4 I just wanted to make some points in
5 terms of one idea that I think is - that this represents
6 some success in, and that's educating people close to their
7 home communities. One of the things that I think our
8 particular program has been very successful with is getting
9 people who otherwise wouldn't have opportunities in the
10 North through an educational program.

11 When I came up to the North, I came up
12 here in 1988 now. I've been here five years in July.
13 One of the things that's really impressed me in being here
14 is that there is a desperate need for educational
15 opportunities past high school level, which for a lot of
16 people who are in remote communities, they don't have those
17 opportunities, either because they don't have the
18 financial resources or they don't have the, they haven't
19 had the access or ability to get that educational
20 preparedness.

21 So, I guess one of the ideas that I think
22 is really important is locating educational opportunities
23 close to communities of which people are a part of, and
24 that's not present right at the moment, with the exception

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1 of a few marginal type of programs in the North.

2 Our particular program, we've had
3 forty-eight graduates since our inception and that's not
4 counting this year's group of graduates, of which we've
5 got another thirteen that are moving out in that direction.

6 Out of those forty-eight, we've got
7 thirty-eight of those graduates who are presently employed
8 and located in the North, which is approximately that
9 seventy-nine percent of our graduating population is
10 located in the North.

11 Out of the ones, out of the ten that
12 aren't located in the North of maybe Manitoba, we have
13 two of those people who are located in Northern British
14 Columbia. We have one that's in a small community in New
15 Brunswick. We have two that are located in Ontario, one
16 of whom is in a large centre of Toronto. The second who
17 is working out of Sioux Lookout, which is northeastern
18 or northwestern Ontario. We have five in Southern
19 Manitoba, two of which are located in Brandon, one in Fort
20 Alexander, a reserve community. One in Ashern and one
21 in Swan River, and we have one in Central Manitoba. I
22 should, and that's the one that's in Swan River is in
23 Central Manitoba.

24 So, I think we've also got a large

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1 success in having people with social work skills go into
2 communities which are not large urban centres, which I
3 think is a very high degree of success in terms of one
4 of the principles of our program.

5 The other thing that I think is really
6 important in terms of success in this program and I'm going
7 to speak in terms of my observation of the graduates of
8 other programs. I'm sure that if they were here they would
9 speak much more, in much more detail and much better about
10 this than I can. But one of the things that I've noticed,
11 our first group of graduates graduated in 1988 out of our
12 program and I've had the opportunity to see where they've,
13 some of the kinds of impacts they've been able to have
14 in the community.

15 A number of these people have moved very
16 quickly up into supervisory positions. They're in
17 positions where they are part of, they're in
18 decision-making positions and where they're part of the
19 policy development process or they're starting to be part
20 of the policy development process, which I think is very
21 important in the North, because they're not, it puts people
22 who are born and raised in the North in a position of not
23 being advisory to people who make decisions, but as being
24 part of the, of being a people who do make decisions.

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1 And I think that's one of the, I think that's because,
2 that's possible because of the educational opportunities
3 that programs like this provide.

4 I'm hoping and we're still very young
5 yet, to do this, but I'm hoping eventually if we can stay
6 alive long enough, to have a transfer of knowledge go from
7 the North to the South, because I think there's some very
8 good ideas and just speaking from my perspective from
9 social work, I know that there are different ways of
10 approaching issues, social issues and things that are
11 pertinent to social work and social work practice, which
12 are very different in the North than they are in the South.

13 And by having programming in the North and providing,
14 and being able to provide field placements in the North,
15 being able to be very closely connected to people in the
16 North, I think that we have a chance to change, in our
17 profession, social work knowledge base, so that it is more
18 much responsive to the needs of people in the North.

19 I think that that takes time and I think
20 that we are very, very young and have a long, long way
21 to go in that area, but I think that this kind of program
22 and location makes these kinds of things, these kinds of
23 opportunities possible.

24 The other thing that's important about

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1 this program is, we have seventy percent First Nations
2 population of students in our student body. Seventy
3 percent of our students are First Nations people. That's
4 a very important number of students, because it means that
5 issues for Aboriginal people become centre front because
6 these are the people who live in the North, these are the
7 people who these issues impact on, these are the people,
8 the student body, that keep them front and centre and they
9 focus, and they push us to change our program, that even
10 though it might be the same program that's delivered on
11 campus in Winnipeg, they push us to make it relevant to
12 the North, and they push us to make it relevant to the
13 practice and the policy issues that are existent in the
14 North. So I think numbers is something that's very
15 important.

16 This is not something that I think is
17 possible if you locate the program in Winnipeg, where
18 Aboriginal people do not become the majority of the student
19 body, they'll become a minority of the student body. So,
20 I think that's another reason why it's very important to
21 have these kinds of educational programs in the North.

22 The other thing that it makes possible
23 to is, I think quite often in our education systems, we
24 got caught up within points, and that we somehow have to

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1 define when the end point is and then work towards it.
2 One of the things that's been very exciting about having
3 this program in the North and having a student body that
4 pushes us to make things relevant in the North is that,
5 we don't really know, we don't really have a clear concept
6 of what that end point is going to be. But we do have
7 a concept, we do have knowledge about our past and we do
8 have knowledge about our present, and we can use that
9 information and that knowledge and that practice
10 experience to try and define what that end point is going
11 to look like.

12 And one of the other things that's very
13 exciting, I think that in terms of changing knowledge basis
14 is, is that it's also allowing us to speak towards, working
15 towards an end point that we don't really know what it
16 is and being able to change that end point as we learn
17 more information about it and what it should look like.

18 I think that's something that's very exciting and made
19 possible by having the program in the North and by having
20 the number of students that we do have in our student body.

21 Out of our forty-eight graduates, we have twenty-seven
22 of those that are First Nations people.

23 Some of the First Nations people have
24 moved into, we fought a few years ago to have the MSW,

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1 one course is taught out of the MSW program, the Masters
2 program for social work in the North and delivered to the
3 people in the North, because so many of our students were
4 graduating and moving into supervisory positions and so,
5 we managed to get the Faculty of Social Work to provide
6 this within the existing resources that they have right
7 now in their faculty. And we were able to move three First
8 Nations people into - well, they moved themselves, not
9 us - three First Nations people are now presently in those,
10 in that particular MSW program and are taking their courses
11 on a part-time basis in the North.

12 I think that's very important because
13 they need that kind of graduate support to be able to
14 continue to move to make those kinds of decisions and to
15 partake in those decision-making processes.

16 So, I think there's a real need to
17 continue that trend and to, this is only a one time only
18 kind of course, time that they're going to offer it. It's
19 only for this group of students. This is not going to
20 be offered on an ongoing basis. I think that this needs,
21 this needs to be looked at as a future resource that needs
22 to be developed.

23 In terms of an access program and one
24 of the things that's important about access programming

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1 is, it shifted the emphasis from working at intake
2 standards as opposed, in terms of accessibility and
3 opportunities as opposed to outcome and there's big
4 emphasis on trying to provide the kinds of support
5 mechanisms in the program to make it possible for people
6 to succeed. And we have had a good success rate with that,
7 with those. However, some of the - first I'll tell you
8 very briefly about our support systems.

9 We have academic supports where we
10 deliver the program across three terms as opposed to two
11 terms as you would on campus. We, the most courses that
12 one person, one student would be required a term would
13 be three courses, would be four courses and that usually
14 only happens in one out of the three terms and more often
15 it is three courses per term. We try to provide a lot
16 of support in terms of writing skills and conceptual skills
17 so that we help students in terms of writing and
18 communicating their ideas and trying to get them down onto
19 paper and out. Previously we had counselling support in
20 the program up here, but more recently we haven't been
21 able to provide those because of funding cuts, but when
22 I first came in 1988, we had a student counsellor. We
23 have not had a student counsellor for the last two years.
24 What we've tried to do is, for the faculty and the

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1 communities try to provide counselling supports for
2 students to help them move through the program so, because
3 of funding cuts there's been a bit of an erosion of our
4 ability to provide that.

5 Financial supports was the other piece
6 that we have had in the program in the past, but that also
7 has been eroded in the last few years and it's going to
8 be eroded again this year through significant cuts.

9 One of our difficulties and one of the
10 reasons why we have so much difficulty with funding, I
11 believe is because we are funded by soft funding, by
12 external soft funding, and that I think marginalize, is
13 commitment and marginalizes our ability in a large extent
14 to provide a program like this, because eventually and
15 quite rapidly these soft funds are drying up and not
16 available to us anymore, and threaten the existence of
17 what's been, I feel, a very successful program and a program
18 that has a chance to go further. Although I'm not, at
19 this point I'm thinking that it's not just even this
20 program, but any kinds of programs like this need to be
21 provided. I'm not just putting this forward to look and
22 say, I want to say this particular program, I would want
23 educational opportunities like this to continue and even
24 if this program were not to continue, that we wouldn't

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1 lose these kinds of opportunities in the North and the
2 building and the experience and the ability to make a
3 difference that this particular program has been able to
4 be a participant in.

5 Other kinds of things that have been
6 eroding the last while too, is a number of our students
7 are single parents, both males and females. A number of
8 people, it's predominantly a female student body and of
9 the males that are in the program that aren't single
10 parents, they usually have a large, and I guess that also
11 goes probably for a number of the females, they also have
12 large numbers of children in their families, as well, which
13 also makes it harder to be successful in university
14 education.

15 Child care supports have been another
16 issue that's been eroded this year in terms of funding
17 cuts, in terms of subsidized spaces. Our program is very
18 dependent on subsidized child care spots and those spots
19 have been eroded in the Province of Manitoba in the last
20 while, particularly this year. In that, a cap on those
21 spots has been, so that even though, if, if we bring
22 students into our program, our opportunity to be able to
23 support that many in terms of their child care needs has
24 been significant, our ability to do that has been

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1 significantly reduced.

2 At the programs in session we brought
3 in fifteen students per year, program funded students.

4 In 1991, we were reduced to eleven program funded students.

5 This year we are reduced to four program funded students.

6 Any students that we bring in beyond those four program
7 funded students this year, we have to find other funding
8 opportunities for them. That's a concern because there
9 have been caps on a number of programs that provide those
10 alternative funding opportunities. The criteria for
11 social assistance has a social program. The criteria's
12 been changed for that. Caps have been placed on the amount
13 of monies that are available for Aboriginal people to put
14 their people into post-secondary educational
15 opportunities. So again, this is another way of reducing
16 abilities to be able to provide educational opportunities
17 for people.

18 In closing, I just wanted to impress upon
19 the Committee again how important education is in giving
20 people the opportunity to be able to make differences in
21 social policies, in the kinds of things that, and the
22 decision-making bodies that make a difference in the kinds
23 of mechanisms that govern our country. And I would like
24 to see as part of your solutions, more support given to

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1 education in order to be able to provide Aboriginal peoples
2 with those opportunities to make those kinds of
3 differences.

4 Thank you.

5 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you for
6 coming and speaking to us. You mentioned that support
7 mechanisms are built into the program and that some of
8 the students need support in the area of writing skills
9 and conceptual skills and the last community that I visited
10 I had some alarming statements about the level of literacy
11 of some of the Native students coming out of high schools,
12 and it was described to me how these students were pushed
13 ahead in a process that was known as number crunching and
14 that the Native students got pushed ahead into the next
15 level and the next level and then graduated from the high
16 school and in many cases, couldn't really read, and that
17 it was necessary to, if they were going on to post-secondary
18 education, that it was necessary to put them through
19 literacy training, and I found that a rather startling
20 proposition that students would be graduating from high
21 school and would not be able to read and therefore to be
22 able to handle the materials that they were going to be
23 confronted with when they went to the post-secondary level.
24 It's obviously a very serious issue if that situation

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1 is general as opposed to confined to these particular
2 communities. And I'm wondering if, since you have both
3 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in your courses,
4 I'm wondering, do you see any significant difference of
5 the level of attainment of Native students emerging from
6 the high schools as opposed to the non-Native students?
7 Is this, do you think this is a real problem or is this
8 just something that exists perhaps in the communities I
9 was in?

10 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. I'm not sure that
11 I feel really in a class to be able to answer, you know,
12 all what you're asking. I can tell you that in terms of
13 our student body, we have a number of people, because of
14 our selection criteria, we have a number of people that
15 have Grade 8. The average student in our program has a
16 Grade 10 education, whether they're Aboriginal or
17 non-Aboriginal. There are a number of people that have
18 Grade 8 educations and there are a number of people that
19 have a Grade 7 education and we've graduated one person
20 who came in with a Grade 6 education. A lot of this is
21 because the lower education levels, because there's
22 significant barriers in being able to move through the
23 public school system for people, people that are in
24 positions of poverty, people that have differences in

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1 culture, people that have differences in language. I
2 think all of those - poverty, culture, language, all of
3 those types of things affect Aboriginal people.

4 One of the things that is very exciting
5 for me to see, is to see people when they come into our
6 program in the beginning and then when we - there are
7 people, for instance, who we have to, you know, who nipped
8 out on the parts of their educations in terms of how to
9 write papers, in terms of how to put things in terms of
10 sentence structure and that kind of thing, in terms of
11 being able to take very, very good ideas and how do you
12 express them in another language, and in a system, in a
13 university system, which is based on a culture, which puts
14 different priorities than a culture that these people are
15 coming from, and be able to be heard, and with the program
16 supports, are seeing very, very significant progress.
17 Standards is not something that I'm concerned about with
18 our program in terms of the graduates of our program.
19 I think that we've, as much as we're able to provide enough
20 supports and we have the resources to be able to do that,
21 these people have great ability and can make great gains
22 in going through the program. I've seen very big changes.

23 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I can see when
24 your students are coming in from different levels that

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1 you wouldn't be in a position to make the kind of assessment
2 that I was asking. Could I ask you what kind of social
3 work activities your graduates get involved in? Could
4 you give us a general idea of what they're doing, those
5 who have graduated and are employed?

6 **KATHY JENSEN:** Yes, that I can do. We
7 have people who are working in the parole system. We have
8 people who are working in community and corrections. We
9 have people who are working in Awasis. Child and Family
10 Services. We have people who are working for Health and
11 Family Services. We have people who are working in school
12 systems, both in their home communities and we have one
13 person who's Director of Education in Pukatawagan. We
14 have another person who is a school counsellor in Norway
15 House. We have people who are working in Community
16 Outreach in Churchill. Let me see, what else. We have
17 people who are employed with Manitoba, with MKO in
18 Thompson. We have other people that are employed with
19 Keewatin Tribal Council in Thompson here. We have people
20 who are employed with the Alcoholism Foundation of
21 Manitoba. Nelson House Medicine Lodge. Family Services
22 in Sioux Lookout. Oh. What else. Frontier School
23 Division. People are working with the mentally
24 handicapped. McGill House is one program that's in the

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1 community that we're in right now. McDonald Youth
2 Services. Does that give you an idea?

3 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes, it does.
4 Thank you very much. I'll ask my colleague if he has any
5 questions.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you for
7 your presentation, Kathy Jensen. I do have a few questions
8 if you don't mind.

9 I'd like to understand something about
10 the prerequisites that are relied upon for entrance into
11 your program. I heard you make a particular statement
12 and I'm going to repeat it and I'm going to try to get
13 a clarification from you, if I can, because the
14 implications are quite startling. I have a strong
15 suspicion that I did not understand the statement.

16 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay.

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** "People who
18 come in are those who usually don't have high rates of
19 success." That, I find, a bit startling in the sense that
20 let me present two logical conclusions that might flow
21 from that.

22 One. One might make the observation
23 that if an individual who had taken some bits and pieces
24 of education say at a technical college and had done very

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1 well, they would not be entitled to come in because they
2 had the experience of success. Is that right?

3 **KATHY JENSEN:** Well, okay. They would
4 be a lower priority. Technical college doesn't
5 necessarily eliminate you. What might eliminate you
6 though would be if you have twenty-seven university credits
7 or more and they are in good standing.

8 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Oh, then I am,
9 maybe there is cause for concern then. So, your program,
10 is it geared then at young people to register who are likely
11 to fail?

12 **KATHY JENSEN:** No. I think that's a
13 position of the system. These are people who would likely
14 fail, yes, if you put them into the regular university
15 system, for instance, on Fort Garry Campus in Winnipeg.
16 Yes, these are people who would likely fail. these are
17 people who have abilities or have the ability to achieve
18 in the system if you're given adequate support.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. How do
20 you measure that ability, I guess is my question?

21 **KATHY JENSEN:** Well, because we are an
22 access program and we are geared specifically to those
23 people, to bring in those people who have been excluded,
24 okay, that's part of entrance criteria, we look at their

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1 experiences, for instance, in the community. What have
2 they done in terms of volunteer experiences, in terms of
3 work experience, what kinds of successes have they had
4 in doing that kind of work. In a lot of Northern
5 communities there are no organized social services, so
6 that you have to work with different eyes to see what kinds
7 of community input these people have and the impact.

8 We look for awareness of social issues
9 and social concerns in the North, at positions that people
10 have and ideas people have about ways that they could do
11 things differently. We look at commitment, to social work
12 and interest in social work issues, and understanding of
13 social work. We look at support systems. You know, in
14 terms of family support systems, in terms of friendship
15 support systems; those kinds of things. This is not a
16 traditional entrance criteria that you would look for if
17 you were doing admissions on university campus at the
18 Faculty of social work.

19 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So, I'm just
20 trying to understand the implications for Aboriginal
21 individuals. Let me take a hypothetical case and see how
22 you would handle this individual. I'm still very
23 concerned about the effect of the registration policy.
24 I hope you can prepare something in writing. It's a very

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1 important issue and I'm rather concerned that you would
2 even be able to deal with it. The Aboriginal individual
3 grows up in a community where as many communities are denied
4 the kind of education services that most Canadians have.

5 One would seem to think, oh well, this is the kind of
6 individual that this access program is designed to help.

7 Whether this individual gets a job, working in
8 construction or take your pick, works very hard and the
9 individual is successful by depending on what standard
10 you apply. The individuals may have a Grade 8 education,
11 Grade 9, take your pick. The individual might work and
12 get some education, perhaps a high school equivalence
13 certificate. Get a couple of credits, Red River Community
14 College, straight "A's", a very bright individual.
15 Because of that success then, an individual would be
16 excluded from admission to your program because you're
17 only taking those who will fail.

18 **KATHY JENSEN:** No. No. That person
19 will not be excluded, because that person did not go, that
20 person you're saying achieved a Grade 8.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** It was a
22 hypothetical situation.

23 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. That person
24 achieved a Grade 8. That puts that as an indication of

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1 somebody who has an interest in upgrading their skills,
2 okay? The fact that they've taken two Community College
3 courses and they've gotten straight "A's" that's helped
4 them because they have achieved...

5 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Where there is
6 no question that the individual is committed to work.
7 I'm concerned that people who are identified as succeeding
8 are excluded in the programs.

9 **KATHY JENSEN:** No, they aren't, because
10 that's a situation, in that instance, in the example that
11 you've given me, they wouldn't be excluded. However, if
12 you had somebody who had thirty university credits, okay.
13 all right, let's say twelve university credits, so they're
14 one short of a full year of university credits. Their
15 an Aboriginal person. They have a Grade 12. They've had
16 a fairly stable homelife and is single, that person would
17 be excluded, because that person would not be in as great
18 a need of the program supports that we have as the person
19 that you're describing, who has a Grade 8 education, has
20 gone and gotten a GED, has taken a couple of community
21 colleges courses and gotten straight "A's". That person
22 would be in more need of our resources and therefore would
23 have a higher priority in terms of coming into our program.

24 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I, let me ask.

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1 What is the rate of graduates? How many graduates, for
2 every individual coming in, for every ten, how many
3 graduate? What is the rate?

4 **KATHY JENSEN:** We have a 48.5 percent
5 rate of graduation from point of entry to exit point.

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** 48.7. What
7 is the average for universities?

8 **KATHY JENSEN:** Well, this particular
9 group, probably fifteen percent.

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Sorry.

11 **KATHY JENSEN:** For this particular
12 group of people that we're working with, fifteen percent.

13 If you're talking overall, you know, graduation for the
14 excluded group, fifteen percent, yes.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I missed
16 that. I was wondering how many people would graduate from
17 your program out of those who enter into the program?

18 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. How many
19 people...

20 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Out of one
21 hundred, how many would?

22 **KATHY JENSEN:** It would 48.5 people.

23 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Right.

24 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. Or...

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1 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I don't know.

2 Where do the fifteen percent come from, that's the
3 question?

4 **KATHY JENSEN:** Well, you asked me if you
5 were going through a regular university program...

6 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I see.

7 **KATHY JENSEN:** What would the success
8 rate be, and I said the success rate would probably be
9 around fifteen percent.

10 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Oh, I see.
11 Oh, all right. I didn't get that part. Okay. So, yours
12 is much higher than the regular...

13 **KATHY JENSEN:** That's right.

14 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** University
15 programs.

16 **KATHY JENSEN:** That's right.

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Is what you're
18 saying.

19 **KATHY JENSEN:** They're the same
20 individuals.

21 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. I
22 wonder if you would do me a favour of sending us written
23 descriptions of the policy, the goals and of the entrance
24 requirements because I'm still not clear on your goals...

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1 **KATHY JENSEN:** Yes.

2 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** And this is a
3 part of an extremely important issue here. I agree with
4 you one hundred percent education is critically important
5 for Aboriginal people and I can say that I will vigorously
6 support the inclusion of recommendations in your report
7 for more education for Aboriginal people, but those
8 recommendations have to be the absolute best that you need.

9 **KATHY JENSEN:** And I would agree with
10 you on that.

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** And I would
12 like to have a look, a very close look at the kinds of
13 programs that exist. You said that there are quite a
14 number of flaws in them. You've identified some. For
15 example, the funding is ad hoc. It presents
16 difficulties...

17 **KATHY JENSEN:** That's right.

18 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** For long term
19 planning and so on, so I would be grateful if you would
20 do that...

21 **KATHY JENSEN:** Yes, I can do that.

22 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Do you have
23 time for a couple more questions or do you have to go?
24 I'm very sorry, if I have delayed your schedule to prevent

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1 you from making a full presentation.

2 **KATHY JENSEN:** I have to go pick up my
3 son. He's due to be picked up five minutes ago at the
4 day care centre.

5 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I wonder if we
6 might be able to correspond with you, with your superiors
7 on...

8 **KATHY JENSEN:** Absolutely. If I...

9 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** There are
10 important points here that need to be dealt with and...

11 **KATHY JENSEN:** If you want to write them
12 to me, I'd be more than happy to get them back to you in
13 correspondence.

14 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** I'm asking the
15 staff here to make note of that. There are important
16 issues about this program that I'd like to make sure that
17 we deal with, it is not missed in our research program
18 and I'm sorry if we dragged a little late and you're unable
19 to complete - but thank you very much for your contribution.

20 **KATHY JENSEN:** Okay. Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
22 much.

23 **KATHY JENSEN:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Our next

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1 presenter is the Northern Women's Development Network and
2 if the presenter would step up. I daren't even try to
3 pronounce the name.

4 **HARI DIMITRAKOPOULON, NORTHERN WOMEN'S**

5 **DEVELOPMENT NETWORK:** My name is Hari Dimitrakopoulon and
6 I'm here on behalf of the Northern Women's Development
7 Network. Some parts of the Network have already presented
8 to you. Yesterday some women who are part of the Network
9 has presented to you as part of the IWC, Indigenous Women's
10 Collective, as well as Northern Women's Resource Service.

11 The Northern Women's Development Network consists of ten
12 women's groups and those women's groups, some of them are
13 solely Aboriginal women's groups, however, some others
14 are all inclusive. Myself, I'm not an Aboriginal woman,
15 but I'm here as presenting to you as the author of the
16 report, and this report was written for the Northern
17 Manitoba Economic Development Commission under the
18 Province of Manitoba, Northern Affairs.

19 You, I think you heard earlier today,
20 Mr. De Groot presenting on behalf of the Northern Manitoba
21 Economic Development Commission. What I'm going to be
22 talking and highlighting is about the report on women
23 economic development and that's the one I just handed you.

24 We found this earlier report across the

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1 country that deals with women, and this deals with women
2 in Northern Manitoba, however, a lot of it is devoted to
3 Northern Aboriginal women, North of 53, the Northern
4 Affairs jurisdiction in the Province of Manitoba.

5 I'll take you almost on a time trip here.

6 Just highlighting and I'll try to be as brief as possible.

7 I know your time is quite tight. In terms of what we
8 looked at - we looked at the status of women in Northern
9 Manitoba, as Northern Aboriginal women and we ask from
10 the Commission that if they're going to do a study on women,
11 on Northern Manitoba, it's almost like taking a stock in
12 inventory of where Northern Manitoba is. It won't be
13 appropriate as categorizing women as another column in
14 the statistics. It appears to be much more in depth why
15 women in Northern Manitoba fare the way they do and we
16 cannot follow the Canadian or Manitoba statistics because
17 in Northern Manitoba we are worse than Canadian or Manitoba
18 statistics, and Aboriginal women, in particular, fare
19 worse than non-Aboriginal women in Manitoba, in Northern
20 Manitoba.

21 Just talking briefly, all I'm going to
22 do is highlight some of our findings. In Chapter 4, page
23 26, we talk about the history of women in Northern Manitoba
24 and I'm sure you are familiar with that, however, as you

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1 know, in Northern Manitoba there are four nations: Kriklie
2 Nations, Sayisi Dene, the Ojibway Nation and the Cree.
3 And women in those four nations are different as much as
4 different - different women, for example, in European
5 setting of countries.

6 I would like to say that the role of men
7 and women in the Aboriginal economy prior to European
8 conduct was different, but both played a vital role. Men
9 hunted large game. Women remained closer to the camps,
10 hunted small game and harvested berries and other edible
11 food items. There is some dispute over the level of
12 equality of women in Aboriginal societies. Part of this
13 has stemmed from the cultural bias and examination of
14 Aboriginal societies.

15 So, we like to, to draw attention to
16 women in the pre-European context in Northern Manitoba
17 where their contribution was as valuable as the men's
18 contribution, however, because there is no account,
19 regular account or any of other account or very limited,
20 I should say, we cannot say, however, what we have is that,
21 there was an equal valuation of their work. Here we have
22 testimonial such as Aboriginal women were vital to the
23 economy of the fur traders after the European conduct.
24 In the words of a Sayisi Dene guide in 1772, "there is

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1 no such thing as travelling a considerable distance for
2 any length of time without the women's assistance. Women
3 carted the canoes, acted as guides and translators and
4 on many occasions, provided the food that kept the party
5 alive."

6 The immigration of European women after
7 this time also increased the degree of racial prejudice
8 against Metis women coming out of mixed marriages and their
9 offspring. In the North, Aboriginal Peoples Alliance and
10 the increasingly marginalized fur trade led to growing
11 dependence and decreased self-reliance. The role of both
12 Aboriginal men women, after hearing being brought
13 increasingly into the market, was more marginalized by
14 the market.

15 In concluding in terms of the historical
16 aspect for Northern Manitoba women, the growing sense of
17 cautiousness amongst First Nations and Metis women and
18 then uniqueness of their religion and source of
19 development, was apparent throughout the whole project.

20 Despite their different outlook, First Nation and Metis
21 women not only rejects culturally and general biased
22 definitions of economic development, they reject cultural
23 and general biased views of history that have either
24 ignored or distorted the role of women.

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1 They are seeking a more accurate
2 reflection of the historical role that Aboriginal women
3 have played within all the economies of the North. They
4 are seeking nothing more than an equal valuation of
5 economic development and an equal role in that development
6 process.

7 Number 2. I'd like to highlight some
8 of the demographics in Northern Manitoba. The statistical
9 information comes from Stats Canada. On page 37, Chapter
10 5, the demographics, we have illustrated where we stand
11 in terms of women and men ratio in Northern Manitoba.
12 It is well known there are more women than men in Canada,
13 however, when it comes to Northern Manitoba there are more
14 men than women, and this is not only in Northern Manitoba's
15 urban communities such as Thompson, which is - well, the
16 number of the men employed in the mining industry
17 profitably, are more than women. The same occurs in the
18 First Nation communities as well as the Northern Affairs
19 communities. And that, of course, it's worth noting we
20 haven't been able to, to look into it in details, but we
21 believe that first employment in the North is geared
22 towards male occupations, such as mining and forestry.
23 However, the surprise was in the First Nation and Northern
24 Affairs communities.

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1 What might be occurring is a marked
2 migration of women from First Nations and Northern Affairs
3 communities to urban communities such as Thompson and The
4 Pas in the North, and Winnipeg in the South. This could
5 result from not only the higher number of Aboriginal
6 women's children help starting outside of the community
7 than men, but also the number of single parents, most of
8 whom are women, relocating to the urban communities. And
9 we have urged repeatedly the Commission and the government
10 of Manitoba to look into this disparity.

11 Number 3. I'd like to draw your
12 attention to the income figures and that's on page 43-45.
13 It illustrates that the Canadian, Manitoba and the
14 Northern income figures, but when it comes to First Nations
15 Northern Affairs municipalities, the disparities have
16 grown larger and larger. I think the graph shows the
17 difference in terms of where Aboriginal women do not fare
18 as well as Manitoba, Canadian, and Northern women in
19 general.

20 Number 3 or Number 4. I'd like to draw
21 your attention to the whole issue of traditional
22 non-monetary activities taking place in Northern Manitoba.
23 The level of economic activity in Canada has, until
24 recently, been influenced by culturally assume minds bout

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1 economic activity and that's very much true in Northern
2 Manitoba. The original of the Aboriginal economy was
3 largely self-sufficient and sustainable. If it were to
4 be measured by the main statistical measures today,
5 however, there would be no measurable economic activity.

6 And other studies have been made, we counted ten across
7 the country, however, none in Northern Manitoba, or how
8 it relates to women and how the majority of these activities
9 are performed by women. So, in this particular case, not
10 only Aboriginal women fare worse than Aboriginal peoples
11 in general in terms of income, however, when it comes to
12 the valuation of their work, when activity is not measured
13 and, of course, it's not valued, that's another minus in
14 terms of the economic existence within their own
15 communities.

16 Okay. We also looked at all levels of
17 government in terms of employment of women. We haven't
18 been able to hear the detailed information from federal
19 and provincial governments in Manitoba in terms of
20 Aboriginal womens' participation. However, when we
21 surveyed the First Nations governments, and that means
22 tribal councils as well as government, or First Nations
23 government on the reserve, we found that women fare better
24 in those governments rather than provincial and the federal

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1 government in Northern Manitoba. So, the network's
2 research indicates that First Nations governments employ
3 a significant number of women and that was a real positive
4 surprise for us. Thus far, indicating a historical
5 background, the way it come out of research, income and
6 privation of records as well as in terms of the
7 demographics, we extended our research in terms of other
8 issues such as living conditions.

9 On page 92, we looked at living
10 conditions in Northern Manitoba and how it affects women's
11 lives and just came through studying how things can be
12 worse in Canada, or just a few kilometres apart. From
13 the study the death rate amongst the Aboriginal people
14 which is 2.6 times the rate amongst the population as a
15 whole, it's particularly high amongst young people. The
16 infant mortality rate is twice as much the national
17 average. The suicide rate of Aboriginal people make up
18 7 percent of the population but 54% of the prison
19 population, the rates of alcohol and substance abuse are
20 much higher than the national average.

21 And, of course, another issue we looked
22 at is the whole issue of housing within the social
23 conditions and then we found out that in other words, the
24 number of people per room can be as high as four and a

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1 half times greater than the national average, and that's
2 from Statistics Canada. Maybe some of them are not -
3 they're not significant information to you, however, when
4 it comes to women's lives, it greatly affects them. In
5 conversations and discussions we had within the different
6 communities, the issue of housing affects women as safe
7 housing. A lot of women, Aboriginal women in their
8 communities cannot find safe housing or if they find
9 themselves a single parent, they sometimes have to move
10 outside the community. This is, this posed to them a lot
11 of stress and sometimes to the extent of tragic results.

12 The other issue we looked at and a lot
13 of programs in Thompson such as the program of the previous
14 presenter talked to you about, the access programs, have
15 significantly increasing difficulties, is the whole issue
16 of child care. We devoted some part of our research to
17 the whole issue of child care and what we have found that
18 there is not child care facility in the First Nations
19 community two months ago. I believe there is one being
20 developed as we are speaking in The Pas First Nation,
21 however, there is no other First nation that has child
22 care facility. That means women do not enjoy the same
23 opportunities in terms of education or the potential if
24 there is any job being involved in the employment part

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1 of the economy. Just for your information, Northern
2 Manitoba has 8 percent of the total Manitoba population,
3 however, has only 4.1% of child care spaces and all of
4 them are concentrated in the urban centres with only three
5 of them in Northern Affairs communities and, as I said,
6 hopefully one in The Pas as we are speaking. That also
7 poses great difficulty in those ones migrating to our
8 communities, to the urban communities from their own to
9 starting or to look for employment because they don't have
10 the supports that extended family can provide, so when
11 they come here, there is a high rate of failure in the
12 educational programs because partly, there is nobody to
13 take care of the children and, of course, the parent cannot
14 concentrate on what they supposed to do, study or work
15 and fulfill the requirements of the employer.

16 Our study was not only based on Stats
17 Canada information or conversations, workshops and
18 discussions, it was also based on a survey we conducted
19 and the outlook of the surveys was significant. Of those
20 identifying their background, 64.8 percent were Aboriginal
21 including Treaty, non-Status and Metis; 24.3 were
22 non-Aboriginal; 5.4 immigrant; and 4.0 visible minority
23 and 1.4 disabled.

24 We came across a number of barriers and

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1 I would like to take this opportunity to look at them,
2 but there are too many just to name them at this point,
3 however, throughout all the communities in Northern
4 Manitoba, it was almost like repeating the same kind of,
5 identifying the same barriers, repeating the same
6 problems. That was both on the basis of economic
7 development as well as education and the previous
8 presenter, Kathy Jensen, just outlined very well what she
9 thinks the students face in the education part. However,
10 we didn't stop at that point. We just went on to chart
11 some strategies the way they came out of the women
12 themselves throughout our study, and we found that the
13 migration and immigration strategies that were integral
14 to many area of governments, strategies were begun in
15 the 1970's, largely were rejected by Aboriginal, the rural
16 and Northern communities. And, of course, that could change
17 the profile of how government or at least we hope it would
18 change the profile of how governments deal with some of
19 these issues we identified.

20 What women have hoping to be done,
21 strategies that are based on the needs of people in
22 communities and give them greater control over their own
23 lives are key to women's economic development. In post
24 strategies, they have ignored women in the past and in

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1 many cases have had a negative impact on them in their
2 communities. This is particularly true of women in First
3 Nations and Metis communities. It will be seen women not
4 only want a strategy focused on their needs, they are ready,
5 willing, and able to identify exactly what needs to be
6 done and how it can be done.

7 Further to that, we identified a number
8 of women, women's organizations and women's groups who
9 have made a difference either as individuals - some of
10 them came here to you. You might see their names here
11 as Chiefs, community coordinators, women who took charge
12 in terms of economic development or educational
13 opportunities. It's just quite numerous, I mean, it's
14 the whole, I could pose a whole downside of Northern
15 Manitoba in terms of Aboriginal women, however, a lot of
16 them had led the way and that has created role models for
17 the younger ones and as well, a tradition of stronger women.
18 Our two groups that are outstanding in my mind in terms
19 of their contributions, one of them lives in Berens River
20 First Nation, on the east side of the lake, and that's
21 the Equa Greenhouse Coop, which is a clear example of
22 successful community venture, and as well, a part of the
23 Berens River Band. Elders in this community report that
24 food was grown on the traplines. Their wild rice was

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1 harvested well in the 1950's before being largely replaced
2 by purchased food. After the encouragement of government
3 in the 70's and 80's, the Worker's Cooperative was
4 established in the late 1980,s which operates a greenhouse
5 and a market garden.

6 Not only they become an economic unit,
7 it also teaches experience from previous generation to
8 next generation when it comes to being self-sustaining.

9 As well as the Poplar River Sewing Club which was
10 originally established by fifteen women in the community,
11 Poplar River community, largely as something to do, but
12 is increasingly taking an economic role. Increasingly,
13 the younger women have turned to the older women to learn
14 skills they need. In the process, the traditional art
15 of producing clothes is being reviewed. And, of course,
16 we have the profile of a few of the women who have, as
17 individuals, through business or other creative
18 approaches, have been outstanding in their communities
19 and that's both First Nations and Metis communities.

20 Further to that, we charted an Action
21 Plan and we have asked for a lot of things, what women
22 have felt it should be done to improve their economic and
23 social situation in their communities and that goes from
24 a conference on Aboriginal women to a community development

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1 corporation to other, to establishing other support
2 services.

3 Issues of living conditions has the same
4 conclusion. Child care, employment opportunities and
5 self-employment and education have to be addressed by
6 initiating funding, long term funding in order to make
7 this wish a reality that Aboriginal women live along with
8 us as equal partners in all Northern Manitoba society.
9 Problems and projects that are decided, have to be decided
10 by Aboriginal women or involve Aboriginal women,
11 administered by Aboriginal women and expressing the wishes
12 of Aboriginal women. Basically, the issue that came to
13 our attention and to my attention as I was writing this
14 report, is being able to control their own lives. However,
15 it is our responsibility, as a society at large, to aid
16 this process, otherwise we only provide lip service to
17 them and to ourselves and it's a loss to all of us.

18 Thank you.

19 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
20 much for that massive report that you did covering almost
21 every aspect of women's lives and I look forward very much
22 to reading it. Are there more copies of the report
23 available?

24 **HARI DIMITRAKOPOULON:** Yes. They were

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1 given to the Department of Northern Affairs and the
2 Government of Manitoba, although their attention was much
3 less and I can write a few pages on that one, but there
4 was not a lot of interest in acquiring these and we have
5 a box of them, and it's an outpouring of our souls to that
6 and that's why we thought it was very important to bring
7 it to your attention.

8 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes. It's
9 excellent and exhaustive and I think quite unique...

10 **HARI DIMITRAKOPOULON:** The other one we
11 came across similar to that was in Northern British
12 Columbia, a report involving the women of British Columbia
13 in regards to the oil pipeline.

14 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes. Well,
15 thank you very much. I'll ask my colleague if he has
16 anything he wants to - Paul?

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Well, thank
18 you. I presume you're giving this to us to add to our
19 stock of information. You have no particular
20 recommendations for us to make to the federal government,
21 which is our particular mandate.

22 **HARI DIMITRAKOPOULON:** Well, in actual
23 fact there is an action clause, an action clause which
24 is on Chapter 17, page 154, it very much informs you of

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1 what we want the government to do.

2 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** So, it does
3 contain some recommendations respecting federal
4 government policies and you would like our people then
5 to consider that.

6 **HARI DIMITRAKOPOULON:** Yes.
7 Definitely. For some of them we ask for joint federal/
8 provincial government funding and we have identified when
9 participants of the whole study have identified, for
10 example, an urban development corp. program funded by the
11 federal/provincial governments, for example. We would
12 like for the federal government to look into all these
13 recommendations and we hope that something like that can
14 come in the future.

15 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you.

16 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you. Our
17 next presenter is the York Factory Band, Mr. Donald
18 Saunders. Is he here? Just whenever you're ready, please
19 proceed.

20 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** The contents of my
21 presentation looks mainly at the relocation of the York
22 Factory Band, the Treaty Land Entitlements, the Northern
23 Flood Agreement, land claims and land exchanges. The
24 Hydro - impacts it has on communities.

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1 I would just like to go a little bit into
2 the relocation of the York Factory First Nations in the
3 summer of '57. A couple of years back, I started working
4 with the Northern Flood Agreement as a key communicator,
5 and in one of my visits to the elders, when I went on one
6 of my visits to the elders, I talked to them what they
7 recall about the relocation of the First Nations York
8 Factory at that time. And the stories that I heard were
9 very sad. Sad in many ways. That the stories they came
10 up with, the hardships that they went through in relocating
11 their families.

12 At the time of the relocation, the Hudson
13 Bay Company was also located in York Factory, which
14 provided store goods to the York Factory Band at that time.
15 And they had heard stories that the Hudson Bay Store would
16 be closing. As a result, the agency at that time had
17 informed these council members and the Band that they would
18 be moving the people that year, in 1957. They did the
19 relocation in 1957, the winter of 1956.

20 The issue I want to touch on is the
21 relocation of a community. The hardships that they went
22 through. They tell the stories. The elders have told
23 me stories, the hardships they went through coming down
24 the Nelson River by boats. Some came through by dog team.

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1 At that time, there were children involved. At that time,
2 too, the river was at higher levels in its natural form.
3 There were times when the women and children had to get
4 out of the boats so they could travel lightly to get around
5 the rapids and then in that spring, with the breakup of
6 the river, the Nelson River, still had ice hanging around
7 on the banks, and the women had to climb up these banks
8 to get around the rapids, while the men got the boats across
9 on the shore. It was also very dangerous. What little
10 items they had of personal belongings or any items they
11 had to take to their place, were never identified. We
12 tried to get these stories from the elders, because what
13 they told was true, as they were younger. We also had
14 the documents from the Department of Indian Affairs. They
15 were documents of correspondence between themselves and
16 Ottawa at that time, and there were differences regarding
17 the Band Councils at that time.

18 The people went through where they lived
19 in tents in Northern Manitoba. They stayed there for two
20 or three weeks at a time. These stories come from what
21 the elders have told me. I've documented some of their
22 stories.

23 From there they went further North where
24 there was a Northern agency at that time. It took them

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1 a long time to find that place that was to be their new
2 home. When they arrived, they still were living in tents.
3 Then they moved to down the Nelson River which is located
4 in the Split Lake area. I can't see these lands that are
5 going to us as promised in our Treaties. We presently
6 live on twenty-two hundred acres of land, which only serves
7 as a purpose for locating houses with no suitable land
8 to expand in any way economically. That we're in an area
9 where we cannot continue with our traditional livelihood
10 of trapping, of fishing, or hunting. We can only today
11 think about that Manitoba forest area that we've lost.

12 We are also now affected by the Hydro
13 development on the Nelson River. Today our trappers
14 cannot trap in the immediate area. There's also loss of
15 food production because of the Hydro development. The
16 trappers have experience this as I said in my presentation
17 about the high cost of transporting them to their original
18 home of York Factory and the cost of their fur production
19 is more than for them to go up there. It's costly for
20 transporting fuel, trapping equipment, it's a livelihood.

21 We cannot proceed with the exchanges,
22 the land exchanges provided under the Northern Flood
23 Agreement when we have no full entitlement on the Treaty
24 lands.

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1 Other issues as a result of the Hydro
2 are unemployment, the welfare situation, economic
3 development issues. My main concern on this
4 presentation is the relocating of the people. They have
5 been told by different governments over and over again,
6 when it comes to promises or commitments to Aboriginal
7 people, they do the negotiating in good faith, but today,
8 I don't see that because of the outstanding Treaty
9 entitlements not going to the First Nations.

10 There was an impasse too with the
11 Limestone Development. There's no wonder there's
12 mistrust on the part of the Aboriginal people when there's
13 no commitments on the part of governments that are not
14 fulfilled. We talk about establishing goodwill and a
15 working relationship with people and that is what we lack
16 in a lot of, in a lot of the Treaty lands entitlements
17 and land claims settlements. We're not getting our
18 agreements. Whether it's, in our case, the Northern Flood
19 Agreement, in the Northern Flood Agreement the basis for
20 settlement was thrown out after five months and being a
21 small Band does not make us accept a small piece of the
22 pie. We could get a lot of things due to the relocation
23 of our people in terms of program services facilities that
24 we, as a Band, ought to enjoy.

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1 With that, I'll close this presentation.

2 Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
4 much for the letter. I'm not sure if it is a letter that's
5 attached to your presentation. Where did it go?

6 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Pardon me?

7 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** The letter? Was
8 that directed to, to the Council from you?

9 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** The letter?

10 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes, at the back
11 of your presentation.

12 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Yeah, that came from
13 the Band.

14 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** That came from
15 the Band?

16 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Yeah.

17 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** So, what you're
18 telling us is that this is another example of a relocation
19 of your community that had a disastrous impact on the people
20 and for which no compensation has been ever received?

21 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Well, that's true,
22 too. That's right today. We have our own people that
23 our of schools and other social problems and alcohol and
24 drugs, suicidal attempts; those kind of things are a lot

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1 of the issues.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** How many people?
3 What's the size of your community? How many people live
4 there?

5 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** About two fifty.

6 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Two hundred and
7 fifty?

8 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Yeah. A lot of our
9 Band members are living in other places. That's the other
10 thing. It split up our people and they're now in different
11 places. They couldn't bring themselves to that place that
12 they promised them. They all went to a different location.

13 A lot of them ended up working on the railroad. That's
14 where most of them went and they're all over in Manitoba.

15 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I see. Thank
16 you. I'll ask my colleague if he has any questions.

17 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Thank you.
18 I'd like to hear from the Northern Flood Committee. We,
19 I believe, received some money, I believe, under the
20 Commissioners Intervenor Participation Program. We're
21 going to be including information about York Factory and
22 in particular, about the relocation.

23 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** I'm not in a position
24 to discuss anything like that right now. There are some

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1 talks on that going on, but we haven't been able to identify
2 what that's going to be, but in the future, we're kind
3 of looking at the relocation some more.

4 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Are you a
5 member of the Northern Flood Committee now?

6 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** Yes, I am.

7 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** Yes. And do
8 you know if they received funding to make a presentation
9 to this Commission? I believe they did.

10 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** I can check on that.

11 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** That might be
12 helpful to incorporate matters that you would like to see
13 included in that, also to contact our...

14 **DONALD SAUNDERS:** We just had an
15 election on the Council and we really haven't got any work
16 on this, from what they had done on the previous Council.
17 There'll probably be something coming out of that, though.
18 Thank you.

19 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
20 much for coming and making your presentation. The next
21 is a presentation from the Mathias Colomb Band, Mr. Peter
22 Sinclair.

23 **PETER SINCLAIR, MATHIAS COLOMB CREE**

24 **NATION:** Good afternoon. I'm from Pukatawagan.

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1 My name is Peter Sinclair.

2 On behalf of the Mathias Colomb First
3 Nation, I appreciate this opportunity to be here to make
4 this presentation and to share with the Royal Commission
5 our day to day nightmare with the ongoing obstruction and
6 interference by Government Bureaucracies. Without
7 consultation with the Mathias Colomb First Nation, the
8 federal and provincial governments through the Department
9 of Indian Affairs, helped mining corporations, Hydro
10 developers and forest companies with the systematic
11 destruction of forests and river systems in our lands.

12 This obstruction and interference by the
13 above entities are hampering our inherent right to
14 self-government. In addition, a lack of funding is also
15 affecting our abilities to negotiate on an even footing
16 with the two levels of government. This obstruction and
17 interference has caused and is still causing profound
18 affects to our environment, our traditional economies and
19 to our way of live.

20 This systematic interference since the
21 signing of the Treaties has also blocked our attempts to
22 become self-sufficient and has finally created our total
23 dependency on meager government handouts. The ideology
24 of integrating Aboriginal people into the mainstream

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1 economic systems is still being perpetuated by governments
2 today.

3 The Aboriginal peoples have experienced
4 this approach by the Government of Canada through the
5 Indian Residential School era which have left them with
6 shattered lives and no identity or culture to share
7 meaningfully with their children today.

8 This is a far cry from the spirit and
9 intent as promised in the Treaties. We were to share in
10 the growth and the riches of this country, but very
11 knowingly and very precisely, the governments carved out
12 our destinies and pushed us to places to exist with no
13 economic opportunity and to be forgotten.

14 In the past, there has been studies done
15 on the Canadian Aboriginal People about why we are
16 suffering from alcoholism, reservation violence, a high
17 mortality rate, absence of education and perpetual
18 poverty. One would think it was high time these studies
19 shed some light to the politicians and governments in the
20 past one hundred and sixteen years, why the Aboriginal
21 people are in the state they are in today.

22 The Mathias Colomb First Nation
23 understands what is needed in our lands. We need our share
24 of the profit that is extracted from the resources of our

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1 lands, so we may create the magic all societies so
2 drastically and dearly hang onto, called Economic
3 Independence.

4 Our elders share their visions with us,
5 to let us know there has been precedence in our history
6 to expect, like the elimination of the buffalo that forced
7 our ancestors to sign the Treaties at the mercy of the
8 manifestation of brutal and unscrupulous governments.

9 When we talk about unscrupulous
10 governments, why we are not so different, in that, we should
11 be happy with all the ill will that has been subjected
12 to the Aboriginal peoples not only because of economic
13 greed but by apartheid and racism and seemingly, that we
14 are not contributing to Canadian Society.

15 The Mathias Colomb First Nation
16 understands the horrible disease of bigotry and racism
17 from the Canadian Establishment through the Residential
18 Schools era. Some Aboriginal people used to think that
19 racism was brought on by the economic state they were in
20 and are still in that state today, but then again, one
21 thinks about the economic independence gained by other
22 minorities in urban areas that are blatantly discriminated
23 upon.

24 When the Mathias Colomb First Nation

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1 talks about the discrimination and racism from the Canadian
2 Establishment, it is because it is true and that the
3 Governments of Canada condone such practices by looking
4 the other way for the sake of development and making sure
5 the majority rule is comfortable at the expense of the
6 First Nations people. the ideology from the Canadian
7 Establishment has to change lest the Canadian Nation will
8 be branded by world nations as that of South Africa and
9 in today's times, racism and apartheid is considered
10 illegal, boring and a waste of human energy.

11 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal
12 Peoples wants further, wants to make sure, this time it
13 will ge the right message from the Aboriginal people
14 exactly what is troubling them and take with them back
15 to Ottawa for further study on their findings.

16 The Mathias Colomb First Nation has
17 written letters in the past to the Minister(s) of Indian
18 Affairs about our crisis situation concerning our lands
19 and our river systems for possible solutions. We have
20 had numerous meetings with different government officials
21 from Indian Affairs and also from both Provincial
22 Governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to bring to their
23 attention of our dilemma. With no finances to persuade
24 governments to comprehend what they are doing to us, to

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1 our children, and to our traditional economies, our pleas
2 have fallen on the way side.

3 For what it's worth, we will you our
4 story again, how the Mathias Colomb First Nation citizens
5 have been at the mercy of large-scale resource development
6 in our traditional territories. For the last sixty-four
7 years, forestry, mining and Hydro development has
8 completely destroyed our lands and river systems, our
9 economies, and our way of life as the foregoing will
10 illustrate.

11 The history of the Mathias Colomb First
12 Nation. The majority of the Mathias Colomb First Nation
13 members totalling approximately two thousand one hundred
14 people, reside on our reserve lands at the community of
15 Pukatawagan which is situated on the Churchill River about
16 sixty miles downstream from Island Falls, Saskatchewan.

17 We also have reserve lands at High Rock
18 Lake which is further downstream. Some of our members
19 also reside at the settlement of Granville Lake, which
20 is not part of the reserve, but it is in the plans to be
21 included under our Outstanding Treaty Land Entitlement.

22 The major and almost sole employment of our people is
23 hunting, trapping and fishing.

24 The Mathias Colomb First Nation signed

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1 adhesion to Treaty No. 6 under the James Robert Band at
2 Montreal Lake in Saskatchewan in 1876. The people went
3 back downstream to Pukatawagan after the signing of this
4 Treaty with the federal government.

5 The people's principal language is
6 Woodland Cree. Southern Native people refer to
7 Pukatawagan people as "Rocky Land People" due to the
8 environment. Traditionally, before the arrival of the
9 white man in the Churchill River region, our forefathers
10 were a group known as "Mississippi People" or "Big River
11 People."

12 The rivers, lakes and streams in the
13 vicinity of the Churchill River have always been and remain
14 the central to the culture, society and economy of our
15 people. Without massive hydro development, the people
16 had plenty of fresh water , big game, fish and aquatic
17 fur bearing animals. Hydro development became a major
18 industry due to the river's vast supply of fast water and
19 energetic waterfalls.

20 Mining companies and provincial power
21 corporations started damming the Churchill River and other
22 lakes and streams without consulting members of our First
23 nation who have lived in this region for thousands of years.

24 Our traditional hunting, fishing and

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1 trapping areas are within the lands outlined in the map
2 attached.

3 Nature of ecological impacts. The
4 Saskatchewan Power Corporation Hydro Electric Projects
5 produce ecological impacts, which affects our existing
6 and potential economic and social life. We have been most
7 affected by the Saskatchewan Hydro projects since 1927
8 and it is our reserve lands, claimed lands or lands
9 traditionally used which are environmentally altered.
10 Such activity diminishes the value of our reserve lands,
11 limits our selection of the balance of the reserve land
12 to which we are entitled and destroyed our neighbouring
13 forests, fish and wildlife habitats.

14 In our community, a significant number
15 of residents contribute economically through trapping,
16 fishing and hunting. All these economic activities are
17 potentially productive and renewable but only if the
18 ecology is not disrupted and is properly managed. The
19 damming and flooding required by Hydro electric projects
20 in Saskatchewan has caused severe impacts on the ecology.

21 In fact, as time passes, these harsh effects have
22 intensified to the point where ninety percent of the main
23 income earners in our First Nation communities have lost
24 their employment and are required to rely on social

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1 assistance.

2 The social impacts caused by such
3 developments are brutal since they have resulted in great
4 despair for many of our people, including the need to live
5 off the reserve lands outside our traditional lifestyle,
6 family breakups, a high rate of increased alcoholism and
7 community violence.

8 Specific comments on the Island Falls
9 and Reindeer Lake Regulations. Between 1925 and 1930,
10 the Churchill River Company Limited, a subsidiary of the
11 Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Company, constructed the
12 Island Falls Power Dam in Saskatchewan near the village
13 of Sandy Bay.

14 With all three governments anxious to
15 have the mining development get underway, there were no
16 obstacles to impede the progress of development at either
17 the mining site of the Hydro electric site. The prevailing
18 view was that the two sites were in unsettled and
19 undeveloped areas and as a result, there was no danger
20 in damaging anyone's property.

21 With regards to the Island Falls
22 development, R.E. Phelan of the power company commented:
23 "As you know, the Island Falls development is a very long
24 distance from any means of transportation. Its

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1 development is only fortunate and there is not population
2 of any kind in the surrounding country except an occasional
3 few Indians and once in a while a single trapper...it was
4 considered that an extra unnecessary burden should not
5 be put upon the company to make a survey which would do
6 no one any good, which would in no way protect the
7 government nor the operation itself, and which
8 particularly in the country embraced by the Churchill River
9 was of no protective value to either farmland, timer lands
10 or industrial or other use."

11 The unnecessary burden mentioned was the
12 conditions placed upon the power company in the interim
13 licence that they should survey lands on either side of
14 the Churchill River upstream for a specified number of
15 miles. There power company was eventually excused from
16 making the required survey and was only required to survey
17 a few miles upstream. There was little concern given to
18 the impact the Hydro power development would have on the
19 environment. The main concern was for the development
20 to continue unimpeded.

21 The plant was completed and brought into
22 full capacity by the first half of 1931. It is our
23 understanding that a final licence was issued by the
24 Province of Saskatchewan around April 1, 1931 and was

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1 redrafted and issued once again by the Province of
2 Saskatchewan on October 21, 1937. The period of the
3 licence was 50 years and expired on April 1, 1981.

4 The Churchill River Power Company then
5 persuaded the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Governments that
6 a storage reservoir was required in the vicinity of
7 Reindeer Lake to allow for the production of additional
8 power at the Island Falls structure. It is our information
9 that by the middle of 1937 approval had been obtained from
10 the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Governments to build rock
11 dams at Rocky Falls and by the end of October they were
12 completed.

13 Finally, the Whitesand Dam at Whitesand
14 Rapids was completed in 1942 raising the level of Reindeer
15 Lake even higher. Manitoba approval for the Whitesand
16 Dam was given on May 1, 1942. The licences for the
17 regulation of Reindeer Lake also expired on April 1, 1981.

18 It is our understanding that the Island
19 Falls Power Dam and the Whitesand Dam regulating Reindeer
20 Lake were constructed to provide Hydro electric power for
21 the mining towns of Flin Flon, Snow Lake and the Chisel
22 Lake Mines owned by Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting
23 Company. As of April 1, 1981 when the licence for Reindeer
24 Lake and the Island Falls installation expired, it is our

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1 understanding that Saskatchewan Power Corporation became
2 responsible for the operation of the Island Falls Dam and
3 the Reindeer Lake storage areas.

4 The combined operation of the Island
5 Falls and Whitesand Dam has caused an overall drop in the
6 water levels of the Churchill River system from Island
7 Falls all the way to Granville Lake. As well, there are
8 serious disruptive day to day fluctuations. These
9 alterations and fluctuations have had a drastic effect
10 on the fish, aquatic fur bearing animals and other wildlife
11 living in the area. The commercial trappers and fishermen
12 have suffered substantial losses due to the decreased
13 number and quality of animals and fish in addition to
14 increased costs associated with damaged equipment and
15 greater travel requirements.

16 The community has also suffered from the
17 lack of wildlife and fish available for domestic use.

18 The Pukatawagan people have also been
19 attempting to develop commercial wild rice but have faced
20 a number of problems arising out of the water level
21 fluctuations.

22 Loon River, Laurie River, Russell Lake
23 Claim. In 1952, the Loon River, Laurie River and Russell
24 Lake water flow systems located thirty miles North of

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1 Pukatawagan in Manitoba were changed by the construction
2 of the Laurie River Power Dam. Around this time, Sherritt
3 Gordon Mines opened a mine in Lynn Lake, Manitoba. The
4 Laurie River Dam was constructed to power this operation.

5 Several structures were erected in the
6 region to build up a sufficient water head at the Laurie
7 River Dam. One was built on the Loon River, diverting
8 its flow from the Churchill River and towards the Laurie
9 River Dam. Another was built at Mile 145 of the CNR line
10 to convert Russell Lake into a huge water basin. Finally,
11 a structure was placed at the end of Todd Lake. All of
12 this construction occurred between 1952 and 1953.

13 Prior to Hydro development, the Laurie
14 River and Loon River systems and Russell and McCallum Lakes
15 were amongst the best trapping and fishing the Pukatawagan
16 areas north of the 55th Parallel. Since development, the
17 conditions of the lakes have deteriorated to a point where
18 the natural resources are practically useless. The land
19 has been flooded for over 30 years and nothing by way of
20 improvement of the ecology has been attempted since
21 construction.

22 The most dramatic effect has been on the
23 aquatic animals. There are no beaver and muskrats along
24 the shoreline and the quality of fish has deteriorated

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1 to a point where it is no longer feasible to fish
2 commercially in the area.

3 The Laurie River Dam now powers the towns
4 of Lynn Lake, Fox Lake, Leaf Rapids and the City of
5 Thompson. Ironically, it was not until March, 194 that
6 Pukatawagan and Granville Lake received land line power.
7 In the meantime, since 1853, the commercial value of the
8 area for fishing and trapping has been practically
9 non-existent.

10 South Indian Lake Claim - Churchill
11 River Diversion. Manitoba Hydro diverted the Churchill
12 River into the Nelson River by way of the Rat River -
13 Burntwood River Systems in 1972. It flooded South Indian
14 Lake and raised the water level of Granville Lake. The
15 diversion has had an adverse effect on the quality of the
16 white fish whose classification has dropped from Export
17 "A" to Continental "B". Of course, the declassification
18 of white fish results in a drop of value.

19 Presently we believe that this diversion
20 has reduced the quantity and quality of aquatic fur-bearing
21 animals also.

22 Surprisingly, these impacts were not
23 included as a part of the Northern Flood Agreement and
24 have never received an explanation for our exclusion.

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1 Desired situation. In 1982, the Penner
2 Report gave its recommendations to the federal government
3 based on research derived from First Nations across Canada.

4 It speaks about the desired situation
5 most First Nation Communities have agreed to adopt. It
6 also speaks of the spirit and intent of the Treaties that
7 the First Nations would be partners in any resource
8 development in their respective lands.

9 When ambiguities concerning the
10 terminologies of the Treaties became evident, then these
11 ambiguities would be in favour of the First Nations.

12 The Penner Report also clearly outlined
13 that the boundaries of the surveyed reserve lands would
14 not restrict the hunting, fishing and gathering areas of
15 the First Nations.

16 The Penner Report also gave
17 recommendations on the specific land claims issue, the
18 outstanding lands issue and that these issues should be
19 settled in the broadest sense of the work favouring First
20 Nations.

21 The Mathias Colomb First Nation has
22 claimed all of its traditional lands suing our trapline
23 block area. These lands have been used by our members
24 since time immemorial. This claim is called the Mathias

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1 Colomb First Nation Tribal Government District and it
2 encompasses one hundred by one hundred square miles in
3 the northwest corner of Manitoba and the Saskatchewan
4 Border.

5 We have signed a Moose/Caribou
6 Co-Management Agreement with the Province of Manitoba.

7 When our negotiations started involving
8 our Tribal Government District proposal, the Manitoba
9 Government led us to believe they were sincere in their
10 talks with us and that we would continue our talks to arrive
11 at a mutual agreement. After the signing of the
12 Moose/Caribou Co-Management Agreement, the province said
13 they were no longer interested in talking about the Tribal
14 Government District.

15 The Mathias Colomb First Nation is now
16 telling the Royal Commission that the federal government
17 neglected their fiduciary responsibility when it gave away
18 our resources and our traditional lands to the Province
19 of Manitoba in 1930, when the transfer agreements took
20 place. This was done without consultation and before all
21 the Treaty promises were honoured. The Mathias Colomb
22 Band is telling the federal government through the Royal
23 Commission we need to settle these long outstanding issues
24 now.

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1 And the conclusion. The Mathias Colomb
2 First Nation has been victimized by governments and
3 industry without any concern for the well-being of our
4 future and the future of our children. The benefits of
5 those developments have been one-sided for far too long.

6 Other First Nations that have been affected by Hydro
7 development can understand what the Mathias Colomb First
8 Nation is going through. Even with the Northern Flood
9 Agreement in place to those five First Nations affected
10 by Hydro development, they are experiencing far reaching
11 social and economic destruction that money cannot buy.

12 Our community and community members are
13 totally at the mercy of the welfare system because Hydro
14 development in our region has killed off what little
15 resource we had in our traditional economies.

16 Without sustainable economic
17 development in our lands controlled by the Mathias Colomb
18 First Nation, our membership input has to be in place to
19 lay the foundation needed to direct our destinies in the
20 right direction.

21 And that's the end of my presentation.

22 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you very
23 much. Obviously your Band has suffered from a variety
24 of different developments over the years. I'm not quite

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1 sure though what, in particular, you're asking the Royal
2 Commission to do, how we can help in this matter.

3 **PETER SINCLAIR:** Well, we've had, we
4 have never received any compensation...

5 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** No, from the
6 government.

7 **PETER SINCLAIR:** From, from - well, even
8 consultation prior to the development of these hydro
9 generation stations or installations and it - even if we
10 just complained and tried to stop the developments, it
11 would have been of no use at all, because when these took
12 place, these developments took place, our governments,
13 our local governments were not sophisticated as they are
14 today, and by the governments knowing that full well that
15 the history will tell, that during the signing of the
16 Treaties, you know, these First Nations were first
17 pressured to sign these agreements with the federal
18 government and that - but it's not any different today,
19 because of our economic situations, you know, we, the First
20 Nations have been given little opportunity to decide what
21 is best and what is good for them for their futures. They
22 almost jumped at the first sign of any amount of dollars
23 available for any kind of short-term development, they
24 might be able to achieve and try to accomplish in their

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1 respective communities. And we are saying to the Royal
2 Commission that the Mathias Colomb First Nation is not
3 any different from that of what Mr. Saunders here just
4 said, from York Factory or York Landing. We've got
5 somewheres in the neighbourhood over five hundred and
6 thirty-five young people from eighteen years old to thirty
7 years old that are walking around or community with nothing
8 to do. No hope. I could sit here all day and tell you
9 a story about that situation back home. And it's right
10 across the country like that with every First Nation.

11 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes. And we can
12 address those kinds of things, these projects that have
13 destroyed the habitat and deprived people of their means
14 of livelihood in general terms, but I was just wondering
15 if there was anything specific over and above the general
16 comments that we're able to make about how these projects
17 have gone ahead without consultation and have had a
18 devastating effects on communities and no compensation
19 has been paid to the people affected and as you say, there
20 are many, many such communities that suffered in that way,
21 and we certainly have to address that in our report. I
22 was just wondering if there was anything more than that
23 specific to your community.

24 **PETER SINCLAIR:** If I may answer that

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1 in this way. We can put that onus back to the governments
2 to say that we signed the agreements with the government,
3 the federal government, to say that they have a
4 responsibility, a fiduciary responsibility that has been
5 agreed upon between the two Nations. And that itself alone
6 should be the power to straighten out this mess that we
7 are experiencing. At the same time, we have, also the
8 Saskatchewan Power Corporation, because they say that we
9 don't have any jurisdiction within their province to go
10 and tell them that they cannot operate their Hydro
11 generating stations, because they're affecting us
12 downstream.

13 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Yes.

14 **PETER SINCLAIR:** And somehow the
15 federal government, the Environment Minister, you know,
16 the federal minister, is not doing their job and also the
17 Navigable Waters Act is not being enforced. Nothing is
18 being enforced. We're not getting help from anywhere.
19 And that itself alone, if they'd just share the
20 responsibility by the government should give us the
21 opportunity to straighten out this problem we've got, and
22 furthermore, like say for instance, right now,
23 Saskatchewan, we've taken Saskatchewan, the two Bands,
24 like the Bare Lands Band and also the Mathias Colomb Band

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1 has taken the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to court.

2 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** I was wondering
3 if you had gone to the courts.

4 **PETER SINCLAIR:** Yes. Yes we have.
5 But now they're stalling, and stalling and stalling.
6 They've got all sorts of motions put in place to say that
7 - one of the things that the two First Nations cannot be
8 the Plaintiff, because they do not, they do not have any
9 licences or past licences or you know, water licences to
10 - they're not governments, they're not recognized
11 governments by any, any other government aside, other than
12 the Manitoba Provincial Government. They assume that
13 Manitoba Government should be the Plaintiff instead of
14 the two First Nations. We went to Manitoba and asked them
15 whether they would do that. Now they're saying, well,
16 the case is in the courts are waiting, let's wait it out
17 and see what happens. We've been waiting for sixty-four
18 years and nothing has happened.

19 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** So you just sued
20 the companies? You didn't sue the governments?

21 **PETER SINCLAIR:** We haven't sued
22 anybody. We haven't sued anybody. We've asked for the
23 Department for money, the Department of Indian Affairs
24 for money to go through this process, and they tell us

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1 they don't have money for that kind of exercise. Like,
2 we've tried all sorts of things and we haven't been able
3 to get any satisfactory answer from anybody. Aside from
4 us being able to put aside some monies to continue on with
5 what little power we have to get these people to understand
6 what we're going through, it's about all we can do. We've
7 tried, well, we haven't really tried everything. I guess
8 we haven't demonstrated. We never had any massive
9 demonstrations, you know, and we've never asked for any
10 other First Nations to come and help us and we haven't
11 had any luck with any government.

12 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you.

13 Paul, do you have any questions?

14 **COMMISSIONER CHARTRAND:** No questions.

15 Thank you very much and please say hello to Chief Bighetty.

16 **PETER SINCLAIR:** Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER WILSON:** Thank you for
18 coming.

19 That was our concluding presentation,
20 so the Commission is now adjourning for the day.

21 Thank you very much.

22

23 --- Whereupon the hearing concluded at 6:50 p.m.