

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: PRESIDENT HOTEL
 SUDBURY, ONTARIO

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"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

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1 **Sudbury, Ontario**

2 --- Upon commencing on Monday, May 31, 1993 at 8:40 a.m.

3 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Good
4 morning, everyone. You may remain seated.

5 This is Dominic Eshkagogan and he will
6 be doing our opening prayer this morning.

7 --- **Opening Prayer**

8 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

9 Meegwich.

10 Before we begin this afternoon's
11 hearings, I would like to establish a few ground rules
12 that will be in effect, but first of all I would like to
13 welcome everyone. I will be your Moderator for this
14 afternoon and tomorrow. My name is Blanche Meawassige.

15 On behalf of all of us here, I wish to
16 thank Ernest for his words. Before Mr. Dussault and Mary
17 Sillett give their opening remarks, I would like to direct
18 your attention to the agenda that you have in your packages
19 and we will follow that as closely as possible as we can.

20 You will note on your agenda that at 3:15
21 we will be having our break to 3:30, and then a dinner
22 break from five (5) to six (6), but also I would like to
23 point out to you that there will be no smoking in this
24 room. Smoking however, you may do so at the back, in the
25 back room.

1 For your convenience, translation is
2 available. We have the translation devices on the side
3 of the room and services are offered in Ojibwa and in
4 French. With it comes along this little device. Number
5 one (1) is for English, number two (2) is for French, and
6 number three (3) is for Ojibwa.

7 In attendance, we have a court reporter.

8 She is sitting off to the side of the room and her name
9 is Linda Evans. Our Ojibwa translators are Loretta
10 Assinewai and Sandra Pelletier. Our French translators
11 are Darren Horowitz, Jose van Amragen (PH) and Andre
12 Morgeem (PH).

13 You will note in the agenda that there
14 is a time limit on each of the presentations.

15 The Elders will be given 15 minutes each
16 to give their presentations, followed by a 45 minute
17 discussion period. Each presenter will be allowed 20
18 minutes, followed by a 10 minute discussion period.

19 Welcoming remarks will be given by
20 Counsellor Maurice Lamoreux on behalf of the City of
21 Sudbury and the Region of Sudbury.

22 Mr. Lamoreux.

23 **COUNSELLOR MAURICE LAMOREUX:** On behalf
24 of the City and the Region of Sudbury, I am very pleased
25 today to bring greetings to the Royal Commission and a

1 sincere welcome to
2 the Region and the City of Sudbury.

3 We thank the Commission for choosing
4 Sudbury as a venue for the Royal Commission Hearings, and
5 knowing full well that the citizens of Canada are not only
6 willing to participate in trying to find solutions to all
7 the problems that we have in Canada, they are demanding
8 consultation process and we are very pleased that you have
9 brought this opportunity to our residents of Sudbury.

10 Knowing from past experience that there
11 is always a good response by our citizens in the
12 consultation process, I am sure you are going to have some
13 very lively presentations.

14 On behalf of the Royal Commission,
15 ladies and gentlemen, we welcome you to Sudbury, and we
16 hope you participate actively in this Royal Commission.

17

18 Good luck.

19 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

20 Thank you, Mr. Lamoreux.

21 Now we will receive the opening remarks
22 from our Co-Chair, Rene Dussault and after Mr. Dussault,
23 we will be hearing from Commissioner, Mary Sillett.

24 Mr. Dussault.

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Meegwich,

1 Merci.

2 First of all, I would like to welcome
3 everyone to the two days of Hearings in the framework,
4 the third series of public hearings of the Commission,
5 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

6 I would like to welcome everybody -- each
7 and every one of you -- to this week of hearings. We start
8 the week with two days in Sudbury. We will be moving later
9 on to Toronto.

10 The situation of Aboriginal People in
11 Ontario is central to the work of the Commission, and of
12 course, the relationship with the larger public and the
13 various governments, be it federal, provincial and
14 municipal.

15 I will be brief. Just to recall that
16 this Commission was created in early fall, 1991, following
17 a report presented by the former Chief Justice of Canada,
18 Brian Dickson. Mr. Dickson had been asked by the Prime
19 Minister to consult extensively, both with Aboriginal and
20 Non-Aboriginal people in this country and to come up with
21 recommendations as to the mandate of this Royal Commission
22 and the membership of the Commission.

23 The mandate is written in 16 points, with
24 many sub-points in each of them. It is probably the most
25 sweeping mandate that the Royal Commission was given in

1 this country.

2 It deals with issues like:
3 self-government; the issue of territory; of a land base;
4 to self-sufficiency; economic self-sufficiency; both
5 personal and collective self-sufficiency; the social
6 issues; education; health; justice; social services; the
7 social problems; abuse of drugs; substance; family values;
8 and also the high level of suicide.

9 As you know, since this Commission was
10 created, we have all been living through a situation that
11 is near an epidemic side, as far as young Aboriginal People
12 that are taking their lives, and this is a major concern
13 for everybody in this country, but more so for the Royal
14 Commission.

15 We have to look at the situation of the
16 Inuit People in this country, the Metis, people living
17 off Reserves in cities like Sudbury, or Toronto, or other
18 major cities across the country, at the situation of
19 Aboriginal People living in an urban setting is a trend
20 that is not going to disappear. It is a trend that is
21 on the increase.

22 We just published last Friday, the
23 report of an Urban Round Table, that we held in Edmonton
24 at the end of June, last year. This report shows how
25 difficult the situation is of Aboriginal People in the

1 cities in this country.

2 There is an urge for action from all
3 quarters. As we embark upon this third series -- or round
4 of hearings -- we have moved to a situation where we have
5 listened to many many Aboriginal people in this country.

6 We visited over 72 communities in the
7 first two rounds. We heard maybe 20 per cent of
8 Non-Aboriginal People, so the bulk of the presenters were
9 from Aboriginal Peoples.

10 As we are moving towards the end of our
11 public consultation process, we are going to hear more
12 and more Non-Aboriginal People. We hope that next Fall,
13 when we are finished with the public consultation process,
14 we will have a much better balanced view of the desire
15 and also the common grounds for building upon solutions.

16 We have been seeking solutions from the
17 inception of this Commission. It is difficult. We
18 realize that when we go to the communities, people want
19 to make sure first that we understand the problems very
20 well and this is pretty basic. Problems have to be
21 understood first before designing solutions.

22 The difficulty of course, is to move to
23 solutions, because very often they might belong to the
24 communities, to the leaders, to the families, to parents,
25 but also to larger organizations like Tribal Counsel, like

1 the national organizations like provincial governments,
2 and of course the federal government.

3 We are thoroughly convinced, and there
4 is ample evidence that on Aboriginal issues, solutions
5 cannot be designed in bureaucrat's offices, whether in
6 Ottawa, Queen's Park, Quebec City, Vancouver or Victoria.

7 It is quite clear to us that the
8 solutions have to come from those who live the problems
9 and who will have the opportunity to put the best effort
10 to bring a cure, corrections to the situation.

11 Of course, these solutions have to be
12 understood by the larger public and it is one of the major
13 questions we have been asked from the beginning: are you
14 going to live through the same fate as most Commissions
15 who have looked on various aspects of Aboriginal life in
16 this country? Are you going to be implemented or shelved
17 in some government shelf?

18 That is a very very difficult question.

19 There is no guarantee that any Commission is implemented.

20 What we have decided to do though, is
21 to really benefit from the experience of other groups and
22 Commissions, and we feel that if we come up with
23 recommendations that do not involve only some principles,
24 but also design some of the mechanics as to how it is going
25 to work, it will help for implementation.

1 Also, we want to be strategic in our
2 recommendations, and that is the reason why we have
3 hearings here in Sudbury for two days. We are going to
4 meet with many Bands, with Non-Aboriginal People also.

5 There is great diversity, as you know,
6 and we want to have a full grasp of the desire of each
7 Nation of each People, and the way they see their future,
8 in order to come up with solutions that will have some
9 ownership among Aboriginal People -- strong ownership.

10 At the same time, we want to assess
11 resistance in the larger public, in governments. We also
12 want to assess the feasibility, the cost, financial/
13 administrative aspects of our recommendations and find
14 the common grounds. We feel that we know that there are
15 differences, but we also know that they are common grounds
16 and we want to build our recommendations on those common
17 grounds. They are much more likely to be implemented if
18 we do so.

19 So this is the spirit that has animated
20 us since the beginning.

21 We launched our first round of hearings
22 a year ago. We publish a document between each of the
23 rounds. We have an overview of what was heard. Each round
24 brings -- through court reporters, like the one we have
25 today -- brings over 10,000 pages of transcript, verbatim

1 transcript, and we try to boil this down to the essentials
2 in 100 to 125 pages to give a good overview of what we
3 hear.

4 On top of that, we publish a discussion
5 paper by the Commission that is not a research document,
6 or a policy document, but that gives the states of the
7 dialogue as we have seen in on the road, in the various
8 cities, communities, south, north, east, west. We have
9 been in the 10 provinces, the two (2) territories many
10 times, and we want to establish a genuine dialogue in order
11 to test ideas and elements of solutions and models, be
12 they models for economic development, models for
13 self-government, a model for a justice system, and on and
14 on.

15 That is the process we feel will enable
16 us to come up with those recommendations that will be much
17 more likely to be implemented.

18 Public education is the key. A Royal
19 Commission, of course, big on the problems, but the public
20 has to follow and to be made aware of not only the problems,
21 but aware of the trade offs, where can we reach an agreement
22 to move ahead.

23 Everybody in this country is anxious to
24 move to a situation where Aboriginal People will not be
25 seen as a liability, but as an asset, a human asset, real

1 partners in developing this country.

2 There is a strong desire from both sides
3 that we sense. We have sensed that during our hearings.

4 We came up on April 2nd, with a
5 discussion paper called Focusing the Dialogue, where we
6 listed four touchstones for changes and the strong message
7 that was sent to us was that we had to work on the four
8 of them and I will just repeat them.

9 Healing has to take place. They are:
10 living conditions; social problems that are major and
11 burning in many many areas in this country and a lot of
12 healing has to take place.

13 Self-sufficiency is central. It is
14 useless to speak about self-government if there is no
15 economic base in a great measure than there is now.

16 Self-government or self-determination
17 -- a great majority of Aboriginal People in this country
18 have told us that they want to self-determine themselves
19 within Canada, through self-government.

20 Some Nations would like to have an
21 external sovereignty, but they are not the majority by
22 far. Most Aboriginal Peoples are in the process of
23 self-determining themselves within Canada through
24 self-government and through some kind of economic base.

25 I think there is a common understanding

1 that a situation of dependency is not welcome, not for
2 Aboriginal People, nor for the larger public. The message
3 is that the money that is spent by government should be
4 much more productive.

5 At this point, it is some kind of welfare
6 money, and you start all over again each year, every year.

7 You are not building a strong relationship on that and
8 you develop frustrations and some conflict, so the message
9 is: put that money to work. It will have to be done
10 through a much greater measure of self-sufficiency. It
11 is challenging for both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal
12 People.

13 So we might go on and on, on those issues
14 that are central to the work of this Commission. I would
15 like to close in saying that we have started a very major
16 research program, alongside the public participation
17 process.

18 Also, we held many National Round
19 Tables. The last one was on economic development, and
20 the next one in early July will be on education. These
21 two are key to self-sufficiency, both personal and
22 collective self-sufficiency.

23 We will be in a position in the Fall to
24 put the information coming from the public hearings like
25 these ones, the National Round Tables and the results of

1 our research programs together in what we hope will be
2 solutions for the future that will be acceptable for moving
3 ahead by governments, but also by Aboriginal Peoples.

4 Having said that, I would like to welcome
5 again, the presenters. We should feel free to discuss
6 -- to speak out and discuss as openly as possible, the
7 issues and the solutions. We will stress the desire to
8 get solutions through today and tomorrow. We hope -- we
9 have no doubt that these hearings will be aiming toward
10 the goal we have for a better relationship between
11 Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People in this country.

12 I would like to now ask Mary Sillett to
13 make opening remarks, initial remarks, and then we will
14 move to our agenda.

15 Thank you very much for your attention.

16 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Meegwich,
17 Nakamik, thank you very much.

18 I would like to begin by thanking the
19 Elder for your opening prayer. I would also like to thank
20 Blanche Meawassige for accepting the responsibility of
21 moderating, and also Julie Bothwell for acting as our
22 Community Representative.

23 I would also like to recognize the staff
24 that works with us, because they are the ones that work
25 early in the mornings, late in the nights to make these

1 things successful. Joyce Ford -- she is an Inuk, she's
2 from Makkovic, Labrador, Robert Tookoome -- he's from
3 Gumnikdwok (PH) in the Northwest Territories, which is
4 Baker Lake, he's also an Inuk. Luc Lane is a Huron from
5 Quebec, and Brad Michael, he's from Saskatchewan and Hugh
6 McCullum.

7 So having said that, I would like to say
8 that there were seven (7) commissioners when the Commission
9 was appointed in August by the Prime Minister. He
10 appointed seven (7) people to sit on this Commission.
11 Four (4) Aboriginal, three (3) Non-Aboriginal and three
12 (3) women.

13 We have George Erasmus, he's our
14 Co-Chair. He was previously the National Chief of the
15 Assembly of First Nations. He, along with Paul Chartrand,
16 who is a Metis, who is a lawyer, a professor of native
17 studies in Manitoba, are presently in B.C. conducting
18 hearings there and there is Madam Justice Bertha Wilson.

19 She was the first woman ever in Canada appointed to the
20 Supreme Court. She and Viola Robinson, who is a Micmac
21 from Nova Scotia, and also the former President of the
22 Native Council of Canada are in Manitoba doing the same
23 thing. Mr. Dussault and I, he is a Quebec Court of Appeal
24 Judge. He is from Quebec, and I am an Inuk. That is
25 singular of Inuit. I am from Hopedale, Labrador.

1 We are really pleased to be here. Just
2 very quickly, three (3) things that Mr. Dussault did not
3 mention.

4 One of them is that we expect that our
5 final report will be done in the Fall of 1994.

6 Secondly, we are an independent inquiry.

7 I feel it is necessary to say that, because I think as
8 we have gone across the country, a lot of people think
9 that we are the Federal Government. We are not the Federal
10 Government, neither are we representatives of Aboriginal
11 Associations. We are an independent inquiry.

12 I think that one of the things that Chief
13 Justice Brian Dickson did when he consulted with people
14 prior to the creation of this Commission, he did an
15 extensive consultation, and I think when he wrote his
16 report he said:

17 "There is one thing I have heard more than anything else
18 as I have gone through these
19 consultations and that's people
20 don't have a lot of faith in the
21 ability of a Commission to change
22 their lives."

23 People think that the work of this
24 Commission will end up in the same place as the work of
25 other Commissions before us, on the shelf. Since we have

1 started our work, we have heard that wherever we have gone.

2

3 I remember particularly when we were in
4 Davis Inlet, one presenter said, "You know, I have been
5 to thousands and thousands and thousands of meetings."
6 He said, "Nothing ever changes." and I think that's a
7 feeling that is very prevalent right across this country,
8 and it is clear to me that people are impatient. It is
9 clear also to me that we have our work to do and we have
10 always said that no one should wait until our work is done
11 before they start making some positive initiatives, and
12 I think there are many leaders who said, "Don't use this
13 Commission as an excuse to delay work." They would never
14 have agreed to the creation of this Commission had that
15 been the case.

16 But last week I was glad to hear that
17 a historic event took place in the Northwest Territories,
18 the creation of Nunavut will someday be a reality. Land
19 claims are progressing.

20 I also feel that as we have gone in our
21 consultations, there has been a lot of people who do not
22 have a lot of faith anymore, but there are some who do.

23 I am really glad and pleased that you are part of this
24 process. I am glad and pleased that you have come here
25 to help us, so thank you very much.

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
2 would like to thank both of our Commissioners for their
3 opening remarks.

4 We will move right along to the
5 presenters.

6 First there is Ernest McGraw, Mary Lou
7 Fox and Rita L. Corbiere. All three (3) are from the Ojibwa
8 Cultural Foundation, and each will be given 15 minutes
9 each to speak.

10 First, Ernest McGraw will speak on the
11 residential schools and their effects, the importance of
12 spirituality, the survival of language.

13 Mary Lou will speak on traditional
14 healing, diabetes, languages, and Rita Corbiere will speak
15 on justice for First Nations.

16 Ernest -- I am sorry, that is Dominic
17 Eshkakogen. Dominic will speak on services, traditional
18 healing and language.

19 **DOMINIC ESHKAKOGAN:** I guess I come here
20 today with a bit of a heavy heart. Partially because of
21 what Mary said in her opening remarks.

22 I was in native politics for 31 years,
23 up until 1975, and there has been no results of anything
24 that we dealt with.

25 I started off as a very young man. I

1 became a Band Counsellor when I was 21 years old, and for
2 many years, I attended many meetings with the Chiefs, the
3 various Chiefs that were in Counsel, and nothing has ever
4 happened.

5 I was a bit reluctant to be here, because
6 of that very fact. All these years of the lack of concern
7 for our Native concerns. It hurts to go back to all those
8 years.

9 One of the things that my friend Ernest
10 always talks about is the residential school system, which
11 was very damaging to our people. It is hard to remember
12 those years. I began my residential school life in 1939,
13 but I was lucky enough to be only in there until 1943.
14 The pain of separation from my family I guess was the
15 hardest to take. I became, by 1943, I had become a stranger
16 in my own family. My younger brothers and sisters were
17 alien to me. There was no brother/sister relationship
18 there. But in spite of the things that happened, the many
19 hurts that were there of how difficult it was through those
20 young years -- I was only seven (7) years old -- and of
21 all those years, of how I carried that hurt for many years.

22

23 The thing that Ernest wanted to express
24 here today, is the lack of spirituality among our own
25 people. In order for us to be survivors of those

1 residential systems, it has to start from inside here
2 (indicating) and for me, at the age of 45, 46, is when
3 I began that process. The process of healing.

4 I have heard many remarks when Ernest
5 and I talk of the reactions of different people that went
6 through the residential school system. One most recent
7 one was we would talk about forgiveness. We have to
8 forgive. We have to start life anew. It is that we
9 forgive all those hurts in the early years. I blamed my
10 parents, I blamed my Dad until the day that he died. The
11 morning that he passed away, he shook my hand, yet I did
12 not accept it in good faith.

13 For five (5) years after that I suffered
14 because I did not accept his hand the way I should have.

15 It was not his fault for the way things developed. In
16 a recent conversation with Ernest McGraw he mentioned that
17 he tries to talk to people also about forgiveness, but
18 one of the replies that he got was: I would not give them
19 the satisfaction of knowing that I forgive.

20 To me, and as Ernest and I understand
21 that, Ernest went through a harder time than I did. The
22 thing that we wanted to bring is that we do not forgive
23 to satisfy anybody. We forgive in order to heal ourselves.

24 We look to this person first in order to be able to forgive
25 and to heal.

1 But in spite of that, the hurt is still
2 there whenever residential schools are brought up. It
3 brings back memories, it bring backs tears. Even as old
4 men we cry. We cry when we remember those years.

5 So the thing that we need to do in regard
6 to the residential system is to try and forgive for our
7 own sake, for our own healing, never mind others. You
8 do not even have to tell them that you forgive them.

9 Five (5) years after my Dad died I was
10 able to understand what happened and I was able to forgive
11 him. As a young child, as a youth, as a parent, I had
12 that bitterness in my heart. Probably it led to other
13 things, because when you have that anger and that stress
14 inside of you it leads to other things, which brings me
15 to my other concerns, which is the health of our people,
16 the language of our people.

17 I think what bothers me most regarding
18 the health of our people is the lack of education,
19 especially of diabetes, of which I am one, and I don't
20 have too many years to go yet. Who knows when I will be
21 finished. But to me, if I had known what I know today
22 about diabetes. I have a ring binder at home which is
23 about two inches thick with materials that I have gathered
24 in the last three years of my diabetes. If I had known
25 today what I should have know then, my heart wouldn't have

1 been gone. I have what is called congestive heart failure,
2 my kidneys are beginning to fail, and as the doctor said,
3 "They are not going to get any better. They are going
4 to continue to progressively decline."

5 Last Fall, on November the 7th, 1992,
6 on the Disability Network, after trying to get funding
7 for several years to run workshops to help others, to teach
8 them what we know about diabetes, to prepare the young
9 people what they will expect if they live the lifestyle
10 that I did.

11 In 1978, I weighed 296 pounds. The same
12 year I discovered that I had diabetes. Of course, I didn't
13 pay any attention to it, because to me I hear people
14 suffering from diabetes and going on doing -- carrying
15 on with life. But how did they do it? I didn't know.
16 So November 7, 1992, on the Disability Network which was
17 shown through the CBC, because of the lack of funding from
18 both the federal and the province, the lack of funding
19 to hold these workshops, every time we applied for funding
20 we hit a brick wall, and during that film -- I was going
21 to bring it today, but my memory has also been affected
22 too -- I left that tape behind this morning at home. You
23 would have seen what I have said about the government.

24 I accuse both the federal and provincial
25 government of their own Canadian style ethnic cleansing

1 of our people. I accuse them that that's the way they
2 are going to get rid of us. It is costing them too much
3 money to hear what we have to say.

4 In that film, I said we have tried the
5 federal government, we didn't get any where to get funding
6 to hold workshops, educational workshops to teach our young
7 people about diabetes. The same thing with the province.

8 We did hold a workshop two years ago, but it was through
9 private foundations. We got a few dollars and we were
10 able to run one weekend in which we had 15 people, and
11 to prove what happened that weekend, almost every one of
12 those people had their blood sugar count dropped by 11
13 to 12 points using the millimole measure. Some of them
14 were at 22, 23 level when they came in Friday afternoon,
15 by noon on Sunday they had dropped down to 8, 9 and 10,
16 some at 11.

17 After I was interviewed on that
18 Disability Network after I had made that accusation, most
19 people went to the Federal Government, they went to the
20 head doctor of National Health and Welfare, and they had
21 to admit that there was no funding for diabetic education.

22 I think that program was run again in May.

23 The Provincial Government was asked the
24 same question -- the head doctor -- these are two head
25 doctors that were approached and they both admitted that

1 there was no funding for diabetic education. She did say
2 that for Ontario there is very minuscule funding for
3 diabetic education.

4 A bit about language. We are concerned
5 about the language of our people. Somebody else will
6 elaborate more on that. My experience is I was in the
7 hospital for a month and a half this winter. There was
8 an Elderly man that was brought in as a room mate the last
9 few days I was there. The old guy did not speak one word
10 of English. He could say a few words. I tried to explain
11 to him the procedures that were being done, he didn't
12 understand. He didn't know what was going on. Even
13 though I tried to explain what needs to be done. he
14 couldn't understand what it meant, why it was being done.

15 We need people in hospitals to speak to
16 these old people, to help them, to be there with them to
17 help them to understand what is being done. That old man
18 was put on intravenous, but he ripped it off. He did not
19 know why they had to use the needle to give him medicine.

20 He said, "Why can't they give me pills?" He did not
21 understand that the intravenous was a better way of
22 introducing medicine into his system. I am sad to say
23 that that old man died two weeks later, or two weeks after
24 I came home he passed away. When I was there he seemed
25 happy, except for his pain.

1 My biggest complaint, I guess, most of
2 all is that the funding for these various things never
3 gets to the native people in the community. There is no
4 funding in community level programs.

5 I am glad that the Director of the Ojibwa
6 Cultural Foundation included a letter that was written
7 to the University of Toronto. It is universities and
8 colleges that get all the funding that should be going
9 to the native people.

10 In a proposal for funding, the
11 University of Toronto used the Ojibwa Cultural Foundation
12 in its proposal and we talked about it and Mary Lou wrote
13 a letter to that lady in Toronto at the Faculty of Nursing.
14 We asked her why she was using our name. This is one
15 of my biggest beefs is that all of these things going to
16 the cities.

17 For instance, the University of Toronto.
18 What good is the Diabetic Program going to do us down
19 there when it should be in home communities for our people.
20 There should be more education for our young people.

21 We see today a lot of our young people
22 who are overweight and they are prime candidates for
23 diabetes, but do they understand that, do they know why
24 it is going to happen? As I said earlier, if I knew 15
25 years ago what I know today, I would not be on my last

1 legs of life. I would still be able to be a useful human
2 being on this earth by contributing my share of supporting
3 myself and my family. It is going to cost more to keep
4 me going, to keep me alive for the next few years than
5 what it would have cost to educate me on the dangers of
6 diabetes and its effects.

7 Meegwich.

8 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

9 Thank you, Dominic.

10 Those are surely heartfelt words, and
11 I think you are still worth every penny and plus that,
12 plus more.

13 Dominic Eshkakogan is an Elder from
14 Sucker Creek, First Nation -- Sagamok -- sorry, I am out
15 to get you today, I think. I apologize.

16 Next, I would like to introduce Mary Lou
17 Fox.

18 Mary Lou is an Ojibwa Elder from the West
19 Bay First Nation. Since 1974 she has been serving as the
20 Director of the Ojibwa Cultural Foundation. She has been
21 very involved in the area as an educator and as a teacher.

22 That is what I have here. Mary Lou will be speaking on
23 traditional healing, diabetes, and languages.

24 But first, before we go to Mary Lou, I
25 would like to extend, on behalf of the Commissioners, our

1 best wishes to Ernest McGraw, who I understand is not
2 feeling well and was unable to attend today.

3 Mary Lou.

4 **MARY LOU FOX:** Hello, I bring greetings.

5 I work in West Bay. This is the way I was taught. We
6 speak and talk about something that is important, you will
7 talk Indian. What I am going to talk about is the native
8 way of living. I don't speak Indian that often, and I
9 may not be understood. I will ask the Creator to help
10 me to speak English and to speak well. I am thankful that
11 I am able to be here today and to be able to speak, and
12 I say thank you to these people that are in charge of this
13 Commission.

14 --- particularly what is happening in the
15 native communities about diabetes. Ernest McGraw was on
16 our agenda, but as was mentioned, he is not feeling well
17 and I would just like to say that we have an organization
18 called with the Elders, our grandmothers and grandfathers
19 who are really the driving force behind the Ojibwa Cultural
20 Foundation and all that we do. So every time we meet,
21 Ernest always brings about the residential schools. I
22 did not go there. I was supposed to, but that is another
23 story.

24 Anyway, last year there was a big meeting
25 in Sault Ste. Marie and I had the opportunity to be with

1 Ernest and he asked me if I would take him over to where
2 the residential school used to be. I don't know when it
3 closed, but it has been a number of years. This was the
4 first time that Ernest had felt like going back to the
5 site where the residential school was, and he was very
6 upset. One of the statements that he said was, "I heard
7 the children crying" and he came with tears in his eyes.

8 He recently attended a meeting, and I
9 believe this was a national conference for people who went
10 to residential schools across Canada, were brought
11 together and he came back from that meeting very very hurt,
12 with a lot of sorrow in his heart and very upset because
13 people were talking about their experiences in residential
14 schools and when he speaks he talks about the people that
15 he went to school with and many of them that committed
16 suicide because they just could not carry on because of
17 their experiences in residential schools. He talks about
18 how many of them, including himself, suffered from alcohol
19 and drug abuse.

20 The sad thing isn't only the people who
21 went to residential schools, but it has carried on for
22 generations, so not only children, but grandchildren and
23 great-grandchildren carry the scars from this experience.

24 Also, many, perhaps of the indignities
25 that were suffered there and we here about physical abuse,

1 but also sexual abuse.

2 I just wanted to say that on behalf of
3 Ernest from some of the things that he said to us, and
4 I would like to concentrate on the language, which is one
5 of the -- this group of Elders that we have, when they
6 speak, they talk about three things that are very important
7 and one is the language, traditional healing and then also
8 about their concerns about the environment. So then they
9 give us guidance of what we are to do about these things.

10 Anyway, about the language. It is a
11 deep concern, because as we speak, our languages are
12 slipping away as each of our Elders pass away, so they
13 take with them the language, the culture, the history and
14 so on.

15 The centre of our being is within the
16 element of language. It is the dimension in which our
17 existence is most fully accomplished. We don't create
18 a language, but are created within it.

19 In the language of the medicine wheel,
20 the centre of the circle is called "The Child's Fire" and
21 The Child's Fire is the symbol of the enlightened child
22 -- a happy child, a wholesome child, a healthy child, who
23 has never experienced suffering, a child who only knows
24 love and is one with the power of his ancestors.

25 One of the most important teachings in

1 the medicine wheel is, "Nothing may be done that will harm
2 the children" and so we are here today to talk about the
3 Aboriginal languages of the First nations of Canada.

4 Anishnabe culture abounds in songs and
5 poems which provide substance to maintain the Anishnabe
6 Way of Life. They are a gift from the Gods, not the works
7 of men. Songs and poems affect nearly every aspect of
8 life. The repetitive nature of prayer and song, the magic
9 of the word lies mainly in the fact that it is capable
10 of placing the speaker in communication with his own being
11 and with the world. So we do not restrict language to
12 its capacity to describing the world -- it is the world.

13 One Elder said, "Without the language we are warm bodies
14 without a spirit".

15 One of our Elders passed away not too
16 long ago, Dan Pine. Maybe some of you knew Dan. His
17 grandfather was known as Shigwaukoose, Leader of His
18 People. Dan Pine has been recognized as one of the
19 greatest Ojibwa's who ever lived and he always spoke about
20 his grandfather, Shigwaukoose, and he told a story where
21 Shigwaukoose gathered his people together and said, "I
22 have to tell you -- I want to tell you about a dream that
23 I had last night. It wasn't a dream really, it was a
24 nightmare." It was so sad and affected him so deeply
25 that he woke up crying. His dream was that the language

1 and the culture of the Anishnabe would be lost. He said
2 to his people "If I ever thought that would happen that
3 would just be the worst thing that could happen to us as
4 Anishnabe people is to lose our language and then to lose
5 our culture."

6 It is sad to say, that is what is
7 happening to our people. Out of hundreds of languages
8 that were spoken in Canada at one time -- Aboriginal
9 languages -- they state that 53 remain, and out of that
10 53, just varying degrees of the language are spoken.

11 In some our communities it is only the
12 Elders who speak the language, so the language is not being
13 passed on.

14 Mike Mitchell, one of our Grand Chiefs,
15 at a meeting we were at said:

16 "Language is the foremost aspect of our culture. Our
17 languages must be a priority, but
18 there are many issues that confront
19 us: lack of identity; lack of
20 self-esteem; alcohol and substance
21 abuse; suicide; and health.

22 In order to help our children, language
23 and culture must be a priority."

24 Perhaps the most important aspect, when
25 we think about preservation, retention and/or

1 revitalization of a language, we think about the Elders,
2 because it is the Elders who are the ones who are concerned,
3 not for themselves, but for the children to come.

4 So we should always remember to be
5 grateful to our Elders. We say our grandmothers and
6 grandfathers. Throughout our history and now, our Elders
7 occupy a special position because through the years they
8 have accumulated knowledge and wisdom through personal
9 experiences and they have a compassionate insight and a
10 sense of the enduring qualities and relationships which
11 are important, not only to our survival as an Anishnabe,
12 but to the rest of the world.

13 This accumulated reservoir of knowledge
14 and wisdom is freely offered to the living generations
15 of our people to help us communicate harmoniously with
16 our past, our present and future.

17 So at every meeting that we have with
18 the Elders, and these meetings are often, they remind us
19 about our language. They tell us that it is a spiritual
20 language, a gift from the Creator. They remind us every
21 time that we gather about the great responsibility that
22 we have and that is to ensure that our precious languages
23 will always be heard.

24 One of our artists did a poster which
25 he called "The Voice of the Land is in our Language" because

1 it is this land that we live on, the continent of North
2 America that makes us look the way we do, act the way we
3 do, and speak the way we do.

4 We do not have the luxury of other
5 cultures who have freely chosen to come to this island,
6 that they can go back to their country of origin, where
7 their languages and their culture are intact. We can't
8 do that. Once we lose it here, it is gone forever.

9 We have a number of pertinent concerns
10 about things that we would like to do. One of them is
11 what they call MCU Strategy, Ministry of Colleges and
12 Universities Strategy, and before I left I was on the phone
13 to someone and they told me they have changed that MCU
14 Strategy to something else. But anyway, this -- what has
15 happened is that millions of dollars are being made
16 available to colleges and universities, not only in
17 Ontario, but across Canada without any concern about what
18 the people at the community level are needing or wanting
19 or talking about.

20 This money which comes from Indian
21 Affairs -- 4 million dollars plus -- is for Aboriginal
22 education, which includes language. I think that colleges
23 and universities have a very important role to play, but
24 our Elders say not when it comes to language. That is
25 our responsibility and should be in our own territory.

1 So we are very concerned that the
2 communities are not able to do anything, and I speak from
3 experience. One of our communities, for instance, would
4 like to have a language immersion program for families.

5 One of the things that has happening is that language,
6 to some degree, is being taught in the schools, however,
7 in some communities the parents of these young children
8 don't speak the language and that is very important,
9 because otherwise they are just saying a few words:
10 window; door; book; that kind of thing, but they are really
11 not speaking the language.

12 So the Sheshegwaning Reserve would like
13 to have an immersion program for family, because it is
14 important for the family. That is where it should come
15 from first, but as it is now we need reinforcement from
16 the family.

17 However, there is no money available.

18 I contacted one of the colleges and asked, because they
19 talk about community initiatives in the language and would
20 they not be able to look at this program for the
21 Sheshegwaning Reserve, but they have informed me that they
22 cannot look at community initiatives.

23 So the Bands do not have money for
24 language programs, the Cultural Centre where we work, we
25 do not have any money, however, we have been able to make

1 small amounts available. One of the other ones was from
2 the Reserve near Sault Ste. Marie, and the lady phoned
3 and she said, "I'm teaching the language at the college
4 or university in Sault Ste. Marie, but I am having to learn
5 the night before. I just don't speak the language that
6 well. It is very important for me, but this has been also
7 reiterated by other adults that they would like to learn
8 the language. Do you have any money?" I said, "Well,
9 we have go a little bit that we could help you get started."

10 But the fact that this lady, who is an instructor of the
11 Anishnabe language works for a college or university where
12 thousands of dollars are provided and yet they are unable
13 to look at a small initiative in the community which is
14 right on top of them.

15 So she wrote me a letter and said thank
16 you very much for the money that you sent and we had the
17 work shop and she gave me a list and the instructor and
18 she said:

19 "Thank you for your support on this community initiative.

20 There is interest in the community
21 for this type of set up even though
22 funding sources are hard to find,
23 I continue to pursue this concept
24 and hopefully get something going.

25 Any assistance you can provide in

1 the future would be appreciated --
2 where, who et cetera to approach
3 for funding sources. Thanks
4 again, hope to see you at the West
5 Bay conference."

6 So this is just sort of things that are
7 happening as we speak to bring out the point that there
8 is no money available for language initiatives in
9 communities.

10 One of the things that not only locally,
11 but also in Toronto, was that they are making noises about
12 wanting to establish a language institute, and like I say,
13 they have their role to play, but when it comes to language,
14 our Elders tell us "No, hands off. It must be our own
15 territory, under our control, on our own terms."

16 In fact, the Elders have spoken to the
17 National Chief, and he has written letters and also to
18 the Chiefs of Ontario, so there is support there, but it
19 is very alarming to the Elders when they hear about a
20 language institute possibly being established in Toronto.

21 In fact, there were two organizations: the University
22 of Toronto; and another one under education who were
23 wanting to establish such an institute.

24 So the point I am making is that there
25 is absolutely no dollars available for community

1 initiatives where language is concerned. We feel that
2 something should be made available.

3 It took us over 100 years to get to the
4 point where we are, and we have lost many many languages,
5 so when is some attention going to be given?

6 One of the comments, and I think it was
7 Rita who made that comment when we were discussing this
8 strategy, she said that it is the same thing, that the
9 government always does, that they feel Indian people can't
10 do anything, so give the money to colleges and
11 universities, they are the intellectuals, academics, they
12 will handle the money properly, but we as Indian people
13 can't. So that is often how those kinds of moves are
14 perceived.

15 So that is one thing, so I guess maybe
16 the recommendation that we would have here is hopefully
17 that Anishnabe language institute would be established
18 on our own territory, run by our own people who would look
19 at this whole thing of language revitalization, curriculum
20 development, teacher training, and research. An
21 important area of research is working with the Elders,
22 because we come from an oral tradition.

23 Also, it is important to think about the
24 future and to think about archives. When you talk "the
25 Elders", they are really the finest speakers of the

1 language and words that they use, you don't hear anywhere
2 else any more. So it is important to be recording these
3 things.

4 At the same time however, the Assembly
5 of First Nations in Ottawa, they have an organization or
6 a committee called the Aboriginal Languages and Literacy
7 Committee, and they are also now looking at a languages
8 and literacy foundation to be established at a national
9 level, which perhaps could be an umbrella organization
10 for people like us, the Anishnabe of Manitoulin, the North
11 Shore Sudbury area, because I know other people in other
12 provinces and the territories who have similar concerns.

13 Presently, the budget that we get at the
14 Cultural Centre, we have a language person who works with
15 the teachers, so we have that salary. The only other money
16 we get is \$3,000 from the Secretary of State. That is
17 it. That is our allotment, and that is not very much.
18 You cannot do much.

19 So what we do is we produce very ugly
20 stuff, cheap stuff made out of the cheapest newsprint you
21 can get, because you can only do one little book like this
22 and probably this would even cost more than \$3,000 to get
23 it published. That is where we are at. We do not have
24 the luxury of having nice hard cover, fully coloured
25 material. We have to do it with the cheapest stuff that

1 we can get.

2 I would also to make the point that there
3 is no equality when it comes to funding. I do not know.

4 These are statistics from a few years ago, but at that
5 time in a report that was done by the Secretary of State
6 -- the lady's name was Anastasia Schtilnick (PH) -- the
7 fact that 488 million dollars went to support French
8 programs across Canada, six million went to heritage
9 language programs done after school or lunch hour --
10 Chinese, Japanese, whatever -- and then one million for
11 Aboriginal People that are across Canada. So it is just
12 not fair.

13 I would also like to tell you, just as
14 an example, because this is what is happening now, we are
15 planning a conference and because I mentioned to you about
16 our Elders and two of them are sitting here with me, it
17 is because of their initiatives in regards to language
18 that this is taking place.

19 It is the first time that Elders will
20 be brought to Manitoulin Island from across Canada from
21 every Aboriginal language that is spoken, because what
22 is happening is that it is to the Elders that we must look
23 for this to happen.

24 So they have taken the bull by the horn
25 and it is going to happen this summer, but we have been

1 unable to access any funds from the provinces or the federal
2 government.

3 As of today, we have received \$5,000 from
4 the Ontario Heritage Foundation. So when we think that
5 there is all kinds of nice glossy stuff going out about
6 The Year of Indigenous People, from not only the province,
7 but also from the federal government, and really note that
8 this is a initiative of the Elders, the Indigenous People
9 of Canada.

10 Also, that Ontario -- I do not know if
11 it's maybe Ontario, maybe it is all of Canada -- has been
12 declared Senior's Month, June -- with nice posters and
13 -- but there is no money available, so we have had to go
14 to our leadership, to the Chiefs of Ontario, because the
15 21st is coming pretty soon.

16 However, perhaps maybe the nicest thing
17 that has happened with this is that our own First Nations
18 People are contributing. We work with 14 Bands, and
19 without exception, they have all contributed money, at
20 least \$1,000 that they have taken out of their own budgets.

21 We have this quilt going that if you give us \$1,000, we
22 will put your name on the quilt, so everybody wants their
23 name on the quilt. So anyway, our own First Nations have
24 contributed that and they are pretty short on money too,
25 but they see this as a very important thing.

1 They have also contributed their people
2 -- we have to fix up the grounds, so we have had three
3 bee's where the Bands come in with their heavy equipment,
4 people to run them, that kind of thing -- so they also
5 contribute that. We have also been doing a lot of fund
6 raising, but that also takes a lot of energy.

7 So I just wanted to mention that again,
8 the Aboriginal languages of Canada are not being seen as
9 a priority by the province, or by the federal government.

10 We are especially disappointed with
11 Indian Affairs who said "We have no money, go to the
12 Region." So we went to the region and they said, "Oh,
13 this is wonderful that you are doing, but there is no
14 money."

15 So I just really wanted to bring that
16 out, because to me this is the first time this is happening.

17 It is going to be very historic. It is a major gathering
18 and yet the different governments have refused to recognize
19 it.

20 Dominic touched briefly on language he
21 talked about in the hospital, and this is another area.

22 My mother speaks the language fluently and in the small
23 town that she lives -- Espanola, not far from here --
24 whenever there are Elders who are brought in from Sagamuck
25 or Whitefish River, the hospital phones my mother, because

1 these people can communicate much better in their own
2 language. So she keeps saying, "I am so tired of going
3 over there to translate. I really wish they would hire
4 somebody who could do that."

5 Dominic mentioned diabetes. Most of
6 our people who are in the hospitals are older people who
7 are more comfortable in their own language.

8 I had an experience of going in to see
9 one of the Elders from Wikwemikong. His wife had just
10 died, he was a diabetic. So after his wife died, he did
11 not look after himself and he was sitting there with his
12 legs purple up to his knees and while I was there, the
13 doctor came in said, "Well, Angus, your pancreas is no
14 longer functioning and your glucose tolerance level is
15 very high, so I think that we are going to have to put
16 you on insulin." So Angus just sat there and listened
17 and when the doctor left, he said, "What did the doctor
18 say?" He had no idea of what the doctor had said.
19 Unfortunately, Angus died shortly after that time that
20 I saw him, but that is just one story out of many.

21 Another one is in the courts, and I think
22 here we are talking about justice. Again, of the courts
23 refusing to recognize that someone has a first language
24 other than English or French. Recently we had that kind
25 of experience where I was asked to go to testify that this

1 Elderly gentleman could not understand or speak English.

2 Now, he could answer maybe hello or how are you, but he
3 cannot take part in a discussion, because Ojibwa is his
4 first language. The Chief of the Reserve was asked to
5 go to the court to testify to the same thing and the courts
6 refused to recognize that. We come from an island --
7 Manitoulin Island -- where half the population are Indian
8 people, so there has never been any recognition to that.

9

10 Yet at the same time, I was watching
11 television the other day and they were talking about
12 cultural interpreters for Thai people who have come to
13 Ottawa from Thailand and so they trained these cultural
14 interpreters to work with these Thai people who do not
15 speak English, especially in the hospitals. So anyway,
16 this cultural interpreter was saying, "You know, it isn't
17 only language, but really it is a whole cultural thing."

18 While I think it is very commendable that the government
19 would do this for Thai people, then never really think
20 of First Nations, that we have our own language other than
21 English or French.

22 I think maybe that might be all that I
23 have to talk about.

24 I guess one of the things that I have
25 mentioned is that whole thing about control ---

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

2 Excuse me, Mary Lou, if I could just interrupt for a second.

3 In order to ensure that everyone gets ample time, I have
4 to ask you to be as brief as possible so Rita Corbiere
5 may have her chance. It is 2:30 already, and we will want
6 to have ample time for discussion as well.

7 **MARY LOU FOX:** Why don't I leave the
8 language issue. If there is time, I would still like to
9 discuss the issue of diabetes which is different.

10 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** That
11 is fair enough.

12 **MARY LOU FOX:** Okay.

13 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Yes,
14 so if we may hear from Rita Corbiere who is an Ojibwa Elder
15 from Wikwemikong Unseated Reserve.

16 She is also a teacher who is quite active
17 in the area of language and cultural retention or
18 revitalization.

19 Rita, if I may ask you to please keep
20 it to a minimum. I will nod to you when you can start
21 wrapping up so we can have room for discussion. Thank
22 you.

23 **RITA CORBIERE:** Thank you very much.
24 Thank you to the leaders who are staying in front. I thank
25 everybody that they think it is pertinent that I come here

1 to sit, to allow me to speak of what my purpose is, of
2 what the past was, and what happened to the Anishnabe
3 people.

4 I will have to speak in English for the
5 good of everybody in the room.

6 We are the North American Aboriginal
7 People. This is our Homeland. Europe is the homeland
8 of the Caucasians, Asia is the homeland of the Asiatic
9 peoples, Africa is the homeland of the Blacks, the
10 Middle-East is the homeland of other races such as India
11 and other peoples from there.

12 We, as North American Aboriginal Peoples
13 have been too trusting, too amiable, too magnanimous.

14 When the Europeans landed on our shores
15 our ancestors were too kind to them, so after 500 years
16 they have reduced us to the bottom. We are very few in
17 numbers now as compared to a few centuries ago.

18 We are only about half a million in
19 Canada as compared to the other races. I think it is about
20 25 million in Canada, so why are they talking about spending
21 our tax money, you are doing this, you are doing that,
22 the native people are getting this, they are getting that.

23

24 We are only a small number of people
25 compared to all these other people such as immigrants that

1 they are spending money on, their tax money, and this tax
2 money that is being used on us native people is coming
3 to us because on account of the Gross National Product,
4 the GNP, which comes to billions and billions yearly.

5 Why do they say that we are using their
6 tax money? Because that is our national -- the national
7 products or the products that belong to the native people
8 originally.

9 Our ancestors have been too innocent and
10 too trusting, so they signed some treaties, some of which
11 are now being ignored or broken.

12 We have our native rights which we are
13 keeping. We do not want them being ignored.

14 History tells us Empires come and go.

15 The Greek Empire went, the Roman Empire went, the Egyptian
16 Empire went. The French, under Bonaparte, tried to rule
17 the world. The Germans, under Hitler, tried to rule the
18 world. Germany we beaten in World War I and World War
19 II, yet they still -- they are allowed to keep their
20 country, their lands. Even today in today's news, they
21 are burning their houses in Germany because they think
22 they don't want the foreigners in their land, so they --
23 just yesterdays news there was a few foreigners got burnt
24 in their apartment in Germany, because these Germans don't
25 want them there.

1 The British Empire seems to be on the
2 way out. There is great unrest in Southern Africa. In
3 Canada, the British Monarchy seems to be on shaky ground.
4 Great Britain, under Margaret Thatcher, spent millions
5 defending the Falkland Islands, which are very small
6 parcels of land.

7 This shows us land is the top priority
8 of any given country. This is why we have to hang on to
9 our lands, we Anishnabe of Canada. We have go to very
10 careful to hang on, to keep our lands, the little bit that
11 we have left, our native land. This is why we should not
12 endorse this new idea while is being pushed on to us, namely
13 the proposed Chartered Lands Act for the Native people,
14 which is in the news nowadays in the past few years, and
15 also this Spring -- it is in the news right now -- this
16 proposed Chartered Land Act.

17 What does this Charter mean? The Native
18 People do not really know what that entails. I do not
19 either. It is only up to the lawyers, I guess. The
20 educated people who know.

21 Our lands have been taken away. We have
22 been reduced to small reserves, now they want to take those
23 small reserves away too. Namely, under this new proposed
24 lands act.

25 Only seven (7) Chiefs across the length

1 and breadth of Canada are endorsing this. They do not
2 represent all the native people of Canada and yet there
3 was a newspaper article which said, "The Indians are making
4 history. They are drafting their own legislation, which
5 means the Chartered Lands Act. And yet these seven (7)
6 Chiefs are not representing all the peoples -- all the
7 Indian peoples across Canada, also the Northwest
8 Territories.

9 The government is allowing 10 million
10 dollars to push this through and they want this to be done
11 within a few months. Why? Why do they want to spend so
12 much money on this when the government now is so short
13 on finances? "Are we to be shelved ...". I am quoting
14 thanks to Rene Dussault "We do not want to be shelved."

15 We have to fight this Chartered Lands Act because our
16 land is very dear to us. We have deep spiritual and
17 cultural ties to the land, our Mother Earth. We have
18 practised conservation regarding fishing.

19 My father was a fisherman. He fished
20 all his life. He was 89 years old when he died and no-one
21 ever bothered him. He was never put in court, which the
22 MNR is doing nowadays.

23 How can we protect Mother Earth from the
24 white man's pollution? The ozone layer and all that.
25 They say it is -- they are blaming the ordinary common

1 people living on the earth now for the ozone layer breaking
2 up. They are saying it is from the aerosol sprays and
3 all that, but to me I wonder if the government isn't hiding
4 something about the ozone layer. I begin to think of why
5 all these machines, that they send up to the moon. If
6 these machines have to pass through the ozone layer and
7 then they have all this pollution leaving behind them.
8 They must have to go through the ozone layer. They have
9 to disperse it, but no-one has ever mentioned that fact.

10 My father used to tell us about the War
11 of 1812. It was handed down by word of mouth from his
12 ancestors and not much has been written in history about
13 the War of 1812. I wish I were educated. Native people
14 would rewrite Canadian history to promote the self-esteem
15 and promote a positive self-image of our Aboriginal youth.

16
17 My father told us many stories. He said
18 that in the War of 1812, the Americans were getting the
19 upper hand. They were getting into -- they got York, they
20 were getting into Upper Canada, so the British Generals
21 invoked the aid of the Ojibwa warriors who were living
22 on an island north of Manitoulin Island -- I forget the
23 name of that island -- these warriors were very brave
24 warriors. They were known to be fearless. If they only
25 had the equipment like the other soldiers had, they would

1 probably have wiped out the enemy.

2 Anyhow, they had powers derived from the
3 Vision Quest, so they helped out the British and they won
4 the battle at Fort Detroit.

5 The war was over and the boundary line
6 had to be set. It was set by the Treaty of Ghent in 1814.

7 These Ojibwa warriors -- their homeland was Drummond
8 Island, that is near Michigan -- when the boundary line
9 was set, Drummond Island fell into U.S.A., so the warriors
10 -- the British officials went to them and told them that
11 now, your land -- Drummond Island -- belongs to the U.S.A.,
12 you have to move. You could stay if you want to, but the
13 Great White Father wants to move you to another place which
14 is Cold Waters. So they were moved down to Cold Waters,
15 which is near north of Barrie, and so they settled there
16 and there was a lot of good soil, but they were not made
17 to be farmers.

18 The government told them "We will give
19 you all the farming equipment, we will teach you
20 agriculture, we will give you horses, we will give you
21 farm equipment, but they were hunters, fishermen and
22 trappers. So they didn't bother going into agriculture.

23

24 Then the settlers started moving north
25 and they were envious of all this land around Cold Waters.

1 Real good agriculture land, so then once again, the Ojibwa
2 Warriors were moved ---

3 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I am
4 sorry to interrupt, Rita, but could I ask you to wrap up,
5 please.

6 **RITA CORBIERE:** Okay.

7 That is when they were moved to
8 Manitoulin Island and then the 1836 Treaty was made on
9 Manitoulin Island.

10 A short while after, again, the white
11 people came up to them and then they made the 1862 Treaty
12 and then now they are in a few scattered Reserves on
13 Manitoulin Island, and now 1993 the government again has
14 a new idea called the proposed Chartered Lands Act to take
15 away from the Aboriginal Peoples, the rest of the few
16 scattered acres that they have left on Manitoulin Island.

17 Thank you. Meegwich.

18 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
19 would like to thank Dominic, Mary Lou and Rita for their
20 presentations. It appears that all three are extremely
21 concerned over the language issue, the Chartered Lands
22 Act, traditional healing and diabetes.

23 As it has been stated earlier by Mr.
24 Dussault, that the intent of this Commission is to look
25 at the issues facing native people today, and by your

1 presence here and your presentations, the Commission in
2 fact is doing so. But other than that, or more
3 importantly, the Commission is looking for solutions for
4 today, tomorrow and seven generations from now.

5 So on that note, I will hand the mike
6 over to Mr. Dussault.

7 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

8 I would like first to address the health
9 issue and of course, the major concern that was raised
10 was on diabetes and I know there is more to be said about
11 it.

12 Three weeks ago, or earlier in May, we,
13 as you might know, we had a couple of days of hearings
14 in Kahnawake, near Montreal. One of the presentations
15 that was made to us there was by Doctor Louis Montour,
16 who is a Mohawk at Kateri Hospital, and explained to us
17 the development that his groups have been involved in as
18 far as diabetes is concerned. There are making a major
19 study on the whole area and he was struck by the fact that
20 we had, in mid-March, a National Round Table on health
21 issues in Vancouver.

22 One of the workshops addressed the issue
23 of diabetes, but it was really on the surface, and it is
24 obviously a major concern for Aboriginal communities.

25 Doctor Montour told us in Kahnawake that

1 none of the studies so far are really giving us the "recipe"
2 to avoid this diabetes. On the other hand, it is quite
3 clear that there is a link with heart diseases and that
4 many many factors that lead to heart diseases are
5 associated with diabetes.

6 In fact, I was quite impressed by the
7 presentation you made on prevention and on living
8 conditions that could lead to diseases as this one. When
9 you were telling us that had you known 15 years ago what
10 you know now, it would have been very different for you
11 and the message is that you would like to avoid people
12 to go through the same thing that you did without getting
13 the proper information. It is a challenge for both
14 non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal communities.

15 The trend and the temptation is always
16 to deal with crisis and to deal with acute care, put the
17 money there, and not on enough prevention.

18 You said at one point that you are the
19 Ojibwa Cultural Foundation and could do much more in terms
20 of prevention. You spoke about the network that took
21 place, the Education Network in November. In fact, the
22 question is, and I know it is not easy, but there are some
23 information and prevention measures that are taken, even
24 if they are not as numerous as they could be and because
25 of the funding, and on and on, but we know that it is a

1 challenge to bring more money to prevention and to divert
2 some how, funds to prevention, but what would be the tools
3 to enhance the awareness of the conditions that lead to
4 that kind of disease and others, to the awareness that
5 these conditions should be done away, because sometimes
6 they seem pretty obvious in many ways when, for example,
7 and I don't want to be too personal, but over weight is
8 a major factor and young people know that even if they
9 don't know where it is leading.

10 Could you expand a bit on what could be
11 done, not only to pass the information, but to convince
12 people to act upon the information, once received. Very
13 often it is one of the problems. It is like smoking, it
14 is like many of those aspects.

15 **DOMINIC ESHKAKOGON:** Possibly what
16 could happen is that if literature and materials became
17 available to our young people at an early age, let's say
18 for instance in the school: why are your parents diabetic;
19 how did it happen?

20 In my own case, I am the first one in
21 my family to develop diabetes. That includes both sets
22 of grandparents -- that's four grandparents -- none of
23 them ever had diabetes or was there any way of knowing
24 that they did have it. One grandfather died of cancer,
25 and the other died of heart failure because he was

1 overweight, but there was no other sign of diabetic --
2 all the things that happen when you are diabetic -- nothing
3 was there. His body was whole when he died of a heart
4 attack at a fairly old age.

5 Grandmothers -- they all died of old age.

6 So on both my dad's side and my mother's side, I was the
7 first one to have diabetes in my whole family.

8 Immediately after we found out I had
9 diabetes, again a few years later my second brother --
10 second to me -- had diabetes.

11 Had we known at that early age -- when
12 I developed diabetes in 1977 -- if I had known what caused
13 it or how does it come about -- it was my own lifestyle
14 that led me to be overweight. I think it was mentioned
15 earlier regarding the residential school system and the
16 problems that were inside that led me to drink very heavily
17 for 15 years. I lived as an alcoholic and when I came
18 out of that stupor I was diabetic and overweight. As I
19 said, I weighed 296 pounds.

20 It was a way that this awareness program
21 can be developed that would help these people. We did
22 not mention that earlier in our statistics -- we mentioned
23 that the epidemic levels of diabetes among native people
24 -- is that the diabetics are getting younger and younger
25 every year, including young women and young girls -- they

1 are practically in their teens when they starting to
2 develop it now.

3 So if there was a sort of an awareness
4 program where all this information is given -- if it can
5 be started at the school level, and then having information
6 sessions on how to try and prevent that. They could try
7 to change the lifestyle.

8 Our lifestyle has changed so much. I
9 was a bush worker, and I worked with MNR for so many years.
10 I walked all day. Maybe that is what kept away, and then
11 as soon as I went to work for the Reserve in 1970, it took
12 seven (7) years to develop diabetes and also develop that
13 extra weight, because I was still living the lifestyle
14 of a bush worker. The meals that I had were just as rich
15 as they were when I was working in the bush -- living,
16 walking in the bush 7-8 hours a day in the bush. If I
17 had known, I would have kept that up and I would have
18 probably changed my life style quite a bit, if I had known
19 what was preventing the diabetes from developing, even
20 though I was overweight all those years. But when I
21 changed my lifestyle and went to sit and work at a desk,
22 that is when that the diabetes flared out.

23 So I am hoping that with the way things
24 are going now that one of my hopes is that this session
25 will not be lost among the 10,000 pages of testimonies,

1 and I am pretty sure there is going to be lots more before
2 it is over.

3 I think the only one recommendation that
4 I would really make is that it is time for the governments
5 to listen to the native people and hear what they are
6 saying. Not only listen, but hear what they are saying,
7 and then react.

8 That is what I would recommend.

9 **MARY LOU FOX:** We did not have too much
10 of a chance to talk about traditional healing, but I think
11 that that can play a very important role in prevention,
12 and care of diabetics, because we do have traditional
13 healers.

14 I am a diabetic and have been for 20
15 years, and it was only when I went to a traditional healer
16 -- I am still a diabetic, but I was put on insulin -- this
17 healer said, "Well, you should ask for healing." So I
18 did that, but also I have been told that going to "Sweats"
19 is really a good thing, so I started doing that. I credit
20 going to a healer, going to "Sweats", that I was able to
21 get off of insulin.

22 So to me, if somehow there could be an
23 understanding where biomedicine or western medicine can
24 work together, that there be a better understanding.

25 Another thing is lack of services.

1 Where we come from -- Manitoulin Island -- is that there
2 are not any specialists who deal with diabetes, and there
3 should be that.

4 Another thing is that there are other
5 things that can go wrong with you. You can lose your
6 eyesight, you can also lose your limbs because of
7 circulatory problems.

8 I know myself when I have problems with
9 my feet, I have to try and get an appointment with a doctor
10 here in Sudbury. One time I had had surgery, my foot was
11 not healing, I was panicking. I tried to get an
12 appointment with the doctor and said, "Well, we do not
13 know when you will be able to go down or when you could
14 come up" and I said "Well look, I need help right now.
15 My foot won't heal." They said, "Well, the thing is that
16 the doctor broke his leg, so we don't know when he will
17 be available."

18 So I am talking about these things that
19 can happen to diabetics, losing their legs and limbs.
20 I know people who have had amputations, their foot, then
21 up to their knee, then higher -- you know, as high as you
22 can go -- and people really do not have to go through that.

23 So those are some of the things that I
24 would say is that we need these two types of medicine to
25 come together: traditional healing and western medicine,

1 but also that there is a real lack of services for people
2 on Manitoulin Island.

3 **MR. DOMINIC ESHKAKOGON:** Just a bit more
4 on traditional healing.

5 There are people who do different types
6 of healing. Not all of us can concentrate on one as this,
7 as I often tell people.

8 One person does not know everything.
9 It takes a whole bunch of people. We specialize in
10 different things. I specialize in arthritis, and for my
11 heart condition I have to go to another medicine man in
12 order to be able to move around.

13 If I did not have this traditional
14 medicine, I would probably be in bed all day and not be
15 able to -- when I was ill, I could not even move my arms
16 above my shoulders and I was out of breath just from lifting
17 my arms to brush my hair.

18 One of the things I would like to make
19 as a last comment is my concern is what is happening again
20 with the federal government.

21 On December 19th, 1992, there was an
22 introduction of a paper at the federal level to ban 64
23 therapeutic herbs from the stores. When I read that I
24 said, "Well, they are going to have one police on me all
25 the time, because whenever I leave the house to go and

1 pick medicines, they are going to have to watch what I
2 pick and they are going to have to teach that cop or person
3 how to identify those medicines I am going to pick, because
4 I am going to continue to use those medicines, regardless
5 of what the government does.

6 If the government bans it -- bans those
7 64 therapeutic herbs -- fever few is one of them -- we
8 call it fever weed. It is for people who have migraine
9 headaches. I give that to people who have migraine
10 headaches, and I treat them with it. If the government
11 is going to ban that -- they say it is harmful to us --
12 how do they know it is harmful? We, as Native People,
13 have been using these remedies for thousands of years and
14 some of us extend our life with that. It does not harm
15 us.

16 So that is the last comment I want to
17 make is that there are ways that we can approach our people.

18 The different herbal remedies that they have. I treat
19 arthritis, I am an arthritic. I have been arthritic ever
20 since seven (7) years old. I have treated myself. My
21 hands are still straight and the only thing that is wrong
22 with me is that I have congestive heart failure, I have
23 kidney failure. I treat myself for prostate enlargement.

24 I do my own treatment of that, and the only thing I need
25 as I said is that I go to other medicine for my heart

1 medicine.

2 So there are many ways besides that.
3 If all this information is made available to our people,
4 and we also are beginning to find out that some of these
5 therapeutic herbs do work in reducing the level of diabetes
6 in a person.

7 I have gone from two (2) needles a day
8 to one needle a day. That one needle was just reduced
9 recently -- three (3) weeks ago -- because I did not need
10 all that insulin because of my using these therapeutic
11 herbs to control, to help me bring my sugar down.

12 Meegwich.

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

15 One of the priority areas that we have
16 to work on is the relationship. We know that in the past
17 there was a relationship between Aboriginal and
18 Non-Aboriginal peoples which was better. We also know
19 that the relationship in 1993 is not that good.

20 One of the greatest challenges that this
21 Commission has to look at is that relationship issue.
22 There is a lot of racism. I think that we have heard that
23 wherever we have gone.

24 We have heard about how in the urban
25 areas there are differences in the way Aboriginal People

1 look at other Aboriginal People, there are differences
2 in the way Aboriginal People look at Non-Aboriginal People,
3 and I think that one of the things that we have heard is
4 that the Hudenac (PH) White Man has to respect the
5 Anishnabe, or the Inuit and the Inuit Manishnabe have to
6 understand and respect the Hudenac (PH) if this
7 relationship is to be better.

8 I think that we have heard that many
9 people have many responsibilities to fix that relationship
10 up.

11 In the schools there is a responsibility
12 to teach history. We have heard all over that there is
13 incorrect history, or bad history, or no history in the
14 history books. It affects how Non-Aboriginal children
15 look at Aboriginal children. It affects how Aboriginal
16 children look at themselves.

17 When I say that I remember again when
18 we were in Davis Inlet. One guy who was an Innu, went
19 to a non-Innu school, and he said that "In school I learned
20 about how great John A. MacDonald was and I also learned
21 about how great Joey Smallwood was, but not once, never
22 once was I taught about the richness of my own culture,
23 about the beauty of my own land."

24 So I think wherever we have gone, for
25 whatever reason, we have heard that history is necessary.

1 I think as parents we have responsibility to teach our
2 children about equality, and I think that as Elders --
3 our Aboriginal Elders -- we have been taught that
4 Aboriginal Elders have a role in telling people this is
5 the way to live and acting as role models, in guiding the
6 people in the community as to how people should get along
7 and I am wondering, in terms of the relationship, what
8 responsibility is it for the Elders to fix up a relationship
9 or to get to a point where we have a relationship which
10 is better? How do you see the role of the Elders in that
11 relationship healing?

12 **RITA CORBIERE:** I think Elders have a
13 lot of stories that were handed down to them by word of
14 mouth traditionally from a way back, because the older
15 people do not know how to read or write, but they have
16 all these stories with them that they hand down to the
17 generations.

18 They have their good stories like that
19 one that my father told me about the War of 1812. It is
20 not even written anywhere.

21 It is a story that our youth could be
22 proud of. If our history in the battles -- how our native
23 people helped out with the governing people -- whether
24 it was British or the French.

25 The native people helped them out, and

1 they have lots of stories about that. If it was written
2 in history, the young people would have much self-esteem
3 about that and if it was in the curriculum in the native
4 schools, this new, rewritten history should be on the
5 curriculum in our native schools.

6 **DOMINIC ESHKAKOGON:** In regard to the
7 Elders, I as a young boy, used to listen to the Elders
8 in my community. Right up until this day I still do it.
9 They have a lot of wisdom and knowledge.

10 One of them said one time:

11 "You can be very knowledgable. You can be very, very
12 knowledgable about book learning
13 and everything, but that does not
14 mean you have the wisdom. You have
15 to listen to what the people talk,
16 how they talk and what they say."

17 In regards to relationships, I hear
18 stories of how our Anishnabe people took in other peoples,
19 not necessarily only other native people.

20 There is a story in the North Shore area
21 of how some of the Shawnee people fled from the south and
22 today there is no trace of those Shawnee people because
23 they have all adopted the name Anishnabe or the Ojibwa,
24 and there are some non-native people among our people that
25 still survive today -- non-native people who were adopted

1 by our people -- and these stories are told about how these
2 things happened.

3 I myself come from quite a mixture of
4 backgrounds. My grandparents were both Adowa (PH) that
5 were married to Padwadama (PH) women, and one of my
6 grandfathers married an Irish lady from which I may always
7 make that statement: I am like an ivory soap. I am 99
8 and 44 one hundredths Ojibwa, the rest you see of me is
9 Irish and French from my grandmothers side is the French
10 background.

11 So we have all these people and they tell
12 stories of how these people were adopted into the Anishnabe
13 tradition, because of their openness to people.

14 I think we heard quite a bit about that
15 today, about how our people in the past were so open to
16 helping others. I think the Elders telling those stories
17 is a way of hopefully bringing back some of our traditions,
18 although we cannot go back to living off the land, which
19 is practically impossible for anybody to do nowadays unless
20 you are raised by traditional grandparents.

21 I feel sorry for our young people. I
22 myself can survive if I am able to walk around the bush.

23 I am not able to walk around the bush anymore because
24 of the effects of my heart and on my hands and on my feet.

25 I have what is called edema and my feet swell up so badly

1 that it takes several days for the swelling to go down
2 and be able to start walking again. Every day the swelling
3 of my feet goes up and I have a hard time walking. So
4 if I was able to walk in the bush today, I would be able
5 to survive, because of the teaching of the Elders.

6 Meegwich.

7 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** I would
8 like to get back to culture. It is so central to the life
9 of Aboriginal People and the work of the Commission.

10 You mentioned preservation, retention
11 and revitalization. You mentioned that there is never
12 enough money in this area, but there is some money with
13 the college and the university.

14 Also, you mentioned that some kind of
15 language institute was in the works to be established in
16 Toronto. From a very practical point of view, and you
17 said they have money at the university or the colleges,
18 but no contact with the communities. The Elders worry
19 -- it is alarming to the Elders to see that it might be
20 an institute -- a language institute in Toronto.

21 On this one -- let's start by this one.

22 It is difficult to imagine that the people will want to
23 establish a language institute will do so without proper
24 communication and contact and output by the real people,
25 like those that are really concerned by the maintenance,

1 preservation and enhancement of the language.

2 Could you expand a bit on that. Is there
3 a parallel process going on whereby you are excluded from
4 or ---

5 **MARY LOU FOX:** There does not seem to
6 be a parallel process, and it seems to me that this was
7 an agreement or an initiative signed in 1982 by the Chiefs
8 of Ontario. So when we became concerned about language
9 institutes, then we arranged to meet with the Chiefs of
10 Ontario.

11 So what they are saying now is that
12 apparently there were five (5) submissions to the
13 committee, but as a result of -- with the Elders and concern
14 about the language that they are not going to look at any
15 language institutes for now.

16 So the Chiefs are also saying that they
17 have to really look at that contract or initiative that
18 was signed in 1982, which is 11 years ago, because things
19 change.

20 So for now, as I understand they are not
21 looking at language institutes as a result of our concerns.

22 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes, but
23 I understand in '82 it was part of the plan -- when you
24 speak about a contract that was signed because ---

25 **MARY LOU FOX:** I don't know -- I don't

1 think language institutes -- I think it was just generally
2 Aboriginal education, and then it would be the -- however
3 it was identified by the colleges and universities what
4 they wanted.

5 One of the things I understood was that
6 there would be community input. I went to one meeting
7 just to see what was going on, and out of 25 people at
8 the meeting, five (5) of them only were community people.
9 So that is not a good balance.

10 Also, that was the time when they said,
11 "Well here is our proposal for the language institute."

12 So it was all accomplished, really, that it was going
13 to happen. Here it is and the people there agree, and
14 sign it.

15 So a lot of times things are prepared
16 ahead of time, and even if they have two (2) or three (3)
17 Aboriginal People sitting on a committee, it is just kind
18 of your rubber stamp things.

19 Anyway, as a result, there has been a
20 stop on language institutes.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What about
22 the relationship with the colleges and universities?
23 Because you are saying there is some money available there,
24 but ---

25 **MARY LOU FOX:** But not for community.

1 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: Yes.

2 MARY LOU FOX: Nothing -- it has to be
3 at the college.

4 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: So it is
5 for courses or ---

6 MARY LOU FOX: It is for pretty well
7 courses, even though at one time they were saying that
8 they would like to have an immersion program, but again
9 it is just for the students who are going to the community
10 college. There is nothing that can be done on the Reserve,
11 because we asked. They said no, it has to be initiated
12 by the community college or university.

13 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: Are you
14 aware of some kind of output given by the communities in
15 the design of those courses that ---

16 MARY LOU FOX: No.

17 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: --- are
18 given on the premises of the college; no?

19 MARY LOU FOX: No, I am not.

20 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: And ---

21 MARY LOU FOX: You see, the thing with
22 languages, they say that it is very difficult when young
23 people are aged 18, 19, 20 and 21 -- those ages -- to pick
24 up a language with just 37 minutes for six (6) months,
25 maybe even just one class a week. I don't know, because

1 as I understand, they just have the one.

2 So you are not really learning a
3 language, because a language has to be functional and it
4 is not functional at that level.

5 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So what is
6 the situation at the primary school at the moment, as far
7 as the teaching of the language is concerned?

8 **MARY LOU FOX:** It is done in some
9 schools, but the concern is that the parents of pre-school
10 children especially, can no longer assist their children.
11 So that is why communities are asking for language classes
12 for adults so they can help their children.

13 **DOMINIC ESHKAKOGON:** Another concern we
14 have regarding these university and college programs is
15 that when we look at their proposals, they say "Community
16 Based Programs", but we have had people who have worked
17 on some of these so-called "Community Based Programs".
18 They have been told, "You stay in the college here, you
19 stay in your office." When they have asked how they are
20 going to carry out this "Community Based Program", so they
21 were told to stay within the college office, because that
22 is where they were paid from and that's where you are
23 staying.

24 So I think there is a lot of
25 misinformation by these colleges regarding the proposals

1 that they make out when they send them in for funding
2 proposals.

3 I am a bit concerned that this is
4 happening also. The universities, although they say they
5 talk about "Community Based Programs", they are still not
6 sharing these programs with us at the community level.

7 So that is why we are stuck right there,
8 because we cannot -- so when we go to -- when the Reserves
9 or the Bands go to the government for funding they say,
10 "Well, you already have a Community Based Program at such
11 and such a college."

12 They won't believe us when we tell them
13 that this is not happening. I am a language instructor.

14 I have a unique system that I use for teaching language,
15 and I am one of the few people that say I can guarantee
16 you can speak the language in 20 hours.

17 So in order for me to teach the language
18 to these people, I have to get them straight from them.

19 It does not even pay for my operation of the program --
20 for my materials, for my driving back and forth -- from
21 what they contribute to the language program.

22 But I must say that the language system
23 that I use, I have one graduate that is now speaking the
24 language. He has never spoken it before, he is writing
25 it and he is also translating it now from the way that

1 I had taught that person. So I am quite proud of the fact
2 that I was able to accomplish that one person anyway, to
3 write and translate the language in which he had never
4 spoken before. He makes better translator than most of
5 our people.

6 **MARY LOU FOX:** Perhaps things are
7 improving and like we say, colleges and universities have
8 a very important role to play, but I remember when the
9 Cultural Centre first got started and there was a meeting
10 with the Chiefs with Community College people. They came
11 down and they had a list of things that could be done,
12 but they said, "We want to meet with you to see what your
13 needs are in the field of education." So I remember that
14 the area of arts and crafts was identified as "What about
15 arts and crafts, which would reflect traditional arts and
16 crafts?" They said "Oh no, that is not on our list."
17 However, when you looked at the list, two (2) things stuck
18 out in my mind, and one of them was brushing, that they
19 could have something in brushing, and another one was lion
20 taming. I remember the Chief of West Bay saying, "I am
21 so sick and tired of brushing" because that was the only
22 thing they could get, and then he said, "What need do we
23 have of lion tamers on the Reserve?" But those were
24 courses that they would fund, you see, but again that is
25 20 years ago, so things are different now.

1 **DOMINIC ESHKAKOGON:** And we don't have
2 lion tamers yet.

3 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** My very
4 last question.

5 About the Ojibwa Cultural Foundation
6 itself -- is it an organization that cover the whole Ojibwa
7 in Ontario or ---

8 **MARY LOU FOX:** No.

9 There are probable about 60 Cultural
10 Education and Resource Centres across Canada and five (5)
11 in Ontario.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So you are
13 one of them?

14 **MARY LOU FOX:** We are just one of the
15 ones in Ontario, and it is just the Anishnabe in this area.

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

17 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

18 Again, I would like to thank you for taking this time to
19 present your concerns to the Commission.

20 So on behalf of Mr. Dussault and Mary
21 Sillett, Mary Lou, Ruth Corbiere and Dominic Eshkakogan,
22 I would like to thank you again.

23 We are finished this part of the
24 afternoon. We will be breaking for -- it is 3:25 now.
25 If we can take a 10 minute break and meet back here in

1 10 minutes.

2 --- Upon recessing at 3:25 p.m.

3 --- Upon resuming at 3:55 p.m.

4 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Our
5 next presenters are Bridget Elliott and Martha MacKenzie,
6 both of whom are representing the Sudbury Anishnawbaeque.

7 Bridget and Martha, you have 20 minutes
8 to give your presentation, then it will be followed by
9 at 10 minute discussion period. I will let you begin.

10 **BRIDGET ELLIOTT:** In this presentation,
11 on the behalf of the Sudbury Anishnawbaeque, I would like
12 to focus on the relationship between Aboriginal and
13 Non-Aboriginal people beginning with Education.

14 First of all the objectives of our local
15 are:

16 (1) Social and recreational activities
17 for Native women and children.

18 (2) To give an awareness, to non-native
19 people, of problems experienced by
20 Native people, specifically women
21 and children.

22 (3) To give Native women an opportunity
23 to increase their feelings of
24 adequacy and a sense of
25 responsibility through planning,

1 developing and managing projects.

2 (4)To provide services to Native women
3 of all ages, in personal and social
4 areas.

5 (5)Our overall objective is to oversee
6 the well-being of the Native
7 families in the Sudbury area. The
8 approximate Native descent
9 population is 5,000 to 7,000 in
10 this area.

11 Presently, the Public School system has
12 incorporated a Native Language Course in some schools in
13 Sudbury.

14 The Separate School system has Native
15 volunteers make presentations on Native Culture once a
16 week.

17 These initiatives were put into place
18 because of the high enrolment of Native children in their
19 schools.

20 At the Secondary Level volunteers go in
21 as well, but no Native courses are offered.

22 N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre
23 houses an Alternative School which is a satellite of
24 Sudbury Secondary School.

25 The Aboriginal students can attain their

1 secondary diplomas and receive a cultural based Aboriginal
2 specific curriculum in the process.

3 In 1991, the Alternative School was in
4 operation for four (4) months and one person graduated.
5 In 1992, there were three (3) graduates, in 1993, there
6 were 17 graduates. At the beginning of the program the
7 enrolments was 20 and now there are 93.

8 Many students are in line to graduate.

9 I believe that their high success rate, which is the
10 highest in Ontario, is attributed to the Native culture
11 component.

12 At the post secondary level there are
13 two (2) institutions that have Native programs in place.

14 They are Cambrian and Laurentian University.

15 If there is going to be a new
16 relationship developing in Canada with the native and
17 Non-Native People, an awareness has to be created at the
18 early stages in education.

19 In order to foster a new relationship,
20 the Ministry of Education in Ontario has to include Native
21 courses starting at Elementary Level and continuing into
22 the Secondary Level. This would then begin to broaden
23 the understanding between the Aboriginal and
24 Non-Aboriginal People and would help lessen the
25 discrimination and stereotypes that exist in our community

1 and in Canada.

2 The Native women in Sudbury are
3 concerned about the future of N'Swakamok Native Friendship
4 Centre. It was brought to our attention that cutbacks
5 in funding could reach as high as 20 per cent within the
6 next four (4) years.

7 The Friendship Centre offers many
8 programs and services to all people in the community such
9 as:

10 Better Beginnings Better Futures
11 Nokiwiin Employment Services
12 Alternative School
13 Family Courtworker
14 Courtworker
15 Community Youth Support
16 Summer Employment Programs.

17 Our Native Women's Group and many Native
18 and Non-Native organizations utilize the resources that
19 the Native Friendship Centre offers.

20 The Friendship Centre also has 64 acres
21 of land on the outskirts of Sudbury where they host many
22 cultural events. Many of our families have benefited from
23 the spiritual healing that takes place on the land which
24 is its primary purpose.

25 On average, the Friendship Centre

1 answers approximately 200 telephone calls a day and also
2 assists and refers numerous walk-in clients.

3 The staff members are already working
4 at an overload and therefore any cutbacks would hinder
5 the services they provide and the people they provide it
6 to.

7 For example, the Family Courtworker
8 program provides court services to an average of 120
9 families in one month.

10 If the Canadian government is looking
11 at a new relationship between the Aboriginal and
12 Non-Aboriginal people they should maintain their present
13 one and expand on it.

14 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

15 Thank you, Bridget.

16 I would like to hand the floor over to
17 Mr. Dussault now.

18 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
19 very much for your presentation.

20 I think the key aspect of your
21 presentation is when you say at the bottom of the first
22 page:

23 "If there is going to be a new relationship developing
24 in Canada with the native and
25 Non-Native People, an awareness

1 has to be created at the early
2 stages in education."

3 **BRIDGET ELLIOTT:** Yes.

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** From both
5 sides, and I would like to ask you at this point, what
6 is your assessment of what is taught at primary school,
7 or even at the secondary level, in the Non-Aboriginal
8 schools in a city like Sudbury.

9 For example, do you have an assessment
10 of the awareness that is raised about Aboriginal Peoples
11 that are living around this part of Ontario? Are there
12 elements in the programs that are thought to help young
13 kids to know better? What is the situation of Aboriginal
14 People even in terms of the numbers, the languages, various
15 Nations and on and on?

16 Are you familiar with what is thought
17 at the school? I am not talking at this point to the
18 Aboriginal kids, but to the Non-Aboriginal kids.

19 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** I think in the early
20 part of Bridget's presentation it was mentioned that this
21 is the first year that the public schools and the separate
22 schools are taking into consideration native culture and
23 language, so it is very early to comment on what the
24 progress is.

25 I think the main concern is that there

1 is nothing in place in the curriculum. There is French
2 language, there is math, there is English, but there is
3 nothing for -- there are no native courses, so there are
4 no native teachers -- so that should be started at the
5 elementary level.

6 It is very hard to change adult's
7 thinking, but I think if you bring up children with that
8 awareness that would help.

9 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: You are
10 quite right.

11 What struck me and the whole Commission,
12 travelling across the country, is the fact that even the
13 physical presence of Aboriginal People, where they are,
14 how numerous they are -- basic data -- is not taught in
15 the schools. I am not talking about the cultures and the
16 more in-depth understanding, but the basic facts. People
17 do not realize that part of their neighbours is Aboriginal,
18 so we are looking for -- of course, we try to see a way
19 to bring corrective measures.

20 We are talking with the various
21 departments of education is at the provincial level, for
22 example, because it has a lot to do with the program itself.

23 So you are just starting. You have not
24 approached yet the school boards or the Minister of
25 Education here in this province.

1 What are your plans for the future?
2 What do you plan to do to bring this awareness and at one
3 point to bring some corrective measures ---

4 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** We have planned
5 different workshops.

6 last summer we had a cultural workshop
7 at the land that the Friendship Centre has. It was a
8 one-day event and there were approximately 100 people that
9 were there, and it wasn't just for the Native people, it
10 was for the non-natives too, so it was a good day for both.
11 It was learning and sharing.

12 We have planned different workshops to
13 continue. We just need somebody to apply for money.

14 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What about
15 the teachers themselves, the unions that represent
16 teachers in Ontario, have you thought of establishing
17 links, getting contact with them, because we feel that
18 it is one thing to discuss with School Boards, but the
19 very people that are in class are very important. It is
20 always the problem when we discuss the relationship --
21 we feel that contact should be made at all levels. It
22 takes time to take hold for an idea to materialize in the
23 classroom.

24 You are working with -- the Friendship
25 Centres are obviously major instruments in this country

1 to cross cultural changes, but they cannot do everything.

2 The progress is quite striking, the interest of the
3 registration -- the figures that you gave -- so it is
4 certainly worth pursuing.

5 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
6 very much.

7 This is a question of clarification.
8 Is your youth group a part of the Friendship Centre, is
9 it a local or how is it related -- I know it is the name,
10 but you say the objective of your local is to represent
11 the interests of Native women and children.

12 Is it a Friendship Centre, or is it part
13 of the Friendship Centre?

14 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** Well, we hold most
15 of our events at the Friendship Centre, because we do not
16 have space for the women's group.

17 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Oh, so it
18 is a women's group, and then you work out of the Friendship
19 Centre; is that what it is?

20 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**
21 Maybe I could interrupt here.

22 They are Sudbury Anishbabequek. They
23 are a chapter of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

24 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Oh, okay.

25 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** A lot of the members

1 of the Friendship Centre are members of the Native Women's
2 Group in Sudbury.

3 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** And the
4 Native Friendship Centre houses an Alternative School.

5 Could you tell me more about the
6 Alternative School? How is it funded? How do kids go
7 there? Do you have Native teachers that run the courses?

8 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** No, the Alternative
9 School is a satellite of Sudbury Secondary School, so that
10 we have four (4) teachers that are from the Sudbury
11 Secondary School.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** We
13 certainly wish you good luck in the pursuit of your projects
14 and the objectives.

15 Thank you very much for sharing this with
16 us.

17 **BRIDGET ELLIOTT:** Thank you.

18 **MARTHA MACKENZIE:** Thank you.

19 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

20 Again, on behalf of Mr. Dussault and Mary Sillett, thank
21 you, Bridget and Martha.

22 Our next presenters are representing
23 Newberry House, and they are Mr. Sanford Cottrelle and
24 Wes Whetung.

25 They will be addressing:

1 (1)the prison system and Native Offenders, comparative
2 view on Native and non-Native
3 halfway houses;
4 (2)compensation for former residential school residents;
5 (3)accessible moneys to implement both cultural and
6 non-cultural programs for children
7 and youth;
8 (4)and lastly, strive to correct stereotypes of Native
9 people in regard to portrayals in
10 text-books.

11 I would like to take this opportunity
12 to remind those of you who were here at the beginning and
13 those of you who did come in late -- we do have translation
14 services, both in French and Ojibwa. If you feel
15 comfortable giving your presentation in Ojibwa, please
16 feel free to do so.

17 The presentations are 20 minutes in
18 length. I will intervene when your 20 minutes are up and
19 allow 10 minutes for discussion.

20 If you would like to begin (referring
21 to Wes Whetung).

22 **WES WHETUNG:** My name is Wes Whetung.

23 I work as the Executive Director at Newberry House.

24 I want to begin by expressing my thanks
25 that we are able to meet with the Commission today and

1 that we have this opportunity to express and to share some
2 of the ideas and dreams and concerns that we might have
3 in relation to the items that are listed on the
4 presentation.

5 I wanted mostly just -- I am here to
6 support Mr. Cottrelle in his presentation today and to
7 sort of introduce him and support him if there are any
8 questions that he may need help in answering.

9 But Sanford is a resident of Newberry
10 House, and he is moving out on his own today. He has been
11 through the House before, and he is quite familiar with
12 the prison system and how it affects Native offenders.

13 One of the things that we are hoping to
14 express today is -- part of our concern is the way the
15 Native offender is treated in the system, but also the
16 services that are available upon release, and how the
17 offender is actually treated by Native communities
18 themselves.

19 These are some of the things -- the
20 issues that are coming into contact in our work and we
21 are hoping to address them today.

22 Also, Newberry House is a halfway house,
23 co-ed, accessible for Native men and women released from
24 Federal Penitentiaries.

25 Our treatment is all based on Ojibwa

1 traditions, Ojibwa teachings, Ojibwa methods of healing
2 and regaining balance in our lives today.

3 So that is a little bit about where we
4 are coming from, and as I mentioned earlier, Sanford has
5 been through the prison system, and he has also been through
6 the Newberry System, and he has a wealth of knowledge,
7 a wealth of experience from where he is coming from.

8 I am looking forward as well to hearing
9 from him today.

10 Thank you.

11 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** As was said, my name
12 is Sanford Cottrelle. I am originally from the Chippewa
13 Sarnia Reserve in Ontario.

14 On most of these points, I am mainly
15 going to focus on the top two (2): prison system and Native
16 offenders; and comparative view on Native and non-Native
17 halfway houses.

18 The other points are points that other
19 residents at the House that they would just like to give
20 a brief statement on, but none of them showed up so ---

21 The prison system itself -- my primary
22 concern there is that there is not enough native people
23 involved in that system, not as guards, but in the social
24 work areas within those prisons.

25 There are a lot of people that go through

1 there, particularly from isolated regions who are very
2 shy and distrusting of anybody who is Non-Native. They
3 get into that system and they find it very hard to talk
4 to people or anything else. Some of them might make
5 progress on their own in changing their way of thinking
6 and their way of doing things, but the system does not
7 get to see it because of their shyness and their distrust
8 of they system of non-Native people. They are basically
9 shy of other Native people that are within that system.

10 Over time you get to see how some of them
11 come around and start talking a little more, talking about
12 themselves and trying to do something about themselves.

13 The majority of the people that are in
14 there spend a lot of time talking amongst themselves and
15 basically trying to help each other out. Most of them,
16 myself included, I did not trust. To many of the people
17 -- that I could -- even the social work system, psychology,
18 psychiatry, whatever -- you have to see all these people
19 while you are there, prior to your release. Not being
20 able to trust them and talk to them, you can't give a true
21 view of how you feel, and what you think may be best for
22 yourself.

23 It is quite disturbing, because there
24 is a lot of talented people in there who, if given the
25 opportunity, could change their lives around and come out

1 and be productive people within society.

2 You run into a lot of bias and prejudice
3 within the system, that even with your spiritual aspects,
4 you are laughed at, kidded -- not by the inmates, but by
5 the officials in charge. They even have those things
6 within that system. People have to fight and scratch their
7 way through. They have to literally get themselves put
8 into segregation in order to have those things within those
9 systems.

10 I personally encountered that type of
11 bias while I was there. Within a recovery program, I was
12 told not to partake that while I was in that recovery
13 program although I felt that it was aiding in my recovery
14 from drug and alcohol abuse. I was quite prepared myself
15 to give up any parole or anything else that may have been
16 coming my way.

17 We have that recovery program because
18 I have such a belief and faith in the ways of our people.

19 It was carried over into a Non-Native halfway house that
20 I was at.

21 It was quite strange for me to be there.

22 It was quite hard on me as an individual to come into
23 that environment where I was basically told that -- what
24 they tried to do, and they had done it with people who
25 had been there previously -- Native People -- was that

1 they could not even go to the local Native Centre. They
2 were banned from doing stuff like that, to focus on that
3 program, that particular program. They couldn't go to
4 Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, or anything of that nature.

5 I knew I was trouble right away when I
6 got into this place, because within two (2) weeks -- two
7 (2) or three (3) weeks of my arrival, the lady who ran
8 the place -- the Executive Director -- brought in some
9 flyers and left them on the table. Some of them had things
10 to do with the local Reserve, Six Nations, so I went over
11 and picked them up and started looking at them. This lady
12 right away that if I was to do anything with my life that
13 I would have to turn away from that stuff that I was doing,
14 this Native oriented stuff. That unless I wanted to chain
15 myself to a tree on a Reserve and live there for the rest
16 of my life, that I would have to put away all that stuff
17 and then integrate into society.

18 It was quite -- I just knew that it was
19 not going to be easy for me within that environment, and
20 the only thing that saved me from being in violation of
21 any of their rules or anything else was that my parole papers
22 stipulated that I had to have that interaction with the
23 Native community. Otherwise I would have been -- put
24 myself into a very negative atmosphere, but if it were
25 not for that -- I was given the opportunity to be able

1 to go to the local people, share my views and my concerns
2 -- but if I did not have that I would have quite likely
3 ended up back in prison. Mainly because I would not have
4 been able to abide by their rules and conditions that they
5 were trying to impose upon me.

6 It is my belief that if there were more
7 Houses, such as Newberry House, that were run by Native
8 People and for Native People, that we would have -- there
9 have been a number of success stories from Newberry House,
10 and there would be more successes in people turning their
11 lives around if there were more Houses like that.

12 Newberry House, as far as I know, is the
13 only Native halfway house in the Ontario Region. It serves
14 only federal inmates. There is nothing that I am aware
15 of that is comparable to this House for people in the
16 provincial systems, provincial run jails, reformatories.

17 Most have very little -- most prisons have very little
18 in regard to officials who are recognized as social work
19 and who can give counsel to Native People and report on
20 that progress to the other officials within those systems.

21 Basically, what residents at Newberry
22 House and myself are concerned with is seeing more input
23 into these types of things for Native People who are
24 incarcerated.

25 They also have concerns that a lot of

1 Elders and stuff, people who come there to put on workshops,
2 to help out in every way they can, are often not given
3 their honorariums. They have to wait some certain length
4 of time -- up to two (2) or three (3) months to receive
5 honorariums to compensate for the time they spent coming
6 to do their workshops or whatever they are doing within
7 those systems. Some of them do not get paid at all because
8 they lose the paperwork on it.

9 So it would be appropriate, I think, if
10 there were some moneys made available to help with the
11 work that these people do who go into those institutions.

12 As I say, most native people within those systems do not
13 integrate well with other people. They don't talk a whole
14 lot to other people, other than Native People, and even
15 then, some of them have a hard time. Even then it is hard
16 to make any progress at rehabilitation. They have to have
17 some kind of interaction and communication with others
18 to be able to do that.

19 These other points: compensation for
20 former residential school residents are compensation for
21 former residential school residents; accessible moneys
22 to implement both cultural and non-cultural programs for
23 children and youth; and strive to correct stereotypes of
24 Native people in regard to portrayals in text-books are
25 issues that other residents at Newberry House put forth,

1 but they did not really give me much to elaborate on in
2 regards to these issues.

3 My own personal feelings on accessible
4 moneys to implement both cultural and non-cultural
5 programs for children and youth and I am thinking about
6 my own Reserve, and it is the people themselves who are
7 reluctant to put moneys into these things for the youth
8 and children, for whatever reasons -- I don't know -- the
9 Band Council chooses not to do this, but they have a hard
10 time just to get any kind of program going for these kids
11 to keep them occupied, give them something to do, give
12 them something to be proud about themselves and their
13 peers.

14 The Band Council was approached just for
15 money to sponsor a hockey club, travel expenses and
16 whatnot, and the Band was quite reluctant to give them
17 anything at all. Perhaps they didn't have the funds
18 available or could not tap into something for such
19 programs.

20 This comes from the people at Newberry
21 House who felt that if they had more things to do as youths,
22 as kids growing up, that perhaps they might not have gone
23 the way that they did about trouble following them wherever
24 they went, and so on and so forth. If they had these types
25 of things in place, their personal lives might have been

1 a little different than what they have turned out to be.

2 That is about all I have to say on these
3 issues that are presented here.

4 Thank you.

5 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
6 would like to thank you, Sanford, for that. I had my hand
7 right on this little button here. I was just about to
8 beep you. You timed it right on.

9 I am sorry I did not mention at the
10 beginning -- Newberry House, what it is.

11 Although Wes Whetung did give a small
12 biography on it, however I will go into what I do have
13 here.

14 Newberry House is a Community
15 Residential Centre -- it is a halfway house -- engaged
16 in housing and re-establishment of Native people upon
17 release from federal penal institutions. Newberry House
18 has a ten-person capacity. They are open to both men and
19 women on Native ancestry.

20 Now, Mr. Dussault will take over.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Merci,
22 thank you.

23 Could you tell us the duration -- how
24 long you can stay in Newberry House?

25 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** At Newberry House?

1 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. Is
2 there a limit for when you come out of the federal
3 penitentiary?

4 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** I depends on the
5 type of release you are under. They take various releases:
6 there is a day parole, which is six (6) months to a year;
7 there is full parole; and there is mandatory release, or
8 whatever they call it, from the institutions.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So, let's
10 say you have day parole -- a six month day parole ---

11 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** You would have to
12 stay at Newberry House.

13 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** You could
14 stay there for six (6) months?

15 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** You are obligated
16 to stay there for that length of time, but if you are
17 released under something else, you can pretty well leave
18 any time you feel you want to. You just have to inform
19 a parole officer of your change of address.

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What is the
21 proportion of -- maybe this question should be addressed
22 to the Executive Director, but what is the proportion of
23 women and men using the services of the house?

24 **WES WHETUNG:** It is mostly men, probably
25 around 80 per cent men and 20 per cent women.

1 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Is there
2 a waiting list, or are there other halfway houses like
3 this one in Ontario?

4 **WES WHETUNG:** No, there are no other
5 halfway houses like this one in Ontario, exclusively for
6 Native People.

7 I do not think there are any other
8 halfway houses in Ontario for parolees that accepts both
9 men and women either. So being a co-ed halfway house is
10 -- we are the only one that practices that as well.

11 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Are you
12 financed by -- where does your budget come from -- the
13 Federal Government Solicitor General or ---

14 **WES WHETUNG:** Our primary source of
15 funding comes through the federal government, through
16 Correctional Services Canada. They are in the process
17 of altering their funding format, so there is going to
18 be some changes in the nature of the funding that we
19 receive. It will probably result in a cut back.

20 We also do community based fund raising
21 as well, on our own.

22 The house is also subsidized by a CMHC
23 mortgage subsidy, so those are the three (3) primary
24 sources of income.

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Again, I

1 suspect the need is greater than what is available. Do
2 you you have a waiting list or, to put it another way,
3 could you ---

4 **WES WHETUNG:** There are people in the
5 prison system that are waiting for release to come to
6 Newberry House. There are Native People in the prison
7 systems who, because of the delays within the system, they
8 opt out rather than try and pursue it. They just wait
9 until their release is mandatory. Quite often someone
10 who does that will then come to Newberry House by their
11 own means.

12 So if the system was more responsive at
13 the prison level to the needs -- to the requirements --
14 of the Native offender, then you would probably see a lot
15 more Native parolees. As it is, most people just wait
16 until the prison has to release them.

17 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And the
18 program offers a transition -- for example, you mentioned
19 that it was a condition to your parole to keep close contact
20 with the Band, so what are you doing during the day at
21 the moment, apart from today, of course?

22 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** At present I am not
23 doing anything, but I just completed the winter semester
24 at Cambrian College and I am going back in the Fall. Apart
25 from that, I am looking for Summer employment right now.

1 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Is there
2 a requirement that you keep close contact with the Band,
3 or -- I just want to clarify -- you said that you were
4 asked at first to relinquish or ---

5 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** That was at a
6 halfway house, a Non-Native halfway house in Brantford,
7 Ontario, prior to going to this one.

8 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Prior to
9 this one, yes.

10 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** I had it stipulated
11 -- I was one that requested to have the interaction with
12 Native community, through the parole board, and if that
13 was not in my papers, then the house I was at in Brantford
14 could have prevented me from interacting with the local
15 Native community, which is Six Nations.

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** We have
17 held many hearings in federal penitentiaries, for both
18 men and women, and we were struck by the fact that very
19 often going to the penitentiary was for young people --
20 a way to resume some connection with Elders and with
21 spirituality.

22 For example, we were in Stoney Mountain
23 a year ago, and there were 180 young Aboriginal People
24 serving sentences from two (2) to 25 years, out of maybe
25 450 people. Of course, the situation might vary from one

1 province to another, but it was quite striking that many
2 of the young people who had come from the Reserves or a
3 Northern community to the city and ended up in that
4 situation.

5 They were telling us that going to a
6 situation like that was a difficult situation, but also
7 because of changes that were made in the last few years,
8 an opportunity to meet with other young Aboriginals and
9 to resume some of the learning about their roots and
10 identity.

11 Did you -- I realize the situation
12 varies, but -- can you tell us a bit more about the situation
13 as you see it when you serve a sentence in a federal
14 penitentiary in Ontario, and move to the regular life
15 through a transition like a house like this. Obviously
16 you have mentioned two (2) different houses and the
17 differences that were there, but could you expand a bit
18 on the need for facilities like these and what difference
19 it makes to have them?

20 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** The Brantford
21 Region and this region are very different. They are mostly
22 Iroquois in the Brantford region, in that area, and they
23 would be better served if they had a half way house in
24 that area that incorporated Iroquois teachings for those
25 individuals coming out of the institutions.

1 I was fortunate in that I knew of
2 Newberry House, and that I have known Wes for a number
3 of years. I knew where to go to get away from the
4 environment that I was in. It seemed to me quite racist
5 -- attitudes that people had that were working there.
6 But if there were people who wanted to be closer to their
7 home and closer to their own people, then they would be
8 better served in having some kind of house like this
9 available to them, whether they be Iroquois, Cree or
10 whatever, to get their own teachings, their own Elders
11 that they can talk to and relate to, instead of -- this
12 is the only halfway house of this kind in Ontario, and
13 I think there is a greater need for them throughout Ontario
14 to serve the different groups of people, Cree, Iroquois,
15 Ojibwa.

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What kind
17 of stuff is there at Newberry House? Do you have
18 professional staff to make the follow up, or are they
19 probation officers mostly that ---

20 **WES WHETUNG:** The staff there is -- some
21 of us are professional. There are five (5) staff members
22 at Newberry House, including myself.

23 The programming -- the treatment that
24 we offer sort of covers -- well, it covers a lot of things.

25 The cultural aspect of things -- we have

1 a good staff there that is quite well versed and quite
2 knowledgeable in Ojibwa culture, and that kind of staff
3 training -- you can't get it from some training institute.

4 It is training, experience, it is acquired through a
5 person's own personal development of those things, and
6 it is a quality among staff. At Newberry House we really
7 value that.

8 The professional aspect of things --
9 whatever moneys we can access for training and different
10 types of training that we can get into. Whenever that
11 opportunity is there, we always go for that as much as
12 we can.

13 Some of the programming that we offer
14 is: drug and alcohol awareness; and abuse -- sexual,
15 physical, emotional. Some of the other things that we
16 offer are things like on regular basis we have sweat lodges,
17 we attend ceremonial gatherings on a regular basis,
18 anything that is related to a person's native identity
19 is accessible and available, and we encourage people to
20 pursue that.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.
22 Mary.

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I would
24 like to thank you both for coming.

25 As Mr. Dussault said, we have visited

1 many, many -- not many, but we have visited some federal
2 penitentiaries, and I guess you can't help but feel a bit
3 touched with the situation of the many people that are
4 there and you often wonder, what can you do. What can
5 you do to make sure that your children don't end up in
6 the situation where they are in conflict with the law,
7 what can you do with the people who are there, what is
8 necessary and what is necessary to make sure that once
9 people come out, that they don't have to go back.

10 I think that there has been many, many
11 studies done and somehow the answers are very difficult
12 to find, and I think that everything you have said has
13 been confirmed in some way or another by the many people
14 that we have met.

15 You were saying for yourself, you were
16 talking about how good a program this is. There should
17 be many more, and for yourself, you will probably be
18 pursuing some sort of education, but what happens to the
19 others? What will they do? Will they go back home? Can
20 they go back home? Will they stay out?

21 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** That is a hard one.

22 The majority, I think, if they don't go
23 somewhere where they can get away from the negative
24 influences in their lives, the majority of them will --
25 re-offend and then back -- end up back in the prison system.

1
2 In Brantford itself, I helped organize
3 a group for ex-offenders that the local people can go to
4 and they can sit and discuss whatever is on their mind
5 and try to get into a -- most of our problems are related
6 -- people who are in the prison system are related to either
7 drugs and alcohol and we try to encourage people to stay
8 away from that and to go out and just have some fun doing
9 things that you didn't -- just having fun without being
10 drunk or high or whatever is all we were trying to do at
11 the time. Just get a program together where we could
12 discuss things and organize some events to have some fun
13 without drugs and alcohol.

14 If they don't have anywhere to go, they
15 didn't really gravitate towards those that they had chummed
16 around prior to going to prison, and they would to back
17 and find the same people and go through the same experiences
18 again -- the majority.

19 That is why I think there should be more
20 houses such as Newberry House that focus on the Native
21 individuals, throughout Canada.

22 **WES WHETUNG:** I think it is
23 demonstrating a lack of services that Newberry House that
24 is geared specifically to Native men and women being
25 released from the federal penitentiaries.

1 As Sanford pointed out, we can't even
2 begin to offer services to those in the provincial systems,
3 and we hear from the clients at Newberry House all the
4 time, the need for preventative work: services for youth;
5 the comment made earlier that a lot of people make is that
6 this is where they first got exposed to some sense of their
7 identity, their culture was inside the prison system.
8 Why isn't that service being provided in the neighbourhood
9 communities, in the urban native communities? Why do our
10 young people have to wind up in prison in order to be able
11 to have contact with an Elder?

12 Those are some of the concerns and the
13 questions that we are continually responding to at Newberry
14 House. We are on the receiving end of all of this, and
15 we are hearing it from our clients, from the people who
16 have been through the system.

17 We are a sort of band-aid. That is all
18 we can be at Newberry House, and unless there are other
19 services developed within the communities, I think this
20 type of situation is just going to keep repeating itself,
21 where people are being pushed through the system and
22 nothing is happening.

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** It really
24 surprises me, because wherever we have gone, we have heard
25 that native populations in any penitentiary, prison or

1 federal is over represented and it strikes me really
2 strange that for the number of people that require the
3 service, there is only one. I think that is shameful,
4 personally speaking.

5 I just wanted to ask another question.

6 I think -- one thing that we have heard in our community,
7 and I am from the north, our communities are really, really
8 small -- usually what happens when people leave either
9 provincial facility or a federal facility, there choice
10 is usually to go home, and that has obvious reasons, the
11 language, their families, their friends.

12 But sometimes the communities are really
13 hard on them, and I think that is what I have seen. I
14 have always felt that our communities have some
15 responsibility to make sure to help our people, and I have
16 always been sort of shocked by that.

17 **WES WHETUNG:** There is a definite stigma
18 attached to any native person, I think of any Native person
19 who goes to prison. Returning to their home community,
20 nobody wants them there. We see that at Newberry House.
21 People tell us, "I can't go home." The charges or the
22 offenses are not particularly heinous or horrific, it is
23 just that the attitude is nobody wants you, and yet all
24 the problems that resulted in that person winding up in
25 the prison system, exist within that community.

1 The number of people that wind up in
2 prison, I think are just a small percentage. They are
3 the ones who got caught. For every person who is in prison,
4 there is probably 20 more who did not get caught. There
5 is no difference in the individual.

6 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** It seems to
7 us too, that one thing that we heard is that the majority
8 of the people who end up in those systems unfortunately
9 are a very high percentage, were either from -- they were
10 raised in institutions as children -- some sort, usually
11 Non-Native -- is that the scenario usually or ---

12 **WES WHETUNG:** Yes, there is a definite
13 pattern there. I would say that over 90 per cent of our
14 clients have been through Children's Aid or through
15 Residential Schools, or through what is now the Young
16 Offenders System, but what was previously Reform Schools,
17 things like that. A lot of times it is a combination of
18 all of those things. Being fostered out and winding up
19 in Reform Schools and they are just gradually working their
20 way through the system in one form or another.

21 So that pattern of the institutions
22 responding to the crisis, to the needs, is established
23 there and the community is removed from that, in that
24 process.

25 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you.

1 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
2 very much for coming and sharing with us your experience
3 and thoughts.

4 Thank you, both of you.

5 **WES WHETUNG:** Thank you.

6 **SANFORD COTTRELLE:** Thank you.

7 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

8 Again, thank you, Sanford, and professional, Wes Whetung.

9 Now, we will go to our next presenter.

10 His name is Michael Eshikibok. He is a student at
11 Laurentian University, and he is also a freelance Ojibwa
12 writer for the Sudbury Star, and he currently resides here
13 in Sudbury.

14 Michael, I have to remind you again of
15 the rules. We are running behind schedule. As it is,
16 it is now 4:52. I would like you give your presentation
17 and keep it to a minimum if you can, then it will be open
18 for discussion. You may proceed.

19 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** I shouldn't take
20 that long really, the facts pretty well speak for
21 themselves.

22 I am a third year student at Laurentian
23 University in the Native Human Services Program, or the
24 Native Social Work Program.

25 What I have done is I have taken a general

1 view of the Native population at first, giving you some
2 stats and facts and figures and I will get to my conclusion.

3 Status Indians are defined as those
4 registered under the Indian Act. In Canada, as of December
5 31, 1992, there were 533,461 Indians with 295,000 living
6 on the reserve and approximately 218,000 living off the
7 reserve.

8 According to the 1991 Census, those who
9 reported North American Indians, Metis, or Inuit origins
10 is double the above statistics. In 1993, there are
11 approximately 1,000,000 people who claim Aboriginal
12 ancestry.

13 (1) The Native population is much more
14 dependent on General Welfare Assistance
15 with an average of 32 per cent in
16 Northern Ontario and 23.6 per cent in
17 all of Ontario, compared to the general
18 population rates of 2.1 per cent in the
19 north and 2.2 per cent province wide.

20 (2) Native people make up approximately 8 per cent of the
21 population of Northern Ontario,
22 but Native women make up 58 percent
23 or 7 1/4 times higher than the
24 provincial inmate average.

25 Native males make up 32.8 per cent

1 of the male inmate population or
2 4 times higher than the provincial
3 average.

4 (3)The incidence of admission for liquor offenses for
5 Native women in the north is 42.9
6 per cent, 29.8 per cent for
7 non-native women and only 5.4
8 percent province-wide.

9 (4)According to 1985 statistics, the provincial rate for
10 admissions to detox centres per
11 100,000 was 660 province-wide but
12 4,818 for Kenora, 1,090 for Sudbury
13 and 1,052 for Thunder Bay. This
14 would mean that the alcohol
15 consumption is higher in the north.

16 (5)In general, Aboriginal people have lower levels of
17 education. In 1986, 41 per cent
18 of off-reserve Aboriginals, 15 and
19 over, had less than Grade 9 and 2
20 per cent had university degrees.

21 In comparison, 17 per cent of
22 Canadians had less than Grade 9
23 education in the same age bracket
24 and 10 per cent had university
25 degrees.

1 (6) The average income of off-reserve Aboriginal men in
2 1986 was 14,300, compared the
3 Canadian average for all men at
4 23,000. Aboriginal women earned
5 9,000 compared to the average for
6 all Canadian women at 14,000.

7 (7) The median income for Aboriginal women living
8 off-reserve was 7,200, while the
9 average for Canadian women was
10 10,800 in 1986.

11 New statistics are to be released by
12 Statistics Canada in the third quarter of 1993.

13 Because I write for the Sudbury Star,
14 this article will come out today, and if I may further
15 add to you that if you consider only the population eligible
16 to go to jail, 15 and over, male status Indians are 37
17 times as likely to go to jail, 12 times for non-status
18 Indians than non-natives. For native women the statistics
19 are worse; a status Indian women has 131 times and a
20 non-status or Metis 28 times more likely than the general
21 population, to be admitted to a penal institution.

22 Put another way, in Saskatchewan prison
23 has become more for young native men, what high school
24 or college means for everyone else - a general expectation.
25 Placed in an historical perspective, going to jail for

1 young native people is the equivalent of what residential
2 schools represented for their parents.

3 Native people are disproportionately
4 impoverished to the rest of Canada. There is a co-relation
5 between economic deprivation and crime.

6 What links native crime to poverty is
7 the process of colonization of indigenous people.

8 High rates of alcoholism and crime are
9 by-products of that system.

10 I will get to my conclusion.

11 Native people must control their own
12 lives through self-government. There is no other answer.
13 There are no other real alternatives.

14 My conclusion is the Indian Act does not
15 benefit Canadian Indians as statics show. It must be
16 replaced by something that makes the Native people
17 self-sufficient and equal within a Canadian Confederation.
18 Unless this is done, the stats will not change.

19 As Elijah Harper once said:
20 "To change the Indian Act is to prolong the suffering".

21
22 The Indian Act must be replaced by
23 legislation that allows the Aboriginal population to reach
24 their full potential as human beings like anybody else
25 in this great land called Canada. In other words, Native

1 people must be treated as equals.

2 What do Native people want? They want
3 their treaties honoured and Aboriginal rights respected.

4 That is all I have to say.

5 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** That
6 was well presented, Michael, thank you.

7 And now, Mr. Dussault will carry on.

8 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** Thank you.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

10 Of course, the Indian Act is the centre
11 of the work of this Commission, and centred to the life
12 of Indian People in this country.

13 We have been told over and over again
14 to do away with the Indian Act, and as you are saying,
15 that the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights should do the job
16 instead. The difficulty is that between the two
17 statements, there is probably a huge transition and many
18 Aboriginal People also are -- as long as this transition
19 is not known, are reluctant to move from the Indian Act,
20 because the Indian Act is something known -- offer
21 financing to the Band Council and on and on. They bring
22 me to more precise or more specific view as to what should
23 be done.

24 Also, communities are not at the same
25 level of readiness to move ahead, and so, sir, could you

1 try to be a bit more specific on the transition as to how
2 it should be done, because also, of course, we know that
3 there are all kinds of interpretations on treaties and
4 rights, and very often the judicial route is difficult
5 and long and at one point, political agreements are more
6 efficient ways to reach it, but could you tell us a bit
7 more.

8 What are your views about the Indian Act.

9 What should be the first step towards the goal that you
10 mentioned?

11 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** I think first of
12 all, those Bands who want to remain with the Indian Act
13 and who feel comfortable there should stay there as long
14 as they feel is necessary. Those Bands who want to move
15 ahead, should start moving ahead.

16 All Bands are different, and from one
17 end of the country to the other, the Bands are very diverse,
18 as so are the Indian Nations, which is, I guess, almost
19 the same thing.

20 Those that can move out of their
21 situation should be allowed to do so, and given the
22 recognition and the help that they need to do so that they
23 can begin to reach their full potential as human beings,
24 whereas now I really don't see that happening.

25 Native people need to know that they can

1 move ahead and get on with building their own economies
2 and I think first of all, starting with their own lives,
3 and start their own healing processes, because Residential
4 Schools have had a serious affect on our people as you
5 may know.

6 I believe the treaties should be
7 interpreted in a liberal, fair and a just manner, because
8 it is Canadian society who will benefit in the long run
9 when Native people get their education or their university
10 degrees to help make Canada a better country.

11 There are people who don't like the way
12 things are now, and as you just heard from a couple of
13 other gentlemen here, there is a great deal of
14 dissatisfaction with the way things are.

15 We have a high incarceration rate, high
16 poverty rates. We are leading in all the wrong fields
17 and it is not right and it is not just.

18 So I think the problem has to lie in
19 changing the Indian Act so that Native people can begin
20 to take their own destiny into their own hands, rather
21 than being told by Ottawa what they are going to have to
22 do, or not being allowed to do it.

23 Like I said, certainly some Bands may
24 not want to move from the Indian Act. We have to realize
25 that social change is slow and it will take time to change.

1 It is not going to be done overnight.

2 The problem remains is that we have to
3 run our own lives and do the things that we have to do,
4 and I don't think Canadians should have to be scared of
5 that. In fact, they should be proud of it. If legislation
6 and whatever else has to be done is put into place, so
7 that the people really can be proud of their land and
8 Non-Natives as well. There is no exact answer, but because
9 the process is always ongoing and everybody is at different
10 stages, but certainly I think most people would agree that
11 treaties should be believed up to, because it is not us who
12 is being watched. It is the government that has to live
13 up to the responsibilities as the people who are in charge.

14 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** At the
15 moment, one of the difficulties that the benefit flows
16 from the situation of whether the person is on the Reserve
17 or not, and there are some benefits when people leave the
18 Reserve, the difficulty also with the Indian Act are the
19 controls that flow from the fact that there is a huge sum
20 of moneys that are transferred to the Reserves, to the
21 Band Councils, and it brings us back to economic
22 development and a real measure of economic
23 self-sufficiency.

24 Your proposal, implicit, is that if
25 treaties were honoured and Aboriginal rights recognized,

1 that will be sufficient to give self-sufficiency
2 economically? Is that what you have in mind?

3 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** Well, right now we
4 have to have access to the rest of the system, just like
5 any other Canadian and right now I believe that is being
6 hampered. We have to make our own decisions relative to
7 our own situation.

8 Does that answer your question?

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Well, I am
10 just trying to understand.

11 The White Paper in '69, that was seen
12 as infamous by the majority of Aboriginal People was doing
13 away from the Reserve system, but with no counterpart for
14 safeguard of cultures, identity and on and on.

15 One of the difficulties we face as a
16 Commission is that many, many people are saying on one
17 hand we should do away with the Indian Act, we should be
18 given the freedom to live our lives, to take some of the
19 risk and the benefits, but also on the other hand, people
20 are telling us that the fiduciary duty, responsibility
21 of the federal government should stay as a safeguard and
22 it is seen by many as a contradiction.

23 Is there a point where -- because
24 self-sufficiency and self-government -- if it was to flow
25 to the end and give a real economic independence, then

1 it could mean some kind of -- it will have a strong impact
2 on the fiduciary duty.

3 There is a kind of paradox there and we
4 wrestling with that as with many people in this country.

5 What are your views on that?

6 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** I am not sure where
7 that point is of course, myself is, and I am not sure if
8 anybody does, but I know that in the James Bay Agreement,
9 the government has not built up to their responsibility
10 in fulfilling that, so the Native people have historically
11 given the government the fiduciary responsibility or the
12 trust responsibility to make sure that everything is as
13 equal as possible, and I think that is what has to be kept
14 in mind.

15 A major point that has to be made is the
16 consultation process that has to be ongoing and open.
17 That is my conclusion, and there is a paradox between being
18 responsible and on the other hand, the government letting
19 go.

20 I am not sure where that point is where
21 -- or at which point the natives can take over their own
22 lives -- but I know it can be done, and it has to be done.

23 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

24 We could discuss this issue, because it
25 is so centred for many hours, but I would like to thank

1 you for your contribution to this point, and if you have
2 additional views to share with us later in the process,
3 in the coming weeks or months, I would be happy to hear
4 from you.

5 **MICHAEL ESHIKIBOK:** Thank you.

6 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

7 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

8 Michael was our last presenter before our dinner break.

9 Michael, thank you for your
10 presentation.

11 It is now 5:10 and I am starving and I
12 am sure most of you are. Some of you I am sure have taken
13 a nicotine fit as well. So let's break for dinner and
14 meet back here at 6:00.

15 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

16 --- Upon recessing at 5:10 p.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at

18 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

19 We're ready to begin our after-dinner session. We'll
20 start with Adrian Abel who is a youth from Sudbury and
21 he's joined by -- I'm sorry, I don't know your name.

22 **ANDREA CHUSAN:** Andrea Chusan.

23 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

24 Andrea?

25 **ANDREA CHUSAN:** Yeah.

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

2 Okay. I understand you'll be touching on the importance
3 of education?

4 **ANDREA CHUSAN:** M'hmm.

5 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Drug
6 and alcohol abuse, suicide and summer employment?

7 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yeah.

8 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

9 You're free to take the time that you need.

10 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I feel that these issues
11 are most important nowadays. Suicide is going up. I know
12 a lot of people who have committed suicide. Just lowers
13 our chances of survival in the future, with all our youth
14 killing themselves today.

15 Education, lack of education with
16 our youth not finishing school. You know, I'd like to
17 see counsellors at schools where there are native students,
18 like, at universities and just anywhere where there's
19 native people. 'Cause I went to a school where there was
20 -- high school, and there was no native counsellor there
21 and, like, there was about eight of us, eight students
22 that went there and you know, there's like prejudice and,
23 you know, if we had someone to talk to, you know, I'd feel
24 better about, like, who I was.

25 We need more native counsellors to

1 encourage the native youth to finish school. They got
2 a good program set up at Sudbury Secondary, the council
3 they have there, 'cause they provide -- they give
4 opportunities to join the council and to be a part of the
5 school 'cause I know I didn't feel a part of school that
6 I was goin' to, you know.

7 We need more recreation activities
8 -- more recreational activities. Just so a youth coming
9 right off the reserve, you know, they don't know too many
10 people. All they really got is, like, the people they
11 moved up -- if they're runaways, you know, they don't know
12 nobody and it's contributing to suicide.

13 Drug and alcohol abuse is high too.

14 I think the bottom line is we need more recreational
15 activities for the youth to help them. Counsellors,
16 professional counsellors like our people, train our
17 people.

18 **LANA PERRIN:** Employment.

19 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Employment. Summer
20 employment. I guess that ties in with education, with
21 lack of education. Summer employment -- jobs set up for
22 youth. The Friendship Center has a good -- with the Little
23 Beavers, like, they provide employment for some native
24 youth, but there are still a lot of others that are, you
25 know, still out of work and on welfare.

1 With recreation I could see weekend
2 trips set up, like going out to say Birch Island or
3 wherever, and have teachings, Elders teach -- just outings.
4 Just lots of recreation I'd say. Get away from the city,
5 and, like, just to be with our people, you know, 'cause,
6 like, a lot of -- I find that a lot of people -- a lot
7 of native people youth don't feel like they're part of
8 the city or they're part of society I guess. That's what
9 I'd like to see.

10 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Do
11 you have anything to add?

12 **MR. CHUSAN:** No, I don't.

13 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**
14 Okay. I'd like to thank you for your input. Mr. Dussault
15 will direct any questions he may have.

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** I'd like
17 to start with asking you a bit about what you're doing.
18 Are you students?

19 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yes. I go to Cambrian in
20 Electronics.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. And
22 you live in residence or what's the setup for ---

23 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I got an apartment over
24 at Mildon (PH). In Sudbury.

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** In

1 Sudbury. Both of you?

2 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yes.

3 **LANA PERRIN:** Yes.

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And when
5 you say that many students don't feel they're part of the
6 city, or more largely of society as such, how long have
7 you been here in Sudbury?

8 **ADRIAN ABEL:** About 10 years.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So you're
10 studying all the time or is your family living here?

11 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So you're
13 talking about a situation where you're really part of the
14 city. You didn't move from somewhere else to -- I just
15 want to make sure that the situation is a bit different
16 when students are coming from their communities moving
17 to the city for the sake of studying for the first time
18 or -- so are you talking for -- representing those students
19 also?

20 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yeah. Just 'cause
21 they're so withdrawn I guess. I know a lot of people that
22 are withdrawn and they don't like joining school teams
23 or, you know, they just, like, go to school, go home, watch
24 T.V. or whatever they do, do their homework, and then --
25 like, I try to talk to some of them, you know. But some

1 of them are so just withdrawn, I don't know, like, they
2 have to talk to somebody -- they need to talk to somebody,
3 you know.

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Is it
5 because they're afraid or they don't feel at ease or welcome
6 or ---

7 **ADRIAN ABEL:** It's a lack -- I think a
8 lack of self-confidence, yeah.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** A lack of
10 self-confident?

11 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yeah.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And apart
13 from the Friendship Center is there organizations that
14 try to give some support to the students, Aboriginal
15 students in this city?

16 **ADRIAN ABEL:** The Multicultural Center
17 I guess.

18 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What is
19 your field of study again?

20 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Electronics.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:**
22 Electronics. And is it the same? No?

23 **LANA PERRIN:** Business.

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What is
25 your business. What are your plans afterwards when you're

1 finished?

2 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Finished School?

3 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. What
4 do you plan to do?

5 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I'd like to have -- I'd
6 like to go back to the reserve and help any way I could
7 with computers or whatever that they need, or set up
8 recreational things for people down there.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** You
10 stressed the lack of facilities, recreational --

11 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yes. Yes.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** --
13 facilities. Is it true for all students or specifically
14 you were talking about the situation in the city?

15 **ADRIAN ABEL:** In the city here. See,
16 you try to get a gym for volleyball or a rink for hockey
17 or whatever, everything is all taken up. I'd like to see
18 a building go up specifically for native youth where they
19 can just go and be -- belong somewhere, you know?

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. And
21 how many students are there in the city?

22 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Approximately -- I don't
23 know -- about I'd say close to around 500.

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And when
25 you mentioned the drop-out rate -- what do you see as the

1 most -- well, if there was one single measure that could
2 be taken, what would it be?

3 **ADRIAN ABEL:** One single measure?

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. To
5 keep youth in school. Is it a question of motivation?
6 They don't feel they will get a job after or is it a problem
7 with the teaching or ---

8 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I know it ties in with
9 being a part of your people. A sense of belonging. That
10 will help. Counsellors to motivate them.

11 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What kind
12 of support from your point of view have the students from
13 their parents?

14 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I beg your pardon?

15 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Are
16 students supported by their parents or what kind of --
17 do you feel that young people who are studying get the
18 support of their parents to keep on?

19 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I can only speak for
20 myself.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes.

22 **ADRIAN ABEL:** My parents supported me
23 a lot. Told me to finish school. I could only speak for
24 myself, so ---

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What is the

1 situation of Aboriginal people in residences or ---

2 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Residences?

3 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. On
4 campus or in college.

5 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I think it's a matter of
6 getting up and going to school.

7 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes.

8 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Getting up for the 8:00
9 o'clock class. That Monday morning 8:00 o'clock class.
10 Being motivated to go.

11 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** So it
12 brings us back to the motivation.

13 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yeah.

14 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And to see
15 the purpose of doing it, completing it.

16 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Oh yeah.

17 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And what
18 is lacking? Is it a clear view that there are jobs and
19 that ---

20 **ADRIAN ABEL:** Yeah, that's -- yeah.
21 Jobs. There's not too many jobs right now. I've been
22 looking and, like, career-wise for my career, electronics,
23 you know, I haven't really seen that much. Right now
24 anyways.

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** You have

1 friends that joined you. Do you have anything additional
2 to share with us? Some of your concerns?

3 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

4 Maybe you could introduce yourselves first and then give
5 your views or comments on the issues that you feel that
6 are facing native youth today.

7 **STEVEN HALL:** I think a major issue
8 facing native youth is addictions.

9 **MARK SEABROOK:** Addictions?

10 **STEVEN HALL:** Addictions. Some youth
11 have problems. I think that creates a lot of problems.
12 Even for students.

13 **MS. DISHNIKAS (PH):** I'd like to say
14 something. My name is Wasayabeniquoi Dishnikas (PH) I'm
15 going to say something and I'm pissed off because it's
16 -- I know a lot of young native youth are having a hard
17 time and there's a lot of us that have addiction problems
18 and drop-out rates. But the real reasons of this aren't
19 being faced and that's 'cause we're always being put on
20 the back burner. Nobody listens to us when we try to say
21 something, so why should we even do anything when nobody's
22 listening to us? So many adults these days are so
23 concerned that political issues that are now -- and they're
24 trying to deal with it and they're not trying to train
25 us in the proper way to take care of it when the time comes

1 for us.

2 And as far as addiction, there are
3 no services to help us. I know going through my own
4 personal problems through addictions there is nowhere for
5 me to go. The only place I had to go was down South and
6 -- because there was no way for me to get funding to go
7 down there. I had to face it all by myself. I had to
8 seek help on my own. Luckily I was able to find good strong
9 people to help me and take me in, but that was the only
10 way. And not all young people have the same influence
11 as I had when I was growing up. There's not enough help
12 out there for us. We need more help. We're always being
13 put on the back burner and whenever -- I just heard about
14 this this afternoon, about this whole thing about you want
15 to hear from young people. There's only -- there's a few
16 that were here. We don't get told about these things.
17 And when we do, well, we have an hour to speak our mind
18 and there's so many of us out there. When surveys are
19 being done we're never asked. And we're the ones that
20 are going to have to deal with these problems.

21 That's what I have to say.

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Can I just
23 say something?

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes.

25 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you

1 very much. Thanks a lot. I did want to say that within
2 our mandate I guess we're trying to be very very respectful
3 of the fact that we have to involve young people and in
4 most communities -- like, this is our -- I know a number,
5 maybe 1,500 presentation or hearing, but we've gone to
6 close to 76 communities and in many of those communities
7 we've gone to schools, we've gone to high schools, we've
8 gone to Friendship Centers. I know that we've gone to
9 social service centers where they have responsibility for
10 youth. Within the Commission we have two or three people
11 primarily designated to look into the issues of youth.
12 And I think wherever we've gone people have definitely
13 recognized what you've said. That the young people are
14 our future and we must involve them. I think you're right
15 that sometimes we don't do as good a job as we should do
16 on it. But I'm glad that you're all here.

17 I'm going to ask a question with
18 respect to addictions. If you -- for example, if you have
19 a problem with addictions where do you go? In this area
20 where do you have to go?

21 **STEVEN HALL:** This evening there's a
22 healing circle at the Friendship Center and it's A.A.
23 Principles, but medicines are used. And that's what I'm
24 downtown here for and I just -- I just stopped in here
25 for the presentation -- but we're across the street, and

1 in regard to youth speaking, we're not really in touch
2 with the youth circle at the Friendship Center. But we're
3 on the right road. We're on the right road. But I think
4 the addiction problem is a major problem. As well as the
5 suicide rate up north.

6 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Yes, it
7 is. It's very very high. So with respect to the suicide
8 problem one of the things that we've been asking is if
9 you identify the issue we'd like to know, you know, what
10 your ideas are on solutions.

11 **STEVEN HALL:** Spiritual growth for
12 these people. The right teachers; the right helpers; the
13 right circles.

14 **MS. DISHNIKAS:** I'd like to say that I
15 feel it's very good what you're trying to do in inviting
16 the young people here and going to different high schools
17 and things like that, but the majority of young people
18 in the Sudbury area from what I have seen have no interest
19 for what you're doing. And we're on the streets. We're
20 dying out there. And maybe if you would come and help
21 us off the streets and maybe give us a warm meal every
22 now and then. Sometimes it's offered but the meals that
23 are offered are far from nutritious. Maybe if you look
24 in your backyard once in a while and if you see a young
25 person there maybe offer some conversation to them because

1 high school -- there's no young people in high school
2 anymore. You might see them but they might be there
3 physically but mentally they're elsewhere.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Well, if we
5 wanted to talk to the young kids you're saying that we
6 shouldn't only go to the schools, that we should go to
7 -- I think we should go to the schools sometimes. I mean,
8 usually they're -- you know, if you're 13, 14, I think
9 you drop out when you're 15, if you can drop out, around
10 there, so you have some kids in school. And you're
11 suggesting as well that we have to go outside, you know.
12 There are other places?

13 **MS. DISHNIKAS:** Yeah. Even starting on
14 the elementary level to the people who are still -- before
15 they are reaching that time of their life where they're
16 going through those identity crises. That's the time that
17 you should let them know that there's places they can go
18 once they reach that time, they need help.

19 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I think too
20 that the reality is it's much easier to have -- like, for
21 example, a dialogue with someone your age than it is smaller
22 children. We've gone to the schools with, you know,
23 children who are probably eight or nine and I guess their
24 interests are very very different than are nine, 10, 11,
25 12, 13, 14 years old. So I think that, you know, if we've

1 had fruitful dialogue it's been with the 13-year-old and
2 over age category.

3 **MS. DISHNIKAS:** Yeah, well, even
4 letting them know that you're gonna be there is a lot of
5 help too.

6 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I was
7 wondering: in terms of the -- you know, we hear a lot
8 about the need for prevention with respect to drugs and
9 alcohol, the need for much public education with respect
10 to suicide. And we all know that in some communities there
11 are public education and preventative programs, but how
12 effective are they? I mean ---

13 **STEVEN HALL:** A program in school?

14 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Like, any
15 kind of programs, in or outside of schools.

16 **MARK SEABROOK:** I'd just like to say
17 something about that. My name is Mark Seagram and I come
18 from the Spanish River Band of Ojibwa. Something about
19 that -- not last winter but the winter before I worked
20 for the Spanish River Band and it was a Ministry of Health
21 project and it was health promotion. So anyways,
22 basically the program was four months and I went to the
23 reserve to work with the kids over there. Now, that's
24 where I come from, and they're having a lot of problems
25 over there with their kids. Just this past winter a few

1 of them committed suicide and accidents and drop-outs,
2 all this sort of thing.

3 So anyways, what happened was, one
4 of the things that we did there was try to get them into
5 art and music and they have a big center there and they
6 were allowed to use the place two nights a week. The rest
7 of the time it was booked for other things like bingos
8 and stuff. So anyways, so during those two nights a week
9 we came upon a project to hopefully decorate the place
10 and it was lucky that there were funds available. What
11 we ended up doing was making eight four-by-eight-foot
12 murals acrylic painting on plywood, giving the kids a
13 chance to work together as a group and do something
14 artistic, even though there weren't too many artists in
15 the group. But it brought the group together.

16 So what we did was we did the
17 paintings and by the end of the program most of them were
18 finished -- there was a few that weren't -- but anyways,
19 after the end of the program I had to leave and go work
20 someplace else and a couple of things happened. One:
21 the community never took the time to hang up the paintings,
22 so they're still sitting in the closet over there. I just
23 wrote a letter to the Chief and I said "What's the
24 problem up there?" and never heard anything back. So as
25 far as being rejected by the older people there, that was

1 a really bad blow to those kids.

2 The other thing, because I took off
3 they thought that I had abandoned them. So I was hearing,
4 you know, six months later "What happened here? You were
5 just getting started." And I said "Well, that's how they
6 ran the program. That's how they worked it." So I think
7 that -- something like that where, you know, arts and music
8 and that sort of thing, get a place like that where they're
9 pretty much out of the city and they're out of -- they're
10 pretty isolated. Something like that. A long program,
11 you know, something like that sort of thing would be more
12 helpful than something as minor as 20-some weeks, you know.

13 I think that if somehow they could -- like, if there was
14 someone specific to them and not general, you know.
15 There's a lot of people that work for them but it's not
16 specific and if they had somebody that was for them, I
17 think that would be useful. Somebody they could learn
18 to trust and that sort of thing, because we were getting
19 a good thing going and then it had to finish.

20 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** You
21 mentioned earlier that, you know, like, adults in this
22 society aren't serious enough about trying to get the views
23 of the young people and I'm wondering: what are the best
24 ways to get the views of young people known? I remember
25 when we were in Winnipeg we, you know, like, people were

1 determined to show us how people really lived and they
2 took us through the streets and we met people, but you
3 know, people don't just go up and talk to you. I mean,
4 you have to have some sort of relationship. You ask them,
5 you know, "Hi, how are you?". Some people are withdrawn,
6 like you were saying. It's not always easy to talk to
7 people who don't want to talk to you. So I think that,
8 you know, I'd like to hear -- if you have any suggestions
9 as to how we can involve and hear from youth.

10 **ADRIAN ABEL:** I think you should hit
11 them -- native youth anyways -- when they're in elementary
12 school and tell them, you know, where to go. Like she
13 was saying.

14 **STEVEN HALL:** I heard you speak earlier
15 about the reservations and the school and people were
16 taking off to the missionary schools and is anyone
17 responsible for that? Like, that affects people's lives,
18 children, and the shame people feel -- and it's affected
19 my life and it's affected a lot -- many many lives of people
20 'cause of the shame they feel and the youth 'cause they
21 don't understand. And their parents are ashamed because
22 their culture was taken away. Is anyone responsible for
23 that?

24 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Well, I
25 think wherever we've gone we've heard about the Indian

1 residential schools. It's clear to us that the hurt that
2 people feel is very very deep. It's affected many many
3 generations and people are still talking about it. In
4 some communities there are healing projects, but I think
5 that when we've crossed the country people said there must
6 be -- they've suggested different options. People said,
7 you know, the churches must apologize, the government must
8 apologize, there must be different kinds of compensation.

9 So it has been discussed and ---

10 **STEVEN HALL:** No one's apologized
11 though.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I guess
13 some groups -- some churches have, yes. Actually, we just
14 heard from the Oblate Fathers in Montreal and they came
15 forward to the Commission. They made a presentation and
16 we asked them, you know, we said the Indian residential
17 school is a legacy that -- it's a shameful one, but it's
18 in Canadian history. What responsibility do you feel --
19 what role do you have to play in addressing this wrong?

20 And they talked about what they've done. They've
21 apologized. They're willing to become involved in any
22 kind of healing initiative that's proposed by Aboriginal
23 communities. So some groups have.

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** In fact,
25 may churches did so in the last few years, but again, once

1 it's done it doesn't change your life and the situation
2 that is ---

3 **STEVEN HALL:** It would ease a lot of pain
4 for a lot of people.

5 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes. And
6 it's to get out of the situation where people have been
7 put through a system and -- so it brings us back to not
8 only the question of healings, but the real day-to-day
9 problems that are faced by young Aboriginal people in the
10 cities in particular. And on reservations for other
11 reasons. So these issues are the most important ones and
12 jobs, employment, some kind of motivation to see that there
13 is a purpose to life and to putting the efforts to go through
14 the course and project and whatever. We realize that it's
15 not easy and many people, older people, keep telling us
16 self-government will enable this to happen, but many many
17 young people are not there really to follow suit and we
18 feel that education, we're told over and over, that
19 self-government will be for the young people to really
20 fill the jobs that will be there and on and on. But it
21 seems to be some kind of distant more theoretical things
22 than the link with the reality, that represent reality
23 is not ---

24 **STEVEN HALL:** Those things will happen
25 eventually.

1 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: Yes.

2 STEVEN HALL: I'm not too aware of the
3 politics of it all, but I know at times funding is not
4 available for everyone.

5 CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT: We realize
6 that.

7 COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT: Yes, that's
8 right.

9 LANA PERRIN: You talk about how the
10 system in the residential schools has affected until even
11 this generation, what a big impact it has. But the truth
12 in reality is is that the system really hasn't changed
13 that much. Physical and the spiritual torment might not
14 be there as strongly, but the emotional and the mental
15 torment is still there. Even by our own peers, teachers.
16 You can't deny that -- I know there has been a lot more
17 acceptance of native courses in schools and even in
18 secondary schools and that's really good to see, but still
19 the respect isn't there like it should be. And I'm not
20 gonna put it upon your shoulders to change that, but perhaps
21 if you can in some way help us influence respect and show
22 them that it is really a respectable way.

23 COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT: You know,
24 as a parent, I have two children, I have four step-children,
25 I have six children. And when I hear a lot of people

1 talking, you know, even my age and other people and, you
2 know, talk about what they want for the future, I think
3 all of us want a good future for our children because we
4 love them. And we want that kind of future for many
5 children and I think when I hear a lot of adults speak
6 I think they do it that way sometimes.

7 Unfortunately, our record
8 hasn't been that good, you know. We don't try to exclude,
9 but it happens and I think that we've made a conscious
10 effort in this process to involve children, or to involve
11 young people. And if they have anything to say, you know,
12 we welcome them.

13 **ADRIAN ABEL:** What are you going to do
14 with all this information that you're gathering? What
15 are you going to do?

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** That's a
17 very good question. This is the third time that we visit
18 the country, all the provinces and the territories. Each
19 time we produce -- we have a lot of information and we
20 try to boil down the information in books like these that
21 give a summing up of the main thrust of what is said to
22 us, what is the message. And to see the kind of consensus
23 that there is about the problems, but also elements of
24 solutions and the purpose of this Commission is to
25 recommend to the various governments, chiefly to the

1 Federal Government, change for the future.

2 **ADRIAN ABEL:** So you're just like an
3 advisory board?

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Well, in
5 fact we are not the government. We are an independent
6 body. We have an advisory capacity, we're going to
7 recommend, but ---

8 **ADRIAN ABEL:** So it doesn't necessarily
9 mean they're going to listen to you?

10 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** There's no
11 guarantee. But the way we are proceeding we hope to
12 benefit from experience of others and to really this time
13 come up with recommendations that will be understood, not
14 only by Aboriginal people, but also with the larger public.
15 We feel also that the time is right for a change and we
16 would have done it 10 years ago -- it would have been
17 different so it's not being unfair to many groups that
18 preceded us but this is the first Royal Commission. We
19 have all the aspects that touch the life of Aboriginal
20 people in this country and the life of everybody in this
21 country under our mandate and we -- of course, the only
22 thing we can say is that we're going to put -- we are putting
23 the best efforts to come up with practical solutions and
24 that will change things. We are interested in the
25 political issues but we are as much interested in the living

1 conditions of Aboriginal peoples, women, youth, older
2 people, adults who have to wrestle with raising families.
3 And also the relationship with non-Aboriginal people.
4 Racism is a major major factor in this country.

5 So in putting some effort in this
6 Commission you're helping us certainly to do a better job.

7 That being said: there's no guarantee. It's like when
8 you study, there's no absolute guarantee that you're going
9 to get a job but you're more likely to do so if you pursue
10 and go through and get the will to have things done and
11 changed. So that's the situation with us. And with the
12 kind of efforts people are putting in the Commission, and
13 hope, we feel that we're more likely to bring some changes
14 this time. There is the support of all the three Federal
15 parties at the House of Commons when the Commission was
16 created. It was unanimous that it was deeply needed and
17 once and for all this time people wanted to -- not only
18 to go in a piecemeal fashion, but really try to look at
19 the picture in a holistic fashion. See the relationship
20 between the problems, the issues, and also the solutions.

21 **STEVEN HALL:** You say the last three
22 times. What happened to the last two times that you did
23 it?

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Well, we
25 started a year ago. We visited all the provinces and the

1 territories, northern communities from east to west,
2 north, south, for three months. Then we published a
3 document that was called **Framing the Issues** where we listed
4 the basic questions that were raising from what we heard.
5 And we had another round of hearings in
6 October/November/December and we published this document,
7 **Focusing the Dialogue**, saying that we should work on four
8 touchstones: healing, self-sufficiency,
9 self-determination through self-government within Canada
10 in order to get a new relationship based on values and
11 principles that would be acceptable, and chaired by both
12 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, like, respect --
13 you mentioned pride -- reciprocity, it has to go both ways,
14 and on and on. And we're testing that with not only
15 Aboriginal people but non-Aboriginal people, because we
16 know at the end to bring change our recommendations will
17 have to be seen as part of what Aboriginal people --
18 Aboriginal people will have to recognize themselves in
19 them, but also the larger public will have to see that
20 it is in the interest of everybody to forge ahead and
21 implement them.

22 So we are completing until the end
23 of June this third round of hearings. We are testing ideas
24 between each of them because we want to enter into a genuine
25 dialogue. We feel that solutions from the top -- we know

1 they are not working and we want to develop them from
2 communities and in meetings like these. So we'll resume
3 in the fall with mainly the non-Aboriginal people to make
4 sure that we have all the spectrum and we'll put this
5 together with the result of research program to develop
6 solutions that we're going to recommend to the various
7 governments.

8 **ADRIAN ABEL:** We need to get people --
9 native people in the government to see that this will
10 happen. Stuff like what you're doing now.

11 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Yes.

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I just want
13 to say that when we first -- when this Commission first
14 was created, you know, we were proud of the fact that we
15 have seven Commissioners, four of them are Aboriginal.
16 If you look all throughout history, there's never been
17 a commission, especially on Aboriginal peoples, where
18 there's been a majority of Aboriginal people. We have
19 a Inuit, that's myself -- Inuit is singular of Inuit --
20 we have George Erasmus, he's a Dene (PH). We have Viola
21 Robinson, she's a Micmac and we also have Paul Chartrand.

22 And one of the things that we felt
23 was very very important was that, you know, if we do our
24 work we must do it right. And if we left anything, what
25 we should do is make sure that as many native people as

1 possible who were qualified would be hired to work with
2 the Commission. So we have maybe over 90 permanent staff,
3 most of them are different Aboriginal peoples from all
4 across Canada.

5 We also felt too that with, you
6 know, there must be other ways of doing things right and
7 we -- and when we go to communities and have public hearings
8 we hire people who are from the communities who give us
9 the best advice in terms of, you know, how we should
10 advertise, who we should invite in order to hear from youth,
11 in order to hear from women, in order to hear from Elders.

12 I'm not going to go into all the things that we do because,
13 you know, the time is limited, but I would like to say
14 that we are planning to have a round-table on youth. As
15 I said earlier, we do have -- how many people is? -- three
16 people at the office working specifically on youth.
17 They're young people. One, Sheila Lumsden, she's a
18 contact person, but if I could get, you know, one of your
19 addresses -- I'm sure that one of you could contact --
20 all of you -- or do I need to take all your addresses so
21 that you could be informed of the round-table if you're
22 interested? I mean, it would be a good forum for youth
23 to exchange ideas, to have input into the future.

24 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Unless
25 there are other comments ---

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Are
2 there any other comments or questions?

3 **STEVEN HALL:** I think it's still a power
4 struggle.

5 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** What's a
6 power struggle?

7 **STEVEN HALL:** The issues. And the
8 people controlling government. People are still being
9 controlled by ---

10 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** You're
11 trying to change that and we're trying to change that.
12 We're all trying to change that.

13 **STEVEN HALL:** It's a job to you people.
14 To most people. It's a life to us.

15 **ADRIAN ABEL:** They're making cutbacks,
16 right? With the Friendship Centers. A lot of people,
17 like, need these Friendship Centers to have a place in
18 the city. And without the Friendship Centers, you know,
19 like, I don't think I want to finish high school or go
20 on to college 'cause the Friendship Center has given me
21 and a lot of other people support.

22 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Yes. The
23 Friendship Centers are a very valuable service. Yes.
24 Sure.

25 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** If

1 there are no other questions or comments? I'd like to
2 thank you all for coming out. I urge you to keep speaking
3 up for your future. Even though at times it may seem
4 fruitless, don't stop. Thank you.

5 Again, welcome to everyone that's
6 just joined us for the evening. I would like to remind
7 you that there are translation services available for you.

8 If you wish to speak in the Ojibwa language you are more
9 than welcome to. French language services are offered.

10 There is literature in the back for those of you who wish
11 to take home literature on the Commission.

12 We will be breaking at 7:55. The
13 ground rules as established earlier, 20 minutes for the
14 presenter and 10 minutes for a discussion period.

15 Because we have a few minutes,
16 seeing how the youth group wrapped up a bit earlier,
17 Margaret Jackson would like to make a few comments on native
18 family support. Margaret?

19 **MARGARET JACKSON:** Hello,
20 Margaret Ziibikwe is my Indian name and I am from Makomakong
21 (PH). The issue that I want to bring up is the family
22 support. Now, I'll be very brief on this because I don't
23 have a 20-minute speech prepared.

24 The issue that I want to bring up
25 is the family support. I am a mother of three and I am

1 a counsellor for Anishnabaseuk native children and their
2 families. I've been a worker with these people, with the
3 Anishnabaseuk in southern Ontario and recently in northern
4 Ontario here. Our Anishnabaseuk families are very
5 unhealthy. The term used for that nowadays is
6 dysfunctional.

7 The single mothers are very
8 frustrated because the fathers are not being supportive
9 for the children, for their offspring. They're not
10 supporting them, looking after them, and also in financial
11 terms. Sometimes the women that I service are in urban
12 communities. They have fled their reserves for reasons
13 that you would be appalled to hear, so they stay in the
14 urban area, in the cities, to avoid certain situations.

15 Therefore, try to bring up children
16 on their own and very frustrating. Some of these fathers
17 are employed on reserves which at one time -- I don't know
18 about now -- according to the Indian Act they cannot be
19 garnisheed because they work on the reserve. The Support
20 and Custody Enforcement Office came into law in early '80s
21 I believe it was, the SCEO, and now the Family Support
22 Plan. But nowhere in that book, or in those booklets or
23 the information that I have anyway, is there any mention
24 of the fathers of these children. I have not seen any,
25 unless it's between the lines. I don't know.

1 What is being done about that? Has
2 anybody ever questioned you on your journey throughout
3 Canada on family support for the native families?

4 It is time that someone did do
5 something about this. Maybe the bands, the community can
6 garnishee their wages if they are living -- if they are
7 employed on reserve for their families who live off the
8 reserve. These children need role models as we heard right
9 here. These youths. I don't know how many of them live
10 in nuclear families with the extended family supporting
11 them in positive ways. It's very -- they are frustrated.

12 They need role models, a good role model for mothers;
13 good role models for the father.

14 These children are of our future
15 and I want a healthy, strong and positive future.

16 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

17 Thank you, Margaret. I'm sure Mr. Dussault will have a
18 question or two for you.

19 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
20 very much for sharing this with us. Of course we are aware
21 that the trend -- immigration trend to the cities for women
22 bringing children -- bringing up children alone and for
23 young people also as we had earlier, is major concern.
24 Family support is something that is sorely lacking and
25 we at this point really the only services is through

1 specialized services -- is through the Friendship Centers.

2 Otherwise, of course, services are available as to any
3 other citizens but very often it's culturally difficult.

4 So I would like to thank you for reminding this. We've
5 heard that often enough and we realize that even in the
6 mid-sized cities the problem is there as well as in big
7 cities like Toronto. So when we are looking about the
8 situation of Aboriginal people in urban setting we don't
9 have in mind only Winnipeg, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary,
10 but mid-sized cities and much smaller cities where the
11 problem is about exactly the same. And I would like to
12 thank you again for sharing this with us.

13 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
14 very much. We have heard about the situation with native
15 women fleeing from reserves and the reasons, and I agree
16 that I think some of the reasons are, you know, not too
17 good.

18 And with respect to child support,
19 I think this is the first -- and native fathers not paying
20 child support because even though they're working for a
21 band their wages cannot be garnished because they're
22 working on a band, this is the first time I've heard of
23 that. I was just wondering: when you mentioned SCEO,
24 is that the Family Support Plan?

25 **MARGARET JACKSON:** That's the one, yes.

1 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Is that the
2 federal?

3 **MARGARET JACKSON:** It's federal.

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Okay.
5 You're saying that under that particular plan there's no
6 provision to garnishee the wages of fathers who might be
7 employed on the band?

8 **MARGARET JACKSON:** I've never been able
9 to reach anyone in SCEO to give those answers. They keep
10 passing the buck.

11 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Okay.

12 **MARGARET JACKSON:** But I can't get an
13 answer from any one of them.

14 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Okay. I
15 think, you know, this is -- just for the information of
16 anyone here -- Brad Michaels is our record-taker and he
17 takes note of things and in some areas there are
18 possibilities of following up through letter and this might
19 be one. Thank you very much.

20 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
21 want to thank you, Margaret, for your presentation.

22 Next on our agenda we have Schuyler
23 Webster. He is representing the Native Human Services
24 Program and Laurentian University.

25 There will be 20 minutes for your

1 presentation and 10 for discussion.

2 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Okay. Thank you for
3 this opportunity to address the Commission on matters
4 related to First Nation partnerships and promoting
5 educational opportunities.

6 I don't know if this is an
7 appropriate anecdote for the Commission, but Sudbury is
8 famous for its famous geologic rock formation and in the
9 Geology Department there is another Professor Webster and
10 I got a call from Brian Mulroney's staff. They wanted
11 to honour Brian Mulroney's contribution to the
12 International Community on Free Trade and they asked me
13 because they thought I was Professor Webster from the
14 Geology Department. What my ideas were on a group of
15 private investors getting together and putting Brian
16 Mulroney's image upon Mount Rushmore next to Teddy
17 Roosevelt and they asked me "What do you think of that,
18 Professor Webster?" and I said "Well, you'll have an
19 immediate problem" and they said "What is that?" and I
20 said "I don't think granite is a dense enough material
21 to really represent the substance of the man". Always,
22 this information seems to be rather -- you can mislead
23 people on occasion and have a little fun with it.

24 Anyway, I wanted to present as
25 Coordinator of Human Native Services at School of Social

1 Work, Laurentian University, on matters related to First
2 Nation partnerships and promoting educational
3 opportunities. We are, and I think the Commission and
4 most native people are aware that educational
5 opportunities have been denied in part by access and
6 history of discrimination, the lack of political power
7 and the lack of understanding and sensitivity on behalf
8 of educational institutions, those professionals who are
9 schooled there and those who are working in disciplines
10 that do not take into consideration culture and matters
11 related to the important aspects of native heritage and
12 contributions to Canadian society.

13 This presentation particularly
14 relates to the establishment of Native Human Services as
15 a Native Human Services honours degree program in social
16 work established in 1988. But I cannot make a contribution
17 to this information without recognizing that since the
18 early '60's in the Sudbury area there's been a
19 preponderance of native activity in promoting
20 post-graduate, under-graduate and post-secondary
21 activities to support native educational opportunities
22 and, you know, I'm proud to present in the same venue with
23 Cambrian College's native programs, the post-secondary
24 efforts here and their native program, the Swakamok
25 alternative school and University of Sudbury's native

1 studies program.

2 All have a history that precedes
3 Native Human Services and all have made a good and lasting
4 contribution to encouraging the continuation of native
5 educational opportunities.

6 In 1984 -- oh, and we continue to
7 develop and maintain partnerships with these native
8 community and institutionally-based education programs
9 and we only look forward to getting stronger with them
10 as we all are in the arena of promoting educational
11 opportunities, period.

12 Our particular program has a
13 history in relationship to native studies at the University
14 of Sudbury. Native studies was established in 1972 and
15 community needs identified that there be increased
16 knowledge, awareness and sensitivity of First National
17 communities, the development of native studies curriculum
18 and finally, the establishment of Bachelor of Arts degree
19 in native studies.

20 This is important because Native
21 Human Services has a co-relationship with native studies
22 in that native studies exist to provide historical
23 relationships that portray accurately the history of
24 protection, assimilation (sic) of native people. And
25 that history always has been written by and interpreted

1 by primarily politicians, sociologists, historians who
2 ignore the native realities of how those processes have
3 been used to intrude and be prescriptive and burdensome
4 towards native people.

5 So native studies -- the community
6 needs identified that native studies, people who take
7 Native Human Services Program that they need to have a
8 sound basis of knowledge of those histories, those
9 understandings of native language and the role -- the
10 negative role and the positive role that were played by
11 people who sought to continue the domination and
12 extermination of native language and culture and also the
13 positive roles that native people and non-native people
14 have played in revitalizing these efforts at correcting
15 the historical profile and establishing educational
16 opportunities of native studies so that native people and
17 non-native people can get the information straight and
18 can go on and pursue areas of study beyond native studies
19 or continue in the vein. So they play a crucial role in
20 our particular program.

21 In 1985 there was the other
22 important, and probably the most important part played
23 in the establishment of Native Human Services, in that
24 there was a rather extraordinary community consultation
25 that was undertaken from '85 to '86 that involved

1 principally getting support from the Robinson Huron Treaty
2 Council and creation of a regional working group
3 representing the institutional representatives from
4 Laurentian and those tribal-based communities and council
5 members out of the Robinson Huron that consulted --
6 consultation phase contacted well over 30 communities and
7 asking them one question, and that is: what do you want
8 to have taught in a social work program that would produce
9 native social work students who are both sensitive, aware
10 and skilled in working in native communities? And the
11 principles of that community consultation is one of the,
12 I think, principles and elements of success to any venture
13 that, whether it be economic, social work or educational,
14 that needs to be respected.

15 The other important principle that
16 came out of that is that native -- the 31-community
17 consultations indicated that a fundamental prerequisite
18 of any program that they wanted in this social work model
19 promote by competence. In other words, that we just don't
20 teach native focused awareness and sensitivity in terms
21 of working out family and cultural systems, but that we
22 also provide the necessary skills, awareness and knowledge
23 in working with and through non-native agencies.
24 Non-native social work agencies. So this by competence
25 preference is one I think that is an important principle

1 as well.

2 The other area that is unique and
3 ground-breaking is that the curriculum model that
4 currently is reflected in the information packet I've
5 provided to the Commission is that it is one of the few,
6 if not maybe one of the only ones in the country that I'm
7 aware of at least in social work, that asked the community
8 to define in all categories of how they need help in their
9 communities, what the content should be of the curriculum.
10 What the cultural specificity should be. That there
11 should be some distant education opportunity for those
12 who are isolated far away and prefer to live in community
13 and take our courses at a distance. And finally, that
14 a field development component, in other words, native
15 students who are eligible to do their field placements,
16 that they be encouraged and that an effort be made to
17 include that field development be developed on
18 community-based areas and that they can develop field
19 agency skill enhancement and also a practice skill
20 enhancement while working in their particular communities
21 or working in another agency, native agency setting,
22 organization or community.

23 Now, all those are important and
24 critical to the submission that was made to Laurentian
25 University in 1988 and it required institutional

1 arrangements which meant that there had to be a commitment
2 not only in terms of principle to see that this model be
3 promoted, but also that there had to be some intestinal
4 physical commitment. In other words, they could not blink
5 if they agreed that this is a model that was academically
6 sound, maintained the standards and accreditation of the
7 National Association of Social Work and was an important
8 contribution to not only Laurentian, but locally and
9 regionally. And the academic package that was submitted
10 to the Senate and the Board was accepted as the community
11 had defined it, as sound and met all the requirements.

12 The institutional arrangements
13 required that it be based in a academic department so it
14 was based in the School of Social Work. And there are
15 three streams there: Anglophone stream, Francophone
16 stream and now a Native stream. And like the national
17 debate on the Constitutional Accord, we had to grow in
18 our understandings of our differences and our
19 distinctiveness and maintain our identity at the same time.

20 So the tensions that are present in the national arena
21 are also -- and we could find those present in any
22 department if you promote such tri-parteid educational
23 opportunities. But we find that our identity is stronger
24 today than it ever was, and will only get stronger.

25 We have an inter-institutional

1 arrangement with Native Studies which makes it even more
2 sound and more appropriate. The University provided
3 fiscal support for five academic positions plus an
4 administrative position, plus a staff position. That's
5 where I talk about having some physical fortitude to back
6 up. So it's not maintained by any particular grant or
7 anything like that so it can end when someone lacks support.

8 And I think this is true in recognizing also that
9 institutions like Cambrian as well are committed in
10 principle to not only creating these native academic
11 entities, but also in making sure that they're going to
12 survive beyond any administration or budget cuts that may
13 be coming down.

14 We have to take a look -- we had
15 to also include an academics admissions criteria in which
16 we begin to take a look at native needs as one that has
17 a historical legacy in which their opportunities were
18 denied to participate fully in the educational process
19 and make contributions in a positive manner, not only to
20 themselves and their families, but their communities.
21 Those academic admissions criteria do not lower standards,
22 but they also recognize that we are one people that were
23 denied and that admission standards continually, and for
24 a lot of institutions nationally, continue to exclude
25 natives by proposing some non-native standards over

1 academic entry into opportunity.

2 Our education program is a conjoint
3 program which we manage and is also run out of the Center
4 for Continuing Education. And probably one of the most
5 important institutional arrangements is that we maintain
6 a program committee comprised of members of the Robinson
7 Huron Treaty Council, urban representatives and
8 representatives from the school and the native faculty
9 in providing guidance and direction for our program.

10 Our personnel qualifications mean
11 that native preference is given to those who have
12 credentials and that there is some continuity in supporting
13 community-based programming in that aspect.

14 The first graduating class took
15 their convocation in 1991. I believe we had 10 out of
16 that class. Last year we had three. This year we'll have
17 five and last year's class I believe had -- half of the
18 first 13 are in graduate schools. We expect three to come
19 out with a Masters and there's one taking currently
20 underway to completing a PhD. And this year's graduating
21 class, all five have been accepted into graduate schools.

22 So the fact that some people take a look at native
23 programming, and I've heard this at a provincial level
24 as well as the national level, you hear academicians and
25 also administrators in education say that they're afraid

1 to take the leap of faith to engage with native people
2 in promoting native identity, native-based programming
3 and education because they don't want to ghettoize
4 programs. You hear that word come up every -- you know,
5 negatively, unfortunately, a number of times. And that's
6 an institutional historical stereotype and ongoing racist
7 attitude that probably won't go away unless you get a whole
8 other generation of people that see that native people
9 are here to stay and that native disciplines and the
10 emerging new word, or the emerging new field called
11 "ethnoscience" plays a role in not only native social work,
12 but in all kinds of other disciplines.

13 For our graduates, for those who
14 are interested in continuing an education, whether it be
15 in our program or any others, we find a great deal of common
16 understanding about our frustrations and about our hopes
17 and our aspirations. We are not surprised when we find
18 native people who have been turned away, turned off or
19 have lost some degree of self-motivation, find that within
20 native-based programs that they thrive, that they are
21 encouraged and that they have a place. That is basically
22 I think the bottom line in terms of creating some kind
23 of island of hope and understanding.

24 For the future, or charting these
25 new courses, that these successful partnerships between

1 First Nations and post-secondary institutions must
2 recognize the inherent rights of First Nations to develop
3 and establish and implement strategies for the eventual
4 creation of First Nation disciplines as import co-equals
5 in university and college curriculums. Science,
6 engineering, law, behavioural and health science,
7 medicine, anthropology and agronomy are but a few academic
8 disciplines which our Aboriginal heritage have made
9 contributions to in our ethnicographic past and are viable
10 as emerging ethnosciences today.

11 Graduate as well as post-graduate
12 ethnoscience content and training must be promoted to
13 establish educational models which provide by competence
14 in related disciplines. The funding for Aboriginal
15 ethnoscience disciplines and training models must reflect
16 the priority of regional and local needs in order to secure
17 stability, continuity and relevance. Innovative and
18 creative use of community-based education delivery models
19 must emphasize partnerships in determining content.
20 Research and research fellowships, opportunities, must
21 be established in order to promote community-based
22 research training in order to increase the level of skills
23 available to Aboriginal communities.

24 And finally, and probably in terms
25 of access and opportunity, increasing acceptable bursaries

1 and other financial aid resources are needed in order to
2 assure the Aboriginal students can self-determine their
3 own educational goals and eventually make positive
4 contributions to First Nations communities.

5 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
6 want to thank you for your presentation, Schuyler. Mr.
7 Dussault, I'll hand over the microphone to you.

8 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.
9 I'd like to start by asking you the number of students
10 that are in the program in the four years. I understand
11 that you had 10 who graduated in '91, three and then five.
12 But how many students are they altogether?

13 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** We have in numbers
14 75 students. And since we've initiated a recruitment and
15 information effort that has proven successful we've had
16 a 60 percent increase from the admission rate from a year
17 and a half ago. It seems that if you establish a program
18 in one sector of an institution, you have to be able to
19 try to get resources that are typically available to the
20 non-native population. In other words: recruitment.
21 The University has a recruitment budget and recruitment
22 department, but they don't fly into native communities.
23 You know, they don't network in the -- educational
24 counselling networks for promoting native information and
25 access about programs like this. So we've had to undertake

1 that ourselves and found that to be the most successful
2 route in establishing information networks and providing
3 that -- creating a network where they can get the
4 information about programs and educational opportunities.

5 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Are you
6 located in the same building than the two other streams?

7 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Yes, m'hmm, we're
8 located on the same floor.

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And what
10 about the teaching staff? Could you tell us a bit more
11 about the staff that are teaching on this particular
12 stream? Are they all native teachers or ---

13 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Yeah. All our staff
14 is native teachers. Our administrative and support staff
15 are native and I think this year we had to hire non-native,
16 but you have to have all colours in a medicine wheel.
17 And that's proven really good and we look forward to
18 increasing our native -- full complement of native faculty
19 this year.

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** When you
21 speak about First Nations discipline being as important
22 co-equals with -- in universities and college curriculum,
23 could you expand on that? You mentioned one:
24 ethnoscience.

25 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Well, ethnoscience

1 is a more systematic way to take a look at culture, its
2 systems, its unique variables of meaning in terms of
3 culture populations. Now, we know that astronomy is no
4 foreign territory to native people. We've had our
5 astronomers, we have made contributions in that regard.

6 We know that agronomy or agriculture, native people have
7 made contributions in that area. We know that botany in
8 terms of medical -- medical contributions in terms of
9 healing herbs and medicines have made their contributions.

10 And in this field, social work, we're obviously taking
11 a look at prevention and treatment and we're finding that
12 we can make a contribution that is as sound academically
13 and relevant socially and culturally to our people because
14 in our ethnographic past we've had ways in which to
15 diagnose, assess and treat community turmoil back then.

16 And we're not revisiting something that's just a memory,
17 but we're revitalizing it and making it applicable in
18 communities today. And we only say that -- ethnoscience
19 is a broad term and that contributions can be made and
20 content can be increased in a lot of disciplines, including
21 law and other areas.

22 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** You said
23 that you did your -- you had to do your own networking
24 to convince -- put the information across and we had young
25 people earlier this evening. Could you tell us what is

1 your feeling in terms of young people moving towards
2 post-secondary education? We realize when we look at
3 statistics from the early '60's to 30 years later, it's
4 a big improvement, but it is still felt that with the
5 numbers of young people that are in the communities and
6 the cities, it's not enough and they're not catching up
7 as they should. Do you have views as to what could be
8 done, not only in your field, but more generally to bring
9 more young people to get post-secondary training?

10 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Well, you know, I
11 think obviously what's needed in the end is having more
12 native people eventually educated and going back to the
13 community so that you can see professionals amongst you.
14 Your brothers and sisters, your aunts and uncles, your
15 fathers, mothers, grandparents. You know, until we start
16 producing enough native graduates that way the
17 contributions that people are making in the cities and
18 in rural areas are to establish a place so that native
19 people can feel comfortable, welcomed, encouraged, and
20 that they can receive the kind of education support that
21 they deserve and not the kind that they only have fantasies
22 about having. Those efforts have always proven to be
23 successful when they've been committed, when they've been
24 financially supported and when they have been allowed to
25 thrive and not wither on the vine because there's not enough

1 funding for them.

2 There's a phenomena that they call
3 the "cross-over phenomena" where young native people from
4 the age of three to seven perform above average in areas
5 of math and science, but it's after that particular age
6 cohort that their grades begin to tumble and it's not
7 surprising that that's related directly to their
8 self-identity and self-esteem as native people. And so
9 the efforts being made in native communities to increase
10 cultural identity, reinforce information that is sensitive
11 and portrays native people accurately is part of that
12 process. And there needs to be I think a bigger effort
13 at institutions at reaching out to communities and getting
14 people involved. Including that young population.

15 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Within the
16 university I understand this program has a specific focus
17 on native studies and realities, but is there -- when young
18 people come there is support services available to them?

19 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Yes.

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And are
21 those services available to young Aboriginal people who
22 might want to go into other areas at the University? Are
23 they the same or is it different when you come to this
24 particular program?

25 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** It matters whether

1 or not you are recruiting and providing information to
2 communities where different sectors of the academic
3 institution are involved at promoting these initiatives.

4 Like, there's a native initiative to look at getting a
5 native engineering program going. Well, it takes some
6 degree of commitment and follow-through to do that. There
7 are efforts -- we have a native counsellor on. We do some
8 strong academic advising. We certainly don't encourage
9 native people to all come in and do social work and native
10 human services. Several have changed their mind and went
11 into political science or criminal justice fields and
12 that's fine with us. That's what academic choice --
13 freedom is all about. That duplication -- there's
14 potential for things to be duplicated nationally on all
15 kinds of levels but whether or not we can get institutions
16 nationally to embrace cultural models to be relevant and
17 also academically sound is another thing. But there are
18 these models emerging, not just at Laurentian, but at
19 different places.

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

21 **SCHUYLER WEBSTER:** Yes. Thanks.

22 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

23 Thank you, Schuyler.

24 Our next presenter is John
25 Steckley. He's an Assistant Professor to the Department

1 of Native Studies from the University of Sudbury. John
2 is a resident of Sudbury and has years of experience in
3 working with various native languages. He teaches
4 Aboriginal languages in the contemporary context.

5 It is now 7:38. We would like to
6 break at 8:00 o'clock if possible. You may go ahead.

7 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Okay. You know, I'm
8 used to teaching three-hour courses so I ---

9 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Don't be
10 intimidated.

11 **JOHN STECKLEY:** I'm never intimidated.

12 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** I know.

13 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Okay. This actually is
14 going to be relatively brief. I want to talk about
15 languages and I don't want so much to talk about languages
16 and identity and the power they have and the way they're
17 the key to the identity because I think you've probably
18 heard a number of Elders saying that kind of thing and
19 they could probably say it more eloquently than I could.

20 What I want to do though, is make
21 kind of a suggestion that's something we can do here in
22 Canada and it's not sort of something that's right up in
23 the sky, but it's actually something that already exists
24 in other places and I think it's a place where we should
25 be going or some ideas where we should be going in terms

1 of native languages. And I've written down here -- just
2 put as:

3 "Suggestion: That the Canadian Federal Government go at
4 least as far as the government of
5 the United States in giving Native
6 languages 'official status'."

7 I'm going to talk a little bit about what
8 that entails.

9 How I see it as entailing, it's kind
10 of odd to me as a Canadian, you know, we talk about, okay,
11 the Americans have the melting pot and we have this vertical
12 mosaic, you know, we're all little tiles up there on the
13 wall somewhere. And it's odd to think that in this kind
14 of area in terms of native languages, as in some other
15 areas, the Americans are ahead of us. And I think our
16 -- have some insight or seem to have established some
17 insight that we have yet to.

18 I'm going to talk a little bit of
19 historical background to some of this and it's actually
20 a good place to think of right now that we're in sort of
21 cold rainy Sudbury, sort of like to take you to Hawaii,
22 you know, like, take me to Hawaii first, but I'm just going
23 to take you verbally to Hawaii.

24 In 1978 in Hawaii they declared as
25 their official languages both English and Hawaiian. Now,

1 that's a powerful thing when you look at it because
2 Hawaiians are the indigenous people to that area, they
3 have fewer speakers probably if you did a proportional
4 basis, they are probably few speakers of Hawaiian in Hawaii
5 than there are native language speakers in Canada. So
6 it's an interesting precedent in that way.

7 Now, like I say, this took place
8 in 1978. Since that time they've developed pre-school
9 programs throughout Hawaii that have been emersion
10 programs in the language. These are taking place in the
11 cities and have used -- have made the cities a kind of
12 center for Hawaiian culture in ways that they've never
13 been before. And again, I think if that can be done there
14 and start at that level we can do that here. That was
15 kind of the impetus for establishing not just in one state
16 but extending beyond the state level to the American
17 federal level.

18 I'm going to read a couple of things
19 -- a couple of resolutions. One that was introduced and
20 then kind of a changed version, do a little bit of summary
21 of what actually did get passed.

22 In 1989 it was a resolution before
23 the American Senate and it was called Joint Resolution
24 - S.J. Res. 379. They have these great names for these
25 resolutions. The purpose was -- and I want to read this

1 because I think -- when I read this and I say this it reminds
2 of when there was a referendum and when they were talking
3 about native languages and native culture. The statements
4 that I kept hearing were ones like "Well, we'll let you
5 talk your language" kind of like "As long as you don't
6 bother anybody", you know. And the American statements
7 are so much more powerful. And that really really struck
8 me. When I first encountered this I kind of didn't believe
9 it at first but -- okay.

10 So the purpose of this was:

11 "To establish as the policy of the United States the
12 preservation, protection and
13 promotion of the rights of Native
14 Americans to use, practice and
15 develop Native American languages,
16 to take steps to foster such use,
17 practice and development, and for
18 other purposes".

19 Now, that was changed a little bit and
20 re-introduced as S.1781 called the "Native American
21 Language Act" and it was passed by both houses in American
22 government in 1990. So this is law in the States. I'm
23 going to take kind of a summary of this and I'm going to
24 go over some points and then I'm going to kind of contrast
25 them a little bit with Canada. So highlights of this are:

1 "Highlights include the recognition of the special status
2 of Native American... languages
3 and cultures, and recognition of
4 the responsibility of the United
5 States to act together with Native
6 Americans to ensure their
7 survival."

8 So here we have their federal government
9 saying "We'll act together with the people to ensure the
10 survival of the language". We've never had anything like
11 that here. Not anything close.

12 And here's another interesting
13 thing that I got from this:

14 "Oppressive federal actions of the past are recognised
15 as not consistent with the policy
16 of self-determination for Native
17 Americans."

18 Ohhh -- it always gets me -- I always
19 figure, like, federal government sort of -- you join and
20 it's like a club and you have to -- the first step is:
21 you can't really condemn what people did in the past because
22 you're going to end up doing it yourself, kind of -- you
23 know. It just sort of -- we've never made a statement,
24 our federal governments have never really made a statement
25 to say "Well, you know in the past we really came down

1 hard on those languages and we really did some hideous
2 things". We never heard that. It's kind of like the
3 churches and residential schools, you know. That's
4 something you'd like to hear in that same regard. Why
5 people seem to feel that they have to justify oppressive
6 acts in the past and you know, it's hard enough I think
7 justifying them now let alone the past. Okay.

8 "Evidence that young people do best in school if they are
9 taught to respect their natal
10 language and culture is noted."

11 So their federal government officially
12 recognized that kids are going to do better if there is
13 respect for their language built into the schools. And
14 that's not just schools in community; but that's also
15 schools in the city. I guess I'm sort of getting at the
16 point I was going to make later, but this is something
17 that really kind of irritates me.

18 We have a thing in Ontario called
19 Heritage languages, which is kind of a secondary status
20 to official languages. And we have now in Sudbury we are
21 beginning to teach Ojibwa in the schools but it's really
22 as a secondary status. It doesn't have the power of
23 teaching what seemed to be "real languages". You can't
24 -- you know, you don't get that kind of status that French
25 has, that English has, or even German has or Russian has

1 or Spanish. It's a respected language that you take all
2 the way. It's something that we take kids out of their
3 classes for and we separate them, we kind of isolate them
4 and don't recognize the language as something equally to
5 be studied, even equal to foreign languages. It's kind
6 of like there's Heritage languages, then there's powerful
7 foreign languages, and then there's English and French.

8 And in a way, what I'm asking for and what I think the
9 Americans have at least established, is they've at least
10 established that native languages are at the level of
11 foreign language and maybe are moving towards making them
12 the status of English and French.

13 Okay, I continue:

14 "US policy will be to preserve, protect and promote the
15 rights and freedom of Native
16 Americans to use, practice and
17 develop their languages."

18 It's a powerful thing. Okay:

19 "This policy will be facilitated by granting exceptions
20 of teacher certification
21 requirements for federal funding
22 where these requirements hinder
23 the employment of qualified
24 teachers who speak the languages.
25 The use of the languages as a

1 medium of instruction will be
2 encouraged. Native American
3 governing bodies are permitted to
4 adopt them as official languages."

5 So the beginning part, and this has taken
6 place in a number of native communities in the States,
7 including Anishnabe communities in the States, that in
8 those communities the official first language is the
9 language of the people, and the second language is English.
10 And if they can do that in the States, you know, "the
11 melting pot", think what we can do here with our tiles,
12 right?

13 "The inclusion of Native American languages in curricula
14 at all levels and the recognition
15 of proficiency in them by academic
16 credit similar to that given for
17 foreign language proficiency, are
18 encouraged."

19 And it's that last bit that really kind
20 of sticks with me.

21 "... the recognition of proficiency in them by academic
22 credit similar to that given for
23 foreign language ..."

24 Again, foreign languages, native
25 languages, English, French.

1 It kind of makes me think, you know,
2 we have other parallels as well. I lived in Scotland for
3 a while and I worked in the language Scots-Gaelic. And
4 in Scots-Gaelic which has far far fewer speakers in terms
5 of percentage, in terms of numbers than our native
6 languages, you can get all levels in them. You can get
7 officials with a high school status for that language,
8 which is a language that very very very few people speak.

9 It doesn't have the number of speakers of Ojibwa or Cree
10 or most of our languages. And yet they're in Scotland,
11 they have a greater status for their language, a language
12 that's spoken on a few islands, than we have for the
13 languages that are here that have so many more speakers.

14 You know, you'd think -- now here's a model. It's not
15 like we were creating something that no one else does.
16 And in Ireland you find the same case. There are very
17 few speakers of Irish Gaelic. You have to go right in
18 the little corners to find them, and there's not many people
19 that speak it. It's official. It's granted in their
20 secondary schools. It's just as powerful as the other
21 languages. Just as recognized.

22 In the universities, the same way.

23 Now, we're working towards that here. Like, I work in
24 Native Studies and we're developing that for Ojibwa and
25 hopefully for Cree and I'd love to see others as well.

1 Okay.

2 "Final Points:

3 If Native languages ..."

4 I'm just sort of reading what I've
5 written here:

6 "If Native languages were granted some kind of 'official'
7 status, then they could be
8 effectively promoted not only in
9 reserve communities, but in the
10 cities as well. Such urban
11 promotion of languages has been
12 successful with the Maori language
13 in the major cities of New
14 Zealand."

15 That's another case -- that's another
16 classic example. For Maori culture the language was
17 spoken in the countryside. It was spoken only by the
18 Elders. And now they have a situation in New Zealand where
19 it was taught to the kids, pre-school program, and the
20 language program becomes a program of center for the whole
21 culture. And where the language is learned and it's
22 learned in the context of family, very powerful things
23 take place. Again, if you're looking at numbers, you're
24 looking at percentages, the Maoris don't have any more
25 speakers than we do of our native languages. So Canada

1 is behind in this. It's not like I'm asking us to go
2 jumping ahead. We're behind in this. Behind a lot of
3 countries, and I think if you went in country after country,
4 you know, you'd find similar things. We are behind in
5 this. We are not equal to other nations in this.

6 Just a final point:

7 "When I teach about successful language programs for Native
8 languages, I teach about programs
9 in the United States."

10 I talk about The Peach Springs
11 Bilingual/Bicultural Programme of the Hualapai in Arizona;
12 I talk about the Makah in Washington. These are two
13 communities that have about 1,000 people. They have a
14 successful program and we don't have that similar kind
15 of thing here. And then the Rock Point School of the Navajo
16 in Arizona. And what I'm just suggesting is: when we
17 look -- language is so important. It's such a key to --
18 something people can hold onto to being part of what they
19 are. And to say these things should be respected by a
20 simple thing like making it official, or making them
21 official, doing this would just put Canada in line with
22 what other countries are doing. It's not a radical step.
23 And yet it's a very very very important one.

24 Anyway, that's all I have to say.

25 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Very

1 short and sweet. Thank you.

2 Mr. Dussasult, if you please?

3 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
4 very much.

5 As you know and are aware, language is
6 fundamental and key for culture and self-identity and it
7 is one of the elements in our mandate. I wondered: since
8 the **Northwest Territories**, for example, **Act** was amended
9 to bring six language as official language, are you aware
10 of studies as to the impact that this has brought to --
11 apart from the very importance of the symbolism and on
12 and on, but are you aware of some examination of the impact
13 that this move has had in the last few years?

14 **JOHN STECKLEY:** I know that, you know,
15 the Northwest Territories are doing that. I haven't seen
16 anything yet saying, you know, what the impact is going
17 to be. I think it's going to be very powerful. I think
18 it's a good one and I could see the Yukon picking up on
19 that as well because I think they're currently studying
20 it. But it's a good model to follow and as I say, I haven't
21 seen anything published yet on that, but it's very
22 encouraging, and particularly when they do that with the
23 languages -- they're doing with all the Dene (PH) languages
24 there. It's great. It's great to see.

25 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** You're

1 teaching at the Native Studies?

2 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Yes.

3 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And what
4 is your field of interest? Is it ---

5 **JOHN STECKLEY:** I deal primarily with
6 the Huron language and the Huron history. I'm working
7 with the Huron community now to bring back a language that's
8 dead. And, you know -- I think if we can do that that
9 would be the example to others. And it's happening. It's
10 really exciting to see it coming back. And the idea:
11 if you can do it with Huron that hasn't had speakers for
12 several generations, well, I can do it with them all.

13 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** I know some
14 members of the community are working very hard and we have
15 hearings in Wendiki (PH) in the fall and it's a major
16 concern for many people. At the school is there -- what
17 is the state of the Ojibwa language? Is it spoken among
18 the students who are -- what's the situation -- like this
19 one that you have at the Native Studies?

20 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Okay. Well, we try to
21 encourage as much speech of the language as possible.
22 There's Roger. Roger does his level best back there.
23 I've got to embarrass him. He's not presenting right.
24 You know he's going to get embarrassed. That's it. He
25 brought his class here so they're all going to get

1 embarrassed by it, yeah. I didn't realize he was that
2 short. I thought he was a taller guy.

3 He works very hard at doing that
4 and introducing us all and keeping the language spoken
5 as much as possible. Because we only -- like, we've been
6 historically just teaching the intro. We're working --
7 this fall we're going to have the intermediate level for
8 the first time and I'm really hoping we can get the advanced
9 as well. I think when you get to that, at least the
10 intermediate level, then for a lot of people who -- like,
11 Native Studies is, among other things, it does a number
12 of things. One of the things it does is help people kind
13 of discover who they are. The language is key to that
14 and I think if you're given a greater level, I know a number
15 of students who have taken the intro course and it's kind
16 of "Where do we go from here?" and they want to continue
17 with it. And I think when we get into more advanced levels
18 then more people will feel comfortable speaking the
19 language in the halls and in the class. Other than, you
20 know, the greetings and that type of thing.

21 But I say just any kind of speaking
22 of the language at any level is good because -- and at
23 the University it's good because there's a certain respect
24 built in too. You use the language because it is something
25 that belongs in the University. It is as respected as

1 "foreign languages" are.

2 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

3 Mary?

4 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
5 very much. I'm very interested in the whole issue of
6 language and that's probably because I come from Labrador
7 and I think the Inuktitut language there is threatened
8 which is different from the Inuktitut for example in Inuvik
9 in Northern Quebec, the Inuktitut in the Eastern Arctic
10 or the Central Arctic where it's very much alive. And
11 I've made an observation about Inuktitut and I think that
12 clearly in areas where Inuit are located in a certain
13 territory where they constitute the majority of the
14 inhabitants it's much easier to keep the language alive,
15 even if there isn't legislation. I think the NWT has had
16 sort of an envious history. The majority of the population
17 in the Territory are Aboriginal and I think because they
18 had ministers or MLA's in the House saying "You know, Dene
19 or Inuktitut is very very important. It's necessary for
20 us to recognize this". I think they were able to be very
21 successful in introducing an amendment to the **NWT Act** so
22 that there were certain official languages.

23 But I think one of the real problems
24 in respecting the legislation to its fullest is money.

25 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Yes.

1 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** I mean,
2 it's okay that you have legislation there, but if you don't
3 have the kind of money to produce the materials, if you
4 don't have the kind of money to produce the materials to
5 teach the children in school or to allow native teachers
6 to go on language training, the legislation has limited
7 value. Unless, for example, you said, like, French is
8 a very privileged situation.

9 I think one thing we've always
10 heard is that, from Aboriginal peoples, is we want our
11 language. We want our culture. But, you know, there are
12 barriers there. And I think one of the arguments that
13 we've always heard is that there are 53 Aboriginal
14 languages in Canada. You know, how are you going to make
15 this country Aboriginal language conscious with that many
16 languages? Who will recognize, who will give those
17 languages official status? Will it be the federal
18 government? Will it be the provincial government? Will
19 it be the territorial government? Will it be the
20 Aboriginal government? And we can go on and go on and
21 go on.

22 But I'm wondering if you've had any
23 ideas about what a model would look like.

24 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Well, I think, you know,
25 sort of designing something I guess -- you have a lot of

1 different languages and that makes kind of a special
2 problem.

3 I think first of all, just by
4 declaring that they are official and working out the
5 details of that -- I mean, first of all, it's a statement
6 of respect. And one thing native languages is all native
7 culture suffers from is a severe lack of respect. If you'd
8 look at the schools and we talk about "Okay, we have to
9 train teachers in the language" and that kind of thing,
10 we have to do that anyway. We have to train teachers in
11 lots of different things and lots of different subjects
12 are taught and historically in Canada, you know, we did
13 used to teach Latin and we still do to a certain extent.

14 And we teach German and we teach Russian. And I figure,
15 you know, if we got money to teach that kind of stuff,
16 I think this is much more important and we could kind of
17 shift out of that, you know. And I think we can train
18 teachers in a number of things. We have to say as school
19 boards "These languages are important to learn" and I would
20 say as a person that, you know, I've been taught
21 anthropology and sociology and that kind of thing. I would
22 look at the high school level and I'd say "I would rather
23 -- I would much rather in the local high schools they teach
24 Ojibwa than Man and Society" because boy, if you ever took
25 an Ojibwa course and really got a sense of it, you would

1 learn more about what -- well, Man and Society is a kind
2 of sexist thing but I mean, they call it that unfortunately
3 -- but that kind of course -- you'd learn more by taking
4 an Ojibwa course with the culture and the language in there,
5 you would learn more about that than you could learn at
6 any sociology course. And again, I've taught sociology
7 and I think people would learn a lot more.

8 If we kind of switched it around
9 that way, you know, and said "Okay, how are people going
10 to learn respect for other people? Learn Ojibwa".
11 Classic, you know? And that's not really steering that
12 much more money into teacher training or class time.
13 That's saying Ojibwa deserves the respect of any other
14 subject. Any other subject taught in high school. I
15 think Ojibwa is equal to all of those. And Cree and ---

16 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Like, for
17 example, we heard this morning -- I think that's true.
18 I think that a lot of people want Aboriginal languages
19 taught in school. What we've been hearing in a lot of
20 places is that we don't just want a course in school.
21 We want to be fluent.

22 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Yes.

23 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** And it
24 takes more than 45 minutes a day for two or three days
25 in order to achieve that fluency and sometimes, you know,

1 when the children -- if they learn it at school, they go
2 home, their parents are unable to speak it, it's not spoken
3 in the community, there's no television or radio to
4 reinforce Aboriginal languages. So we hear that a lot
5 and I think that's -- this morning we heard a call for
6 -- enough resources so that parents could learn with their
7 children so that there would be reinforcement there. And
8 then there has to be something in the community which
9 demonstrates the value of language.

10 We heard recently, for example, in
11 one community where the young Aboriginal students were
12 saying "Why do we have to learn our own Aboriginal language?
13 It doesn't get us anywhere." I mean, you know "It's
14 better for us to be able to speak French". Because the
15 value of the language is not understood in that community.

16 **JOHN STECKLEY:** Yeah, that's the hard
17 thing. I mean, people have adapted. One of the things
18 when I taught Aboriginal languages and contemporary
19 culture, one of the things I find even teaching native
20 students is just kind of they have their own prejudice
21 against their language. Like, the words are too long.
22 "No no, it's just English words are too short and the
23 sentences are too long", you know. You just got to switch
24 around your biases.

25 Yeah, there are biases within the

1 community that, you know, a lot of the people, particularly
2 when you look at the residential schools and how they beat
3 the language out of people. A powerful disrespect for
4 the languages came through the schools and I figure it
5 this way: if disrespect for the language has got its most
6 powerful experience through schools, it may be respect
7 for the languages can get its most powerful impetus through
8 the schools as well. I mean, the residential schools were
9 very good at gettin' the native language outta people.
10 If they can be that good at beating it out of them, it
11 should be kind of good at doing it the other way around
12 too.

13 But yeah, I think the language has
14 to be a family experience. And certainly the Maori
15 experience and the Hawaiian experience is such that when
16 the family learns together, great. That's how it works.
17 It has to be that way.

18 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Yes.

19 Okay. Thank you very much.

20 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

21 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

22 Thank you, John, for your presentation. We will take a
23 short break. Ten minutes. Say at 8:10 be back.

24 --- Upon recessing at 8:00 p.m.

25 --- Upon resuming at 8:15 p.m.

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** Mr.
2 Dave White will be addressing cultural retention and
3 education.

4 I must remind you that there is a time
5 limit, (20) minutes and then 10 minutes for discussion,
6 okay.

7 **DAVE WHITE:** Bonjour.

8 I'm the Native Access Manager for
9 Wabnode Institute Anisnabe Studies Division of Cambrian
10 College.

11 I would like to mention a few things
12 about the college. We have six Native specific programs.

13 We have a Standing Committee, Anisnabe Affairs
14 Committee, Standing Committee of the Board of Governors,
15 which is composed of entirely of Native people, and is
16 representative of the First Nations and other Native
17 communities in the college catchment areas. Plus we have
18 openings for people from the major territorial provincial
19 organizations.

20 Each one of the Native specific programs
21 has its own advisory committee as well to ensure that those
22 particular programs address the specific needs of the
23 Native Communities of this area.

24 We have the General Arts and Science
25 Native Studies which are native options. We have the

1 Native Skills Training Preparation Course, as well. Both
2 of those courses are ones in which Native People can prepare
3 themselves for entry into regular college programs which
4 are native specific program or should they wish to do so,
5 go on to University.

6 The other four (4) programs are Native
7 Specific to respond to the particular needs of First
8 Nations and Native Communities in this area, such as the
9 Native Community Care Cancelling Development Program, the
10 Native Early Childhood Education Program, the Native Child
11 Family Worker Program, and the First Nations Lands
12 Management Program.

13 These programs were created to meet
14 specific needs in the Community and have committees to
15 ensure that they continue to do so. In addition to that,
16 we have several other special initiatives such as the
17 position that I hold. We also have a Researcher
18 Development position recently filled in which the
19 individual sitting up at the table here holds. Although
20 its new, I am sure it will develop into a complimentary
21 position for the staff faculty at the Wobnode Institute.

22 Some of the other initiatives -- one is
23 the Elder in Residence Program in which we have recently
24 been awarded some funding for a position, but with tight
25 moneys and all there wasn't sufficient funds allocated

1 to ensure that there was a place to house the program.
2 So we'll have to negotiate with the college or the community
3 to establish a location for that person to work out of.

4
5 I think that comes to the point of Native
6 Cultural Retention in the urban setting. We have to
7 respond to the Cultural needs of the not only the on-reserve
8 population but the off-reserve population as well.

9 Stats Canada recently related that there
10 is almost 8,000 Native Aboriginal people living in the
11 City of Sudbury that we have to provide services for the
12 college. The Native student population of the college
13 has risen dramatically in the past seven (7) years, from
14 a population of 99 in 1986 to a population of 542 in 1992.

15 Not all of those are in the Native Specific Programs.

16 In the Native Specific Programs we had
17 enroled this past year about 168 students, so the vast
18 majority are in the regular academic and skills training
19 programs. We do offer a variety of Native Culture Elements
20 within the native specific programs, but it is difficult
21 to implement those in the regular academic programs that
22 cater to the more general population.

23 I think just the sheer numbers that we
24 do have and the anticipated growth that we expect in the
25 near future would mitigate for additional resources to

1 respond to the cultural needs of the native student body,
2 and the general population that the college serves.

3 It is very difficult to implement a new
4 program such as an Elder Program. For instance: how do
5 you define an Elder; what type of qualifications are you
6 looking for; and more over, what type of individual are
7 you looking for?

8 We expect that that person would provide
9 spiritual leadership, healing and other specialized
10 services not only for the student but also for faculty
11 to gain insights into Native culture. I think that it's
12 these types of initiatives that upon which the native
13 culture growth and experience will be realized at the
14 academic level and they require as much support as we can
15 possible gather.

16 That is the extent of my presentation.

17 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I
18 would like to thank you for your presentation.

19 Indeed, in my short time that I have been
20 here in Sudbury I have seen the student population rise
21 both at university level and at the college level. The
22 needs that you outlined for an Elder is indeed or would
23 indeed be asset.

24 I would like to ask Mr. Dussault now to
25 take over.

1 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank-you.

2 When you say that there are six (6)
3 Native specific programs and that each program has its
4 own advisory committee to make sure that they remain
5 relevant and focus on the need, the evolving needs of the
6 communities.

7 Could you explain a bit more what is the
8 role of the Advisory Committee? How do they make sure
9 that the substance of the curriculum in the programs are
10 adapted, or that the changes occurred to make them keeping
11 atune with what is needed in the committee?

12 Could you give us an example?

13 **DAVE WHITE:** For instance, in the First
14 Nations Lands Management Program, a program that was
15 created to assist First Nations and the administration
16 of the Lands and States and other territorial issues with
17 regards to Management of their resources.

18 This was created by a small group of
19 individuals who were involved in that process in their
20 First Nations Committee and brought that expertise to the
21 college to ensure that the curriculum that was developed
22 would respond to their particular needs.

23 As for a current process that is ongoing
24 some of the Georgian Bay and Lake Nipissing Chiefs have
25 been interested in Treaty Research and Land Claims

1 Research. They have hired a consultant and that
2 consultant is currently investigating methods where by
3 they can achieve the training required to pursue those
4 two areas.

5 This consultant is going to be meeting
6 with the Dean in a couple of days to ensure that his concerns
7 are at least explored, and see if the current curriculum
8 meets those particular needs. If not then we'll have to
9 make our efforts to see whereby our curriculum can be
10 adapted to meet those particular needs such as Archival
11 Research Historical Documentation and Research of
12 Historical Documents et cetera.

13 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** On the
14 statics, you mentioned that the students -- the student
15 body went up from 99 in '86 to 542 in '92. This is at
16 the college level programs?

17 **DAVE WHITE:** Yes, yes. It is a
18 combination of the Wabnode Institute Program, the regular
19 academic program and the other training skills trade
20 programs. It is a combination of those.

21 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** And when
22 the student registers in one of those programs, how long
23 is it?

24 What is the length and duration of the
25 studies in any of those programs?

1 **DAVE WHITE:** Any where from one year or
2 several weeks program with regard to skills trades training
3 to up to a three year regular academic program.

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** What is the
5 situation of women in this increase? Are they ---

6 **DAVE WHITE:** I don't have that exact
7 statistic.

8 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** It is
9 difficult to say if women are ---

10 **DAVE WHITE:** Just from my own
11 experience, they are a significant proportion, greater
12 proportion of the student body than males are.

13 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Because
14 that is the case for Non-Aboriginal students, women have
15 been increasing more. So that is the same situation
16 from your experience?

17 **DAVE WHITE:** Similar from my experience
18 just from my personal observation.

19 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank-you.
20 Mary.

21 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** If
22 there are no other questions or comments you would like
23 to bring forward at this time ---

24 **DAVE WHITE:** No, not at this time.
25 I understand that I have another

1 opportunity to speak tomorrow from a different stand point.

2 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

3 Okay.

4 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank-you.

5 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I

6 would like to thank you then.

7 Our next presenter is Art Petahtegoose,
8 who is the Professor at Cambrian College. He also works
9 from the Wabnode Institute.

10 Art is from White Fish Lake First Nation,
11 and his topics will be Government judiciary Education and
12 Treaties. Art.

13 **ART PETAHTEGOOSE:** Good evening to
14 everyone. It is with some reluctance that I come before
15 the Commission. Given that I I don't feel that I should
16 not have to justify my existence or the existence of my
17 people before the Government of Canada to substantiate
18 my life and my living in my own home.

19 I must remember the words of my
20 Grandfather, and he said that, "When there is a meeting
21 go and speak. If you have to speak a thousand times then
22 speak a thousand times more. But let the people know who
23 you are. Let the people know that you are not going to
24 go away. And I think that this is where I am coming from.

25

1 The first part of my presentation I will
2 talk about my home and my community. I will go on to
3 briefly open a couple of doors and look very briefly at
4 some issues which are currently occurring across the
5 country.

6 I will begin with words of my
7 Grandfathers:
8 "I will cry my own sorrow!
9 I will sing my own song!
10 My spirit will dance upon this land! I am Anishinabe!
11 That is the way!
12 It must be!
13 This is what my father said to me. That is what his father
14 said to him. This is what I will
15 say to my children.
16 I do not wait for anyone to tell me who I am.
17 My grandmothers and grandfathers blood runs deep within
18 my blood, my spirit.
19 This place where I stand,
20 This place were I lay my blanket. This is my home!
21 My ancestors live here with me, to this day!"

22 My grandfathers and grandmother gave to
23 me two gifts, among others to carry. These are my
24 government and my judiciary. There are based upon
25 fundamental principles of democracy, elements that the

1 European Governments attempted to copy.

2 The governments in Canada today have
3 built into them monarchy, totalitarianism and
4 dictatorship. Our government has been raped and
5 bastardized. Canada does not represent me, I dare say,
6 Canada does not represent my People.

7 I indicated that our government was a
8 Democracy, a pure form, that people are not prepared to
9 admit or accept. People who have not taken the time to
10 examine its foundations and structure, condemn it before
11 acknowledging its capacity.

12 My government was founded on: Freedom
13 of the Person; Freedom of Mobility; Freedom of Conscience;
14 Freedom of Association; Freedom to follow a Way of Life,
15 a vision that espouses Harmony in Relationships; Freedom
16 of Speech; Freedom of the Spirit; Freedom of a Living
17 Land; Freedom to Conduct oneself Responsibly.

18 Therein lies the strength of my
19 government and my People. These elements are considered
20 to be so sacred, that even the Creator will not interfere
21 with their being exorcised.

22 It is the expression of these components
23 where our Sovereignty comes from. These components have
24 been given to us at birth. They are components which can
25 not be given away because they are not ours to give. To

1 deny that these components exist would be to deny our being
2 human.

3 Our Sovereignty results from our living
4 expression of these components, both individually and
5 collectively. It is upon the free expression of these
6 principles that my government is founded, my people are
7 founded.

8 My clan system of government
9 encapsulated these principles and put them into practice.
10 Consensus decision making incorporates in its being
11 exercised the founding principles of my government.

12 Under the clan system a large group can
13 not dominate a smaller one. The rules dictate that the
14 large group must obtain the acceptance of the small group
15 before any action or decision can be taken which will impact
16 significantly on both.

17 It is through the reaching out and
18 accommodating that Harmony is achieved by people living
19 together collectively. The existing system imposed by
20 the Indian Act legislation splits communities and causes
21 families to fight with one another: family against
22 family; brother against brother; and sister against
23 sister. That style of government must be replaced. It
24 serves no other purpose than to cause family destruction
25 and cultural genocide.

1 Let me give you an example: if you have
2 4 (four) groups with a number distribution as follows:
3 20 in group one (1), three (3) in group two (2), three
4 (3) group three (3), five (5) in group four (4). The large
5 group can control the other three (3) groups on the basis
6 of voting power under the existing law. One man, one vote
7 with 51 per cent, being able to control 49 per cent. The
8 process is entirely legal.

9 If we add into the picture a land base
10 where one group has 20 members and owns one (1) square
11 mile, where group two (2) has three (3) members and owns
12 two (2) square miles, where group three (3) has three (3)
13 members and owns three (3) square miles, where group four
14 (4) has five (5) members and owns four (4) square miles.
15 Again, by voting blocks the large group can take control
16 of the small group's property. The process again is
17 entirely legal.

18 This type of activities do occur in our
19 communities, where one group gets over- run. Today in
20 court, in Sudbury, we see this very issue being debated.

21 Small family groups fear being over-run by a resident
22 and non resident population.

23 The style of government must be changed.

24 Rules changed, to ensure each individual within a
25 community participates fully. The current procedures do

1 not reflect this critical component to be a reality.

2 I will talk briefly about treaties and
3 Aboriginal Rights.

4 When our brothers came to this land into
5 contact with Turtle Island, they came to look for resources
6 but when they arrived they discovered that there were
7 people here and our people welcomed them. But along the
8 way meetings were held and treaties were entered into.
9 My people signed a treaty but the treaty I am told by the
10 government -- the government says that they gave me the
11 land, but I know that is a lie.

12 I created my reserve by my own choosing,
13 but the land outside the Reserve boundary is what I agreed
14 to share with the rest of the world population.

15 Today the government wants to deny that
16 this is what actually happened, but that is fact is the
17 truth.

18 When I talk about my Aboriginal right,
19 it does not mean that I lock myself on to one small piece
20 of property. It means that as an individual I have the
21 right to lay my blanket anywhere on Turtle Island. And
22 when I do I have the right not to be molested. That
23 property is mine to enjoy, to use the resources for my
24 life.

25 Today the Government of Canada wants me

1 to deny that this is my right. They ask me to give it
2 away to surrender it. I say that is impossible because
3 I would deny my right to being human, I would deny my right
4 to life.

5 Some people say that my life way may be
6 backward, but I say this life way was designed for modern
7 living. It was designed for the future and I say again
8 that there is no greater beauty, there is no greater joy
9 anywhere than I see within my own teachings.

10 When I look at the judiciary, people say
11 that we don't have the ability to look after issues within
12 out community that are troubling to us. But again, I have
13 only to look at the strength of my clan system and what
14 it was able to offer in terms of helping the community
15 to grow to solve its problems.

16 If we think about a circle of people,
17 whether it be a judge, a tribunal, a committee, or a
18 community, an issue can be brought into that forum whether
19 it be by an individual or a group and the issue can be
20 discussed and it is the responsibility of the community
21 to respond to according to its own rules that it creates
22 for itself. Only in that way can we become
23 self-accountable and self-responsible. We should not
24 have to rely upon someone else coming in to dictate and
25 tell us what to do.

1 Some people say that well maybe this
2 individual should not have his family member sitting as
3 a judge or tribunal or committee or community. Again I
4 say "No", that has to occur. We must have our own people
5 sitting in judgment of ourselves. And again that is our
6 responsibility. We have that capacity. We have only to
7 exercise it and I think that we can do quite easily.

8 Perhaps our community has been disturbed
9 and we are not socially well, but in time we will prove
10 that also can be changed.

11 I will talk about education briefly.
12 There are terms like the word "civilization" and "culture"
13 which are used, it seems, within a community talk about
14 our development as people.

15 Again, if we take all peoples and place
16 them on a line, because this is what has happened to us
17 in the past, one group ends up being at the front and among
18 all nations of the people of the world in Canada, we are
19 placed at the end.

20 If we were talking about Nations of
21 People, we might be 200th on 200 at the end of that line.

22 Given that kind of a perspective about us as a people
23 we can understand why people say we don't have anything
24 to offer.

25 We are of no value and that is sad because

1 it takes away from the richness of our people. If we take
2 another diagram, say two lines and say we are only going
3 to talk about two peoples. Anishnabe and the, say as
4 example the English, and if we compare directly one-to-one,
5 we will find out that we will not measure up.

6 When we look at tests which have been
7 created to measure the development of our children, we
8 find that they are culturally biased and again, they are
9 damaging to us a people.

10 Try as we may to be something, we cannot
11 be whatever it is that is not being designed by us. We
12 have to measure up to our own rules. We must measure up
13 to our own way of life.

14 If we take a third line, and place upon
15 it only me as an individual and I measure my growth
16 according to my own principles, the result will only be
17 positive, because I am measuring myself against myself.
18 I am not trying to be anyone else other than my own self.

19
20 To date within our schools these things
21 don't occur. We find that our children are being told
22 to measure up. It is very damaging because they can never
23 be something that they are not something that is not
24 encapsulating them as a people.

25 We go on to another area:

1 accountability. A fellow by the name of Terry Cross at
2 one time developed a method which can be used to make
3 evaluations, perhaps audits of things like companies,
4 organizations, agencies colleges, universities. If you
5 look at things like programs, design of programs, design
6 of services, the resources, the staff, the image, and
7 training, and those just being some basic bench marks,
8 and we use those to look at institutions.

9 We will find that even within our own
10 Reserve communities much of these things have been designed
11 by other people. We need to take on that responsibility
12 for ourselves, and when we look at these institutions and
13 use those bench marks as a way of making an evaluation,
14 an audit of those particular facilities, we find that they
15 are sadly lacking in terms of their being able to project
16 the image of our people in a healthy way.

17 Again, we are told that we are lacking
18 not being able to make a contribution to this world.

19 Currently, communities accounts only
20 for the dollars that are being spent. There is no
21 relationship to the social development of our people.
22 Somehow, we are going to have to turn that around if we
23 are going to make truly great steps in terms of growth
24 as people.

25 Somehow we have to reach out to that

1 Canadian public and get them to support us and holding
2 accountable the government in terms of asking them, "What
3 have you been doing with the money in terms of helping,
4 socially, looking at the development of our people?"

5 We look across the country and we see
6 the suicide rates. We see the dropout rates. No one asks
7 whether or not there is anyone going to be there to pick
8 up the pieces. We run to the government asking for help,
9 but we don't see any coming in any meaningful ways.

10 I have to go and remember and go back
11 to my treaties and think about what the government has
12 been asking me to do. Asking the government to be released
13 from its responsibility, not being prepared to share the
14 resources, resources which are mine by birth. I think the
15 government has to be able to be held accountable for that.

16

17 So, in closing I will say that my people
18 are awakening. They have been sleeping for a time. But,
19 we will move ahead with or without the Government of Canada.

20 Again I will go back to what I said at
21 the beginning:

22 "I will cry my own sorrow!

23 I will sing my own song!

24 My spirit will dance upon this land!

25 That's the way it will be."

1 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** You
2 left me speechless, Art. I would like to thank you for
3 your presentation.

4 Mr Dussault.

5 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
6 very much. I understand that this is a personal
7 presentation and not on behalf of the college.

8 Well, I think that there is a lot to
9 reflect in what you just told us. We are going to do so.

10 As a point of information, you mentioned
11 -- you talked at one point about a court procedure here
12 in Sudbury -- when you were talking in your document about
13 the various groups and that the most numerous one with
14 the system of one person one vote could overtake the others
15 and you referred to a situation here in Sudbury where there
16 is a court procedure.

17 Could you expand a bit to clarify what
18 is involved?

19 **ART PETAHTEGOOSE:** When you think
20 about what is happening over at Bear Island. It has been
21 in the news quick a bit, within the past decade or so.

22 When you go back and look at the clan
23 system, we start looking at how land was held, collectively
24 and individually by groups of people.

25 In the past, when you start thinking

1 about family sizes, it was understood that one family at
2 one time looked after one piece of property and they looked
3 at it as being theirs in one point of view, and they shared
4 the resources of that land base, collectively and
5 individually.

6 And before they would remove themselves
7 from that land or before anyone came in to use the land
8 that they occupied, the person who came in to use the
9 property would ask for permission before they would harvest
10 the resources.

11 Today we find that we are being told that
12 we don't own that land and the individuals who relied upon
13 it, or who rely upon it for their life, are being told
14 that it doesn't belong to them.

15 In terms of our culture, a clan took
16 possession of a piece of property and considered it to
17 be theirs and exercised that right to care for that land
18 as a custodian. They understood that the land didn't
19 belong to them. That again is a different point of view.

20

21 But by today's standards we look at that
22 land by being ours in defense of our rights as a people.

23 Now when we start looking at how decisions are made and
24 exercised and the use of property.

25 If you have large groups of people who

1 are wanting your property on the basis of government, you
2 can be outvoted and then laws can be passed to take
3 possession of your property, and this is a great danger
4 which we see within our reserve systems. People fear
5 losing their land on the basis of that kind of activity.

6 The proclamation recognized our
7 Aboriginal interest and within my community we were given
8 letters supposedly coming from Queen Victoria telling us
9 that: as long as there is an Indian born you will never
10 have to worry about your life. You will be given a home.
11 You will share the resources of this land. As long as
12 there is a child born you will be treated as a bother,
13 as a member of the Royal Family.

14 And I think that as an Aboriginal person
15 that is my right because this is my home.

16 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Okay, I see
17 better what you had in mind.

18 At this point I would like to ask Mary
19 if she has a comment or a remark?

20 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
21 very much, no comment.

22 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank you
23 for sharing these thoughts with us.

24 I hope that we will be able to come up
25 with recommendations that will be helpful. I think that

1 it was important that you made this submission to the
2 Commission. It's on the record. Thank you.

3 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

4 Again Art, I would like to thank you for taking the time
5 to give your presentation.

6 Our final presenter for the evening is
7 Peter Paradis. He is the Staff Counsellor at Newberry
8 House.

9 Peter is also involved in a number of
10 committees and organizations within Sudbury. The issues
11 he will be discussing is the mandate direction of the Royal
12 Commission, action plan suggestions and implementation,
13 the relationship between the Royal Commission and the
14 Canadian State and Political process.

15 Peter, you have 20 minutes to give your
16 presentation. Okay.

17 **PETER PARADIS:** Thank you. Bonjour,
18 Mr. Dussault, Commission Members.

19 It is an honour to be here to speak after
20 hearing some of the presentations today and knowing
21 character and some of the presenters.

22 I thought I would begin first of all by
23 saying before I appeared here -- decided to appear -- I
24 check with an Elder and asked whether or not she had made
25 a presentation, whether or not she thought it would be

1 worthwhile to come here before the Royal Commission.

2 I have never done anything like this
3 before, and it was after speaking with her that I thought
4 I would do this.

5 Let me begin my saying I am going to be
6 going back and forth between my notes a little bit.

7 After hearing a little bit of what was
8 said today there's horror stories, horror stories and I
9 don't in any way envy your position, the position of the
10 Commission based on what it is you set out to do.

11 I am quite sceptical of our Government
12 Inquiries, Commissions, Hearings -- Royal or other wise.

13 You have quite an awesome responsibility
14 and at this point in obligation to the peoples, the
15 individuals, and the communities which have appeared
16 before you.

17 You've placed yourselves in a position
18 of trust. People have agreed to speak with you, sometimes
19 for the first time in their lives about issues about their
20 lives. And you at the same time have offered that this
21 Royal Commission is going to be substantially different
22 from other Royal Commissions, that this Commission would
23 not be another government study which will sit on the shelf.

24 The Commission, there is no use going over the same stories
25 and the same information that is out there already.

1 So I thought to myself, well even if that
2 does not turn out to be true and that is merely another
3 government study and something good still may come out
4 of it, not just from speaking and hearing people, but that
5 you may be setting the stage for some changes.

6 From what I have read, revolutions often
7 occur when people have nothing left to lose, but the
8 Commission, by encouraging people to believe in the
9 Commission and the outcome of the Commission, you have
10 raised people's expectations. You've asked people to have
11 hope, that this will somehow be different. When people's
12 hopes have been raised and they are in a very oppressive
13 situations, and then they are let down once again and you've
14 created quite a dangerous situation.

15 You've created a situation where people
16 have no more belief in conducting business as usual
17 continue to go on to rather desperate measures. So you
18 have placed yourself in a rather dangerous situation if
19 nothing comes out of this.

20 Firstly, because you will be breaking
21 a sacred trust between the Elders and those who have
22 appeared before you. I read over both of the overviews
23 at the previous two hearings and the previous two phases.

24 I believe this is the third phase and it was stated in
25 the published overview that the mandate of the commission,

1 the essence the spirit of the work was to help somehow
2 and bring about a new relationship of the four cornerstones
3 for change -- touchstone for change.

4 That is largely what I want to speak
5 about. It is mentioned in there that you wanted to look
6 at ways and means to shift a slow moving political process,
7 to help establish a workable consensus. I believe also,
8 it was hoped that the Commission would leave behind a legacy
9 of useful ideas and substantial ideas. And I wanted to
10 take a little bit of issue at that. It is almost a
11 contradiction in terms if the Commission merely plans to
12 leave behind ideas or recommendations. I think if you
13 are acting -- the Commission is acting within a larger
14 political process. The Commission is not objective --
15 the Commission seen within a political context -- the
16 Commission must be at least critically understand the
17 process and the forces that work in the political milieu.

18
19 One of the areas, the overview of round
20 one hearings included a schedule of matters for the
21 Commission to consider, another was for the government
22 to consider. Item "G" of the overview states that :
23 The problems are already well known. They are already
24 well documented and that further
25 studies of the problems would be

1 both superfluous and
2 condescending, that the universal
3 frustration and the breadth and
4 depth of the frustration and
5 disappointment is quite troubling,
6 but that the Commission presented
7 a real opportunity for change and
8 dialogue."

9 At the same time it's stated that
10 "There is the hope that the Government and Parliament will
11 therefore demonstrate the
12 political will to follow through
13 on the recommendations."

14 I think in Phase Three as you are
15 approaching the final phase of number of years of hearing.
16 That leaving the final outcome of the Commission to hope
17 is politically naive at its best and perhaps an outright
18 sham at its worst.

19 There's two areas in terms of this
20 relationship: one perhaps is between First Nations and
21 the Public or individuals; the other is between the State
22 and there is a difference, I think, between the Government
23 and the State.

24 For example, recent changes in Ontario
25 or British Columbia with the election of new governments

1 illustrated the instable and shifting nature of western
2 political models were a change in government parties
3 suddenly produces a new willingness to enter into dialogue
4 and negotiations with First Nations and their respective
5 areas of jurisdiction.

6 If a political system can shift its
7 priority so quickly and its fortunes overnight, it doesn't
8 appear to be one which bears much promise of a permanent
9 relationship.

10 The recent Royal Commission, the new
11 relationship in Ontario and British Columbia with
12 declarations of understanding -- I really think I have
13 less to do with the new understanding or change of heart
14 or a change of mind. They are a political response to
15 the determined efforts in the initiative of First Nations
16 themselves and specially the armed actions of the summer
17 of 1990 and Kahnasetake (PH) and Kahnawakne (PH) and the
18 military occupation by the Canadian state of those areas.

19 That's reality.

20 That's one of the reasons this
21 Commission has been created. It's political force at the
22 barrel of a gun, which opened up this new juncture.

23 In addition to defeat of the Meech Lake
24 Accord which was a victory for, I believe, all Canadians
25 over a government which is unaccountable and undemocratic.

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That is also why the recent Charlottetown Accord was defeated because it was a straw vote. It was a plebiscite on the government whether they wished it or not. I think the crucial point about the outcome of here is the lack of a political will.

What happens after here? I think that you have one of the areas in the new relationship deals with public education and the idea that if the Canadian public over a period of time becomes aware and educated in regards to some of these issues. They in turn will be able to influence their government and I don't think that a dialogue and good relations between individuals or the public, changes the colonial situation, decolonization if we look at models around the world, or if they are there to study they are quite understandable how that works.

In this case, we are living in a relatively -- my understanding is an undemocratic system -- not merely the government at this point, and that we're not better off in terms of influencing the government than anyone else. That is the nature of the state, that's the nature of western power.

We are in an area right in the overview Ojibwa territory where today less than one per cent of

1 the original land is being held by that nation.

2 So to kind of get real about this, I'm
3 really wondering first of all the number of things that
4 could be done if the Commission wishes to look at practical
5 recommendations and solutions.

6 One of the areas that I think would be
7 -- I requested some information from the research division
8 which unfortunately didn't get here -- one of the areas
9 I wanted to find out about was in the last fifty years
10 was -- how many Royal Commissions had taken place on any
11 issue and out of that how many actually brought about
12 changes?

13 The other area was sort of the time table
14 and the time frame in terms of organizing this and I didn't
15 have time. I read the overviews as quickly as I could.

16

17 I would of liked to read the Judges Act,
18 the Inquiry Act under which this been come together. Some
19 of the previous reports mentioned in there, Coolican
20 Report, the Berger Report, the other Commissions and
21 Inquiries in order to understand the history of Royal
22 Commissions and exactly what comes out of them.

23 If this Commission is different than the
24 others, if there is First Nations or Aboriginal ownership
25 of it, then I am really wondering at this point -- it

1 wouldn't be too late to do what's necessary and take the
2 time to make sure that everyone gets to appear.

3 I think that one of the areas that is
4 perhaps missing it seems at this point is some type of
5 a Commission strategy in terms of implementing the changes.

6 I think there is lots of room to intervene in the process.

7
8 I think that you've stated in there that
9 you can at different points, if necessary, appoint task
10 force on different areas. I am wondering if any task
11 forces have been appointed at this point? Have any special
12 studies or intern studies been released?

13 And I think, understanding the role of
14 the media in reaching the public, you have to take advantage
15 of the small timely, but limited power of the Commission
16 at this point, which is to intervene, through the media
17 as you go along with what you have discovered with what
18 you have heard.

19 I don't understand the process either
20 in terms of how you will prioritize what you've heard into
21 issues, into recommendations, you certainly cannot put
22 all of them on paper.

23 I think that the Commission has to
24 understand that as individuals you are listening, you
25 moving in the dialogue, but the Commission itself is not

1 seen objectively or impartial.

2 At this point -- it is also in the
3 overview -- is declared that basically you're in the midst
4 right now of an undeclared war and it's highly likely that
5 you are being used as a tactic, as a strategy to buy time
6 for the state.

7 Politics is also, from a Western point
8 of view is another way of waging war, and while you've
9 been hearing this the government has gone ahead with its
10 own agenda. It is continuing to implement its own changes.

11 It certainly is not waiting for the outcome of this.
12 And at least in the short term some of the work that you
13 have been doing, I believe, the government has been using
14 Royal Commission as an excuse as a delay in acting.

15 I think Ovid Mercredi, Grand Chief
16 suggested that what you can do is act as a voice to expose
17 colonial abuses of power abuse underway, what Elijah Harper
18 has called the Federal Policies of Genocide.

19 It's mind boggling to think what you have
20 been privileged to hear and experience. One of the areas
21 that struck me right off that was Aboriginal languages
22 are on the verge of extinction, but the final
23 recommendations will only be released into official
24 languages.

25 During the Constitutional Hearings Ovid

1 Mercredi also appeared before you after learning a meeting
2 had been scheduled between the Prime Minister and the
3 Premieres without his participation, while the same time
4 Joe Clarke was pressing for a ten-year delay in
5 implementing self government.

6 In Winnipeg, Manitoba, another
7 government port recommendations of the Manitoba Aboriginal
8 Justice Inquiry simply were refused to be implemented or
9 accepted
10 -- Phil Fontaine pointed it out to you. This was while
11 the Commission was meeting.

12 So I wonder how the Commission is
13 planning to be different? I guess it all depends on
14 whether or not the government, the Canadian Government
15 wishes to be any different. It's a fat chance. Certainly
16 there is going to be a new government in power when the
17 Commission comes out.

18 Their priorities for the first year to
19 two years will probably be getting in power, implementing
20 their own agenda. And if the Commission's reports are
21 put out at that point, I mean that the realities of a huge
22 monstrous system like the government is they will accept
23 them and they'll need another year to two years to study
24 them at least.

25 I think probably if the recommendations

1 simply aren't fuel for further historical research or brief
2 flash in the media pan, you have some power right now.

3 I would suggest that you establish task
4 forces now, even if they go on for another two to three
5 years. Set up special studies that have been requested
6 by communities. Issue interim reports.

7 I know that you probably have limited
8 budgets and resources, but if this is really a new attempt
9 to establish a newer relationship then go way over budget
10 and don't worry about it. Establish as many task forces
11 as necessary while you can. Change the time lines if
12 necessary as you enter into Phase Four.

13 New relationship is involving the land
14 mass resources, billions of dollars, and I don't think
15 current deficit or physical restraints economical reality
16 have to be an overriding factor when peoples lives and
17 nations are at stake.

18 So I would suggest that certainly,
19 probably you would need media strategy, public education
20 strategy, for the time while you are here. If necessary,
21 you have to hire more staff to do that. Do that if you
22 have to hire more Elders or honorariums for Elders or
23 experts, do that.

24 In the short term at least, it might a
25 little bit of a job creation project. Be nothing wrong

1 with that, that's concrete. In intervenors at Waswannippi
2 (PH) felt that modern day treaty arrangement of James Bay
3 Quebec agreement, the first twentieth century treaty,
4 government's, provincial and federal, hadn't lived up to
5 the commitments, funding had not been provided,
6 consultations had left them out. More recent Yukon
7 negotiations were also described as one sided because
8 Canada controlled the funding, the time tables, the policy
9 and the political will to negotiate and conclude
10 agreements.

11 I have similar concerns about the
12 Commission as well. If the Commission is or plans to be
13 different, and I would suggest that you request all the
14 necessary resources and funding that you need for this.

15
16 If the Olympics -- I am thinking of the
17 76 Olympics in Montreal when a couple of hundred millions
18 dollars over budget for a sports event for a week or two
19 weeks -- and this budget shouldn't be -- any budget
20 requirements put on this process. If you need more
21 researchers, the same thing. The relations of power in
22 order to -- I think that is all what it comes down to --
23 who has the power?

24 Right now the Commission has a certain
25 amount of power -- potentially have a lot more media

1 attention than you realize. I think if you released
2 interim reports based on specific issues and say, "This
3 is what we have heard, here's 10 of the areas we are
4 considering, hold the press conference, bring people
5 together" and do that continually over the next couple
6 of months. Here is the opportunity to bring this into
7 public consciousness.

8 Most importantly, the fact there is an
9 election coming up, and I think that it is imperative that
10 you intervene in the political process. I think the only
11 way the First Nation's issues are going to be something
12 that the political candidates will have to take a stand
13 on, will have to speak about, will have to address, will
14 have to respond to, that it will become an election issue.

15
16 Partly it's the Royal Commission.
17 That's part of the area you can work in, and I would suggest
18 that you have access to the Media at this point, and public
19 education dealing with people and individuals is something
20 that can take years. That's forever, that wont stop, but
21 that is not really dealing with relations of power and
22 I think the Media we've seen recently is like a third force
23 in government at this point.

24 So those are pretty much my
25 recommendations. I think when I thought about what the

1 Royal Commission could or could not do and to move beyond
2 merely hoping for change or political will is to become
3 involved in the process, and my suggestions would be that
4 in your final report, there's already been enough written,
5 whether it's the Declaration of the Assembly or First
6 Nations. To put out something that was 10 points,
7 something quite simple, something people could understand,
8 talk about, and deal with, and somehow the idea of getting
9 the government to find out what the mechanisms for
10 implementing these are going to be is also very important.

11

12 One other area, very briefly that came
13 to mind was the area of how to cultural and spiritual
14 traditions becoming a part of the larger acceptance of
15 the Canadian public for institutions.

16 I certainly think that the presentation
17 of the Royal Commission to the Governor General, Solicitor
18 General, whoever its going to might also be an opportunity
19 for that to be done in a culturally appropriate way. That
20 that process, that event itself, be the beginning of a
21 new relationship on that level at least.

22 So I guess in ending I certainly don't
23 envy the position you've put yourself in -- that there
24 is a very dangerous situation here. The Government is
25 going ahead. It's continued to do what its wants to do.

1 I think about the tax changes that are being proposed.

2

3 I think we can look at all kinds of things
4 right across the board and if it all comes down to political
5 will, and I think the Royal Commission can come out --
6 it doesn't all have to be negative, but I think if you
7 come out with some bold suggestions, that would probably
8 be a really good point in the discussions.

9 Thank-you.

10 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:**

11 Thank you, Peter, for your very lively presentation.

12 Mr. Dussault.

13 **CO-CHAIR MR. RENE DUSSAULT:** Thank-you.

14 Merci. It is certainly a good way to complete a day of
15 hearings.

16 There are many many issues you put
17 forward. I will deal with some of them which appear to
18 me to be the key ones.

19 First of all as far as Commissions are
20 concerned, as a recollection I would like to say that the
21 British Government, before the creation of Canada itself,
22 has set up six (6) Commissions between 1828 and 1858.

23 These Commissions have been very
24 influential in establishing the policies that have been
25 with us for the last 125-30 years that are the policies

1 enshrined into the Indian Act.

2 So what this is telling us is that very
3 often Commissions have lasting roles is seen later on and
4 not necessarily in the week following the report because
5 it has set out the direction and if it is the wrong one,
6 it's possible to suffer many many years, and it is not
7 always easy to correct.

8 The second thing is that one of the first
9 things that we did after the creation of the Commission
10 was to look at the various reports of the committee,
11 parliamentary committee task forces, working groups mainly
12 those established by government, the federal government,
13 various provincial governments, but also some of the major
14 studies that were undertaken Aboriginal organizations.

15 We've asked people at Carleton
16 University to prepare a survey and a summing up of 125
17 of those reports and this will be made available soon
18 because it gives the basis for this Commission to forge
19 ahead. Those reports were produced in the last 25 years
20 since the Aufern (PH) Report in '65 or so.

21 The Royal Commission is, as Mary Sillett
22 said earlier, is not representing the federal government.

23 Commissioners are appointed on personal capacity, though
24 obviously in this one there are four Aboriginal
25 Commissioners who have been deeply involved in Aboriginal

1 issues and affairs in their previous professional life
2 but, again if we are to be successful, we cannot become
3 purely an advocacy group for Aboriginal People.

4 We have to be critical with Aboriginal
5 and Non-Aboriginal peoples and our recommendations have
6 to be tested in both communities.

7 Of course it is not easy, what we did
8 from the start, we made a tour of the capitals and made
9 met with all the Premiers. In fact, 8 out of 10, 2 others
10 were outside the country and the head of the territories.

11 We have met with provincial
12 organizations also to plans those hearings because we
13 wanted to establish a genuine dialogue. It is only after
14 the preliminary tour that we came up with those four rounds
15 of hearings, publications and documents between each of
16 them.

17 Testing one idea from one round to the
18 other in order to get more and more focus on the key
19 priorities and the key issues and the solutions. We also
20 decided to set up an intervener funding program. We were
21 able to convince the federal government to give us 8 million
22 dollars to put into that fund that was administered for
23 us by David Crombie, the former Minister of Indian Affairs.

24

25 We did not want to be in a situation where

1 we would have to allocate money to groups that would come
2 up and present brief to the Commission. So these funds
3 have been used to fund 142 projects. These projects are
4 being presented to us during this third round of hearings
5 and the fourth one early in the fall.

6 If there are to be solutions, designed
7 and brought forward by Aboriginal Peoples in particular,
8 it should be through this fund. We have heard many
9 solutions in the communities, but many of them are
10 intuitive. We felt that there was to be research support
11 given to the service agencies like the Friendship Centres,
12 to the Women Organizations and on and on.

13 Along side of this process we have lined
14 up 150 organizations and all walks of life, unions,
15 business, the arts, universities and we wanted to be sure
16 that we hear the Non-Aboriginal views. The forestry
17 interest, the mining, the fishing, independent trappers,
18 Non-Aboriginal and on and on to make sure that we would
19 have a good debate.

20 We decided also to host a National Round
21 Table policy oriented in order to get technical solutions
22 to difficult problems. We had one on urban issue -- we
23 just published the report last week -- one on justice,
24 one on health and social issues, economical development
25 and the next one will be early July on education. We are

1 going to have three or four additional ones in the Fall
2 and early '94. We also embarked upon the start of a major
3 research program. The basic thrust of our research
4 program is contracted out to over 100 case studies from
5 the bottom up in the communities on Aboriginal economies
6 on self government, on various aspects of social, culture
7 life and on and on.

8 We of course will be facing the challenge
9 of putting the stream of information coming from this
10 public participation process of four rounds of hearings
11 like this one. The round table and the result of our
12 research program together in a single discourse to come
13 up with recommendations and we plan to test our
14 recommendations with both Aboriginal and government and
15 the public in order to avoid too many surprises and so
16 there is no -- when you are appointed to an organization
17 like this one, there is no recipe attached to the Order
18 in Council.

19 You have to rely on the experience of
20 others and benefit on the experience of others to avoid
21 pit falls and also hope that people will put an effort
22 into the work of the Commission because that is
23 fundamental. It is obvious that solutions cannot come
24 from the bureaucracy and the reason why we are created
25 is that the Department of Indian Affairs have not been

1 successful in getting out of the frame work that is there.

2

3 It was felt that an independent body
4 would have the room to manoeuvre and do that, but for doing
5 this we need the output of everybody. That is exactly
6 what is happening across the country, both with Aboriginal
7 and Non-Aboriginal people.

8 That being said, we were told from the
9 inception of the Commission the creation that government
10 should not use us as an excuse for inaction. Aboriginal
11 people made this a condition for the creation of this
12 Commission.

13 On the other hand, when government moves
14 and in a way that is controversial, then we get the message:
15 stop government acting until you finish your final report.

16 So it's not easy to balance when government action seems
17 to be in the right directions. People hope that it will
18 happen before the Commission's work is finished, but when
19 there are some controversial pieces then that is a reverse.

20 Very early in the constitutional negotiations -- before
21 the constitutional negotiations started -- we published
22 a commentary on the Indian's Right of Self Government
23 because we felt that at this point it important to see
24 very clearly where we stand at.

25 The message was that it would be the

1 wrong battle to fight to try and put into the constitution
2 a delegated right. The source of the right should be
3 recognized as an inherent, but the party should negotiate
4 the limit and that is what happened in the following month.

5
6 The fact that the referendum for all
7 kinds of reasons didn't succeed, but we have been pretty
8 active on this area. We plan to publish interim reports
9 before the end of this year, '93. One on two sides, one
10 on the relocation of the Arctic Exiles, one on the
11 Residential School, one on the Process for Land Claims,
12 extinguishment, one on justice, and some others.

13 Of course we are very anxious to come
14 up with our overall report. We plan to do it in the Fall
15 '94, three years after our creation. We might have gone
16 at it for years with the kind of mandate that was given
17 to us but, we felt that the Royal Commission is a push
18 -- a big push. What is important is to set out the
19 direction, to come up with proposals that are practical
20 but also principles in terms of values, the basic
21 principles that will govern the new relationship, but it
22 has to be both ways.

23 There are expectations for changing the
24 attitudes and the mentality -- it is much more difficult
25 than changing laws, legislations and programs, and you

1 cannot legislate that. And there are expectations of
2 course from Aboriginal people toward the larger public,
3 but also the public have expectations as far as the
4 Aboriginal people are concerns.

5 If we speak about the relationship we
6 speak about partnership and it's a give and take, and of
7 course there is more catching up to be done as far as
8 Aboriginal people who are leftovers for so long in this
9 country, but nevertheless that is the situation we are
10 on.

11 We are publishing many of our documents
12 in Inuktituk -- summing up in Inuktituk. On the road we
13 have translation in four Aboriginal languages, in addition
14 to French and English. We try to be sensitive to this
15 situation of the languages. It is very important.

16 Again our research program is a major
17 one. I would like to stress that some of that research
18 will be a legacy for the future, won't have a strong bearing
19 on our recommendations, but others will be central to the
20 recommendations of the Commission. So it is not a
21 conflictual situation. You can have research that will
22 have a longer term impact and others that will be part
23 and partial of our own recommendations and priorities.

24 So, I could go on and on. I am just
25 trying, in a nut shell, to explain what we have been doing.

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We feel that the biggest mistake you could make, to feel that we are indispensable and that we want to make sure that everything will be done in the last detail. If we were to do that, first of all we would embark upon the role that is the role of the organizations to, through the negotiations with governments to decide a lot of things within the frame work.

Also, we would prevent the forces in the communities to follow the push that we are going to make, because the Commission at one point becomes negative. It is too long in the field because the actors at one point have to follow suit and really push. So what we hope to achieve in this process is to develop constituents that will be there when we are gone to push government for implementations.

It is not easy. We cannot do it alone. We need your help and the help of the other presenters and also an awareness that even if we are, it's not just the matter of being right, it's a matter of being understood, so the government and the public have to follow the thought and the work of the Commission in order that there will be a real political will to move forward.

The last word -- we are trying to find common grounds to build upon our solutions. We know that

1 there are differences. It's important that they are
2 understood.

3 Obviously, we will try to base and root
4 our recommendations on common grounds. The environment
5 is certainly a common ground. There are many others.
6 In health for an example, prevention -- we will discuss
7 that early this afternoon -- is another common ground where
8 there is a lot of commonalities between Aboriginal and
9 Non-Aboriginal people.

10 So, we could discuss that at length, but
11 in a nutshell I tried to convey what we have been doing
12 and the way we are trying to achieve our work. Very last
13 point, we can't just -- when we see things that are not
14 nice and that are difficult -- we just can't cry wolf all
15 the time.

16 We have to substantiate documents and
17 come up with forceful recommendations that are persuasive.

18 That is the role of the Royal Commission. Our role is
19 not to substitute ourselves to the Department of Indian
20 Affairs or to various government agencies that are there
21 to deal with the day to day problems.

22 Our role is to keep focus on the long
23 term goals and the mandate of the Commission as such.
24 Not easy, but that is the way we have tried to perform
25 our mandate so far.

1 Mary.

2 COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT: Thank you
3 very much.

4 I would like to say very summarily that
5 I think that we have spent hours and hours and hours
6 discussing these very issues.

7 I said earlier this morning that this
8 Commission was different. I mean that. I don't think
9 that you could even look in a history books and see a
10 Commission made up of four (4) Aboriginal people. I don't
11 think that you can ever see a Commission with such a
12 comprehensive mandate. I don't think that you could ever
13 see a Commission that has hired as many Aboriginal People
14 as we have.

15 Having said that, no one ever made
16 promises. Where ever we go, they say that there are no
17 guarantees. We don't work in a vacuum. There are many
18 organizations and there have been many organizations out
19 there before us and there will after us, who are working
20 on these very same issues.

21 I can say for myself, you know, my life
22 didn't begin with the Commission and neither did George's
23 and neither did Viola's. I think that all three of us
24 have spent our entire working careers dedicated to these
25 issues. And I say that we are different.

1 I mean that I remember for ours -- I mean
2 -- that there is a natural sensitivity to go into
3 communities that no one would even think about going to.

4 There is a natural sensitivity to making sure that when
5 we go into those communities, that we hire people in those
6 communities, who know those communities and who tell us
7 how we should conduct our hearing, who we should have for
8 translators, what language would do, what should we do
9 right do make sure that Elders are here, that women are
10 here, and that youth are here.

11 So we have tried very, very hard to
12 ensure those kinds of things. I think it's well with
13 respect to interim reports.

14 When we first started the Commission,
15 we went to every single provincial capital, we met with
16 not only the provincial governments but, we met with
17 Aboriginal governments too. Aboriginal organizations, we
18 told them what we are going to do. We asked for their
19 advice. We've asked for that advice throughout the
20 process. We still have consultations with the major
21 groups. We continually ask them for their advice on how
22 we should do things right. And we were told very, very
23 clearly that, you know, there are issues in this country
24 that have been outstanding this God only knows when, and
25 you cannot wait till your final report until you address

1 them. You have to have the ability to produce interim
2 reports. There must be some reports that were produced
3 during the life of our Commission because they have been
4 waiting too long to be addressed.

5 We have heard in no uncertain terms that
6 the Aboriginal leaders in this country would never have
7 agreed to the creation of this Commission unless there
8 was an assurance by the Prime Minister and the federal
9 government of the time that this Commission would not be
10 used as an excuse to delay the initiatives that are going
11 on Aboriginal communities.

12 As I said earlier this morning, I am
13 glad. Nunavut of the historic event that happened in the
14 eastern central Arctic but last week they signed an
15 agreement -- it happened. Changes are still happening with
16 or without us.

17 I'd say that that I agreed to take this
18 Commission because I believe. I believe that there is
19 a possibility for change, but I don't think that we're
20 so important that we are the only show in town, we are
21 not. There are a lot of other organizations there, doing
22 very good work at the community level, at the regional
23 level, and at the provincial level. We are just one
24 process. I would like to believe that we're trying.

25 **MS BLANCHE MEAWASSIGE, MODERATOR:** I

1 would like to thank you Peter for being our final presenter.

2 Before we ask Art Petahtegoose to give the closing prayer.

3 I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and
4 every one of you for attending today.

5 The presentations were very well
6 presented and articulated extremely well. Just a brief
7 summary on a few of the things that we heard to day.

8 We heard Elders speak on the importance
9 of language retention. We heard about the need for
10 traditional healing. One Elder was very concerned about
11 the new legislation that is being up forward in the house
12 on the 64 herbs that will be banned. We heard another
13 Elder speak about the concern for the chartered lands act.
14 She suggested that the process be stopped.

15 We heard another individual speak on the
16 Family Support, especially in the areas of single mums,
17 who cannot be guaranteed support payments from the
18 estranged spouse who lives on reserve.

19 We also heard an Elder who spoke on the
20 MCU Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy. She
21 believes that there is no equality on distributions of
22 moneys.

23 Although our Elders are very important,
24 we also heard about -- heard from the Elders of tomorrow.

25 We heard from our youth. They want or see the need for

1 more education councillors in our schools. They require
2 more input into the system. They feel that there is a
3 back lash of the residential school system and they feel
4 it as youths today. They would like to see more employment
5 for students. They acknowledge that the addiction rate
6 is high among our youth, therefore more resources are
7 needed.

8 Again, I would like to thank all of you
9 for coming out.

10 Art, if you would do us the honour,
11 please, of giving us the closing prayer.

12 **--- Closing Prayer**

13 --- Whereupon the Hearing was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. to
14 resume on Tuesday, June 1, 1993 at 8:30 a.m. in Sudbury.