

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR  
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

LOCATION/ENDROIT: ELIZABETH METIS SETTLEMENT, ALBERTA

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 1993

VOLUME: 1

"for the record..."

**STENOTRAN**

1376 Kilborn Ave.

OTTAWA 521-0703

## I N D E X

JUNE 16, 1993

NAME	PAGE
Opening Prayer by Mr. Wilfred Collins	1
Opening Remarks by Mr. Wilfred Collins	2
Presentation by Métis Settlements General Council	7
Mr. Ken Noskey	
Mr. Garry Parenteau	
Mr. Alphonse L'Hirondelle	
Mr. Dennis Surrendi	
Mr. Archie Collins	
Presentation by East Prairie Métis Settlement	123
Mr. Harry Supernault	
Presentation by Fishing Lake Métis Settlement	133
Mr. Randy Parenteau	
Mr. Clifford Calliou	
Mr. Wayne Daniels	
Presentation by Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	144
Mr. Mike Sigurdur	
Presentation by Peavine Métis Settlement	150
Mr. Elmer Anderson	
Presentation by Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement	157
Ms Florence Wanuch	
Presentation by Peavine Métis Settlement	183
Mr. Rick Noskey	
Presentation by Elizabeth Métis Settlement	189
Mr. Wilfred Collins	
Presentation by Raymond Larocque	202
Presentation by Mr. Art Thompson	229
Presentation by Mr. Emile Blyan	231
Presentation by Ms Phyllis Collins	231

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Elizabeth Métis Settlement, Alberta

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, June 16, 1993

3 at 9:10 a.m.

4 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: Could I have  
5 your attention, please. Could I ask people to sit down,  
6 please.

7 MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator): I am  
8 Ambrose Lepine. I will be Chairing parts of the meeting  
9 today.

10 We have the opening prayer by Wilfred  
11 Collins.

12 MR. WILFRED COLLINS: Good morning  
13 everyone. As part of our culture we have adopted the  
14 Christian culture. We did not forget our native culture.  
15 I will be burning the sweetgrass before I say the morning  
16 prayer. First I will do it in Cree.

17 OPENING PRAYER - MR. WILFRED COLLINS

18 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: Thank you,  
19 Wilfred.

20 MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):  
21 Wilfred, will you make your opening remarks.

22 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: Go ahead and  
23 make your presentation. As soon as you are finished we

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 will invite everybody up who is going to present in the  
2 morning.

3 Could I ask people to keep it down a tiny  
4 bit. It's a little loud.

5 **MR. WILFRED COLLINS:** Good morning,  
6 ladies and gentlemen, members of the Royal Commission and  
7 honoured guests. It is an honour to our settlement to  
8 host this part of the study by the Royal Commission on  
9 Aboriginal Peoples. This will very much influence the  
10 future of our country.

11 Our settlements have come a long way and  
12 have struggled hard towards having more control over our  
13 destiny. We now have doors of opportunity open to us.  
14 This study will open many positive pathways to the good.  
15 The concerns that are presented here today will be used  
16 as guidelines with a resulting positive impact.

17 I now invite Ambrose Lepine, our  
18 Vice-Chairman, to continue with the Chairman's duties.  
19 Thank you.

20 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
21 you, Wilfred.

22 At this time we will call up Ken Noskey,  
23 the President of the General Council and Dennis Surrendi,

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 the Commissioner, to join us at the table here, Archie  
2 Collins, Chairman of the Appeals Tribunal and Randy Hardy,  
3 Chairman of the Access Committee. If they could join us  
4 at the table here.

5 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Before we  
6 hear from the presenters, I would just want to make a very  
7 few opening remarks.

8 The Commission is in the middle of --  
9 actually concluding now our third round of Hearings. We  
10 have been to over 100 settlements, communities, cities,  
11 municipalities in Canada. We have been to correctional  
12 institutes and universities and high schools and so forth.

13 This part of our work is to involve as many people as  
14 possible, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in our  
15 process and the intent of our Hearings has been to try  
16 and solicit suggestions for the future, the answers to  
17 the many problems that people have had; the solutions,  
18 the remedies, the ideas that people have as to how life  
19 can be improved and made better for both Aboriginal and  
20 non-Aboriginal.

21 We are travelling in three teams at the  
22 same time, so every week that we are holding Hearings,  
23 every day we are holding three sets of them in different

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 parts of Canada at the same time. So, in this team we  
2 have myself, I am the Co-Chair, Georges Erasmus, and with  
3 me is our Métis Commissioner Paul Chartrand, a lawyer from  
4 Manitoba.

5                   The Commission is also involved in a  
6 massive amount of research that we have launched ourselves,  
7 in the range of about \$9 million that we are doing  
8 ourselves. A lot of that work is directly with communities  
9 and the work we are doing with communities is very much  
10 providing a certain degree of control of that work to the  
11 communities we are actually working with. We are doing  
12 over 100 case studies across the country.

13                   In addition, we have provided an \$8  
14 million fund that was handled by David Crombie for an  
15 Intervenor Funding Program and that money has been provided  
16 to organizations all across the country, primarily to  
17 Aboriginal organizations, but also non-Aboriginal  
18 organizations.

19                   All of this information was brought  
20 together, including an analysis we did of former inquiries,  
21 studies research projects that Aboriginal organizations  
22 across the country, plus governments, provincial,  
23 territorial have done in the past. So that the work of

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the Commission is based on other work that had been done  
2 in the past.

3                   Very soon we will be starting to put that  
4 together to start looking at our final reports. We hope  
5 to be finished by the end of 1994. In the meantime, there  
6 will be a number of interim reports which we will be coming  
7 out with later this year.

8                   So, with that I will just open it. We  
9 would like to encourage people when they are making  
10 presentations to us to keep in mind that what we are after  
11 is not only information and not only a clear description  
12 of the problems people foresee in their lives that they'd  
13 like remedied, but we would like your ideas on how they  
14 can be remedied. That's the reason we are actually  
15 involved in the travel.

16                   I am sure you have heard this spiel  
17 before, but I just wanted to restate it again.

18                   I am quite excited to be here. For  
19 myself, it's the first time I have actually been on a Métis  
20 settlement. The Commission has had other Hearings where  
21 we have been in Métis communities and we have been in other  
22 Métis communities, but in Alberta. This is the first time  
23 I've actually been on one of the settlements, so I am very,

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 very pleased to be here.

2 I will see if Paul has any comments.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you  
4 for the welcome here on Elizabeth Settlement. The very  
5 fine weather, of course, added a special flavour to that.

6 When I arrived here this morning I was seized with the  
7 sense of history as we got out of the van and noticed the  
8 Louis Riel Baseball Park. That, of course, stirred old  
9 memories in an old has been baseball player like myself.

10 That's about -- nothing else can stir these days.

11 The sense of history was deepened when  
12 I found out that we had a Moderator with the famous name  
13 of Ambrose Lepine, of course Louis Riel's very famous  
14 partner.

15 Again, I am happy to be here. I see we  
16 have a very full agenda, so we have quite severe restraints  
17 to operate in. I am anxious to hear from you, so I will  
18 take up no more time and move onto the agenda.

19 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE, (Moderator):** Thank  
20 you.

21 To introduce the first speaker will be  
22 Ken Noskey, the President of the General Council.

23 **MR. KEN NOSKEY (President, Métis**



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 **Settlements General Council):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2

3 First of all, I'd like to thank the  
4 Commission for taking the time out of your busy schedule  
5 to attend a Hearing and hold a Hearing in one of the eight  
6 settlements here in the Province of Alberta. I've made  
7 a number of other submissions and I've met these gents  
8 a number of other times during constitutional talks and  
9 I'd like to personally thank them because they are one  
10 of us I guess. Like Paul says, he's a ball player and  
11 so that's one of us for sure. Georges being the former  
12 President of a national Aboriginal group, he knows all  
13 about politics and so forth.

14 I'd like to just say my personal thank  
15 you on behalf of the eight settlements of Alberta.

16 I know that the Chair asked for myself  
17 to be present here and to come up to the table on my own,  
18 but the presentation is going to include three presenters;  
19 myself, our Vice-President of the General Council, Garry  
20 Parenteau to my immediate right and further to the right  
21 there is Alphonse L'Hirondelle who is our Treasurer of  
22 the organization.

23 Unfortunately, the other member of the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Executive couldn't be with us today due to a death of a  
2 daughter that he had involved in car accident last week,  
3 so he was unable to attend. And Richard Poitras who is  
4 an Elder of the Métis settlements and also the founding  
5 father of the Federation of Métis Settlement Associations  
6 and who we hold dear to our hearts. We are just sad to  
7 see that he lost one of his loved ones.

8                               So, in saying all that and welcoming the  
9 Commission, and by the way and while I am at it, just a  
10 few opening remarks before I actually get into the  
11 presentation with you. Elizabeth Council, the host of  
12 the Hearing, I would like to say a job well done. I know  
13 that K.C. had a lot to do with this organization and I'd  
14 like to congratulate her for a job well done.

15                               **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** (Inaudible)

16                               **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** I am sure she did. I  
17 know better, Georges. I've been around.

18                               I would like to thank the Elizabeth  
19 Settlement for taking their settlement and making us all  
20 feel welcome and a job well done.

21                               To get to the presentation, I am going  
22 to be doing a lot of reading here and so just bear with  
23 me and I hope it all makes sense at the end.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   The General Council was created by Métis  
2   Settlements Act which was passed by the Alberta Legislature  
3   in 1990. The General Council is the common representative  
4   and the political voice of the eight Alberta Métis  
5   settlements and is the sole spokesperson for the  
6   settlements. No other Métis organization has the mandate  
7   or the jurisdiction to speak for them.

8                   The Métis Settlements Act was one of four  
9   pieces of legislation enacted by the Alberta Legislature  
10  in 1990 to realize the objectives of the Alberta Métis  
11  Settlements Accord. This Accord, entered into by the  
12  eight Alberta Métis settlements and the Government of  
13  Alberta in 1989, was designed to ensure that the land base  
14  of the settlements could not be alienated without the  
15  consent of the settlement membership, that the  
16  infrastructure of the settlements would, and with the  
17  assistance of the provincial government, be brought to  
18  levels comparable to those existing elsewhere in rural  
19  Alberta and that the settlements would assume the power  
20  to govern themselves democratically through institutions  
21  of representative government whose members would be chosen  
22  by the settlement membership.

23                  The four pieces of legislation designed

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 to implement the Métis Accord; the Métis Settlements Act,  
2 the Métis Settlements Accord Implementation Act, the Métis  
3 Settlements Land Protection Act, and the amendment to the  
4 Alberta Constitution Act, contain a wide array of  
5 provisions which will bring into existence a comprehensive  
6 form of self-government for the settlements. I will be  
7 discussing some of these at greater length later in my  
8 remarks. But before doing so, however, I would like to  
9 briefly discuss the historical background to our current  
10 Métis settlements legislation.

11 So, a bit about the background. The  
12 eight Alberta Métis settlements in existence today had  
13 their origins in the report of a Royal Commission  
14 established by the provincial government in 1934. On  
15 December 12th of that year, a Royal Commission headed by  
16 A.F. Ewing, a justice of the Alberta Supreme Court, was  
17 established to examine the situation of the Métis  
18 population of the province with regard to health, education  
19 and general welfare.

20 As a result of its investigations, the  
21 Ewing Commission concluded that Métis people in Alberta  
22 were suffering from high levels of poverty, a high  
23 incidence of disease and low levels of education and

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 training. To overcome these difficulties, the Commission  
2 recommended the establishment of Métis "colonies" in  
3 Alberta, land which would be held by the Crown but set  
4 aside for the exclusive use and occupation of Métis people.

5                   The Alberta government of the day  
6 responded sympathetically to this proposal and, working  
7 closely with well-known Métis leaders such as Pete Tompkins  
8 and Joe Dion, the government drafted and enacted the Métis  
9 Betterment Act, which received Royal Assent on November  
10 22nd, 1938. Although this Act was subject to several  
11 revisions over the years, it remained our governing  
12 legislation until the passage of the Métis Settlements  
13 Act and associated legislation some 52 years ago.

14                   Under the Métis Betterment Act, 12  
15 locations throughout northern Alberta were set aside as  
16 Métis colonies or settlements, as they later came to be  
17 known. The Act also established a framework for local  
18 government by providing that the conduct of the board and  
19 affairs of the settlements would be in the hands of boards  
20 elected by members of the settlements.

21                   However, the way in which the boards  
22 conducted their business and the affairs of the settlements  
23 were subject to the approval of the Alberta Cabinet member

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 responsible for the settlements. A government  
2 department, the Métis Settlements Branch, was established  
3 and it exercised close supervision over the day to day  
4 affairs of the settlement. The Government of Alberta and  
5 officials of the Branch ensured that autonomous  
6 decision-making on the part of the local Métis settlement  
7 leadership was carefully controlled.

8                   Whatever its deficiencies, the Métis  
9 Betterment Act did give Métis people in Alberta a land  
10 base which was exclusively for their own use, although  
11 it remained under the control of the provincial Crown and  
12 could at any time by an act of the provincial government  
13 be put to other uses. However, at the time the settlements  
14 were established, there was not much that could be done  
15 about this. During the first 30 years of the settlements'  
16 existence, the major efforts of the membership was devoted  
17 to ensuring that stable communities were established in  
18 the settlement areas.

19                   By the beginning of the 1990s, this had  
20 been accomplished in most of the settlements. As a result,  
21 the leadership in our communities began to focus more on  
22 events occurring outside the settlements. A number of  
23 factors had raised special concerns. By the late 1960s,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 four of the original 12 settlements established under the  
2 Métis Betterment legislation were abolished by the  
3 provincial government without consultation with the  
4 settlement membership. Anxiety that might be repeated  
5 was heightened in the early 1970s when a government task  
6 force seemed to suggest that the establishment of the  
7 settlements in the 1930s was not necessarily intended to  
8 be a permanent measure.

9                   Further, oil and gas development began  
10 on a number of settlements in the 1960s. Essential for  
11 the settlements since their established -- I think I've  
12 got my papers all messed up here. Excuse me for one minute.

13

14                   Further, oil and gas development began  
15 on a number of settlements in the 1960s. Settlement  
16 leaders, believing that subsurface resources properly  
17 belonged to the Métis settlement membership, demanded that  
18 the revenues from the sale of these resources should be  
19 given to the settlements. The provincial government  
20 refused this request and insisted that all sub-surface  
21 resource royalties remain in the hands of the provincial  
22 Crown. As a result, a court action was initiated in the  
23 early 1970s, whereby the settlements attempted to obtain

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1    what we believed to be rightfully ours.

2                                Confronted by these challenges to the  
3    security of the land base and the right to properly benefit  
4    from the resources, the leadership of the individual  
5    settlements, now eight in number, recognized the  
6    importance of collective action for the common good of  
7    all settlement members. By the 1970s the settlements had  
8    created a common organization in an effort to strengthen  
9    their voice. This body was called the Alberta Federation  
10   of Métis Settlements Associations and represented the  
11   common interests of all eight settlements. The governing  
12   board of the federation consisted of the chairpersons of  
13   each of the settlement councils with four executive members  
14   at large.

15                              The mandate of the newly established  
16   federation was to provide the settlement councils with  
17   a mechanism of sharing information and developing policies  
18   on matters that required co-operation from each of the  
19   settlements in the interest of the entire settlement  
20   population throughout Alberta. In addition, the  
21   federation provided the settlement councils with the  
22   ability to speak to government with a united voice to  
23   promote the interests of the entire settlement membership.



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   The formation of the federation brought  
2   a new focus to the struggle for attaining the goals which  
3   were central for the settlements since their  
4   establishment; security for the land base, exercise of  
5   self-government and adequate financial resources.  
6   Through the late 1970s, tension increased between the  
7   provincial government and the federation as the federation  
8   used various strategies to realize these goals.

9                   By the beginning of the 1980s, the  
10   settlements and the government were coming to the  
11   realization that in order to establish a productive  
12   political relationship, a new basis for such a relationship  
13   would have to be found.

14                  A significant contribution to the  
15   momentum for establishing this new relationship was made  
16   by the movement for constitutional renewal in Canada in  
17   the early 1980s. Representatives of the Federation of  
18   Métis Settlements Associations were actively involved in  
19   the struggle to obtain protection for Aboriginal rights  
20   in the Constitution Act, 1982 and attended three First  
21   Ministers' conferences on Aboriginal constitutional  
22   matters held in Ottawa in 1983, 1984 and 1985.

23                  After the failure of these conferences

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to achieve significant protection for Aboriginal rights  
2 caused our federation's leadership to reflect again upon  
3 how we best could achieve these objectives which were of  
4 central concern to the settlement membership since the  
5 first establishment of the settlements. If national  
6 constitutional negotiations could not realize these  
7 objectives, perhaps our traditional policy of pragmatic  
8 negotiations with the provincial government would provide  
9 an effective substitute, at least in the medium term.  
10 Such a approach had after all given Métis people in Alberta  
11 the only legally recognized collective land base in Canada,  
12 and perhaps it could also be used to enhance the  
13 jurisdiction and resource base of Métis communities which  
14 were established upon that land base.

15 As a result of adopting this approach,  
16 a series of negotiated agreements were entered into. The  
17 provincial government and the settlements, acting through  
18 the Federation of Métis Settlement Associations, the  
19 Alberta Métis Settlement Accord signed by the province  
20 and the federation on July 1, 1989 was the achievement  
21 which was reached by these agreements.

22 As I stated at the beginning of my  
23 remarks, the Accord established the foundations of a new

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 relationship between the settlements and the provincial  
2 government, a relationship which was given concrete  
3 expression in the four acts of the Alberta legislature  
4 implementing the provisions of the Accord.

5                   The Métis settlements legislation of  
6 1990 I'd briefly like to go over what that all entailed.

7     There are an awful lot of words. I hope it is doing some  
8 good. Are we all listening? I haven't bored you to death  
9 yet?

10                   At the centre of the new relationship  
11 were those dreams and aspirations which had motivated both  
12 the membership and the leadership of our settlements since  
13 they were established in the 1930s. I have referred to  
14 these several times in the course of my remarks and I will  
15 now briefly comment upon how the Accord helped to bring  
16 these closer to realization.

17                   One was the security of our land base.  
18 Fee simple title to 1.25 million acres of land contained  
19 in the eight Alberta Métis settlements was transferred  
20 from the Crown in right of Alberta to the Métis Settlements  
21 General Council, which under the new legislation is the  
22 successor body to the Federation of Métis Settlements  
23 Associations.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Under the Métis Settlements Land  
2 Protection Act, settlements cannot be expropriated, used  
3 as security, or be subjected to seizure. As well, they  
4 cannot be alienated or left out from settlement control,  
5 unless consent to do so has been obtained from the Crown,  
6 the Métis Settlements General Council, a majority of the  
7 members of the settlement whose land base is to be alienated  
8 and a majority of the members of every other settlement.

9 Point two is the financial package. As  
10 part of our Accord, under the Métis Settlements Accord  
11 Implementation Act, the provincial government is to  
12 transfer \$310 million to the settlements over a 17-year  
13 period to enable them to improve infrastructure and social  
14 conditions. These monies were to be used exclusively as  
15 "catch-up" monies designed to bring the living conditions  
16 on the settlements to levels comparable to those enjoyed  
17 by other Alberta communities.

18 Additionally, a co-management agreement  
19 between the settlements and the provincial government  
20 affords the settlements the ability to control access to  
21 sub-surface resources, the ability to participate in  
22 resource development projects up to 25 per cent and,  
23 finally, to attach a royalty override to resources removed.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 The issue of the ownership of sub-surface resources was  
2 not resolved by the Alberta Accord and remains with the  
3 provincial Crown. This is currently a matter for  
4 negotiation between the settlements and the provincial  
5 government and the court action initiated in the late 1960s  
6 has been currently suspended or put on hold pending the  
7 protection of settlement land in the Constitution of  
8 Canada.

9 The third part of the Accord was the  
10 self-government package. Under the Métis Settlements  
11 Act, a new form of government was created in the  
12 settlements. In the time remaining to me, I want to  
13 highlight several aspects of this newly created government  
14 and talk as well about two other major concerns that all  
15 Aboriginal jurisdictions must consider as they move  
16 towards self-government: appropriate transition  
17 arrangements and membership requirements for those who  
18 will belong to the self-governing communities.

19 That was just a brief background and now  
20 on the issue of political representation under the Métis  
21 settlements legislation and how we are established.

22 From the days of its origin on the  
23 Canadian prairie in the early 19th century, the government

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 of Métis people has been based on consensus and  
2 co-operation amongst all members of the community. This  
3 tradition was continued in the governance of the Alberta  
4 Métis settlements when they were first established, even  
5 though it was hedged about with all manner of restrictions  
6 imposed by provincial legislation.

7                   When we established our new  
8 self-government regime under the Métis settlements  
9 legislation, consensus, co-operation and extensive  
10 consultation with all members of the community regarding  
11 governmental decision-making was made central to our  
12 settlement governments, and to decision-making by the  
13 General Council as well.

14                   The provisions concerning settlement  
15 government are contained in the Métis Settlements Act.  
16 The eight settlements, four in the northeastern part of  
17 Alberta, Elizabeth Métis Settlement and where you are at,  
18 Fishing Lake, Kikino and Buffalo Lake, and four in the  
19 northwestern part of Alberta, Gift Lake, Peavine, East  
20 Prairie and Paddle Prairie, are constituted as  
21 corporations by section 2 of the Act. Under section 8  
22 of the Act, a governing council for each settlement is  
23 established consisting of five councillors.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   The respective terms of office of the  
2   councillors are staggered, with at least two councillors  
3   being elected each year. This preserves continuity in  
4   the settlement council as a whole, but ensures democratic  
5   accountability to the settlement membership by having at  
6   least two councillors answerable annually to the  
7   electorate for decisions which council has made.

8                   Under section 10 of the Métis  
9   Settlements Act a chairperson is elected by the five  
10   councillors from amongst themselves following each annual  
11   election. The chair of the settlement council is an annual  
12   position, ending when the successful candidates at each  
13   annual election are declared elected, although there is  
14   nothing to prevent an incumbent chairperson from being  
15   re-elected annually by his or her colleagues. According  
16   to the provisions of the Act, the chairperson may be removed  
17   from office at any time, if at least three settlement  
18   councillors are in favour of such action or removal. I'm  
19   boring you. I figured it would be important for  
20   documentation.

21                   The settlement councils have extensive  
22   by-law making powers, which are described in Schedule 1  
23   to the Métis Settlements Act. The councils also have the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 power to make decisions concerning membership and land  
2 allocation in the settlement, although these powers are  
3 circumscribed by membership provision in the legislation  
4 and land allocation provision contained in the General  
5 Council policies.

6 Further, for the first three years in  
7 which the Act is proclaimed in force, settlement by-laws  
8 cannot be passed unless prepared in consultation with the  
9 Minister responsible for Métis settlement matters in the  
10 Alberta Cabinet and all settlement by-laws must be approved  
11 in writing by the same Minister before they come into  
12 effect.

13 The adoption of by-laws requires  
14 extensive public consultation and approval. All by-laws  
15 must be given three readings by settlement council before  
16 they are adopted, and each proposed by-law must be  
17 presented to a public meeting of the settlement membership  
18 before it is given third and final reading.

19 At this meeting, which must contain a  
20 quorum of settlement members as specified in the Act, the  
21 proposed by-law is discussed and voted upon. If passed,  
22 the by-law proceeds to third reading at the settlement  
23 council, but if defeated, the by-law dies.



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   Public consultation and approval of  
2 governance are thus not confined to the election of  
3 settlement councillors, but extend as well to approval  
4 of the actual content of the laws designed to provide for  
5 the well-being and advancement of all members of the  
6 community.

7                   The Métis Settlements Act also contains  
8 a provision whereby a specified number of settlement  
9 members may, by petition, instruct the settlement council  
10 to prepare a by-law concerning any matter which is within  
11 the by-law power of the council. The provisions of the  
12 Act relating to the by-law making powers of the settlement  
13 councils are quite detailed and are contained in Part 2,  
14 Division 4 of the Métis Settlements Act.

15                  As I have stated earlier, the Métis  
16 Settlements General Council is the common governing body  
17 of all eight Métis settlements and is the successor body  
18 to the Federation of Métis Settlements Association. It  
19 is established as a corporation by section 214(1) of the  
20 Métis Settlements Act and is constituted by the councillors  
21 of each of the eight Métis settlements and by four officers,  
22 who are elected by the councillors from the settlement  
23 membership. Each settlement council has one vote in these

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 elections and candidates for officers position may not  
2 be members of settlement councils.

3                   The mandate of the General Council is  
4 to represent the common interest of all Alberta Métis  
5 settlements. As I indicated earlier, the General Council  
6 holds the fee simple title to all settlement land and  
7 represents the settlements in their collective dealing  
8 with governmental jurisdictions.

9                   The General Council also has the power  
10 to make policies in areas which are common to all of the  
11 settlements or which in some way engage their common  
12 interest. These areas are specified in section 222 and  
13 223 of the Métis Settlements Act. The member of the  
14 Alberta Cabinet responsible for the settlements must be  
15 consulted about these policies as they are being made and  
16 has the authority under section 224 of the Métis  
17 Settlements Act to veto them. To date, our process of  
18 consultation with the Minister has been effective and none  
19 of our policies as of yet has been vetoed.

20                   The Métis Settlements Act does not  
21 prescribe what type of public consultation, if any, must  
22 be conducted in relation to General Council policies  
23 amongst the settlement membership as a whole. However,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the General Council has used the power given it under the  
2 Act to regulate its internal management and affairs to  
3 require that there must be extensive consultation with  
4 the settlement membership before any policy is finally  
5 adopted.

6 As a result of this requirement, the  
7 wider settlement membership is involved in the policy  
8 formulation and approval process not only through the role  
9 which democratically elected settlement councillors play  
10 as members of the General Council, but also through direct  
11 public meetings at which draft policies are explained,  
12 discussed, debated and formulated.

13 Finally, it is important to note that  
14 most of the policies made by the General Council, and all  
15 of those made in the more significant policy areas, must  
16 obtain unanimous support from all eight settlement  
17 councils before they are adopted. Although all five  
18 settlement councillors from each of the settlements are  
19 members of General Council, each settlement votes as a  
20 bloc at General Council meetings and thus casts only one  
21 vote. This ensures that before a policy is finally  
22 approved, there must be significant consensus regarding  
23 it within each settlement delegation to ensure that a

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 majority of the members will support it. As well, all  
2 eight settlements must agree on the desirability of most  
3 draft policies before they can be adopted and implemented.

4                   The policy and by-law making processes  
5 of the settlement councils and the General Council exhibit  
6 in a concrete way the general principles which underline  
7 our self-government scheme. I would like to briefly  
8 summarize these.

9                   The first one being the grass root  
10 accountability. The involvement of the settlement  
11 membership at every stage of the law-making process, from  
12 electing settlement councils, to approving the content  
13 of local by-laws by voting at a public meeting, to being  
14 extensively consulted before the General Council makes  
15 any policies affecting the common interest of all eight  
16 settlements is fundamental to the operation of our  
17 government process.

18                   The second thing is entrusting the  
19 responsibility for exercising power of these governments  
20 closest and most directly accountable to the membership  
21 of the settlements. The jurisdiction of the settlement  
22 councils with regard to by-law making means that in those  
23 areas of government regulation which most directly impact

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 upon people's daily lives, the accountable government is  
2 the one located in closest physical proximity to and most  
3 directly answerable to the people whose it affects.

4                   The policy-making areas within the  
5 jurisdiction of the General Council tend to be more  
6 comprehensive in scope, but the requirement for unanimity  
7 amongst settlement councils with regard to the adoption  
8 of most policies means that the interests of the membership  
9 of all the settlements must be seen to be served by the  
10 policy. Otherwise, to adopt it could potentially have  
11 serious political consequences for the settlement council  
12 which supported it to the detriment of the interests of  
13 its membership.

14                   A third general principle which I would  
15 like to discuss, this concerns the consensual nature of  
16 decision making, which earlier in my remarks I  
17 characterized as being fundamental to all experience of  
18 Métis self-government since the days of the Red River  
19 settlement. The by-law making process of the settlement  
20 level, with the requirement that there must be membership  
21 approval of every proposed by-law before it takes effect,  
22 the unanimity provision concerning the adoption of all  
23 significant General Council policies: these and related

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 provisions in our legislation emphasize how strongly we  
2 value consensus and collective decision making when it  
3 comes to establishing how we are to conduct our lives  
4 together.

5                   In summary, I believe that the  
6 experience which we have had with the Métis settlement  
7 legislation points to some wider lessons which might be  
8 of assistance to all Aboriginal peoples in Canada as they  
9 move towards greater political control of their own  
10 communities.

11                   Consensual decision making may be  
12 difficult, but we believe it is fundamental and part of  
13 our tradition. Unless the institutions which we are  
14 developing as vehicles for self-government incorporate  
15 at their heart the practices and processes which have been  
16 used by our people and which are familiar to them, we will  
17 not be able to create any popular base which these  
18 institutions can build. Without the popular base,  
19 Aboriginal self-government will simply be the imposition  
20 of yet another form of outside control upon the people  
21 of our communities.

22                   These are circumstances, of course,  
23 where consensus need not mean unanimity. On such issues

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 there will also be divisions of opinion. All communities,  
2 no matter how highly they may value consensus, require  
3 some mechanism whereby division of opinion will not bring  
4 all decision-making activity to a halt.

5                   What that mechanism will be will vary  
6 from community to community and we in the Métis settlements  
7 are currently confronting this issue. I cannot predict  
8 what the outcome of this examination will be, but I do  
9 know that whatever the result it may be I know that it  
10 will not jeopardize our fundamental commitment to  
11 consensus seeking.

12                   Our journey in Alberta's Métis  
13 settlements has been a slow but consistent journey away  
14 from external control over our people's lives and towards  
15 more community based decision-making, where our people  
16 will have the power, if they choose to exert it, of being  
17 their own governors. We have not reached that destination  
18 yet, but we are closer to reaching it than we were five  
19 years ago. And we have worked hard to build our new forms  
20 of self-government upon traditions which have been  
21 established in our communities for a very long time.

22                   This leads to a further point. As  
23 Aboriginal communities move to self-government, the people

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 of these communities must move together in unity. That  
2 is why consensus is so important. It is not only a  
3 traditional political virtue amongst Aboriginal people;  
4 it also ensure that self-government can be effectively  
5 achieved and implemented.

6 I think we are almost done.

7 Anyway, there were many occasions in our  
8 efforts to build a self-government regime for the Métis  
9 settlements of Alberta when it appeared that the  
10 settlements could not continue to act together. We  
11 overcame these obstacles and continued to work together,  
12 and it was to the benefit of all our people that this  
13 occurred. Had this not happened, it is likely that we  
14 would never have achieved the success that we did.  
15 Consensus establishes unity and unity makes for progress  
16 towards the common goal, at least this has been the  
17 experience in the Métis settlements.

18 There is a further feature of our  
19 experience with self-government which may be unique to  
20 the Métis settlements. Although we have had difficult  
21 relationships with government in the past, in the end we  
22 have always worked these out in the end and in a pragmatic  
23 spirit of compromise. We acted in this way so that we



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1    could move closer to our goals of a secure land base, more  
2    adequate financial resources and greater control of the  
3    government of our communities.

4                    To achieve these goals, we had at times  
5    to act in opposition to other levels of government, but  
6    ultimately we also needed to co-operate with them and  
7    establish institutional linkages with them in a variety  
8    of ways. This may have entailed some negotiation, but  
9    it has also given us a foundation on which to build the  
10   kind of communities in which we and our children can  
11   prosper. Our arrangements have not been perfect, but they  
12   have provided us with a solid beginning for the advancement  
13   of self-government.

14                   This process is not complete as of yet.  
15   We are currently reviewing our agreements with the  
16   provincial government to determine ways in which the  
17   provisions of our legislation can be strengthened and  
18   improved. Differences between government and ourselves  
19   will emerge during this process, but without co-operation  
20   it is difficult to see how we would have made the progress  
21   which have to date.

22                   Conclusion. The best part.

23                   I would not want to leave the impression

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1   that the Métis settlements legislation has ushered in a  
2   perfect world; not surprisingly, that is far from the truth  
3   or the case. As I have mentioned, the Métis Settlements  
4   General Council has recently established with the  
5   Government of Alberta a joint review process to examine  
6   how effectively the legislation is meeting the goals  
7   established for it and what provisions should be changed.

8                   I do believe, however, the settlements  
9   have achieved significant things with this legislation  
10   and that it provides a stepping stone to greater autonomy  
11   and higher levels of economic and social development in  
12   our communities. With regard to lessons which other  
13   jurisdictions might learn from our experience and my short  
14   answer would be this: The transition of self-government  
15   on the part of Aboriginal communities can be most  
16   effectively addressed if it is done in co-operation with  
17   all levels of government; Aboriginal, provincial and  
18   federal. Only in such situations can resources be used  
19   with maximum efficiency in what is bound to be a difficult,  
20   demanding and expensive process.

21                   If co-operation amongst all  
22   jurisdictions is crucial to progress in this area, so is  
23   effective and democratic representation of the needs of

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1    Aboriginal communities. Self-government has to be  
2    community based, not only because self-government is not  
3    based on the participation -- pardon me. Self-government  
4    has to be community based, not only because self-government  
5    which is not based on the participation and consent of  
6    the governed is a contradiction in terms, but also because  
7    without the support of the people, new governmental  
8    arrangements will either never be implemented or will  
9    quickly grind to a halt. There must be effective popular  
10   representation during the whole transition process and  
11   issues of concern to the community must be addressed.

12                    We have tried to meet these objectives  
13   in pursuing the goals of the Métis settlements legislation  
14   and we have confronted the challenge of continuing to meet  
15   them every day. The struggle for self-government does  
16   not end when self-government legislation is introduced;  
17   that is when the struggle begins in earnest.

18                    We believe that we achieved a great deal  
19   through our pragmatic efforts in moving one step at a time  
20   to meet clearly defined long-term objectives. We think  
21   that our experience has some utility for other Aboriginal  
22   groups in Canada, at least we hope that is the case. The  
23   Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has provided an

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 excellent vehicle for us to share our experience with  
2 others. That's it. Thank you.

3 That's my portion, now Garry's and  
4 Alphonse's portion. I hope I didn't bore you too much  
5 to death. I bored myself to death, but I thought that  
6 was important. That is a brief background and the way  
7 things are going at present. I am actually a better  
8 speaker than I am a reader, as you can tell. Garry.

9 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU (Vice-Chairman,**  
10 **Métis Settlements General Council):** Thanks, Ken. Good  
11 morning, members of the Royal Commission, Georges and all.  
12 It's nice to see you here on the settlement.

13 I would also like to thank the host, the  
14 Elizabeth Settlement, the members of this community of  
15 Elizabeth Settlement, and ladies and gentlemen, other  
16 invited guests from other settlements, welcome here this  
17 morning.

18 As Ken stated earlier, my name is Garry  
19 and I am the Vice-President of the Métis Settlements  
20 General Council from Fishing Lake, the settlement just  
21 south of here. I hope you have some extra time on your  
22 hands later today and maybe you can drop by and pay us  
23 a visit and see a second settlement.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   I would like to address the issue of the  
2 transition process from a status quo, from whatever it  
3 may be, to a more truly self-government regime. I will  
4 only use the term "self-government" one time during my  
5 presentation. As you may both be aware, self-government  
6 was a nice buzzword that was introduced during the last  
7 two rounds during the constitutional talks and it is really  
8 a redundant phrase. I will be referring to it more in  
9 the context of the settlements, meaning settlement  
10 government.

11                   Given the situation in which many  
12 Aboriginal jurisdictions find themselves today, all levels  
13 of government, Aboriginal, provincial and federal, must  
14 realize that concrete provision must be made for the  
15 transition from Aboriginal jurisdictions -- which  
16 Aboriginal jurisdictions have made to make from the status  
17 quo of particular control to enhanced powers of government.

18                   Infrastructures of all kinds must be  
19 improved and Aboriginal governments must be assisted as  
20 they make the practical transition from being surrogates  
21 for other jurisdictions to democratically accountable  
22 governments, answerable not to some provincial or federal  
23 official, but to our own people.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Under the Métis Settlements Accord  
2 Implementation Act, a Métis Settlements Transition  
3 Commission, headed by a public official called the  
4 Commissioner and employing approximately 60 professionals  
5 of various types, was established to assist the settlements  
6 in their transition to settlement government. The  
7 Commission is mandated to last until 1997 and assists the  
8 settlements in a variety of ways. The Métis Settlements  
9 Accord Implementation Act in section 10 mandates the  
10 following principles which must underlie all of the  
11 Commission's activities: (a) the principle of benefiting  
12 the people of the settlements; (b) the principle of  
13 co-operation between the people of the settlements and  
14 the Government of Alberta; (c) the principle of  
15 self-sufficiency and local government autonomy; (d) the  
16 principle of equity with other local governments in Alberta  
17 in the use of and in the benefit from provincial resources;  
18 and, (e) the principle of political respect for the  
19 institutions of Métis settlement established by the  
20 legislation.

21 As the Transition Commissioner will no  
22 doubt be stating at greater length, the mandate of the  
23 Métis Settlements Transition Commission is to: (1) assist

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 in the establishment of settlement government structures;  
2 (2) assist in making government programs and services  
3 available to the settlement; and (3) assist in the  
4 management of settlement finances in the seven year  
5 transition period.

6                   The transition process is a crucial one  
7 for the success of any Aboriginal community as it  
8 implements settlement government. There are two  
9 fundamental aspects to any transition process. Firstly,  
10 adequate capital resources must be provided to Aboriginal  
11 governments so that they can capably discharge the many  
12 responsibilities which they will be assuming for the  
13 well-being of their people. It is a well-known fact that  
14 Aboriginal jurisdictions do not possess these resources  
15 today, and that a significant gap exists between the  
16 resources that are currently available to Aboriginal  
17 governments and those which are available to other  
18 jurisdictions in Canada.

19                   The necessary capital to which I refer  
20 will allow Aboriginal groups to formulate a process which  
21 best serves their uniqueness and allows them to achieve  
22 their objectives.

23                   Secondly, governments must be prepared

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to offer adequate support over the long term to ensure  
2 that effective Aboriginal government can be achieved.  
3 The realization of this goal will not be solely to the  
4 benefit of members of the Aboriginal communities. In the  
5 long run, all Canadians will benefit.

6 As Aboriginal communities move from  
7 imposed dependency to economic and political  
8 self-reliance, they will contribute fully to all aspects  
9 of Canadian life. This can only lead to the betterment  
10 of all Canadians.

11 No transition process is perfect and we  
12 could readily identify ways in which it might be improved.

13 However, the point I wish to make here today is that the  
14 necessity for meaningful and comprehensive transition  
15 arrangements is essential to the success of any Aboriginal  
16 government arrangement.

17 Aboriginal groups have their inherent  
18 type of government within each of their respective  
19 communities. However, for any group to operate a  
20 functional government, resources are required. After  
21 all, where would the federal government or any provincial  
22 government of the day be if several centuries ago they  
23 had not been given -- they were given governing authority



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 by the Aboriginal peoples but only with the discretionary  
2 use of resources.

3 Very brief and short and I thank you for  
4 your attention, and in closing to say that when we look  
5 at our type of local government there also has to be  
6 adequate resources to go with it, whether they be human  
7 resources or natural resources. It's all part of  
8 operating and doing the duties of any type of government.  
9 It's an essential part of governing. Thank you.

10 **MR. ALPHONSE L'HIRONDELLE (Treasurer,**  
11 **Métis Settlements General Council):** Good morning,  
12 members of the Royal Commission, settlement council,  
13 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Alphonse L'Hirondelle.  
14 I am Treasurer of the Métis Settlements General Council.  
15 I make my home on the East Prairie Métis Settlement which  
16 is just west of Lesser Slave Lake. I would like to say  
17 a few words about how the Métis settlements of Alberta  
18 have addressed one of the most contentious issues facing  
19 any Aboriginal jurisdiction today, the issue of  
20 membership.

21 To be entitled to legally reside on a  
22 Métis settlement a person must be a member of that  
23 settlement or the child of such a member under the age

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 of 18. The Métis Settlements Act states in section 74  
2 that a person may apply for membership in a settlement  
3 only if that person is a Métis and is at least 18 years  
4 of age and if the applicant has previously been a settlement  
5 member or has lived in Alberta for the five years preceding  
6 the date of his or her application for membership.

7 The last provision may be waived if one  
8 of the applicants' parents was a member of a settlement  
9 association established under the Métis Betterment Act  
10 or is a settlement member under the current legislation.

11 Decisions concerning settlement  
12 membership are made by the council of each settlement,  
13 although there is an appeal process from the decision of  
14 the council to the Métis Settlements Appeals Tribunal with  
15 regard to membership issues.

16 One of the essential requirements for  
17 membership is that a person be a "Métis". This term is  
18 defined in the Métis Settlements Act as meaning "a person  
19 of Aboriginal ancestry who identifies with Métis history  
20 and culture".

21 When the Métis settlements legislation  
22 was prepared, the definition of Métis under the new Act  
23 was substantially changed from that contained in the Métis

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Betterment Act. Under the latter Act, "Métis" was defined  
2 as meaning "a person of mixed white and Indian blood having  
3 not less than one quarter Indian blood, but does not include  
4 either an Indian or a non-treaty Indian as defined in the  
5 Indian Act of Canada.

6 In spite of this change, every effort  
7 was made to ensure that all of those people who had been  
8 members of the old settlement associations would not lose  
9 their membership when the new legislation took effect.  
10 A regulation was made by the Minister for the Métis  
11 Settlements Act to ensure that there would be no membership  
12 purges or disruptions in the membership base of the  
13 settlements.

14 Membership can often be a contentious  
15 issue, but it would have been unfair and unjust if people  
16 who had become settlement members under the previous  
17 legislation and who had built their lives on the  
18 settlements had been forced to lose their memberships and  
19 this has not happened.

20 The criteria for membership under the  
21 Métis Settlements Act which I discussed earlier makes any  
22 Métis person who has lived in Alberta for five years  
23 eligible for settlement membership. I also noted that

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 the settlement council is empowered by the Act to make  
2 membership decision, with a right of appeal to the Métis  
3 Settlements Appeal Tribunal.

4                   However, the Act does establish some  
5 criteria which the settlement council may apply before  
6 approving applications for membership. Section 78 of the  
7 Act states that an application for membership in a  
8 settlement can be approved only if the settlement council  
9 is satisfied that the applicant is a person of Canadian  
10 Aboriginal ancestry who identifies with Métis history and  
11 culture, has or will have suitable living accommodation  
12 in the settlement area and is committed to living in the  
13 settlement area and preserving a peaceful community.

14                   Thus, although there is a general desire  
15 to be as inclusive as possible in establishing basic  
16 membership criteria, there is also an emphasis upon  
17 community involvement and commitment when it comes to the  
18 approval of individual membership applications.

19                   This emphasis is strengthened when the  
20 grounds for losing settlement membership are considered.

21     Under section 87 of the Métis Settlements Act, a  
22 settlement council may terminate the membership of anyone  
23 who ceases to reside on a settlement or has abandoned

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 membership, or has not resided on the settlement for 12  
2 consecutive months or more, without adequate reason.  
3 Settlement membership is thus practically tied to some  
4 tangible connections with the settlement community and  
5 at least some commitment to the settlement over the long  
6 term.

7                   Membership disputes are not unknown on  
8 the settlements, but on the whole the transition from  
9 membership under the previous Act to membership under the  
10 current Métis Settlements Act has worked well. The  
11 groundrules for membership approvals under the new  
12 legislation are set out quite clearly and the provisions  
13 of appeal from any membership decision of the settlement  
14 council appears to be working adequately.

15                   Based upon our experience to date,  
16 membership matters appear to be proceeding well, on the  
17 whole.

18                   I would like to thank you for the  
19 opportunity to speak here and for your time. Thank you.

20

21                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE, (Moderator):** Thank  
22 you, General Council.

23                   The next speaker I guess will be Dennis

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Surrendi, the Transition Commissioner for the Transition  
2 Commission.

3 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI (Transition**  
4 **Commissioner, Métis Settlements Transition Commission):**

5 Thank you very much, Ambrose. At the outset I'd like  
6 to express my appreciation to the Elizabeth Settlement  
7 for hosting these proceedings and the hospitality that  
8 I have already had and I know we will all be having during  
9 the day here. It is really wonderful to be here. I also  
10 want to acknowledge the other participants and their wisdom  
11 that we have heard and I am sure we will hear throughout  
12 the rest of the day.

13 I wish to express my gratitude to the  
14 Commission for the privilege of being permitted the  
15 opportunity present this brief to you. It is my sincere  
16 hope that my comments will assist the Royal Commission  
17 in achieving its goals.

18 I earlier provided the Royal Commission  
19 with a brief outline describing the Métis Settlements  
20 Transition Commission and the responsibilities of my  
21 position as Commissioner. Without repeating what Kenny  
22 Noskey said earlier, I would like to table some documents  
23 with the Commission: Firstly, the Accord, the Alberta

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Métis Settlements Accord, the political agreement to which  
2 Mr. Noskey referred; copies of the legislation again to  
3 which Ken Noskey referred; an Annual Report from the  
4 Commission, the first Annual Report and also an information  
5 package which was issued on proclamation and still contains  
6 relevant information with respect to the legislation and  
7 this process. I will leave those with the Commission as  
8 part of my presentation.

9                   As you will note in the Métis Settlements  
10 Accord Implementation Act, the Commissioner was selected  
11 by joint agreement of the Métis settlements and the  
12 Province of Alberta to assume the responsibilities of  
13 Commissioner. I am an employee of the Transition  
14 Commission. I am not a provincial employee, incidentally,  
15 and I think that's important.

16                   I had the privilege of participating in  
17 the negotiation of the Accord, in the drafting of the new  
18 legislation and, as Commissioner, in the implementation  
19 of the Accord since November 1 of 1990.

20                   As you will note further from the  
21 legislation, the Commissioner assumes considerable  
22 responsibilities with minimal legal authority. I believe  
23 that my advice to anyone that does this in the future,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1   that that is the way it should be.

2                   The Commissioner's role is primarily one  
3   of an advisor, educator and facilitator to both the  
4   settlements and the province.

5                   The Métis settlements of Alberta and the  
6   Alberta Métis Settlements Accord implementation process  
7   reflect one of the very few real experiences in Canada  
8   involving the active pursuit of self-government by  
9   Aboriginal people. The experience to date has been  
10  enlightening, educational, challenging, exciting and,  
11  yes, even painful on occasion. It has been likened to  
12  the state of pregnancy incidentally, that is from  
13  conception, which was rather pleasant, to the pain of  
14  delivery and ultimately leading to the hope and future  
15  happiness of a new beginning.

16                  My comments that follow are based upon  
17  my experience through Canada with Aboriginal people and  
18  in particular my experience with the Métis Settlements  
19  of Alberta through the formulation and implementation of  
20  this Accord. In particular, I wish to reflect on those  
21  factors that Aboriginal communities and other levels of  
22  government may wish to consider in the design and  
23  implementation of self-government initiatives.



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   Long before Europeans set foot on this  
2 continent, Aboriginal people already possessed  
3 self-governing institutions. These institutions were  
4 based on a wide range of traditional, cultural and  
5 spiritual values that evolved over generations. Whether  
6 one is of Inuit, Indian or Métis descent, these cultural  
7 and spiritual values are still a vital force in the lives  
8 of all Aboriginal people.

9                   Since the arrival of European man, the  
10 challenge facing Aboriginal people has been and still  
11 remains the imperative need for the determination to retain  
12 their own ideas of themselves, who they are and where they  
13 came from and to reflect the will to have something to  
14 say about their lives and their future.

15                  The fact that Canadian legal and  
16 administrative institutions, particularly relating to  
17 governance, reflect their roots in European philosophy  
18 places an even greater challenge on Aboriginal Canadians  
19 to proactively offer creative and innovative approaches  
20 to fit their desired forms of self-governing bodies within  
21 such national and provincial systems.

22                  It should also be emphasized at this  
23 point that from my experience there is a great deal to

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 be learned by federal and provincial governments from  
2 Aboriginal people with regard to their approach to  
3 collective interests, cultural and spiritual values, in  
4 particular the Aboriginal perspective with regard to land  
5 and the environment. In fact, it is fair to state that  
6 unless industrialized society learns to respect and care  
7 for Mother Earth, the fate of mankind is at risk.

8                   In the pursuit of self-government or  
9 self-determination, it is imperative that such concepts  
10 are clear in the minds of everyone involved before, and  
11 I emphasize "before", ratifying agreements with other  
12 levels of government and the form of self-government is  
13 secured in legislation. What may fit the aspirations and  
14 needs of one Aboriginal community may not fit the needs  
15 of another. In particular, appropriate time must be  
16 allowed to provide a sincere opportunity for the members  
17 of the affected communities to participate in the design  
18 and structure of the form of governance to be sought.  
19 This ownership at a community level is an essential  
20 ingredient to success. Without it, the probability of  
21 failure is heightened.

22                   There exists a vast array of  
23 self-government or self-determination options, probably

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 as many as the mind can design. The challenge is to develop  
2 the best fit for the Aboriginal community or communities  
3 involved. As previously stated, this can only take place  
4 through a process whereby the affected members of those  
5 communities have an input into shaping the governing bodies  
6 involved.

7 Another consideration in the design of  
8 Aboriginal self-governance is the degree of linkage with  
9 other levels of government. With the failure of the  
10 referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, there still  
11 remains only two levels of government constitutionally  
12 recognized in Canada; the federal and provincial levels.

13 It therefore follows that other levels of government must  
14 be created through enactments of either the Parliament  
15 of Canada or the various provincial legislatures. That  
16 may change some day, of course, but at this point in time  
17 that's the way the law is structured.

18 In the case of the Métis settlements of  
19 Alberta, they chose to relate to the provincial legislature  
20 with regard to the legislation that put into effect the  
21 1989 political agreement with Alberta. The only federal  
22 linkage is the commitment to secure protection of the Métis  
23 settlements land base in the Canadian Constitution.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   The Métis settlements are considered a  
2 unique form of local government in Alberta. Other  
3 Aboriginal groups may seek other arrangements with either  
4 the federal or provincial governments, or both, to  
5 accommodate their self-government aspirations. There are  
6 also initiatives leading toward self-government or  
7 self-determination through administrative agreements  
8 rather than legislative change. An example of such an  
9 arrangement exists in this province through the Framework  
10 Agreement with the Métis Nation of Alberta and the  
11 Government of Alberta. With regard to this agreement,  
12 I would presume that you as the Commission have had or  
13 will have representation from the participants in the  
14 Framework Agreement to explain in more detail what this  
15 agreement entails, so I will not dwell on it any further  
16 here.

17                   When moving any initiative concerning  
18 Aboriginal self-government forward to either a federal  
19 or provincial level of government, strategically one must  
20 bear in mind the basic level of understanding and  
21 appreciation by the non-Aboriginal community on such  
22 matters. From my experience, there remains an enormous  
23 challenge with respect to sensitizing and educating the

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 most senior levels of government and society as a whole  
2 to the needs, aspirations and values of Aboriginal people.

3                   There must also be a will for the federal  
4 and provincial policy makers to be sincerely committed  
5 to seek this understanding of the Aboriginal perspective.

6   Furthermore, and to complicate things even further,  
7 Aboriginal leaders and administrators must also reach out  
8 to understand the way in which federal and provincial  
9 governments and agencies function and think, in order to  
10 develop effective strategies to convey their interests  
11 to such bodies.

12                   I have long said that one should always  
13 be careful in making requests or demands of governments  
14 because sometimes they can surprise you and actually give  
15 you what you ask for. My point here is that before anyone  
16 aggressive pursues self-government or a  
17 self-determination option, make absolutely sure you know  
18 what it is you want and what the positive and negative  
19 aspects of your request might be. Otherwise you may be  
20 given the car of your dreams, only to find out that you  
21 can't afford to run it.

22                   The bottom line is that there is no free  
23 lunch for anyone. Although money isn't everything, the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 funding of any government, including Aboriginal  
2 self-government, is a matter that not only concerns  
3 Aboriginal people, but it also concerns all Canadians.

4                   The fact of the matter is that Aboriginal  
5 self-government, in whatever form, is a lot easier to sell  
6 if some degree of financial self-sufficiency is reflected  
7 in the long term.

8                   On the other hand, there are some federal  
9 and provincial officials that periodically use the term  
10 "self-sufficiency" for Aboriginal self-government in a  
11 manner that suggests that Aboriginal governments should  
12 be expected to pay their own way in the future. As a point  
13 of interest, to my knowledge there does not exist any form  
14 of local government in Canada that does not count on  
15 substantial annual financial support, that is  
16 subsidization, from either the federal or provincial  
17 levels of government.

18                   My point being that there does not exist  
19 a truly self-sufficient form of local government in this  
20 country. However, that said, any Aboriginal community  
21 seeking some form of self-government must expect in the  
22 long run to have to shoulder some degree of financial  
23 responsibility to carry out their vision.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   In Alberta, the Métis settlements are  
2   in the midst of implementing their own form of  
3   self-government. There are not many practical working  
4   models of Aboriginal self-government in Canada. I would  
5   highly recommend to any Aboriginal group seeking  
6   self-government to take the opportunity to meet with the  
7   Métis settlement representatives in order to benefit from  
8   their experience.

9                   From my standpoint, as Commissioner, one  
10   of the most important aspects of the agreement between  
11   the Métis settlements of Alberta and this province is the  
12   legislated process that allows both parties to  
13   periodically review the agreement and to assess what is  
14   working, what is not and what adjustments are required  
15   to ensure the long-term successful implementation of the  
16   settlements form of self-government.

17                  Without this process in place and the  
18   opportunity clarify misunderstanding, I am convinced no  
19   agreement of this nature can succeed. It is imperative  
20   that any Aboriginal group contemplating a self-government  
21   initiative factor into their initiative a requirement to  
22   revisit their agreement with either the federal or  
23   provincial levels of government depending on who the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 self-government agreement is with.

2                   My reason for such a specific  
3 recommendation is that such agreements tend to be  
4 exceedingly complex and it is simply not possible to  
5 predict everything you can and need into the future.  
6 Furthermore, such agreements are normally prepared in  
7 oak-lined board rooms of legal firms and plush government  
8 offices. It is only after one proceeds into the  
9 implementation phase of these agreements do you see where  
10 the real issues and misunderstandings occur. You get a  
11 truer, more realistic picture of how various government  
12 officials interpret specific words in such agreements and  
13 you get a more realistic perspective of how such agreements  
14 get interpreted by the members of the Aboriginal community  
15 involved.

16                   I have an old saying that I developed  
17 after being involved in such negotiations as this. That  
18 is:

19 "One of the biggest problems with communications is the  
20                   illusion that it is occurring."

21                   On many occasions I have witnessed and  
22 been directly party to negotiations leading to agreements,  
23 only to find that even though the participants nodded their



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 approval or acknowledged written agreement to a matter,  
2 when it came time to implement the agreement the  
3 realization occurs that the parties really did not  
4 understand what they had agreed to. Such situations  
5 should be expected in complex negotiations leading to  
6 self-government agreements. They are problems that arise  
7 from a variety of reasons, such as: Cultural differences  
8 in how individuals see and understand the meaning of words,  
9 written or verbal; the loss of the practical meaning of  
10 words due to the legalise normally required to finalize  
11 such agreements; changes in the meaning of words resulting  
12 from the translation of practical political agreements  
13 being transferred into legislation; changes in the players  
14 of an agreement with the new participants having differing  
15 personal or political perspectives; occasionally,  
16 intentional bureaucratic or political stonewalling of an  
17 agreement because one party or the other simply refuses  
18 to accept the principles embodied in an agreement.

19                   For whatever the reasons, based on my  
20 experience in this area, I would strongly recommend that  
21 any Aboriginal group contemplating a self-government  
22 agreement ensure that built into such an agreement is a  
23 process that allows for its periodic review in order to

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 factor in changing circumstances as well as the experience  
2 gained from implementation.

3 A few other suggestions that I believe  
4 lend themselves to the long-term success of Aboriginal  
5 self-government initiatives as follows: It is imperative  
6 that the negotiators on behalf of the Aboriginal people  
7 involved have a clear mandate to speak on their behalf.

8 All too often, individuals claiming to represent  
9 Aboriginal people have little support at the local level.  
10

11 In order to avoid such situations in the  
12 future, the legal structure of national, provincial and  
13 local Aboriginal organizations may have to be revisited  
14 to ensure such spokespersons on behalf of the Aboriginal  
15 community do possess the legal mandate to do so. For  
16 example, the Métis settlement councils have a fiduciary  
17 responsibility to the settlement members.

18 When dealing with any government, if at  
19 all possible try never to accept anything less than  
20 agreements ratified by the head of that government, that  
21 is the Prime Minister or Premier, and that any agreement  
22 between any Aboriginal community and a province or federal  
23 level of government be further ratified by the legislative

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 body involved, that is the House of Commons or Legislative  
2 Assembly of that province. Such an approach provides a  
3 much higher degree of continuity, commitment and  
4 accountability than arrangements made solely with  
5 Ministers or senior bureaucrats.

6                   The concept of a transition period, as  
7 Mr. Parenteau earlier stated, that can accommodate the  
8 development of the technical administrative support  
9 requirements of local government, training, local  
10 government infrastructure, et cetera, is one that is worth  
11 considering. Such a transition period also allows for  
12 all participants to go through a learning curve while  
13 adjusting to a new legislative framework. From our  
14 experience in implementing the Alberta Métis Settlements  
15 Accord, this transition period is recognized as an  
16 important and essential step in the process.

17                   Never underestimate the importance of  
18 seriously and sincerely recognizing the socio-cultural  
19 and spiritual values of the grass roots people being  
20 impacted by any Aboriginal government initiative. No  
21 self-government initiative will be successful unless these  
22 considerations are seriously taken into account.

23                   Never approach a provincial or federal

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 level of government with a self-government initiative  
2 without a strong unified position. The old saying that  
3 "divided you fall" is appropriate in this regard.

4                   Attitude is possibly one of the most  
5 important factors in contributing to the success or failure  
6 of any initiative, including those involved with  
7 Aboriginal self-government. If you have a positive and  
8 constructive attitude in approaching the development and  
9 implementation of self-government initiatives, you will  
10 succeed no matter what the challenges.

11                   Believe in yourself and your values and  
12 take them forward with pride. If you encounter people  
13 or government representatives who appear to be insensitive  
14 to the Aboriginal perspective, take the time to help them  
15 understand through education rather than confrontation.

16  
17                   Above all be patient and persevering  
18 both with the grass roots people in the Aboriginal  
19 communities affected and with the government  
20 representatives involved. Aboriginal self-government is  
21 a new concept to Euro-Canadians so help them grasp your  
22 vision. The concept is also new for Aboriginal people  
23 and the tragedy of decades of domination by federal and

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 provincial agencies has had a heavy toll on the confidence  
2 and self-esteem of Aboriginal people across this land.  
3 Rekindling this confidence will take time, patience and  
4 understanding on the part of all concerned.

5                   The ultimate challenge will be the  
6 blending of the socio-cultural and spiritual values of  
7 Aboriginal people, values which I personally place in very  
8 high esteem, with some of the more contemporary  
9 institutions of governance. It is my personal view that  
10 the culture of any people is centred and perpetuated  
11 through the family unit. It is for this reason that I  
12 do not believe one can legislate the perpetuation of  
13 cultural values. I believe that if you destroy the family  
14 unit you will also lose the culture of a people. In this  
15 regard, I cannot overstate the importance of recognizing  
16 the integrity of the family unit as an integral part of  
17 any initiative leading toward Aboriginal self-government.

18                   In closing, I wish to thank the  
19 Commissioners for their opportunity to share my thoughts  
20 with you on these important matters. It is my sincere  
21 hope, and I believe that of all Canadians, that the findings  
22 of this Royal Commission are undertaken seriously by all  
23 levels of government in this country. I am confident that

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 if your recommendations are put into reality, that Canada  
2 will be an even better place to live today and in the future.

3 If I can be of further assistance to the  
4 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, I would be most  
5 pleased to do so. I thank you for your patience.

6 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
7 you, Dennis.

8 The next speaker will be Archie Collins  
9 of the Appeals Tribunal.

10 **MR. ARCHIE COLLINS (Chairman, Métis**  
11 **Settlements Appeals Tribunal):** Thank you, Ambrose, and  
12 Wilfred and the Council of Elizabeth Settlement. This  
13 is the greatest place to be and it's because I live here  
14 I guess that I say that.

15 I would like to welcome the Royal  
16 Commission here and my presentation is going to be very  
17 short. I would like to table this document with the Royal  
18 Commission. I would like to wish peace to everyone within  
19 this building.

20 Through the presentations that have been  
21 given by the Executive of the General Council and the  
22 Commissioner we all have heard a lot about self-government.  
23 As part of this self-government, the Métis Settlements

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Appeal Tribunal was created to deal with disputes that  
2 arise regarding land and membership within the boundaries  
3 of the Métis settlements.

4 The Appeals Tribunal must hear appeals  
5 and references and perform any function given to it under  
6 this Act or any other Act and any dispute that arises within  
7 the settlement, where all members agree that the Métis  
8 Settlements Appeal Tribunal provides a fair and just  
9 decision.

10 I guess one of the most interesting  
11 powers that the Tribunal has is as set out in the section  
12 under the Métis legislation, section 191(o) is to provide  
13 any remedy that in all circumstances and terms requires.

14 Basically, I guess, the Tribunal being new and hasn't  
15 had too much experience under its belt so far, we do have  
16 problems, but I am sure that these problems have been  
17 addressed by the Executive and Dennis Surrendi.

18 Lastly, I would like to say that the  
19 Tribunal truly affords the settlement members with an easy,  
20 no-cost, quick access to the justice system which meets  
21 their needs and provides understanding of the cultural  
22 backgrounds and lifestyles.

23 I would just like to say at this time

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 that we are pleased to have been invited to make this  
2 presentation and I would like to table this document with  
3 the Royal Commission. Thank you very much.

4 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
5 you, Archie.

6 At this time Randy Hardy has not arrived  
7 and so at this time we will probably take our break.

8 --- Short recess at 10:40 a.m.

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

10 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** If  
11 everyone could be seated. I was also asked to tell  
12 everyone that if there is a lot of movement that the  
13 acoustics are not that great in here and it makes a lot  
14 of shuffling noises. If you can limit yourself from moving  
15 around too much it will help the sound system.

16 At this time Randy Hardy wasn't able to  
17 make it. Garry Parenteau will be making a presentation  
18 for him. He has just gone out and will be just a minute  
19 or two.

20 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could we ask  
21 a few questions while we are waiting for the next presenter?  
22 We could actually ask quite a lot of questions, but maybe  
23 we would just ask a few, the more pertinent and key issues



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 that we would like some answers on.

2 I will start with Commissioner Chartrand  
3 on the questions and then I will ask a few myself. Paul.

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

6 In the present circumstances I am trying  
7 to choose perhaps two or three brief questions, those that  
8 might be most effective at getting to some of the essential  
9 issues that have been presented this morning.

10 I am referring to, if I may, the  
11 presentation made by the Commissioner and if I may raise  
12 two or three brief points respecting that. I will make  
13 a comment first. On page 6 you make the comment that the  
14 legal structure of Aboriginal organizations may have to  
15 be revisited to ensure such spokespersons on behalf of  
16 the Aboriginal community does possess the legal mandate  
17 to do so.

18 I would begin by agreeing that the  
19 issuing of legitimate representation is one of the central  
20 issues that the country faces if we are to move ahead with  
21 Aboriginal self-government. However, having said that,  
22 my understanding is that those who profess expertise in  
23 the area would propose that it is not the legal legitimate

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 and I assume that by mandate here you intend to mean  
2 legitimacy in the sense that I am using it now. It is  
3 political legitimacy rather than legal legitimacy which  
4 prevails in the long run.

5 I wanted to relieve myself of that  
6 comment. I do have two or three points that I am searching  
7 for and they have to do with -- the points arise out of  
8 an earlier presentation and they have to do with the mandate  
9 of the transition team, if I may call it that. There will  
10 be three brief points.

11 First, the Métis Settlements Accord  
12 Implementation Act, I refer to that, to section 10, there  
13 are certain principles which are said to underlie all the  
14 Commission's activities and there are two of them that  
15 I would like to ask about, if I may. First, the principle  
16 of benefiting the people of the settlements.

17 My question is this: Who decides what  
18 is a benefit? It's up in the air. It doesn't mean  
19 anything to say it's for the benefit of the people. There  
20 are two people who could decide, either the people  
21 themselves or somebody else. So, who decides in this case  
22 what is in fact the benefit of the people?

23 MR. DENNIS SURRENDI: If I may respond

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to that. The General Council may have a comment or two,  
2 I am not sure.

3 The approach that I have taken since  
4 November of 1990 is that the Councils themselves of the  
5 settlements are the ones who can best judge the needs and  
6 interests of their people and there is a legal process  
7 on that, the decision-making at a community level,  
8 requiring governments at a settlement level actually  
9 decide things by bly-law usually --

10 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes.

11 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** -- as a major  
12 instrument, which must go before their people.

13 The process includes membership input.

14

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** If I  
16 understand the process that you are involved in then, you  
17 are trying to weave your way through on the one hand,  
18 attempting to abide by the principle that the benefit to  
19 the people is going to be decided by the people and going  
20 through the consultations and when they were discussed  
21 this morning and they are trying to reconcile that with  
22 the legal status of the scheme itself, which vests the  
23 final authority in the responsible minister. Am I right?

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 I am trying to sort of paint the work of the Commission  
2 in that particular way.

3 I am saying is this the essential nature  
4 of the process that you are involved with that you desire  
5 as you are indicating, if I understand, that you wish people  
6 themselves to decide what is their benefit in a practical  
7 way and you are reconciling that with the legality of the  
8 situation, where the final authority can still rest with  
9 the government. Would that be a fair description of the  
10 process or not?

11 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** When it comes to  
12 -- one of the other principles that I will touch on and  
13 maybe it's the other one that you wanted to speak to, I  
14 am not sure, is the respect of the General Council and  
15 settlement council, that's one of the other principles  
16 under section 10. That goes hand in glove, that principle  
17 of respecting the political and legal position of a  
18 settlement council.

19 The settlement councils do have  
20 fiduciary responsibilities to their members. In their  
21 decision-making they have to consider the best interests  
22 of the people in their decisions. As part of what I believe  
23 to be the outcome and certainly the goal of this process

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 and I believe that it be reflected up front and that is  
2 that they are the best ones to understand the needs of  
3 their people and the priorities of their people.

4                   The Commissioner is there only to ensure  
5 that due process of law is followed. That is, he observes  
6 the process of decision-making, for example, with respect  
7 to budgets, that so long as the process is followed in  
8 accordance with the law, then that process leads the  
9 Council to present its position to its members which I  
10 respect as a part of local government autonomy.

11                   I am, for the first three years,  
12 incidentally, while the Minister still approves by-laws,  
13 which ends this fall incidentally, that the Minister's  
14 involvement in by-law approval ends this fall on November  
15 1st, I am the Minister's delegate, with the agreement of  
16 General Council, so on consultation with the Minister I  
17 am the Minister's representative too because we are working  
18 with the Council so closely. I try to encourage, to the  
19 extent possible, we have no difficulties with this to date  
20 incidentally, that the respect of the Council's position  
21 with respect to budgets and priorities is one that I will  
22 not interfere with, so long as it follows the legal process.

23                   COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: Yes.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Thank you for that. It is a very helpful elaboration.  
2 It seems to me tied in with the essence of the debate about  
3 Aboriginal self-government in this country. In your  
4 document, for example, you talk about different forms of  
5 self-government and yet there are scholars who have adopted  
6 other working definitions of Aboriginal self-government.

7 If that working definition is accepted, there is no such  
8 thing now in Canada. So, everything depends upon the  
9 working definition of whether self-government can possibly  
10 mean administrative duties and so on. Thank you for that.

11 Perhaps what I should do to be consistent  
12 and being mindful of the time constraints is make two or  
13 three very brief comments and then perhaps invite your  
14 reaction or the reaction of the other speakers to it.

15 I am trying to mention some of the important points that  
16 catch my eye, and at the same time not go on very long.

17 The principle of equity with other local  
18 governments in Alberta in the use of and in the benefit  
19 from provincial resources is another one of these  
20 principles. I am wondering how far that goes as a guiding  
21 principle. That is, is it the intention or is it for the  
22 future or for the practice for the moment to look at  
23 objective measures to test whether or not this scheme is

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 in fact achieving equity?

2 That is, do you measure, for example,  
3 the educational achievement of children, saying how many  
4 do we have graduating from high school or whatever, or  
5 do we look at other criteria to establish a standard of  
6 living? Do we look for unemployment rates, the average  
7 for municipalities in the province or that sort of thing?

8 That's one question that would occur to me.

9 I will mention one or two more and I'll  
10 stop there. The matter of human resources. I noticed  
11 in I think the first or the second presentation -- it was  
12 Mr. Parenteau's presentation, if I recall, you were talking  
13 about the need to build capital resources as infrastructure  
14 and you added orally something very interesting, that you  
15 need human resources too.

16 My question is this: What mechanisms  
17 are now in place then to get the Métis people of the  
18 settlements themselves to get the skills, the experience,  
19 whatever characteristics might be perceived as necessary  
20 to do the job down the road, whatever the job might be?  
21 What is being done there? What kind of education or  
22 training programs exist? That would be a question that  
23 arises.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   The last one would be this, the last  
2   comment I will make would be to ask, if I am correct in  
3   understanding that the existing membership code would  
4   exclude Métis people who have happened to reside in the  
5   United States. I know of many Métis people after 1885,  
6   escaping the wrath of the Canadian people coming out west,  
7   went to the south. There are many of our people living  
8   in what is now Montana and the Dakotas. It's a small point,  
9   but the question is, is it right to interpret that because  
10  I saw the reference "Canadian Aboriginal ancestry".

11                  Those are the points I would make and  
12  I thought I would do it this way and invite comments from  
13  anyone, or if you prefer not to comment then over to my  
14  colleague. Thank you very much.

15                  **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** I guess in response,  
16  Paul, I will Garry answer the question about education  
17  since it was his comment and maybe the membership I will  
18  leave that for Alphonse.

19                  In regards to the question about equity  
20  with other provincial jurisdictions and other local  
21  governments, when the agreement was negotiated we were  
22  away behind in the areas of housing, social needs,  
23  education as well. We were falling behind and we were



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1    lacking.

2                    I guess that's what this agreement is  
3    all about, to be in par or at par with our neighbours,  
4    whether it be towns, villages, within the area of the Métis  
5    settlements. That's my understanding of what we were  
6    trying to achieve for our people because there were poor  
7    housing conditions and the roads were in terrible shape  
8    and that's what we are hoping to achieve, to bring the  
9    education standard to a level that is equitable with other  
10   governments in this province. That's my understanding.

11    I think I've addressed the concern about education.

12                    **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Insofar as the  
13    equity and the context in which it was presented it was  
14    equity in the form of the local infrastructures to be equal  
15    with other local governments in the province, looking at  
16    the infra-structure, namely the local infrastructure I  
17    guess in capital form, such as roads, streets, et cetera.

18                    Also adding to that, yes, the question  
19    that you posed is education and employment equity and how  
20    to we address it and how do we measure it? Education at  
21    present on the majority of the settlements is being  
22    administered at the primary level by the Northlands School  
23    Division, something that is outside of our control. We

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 do have local boards where we sit as advisory boards with  
2 the school district and we are involved with also the Lac  
3 la Biche School District and the High Prairie School  
4 District I believe for some other settlements.

5                   So, we are able through provincial  
6 standards and the school boards to have education available  
7 for our students. We have elementary schools on the  
8 majority of our settlements, not all of them. However,  
9 for post-secondary education we have no way of really  
10 providing any incentives or any mechanism for  
11 post-secondary education.

12                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** So, the  
13 government doesn't provide any scholarships or bursaries  
14 for people to go to management school or whatever?

15                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** We had initially  
16 funded an education society and it operated for  
17 approximately three years. We are presently reviewing  
18 the society and its focus.

19                   We have in the past been providing some  
20 post-secondary education, but through that society and  
21 we are reviewing it at the present.

22                   As far as the comment I made on the human  
23 resources, what is being done in that respect, Paul, I

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 believe we consider that part of the transition. We look  
2 at how the local governments are structured and how we  
3 run our local governments or councils. It's quite a bold  
4 step I guess, coming from a situation where a government  
5 department sends in a supervisor or someone who operates  
6 inside your projects in the settlement, which has happened  
7 to us in the past ten years or so, and to come a long way  
8 in the last five years of having the ability to make our  
9 own decisions and having budgets which work for our  
10 administrative infrastructure, to have human resources  
11 available to assist us.

12                   We have had on this settlement -- and  
13 I can probably attest to it along with the other settlements  
14 -- a brain drain on our settlements of people who have  
15 attained an education, have attained certain skills in  
16 administration and an ability to work within local  
17 government structures, but we didn't have the  
18 opportunities locally and so they went elsewhere and  
19 applied their skills.

20                   We now have the task of trying to attract  
21 those people back to act as trainers or facilitators for  
22 training our other settlement members. And also through  
23 the Transition Commission have training programs and a

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 mentoring program that Dennis has implemented to train  
2 settlement staff and settlement members to better  
3 administer our settlements. So, we are beginning I guess  
4 to build our human resources and trying to improve the  
5 education levels and the working levels of people in each  
6 affected settlement.

7                   It's not to the best of our ability to  
8 date, but there is room for improvement, I grant you that.

9     We have to look at other means for improving that human  
10 resource.

11                   **MR. ALPHONSE L'HIRONDELLE:** Yes, as far  
12 as Aboriginal ancestry, it's written right into the Métis  
13 Settlements Act that under section 78(1) an application  
14 for membership in the settlement can be approved only if  
15 the Settlement Council is satisfied with the applicant.

16     The first thing is (a) is the person of Canadian Aboriginal  
17 ancestry, who identifies with Métis history and culture.

18                   I guess the reason that was put in --  
19 I can't really recall, but we wanted to state Canadian  
20 Aboriginal at that time when we were putting together the  
21 Act, as I recall it.

22                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** If I could comment  
23 on that, Paul. The description of Métis as we implemented

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 in the Métis Settlements Act was part of a presentation  
2 we made through Métism at one time to the Métis National  
3 Council. The majority of the definition here of Métis  
4 was the definition adopted in the 1983, '84 and '85 round  
5 of First Minister's Conferences by the Métis across Canada  
6 as a definition of Métis. As you are well aware that  
7 definition has recently changed, but to be consistent with  
8 the definition during the negotiation we adopted that  
9 definition.

10 We now are having some problems as far  
11 as the amended definition of Métis.

12 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Just briefly, I've had  
13 some time to think about the question of equity with other  
14 local governments. We have in process right now a  
15 financial review, the first one of four that are  
16 legislative reviews, to find out whether or not the  
17 finances paid out under this agreement are significant  
18 enough to meet the requirements as per the Accord Agreement  
19 that we talked about earlier and whether or not it's meeting  
20 our needs.

21 Part of that review process includes the  
22 hiring of consultants to go out to talk to our  
23 administrators on the settlements, people that deal on

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 a daily basis with the finances, our membership at large  
2 on each and every one of the settlements and our Councils  
3 as well.

4                   They are to talk to them and find out  
5 whether or not we are succeeding in what I guess we set  
6 out to do. That would be part of the review and that would  
7 be how we would measure whether or not we were successful  
8 in what we were trying to achieve. That's just a further  
9 comment.

10                   **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** I would like to  
11 add to what Kenny has just stated with respect to access  
12 to government programs. The Accord Agreement, looking  
13 at it globally, has got a 17-year time life.

14                   The transition period is seven years,  
15 the first seven years. That period can be changed by  
16 agreement of both parties, that if the transition period  
17 has to be extended, it would be extended between the  
18 Government of Alberta and the General Council by agreement.

19                   Within the transition period, that first  
20 seven years, the intent was that in addition to the  
21 financial part of the agreement, which in this case is  
22 if you remove what they have called the rainy day fund,  
23 which is \$5 million a year for the first seven years,

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 annually, and that is put into a savings or an investment  
2 account for future use. If you exclude that, the agreement  
3 for the first seven years includes \$25 million a year,  
4 plus -- and this is the key and one in which there is still  
5 some need to clarify things -- plus most provincial  
6 programming because some of that \$25 million was intended  
7 to replace some provincial programs.

8                   Where we have had some confusion in the  
9 implementation of this Accord Agreement in the very first  
10 phase of it has been what are the settlements eligible  
11 for, because the Government of Alberta has interpreted  
12 certain words a little differently than the settlements.

13 This first review, and there are four of these reviews,  
14 incidentally, in the life of this agreement, the first  
15 review is in 1993, as Kenny indicated. The next one will  
16 be in 1996 and then the last two are in 2001 and 2006.

17                   The objective of those reviews is to  
18 revisit these words to make sure that both parties come  
19 away from those re-examinations I guess of the agreement  
20 with a higher degree of comfort.

21                   We believe, all of us, that this kind  
22 of an agreement has to reflect the will of both parties  
23 to see it succeed. It's really important that governments

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 and the settlements have an open mind as they sit down  
2 to revisit these words.

3                   There are some programs that have been  
4 denied to settlements and in the judgment of the  
5 Commissioner I believe that those decisions were not  
6 intended. One thing we have encountered, and I would  
7 suggest that the words "equitable" and "fair" may be  
8 different. That is, equitable may not necessarily be  
9 fair, and that is that what we are doing is we are trying  
10 in seven years to catch up with what other local governments  
11 have taken sometimes decades to achieve.

12                   I think from our experience early in this  
13 process that maybe it is unreasonable to suggest that the  
14 settlements compete equally in some program areas for funds  
15 that are delivered by certain departments of government,  
16 that there may be a need for specific budgets to be set  
17 aside, particularly during this restraint period, when  
18 it is probably in terms of history one of the most difficult  
19 times financially to implement eight new governments in  
20 this province.

21                   What we are looking at in the next few  
22 months, hopefully, is a revisitation of these words in  
23 this agreement, so that there can be a more fairer



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 reflection of program support to the settlements than  
2 perhaps equitable. They are different and I think by  
3 simply stating that the settlements be competing equitably  
4 with their neighbours may at this point in history not  
5 be a fair level of competition for the settlements.

6 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Maybe I  
7 could ask one of my questions at this point. You are  
8 talking about finances. I was curious as to actually who  
9 manages and actually controls the resources in the interim  
10 period. Is it the transition organization? Is it the  
11 settlement governments themselves? Is it the General  
12 Council or is there a sharing of responsibilities or what  
13 actually occurs?

14 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** I think that would be  
15 an appropriate question for the Commissioner and that's  
16 one of the main reasons he was established, to be the  
17 watchdog and to make sure that the money was used for the  
18 intended purpose.

19 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** The annual  
20 transactions regarding money, if I could summarize them  
21 maybe in a few statements here, the Government of Alberta  
22 by legislation, that is statute, is required to transfer  
23 \$30 million April 1st of every year for that first seven

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 years to the Commissioner.

2                   Then there is a legal process with which  
3 the settlements access the money and that legal process  
4 is outlined in the Métis Settlements Act and in the Accord  
5 Implementation Act.

6                   That process really -- like a thumbnail  
7 sketch of it is reflected in the following steps. The  
8 General Council passes a General Council policy on the  
9 allocation of funds for that year. That allocation is  
10 independent of the \$5 million -- this allocation focuses  
11 on the \$25 million for capital and operating annually.

12                   The \$5 million a year, that is the rainy  
13 day fund or we call it the Consolidated Fund Part II, is  
14 kind of the little heritage package that the settlements  
15 are investing. Upon my receipt of that \$30 million, \$5  
16 million of that is normally transferred immediately across  
17 to General Council and they invest it according to the  
18 way they see fit.

19                   The General Council policy on the actual  
20 allocation on an annual basis must have unanimous support.

21       As Kenny indicated, there are certain policies that  
22 require all eight settlements to agree and so that is a  
23 financial split and that policy requires all eight

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 settlements to agree.

2                   Once the General Council policy is  
3 approved on how the money is split up among the settlements  
4 and General Council, the by-laws of each settlement then  
5 kick in and are sort of the final stage of requisition  
6 of the funds. Those by-laws, of course, go before their  
7 people. The \$25 million annually is currently identified  
8 as being split 60 per cent capital and 40 per cent  
9 operating. That's in the statute.

10                   General Council and the Minister can  
11 change that proportion. So, that's how the money flows.

12                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** So it's  
13 by-laws. They use the by-laws primarily?

14                   **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** That is the  
15 instrument to requisition the funds, yes.

16                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** You said  
17 something that I was partially going to deal with. One  
18 of the questions I was going to ask was the veto that the  
19 Minister has. Is that just for the first three years you  
20 were saying or is that throughout?

21                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** The first three years  
22 by General Council policy.

23                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Do they have

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 to have any reason or is it just an over-arching kind of  
2 veto? Do they have to have a good reason?

3 The Minister of Indian Affairs can veto  
4 any by-law. He doesn't have to give any reason, he just  
5 says no, sorry.

6 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Oh, for good reason for  
7 sure. We are consulting with him all the way through in  
8 the development, the process of any General Council policy.  
9 He is aware of all the concerns, so all his concerns have  
10 been addressed already by the time the policy receives  
11 third reading.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What about  
13 following the three years, what kind of authority does  
14 the Minister have after that?

15 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** He doesn't have  
16 any veto power after three years. He has veto power the  
17 first three years. I am not sure about the other portion.

18 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** The first three  
19 years of the veto power is to make sure that our policies  
20 are consistent with other Alberta law. After three years,  
21 hopefully we would know when we make our policy that we  
22 should be consistent with the Alberta law. It's up to  
23 ourselves to govern ourselves, to police ourselves and

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 also for the assistance of the Commissioner up to year  
2 seven to make sure that we are within the other statutes.

3

4 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Loss of  
5 membership. I notice that people can lose their  
6 membership. One of the reasons is they are not living  
7 in the settlements without a good reason. What does that  
8 actually mean? If you are not here consecutively for 12  
9 months, you could lose your membership. I was just  
10 thinking of some of the Commission staff that are hopefully  
11 still going to be around for about 18 months from now.

12 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Without good  
13 reason I guess is -- it could be broadly defined. If you  
14 look at people in general, people move from place to place  
15 and if someone becomes a settlement member and is born  
16 and raised there or otherwise, applies for membership and  
17 at sometime in their life decides to go somewhere else  
18 and after 12 consecutive months are no longer a permanent  
19 member of that community and has taken up permanent  
20 residency elsewhere in Canada, their membership can be  
21 deleted from the membership list. That's a voluntary  
22 absence basically is what they are doing.

23 However, if you have settlement members

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 who have moved off the settlement for employment, for  
2 incarceration, for good reason, there is an automatic leave  
3 of absence that goes with the member. If settlement  
4 members decide to leave for questionable reasons, there  
5 is a mechanism of applying for a leave of absence on an  
6 annual basis it is referred to the settlement council.  
7 The settlement councils can grant a leave of absence to  
8 settlement members.

9                   So, it's a mechanism I guess of  
10 controlling the membership. The blatant one I guess you  
11 are asking is how do you lose your membership if you don't  
12 live the peaceful life and accepting the Métis way of life  
13 on a settlement and you are very disruptive within the  
14 community. I guess one of the options of the settlement  
15 council is to review your membership. That's your worst  
16 case scenario and it very seldom happens. In most cases  
17 it's a voluntary leave of absence.

18                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Are there a  
19 lot of people actually losing their membership because  
20 they are employed somewhere else or --

21                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** No. Employment  
22 is not a reason for losing your membership.

23                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I was just

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 curious, it's not an important question, but I was kind  
2 of curious as to why the offices are in Edmonton of the  
3 Commission, as opposed to being in one of the settlements,  
4 perhaps creating some capital expenditure for office and  
5 employing local people. Is there a particular reason why  
6 the headquarters and everything is over there, somewhere  
7 else, outside of the Métis land?

8 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** I guess in response to  
9 that, the reason we federated was to have a political voice  
10 and speak with one voice when it came to government  
11 departments and so forth. That's the reason our General  
12 Council office is located centrally and for the purposes  
13 of all Council meetings we all convene ourselves in a  
14 central location and whenever we need the Minister to come  
15 in he's readily available with the legislature being right  
16 in Edmonton. That's the reason that we are there. I  
17 imagine that's the same purpose as the Commission chose  
18 to locate.

19 He also has one location which is in High  
20 Prairie which is a regional office, a satellite station.

21

22 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Any  
23 comments?

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** Just to add what  
2 was just said, it is not out of the question that in the  
3 future that adjustments regionally would not occur.  
4 Incidentally, we have a proposal on the table right now  
5 with the General Council on the phasing out of this  
6 Commission over a period of time and nothing is beyond  
7 potential there.

8                   We do have a set of operating standards  
9 within the Commission which were prepared with the input  
10 of the settlements in terms of service standards and  
11 availability of personnel. Those were worked out in the  
12 last year, so certainly convenience to the settlements.

13                   Sometimes you can be too close too,  
14 incidentally. We've talked about offices in every  
15 settlement. Like sometimes it's viewed as a bit too close  
16 and from all different perspectives incidentally, that  
17 while you are training staff on the settlement to handle  
18 their own affairs, that sometimes having someone there  
19 permanent may be a crutch and that the development of the  
20 personnel on the settlement may not be moved as quickly.

21       It's one of those things that you have to balance out.

22                   The location, incidentally, and design  
23 of the Commission office was done in consultation with



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 General Council, right down to the size of the building  
2 and the location and everything. It was not just placed  
3 there without discussion.

4 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Do you have  
5 a policy of trying to hire as many Métis people on staff  
6 as possible?

7 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** What we are doing  
8 is -- that is a personal policy which have instituted.  
9 The legislation doesn't require me to do this. What we  
10 are doing now is we have developed a mentoring program  
11 and are actually moving to convert all of the management  
12 of the Commission into Métis run, that is management  
13 talent. So, we are in that process now of doing that.  
14 It does have a key role in the future phasing out of this  
15 Commission, incidentally. So, yes we are moving toward  
16 that end.

17 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank you.

18 Maybe we will continue on with the presentations and we  
19 will have a few more questions at the end of the morning.

20

21 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** The  
22 next presentation will be done by Garry Parenteau and  
23 that's for the Access Committee for which Randy Hardy

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 wasn't able to come.

2 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Thanks, Ambrose.

3

4 The presentation I will make on MSAC will  
5 be verbal, as you are aware that Randy is not here today,  
6 but I am sure he has a report he wants to submit to the  
7 Commission and table at a later date.

8 What I will attempt to do is give you  
9 a brief overview of what MSAC is for. MSAC is the Métis  
10 Settlements Access Committee.

11 Before I get into the working and the  
12 make-up of MSAC maybe what I should do is preface it by  
13 saying that what this Accord package gave us was in the  
14 first seven years a fair amount of dollars up front.  
15 That's for building infra-structure.

16 Secondly, there is a period in there  
17 where we can access provincial dollars through two for  
18 one matching grants and also one for one matching grants  
19 at a later date. That's the second portion of the Accord.

20 The third portion of the Accord was the  
21 co-management of Crown minerals. That came about because  
22 when we settled with the Accord we agreed on a land mass  
23 of 1.25 million acres of land in fee simple, giving us

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the exclusive right of use of that land and how people  
2 gain access to it it had to be implemented so that industry  
3 when they wanted to access the minerals under those lands  
4 had to have a very specific way of doing it.

5                   Across the remaining part of the  
6 province industry normally uses the Surface Rights Board  
7 for access to deeded lands or other Crown lands. Being  
8 that the Métis settlements now is a different type of  
9 ownership of land in the province, namely fee simple, we  
10 formed the Métis Settlements Access Committee and  
11 basically what that Committee does is substitutes the role  
12 of the Surface Rights Board of the Province of Alberta.

13                   The co-management gives us two things:  
14 One, an overriding royalty, the right to negotiate an  
15 overriding royalty on any projects that are implemented  
16 on the settlements over and above what the province takes  
17 from the mineral sales. So, that's the first portion  
18 of it.

19                   The second portion is the ability to  
20 negotiate from zero to 25 per cent a participation option  
21 with any member of the industry that wants access to the  
22 minerals below settlement lands.

23                   In order to negotiate those processes,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 MSAC is composed of, first, a Chairperson, presently Randy  
2 Hardy, appointed by the Commissioner, one person appointed  
3 from the Energy Resources Conservation Board and one person  
4 appointed from the Minister of Energy department. Also,  
5 one member from each of the affected settlements. So that  
6 each settlement has representation sitting on the  
7 committee.

8                   Initially when the lands are posted or  
9 asked for -- are requested, there is a notice of posting  
10 that goes out and a request to the Department of Energy  
11 to have a certain amount of land sales, mineral sales,  
12 pardon me, under settlement lands.

13                   I will not bore you in getting into the  
14 time lines, I am sure it will be in the report, but there  
15 are various time limits that are required between the  
16 posting to the consultation process and to the signing  
17 of development agreements. That will all be encompassed  
18 in the report.

19                   Once there is a Notice of Posting  
20 requested, industry then consults with a person that is  
21 appointed by the affected settlement and negotiating team.  
22 There is a period of time that elapses and thereafter  
23 we look at awarding and appointing, or I guess accepting

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 a number of bids from industry and accepting the successful  
2 bidder.

3                   Once the successful bidders are accepted  
4 then we go to signing agreements. We sit down with the  
5 industry, the affected settlement and the members of this  
6 board and sign off agreements on access to the minerals.

7  
8                   There are terms and conditions that  
9 apply to the Notice of Posting and in order to enhance  
10 the employment on the settlements, some of the conditions  
11 that we impose is that the settlements would have first  
12 chance with employment whenever possible. These get into  
13 the development agreements and generally the development  
14 agreements will provide for local employment, employment  
15 of local contractors and the first option going to  
16 settlement councils or local contractors if possible.

17                   I should also back up a wee bit and  
18 clarify that the minerals that are retained by the Crown  
19 are the gas and oil and other minerals as described in  
20 our letters patent. However, there is an exception where  
21 sand, gravel, peat and marl were left out for resources  
22 to be developed by the settlements and are retained by  
23 the settlements as opposed to the Crown.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   We presently have been involved in a  
2   number of agreements. We had the option to participate  
3   in several of them. To date we have not fully  
4   participated, I guess up to 25 per cent and we really  
5   haven't generated any revenues from our participation to  
6   date. We are as eight settlements reviewing and looking  
7   at the feasibility of setting up our own gas and oil  
8   company, so that we can further this agreement -- so that  
9   not only would we participate up to 25 per cent in any  
10   project, but we would also have the ability to be one of  
11   the bidders on other requests for minerals and so that  
12   we could develop the Crown minerals on our own lands.  
13   That's something we are looking at for the future.

14                   That in brief and very briefly what MSAC  
15   is all about.

16                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
17   you, Garry.

18                   From there I guess we go on to -- I don't  
19   know if Harry is here from East Prairie.

20                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** No, he is not.

21                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** So  
22   from there we will probably go on to Settlement Sooniyaw  
23   by Ken Noskey.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Thanks again, Ambrose,  
2 and again, members of the Commission.

3                   I guess Settlement Sooniyaw, I am sure  
4 Paul knows what that is, money -- Settlement Sooniyaw  
5 meaning money. This is not a legislated body, although  
6 it is under the Business Corporations Act and it's not  
7 part of our legislation.

8                   What this corporation is is the economic  
9 development arm of the eight Métis settlements. So,  
10 that's a change of hats and I'm also the President of the  
11 Settlement Sooniyaw Corp.

12                  I guess I would like to start off, the  
13 Alberta Métis have had a long and rich history both in  
14 Alberta and in Canada and made some significant  
15 contributions to both Alberta and Canada.

16                  Over the past 70 years, Métis in Alberta  
17 have been striving for self-determination and  
18 self-reliance, greater control over their own affairs or  
19 one's affairs.

20                  As a people we have endured much  
21 hardship. Hardship has included extreme poverty, like  
22 I mentioned before disease and discrimination. This was  
23 made public and clear s early as 1930 with the Ewing

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Commission that I mentioned earlier. But we have survived  
2 these hardships through persistence, hard work and  
3 determination.

4                   As we move into the next century, Métis  
5 people are determined to shape their own destiny and take  
6 greater control over their own affairs. The Charlottetown  
7 Accord agreement which we are a part of was a perfect  
8 example and manifestation of this reality, that we are  
9 going to some day and continue to take more control over  
10 our own lives and our own destiny.

11                   It is our belief that a greater control  
12 over one's affairs, namely self-government, cannot succeed  
13 without significant resources to sustain. These were  
14 Garry's comments earlier.

15                   In 1971 the eight Alberta Métis  
16 settlements federated as a means to strengthen their  
17 political voice. Again, this is just repetitious, but  
18 I thought it would be important. It became clear to the  
19 settlements that if progress toward self-government and  
20 better living conditions was to occur, unity among the  
21 settlements was essential to make these necessary  
22 advances.

23                   As part of this process, Settlement



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1    Sooniyaw Corporation, which I will refer to from here on  
2    in as SSC, was created in the hope of spurring economic  
3    development. Sooniyaw is the Cree word for "money". The  
4    SSC board is comprised of a representative from each of  
5    the eight settlements and the four executive officers of  
6    the General Council. The settlements' representatives  
7    are chosen by each respective council.

8                    Since 1980 SSC has undertaken various  
9    economic development initiatives. It co-ordinated -- one  
10   of its successes is the Métis Settlements Carpentry  
11   Training Program which provided the settlements and its  
12   members with an opportunity to train and qualify as  
13   Journeyman Carpenters. This Carpentry Training Program  
14   was a co-operative joint venture between the  
15   federal/provincial governments and the settlements.

16                   SSC was utilized by the settlements as  
17   a vehicle to access federal funding through the North  
18   Economic Development Program or NEDP. NEDP then provided  
19   seed capital for a subsidiary of Settlement Sooniyaw  
20   Corporation which I will refer to as SIC, Settlement  
21   Investment Corporation. This body acts as a lending  
22   institution of small loans available to settlement  
23   members. It provides members with start-up capital for

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 such things as small business, agriculture and so on, and  
2 all in the context of economic development.

3                   As could be expected with any new  
4 organization, SIC at the time of its establishment  
5 underwent growing pains. I think that is what we are  
6 having under this new legislative regime that we are under  
7 here. SIC also went through the same growing pains.

8                   However, SIC has managed to emerge as  
9 a financially and administratively strong institution with  
10 a good credit.

11                  Alberta's Métis settlements are in a  
12 very special situation. We are the only Métis in Canada  
13 with a land base and the only Aboriginal group who, by  
14 provincial statute, are able to legally govern their own  
15 lands. We are only talking province here.

16                  As has been stated earlier,  
17 self-government is impossible to sustain without the  
18 necessary resources. Like any government which is  
19 responsible for the delivery of programs and services,  
20 its day to day operations can only be sustained when  
21 sufficient resources come into the community. The  
22 development of an economy is essential to sustain  
23 self-government. I have stated this over and over and

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 over again during my other presentations to the Royal  
2 Commission.

3 What role does the government have then?

4

5 Settlement Sooniyaw Corporation is  
6 providing us with a vehicle for further economic  
7 development. This is not an easy task. A dominant  
8 reality in today's Aboriginal communities is that the level  
9 of infrastructure, education and capital necessary to  
10 develop economies is low when compared with neighbouring  
11 communities. As Aboriginal communities inevitably move  
12 closer to some form of self-government and the development  
13 of sustainable communities, it is essential that  
14 government, both provincial and federal, provide the  
15 necessary support during this transition process.

16 This support role is critical during the  
17 transitional phase because it is during this time that  
18 foundations for communities are built. We believe and  
19 we are learning first hand that building blocks and the  
20 way in which they are placed, like the foundation of any  
21 building determines the solidity or soundness of any future  
22 development.

23 The philosophy and approach of the Métis

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 settlements to issues of governance and development is  
2 one of consensus, negotiation and partnership. Again,  
3 the Métis Settlements Accord defines a partnership between  
4 the Alberta government and Alberta's eight Métis  
5 settlements.

6 I would just like to briefly touch on  
7 some of the initiatives and goals that we are currently  
8 in the process of trying to finalize. Partnering with  
9 business to capitalize on investment and business  
10 opportunities is one area we are currently reviewing and  
11 hoping to tap into.

12 Number two is seeking co-operative  
13 relationships with various lending institutions to assist  
14 our members. As I have discussed, SSC has participated  
15 in federal programs funding economic development since  
16 the early days of the corporation and it is currently  
17 negotiating with Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development  
18 Strategies, CAEDS, to recapitalize Settlement Investment  
19 Corporation.

20 Settlement Investment Corporation, the  
21 subsidiary of SSC, acts as lending institution for  
22 settlement members. Loans dispersed are up to a maximum  
23 of \$1 million and are for small business, agriculture and

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 so on. Actually, that should read \$100,000.

2 As I have stated previously, despite  
3 initial growing pains, SIC has emerged as a financially  
4 and administratively sound institution.

5 As we move forward within the Canadian  
6 confederation and the Métis Settlements Accord, it is  
7 essential that we build a solid economic foundation. In  
8 its proposal to secure recapitalization from CAEDS, SIC  
9 will build on the foundation that we have worked so hard  
10 to achieve.

11 We have met some degree of resistance  
12 on the part of government in this area, but we are committed  
13 to pushing forward in the spirit of partnership and  
14 progress. This is an excellent example of a situation  
15 where government has a role to foster economic development.

16 The Métis settlements are ready, willing and able to take  
17 on these tasks which will allow for growth prosperity and  
18 sustainability. Government must participate in this  
19 process of transition.

20 Number three is maximizing the natural  
21 resources potential of the settlements. This is an area  
22 of significant strategic importance because it involves  
23 the management of gas and oil -- Garry touched on this

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 as well -- forestry products, game farming or ranching  
2 and so on.

3                   We are currently in the process of  
4 setting up an oil and gas company and again that's  
5 repetitive. The reason for that is, as Garry mentioned,  
6 to capitalize on the potential from our co-management  
7 agreement.

8                   The fourth thing we are doing is  
9 training. In addition to infrastructure and capital,  
10 economic development requires trained people to manage  
11 the development. Education and training is a priority  
12 we feel must be pursued. SSC has been involved to this  
13 end and we are actively pursuing education and training  
14 opportunities.

15                   Without any economic base,  
16 self-government cannot flourish. Through the activities  
17 of SSC we are trying to create the financial resources  
18 and skill levels necessary to move from dependency to  
19 autonomy. This poses some difficult challenges, but based  
20 on our success to date, we are confident of meeting these  
21 challenges, providing we can obtain sufficient support  
22 from government and the private sector to continue our  
23 efforts.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   That concludes my submission on  
2   Settlement Sooniyaw Corporation and all those things that  
3   I mentioned are in progress so far and, hopefully, we can  
4   achieve most of those goals that we set for ourselves.

5                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:**   Maybe we  
6   could ask a few more questions.   I will start with Paul  
7   again.

8                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:**   I will  
9   keep it short, even shorter than last time this time.  
10   I would like to ask two questions.   The first one is a  
11   general one having to do with the overall settlements and  
12   the relationship with the government.

13                   It has been pointed out a number of times  
14   this morning that necessarily and in practice disputes  
15   will arise whenever there is an agreement, a written  
16   agreement concerning the interpretation of the agreement.  
17   This is not unique to the Métis settlements situation.  
18   We see it elsewhere.

19                   How to overcome that?   There are a  
20   limited number of options.   One of them, of course, is  
21   to involve a disinterested party.   Is there any such  
22   mechanism here because there is a great imbalance of power,  
23   of course, between the Government of Alberta and the Métis

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 settlements people. I am wondering if you have been able  
2 to make any progress in trying to secure a mechanism for  
3 resolving disputes on the interpretation of this  
4 legislation, policies or whatever? That will be my first  
5 general question and I will ask the other one and invite  
6 answers or comments.

7                   It has to do with the presentation made  
8 by Mr. Noskey here which I found very helpful. I noted  
9 that -- my understanding from what I've read and from what  
10 I've heard this morning is that there is no individual  
11 capacity to raise money with security on settlement lands  
12 on the part of individuals. My understanding, and I am  
13 asking you to correct me, or I am just stating my  
14 understanding and so if I am wrong you can assist me.  
15 So, to try to overcome that difficulty, among other  
16 reasons, you have established Settlement Sooniyaw  
17 Corporation.

18                   One of the bedrocks for successful  
19 societies, it has been argued in a number of quarters,  
20 is small business, for many reasons that I don't need to  
21 articulate. I find it interesting that you say you have  
22 met some resistance from the government in this area.

23                   My general question is to invite



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 comments about the function of small business in places  
2 like this because I think this is an issue, this is the  
3 core of the future vision of Aboriginal self-government  
4 in Canada. What do you see as a function for small  
5 businesses, given their capacity to engage skills,  
6 whatever they might be, wherever they might be and to  
7 generate local satisfaction? What are your views on that?  
8 What is the involvement of Settlement Sooniyaw  
9 Corporation in that? What future plans do you have? What  
10 kind of balance do you see between settlement owned  
11 businesses, as opposed to privately owned businesses,  
12 another imported related issue.

13 Those are my questions and I will repeat  
14 them briefly. What about disputes on interpretation of  
15 the scheme, are there any initiatives there to interest  
16 a tribunal perhaps, a neutral tribunal?

17 The second question, inviting  
18 commentaries about SSC and the future for small business  
19 and private business for the settlements. Thank you very  
20 much.

21 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Very important  
22 questions, Paul. I guess I will try to address both  
23 questions that you raised and following my comments maybe

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 I will get the rest of the executive to have anything  
2 further to comment.

3 In regards to disputes between  
4 government and the settlements in the interpretation of  
5 our agreement or legislation and so forth. The thing that  
6 I mentioned earlier was the financial review, the first  
7 one being in '93 and Dennis mentioned there are four in  
8 the whole package. I guess that's the main intent of the  
9 whole reviews was if there was any disagreement as to what  
10 we agreed to in the first place. This review would  
11 hopefully address those concerns and correct anything that  
12 needed any clarification in terms of interpretation.

13 One of the things that we do have in place  
14 and this is legislated is a transition authority  
15 established. This transition authority is to assist and  
16 give direction to the Commissioner in the implementation  
17 of our agreement. So, once we have an agreement at this  
18 transition authority with representation from the  
19 government, the Minister responsible and myself as the  
20 leader of the Métis Settlements and the Commissioner who  
21 is part of the same body, would receive and give direction  
22 from the two parties to the agreement, the government and  
23 the Métis Settlements. Hopefully all the disputes that

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 would arise because of our agreement would be resolved  
2 within that body. If not, then we have the other process  
3 of the reviews. That's how we would handle any disputes.

4                   The issue of land in SSC and how -- you  
5 are quite correct that we can't use our land as any type  
6 of security for any loans to members or settlement  
7 corporations. The reason being that we didn't want to  
8 lose any portion of our lands, since we had a terrible  
9 time keeping the eight that we do have and we lost four.  
10 We figured we didn't want to risk any portions of our  
11 land in any way, shape or form. That's the reason that  
12 our land is held collectively in that manner.

13                   In regards to SSC's role in small  
14 business on the settlements, the subsidiary company that  
15 I mentioned, Settlement Investment Corporation, was  
16 established for that sole purpose to lend to private as  
17 well as public or settlement owned businesses, just start  
18 them up and keep them running. That's the function that  
19 settlement investment would play.

20                   Settlement Sooniyaw Corporation is the  
21 political body that would ensure that Settlement  
22 Investment Corporation had sufficient funds to go and loan  
23 to members and to settlement corporations.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   If I can ask Garry if he has any further  
2    comments.

3                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Without sounding  
4    repetitive, I guess I would have to support what Ken says  
5    in regards to settling any disputes and mechanisms for  
6    settling disputes.

7                   As far as the interpretation of the Act  
8    goes, whenever we have a question, whether it be from  
9    ourselves or from the provincial side on the interpretation  
10   of the Act, we normally would go back to the transition  
11   authority and come to some consensus by the representative  
12   there, the Minister of the department and our president.

13

14                  If it cannot be resolved at that point,  
15   then there is direction given, as he mentioned, to our  
16   Commission to find a resolve to the dispute and the  
17   interpretation. In many cases it's listing five or six  
18   different legal opinions. We have used a number of legal  
19   opinions in the past.

20                  MSAT is more specific to membership  
21   disputes when it comes to -- or settlement membership  
22   disputes when it comes to membership or land allocations.  
23   Initially, however, the MSAT presentation and the report

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that you will see later on is the body that we hope to  
2 expand on and grow to become our local judicial system  
3 in the future. So, hopefully, MSAT is a stepping stone  
4 for our judicial system that we can impose and use with  
5 the settlements. I will leave it at that.

6                   As far as the Settlement Sooniyaw  
7 Corporation is concerned, as Ken said, yes, you are correct  
8 in saying that we cannot mortgage our lands for securities  
9 for any type of local business. We, however, can mortgage  
10 improvements on our lands through chattel mortgages. As  
11 a result, you will have a lot of local small businesses  
12 -- small businesses are very unique to any community and  
13 they are the backbone of the economy of any local economy,  
14 but most of the small businesses by settlement members  
15 are by chattel mortgages and that's from your local  
16 financial institutions.

17                   In order to -- because the local  
18 financial institutions always said, "Well, you are from  
19 the settlement," and automatically you are a high risk.  
20 We said that in order to overcome that we will set up  
21 Settlement Sooniyaw Corporation that would set up SIC and  
22 the reason for a Settlement Investment Corporation, when  
23 we access funds from NEDP it was supposed to be a

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 non-political organization, basically a financial lending  
2 institution. The reason for that was to fund small  
3 business on the settlements. There was a lot of gas and  
4 oil activity happening and people wanted to get into the  
5 service industries. We are able to do it through funds  
6 from CAEDS most recently and in the past through NEDP through  
7 SIC.

8                   Also, settlement businesses were  
9 established, settlement corporations, CAT corporations,  
10 you name it. There were different settlement-owned  
11 entities in various settlements.

12                   With the employment opportunities,  
13 settlement councils in some instances gave the  
14 settlement-owned corporation first crack at the employment  
15 or the first opportunities for contracts. The reason for  
16 that was so that the employment would be spread further  
17 throughout the community, but also keeping in mind that  
18 there were local small businesses operating and as  
19 sub-contractors to their major contracts that they were  
20 able to survive and to flourish.

21                   So, yes, there is a very unique  
22 co-management I guess of your settlement-owned businesses  
23 and your individually-owned businesses.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I  
2 wondered if I might get a clarification of one point.  
3 The chattel mortgages, what are they on, that's the first  
4 part. The second part is do these have to be subjected  
5 to the approval of all the settlements? I was trying to  
6 understand those kinds of requirements, that is if a  
7 private individual wishes to use the chattel mortgage,  
8 does he have to come before the Council and get the approval  
9 of the eight settlements in order to establish that chattel  
10 mortgage?

11                   But the first question is what are the  
12 chattel mortgages on?

13                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** The chattel  
14 mortgages are usually on the equipment. The chattel  
15 mortgage is a regular mortgage or a loan that you get  
16 through any financial institution.

17                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Anything  
18 that is moveable?

19                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Anything that is  
20 moveable, yes. Anything that is attached to the land is  
21 where you consider a fixed mortgage is I guess the way  
22 we look at it.

23                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thanks

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 for that. I thought I heard "improvements" and I think  
2 sometimes people use improvements in relation to land.  
3 I just wanted a clarification of that. That's very  
4 helpful.

5 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Anything that is  
6 moveable is considered a chattel mortgage.

7 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes.

8 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** As far as  
9 receiving a chattel mortgage, the only time that an  
10 individual settlement member would go before -- and it's  
11 not really all the eight settlements, SIC has a board of  
12 itself that reviews the applications for funds and that's  
13 the Board of Settlement Investment Corporation will  
14 approve funding to individual settlement members or a  
15 settlement-owned entity.

16 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes,  
17 that's clears up the questions I had. Thank you very much.

18 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** How much  
19 money did you start out within your Aboriginal Capital  
20 Corporation at the beginning and how much are you trying  
21 to get refinanced in the renegotiation?

22 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** The initial seed  
23 capital that we received was \$3.5 million. What we are



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 seeking in the proposal for recapitalization is \$6 million.

2 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Was there a  
3 particular reason? I've heard previously that criticism  
4 generally of these kinds of equity corporations was that  
5 the original principle, which is not enough to really keep  
6 the operation going, what will you be able to do now with  
7 the new monies if you actually get it? Will you be able  
8 to do anything more than the loans? Will you be able to  
9 actually be a deposit in an institution where people will  
10 be able to come and put money into your financial  
11 institution or will it continue to be restricted to the  
12 original dollars and loaning it out and operating on the  
13 interest?

14 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** We are in the process  
15 of looking at all of those options that you just mentioned  
16 in order to expand and extend our services to Métis on  
17 the settlements, as well as other people of Alberta and  
18 open to become a normal lending institution at some time  
19 in the future. That's what we are hoping to achieve.  
20 It all depends on the recapitalization whether or not we  
21 are successful in achieving that.

22 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** So you can't  
23 use infrastructure, building, as collateral?

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** No. The only thing  
2 that you could use is anything that is moveable, like  
3 cattle, machinery, equipment and so forth.

4                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Just an  
5 aside, but are you aware of what they are doing on some  
6 of the Indian reservations, Kahnawake outside Montreal  
7 is one of the ones I am familiar with. What they have  
8 done is they actually have a caisse populaire on the  
9 reserve. It's a credit union started in Quebec. What  
10 they have done is to be able to use reserve equity for  
11 collateral in loans, they've set up a three-way system,  
12 where they actually get somebody else, three people I think  
13 from the reserve to sign an agreement with the financial  
14 institution that if this other person, the third person  
15 that wants to use their house and their land for a loan,  
16 if they can't meet their payments and the bank has to  
17 foreclose, what happens is the bank doesn't actually get  
18 the property. These three people that have signed an  
19 agreement end up acquiring this property and acting as  
20 an agent for the financial institution and find a local  
21 person, another Indian person that will buy the property.  
22       So the land stays with members, the individual can loan,  
23 borrow, no threat of ever losing the land from the people

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 and there has been very, very few percentages where --  
2 and they've been loaning like hundreds of millions of  
3 dollars and they only remember one foreclosure.

4 It was very successfully handled and the  
5 person had equity and so it gave back money. The rest  
6 of the money went to pay off the loan and everybody is  
7 happy.

8 MR. KEN NOSKEY: Interesting.

9 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: We can send  
10 you the information on it if you are interested.

11 MR. KEN NOSKEY: Yes, that would be  
12 helpful.

13 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: Because you  
14 are creating your own financial institution. You should  
15 be able to do that internally.

16 MR. KEN NOSKEY: We are talking with the  
17 person that's on the board of directors for CAEDS, his  
18 name is Ron Jamieson and he works with the Bank of Montreal.  
19 He has a concept that we are looking at as well, where  
20 it's similar to what you just mentioned. We are pursuing  
21 those other options I guess that might be available.

22 Thank you for the info.

23 CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS: I am trying

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 to see if I can remember another question or two here that  
2 I've put down. I guess that's about it for now. Maybe  
3 we can break for lunch and I remember them later.

4 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):**

5 Dennis, you wanted to say something?

6 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** The discussion  
7 regarding land and security just raised another point which  
8 might be of interest to the Commission, that one of the  
9 duties of the Commissioner was to examine every piece of  
10 provincial law and bring it into line, that is to make  
11 recommendations to both the General Council and the  
12 government to align that legislation, some almost 700 acts.  
13 Much of that, many of those pieces of legislation impact  
14 how the Province of Alberta, in this instance, relates  
15 to the settlements with regard to benefits and how land  
16 is tied into that.

17 We have recommended amendments to that  
18 legislation which may be of interest to the Commission.

19 I didn't bring the report today, incidentally, but it  
20 is a document that is public. It was tabled last December.

21 If you wish, I could forward a document to just outline  
22 the nature of the recommendations we have made to  
23 provincial statutes to accommodate not only loans, but

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 other elements of securities such as the impact of, for  
2 example, divorce legislation, child welfare legislation,  
3 extremely sensitive wills, that sort of thing. It may  
4 be of interest what we have recommended. I would be  
5 pleased to table that with you.

6 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** It is of  
7 interest. May I ask a quick question related to that.  
8 I was concerned about the status of the Corporations Act.  
9 Is there any application of the provincial Corporations  
10 Act to the corporate body here, the settlement  
11 corporations?

12 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** As settlement  
13 corporations the settlements by the statute that created  
14 them don't have to rely on that legislation. So, any  
15 subsidiaries in fact are creations of the parent company  
16 and are outside of that legislation.

17 What we are doing at present in  
18 co-operation with General Council is speaking to Revenue  
19 Canada about the tax position of those different  
20 subsidiaries and that is not resolved yet.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Just to  
22 try to clarify that, the Corporations Act of Alberta is  
23 expressly excluded in its application to these unique

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 corporations.

2 **MR. DENNIS SURRENDI:** Exactly.

3 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Right.

4 Thank you very much.

5 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** At  
6 this time I will give the floor to Wilfred Collins, our  
7 Chairman, for the blessing of the food and also he has  
8 something to say about the tour.

9 **MR. WILFRED COLLINS:** We are having a  
10 lunch break now. According to the agenda we are not to  
11 be back here until 1:30.

12 If you do find that you have enough time  
13 to make a tour of the settlement after your lunch break,  
14 I myself am available. I brought a vehicle here that could  
15 carry six people and Ambrose also is available to carry  
16 some people for the tour if anyone wants to make a visual  
17 tour of our community. I imagine Lee Desjarolais, Eugene  
18 Jensen and Charlie Cardinal are available for extending  
19 this tour to the people that are here.

20 Before we break, I would like to say  
21 grace.

22 **PRAYER - MR. WILFRED COLLINS**

23 --- Lunch recess at 12:10 p.m.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

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

2 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Would  
3 everyone please take their seats. Is East Prairie around,  
4 Harry Supernault.

5 We will get started. We will ask Harry  
6 to come to the table here. Harry Supernault is the  
7 Vice-President of East Prairie Settlement.

8 Harry, just before you start, I will get  
9 Randy Parenteau to come to the front table, Mike Sigurdur,  
10 Allan Lamouche, Elmer Anderson, Florence Wanuch.  
11 Florence, if you could sit up at the front table here.

12 Go ahead, Harry.

13 **MR. HARRY SUPERNAUT (Vice-President,**  
14 **East Prairie Métis Settlement):** Thank you, Ambrose.

15 My name i harry Supernault, I am from  
16 the East Prairie Métis Settlement. Our submission to the  
17 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is a topic that  
18 concerns everyone across Canada probably when you are  
19 talking about local government.

20 Historically, I guess our people have  
21 suffered through the hands and extended arms of government.

22 Not to take too much of your time, I am just going to  
23 go briefly over the presentation, but since the Europeans

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 have settled in Canada, as we call it today, they have  
2 dominated our peoples' lives for generations. Along with  
3 that there was a lot of hurt because of the two clashes  
4 in cultures.

5 In our community there is no exception.  
6 Each and every family has been affected by it one way  
7 or another.

8 When the people of the settlement first  
9 settled in East Prairie they were under the Betterment  
10 Act and there was no process in that Betterment Act. It  
11 was just people set in some place where they thought they  
12 could make a livelihood for themselves and their children.

13

14 From there they prospered but there was  
15 a lot of hurts from past abuses. We still suffer today  
16 from that hurt. In a community sense when we speak of  
17 hurt in the community we are speaking of people.

18 Our community is no different than any  
19 other Aboriginal community. We suffer from alcohol, drug  
20 abuse, just about any kind of abuse that is there we suffer  
21 from it.

22 The paternalistic documents that were  
23 passed by governments, one historically was the Métis



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Betterment Act from which we all assumed some roles and  
2 responsibility in developing our community, but had very  
3 little to say.

4                   There were supervisors placed in the  
5 communities and the supervisors were always the people  
6 that gave what was supposed to be done. They knew how  
7 to divide the communities. They knew how to hurt, divide,  
8 so we could never get strong. There could be no personal  
9 development from leaders and the hurt continued from past  
10 experiences of our people. There was never any mechanism  
11 in there for a healing process, where governments would  
12 spend dollars to help people understand the various  
13 cultures and where they came from and to understand and  
14 to never forget their language. But instead, the  
15 assimilation and integration continued, trying to make  
16 us what we couldn't be and never will be.

17                   The language was taken away and when the  
18 language was taken away we started to adapt to a different  
19 type of living I guess. Communication was not there with  
20 our Elders any more because they didn't speak the language  
21 that our young people were educated to have.

22                   From there we accepted and we also play  
23 a role in the division in the factions of people in our

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 communities. We took that and we used it against one  
2 another because we never understood. And the hurt  
3 continues, like no one seems to understand why we are  
4 different. We don't understand ourselves. We don't  
5 understand our communities. Leaders of today should be  
6 the leaders to a process that will heal the community.

7 Also to ensure that the children of the  
8 future are not hurt in the same way that our parents and  
9 grandparents have been hurt.

10 Some of these people came from  
11 residential schools and we all know the history of that.  
12 They were always told to better educate themselves, but  
13 in a different society that dominated what their future  
14 would hold. They lost a lot of respect for the community,  
15 for the Elders. There again, they didn't have no  
16 direction. Again, government didn't spend no money in  
17 a process that would ensure that when you value your culture  
18 and to understand your culture you must ensure there is  
19 resources there, so that children will never be affected  
20 in the future.

21 Different governments have to be placed  
22 in the proper places as far as having participation of  
23 Elders and community leaders to be there, so they

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 understand what we have to go through and we have to mend  
2 the community in a healing process that will develop the  
3 children of the future.

4                   When the Accord Implementation Act was  
5 signed everyone thought we had it made because we had some  
6 money now, but the fighting continued. A high rate of  
7 alcohol and drug abuse arose, suicides, suicides you never  
8 heard of. We were starting to get affected because we  
9 didn't have the resources or governments seeing like they  
10 didn't care what happened to those communities. We gave  
11 them money, we gave them land; they should be happy.

12                   When we signed the agreement we said to  
13 preserve and better the quality of life for our children  
14 for future generations. We overlooked that statement by  
15 not ensuring to have a process in place where we develop  
16 a process by healing the community to understand what it  
17 is we are getting into. It was a significant historical  
18 achievement. However, one of these days if we don't do  
19 something about it, when we look back none of us are going  
20 to be proud of that historical achievement because our  
21 young people continue to suffer today; suffering that has  
22 been brought on by generation by generation because there  
23 was no healing process ever by governments.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   Instead, they spend millions of dollars  
2   in institutions. Wherever Aboriginal people are they  
3   spend a lot of dollars there. They never get to the  
4   preventive measures in a community when they talk about  
5   self-government or any kind of local government.

6                   In order for strong local governments  
7   to exist in Aboriginal communities in Canada we must ensure  
8   that the healing process starts with them. I really would  
9   encourage the Royal Commission, starting with them, to  
10  have people representing communities in the form of Elders,  
11  people that know, people that know what it takes to have  
12  a strong community, people that know how to forget and  
13  forgive so the healing process starts.

14                  We can't always depend on the big dollars  
15  that the government sends us. Meanwhile, we suffer and  
16  we hurt inside.

17                  Some of the key problems that in my  
18  opinion I see in my community, the historical loss of  
19  values. Community members are divided by faction, by  
20  family. The community has alcohol and drug abuse  
21  problems. The community has an historical hurt and is  
22  dysfunctional from past institutions, residential  
23  schools, boarding houses.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   Moving away from the community and from  
2 the family, all of which leads to an identity crisis.  
3 The community has a history of abused children, some of  
4 whom become child abusers.

5                   There are more abuses that exist and that  
6 resulting pain must be healed. We must heal to have a  
7 strong community.

8                   When a community doesn't pay attention  
9 or have any intervention or prevention programs in place,  
10 children grow up in the same hurt as their parents and  
11 the rest of the community. Here are our thoughts on some  
12 of the recommendations.

13                   Leaders of the community must lead the  
14 way in a healing process, starting with themselves.  
15 Government must ensure that there is a process and that  
16 the resources that are acceptable by the community in any  
17 negotiated package that leads to a form of self-government  
18 and that they begin with healing.

19                   Elders in the community must be  
20 recognized and their thoughts must be looked upon as a  
21 key to successful local governments. Elders must be asked  
22 to participate in any establishment of commissions, boards  
23 or if appointed by government to be that appointee,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 starting with the Royal Commission.

2 Provincial governments and the federal  
3 government must ensure that the bureaucracy established  
4 must have Elders to ensure their delivery mechanism is  
5 fruitful.

6 Representation of Elders must be  
7 legislated by a formal bill, as opposed to policy or just  
8 mere tokenism.

9 Any land claims or local government  
10 settlements should have a clause putting healing is a  
11 mandatory function of a council. Any Accord, such as the  
12 Meech Lake or the Charlottetown Accord that includes  
13 Aboriginal people must ensure the process for healing.

14 Governments or any form of bureaucracy  
15 that deals with Aboriginal people must have legislation  
16 to ensure they understand the ways our culture is and was,  
17 so Aboriginal people will start to understand. Examples  
18 are Alberta Housing, Alberta Power, any Crown corporation  
19 that deals with Aboriginal communities must ensure that  
20 there is a process in there to understand how it is that  
21 we live.

22 Governments must ensure that private  
23 industry has legislation to follow when dealing with

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Aboriginal people and surrounding communities. Too many  
2 times policy or anything else that requires and meets their  
3 mandates is passed without the knowledge of Aboriginal  
4 people in any community. The affected members again go  
5 through a symptom of hurt by alcohol and drug abuse, what  
6 we call the socio-economic impact.

7                   Governments must ensure that  
8 legislation is brought forward for children of Aboriginal  
9 descent to be given the opportunity to learn of their  
10 culture and the language taught should be their own  
11 respective language.

12                   A lot of times when children speak to  
13 their parents, Elders, when you say something in a language  
14 that is foreign to the understanding principles of our  
15 Elders there is a lot of hurt in that. It's different  
16 when you speak English and when you speak Cree. There  
17 are things that you can say in our language that wouldn't  
18 hurt anyone. You translate that into any form of language  
19 that is foreign to us and it hurts. Policies that dictate  
20 our lives every day, legislation, there is a lot of hurt  
21 in that.

22                   Last but not least, governments should  
23 have Elders in government for major and minor

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 decision-making and developing any form of legislation  
2 and policy. I had an opportunity to work with certain  
3 forms of governments. Although the intent is well taken  
4 as far as what the perception should be of local government,  
5 within that nucleus maybe people understand what it is  
6 we are trying to do. Beyond that, at ministerial levels  
7 there is a shadow of doubt and people show up that don't  
8 really care about Aboriginal people and the communities.

9 They find ways to demoralize our people and again there  
10 the hurt continues. I think in all levels of government,  
11 no matter what kind of bureaucracy there is, people have  
12 to start understanding what we are trying to do and what  
13 is meant when we say we want a form of local government.  
14 Thank you.

15 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
16 you, Harry.

17 From there we will go on to Randy  
18 Parenteau, Chairman of Fishing Lake Settlement.

19 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU (Chairman, Fishing**  
20 **Lake Métis Settlement):** Thank you, Ambrose.

21 I would like to thank the Royal  
22 Commission for taking the time to listen to our  
23 presentation today. Our presentation has three issues



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 within it. At the table here today we have three  
2 councillors from the Fishing Lake Settlement who are going  
3 to be presenting those.

4 My name is Randy Parenteau. I am the  
5 Chairman of the Fishing Lake Settlement. To my right is  
6 the Vice-Chairman, Cliff Calliou and to his right is  
7 Councillor Wayne Daniels.

8 The Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, one  
9 of the eight formed by the Métis Settlements Act in November  
10 1990, represents a population of about 500 members. All  
11 settlements elected a five-member council.

12 Elections are held annually for  
13 councillors to fill terms ranging from one to three years.  
14 A chairperson is appointed at the annual organizational  
15 meeting, along with the various council committees.

16 Today the Fishing Lake Council  
17 Chairperson is myself. The Councillors are Cliff Calliou,  
18 Alvina Cardinal, Wayne Daniels and Bruce Desjarlais.

19 The Fishing Lake Métis Settlement Vision  
20 Statement follows:

21 "To be unique and self-sufficient Métis settlements  
22 protecting our land and culture;  
23 the social, economic and political

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 goals of the Fishing Lake Métis  
2 Settlement will promote equality,  
3 pride and responsibility amongst  
4 our people."

5 The settlement, on behalf of the General  
6 Council, we present this brief to the Royal Commission.

7  
8 The Alberta Métis Settlements have  
9 presented settlement briefs to the provincial and federal  
10 governments on observations, issues and priorities over  
11 the past year. Therefore, our messages are consistent  
12 and represent an ongoing dialogue about the journey for  
13 Métis to achieve self-sustaining local government and the  
14 rebuilding of our culture.

15 The settlements consider achieving  
16 local government status according to the Métis Settlements  
17 Act and the members, to be positive and feasible.

18 Empowering the people of each settlement by the province  
19 through the provincial legislation is a major step for  
20 settlements to reach long-term goals. This includes major  
21 responsibilities for settlements to organize them, instill  
22 a dedicated and conscientious political system, to finance  
23 settlement development and to improve the economic and

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 social base.

2                   The November 1990 Accord established a  
3 seven-year financial fund of about \$3 million per year  
4 per settlement. This fund is a catch-up fund for existing  
5 infrastructure requirements, to develop new  
6 infrastructure and to operate settlements as local  
7 governments.

8                   However, upon the settlements assuming  
9 local government, the various inventories, data bases and  
10 related needs, priorities and planning were not in place  
11 to manage and operate settlements. WE have begun to develop  
12 the information base necessary to make policy decisions  
13 about the current and future needs of settlements.

14                   Through analysis, experience and  
15 long-term planning, we found that the Accord funding falls  
16 short of meeting "catch-up and new infrastructure"  
17 requirements. It is not financially possible to create  
18 enough of a stimulus for investments within the seven years  
19 to replace Accord funding.

20                   Numerous shortfalls exist; programs,  
21 public and private facilities and services to upgrade and  
22 meet the norm in standards of other Alberta and Canadian  
23 communities. Members trying to invest meet major

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 financing obstacles with external lending institutions  
2 due to remoteness and traditional business expansion  
3 restraints.

4 This brief addresses three major topics.

5 They are presented within a context to motivate strategic  
6 reassessment and fundamental change in the way of  
7 Aboriginal people; the private sector and governments make  
8 decisions: (a) economic development and trade; (b)  
9 tourism parks and recreation; (c) environmental resource.

10 Economic development and trade I would  
11 like to turn over to Vice-Chairman Cliff Calliou.

12 **MR. CLIFFORD CALLIOU:** Thank you,  
13 Randy. Thank you, brother from the north. I would like  
14 to welcome the Commission and thank them for taking the  
15 time to come to the settlements.

16 My topic is economic development, trade  
17 and agriculture.

18 The expertise in the world today  
19 continually reminds us that we live and compete within  
20 a global village. Secondly, that we are in a "knowledge"  
21 based and "information" driven economy. Thirdly, that  
22 between the 21st and 25th centuries we are moving towards  
23 a space age economy.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Métis settlements today represent the  
2 1950s economy because from 1938 to 1990 we were under the  
3 Métis Betterment Act which controlled all aspects of our  
4 lives. We need to make a quantum leap forward to function  
5 within the global operating conditions. To do so requires  
6 external partners and champions to channel resources and  
7 expertise to meet new realities. Some of the assistance  
8 can be focused on the following areas: Business, farmers  
9 and settlement support services.

10 Assistance ranges from education, job  
11 training, new product development, electronic information  
12 systems, global marketing, agribusiness developing and  
13 networking.

14 Investment funds and capital seed money.  
15 New risk funds and seed money projects are needed to create  
16 fundamental changes in local economies to match global  
17 needs. The critical massing of money at the local level  
18 is not possible without external input and stimulation.  
19 We cannot compete without restructuring of local  
20 economies.

21 Bank financing. Banking institutions  
22 are creating new approaches to working with Aboriginal  
23 people. However, more needs to be done to bridge

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 historical relationships to new strategies. Banking  
2 rules and I guess their policies for loan criteria need  
3 to recognize Métis settlement land status and  
4 non-traditional financing partnerships. Métis  
5 settlements and members have difficulty matching the  
6 financial criterion normally assigned by normal lending  
7 institutions that are out there for other Albertans and  
8 Canadians that can mortgage their land and so forth and  
9 have histories of borrowing for businesses. That's one  
10 of the parts that they are working on.

11 That's my presentation. Thank you.

12 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** I would like to  
13 turn it over to our Councillor Wayne Daniels to do the  
14 presentation on tourism, parks and recreation.

15 **MR. WAYNE DANIELS:** Good afternoon,  
16 fellow councillors, settlement councillors, Royal  
17 Commission representatives. As you know, I am  
18 representing the settlement on tourism, parks and  
19 recreation.

20 Most of the Métis settlements have great  
21 potential to develop tourism and recreational facilities.  
22 Their locations include some of the most unique country  
23 and geographic features in Alberta.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   If we focus upon partnerships and  
2 international opportunities, our settlements will become  
3 business and vacation destination experiences. The  
4 following are some of the areas requiring leveraged  
5 strategies.

6                   The first area is tourist theme  
7 attractions. All of the settlements have a great history  
8 and uniqueness that forms part of Canada's colourful and  
9 pioneering spirit. Large open spaces supplemented with  
10 rivers, streams, lakes, forests and historical events  
11 create the inventory for tourist theme attractions.  
12 Combining the physical assets with our person's  
13 entrepreneurial spirit, pride and desire to progress  
14 creates the recipe for innovation.

15                  The second area is promotion, marketing  
16 and awareness. There is a great need for external  
17 organizations responsible for these areas to include Métis  
18 settlements within their communication strategies. They  
19 must market locally, nationally and internationally for  
20 not only the tourist dollar, but for investments and  
21 developments as well.

22                  The last area is settlement recreation  
23 and cultural facilities. Many of the settlements lack

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 local recreational and cultural facilities typical of  
2 other Canadian rural municipalities. This is primarily  
3 a money issue that most of our budgets do not permit the  
4 allocation of sufficient funds to create arenas and large  
5 scale facility projects.

6 Without these types of facilities, the  
7 overall tourism strategy is weak and lacks substance.  
8 Furthermore, we do not address the social and leisure  
9 activity issues facing our members. Thank you. That  
10 concludes my presentation for today.

11 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Our third issue  
12 is environmental resources. Our heritage and culture  
13 incorporate nature. The environment is very important  
14 to our holistic view of all settlement development. At  
15 the same time, we need to carefully consider the impacts  
16 and concerns of member and external access to our lands.  
17 Enthusiasm to develop our settlements also requires the  
18 prudent management of environmental resources. Some of  
19 the management strategies require external agency  
20 assistance in the following areas: One, soil and water.

21

22 Development, industry, human  
23 occupation, agriculture and the global warming trend are



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 changing our land. We see streams, rivers and lakes drying  
2 up or being altered. Where moisture levels are  
3 decreasing, drought conditions and soil erosion occur.  
4 Water levels for consumption or development can be  
5 decreasing. Upstream development can be causing  
6 deteriorating water quality.

7                   Forests. Timber today is an economic  
8 base in the global village even though it is not part of  
9 some of the major driving forces in the economy such as  
10 electronics, tele-communications and financial services.

11 For most of the settlements, the forest is the biggest  
12 resource base and requires practice management.  
13 Strategies dealing with forest fires, logging,  
14 reforestation and preservation must be at the forefront  
15 of our planning and utilization.

16                   Wildlife. The settlement wildlife  
17 continues under depopulation pressure from internal and  
18 external factors. In some cases, little hunting or  
19 fishing can be relied upon to sustain families due to the  
20 low wildlife populations.

21                   Since wildlife is relied upon for both  
22 domestic uses and is an integral component for tourism  
23 development, management and restocking programs are

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 necessary for animals, birds and fish on the settlements.

2                   A summary of our presentation today is  
3 we want and need Canadians to consider new paradigms and  
4 innovations when considering our concerns. Yes, money  
5 is part of the solution. However, unless money is viewed  
6 as investment versus expense in the development of Métis  
7 people and unless investment is viewed as long term  
8 empowerment strategy leading to self-actualization of  
9 Métis people, our vision for better lifestyles, cultural  
10 integrity and economic revolution faces empty commitments.

11                   The coming together of a new way of  
12 thinking and innovation dialogue, fundamental changes in  
13 relationships and reinvestment in our communities are  
14 critical for Métis people to excel in a complex world.

15                   The settlements expect to pull their own  
16 weight within the mosaic of local governments in Alberta.  
17 Significant public investments by settlements and our  
18 own members have already been made.

19                   Competing for market share with other  
20 communities requires a significant thrust by all sectors  
21 to develop quickly and meets the standards of competition.

22 To do this requires the provincial and federal government  
23 understanding, support and action plan to address

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 fundamental changes.

2 We advocate to the Commission that this  
3 is a co-operative approach, one that develops community  
4 partnerships not only from a financial perspective, but  
5 from a personal commitment to help settlements succeed.

6 We seek the Royal Commission's advocacy to our collective  
7 vision. Thank you very much.

8 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
9 you, Randy.

10 From there we will go on to Mike  
11 Sigurdur, Vice-Chairman of Buffalo Lake.

12 **MR. MIKE SIGURDUR (Vice-Chairman,**  
13 **Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement):** Thank you, Ambrose.  
14 Thank you to Elizabeth Settlement for hosting this meeting  
15 with the Royal Commission.

16 Members of the Royal Commission, fellow  
17 councillors, members of the General Council, fellow Métis  
18 settlement members, ladies and gentlemen. I am Mike  
19 Sigurdur and I bring you greetings from Buffalo Lake Métis  
20 Settlement.

21 My presentation is intended to provoke  
22 serious thought on the extension of federal medical  
23 benefits to all Métis settlement members. Our intentions

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 are not to offend anyone, but to see our fair share of  
2 federal health funds for Aboriginal peoples, to seek  
3 equality and to work together in harmony with our  
4 Aboriginal brothers and sisters, to ensure that the federal  
5 government establishes adequate medical services in all  
6 of the Aboriginal communities.

7                   For those of you that are not familiar  
8 with the Métis settlements, a little bit of perspective  
9 may be in order. On November 1, st 1990 an historic  
10 legislation giving Alberta Métis Settlements 500,000  
11 hectares of land and the right to self-government was  
12 proclaimed by the Government of Alberta. The agreement  
13 set the framework for self-government for 5,000 Métis  
14 living on eight Alberta settlements. The agreement  
15 provides funds for the settlements to develop programs  
16 and infrastructure similar to other municipalities.

17                   However, no specific provision was made  
18 in the agreement for a Medicine Chest clause.

19                   As you are all aware, the treaty Indians  
20 are First Nations peoples who have special rights to health  
21 services that stem from the Medicine Chest clause of the  
22 treaty with the Crown, namely the federal government.

23                   In April 1992, an Alberta Métis

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Settlements Social/Health Needs Assessment was completed  
2 and the findings in regards to, one, existing  
3 services/programs, health and, two , needs and future plans  
4 in health. They are also included in our written  
5 submission.

6                   The aforementioned health needs  
7 assessment confirm, among other things that, one, trained  
8 Métis health workers are rare, but urgently needed in the  
9 settlements in both prevention and health promotion and  
10 treatment services. A fair percentage of our members,  
11 mostly seniors and some middle aged required service in  
12 our ancestral language which is Cree.

13                   Two, that settlement members do not  
14 enjoy the same health services and conditions as that  
15 experienced by the general population. That the health  
16 conditions in the settlement are significantly and  
17 negatively influenced by poverty, unemployment,  
18 inadequate housing, dietary and other lifestyle factors  
19 and, as well as, historical, social, cultural and economic  
20 factors.

21                   Three, the current health services  
22 system is largely treatment oriented and is focused on  
23 dealing with symptoms rather than trying to prevent the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 causal factors of disease and illness.

2                   Four, that the physical health status  
3 of settlement members and particularly the health of many  
4 elderly members of the community may result in the high  
5 use of prescription medication due to inadequate  
6 monitoring.

7                   Five, that programs are needed to  
8 promote as positive a social/psychological wellbeing as  
9 well as the spiritual health of settlement members.

10                   With all the factors that we have stated  
11 we surmise as follows: We believe that conditions in the  
12 settlements to be identical to those in any treaty or First  
13 Nation community. We also believe that the conditions  
14 in the treaty or First Nations communities will and must  
15 be remedied in time under the Medicine Chest clause of  
16 Treaty Six or the First Nations Agreement with the Crown.

17       However, there is no such recourse for the Métis  
18 Settlement members.

19                   We commend the federal government for  
20 funding medical services for the treaty First Nations  
21 communities. The Métis settlements respectfully request  
22 equal treatment.

23                   In conclusion, we submit that there

StenoTran

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 should be only one class of Aboriginal peoples and one  
2 class of medical services agreement between the Crown and  
3 all Aboriginal peoples. The current arrangement  
4 indicates that some Aboriginal communities are more equal  
5 than others. This is unacceptable and this Royal  
6 Commission should remedy this inequity.

7                   Through no fault of ours, the Aboriginal  
8 peoples of Canada have been divided by the federal  
9 government and the various groups; treaty Indians, Métis  
10 and Inuit, et cetera, yet most of us speak the same language  
11 in our communities.

12                   We live as families within settlements,  
13 within reserves, within the urban areas, yet the federal  
14 government chose to divide and rule us and in the process  
15 has created different classes of our Aboriginal peoples  
16 with different health benefits. Our request, therefore,  
17 is for, one, the federal government to extend the Indian  
18 health policy support to the Métis settlements and, two,  
19 the Métis settlement members as Aboriginal people to have  
20 the same special rights to health services that stem from  
21 the Medicine Chest clause of Treaty Six or any First Nation  
22 community.

23                   In the least, the Métis settlement

StenoTran

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 members should have their Alberta Health Care premiums  
2 paid for under an insured health benefits plan similar  
3 to that enjoyed by the Treaty Six or First Nations  
4 communities. As well, the Métis settlement members should  
5 be accorded the same medical and health services as enjoyed  
6 by the treaty Indians and First Nations members under the  
7 federally funded non-insured health benefit plans; namely,  
8 services such as eyeglasses, prescriptions, dental, dental  
9 health, et cetera and all other charges which are not  
10 covered by Alberta Health Care.

11 Last but not least, the federal  
12 government should cover the Blue Cross premiums for all  
13 Métis settlement Elders in much the same way as it does  
14 for treaty or First Nation Elders.

15 On behalf of all settlements, we  
16 respectfully submit. God bless us all as we seek equality  
17 in health services and for all Aboriginal people in Canada.  
18 It's time, Canada. Thank you.

19 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
20 you, Mike.

21 Kikino and Gift Lake, they are not here.  
22 I will move on to Peavine Métis Settlement, Elmer  
23 Ghostkeeper is Vice-Chairman -- Elmer Anderson.



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. ELMER ANDERSON (Vice-Chairman,**  
2   **Peavine Métis Settlement):** Thank you, Ambrose.

3                   I would like to thank the Royal  
4   Commission on Aboriginal Peoples for taking this time to  
5   hear submissions from the Métis settlements of Alberta.

6

7                   On behalf of the Métis settlements I wish  
8   to give a special thanks to Florence Gauchier for her work  
9   in making this presentation possible.

10                  I have been asked to speak on behalf of  
11   the settlements with respect to transportation and  
12   utilities and the area of agriculture.

13                  I will begin by speaking on settlement  
14   roads. Our roads, like the rivers of our forefathers,  
15   are the settlements' avenues of trade. They will either  
16   open the world of economic development to us or condemn  
17   us to economic stagnation by closing us off from the wealth  
18   of growth that travels daily through northern Alberta.

19                  We applauded the Métis Settlements  
20   Accord we made with the Government of Alberta in 1990.  
21   We saw the Accord funds as payment for the oil and gas  
22   royalties from our lands which had enriched the public  
23   coffers, for many years helping our neighbouring local

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 governments to grow and prosper.

2                   The Accord funds we thought were to  
3 finance a seven-year period for the settlements to catch  
4 up to other Alberta communities. We believed that we would  
5 be eligible to participate in all of the operations and  
6 maintenance programs which are available to other Alberta  
7 local governments. Only too late did we find out that  
8 the monies which were part of Alberta Transportation's  
9 budget to build and maintain roads on the settlements had  
10 been removed and had become part of our catch-up money.

11       There can be no catch-up when we are forced simply to  
12 maintain a bad situation.

13                   Engineering assessments of the  
14 settlements' road systems were done in 1992 to estimate  
15 the cost of bringing the systems up to the standards used  
16 by Alberta Transportation or to make the road systems  
17 comparable to those in neighbouring municipalities for  
18 similar access situations. The cost was estimated to be  
19 in excess of \$10 million for Peavine's roads alone. This  
20 is nearly half of the total monies shared by the eight  
21 Métis settlements for one year.

22                   Should you travel the road leading to  
23 Peavine, there will be no doubt in your mind where the

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 settlement road begins and those of our neighbours end.

2

3 Peavine does not enjoy the benefits of  
4 a paved road, but must rely on gravel roads for both access  
5 and on-settlement travel. Gravel that has thinned to a  
6 dusty level that coats the trees with dust, but does little  
7 to provide a safe and solid road surface. Damage to cars  
8 and trucks from flying stones and grinding dust discourages  
9 all but the most dedicated from coming in to do business  
10 with the settlement.

11 We started with a poor road system far  
12 below the standards of Alberta Transportation and those  
13 of our neighbours. We do not have the equipment nor the  
14 financial resources capable of matching what we lost when  
15 Alberta Transportation moved out. Is it reasonable to  
16 expect us to build and maintain roads during the catch-up  
17 period and to still grow to meet the economic development  
18 that our neighbours have attained the last 10 to 50 years,  
19 when the oil and gas revenues from our lands were making  
20 their growth possible?

21 They continue to be eligible for the  
22 operations and maintenance programs of the Alberta  
23 government, while we are expected to build and maintain

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 our own roads without the same access. We can't drive  
2 fast enough to catch them on our roads. We need to move  
3 forward and not just maintain the status quo.

4                   This can only be achieved if the Métis  
5 settlements have immediate access to provincial and  
6 federal programs, grants and services that are equal to  
7 those enjoyed by our neighbours throughout the region.  
8 Any delay in this area can only cause our people additional  
9 hardship.

10                   The water treatment plans on the  
11 settlements are now eight to ten years old. They were  
12 build by the government to the engineering standards of  
13 the day, for the population at that time. They brought  
14 treated water to our people where none had previously been  
15 available. For that we are thankful.

16                   Times have changed. The population of  
17 the settlements have grown. The demand for water has  
18 increased. The plans have been called on to work harder  
19 and harder. Pipes have corroded, pumps have burned out  
20 and have to be replaced. The steady stream of water sucked  
21 from the sources of ten years ago have diminished. New  
22 sources must be found. The water must be made available  
23 to our people.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   Preventative maintenance has given away  
2 to patch-work maintenance. We live in fear of that major  
3 break down that creeps closer with every day of age placed  
4 on outmoded plants, the break down that may endanger the  
5 health of our members and children.

6                   The engineering assessments of  
7 Peavine's water and waste water systems in 1992 estimated  
8 the costs of just bringing the systems up to the original  
9 design capacity and current standards to be upwards of  
10 \$8,500,000. That does not begin to cover the cost of a  
11 new treatment plant should it be required to ensure the  
12 health of our community, or to even meet the increased  
13 capacity required to provide for the increased population  
14 or to provide adequate fire protection. As things now  
15 stand, we do not enjoy water piped to our homes, but must  
16 bear the cost of trucking it to cisterns located at each  
17 home.

18                  The water treatment plans on the  
19 settlements need to be upgraded and expanded in order to  
20 meet the increased demand for water. A new source of raw  
21 water has been identified on the Peavine Métis Settlement  
22 and we require help in building a pipeline and pumphouse  
23 in order to utilize it. We simply do not have the resources

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 to do this on our own.

2                               How can we be expected to catch-up to  
3 our neighbours, when we cannot be guaranteed a source of  
4 safe drinking water without spending our Accord funds on  
5 plants which are reaching the end of their productive  
6 years?

7                               In regards to electrical service on the  
8 settlements, Alberta Power currently services Peavine  
9 Métis Settlement with electricity and does a good job.  
10 However, one of the outstanding services required is  
11 three-phase power. Three-phase power is needed in order  
12 to attract businesses into the settlements as some  
13 industrial operations require this.

14                              Also in the area of electrical service,  
15 it is very important that the Alberta Electric Energy  
16 Marketing Act remain intact in its present form. This  
17 Act ensures that electrical prices in northern Alberta  
18 are at a comparable price to those in southern Alberta.  
19 This situation must be maintained to allow the settlements  
20 to remain competitive in a competitive world.

21                              In the area of agriculture, we feel that  
22 Métis farmers and ranchers do not have fair and equitable  
23 access to provincial and federal programs available to

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 other Canadians. Agricultural activity is a major area  
2 in terms of economic development for the settlements.  
3 We must have access to all programs directed at promoting  
4 this industry in order to compete for a share in the  
5 agricultural marketplace.

6 It is extremely important that all  
7 government departments and agencies act swiftly and  
8 decisively in the spirit of co-operation with the eight  
9 Métis settlements to remove these obstacles that hinder  
10 our progress and prevent us from enjoying a quality of  
11 life that is comparable to that of other Canadians.

12 We feel that many of the obstacles can  
13 be easily overcome if the will to do so is carried out  
14 through direct action by both the provincial and federal  
15 governments.

16 In closing, I would like to thank the  
17 Elizabeth Métis Settlement Council and members for hosting  
18 this important event. It is our hope that the issues  
19 addressed here today will finally be acted upon and given  
20 the consideration needed to resolve them. Thank you.

21 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
22 you, Elmer.

23 From there we go to -- I guess we will

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 continue on with Paddle Prairie's presentation by Florence  
2 Wanuch, Chairperson.

3 **MS FLORENCE WANUCH (Chairperson, Paddle**  
4 **Prairie Métis Settlement):** Thank you, Ambrose.

5 Mr. Chairman, Commission members,  
6 ladies and gentlemen.

7 Introduction. Just a bit of history  
8 about Paddle Prairie. Our community is a rural settlement  
9 established in 1938 and, more recently, in 1990 received  
10 its land base under letters patent from the province.  
11 We have about 800 people living in an area of 18 townships,  
12 bordered on the east by the Peace River and surrounded  
13 on the other three sides by heavily forested timberland.  
14 Our main activities are farming, forestry and oil and  
15 gas.

16 Our incorporation as a Métis settlement  
17 in 1990 gave us a much sought after self-government with  
18 an elected council and authority over our own way of life.  
19 We really appreciate the ability to make our own by-laws  
20 and make our own decisions.

21 We were encouraged by the Discussion  
22 Paper "Focusing on the Dialogue", which reported on many  
23 of the issues of interest to ourselves. May we



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 particularly focus on social and medical services and  
2 housing.

3                   The report covered many areas in the  
4 chapter on healing, which we will refer to. We will  
5 outline our situation and suggest some solutions.  
6 Likewise with housing, we will outline our circumstances,  
7 the challenges as we see them and some alternatives. We  
8 are concerned that with our exclusion from the boards and  
9 committees in our local area and the exclusion from many  
10 of the provincial and federal programs that we have less  
11 service levels than other comparable local governments  
12 of our size.

13                   We certainly echo the quotation of Henry  
14 Zoe from Yellowknife, who said:

15 "For a person to be healthy, he or she must be adequately  
16                   fed, be educated, have access to  
17                   medical facilities, have access to  
18                   spiritual comfort, live in a warm  
19                   and comfortable house with clean  
20                   water and safe sewage disposal, be  
21                   secure in their cultural identity,  
22                   have an opportunity to excel in a  
23                   meaningful endeavour, and so on.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                               These are not separate needs, they  
2                               are all aspects of a whole."

3                               Social services. Present services at  
4 the local level: The district office of Social Services  
5 in High Level, 45 to 80 miles north of us, depending on  
6 where on the settlement you live, provides the following  
7 services: support services, child welfare services,  
8 investigation of child abuse and neglect, establishment  
9 of foster homes, adoption program, in-house support  
10 programs, court services and guardianship, handicapped  
11 children's programs.

12                              Support for independents: social  
13 allowance programs, family relations program, the AISH  
14 program, client services for adults.

15                              Employment service centres, former  
16 Opportunity Corps.: work projects for social allowance  
17 recipients.

18                              As so often happens, the applicants for  
19 these services experience some difficulty making  
20 appointments and then have to find some way into town to  
21 visit the offices of Social Services.

22                              Discussion. In our view it would make  
23 much more sense to deliver these programs on a local level,

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 having an office here for two or three days per week.  
2 Hiring staff from here would help employment, as well as  
3 assisting in the applications. Who better to speak to  
4 the local residents than someone knowledgeable of the  
5 families, traditions and conditions, and probably able  
6 to converse in Cree also.

7                   There is a thrust by the provincial  
8 government to change some of these recipients into working  
9 clients through training and job creation programs. With  
10 the present job opportunities here this might be difficult  
11 to achieve. Does this mean that if a person cannot be  
12 taken off the roll then they will be cut off social  
13 allowance and other benefits?

14                   Other questions is where will these jobs  
15 be? Does it mean that because a job is offered 50 miles  
16 away that a person has to take the job or be cut off?  
17 We hope that the federal and provincial governments'  
18 budgets retains programs, do not ignore people in the case  
19 of statistics and politics.

20                   It isn't a question of just training.  
21 It is a matter of economic development and (inaudible)  
22 of a community generating more businesses. Even the  
23 traditional trapping is not supporting people, due to

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 depressed fur prices.

2 Health services. The present health  
3 services level. We have access to two hospitals on average  
4 about an hour or so away from most people. Once a week  
5 the Public Health holds a clinic in the Health Unit Office  
6 which has some treatment capabilities and the home care  
7 nurser attends shut-ins and those needing assistance.

8 A few people use the Mental Health  
9 program, but as it is not local people are not really aware  
10 of it.

11 Our excellent local community health  
12 worker staffs the clinic five days a week looking after  
13 lifestyle counselling, home visits, bereavement  
14 counselling, child immunization, monitoring, TB  
15 monitoring, monitoring blood pressures, first aid type  
16 of cases, assisting the home care nurse and interpreting  
17 in Cree when necessary for visiting health staff.

18 We have no representation on any of the  
19 health service boards or communities. We also understand  
20 that no extra funding is being provided for our area.

21 The number of physicians in this area  
22 is too low to permit the clinic to be health in Paddle  
23 Prairie. Therefore, people have to travel to High Level

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 of Manning. We understand that due to the action of the  
2 Alberta Medical Association and the College of Physicians  
3 and Surgeons in restricting foreign doctors that we may  
4 have only two doctors here by the year end. We are already  
5 down to four doctors.

6                   This will lead to an almost impossible  
7 position for a clinic that normally runs on six doctors  
8 servicing the town hospital and outlying reserves and  
9 community. It is difficult to believe that nobody seems  
10 to be doing anything about this problem. Obviously equal  
11 health care to all people is not a large concern to  
12 governments.

13                   There is no long term medical care for  
14 the elderly at all. They have to go to Peace River or  
15 further afield for extended care, nursing homes or  
16 auxiliary services, all a long distance away and far away  
17 from family and support groups. This is not acceptable  
18 at all.

19                   The ambulance service from High Level  
20 or Manning takes time to get here and it's far too expensive  
21 for those without insurance coverage. We feel it would  
22 be much more efficient from our point of view to bring  
23 some of the social services and health services to Paddle

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Prairie where the people are. The reason would be it is  
2 easier and cheaper to move a few services and service  
3 providers to this community than to transport a number  
4 of people to High Level.

5 Local services would make them more  
6 accessible and thus more useable to people who cannot take  
7 advantage of them now. In essence, people are being  
8 discriminated against because they cannot get into the  
9 offices concerned, in the health area particularly. It  
10 means that people tend to get quick service before they  
11 attend at a doctor's office or hospital, or they just do  
12 not know of the service or give up trying to access it.

13

14 The employers would benefit by having  
15 far less time taken out of the workday because of parents  
16 having to take dependents into town for health or social  
17 services.

18 More services could be provided with  
19 time allotted to local people only.

20 We strongly recommend a health centre  
21 to centralize all social and health services provided by  
22 the province and to increase the range of services  
23 provided, particularly a doctor's weekly visit, and more

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 frequent nurse's visits. Other communities of our size  
2 do enjoy these services; why not us? We are prepared to  
3 discuss any joint arrangements.

4                   Health and social services coming into  
5 Paddle Prairie on a regular basis; the services would be  
6 offered locally by local people. We would like a needs  
7 survey to determine the level of need here.

8                   Housing needs. Our standard of housing  
9 has steadily improved over the years, but still is  
10 insufficient in numbers. For many dwellings it is still  
11 substandard, inadequate construction or simply aged and  
12 inadequate maintenance are a combination of more frequent  
13 causes.

14                   We have approximately have 155  
15 dwellings, being mobile homes and single-family houses.  
16 This past two years we have replaced or added 43 units  
17 and Alberta Housing another 40 emergency trailers. A  
18 number of homes have more than one family living in them,  
19 providing some real problems for there are simply not  
20 enough houses.

21                   People would like to remain here and move  
22 back here, but for various reasons cannot afford to build  
23 a house here or move a trailer onto the settlement.

StenoTran

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Therefore, we are seeking more housing assistance or in  
2 the case of seniors they are obligated to leave family  
3 and friends to enter a senior housing or nursing home far  
4 away. This is not right in our view. Other communities  
5 are not required to treat their elderly in this fashion,  
6 so why should we?

7                   The argument is often brought forward  
8 that now we have the Accord money from the province and  
9 for these few years we should spend that on housing. We  
10 are, but this is a short-term gain only. These funds were  
11 originally meant to bring our communities up to the same  
12 level of services as other comparable communities.  
13 Therefore, the more we put into housing the less goes into  
14 water and sewer, roads, recreation facilities or other  
15 public services to improve our quality of living.

16                   There are arguments as to what is the  
17 point of improving infrastructure if there is insufficient  
18 housing to bring people here to benefit from the  
19 improvements or providing housing with no infrastructure.

20                   We are working hard at economic  
21 development to provide an economical, viable community,  
22 so that people can be more self-sufficient, but this takes  
23 time. Meanwhile, we are seeking assistance to both



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 federal and provincial housing programs to accommodate  
2 our past populations properly, more wisely use our present  
3 funds and to allow for an increase in population.

4                   Recommendations. That we be given  
5 equal access to any federal or provincial housing programs,  
6 particularly we request access to senior housing, public  
7 housing and CMHC programs.

8                   Conclusions. Thank you for listening  
9 to us on our social, medical and housing needs. We now  
10 have our own self-government, and we are determined to  
11 become a modern, safe, rural community striving for  
12 self-reliance and economic development.

13                   We are requesting that the governments  
14 who have initiated such a large change in our structure  
15 be more encouraging in permitting us to access these  
16 programs that other comparable local governments all seem  
17 to have access to. Please give us more tools to make our  
18 community the place where families can grow and stay,  
19 rather than move away because of a lack of services.

20                   The provincial government has given us  
21 the authority and the pride of our own government, but  
22 we need a full set of tools to complete the job.

23                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 you, Florence.

2 I guess with Gift Lake and Kikino they  
3 have their presentations here and I will just present them  
4 to you. Then from there we will have -- we are a little  
5 bit ahead of schedule. I don't know if we should have  
6 the break now or go into -- so, we will take the break.

7

8 --- Short Recess at 2:45 p.m.

9 --- Upon Resuming at 3:00 p.m.

10 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** May I ask you  
11 to come back in and take your seats. If the presenters  
12 who presented just before the break could come back and  
13 we could get into a few questions. Maybe we will start  
14 with Commissioner Paul Chartrand, if he has any. Paul.

15 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank  
16 you. Let me, with your indulgence I will find the  
17 references in my notes. I have a question concerning a  
18 characterization of the monies that are said to be a part  
19 of the package, let me call it the package or the Accord  
20 established with the Province of Alberta. I confess I  
21 have not had the opportunity to study with as great care  
22 as I will in time the materials that are available to me  
23 about these matters, but I want to ascertain that I am

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 understanding correctly the nature of the Accord.

2                   There is a fund comprised of something  
3 like let's say \$300 million, just for the sake of argument,  
4 and it's purpose is to provide money to catch-up which  
5 is a word I am borrowing from one of the presenters, with  
6 other municipal areas in the Province of Alberta. To  
7 catch-up what, well, there's a large used, infrastructure.

8 I suppose that means roads, water treatment, that sort  
9 of thing. I think I have heard the proposition made that,  
10 well what if you have roads and you have water treatment  
11 plants, but there are no houses for people to go to. I've  
12 heard people saying what about schools, what about -- I  
13 guess the question is what kind of other things are needed  
14 to create a neighbourhood, an attractive, happy  
15 neighbourhood. It seems to be a central question.

16                   My question is: Is it correct that the  
17 funding that is being provided by this Accord is to provide  
18 what is called infrastructure and what about the other  
19 funding requirements for a healthy, happy neighbourhood?  
20 Where does the money come from for that?

21                   I notice that one of the provisions of  
22 the Accord is a suspension, using a loose, general term,  
23 of the litigation concerning royalties, the disputed

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 royalties, income from the royalties. So, presumably this  
2 is sort of an exchange for what might have been gained  
3 out of that dispute over royalties. I wonder if there  
4 are any comments that anyone would like to make about that?

5 How do you view this money? Is this something that can  
6 only be provided for roads and water treatment plants,  
7 this sort of thing? How do you feel about the availability  
8 of resources to build what I call in a very general way  
9 happy neighbourhoods and which by that I mean schools and  
10 all the other things, sports, recreation. The things you  
11 have outlined in your materials here today.

12 It's a general question, but I am  
13 inviting your views on that.

14 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Go  
15 ahead, Randy.

16 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** I'd like to  
17 address part of that question, Paul. I guess the view  
18 of the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement is that the Accord  
19 money is to set up infrastructures, sure, but when you  
20 say how can you build a neighbourhood, good relations  
21 within a neighbourhood, I assume you mean all different  
22 departments that take up a neighbourhood.

23 From our point of view, we are utilizing

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that money for those different departments right now.  
2 Education when it was negotiated in the Accord is the  
3 province's part to take care of the education part of it,  
4 not post-secondary, but the basic education from K to 12,  
5 so they take care of our schooling portion of that.

6                   However, the rest of the money that we  
7 utilize is for the different departments of our community,  
8 such as your public works, you roads, transportation,  
9 recreation, economic development and so on.

10                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** If you  
11 don't mind, I saw the word dialogue in there somewhere,  
12 so is it okay if I interrupt just to try to understand  
13 better your answer?

14                   **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Yes.

15                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** You are  
16 saying that we are taking schools now as part of the things  
17 that are required for a healthy, happy, good neighbourhood  
18 or whatever. That doesn't come out of the money in the  
19 Accord. The province provides the money for schooling,  
20 but that's elementary schooling or do you have high schools  
21 generally? How many high schools? Are you happy that  
22 you have enough? That's one thing.

23                   The other side of that would be what

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 about the control because I hear people saying we have  
2 self-government. What kind of self-government is that?  
3 Do you control your own schools? I thought not.

4 So, do you have comments on that?

5 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** I guess to  
6 elaborate on that, we don't have any control within the  
7 schooling itself. However, they provide just the funding  
8 for students to go to the schools. They are not owned  
9 by us. We do have problems right now with them and we  
10 have ongoing negotiations with the province right now.  
11 So, that would be my answer.

12 I guess to answer your other question  
13 straightforward, the other money we are saying is a  
14 shortfall when we start addressing all the different  
15 departments we have in our community.

16 When it comes to public works and  
17 recreation and all the other ones that I listed off there,  
18 when you spread this money out at \$3 million per settlement  
19 on an average, that \$3 million becomes very thin when you  
20 have to service all those different departments for capital  
21 infrastructure and for operating them. So the money  
22 becomes very thin towards the end.

23 Last year we had on our settlement alone

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 what we thought we want or we need. We came out with an  
2 \$11 million budget just for one year. We had to come back  
3 to reality and say we can only spend \$3 million, so there  
4 you can see we have to phase it in. It's going to be a  
5 longer-term process than only a 17-year accord deal or  
6 the first seven years of capital funding for  
7 infrastructure. It's going to take us a longer period  
8 than that with the money we have to utilize right now.  
9 I don't know if that answers your question.

10 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes,  
11 that's very helpful.

12 The money, the \$3 million a year that  
13 you are talking about, that's not a part of that  
14 infrastructure fund?

15 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** That is the  
16 infrastructure fund.

17 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** But it is  
18 being used for things other than infrastructure, is that  
19 what you are saying? That's permissible, but it is eating  
20 away at the original purpose, is it?

21 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Exactly. The  
22 intent isn't there with it. There is not enough funding  
23 behind the intent, if you know what I am saying.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Yes.

2                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Are you just  
3 saying there is not enough money or are you saying the  
4 money is not being spent on infrastructure?

5                   **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** There's not  
6 enough money to provide that capital infrastructure in  
7 the term that we have, the first seven years that we have.  
8 Once you start identifying your arenas, your halls, your  
9 seniors' drop-ins, the things that are needed in a  
10 community to make a good neighbouring community like you  
11 said, a neighbourhood, it doesn't cut it and there are  
12 shortfalls in the funding.

13                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Harry.

14                   **MR. HARRY SUPERNAL:** I would like to  
15 just comment on the monies and the shortfall of monies.  
16 When the legislation was signed the settlements didn't  
17 anticipate the influx of new settlement members. They  
18 didn't identify certain things that would become a burden,  
19 so therefore the money that was settled on a per capita  
20 basis was short by maybe 60 to 70 per cent.

21                   The more membership that was allowed and  
22 everything that has happened in a negative impact is  
23 impacted because of the way the legislation is designed.



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Yes, we agreed. However, we didn't see far enough down  
2 the road. Legislation dictated to never saying no to  
3 anyone who wants to become a member. Of course, there  
4 are prerequisites that they must follow and then there  
5 were other members that became members who took up a certain  
6 amount of dollars and then the budgetary system is also  
7 guided by legislation which is followed on a 60-40 that  
8 is governed by general counsel.

9 Further to that, the shortcomings where  
10 the government has promised us the other things like what  
11 other regular Albertans have and to be in parity with other  
12 municipalities that's where the shortchange is, because  
13 we are denied other programs, other resources, because  
14 some of the legislation that is in place is not being  
15 effective and the people that drive that are not being  
16 effective. That's the big problem.

17 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):**

18 Clifford.

19 **MR. CLIFFORD CALLIOU:** Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman.

21 I guess some of the other things that  
22 -- I don't know if they have been said here around the  
23 table, but when we were given this deal in 1990 everything

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that was existing, my interpretation of this agreement  
2 was it was going to be an ongoing negotiation with the  
3 government and that we were going to become part of Alberta  
4 and all the roads that were built before and the budget  
5 that went with them, they took the budget that we used  
6 to get under the old system and they said now that's part  
7 of the Accord.

8                   The same thing happened with housing,  
9 they gave us inferior housing and the housing budget that  
10 was there before through Alberta Housing was cut off and  
11 they said that's in the Accord. Now we are going back  
12 and we are rebuilding some of these roads and that's a  
13 high cost, as you know, for building roads. A lot of these  
14 houses we have to bring up the standards. There are  
15 families living in two-bedroom houses that have five kids.  
16 We have to either make a basement for them or build  
17 extensions.

18                   I think just this year alone for repair  
19 and renovations our budget is around a half a million  
20 dollars. You could correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Chairman.  
21

22                   Our roads, upgrading our roads, I think  
23 I am looking at approximately a quarter of a million dollars

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 this year alone, just to get them up to the minimum standard  
2 so that we can't get sued. I guess the other issue of  
3 public/private roads, when we signed the agreement we were  
4 under the understanding that what we wanted as public was  
5 all the bus routes on the settlement for the protection  
6 of our children and for the protection of our people and  
7 for the protection of being sued by the people that come  
8 onto our roads. That didn't happen.

9 We ended up with one quarter mile of  
10 public roads on our whole settlement. Most municipalities  
11 in Canada have one major road leading out of their area  
12 or control or whatever you want to call it, their  
13 jurisdiction. I think we were treated very unfairly there  
14 and they said here's the deal, go ahead, you are responsible  
15 for this, you are responsible for housing, you are  
16 responsible for roads, you are responsible for water and  
17 sewer. To a certain extent they say, yes, it's still our  
18 system, but a lot of that money is still coming out of  
19 our pocket to pay the people to run these plants.

20 They are paying some portions for the  
21 chemicals and so forth, but there are a lot of other things  
22 too that I didn't realize. There is public works and we  
23 do all our own water and sewer and we have to have people

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 in place. We have to have graders. We have to have cats  
2 for building roads. Some of these things we did have in  
3 place luckily before from the old system that the  
4 settlement built up on their own and we carried them forward  
5 into the new 1990 agreement.

6 But in those areas we do have some  
7 concerns. I think they are legitimate concerns. A lot  
8 of our budget is being spent on rebuilding what was built  
9 already and the budget that we had before was cut off.  
10 So, I don't think it was really especially that good a  
11 deal when you look at everything that it costs to run a  
12 government.

13 That's all I have. Thank you.

14 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
15 you, Clifford.

16 Maybe we could go on to Wilfred Collins,  
17 Chairman of the Elizabeth Settlement to make the last  
18 presentation.

19 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could I ask  
20 a few questions first?

21 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Well,  
22 -- no!

23 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I had a

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 couple of questions I wouldn't mind asking. On the healing  
2 presentation made by East Prairie there was a comment on  
3 page 2 that says you agree on the touchstone of healing  
4 as a good one, but then you have a question there, something  
5 about:

6 "A touchstone, to us, creates another 'standard' which  
7 again may restrict the development  
8 of Healing."

9 I am wondering what you mean. What's  
10 the problem with -- all we were saying in relation to  
11 touchstone was just that it's like a big principle, a big  
12 theme.

13 **MR. HARRY SUPERNAL:** But to me it's  
14 like any other commission that is established or a board,  
15 like no matter who establishes it they throw a standard  
16 at us that we must follow. With that I guess the  
17 terminology I get from touchstone is that it's something  
18 that sets a standard or a precedent, like something that  
19 we have accumulated dialogue from.

20 However, if it was a cornerstone maybe  
21 it would have historical significance. That dialogue and  
22 the nature of healing would always be there and would always  
23 continue

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Let me  
2 assure that's not what was meant. We could have used any  
3 other word, four principles, four themes, four  
4 cornerstones. That's all it meant.

5                   In relation to housing, you had just now  
6 a discussion on housing. Could I ask who owns the homes?  
7 Are they privately owned? I heard "settlement" and you  
8 said yes. What does that mean? Both?

9                   **MS FLORENCE WANUCH:** The system that we  
10 have adopted in our settlement is that there is a payback.  
11 There is a ten-year payback at 20 per cent of the total  
12 cost of the unit. At the end of 10 years they do own it.

13

14                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Do you have  
15 another scheme?

16                   **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** No. I guess ours  
17 is along the same lines, yes, so the settlement owns the  
18 homes until the money is paid back to it.

19                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** You are kind  
20 of like the bank.

21                   **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Exactly. Then it  
22 reverts back to the individual after the term has expired.

23                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Is there

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 some kind of an agreement they sign that kind of --

2 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Definitely there  
3 is an agreement in place with the settlement and the  
4 individual.

5 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could they  
6 pass that on, half way through like a mortgage, pass on  
7 the mortgage to somebody else, their child or their uncle  
8 or somebody like that?

9 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Definitely, yes.

10 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Can the  
11 settlements raise money, like municipalities can go out  
12 and they have bonds, like provinces. Can you go out and  
13 raise money in the public if somebody wants to buy your  
14 bonds?

15 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Sure we can. I  
16 think that's the process we are in right now with forming  
17 our resource company. There it will be owned by the eight  
18 Métis settlements and from there we will sell shares in  
19 it, so we are going to be creating a revenue off that.  
20 Yes, the settlement can go out and make its own money and  
21 through economic development, however they see fit, if  
22 they would like to do it.

23 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** In one of the

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 presentations there was some reference to agricultural  
2 programs that are not available to the Métis. I don't  
3 remember which one it was, but I was just curious as to  
4 which agricultural programs were you referring to? I  
5 think it was perhaps you that mentioned it.

6 **MR. ELMER ANDERSON:** Yes, I was the one  
7 that made that presentation. I would like to call our  
8 administrator to maybe elaborate on this. I am new to  
9 the Council and I don't really have much background.

10 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes, sure.  
11 No problem.

12 **MR. RICK NOSKEY (Settlement**  
13 **Administrator, Peavine Métis Settlement):** Thank you,  
14 Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Rick Noskey  
15 and I am the Settlement Administrator from Peavine.

16 In regards to your question on  
17 agriculture, some of the programs that we were referring  
18 to here would probably fall along the lines of maybe  
19 building grants available to many farmers. Many of the  
20 other mainstream projects such as that, one of the problems  
21 that we face I guess is water shortages and we do need  
22 access to programs such as that, as well as being able  
23 to ensure the crops on settlement lands.



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** So,  
2 provincial agricultural programs are not available to the  
3 settlement?

4                   **MR. RICK NOSKEY:** In most cases we found  
5 that the doors for accessing these grants have been closed  
6 to settlement members, yes.

7                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Since 1990  
8 and the new regime. Before that they were or they never  
9 were?

10                  **MR. RICK NOSKEY:** I am not exactly sure  
11 how to answer before 1990, but I know since the signing  
12 of the Accord they have been.

13                  **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** In the  
14 Buffalo Lake presentation you talked about medical  
15 services and how there was a need for an improvement in  
16 the services. I think that was a fairly good presentation.

17                         I just had one question in relation to  
18 it. There was reference to Treaty Six, the Medicine Chest  
19 of that particular treaty and then there was a reference  
20 made that there should be no second-class Aboriginal  
21 people, there should only be one class. I was just  
22 wondering, when you take this approach that another  
23 agreement made somewhere else should be provided to you,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 I wonder what that does to any negotiations that have gone  
2 on in any kind of a settlement anywhere, because if  
3 neighbouring people suggest that that agreement should  
4 apply to them also, what does that actually do to the  
5 negotiations in any part of the country? Doesn't that  
6 mean that you negotiating with all Aboriginal people at  
7 the same time, regardless of where you are?

8                   Couldn't we say in relation to the  
9 Nunavut settlement that the contents of that should be  
10 the same for everybody? Mustn't we approach this on the  
11 basis that each of the agreements that are going to be  
12 made are specific to the people that are being made?  
13 Surely it has to be the only way.

14                   We have the settlement agreement here  
15 with eight settlements. There are a lot of other Métis  
16 in Alberta. They don't have your agreement. Should they  
17 be demanding the same kind? I am just wondering about  
18 that.

19                   I am not taking away from the argument  
20 that there should be better medical services, but it seems  
21 to me that it's going to mean because each Aboriginal people  
22 are at some time or another get involved in their own  
23 negotiations, there probably will be different rights for

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 different people, not because it's right or wrong, but  
2 it's because each Aboriginal group are going through their  
3 own separate negotiations.

4 I am curious on that because it's  
5 something we are going to have to deal with. You are  
6 following my thinking. Do you want to respond to that?

7 **MR. MIKE SIGURDUR:** As a new councillor  
8 I am not really qualified to answer your question.

9 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** No problem.  
10 If you ever come up with an answer, send me a letter.

11 **MR. MIKE SIGURDUR:** Okay.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** You see the  
13 idea I was trying to bring up there.

14 **MR. MIKE SIGURDUR:** I understand what  
15 you are saying, yes.

16 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Maybe  
17 I could answer, if it's all right with everybody.

18 I think the point that Buffalo Lake was  
19 making was that the medical is something that is common  
20 amongst everyone. There is no -- like everyone else has  
21 a dream to better themselves and in different ways. They  
22 have their own building blocks to make themselves better.

23 When it comes to medical it's all the

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 same, whether it's treaty or Métis, everyone's goal is  
2 the same, to try and see what they can for the Aboriginal  
3 people of Canada.

4 I think when Meech Lake was presented  
5 that's exactly how we were going to be looked at as the  
6 Aboriginal people of Canada, whether it was treaty or  
7 non-treaty. I think in Buffalo Lake's case on the Medicine  
8 Chest it was an example that they would like to see  
9 something right across the board I guess for Aboriginal  
10 people.

11 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** I would like to  
12 respond to that. I guess my response would be more along  
13 the lines of reality, when you see a neighbouring  
14 community, be it a reserve, a part of a treaty that have  
15 a little card and they can walk in anyplace and get their  
16 things free as far as medical or whatever. They are our  
17 brothers and we communicate with them. Some of them live  
18 in our settlements as Bill C-31s.

19 As soon as they see that, that's what  
20 gives them the idea of, "hey, I can see something positive  
21 by getting my Bill C-31 or going to a reserve and I can  
22 get all of my medical services free and I can look after  
23 my family and all that type of thing." They put pressure

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 back on the settlement councils by saying, "look, why can't  
2 you guys make some type of agreement as far as medical  
3 terms like this."

4 So, when Buffalo Lake brings this up that  
5 we should have something similar to that, I don't think  
6 they mean exactly like them, but something that we can  
7 do better for our people as far as medical needs go, or  
8 along those lines I guess. That's what we are getting  
9 at.

10 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank you.

11 Maybe we can go to the next presentation.

12 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** We  
13 have Wilfred Collins, Chairman of Elizabeth Settlement.

14

15 **MR. WILFRED COLLINS (Chairman,**  
16 **Elizabeth Métis Settlement):** Good afternoon, fellow  
17 councillors, Commissioners and honoured guests.

18 On behalf of Elizabeth Métis Settlement  
19 I welcome members of the Royal Commission to our settlement  
20 to hear the views of the various groups and individuals  
21 who have made their presentations today. It is a great  
22 honour for the Elizabeth Settlement to host your  
23 Commission. We believe that the work being undertaken

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 by the Commission is of great importance; not only for  
2 the Aboriginal people in Canada, but also for the  
3 furthering of understanding of all cultures in Canada.

4                   The work that the Royal Commission is  
5 doing is a tremendous help in the search for an  
6 acknowledgment of the importance of all peoples and  
7 cultures in Canada. The suggestions and comments that  
8 you hear and the recommendations that you make will affect  
9 all of Canada.

10                   One of the messages that I want to  
11 present to the Commission is that in every human being  
12 there is a driving force, which is God the Creator, who  
13 is in control of all of our lives. All we do and accomplish  
14 or don't accomplish is part of a grand master plan. I  
15 believe that one of the most important education results  
16 that the Commission can leave with is the bringing together  
17 and integration of the Aboriginal philosophy, the  
18 importance of family and spiritual beliefs and combining  
19 these with the similar beliefs and cultures in Canada.

20                   I would like to develop my thoughts a  
21 little more with respect to the master plan. Within the  
22 Creator's plan, the European culture was brought to the  
23 western hemisphere by Christopher Columbus. He was an

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 instrument of this plan. He found a new territory, but  
2 it was also the beginning of an inter-cultural relationship  
3 in North America.

4 Approximately 400 years later, in 1867,  
5 Canada was born and evolved into a country, where a number  
6 of different cultures were affected and brought together.

7 Let me say this, that if the Creator's grand master plan  
8 was not for the successful development of Canada, He would  
9 not have allowed it to happen. I believe that the turmoils  
10 and strains of developing a new country were a part of  
11 this plan. We seem to think we are in control, but we  
12 are not. God is in control.

13 We have moved into the 20th century,  
14 finding ourselves changing our attitudes along with all  
15 other Canadians. It is not only in the Aboriginal area  
16 that it is happening. It is also with the non-Aboriginal  
17 people. This silent force is continuing to move everyone  
18 in the direction of recognizing that all forms of  
19 lifestyles and they are getting to be acceptable. As well,  
20 improvements have been made with respect to human rights.

21 We are now looking at people regardless of their  
22 orientation to life. The negotiations that took place  
23 100 years ago, we are now saying to ourselves, "let's forget

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the past and look to the future". The slow development  
2 of tolerance is again, let me emphasize, according to God's  
3 plan.

4                   There is no question that these freedoms  
5 grow and as acceptance of alternate forms of lifestyles  
6 and beliefs are promoted much turmoil will take place.  
7 There is a need for the people of Canada to make a commitment  
8 to a new direction, a need for balance in their lives and  
9 a self-discipline to accept that there is another way of  
10 looking at the world. It's happening right today, folks.

11  
12                   Within this search for a better life our  
13 governments are starting to work together to improve the  
14 lives of all people. Budget reductions and job losses  
15 are hurting some people, but I believe good will come from  
16 this adversity. I believe that the Métis Settlements  
17 Accord and the resulting proclamation of the legislation,  
18 the support and the energies along with the commitments  
19 of the people who made this happen are a part of the great  
20 master plan.

21                   A move towards native self-government  
22 is a move towards improving Aboriginal peoples' living  
23 conditions. Although other facets of Canadian society



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 may see this as a threat, both financially and on their  
2 land, I strongly believe that conditions in Canada will  
3 be improved by encouraging self-determination and  
4 self-reliance for Aboriginal peoples. We are also in the  
5 position in our little ways to walk out there to educate  
6 the mainstream society which feels threatened by our  
7 movement towards self-government. All in all, it will  
8 be a benefit to all Canadians in the long run.

9                   One of the untapped human resources of  
10 Canada is the Aboriginal peoples and once we are in a  
11 position to prove that we are and were hard-working people  
12 we will be an asset, viewed upon as an asset.

13                   Past conditions have made played a major  
14 role in the changes that are taking place today. There  
15 have been many hurtful situations, let me tell you, and  
16 many destructive situations, where communities and nations  
17 within the country were suppressed to near extinction.  
18 This not only applies to cultural groups, but also to the  
19 environment and to the earth itself. Mainstream society  
20 is finally recognizing that it would be a great tragedy  
21 if any species were to become extinct.

22                   There is a healing process that has to  
23 take place over many years and I am positive that with

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the right direction, with wisdom and modern technology,  
2 we can make it all work for the benefit of all people in  
3 Canada. Forgiveness, being able to turn the other cheek  
4 and the application of the Golden Rule has to be applied  
5 in many areas. "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

6 A few years ago when I was finishing high  
7 school, 1963, I experienced discrimination firsthand, one  
8 of the greatest hurts we can inflict on one another. I  
9 am grateful that my parents instilled in me the gift of  
10 tolerance and understanding, to help me cope with these  
11 human weaknesses. I really did not understand  
12 discrimination until I felt left out. I was hurt. I was  
13 the outsider looking in. Now I have different feelings.  
14 Many changes have taken place and I feel positive that  
15 a change for the better is taking place right now.

16 There is a force of goodness working.  
17 It is slow, but it is true and it's there and it's for  
18 sure. This change is happening within the grand master  
19 plan. We are just the instruments of that plan.

20 What has this to do with education, you  
21 may wonder. Education is not mere formal schooling, the  
22 acquisition of technical and other skills to make a living.  
23 Education is growing within one's self to understand who

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 we are and attain that self-confidence that allows us to  
2 grow as individuals, as Aboriginal people and within that  
3 as husbands and wives, as children and as Elders.

4                   There are many examples who are  
5 educating the world or our countrymen. Take for example  
6 South Africa. Mr. Mandella's greatest ally is his  
7 spiritual belief. He loves his fellow human being. He  
8 is educating the world that human relationships are  
9 important. Many rulers are and were powerful, but seem  
10 to operate against the philosophy that love conquers all.  
11 As a result, their governments have collapsed. I hope  
12 the Government of Canada hears this.

13                   When the British Empire began to  
14 colonize North American, which included Canada, there  
15 again I believe the grand master plan was in force. The  
16 leaders could have been distracted and they could have  
17 become very selfish. They didn't destroy the native  
18 people in Canada. They could have, but the good force  
19 was there.

20                   I believe that in the school systems we  
21 neglect to promote the most important ingredient that we  
22 learn at home, that is the belief in God, the Creator.  
23 We can be the most intelligent person with many technical

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 skills, but without that silent force we don't accomplish  
2 anything.

3                   The greatest strength of the Aboriginal  
4 culture is the family structure and the spiritual belief.

5    Our culture has evolved recognizing that a strong family  
6 unit is a very important element in a happy and successful  
7 life. From our grandparents we get wisdom and they assist  
8 the parents to carry forward that wisdom and reinforce  
9 it. In turn, the child plays the role of keeping the  
10 grandparents young. Nowadays it seems to me society's  
11 view of putting all of the Elders in one place and not  
12 keeping them as part of the family in my opinion seems  
13 to be discriminating.

14                   The entire family structure is an  
15 environment where love can thrive. If used properly, the  
16 earth environment will survive as well because of this  
17 family love.

18                   Part of my basic feelings is that there  
19 are many areas in all cultures that we can adopt, especially  
20 those good qualities which will help us be a positive part  
21 of the grand master plan. One gift given to us by the  
22 white man is the spirit of investigation. What makes  
23 things work and how can this work better? One gift of

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the native people is a recognition of the spiritual side,  
2 that it is there in all things and how affects working  
3 relationships and approaches to life.

4 I can see a closer working relationship  
5 taking place. This partnership is happening. In some  
6 cases it is fast, in some cases it is slower. The gift  
7 that we as Métis people and other Aboriginal people can  
8 give is to show that patience is a virtue. That thought  
9 needs more prominence before decisions are made. The only  
10 negative that we can see is the speed in which decisions  
11 need to be made, and if we don't know how to be patient  
12 or pass on the virtue of patience, it may be to everyone's  
13 detriment.

14 A while back, referring to our Accord,  
15 we referred to a number, the year '96 and the year '97.  
16 To my feelings and I would say we are going much too fast  
17 with the information bombardment happening. I feel we  
18 will have to slow our pace.

19 The main point that I want to bring to  
20 you today is all positives of different cultures must be  
21 stressed in our education system to assist in the healing  
22 that needs to take place as native self-government and  
23 self-determination takes place. The existence of the

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Euro-Canadian culture, the East Indian culture, the  
2 Pacific Rim cultures, the native cultures and all others  
3 that I have not mentioned must be brought together so that  
4 we can co-exist.

5                   With honesty and truth we achieve  
6 respect. With respect we honour others around us, even  
7 though we may disagree on how to approach a solution to  
8 a particular problem or topic through that same respect  
9 and honour -- love can build a bridge.

10                   I want to make it very clear to the Royal  
11 Commission and to those who are here today that the goal  
12 of higher education for our people is extremely important.  
13 However, education is more than textbooks, math, science,  
14 biology or other skills. Education is learning those  
15 personal virtues that will carry us in our human  
16 relationships from now until our end. Thank you very much.

17

18                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Now I  
19 guess we could open the floor for dialogue or are there  
20 any other people making presentations?

21                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We have some  
22 general questions we could ask, if you don't mind, and  
23 if there anyone else who wants to make a presentation after

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that I guess they could. I will start with Paul again.

2 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I will  
3 begin, as we are getting towards the end of the agenda,  
4 begin by thanking all the people who made presentations  
5 today and assisted us in a number of ways in understanding  
6 the workings of the settlements, both by giving us an idea  
7 of the overview of the structure that you have and also  
8 of the different circumstances on the individual  
9 settlements.

10 Our Commission, of course, has a mandate  
11 to make policy recommendations to the federal government,  
12 so our duty is to say what is it that we can take out of  
13 here that is helpful in crafting federal policy  
14 recommendations. I suppose there are two aspects and one  
15 is that we can look at those elements that you have  
16 presented to us that involve the federal government. For  
17 example, I think there are some federal health benefits  
18 issues that were brought up here.

19 I suppose the other one and I think this  
20 was explained by one of the people who made a presentation  
21 this morning is to suggest that we should be concerned  
22 to examine the mechanisms that are used here as potential  
23 models for use elsewhere.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   So, we have to do our own homework and  
2 I expect that our research people will be assisting us  
3 in examining the details of the situation on the  
4 settlements more closely. All of you are invited of course  
5 to assist us. I emphasize that there are 1-800 free  
6 telephone lines that are available. The staff that is  
7 here with us have these telephone numbers that you can  
8 use to convey your opinions to the Commission on any issue  
9 that you wish. You can express yourself in English, in  
10 French, in Cree or Dene, Inuktitut or whatever your  
11 preference might be.

12                   I think given the unique circumstances  
13 of the settlements and given the complexities of the issues  
14 what I would like to do is to see what kind of a general  
15 recommendation we can get from the people here about the  
16 feasibility, the desirability of something like  
17 settlements.

18                   One of the big jobs that I think this  
19 Commission is going to face is to explain to Canada the  
20 status of special places for Aboriginal peoples. You know  
21 that now there are Indian reserves that have been there  
22 from the beginning and uniquely here there are Métis  
23 settlements. You know that many other Aboriginal people



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 say "we want a land base". It's a very important issue.

2

3 But we are not making recommendations  
4 to Aboriginal people. We are making them to the federal  
5 government. How is the federal government to act? They  
6 are going to act, if they believe they can get re-elected  
7 if they implement anything that we suggest, so then the  
8 opinion of the people in Canada is very important.

9 So, in our report we are bound, are we  
10 not, to explain to Canada the reasons for our  
11 recommendations. So, I would like views then on what do  
12 you think about the establishment of special places,  
13 special residences for Aboriginal people in Canada because  
14 there are many different views on that in Canada, so that  
15 would be my general question addressed generally to anyone  
16 who cares to answer. Do you recommend this? What are  
17 the strong points? What are the negative points about  
18 special living places?

19 I contrast the ideas, mobility,  
20 advantages that people talk about, the advantages of a  
21 global village which I saw in one of the presentations  
22 here today. In the eyes of some people there are some  
23 tensions between that and the idea of special places for

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Aboriginal people, so that would be my question. What  
2 do you think of the idea of settlements, reserves or, take  
3 your pick, what do you think is good about that, what's  
4 not so good, that sort of general opinion. Thank you very  
5 much.

6 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We would  
7 prefer that you use the microphone just so that it's  
8 recorded and all the rest of it.

9 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** I'd like to say  
10 -- I am Raymond Larocque and I've been out here for over  
11 ten years and your question about our special status or  
12 about our Métis settlements.

13 I find that living in a Métis settlement  
14 puts me to a fifth or sixth class citizenship in Canada.

15 I can't understand why living in a Métis settlement that  
16 I am restricted here or that I need permission to go to  
17 school for a year or whatever.

18 Concerning the Accord, what I had in the  
19 old Métis Betterment Act was better than what I have now  
20 as a settlement, like with my quarter. We used to have  
21 surface rights and now our surface rights we don't have  
22 them. Anything that is on a foundation on our land is  
23 not ours, but it belongs to the administration. It

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 restricts me from selling my land.

2                   If I work and try to build a decent home  
3 and to be able to sell it, it restricts who can buy it.  
4 It's only a settlement member who could buy that piece  
5 of land.

6                   All that it boils down to in your  
7 question, Mr. Commissioner, concerning our rights is I  
8 believe that I was a citizen with constitutional rights,  
9 but then rights have been chipping away at the Métis people  
10 so long that where we are not at such a hopeless state  
11 that what we need is a parallel accord which would recognize  
12 our mobility rights, where it would recognize that we could  
13 have an acreage in Paddle Prairie or another one out in  
14 Peavine if we wanted to, as long as we were willing to be  
15 able to pay them taxes on the acreages and be able to vote  
16 in only one place, or to be able to have an acreage out  
17 in any part of Alberta or Saskatchewan as far as that goes.

18                   I thought I had those kinds of rights.

19 I am finding more and more every day and with the  
20 presentations that I've heard here that we've been lied  
21 to concerning this Accord and that we do not have the access  
22 and the opportunities. This self-government, as far as  
23 I am concerned, it's a farce, self-government. It's a

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 self-government where a Minister is rubberstamping our  
2 by-laws or our decisions. We need to achieve a responsible  
3 government where that government is responsible to the  
4 people, not to themselves.

5 I believe that to be able to get into  
6 that direction we have to make our leaders responsible  
7 to us, the people, first. They can't be leaders picking  
8 leaders and having a General Council that is voted on by  
9 chairmen, which we didn't put people in the chairman's  
10 position.

11 To be able to get to the better parts  
12 of our constitutional rights, we have to have that  
13 responsible government in place. I believe that  
14 regardless of what way the government has deceived us in  
15 this Accord, as I remember when it was being passed there  
16 was people running around and telling us we are all going  
17 to be right. We are all going to be driving Cadillacs.  
18 Well, it's not that way.

19 There are a few people driving  
20 Cadillacs, but the grass roots people are not any richer  
21 and most definitely when our Accord money runs out we are  
22 going to be in the worst situation than we were without  
23 the Accord, because with the Accord at least we had surface

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 rights and we had a lease agreement with our land.

2 Now it comes to the point where these  
3 people are going to determine how much our house is worth  
4 or if we had a wellhead on our land, all of a sudden those  
5 monies are taken away from us and we have less rights than  
6 we had before. I encourage people to realize exactly what  
7 this Accord is.

8 As our Chairman made a wonderful  
9 presentation and I believe that what he said is that maybe  
10 we are going too fast. Definitely we are because most  
11 of the people are not knowledgeable enough to know what  
12 really that Accord represents. I heard you asking what  
13 is that \$320 million; is it a catch-up thing? I believe  
14 that \$320 million is a one-time payment which we are not  
15 going to receive again. In the meantime, that \$320 million  
16 was not given to us for nothing. There was something that  
17 had to be taken away from us. I believe what is being  
18 taken away from us is our Wolf Lake or even our hunting  
19 and fishing rights in Elizabeth Settlement here.

20 We had access to Cold Lake. We had a  
21 couple or a section of land there that we could hunt and  
22 we could set a net in Cold Lake and things like that.  
23 Those kind of things we need access to, to be able to feed

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 ourselves, to be able to negotiate for a greater land mass  
2 if we need it. If we have more Métis people coming into  
3 Métis settlements and we need more land, we need that  
4 opportunity to be able to grow, to be able to have Crown  
5 lands set aside on our borders so that we can expand in  
6 the future. Thank you.

7 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could I ask  
8 you a question before you sit down? I didn't quite  
9 understand some of what you said.

10 You said you used to have surface rights  
11 but now you don't. I don't understand.

12 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Well, with this  
13 new Accord we have to sign -- we have to sign, what is  
14 the new leases called, the Métis title. We have to sign  
15 all our legal rights to that land away. It's redefined  
16 for us, so we are exchanging our old Métis Betterment Act  
17 for something that we didn't know about yet. Like the  
18 way it is spelled out in there now, if an oil company wanted  
19 to cut a pipeline or something through my land, they  
20 wouldn't even have to come to see me, the landowner. They  
21 could just do that going through the administration. I  
22 wouldn't be entitled to any monies whatsoever, which I  
23 received before.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   For instance, my brother had his land  
2   and it was sharing a wellhead on the border, so he received  
3   half payment, I believe it was \$1,400 or \$1,800 a year.  
4   Well, with this new Accord now he won't be getting anything  
5   because it specifies on this new Métis lease that we only  
6   own that land just to farm it, that's all. That's our  
7   interest to that land and anything built on a foundation  
8   and everything it's not ours, so that's the way I seen  
9   the application on the Métis land lease.

10                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** You don't  
11   own what you improve from a foundation. Who owns it then?

12                   **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Well, the  
13   administration is the only one that could reimburse us  
14   or that negotiates or whatever we feel we should have coming  
15   for our land and for our work.

16                   Let's say if you live in an area and you  
17   made your own driveway, you cleared some land or you  
18   installed your own running water system and things like  
19   this. Well, those things will be -- the Council ends up  
20   figuring out how much they are worth. It doesn't give  
21   us the opportunity to be able to sell our land anywhere  
22   else, to any other Métis settlement members. It seems  
23   like this Accord what it does is it just kind of divides

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 us all into our own Métis settlements without a parallel  
2 of rights that we should have.

3 What I am saying is a parallel accord.

4 Whatever the Canadian citizens have we should have in  
5 the Métis settlements as far as owning land, as far as  
6 selling our land to outside Métis people, as long as they  
7 are Métis people, and I see no problem with that and all  
8 those kinds of rights of owning acreages, of being able  
9 to own five acres of land in our northern settlements and  
10 to out there and fish for maybe a couple of months out  
11 of the year or whatever.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What's  
13 stopping you from owning land somewhere else?

14 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** The way it is  
15 spelled out, the way -- I've just read this morning on  
16 --

17 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What would  
18 happen if you went to Edmonton and bought a piece of land  
19 there?

20 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Well, your  
21 membership would be terminated. You have that on, what  
22 is it, 35.

23 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could you



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 explain one other thing, you said a lease. Is that how  
2 the internal management occurs within the Métis  
3 settlement, when you are getting a piece of land here you  
4 have a lease?

5 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Yes, we  
6 originally had a lease.

7 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Originally.

8 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Originally,  
9 right.

10 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** And today?

11 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Today we have  
12 what they called the Métis provision, the Métis title.  
13 In the meantime, it is what is coming down the road for  
14 us is that they are going to be taxing us on our land,  
15 it could be even to our well water. It could be anything  
16 in our homes. They are maybe going to levy taxes  
17 comparable to the rest of Canadian society and at the same  
18 time we don't have the privileges and the rights as the  
19 rest of Canadian society.

20 Like before we paid \$10 a year for our  
21 land leases. Let's say if they were to give us taxes of  
22 \$300 a year for our quarters. Who would want to pay the  
23 \$300 a year for our quarters when your land is worthless,

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 when you can only farm it. There are no surface rights  
2 to it, where other citizens of Canada, of Alberta, enjoy  
3 the surface rights and things like that in their own lands.

4 I can't see how that system -- how are they going to get  
5 money out of people to pay for the self-government when  
6 it takes away our rights?

7 I feel very strongly on that principle  
8 because of the idea that our ancestors went to war and  
9 fought and died for this country, just as well as anybody  
10 else, and yet to have these kind of rights, demeaning rights  
11 where I am a fifth or sixth-class citizen, where we have  
12 \$320 million and the Minister has to rubber stamp  
13 everything, where they turn around and give on the one  
14 hand and take away on the other. They are going to leave  
15 us holding the bag and they are going to turn around and  
16 tell us we have to collect taxes from these people to be  
17 able to make this infrastructure work.

18 In the meantime, we don't have control  
19 over education. We can't turn around and say, "well, maybe  
20 there are a lot of schoolteachers of Métis people that  
21 are in Canada that we could attract here, build them houses  
22 and take over our own education system", but we don't even  
23 have that authority.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   We have self-government, a  
2 self-government which is the same system as what we have  
3 had in here. If it's any example of what the government  
4 had been doing to the Métis settlements in the last 50  
5 years and with this \$320 million of Accord money that we  
6 have and what's to come when that runs out, there is going  
7 to be an awful lot of mad young people in these Métis  
8 settlements because of the idea that we didn't know what's  
9 being taken away from us. It's not what we perceived to  
10 be. Our leaders should be working on the land that we've  
11 lost. This is still a Métis settlement and our membership  
12 is growing. Why isn't that land being looked at in Cold  
13 Lake and to be able to go and fish on that land, be able  
14 to feed our families a little more. Why is that all of  
15 a sudden because we've got Accord money there's nothing  
16 moving in that direction?

17                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** The taxes  
18 you are referring to is that provincial tax, federal tax  
19 or is this settlement tax that you are talking about?

20                   **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** That will be  
21 settlement tax. All the programs are being cut off and  
22 --

23                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Are you

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 against the settlement governments having the ability to  
2 tax?

3 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** What I am against  
4 is paying tax on something that's not mine. If anything  
5 on a foundation belongs to the administration, then they  
6 should pay it because it's theirs.

7 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** If that's  
8 the case, why did they just tell us that after so many  
9 years if the settlement has assisted you in building your  
10 house that you own it? Why did they tell us that if that's  
11 the case?

12 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Pardon me, I  
13 didn't get you.

14 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We were told  
15 in a number of cases here that the settlement councils  
16 have created this housing program where they actually build  
17 a house for people, for families and then there is a  
18 repayment period. Once the repayment is over the families  
19 will own the home. Why would they have told us that if  
20 that's not the case?

21 **MR. RAYMOND LAROCQUE:** Well, you don't  
22 own the home. It specifies that our land base is now is  
23 patented to the administration, to our settlement elected

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 members own our land and not ourselves. This Métis title  
2 that we have it restricts us to anything without a  
3 foundation. It restricts our surface rights. It  
4 restricts our right to who we could sell the land to or  
5 whatever.

6 I am saying I will gladly pay taxes, as  
7 much as other Canadian citizens with a parallel accord.

8 If they are going to tax me on that land and let's say  
9 if it is like other Canadian citizens where you lose your  
10 land and it goes back to the administration after five  
11 years without paying tax, well that is fine, as long as  
12 we have the same rights and privileges awarded the rest  
13 of the Canadian citizens. Like our surface rights, like  
14 our right to be able to sell our land to other Métis people  
15 regardless of where they are in Alberta or who they are,  
16 we should be able to make our land of value, otherwise  
17 our -- and it's not a worry that outside people are going  
18 to own our land and it's going to end up and we are going  
19 to lose it. It's not.

20 Our land -- it's permanently our  
21 settlements, but I am saying that I should be able to have  
22 access to acres in different other settlements or  
23 whatever and be able to pay those taxes in them other

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 settlements also, to make this self-government work and  
2 to make the land more valuable too and to be able to  
3 negotiate our land to other Métis settlements.

4                   Let's say if I wanted to move to a  
5 northern settlement, I should be able to have a real estate  
6 agent or something, a Métis real estate agent that would  
7 go over there in Paddle Prairie and set up a picture of  
8 my home and of my land and things like this and negotiate  
9 some kind of a trade or if somebody wants to move this  
10 way or things like that and not just to have it here, that  
11 the only people that could buy it is here, because if it  
12 is that way there are people here when I moved in here  
13 over ten years ago that sold brand new homes and everything  
14 for \$2,000 because that's all they were worth. That's  
15 all you could get for them.

16                   With those kinds of restrictions what  
17 is it to have land and to work it and to pick your rocks  
18 and build your fences, for what? What's the -- I mean  
19 there are Canadian citizens that are doing that to their  
20 farm land and things like this, but when they have finished  
21 farming or they want to sell out it's worth something.

22                   When they put the power through their  
23 property it's worth something. If they put a fence and

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 they have a yard and they've opened up some land, well,  
2 it's worth their while to do that, but for us what is it?

3 I don't understand what it would be worth if only the  
4 administration can buy your land and if they turn around  
5 and want to give you \$1,000 for it, well, I guess that  
6 would be their prerogative. I am saying that we should  
7 have greater opportunities in owning our land and be able  
8 to sell it for a reasonable price.

9 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank you.

10

11 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Randy.

12 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** Yes, I would like  
13 to respond to the comments just made by that individual.

14 As a young Métis settlement member that's involved with  
15 the community, I would like to state that all the statements  
16 that he said I would strongly contradict those statements.

17 I would urge the people of the settlement and other  
18 settlements to get involved with your community and  
19 understand what this Accord can do for us as Métis people  
20 and how it will benefit us young people in the future.

21 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I wonder  
22 if I might just take a second to explain a bit the point  
23 I struggled to make earlier. What I was asking is for

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 people's views about the value of a special place to live.

2 We have Indian reserves and we have Métis settlements.

3 But what we hear across Canada or what a lot of people  
4 are saying is they say what we value is mobility rights,  
5 but we value every one too, to be able to move anywhere  
6 they want.

7                   People say, "Look at what's happening  
8 around the world. Look at the European Economic  
9 Community, for example, where people now are getting rid  
10 in a sense of those boundaries between different countries  
11 that are getting together." That's the one side.

12                   On the other side, people are saying,  
13 "Oh, but Aboriginal people in Canada have suffered a lot  
14 of disadvantages. Languages are being lost, for example,  
15 and there is discrimination and there are all kinds of  
16 problems which require communities." They are saying,  
17 yes, we need these homelands or neighbourhoods or whatever  
18 you want to call them to secure the cultures of Aboriginal  
19 peoples. You can still go on and take that as an analogy  
20 with the European Economic Community, so you need the  
21 Belgian to keep the culture together, but you could still  
22 go out and work in other countries and say they're  
23 primitive.



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   That was the thing I was trying to  
2 understand, special places. I use the word "special  
3 places" because I didn't want to use the word "reserves"  
4 or "settlements" or whatever. We are saying do you believe  
5 or what argument would you like us to make to Canadians  
6 in arguing for a special land base for Aboriginal people,  
7 so that was the kind of arguments I would like to see.

8                   I am not insisting that we hear it, but  
9 I thought it would be very helpful because the issue is  
10 not often brought forward in our Hearings. Thank you very  
11 much.

12                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Ken.

13                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Thank you, Ambrose.

14                   I guess to first of all address Paul's  
15 question about whether or not it is desirable to have a  
16 land base. As far as I think the Métis settlements and  
17 I hope nobody disagrees with me, but the long-term goal  
18 of the Métis of this province because they were squatters  
19 on Crown land, mainly road allowances, living in poverty,  
20 that they lobbied the government to set these lands aside  
21 for the Métis. I think we just carried on that tradition  
22 for 50 years now as Métis leaders in this province. So,  
23 there are certain things I guess that in living on a land

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 base that are not accessible to you as living on the  
2 settlement, but in time all of those things will change  
3 and things will evolve over time.

4                   Like the Town of Edmonton wasn't always  
5 a town of Edmonton. It was a little hamlet and it started  
6 and it grew and it grew and it grew. It's the same thing  
7 here and there are certainly I guess disadvantages in  
8 living here in terms of what you have access to.

9                   The other issue I would like to address  
10 is the Aboriginal issue. In this Accord package that we  
11 negotiated with the Alberta government, Aboriginal issues  
12 were totally left out. What we had in the Charlottetown  
13 Agreement and you, gentlemen, are fully aware of that is,  
14 I guess, a third order of government. We are to be a part  
15 of that third order of government and negotiate an  
16 agreement under that heading of third order of government.  
17 Whether you call it an Aboriginal government or a third  
18 order of government or a native government package, that's  
19 what was included in there.

20                   So, what we have negotiated here is not  
21 total sovereignty, like I've heard a number of questions  
22 from mainly Georges over the course of the last hour or  
23 so in regards to medical services, Medicine Chest and so

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1   forth.

2                   What we have done here is we've put  
3   basically our lawsuit that we had or the litigation that  
4   we had against the province on the shelf in lieu of this  
5   package. We are also still under the provincial  
6   jurisdiction and we are also under the federal jurisdiction  
7   under this agreement. We realize those things.

8                   The whole issue of Aboriginal rights  
9   could be I guess tackled at another time, another level,  
10   but what we have is sort of we believe and I believe for  
11   sure is a step toward Aboriginal self-government. It's  
12   a start because I think to address some of the concerns  
13   that young fellow had was if you dump total sovereignty  
14   and total accountability and responsibility on a  
15   government without the experience and an orientation  
16   period of time or a transition period as we have, or it  
17   might require a longer period than what we have. It might  
18   require 50 years. I think it's a start. I those are the  
19   basis that we negotiated the agreement. Like I said, the  
20   Aboriginal issue was not part of the package.

21                  As far as mobility rights and the Charter  
22   of Rights and Freedoms, like I said we're under the Canadian  
23   Constitution yet. We are not a sovereign country here.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 We are Métis settlements and we are under provincial  
2 jurisdiction and our provincial laws apply and so forth.

3

4 As far as that goes, if you were to buy  
5 a piece of land, such as I have in the City of Edmonton,  
6 so be it. You can retain your membership on the land.  
7 I have land and a house right on the settlement and because  
8 of my Presidency for the Métis Settlements I had to acquire  
9 land elsewhere and residency elsewhere for a temporary  
10 period of time.

11 But as long as you were to give notice  
12 to your settlement council, there is no way they can  
13 terminate your membership if you have a piece of land  
14 outside and you had to leave for work purposes or were  
15 a member of the executive and there are other conditions  
16 that are listed in the Settlements Act. So that I'd like  
17 to clarify as well.

18 As far as the issue of surface rights,  
19 individuals do get surface rights and it is according to  
20 the by-laws of each individual settlement. It would be  
21 the same as before if the settlement membership requested  
22 that it be.

23 As far as the election process goes, in

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 our Métis Settlements Act there are provisions in there  
2 where we would have a review in 1994 as to the election  
3 process where the individual councillors on the  
4 settlement, as well as the executive who are members right  
5 now, for that election process and if you don't like the  
6 way it's going right now, we are going to be coming right  
7 and talking to the membership and asking questions and  
8 the concerns will be aired. We will try to address all  
9 the concerns that people have in regards to elections.

10 I guess as far as dollars and monies,  
11 we haven't had as much rights as we do today in regards  
12 to what the council does with your monies and how they  
13 govern your settlements like we do now. Like under the  
14 former legislation we were restricted in what we could  
15 do as membership. Now everything has to go back to your  
16 membership for approval. So, I think our councils are  
17 accountable, our General Council is accountable. But like  
18 someone said, I believe it was Randy, the membership has  
19 to get involved. They have to get involved and that's  
20 the way we come up with this agreement was consultation  
21 with our membership.

22 There was a referendum held and I believe  
23 it was 71 per cent said, yes, let's go with this deal.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 It's not the best deal, but we will start with it and we  
2 will improve it as time goes on. That has always been  
3 the lot of the Métis Settlements of Alberta as I study  
4 the history of the settlements. I've been around for a  
5 little while and as I go back to history that's the way  
6 it has always been. We negotiate a certain portion and  
7 we lock that in and then we go step by step and that's  
8 just part of the whole process I believe. We are leaders  
9 today and we just carrying on the tradition and protecting  
10 what we have and trying to better the lives of our  
11 constituents, or no different from the provincial MLAs  
12 that are elected or the federal politicians. We  
13 are the elected representatives of our people and we try  
14 our best to make life a little easier for them. But they  
15 have to get involved under this process that we have.  
16 If we don't like it, that's why we have the reviews and  
17 we can change it. That's why those provisions were  
18 legislated.

19 With those comments I would like to --  
20 I guess in case I don't get a chance to speak again --  
21 thank the Royal Commission and thank you, Georges and Paul,  
22 personally for taking the time in Elizabeth Settlement  
23 and for doing a fine job. I hope we could help somehow

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 for the other Aboriginal groups to have a look at us.  
2 We don't have the perfect solution or the ultimate  
3 solution, but we do have some I guess positives and we  
4 also have some negatives and we can contribute either way  
5 as to what self-government should look like. Thank you.

6

7 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Thank  
8 you.

9 Harry, you had something to say?

10 **MR. HARRY SUPERNALT:** The question  
11 that was asked, should other natives or special groups  
12 have special places. I think there should be a strong  
13 move from the Canadian government to ensure that other  
14 Aboriginal groups have places to call home.

15 We all know with the influx of ethnic  
16 groups coming across and flooding the areas of major cities  
17 and towns and villages slowly and surely and I am sure  
18 it won't stop there, that immigrants are going to take  
19 over the Government of Canada some day. They sure have  
20 a big force right now in major elections.

21 I think that people, whether they are  
22 urban or not, should have places put aside for them. The  
23 government has taken advantage of some of the most

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 beautiful places in Canada and they have driven our people,  
2 our Aboriginal people from those places. I think they  
3 should be allowed to stay there because most of them all  
4 they want to do is hunt and fish and enjoy Canada. They  
5 don't want to destroy it, whereas major corporations are  
6 allowed into Canada, the Japanese, you name it and they  
7 are all here destroying Canada and our people are getting  
8 bumped from land claims.

9 I really think that Aboriginal people  
10 should be put or at least helped to establish a place where  
11 they think they are going to get along just fine. Thanks.

12

13 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):**

14 Wilfred.

15 **MR. WILFRED COLLINS:** I just wanted to  
16 inform Georges and Paul that the 1993 review will supply  
17 you with a lot of good information if you are in search  
18 of some type of self-government. The 1993 review will  
19 iron out the wrinkles and clear out the aches and pains,  
20 not all of them, but as Noskey was saying: This is our  
21 way of searching towards self-determination. It's not  
22 the perfect way, but at the moment we feel we are going  
23 in the right direction. Also we are going to need a lot



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 of help towards self-determination.

2 We are not saying it is going to happen  
3 overnight. I say it has deteriorated our Aboriginal  
4 cultures to a degree that we, especially the Métis people,  
5 were living on road allowances. Now the Government of  
6 Canada has for over the last 100 years in the meantime  
7 perfected their way, their style of government and I think  
8 our self-government must integrate into that system, but  
9 they shouldn't expect us to be up to par for the next 60  
10 or 70 years because we've got a lot of growing to do.

11 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Garry?  
12 No?

13 **MR. RANDY PARENTEAU:** I would like to  
14 resound Harry's comments that he made there. Yes, there  
15 should be a land base for Aboriginal peoples in Canada.  
16 The way it seems now is that everybody else is getting  
17 priority to lands and not the Aboriginal people that are  
18 native to Canada. We should be protected in that way.  
19 Thank you.

20 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Garry.

21 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** I too would like  
22 to make some closing remarks. First off, to reiterate  
23 some of Ken's comments, that the lands for the Métis

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 settlements here in Alberta should be set aside in fee  
2 simple with no Aboriginal rights attached to them  
3 whatsoever. It was only to secure a land base for the  
4 Métis settlements.

5                   We settled on a financial package on an  
6 outstanding lawsuit that we had to finance I guess, for  
7 lack of a better phrase, to finance our own form of  
8 government. In saying that, in answer to your question,  
9 Paul, should special lands be set aside for groups of people  
10 across Canada, there are continuously Aboriginal land  
11 claims, if you want to call it that, across Canada in  
12 northern Canada for square miles of land, for "x" amount  
13 of dollars. I feel it may be a patchwork, a temporary  
14 process. The reason I say that is you are probably both  
15 well aware that when we got to the First Minister's  
16 Conferences in the mid-1980s and again in the last round  
17 of talks, the Charlottetown Accord, Canada, the federal  
18 government, never did put sovereignty on the table and  
19 they probably never will, immediately.

20                   So, with that we are trying to make the  
21 best of what we have and that's just having land set aside  
22 for us, settling for financial packages and trying to fund  
23 our own type of governments. Most of it being imposed

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 by consultants and saying that it should be close to a  
2 municipal type of government or whatever, without really  
3 reflecting on what we have or practice as inherent  
4 governments in various regions.

5                   So, yes, although it may be hard for  
6 other Canadians to swallow as it showed during the talks  
7 and the sovereignty of Quebec was an outstanding issue  
8 and I think it was a very hard fought one across Canada,  
9 that special areas set aside for special peoples are hard  
10 for the average Canadian to swallow. But Aboriginal  
11 peoples, being one of the first peoples here in Canada,  
12 I believe have a part and a lot to say in the forming of  
13 this country. That was the basis of the Charlottetown  
14 Accord and a lot that was built into that Accord I believe  
15 would have been of great benefit to Aboriginal people and  
16 Aboriginal groups across Canada.

17                   Hopefully that the information that you  
18 received here today and during your tours across Canada  
19 for the last several months and the upcoming months will  
20 add information and will be used as a resource base, when  
21 the federal government, the provincial governments go back  
22 to the First Minister's Conference on Aboriginal Rights  
23 in 1997 and hopefully it will add support for arguments

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 at our table at that time.

2 I wish you all the luck in your final  
3 report. I appreciate you being here today. Thanks.

4 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Art  
5 Thompson.

6 **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Thank you.

7 My name is Art Thompson, I am a member  
8 of the Elizabeth Settlement. I have been hearing all kinds  
9 of reviews and commentaries, TV, radio and everything,  
10 as well as what I see here today. I've heard mention of  
11 Christopher Columbus and how the Métis as an end result  
12 had to live on road allowances and so forth.

13 I would like to remind you people,  
14 everyone concerned, that where do you think the Métis came  
15 from. I think they came from the natives that lived here  
16 originally when Columbus did come over. So, we should  
17 all work on that basis. We are a spin-off of the whites  
18 and the natives that were here originally, who took over  
19 this land. The native was here first and the whites took  
20 over the land, didn't they. I haven't seen much of that  
21 mentioned anywhere, in the newspapers or through the TV  
22 media or radio or any of these kinds of meetings.

23 I think the governments and the people

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 that are governing us now at this time should be reminded,  
2 the natives owned this land in the first place. I don't  
3 think we should have to fight all this hard to try and  
4 keep a piece of it. What is doled out is very small and  
5 minuscule compared to what the governments are holding  
6 on to.

7 I would like the Commission to actually  
8 remind the people that they are dealing with that the  
9 natives owned this land before they came along, including  
10 Christopher Columbus. Thank you.

11 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Emile  
12 Blyan.

13 **MR. EMILE BLYAN:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

14 I am Mr. Blyan from Elizabeth  
15 Settlement. I was going to comment on what Mr. Noskey  
16 said about 70 per cent of the people who voted for the  
17 Accord. I believe and there's no doubt in my mind that  
18 70 per cent of those people who voted for the Accord didn't  
19 understand the Accord.

20 I see there are some complaints here  
21 today that there are some stumbling blocks with access  
22 to the government grants. So people didn't really  
23 understand what they are getting into and now they are

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 starting to understand with all of those stumbling blocks  
2 that they are running into. So, the 30 per cent who voted  
3 no maybe understood the Accord, but the rest, the 70 per  
4 cent didn't who voted yes. Thanks.

5 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** May I ask a  
6 couple of questions? They probably won't take long to  
7 answer. I am sorry, go ahead.

8 **MS PHYLLIS COLLINS:** I am Phyllis  
9 Collins from Elizabeth Settlement. I have been listening  
10 during the day. There are a few concerns that I have in  
11 terms of education, members' rights and the actual Accord  
12 itself and also how the Métis came here. The first I would  
13 like to speak of is just the latter that I mentioned.

14 I guess the understanding is that we are  
15 of mixed breed and anybody who tries to tell me that they  
16 are of pure blood, with a straight face, well --

17 When we had the privilege of hosting this  
18 review by the Commission in terms of hearing our concerns,  
19 as settlement members we put up a banner saying that "love  
20 can build a bridge". I think that we should stress on  
21 the positive and deal with it from there. The concerns  
22 that you heard today were well thought out and I'd like  
23 to commend the people that worked on them. I was really

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1    impressed by the questions that were asked because it  
2    showed me that you really were listening.

3                    The thing I would like to speak on in  
4    education, there was mention earlier on our education  
5    society. I strongly believe in education, being involved  
6    in it for a lot of years. When that was originally formed  
7    we didn't realize the impact it was going to have. The  
8    very first year of operations we had 133 students in  
9    technical school, post-secondary upgrading and trades.

10                   We didn't realize that there was going  
11    to be that much of an impact in the very first year of  
12    operations, so of course there were a lot of things to  
13    be ironed out. But to get to the bottom line of that,  
14    we went through growing stages just like the settlements  
15    are now and we've come a long way in the couple of years  
16    that we have been in operation.

17                   When it comes to the Department of  
18    Education, if you are going to be making any presentations  
19    on behalf of the Métis people, perhaps it would be a good  
20    time to mention that because of this transition and the  
21    growing pains that the settlements are going through, it  
22    would be really a help if the concerns that were raised  
23    earlier by a fellow that was talking on education that

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 the local boards are here for the conglomerate boards,  
2 the corporate boards, but really they just deal locally  
3 and the major decisions don't get made at the local level.

4 The corporate board deals with that.

5 The Department of Education should  
6 seriously look at the evaluation of the teachers in our  
7 schools locally because maybe a part of it could be the  
8 teachers taking orientation in terms of the cultures, the  
9 local cultures because every settlement is different, if  
10 you are speaking specifically on the settlements.

11 I would like to see that there be more  
12 educational dollars out there accessible to those students  
13 that are trying to get into trades or post-secondary  
14 because as it is we are doing a catch-up. We are almost  
15 band-aiding the existing programs. It's usually the first  
16 couple of months that a student will really suffer because  
17 of lack of funds, first for registration costs. As you  
18 know, between \$2,000 and \$2,500 is the registration fees  
19 now in universities, so that's a real big cut in their  
20 finances right off.

21 In terms of rights, I think that  
22 individual members of each settlement, when it comes to  
23 understanding the Accord and Randy mentioned that



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 settlement members and council should be urged to help  
2 their settlement members understand what the Accord really  
3 means. I think that's a commendable recommendation, but  
4 it takes time.

5                   If there are any suggestions that the  
6 Commission can come up with in your travels that maybe  
7 some other Aboriginal groups have in terms of understanding  
8 what your rights are and how is it shared with those people  
9 that are involved or directly affected, how do you really  
10 make someone understand? There are different  
11 perspectives to everything. So, if you've got suggestions  
12 that would be appreciated.

13                   I think that is about it. Thanks.

14                   **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** Art.

15                   **MR. ART THOMPSON:** I would like to make  
16 a few more comments. First of all, I'd like to ask the  
17 Commission a question. Is the Commission set up to help  
18 set up government for the settlements? Is that the  
19 understanding?

20                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Do you want  
21 to ask that again.

22                   **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Is the Commission set  
23 up to help the settlements set up their own government

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 or establish a government?

2 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We have been  
3 set up by the federal government to look into all the  
4 conditions that Aboriginal people find themselves in  
5 across the country, whether it is political issues,  
6 economics, culture, health, education, Métis issues, urban  
7 issues, women's issues, youth, elders, the Indian Act,  
8 Indian Affairs, justice, Inuit issues and because we have  
9 been set up by the federal government our report goes to  
10 Parliament.

11 We know we have to work with the  
12 provinces, so we have set up a line of communication with  
13 them, which we did very, very soon after we were created,  
14 but we know that our strongest influence is going to be  
15 on the federal government.

16 As Paul Chartrand was mentioning  
17 earlier, a lot of the stuff that was coming out here was  
18 provincially related, so we haven't finalized what we are  
19 going to do there. We have always been aware that we are  
20 going to have to do something in the provincial area, but  
21 we know that our influence provincially is going to be  
22 far less than it is going to be federally.

23 In relation to self-government, the

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 approach we have taken to that is there seems to be an  
2 overall positive attitude in the country that  
3 self-government is going to occur one way or the other.  
4 It's a matter of how it is going to occur. We have been  
5 approaching it on the basis that what is needed is numerous  
6 models of self-government that could be used differently  
7 by different Aboriginal people in different parts of  
8 Canada.

9 So, like Paul was asking here, for  
10 instance, what can be learned here for other people. I  
11 don't know if that answers your question, but  
12 self-government is definitely part of our mandate.

13 **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Yes, it does. Thank  
14 you.

15 My next comment would be would it be  
16 feasible to set up some type of an evaluation system for  
17 the settlements per se to see what is happening on say  
18 a monthly basis or biannually or quarterly, some type of  
19 a guidance system until we get on the --

20 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think you  
21 should be talking to your leaders about that.

22 **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Until they get on the  
23 right track sort of thing.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think the  
2 people you should be talking to is your own leadership.

3                   **MR. ART THOMPSON:** That's all well and  
4 good too, but maybe they need as much help as everyone  
5 else, if you know what I mean, being brand new and setting  
6 up a government, that's a big job and that needs a good  
7 directive. I was just wondering if there was anything  
8 thought of to be set in place to help them along to follow  
9 the right direction.

10                  **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** You might be  
11 surprised, but actually having an agreement that says you  
12 come in and review it four times over the life of an  
13 agreement is by itself very, very unusual, extraordinarily  
14 unusual. It is not the norm. You are not asking for a  
15 monthly review. If that was the case, you would constantly  
16 be in the middle of a review. You would be just barely  
17 finishing your last one when you would be starting the  
18 next one.

19                  **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Yes, but you  
20 understand what I am saying?

21                  **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I understand  
22 perfectly what you are saying.

23                  **MR. ART THOMPSON:** It's like starting

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 a brand new job, you have to be oriented, you have to be  
2 evaluated and directed until you get the hang of it.

3 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Seriously,  
4 I think that nothing stops your own community  
5 organizations, leadership, government from doing what the  
6 community wants. Really that's an internal discussion.

7 **MR. ART THOMPSON:** Thank you very much.

8  
9 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I had a few  
10 questions I wouldn't have minded asking. I notice people  
11 are vacating the table and that's why I wanted to ask them  
12 earlier.

13 In relation to membership -- at least  
14 we still have Ken here -- in relation to membership and  
15 this business of yearly reporting if you are going to be  
16 off the settlement, is that in the settlement legislation  
17 or --

18 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Right.

19 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** It is.

20 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Right. A leave of  
21 absence (inaudible) --

22 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I was just  
23 wondering if that was an internal --

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** It's legislated.

2                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** In relation  
3 to the subsurface, I think perhaps it was in your  
4 presentation or part of the three there that was being  
5 made, that you mentioned that subsurface was still an area  
6 that was going to be worked on. What is the status of  
7 that whole area? Is that still up for negotiation? Are  
8 you still working on that?

9                   **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** Right now we have a  
10 process agreed to by the P.C. government of this province  
11 to sit down and negotiate and talk about the ownership  
12 of mines and minerals that are located under these  
13 settlements. It's just a process in place where we sit  
14 down and negotiate. That's what we do have in place.

15                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I wish I  
16 would have read the legislation, but I didn't and so I  
17 am not sure when you say self-government, like what actual  
18 heads of powers you have, what jurisdiction you actually  
19 have. I will ask you now and I'll read the legislation  
20 probably once I'm on the plane and heading out of here.

21                   Are you now satisfied with what powers  
22 you have? Is this the agreement on self-government or  
23 had the Charlottetown Accord gone ahead and the inherent

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 right been there and a process to negotiate self-government  
2 throughout Canada, would you have gone back and said,  
3 "Okay, now we want to improve on what we have," or what's  
4 the situation there?

5 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** I think every  
6 government's responsibility is to improve what they have  
7 already for their membership and their constituents and  
8 I think that's all we have tried to accomplish over the  
9 last 50 years and probably ever since the time of Riel,  
10 trying to better our lot.

11 I am not saying, like I said in my earlier  
12 comments, that this is the would-be agreement or the end  
13 all. Like I said, it's not a total sovereign type of a  
14 government. You are still under the federal jurisdiction  
15 and the provincial jurisdiction, but it is a start and  
16 we are eligible for program services, as other Canadians  
17 as well.

18 Maybe Garry has some comments in regards  
19 to the issue.

20 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Just a quick  
21 comment maybe on the question of whether the Charlottetown  
22 Accord would have been an answer to it all. No, it wouldn't  
23 have been.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   The package that we have, the Accord here  
2   in the Province of Alberta, dealt with mainly setting the  
3   lands aside which was a provincial jurisdiction. You may  
4   well be aware that during the Charlottetown negotiations  
5   we, as the Métis settlements, had to have a non-derogation  
6   clause in the Métis Accord that was proposed in the  
7   Charlottetown Accord. The reason for that is the Métis  
8   Accord went back to the 91(24) issue.

9                   In doing that it would have given the  
10   responsibility to the federal government of the Métis  
11   across Canada and that's what the Métis Accord basically  
12   was in a nutshell.

13                  In order to protect the Accord here in  
14   the Province of Alberta we had to put a non-derogation  
15   clause in there because if that would have went through,  
16   we have to look at a tri-partite agreement, so that what  
17   we've negotiated here in the Province of Alberta wouldn't  
18   be ultra vires because if we became the jurisdiction of  
19   the federal government, then the negotiations we had here  
20   with the province would be null and void. We didn't want  
21   that to happen, so we had to put that non-derogation clause  
22   in there to look after and to protect the agreements that  
23   we have here with the provincial jurisdiction and the



**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 provincial body.

2                   So, it's really twofold. One, we are  
3 looking at expanding what we have from the province because  
4 from the province, I reiterate again that we do not have  
5 Aboriginal rights. We have a land mass that we settled  
6 on. We are operating on a financial package for monies  
7 that we felt were owing us from natural resource revenues  
8 and the whole Aboriginal issue has never been settled.

9                   When we get into that whole negotiations  
10 of Aboriginal rights, that will have to be over and above  
11 the agreement that we presently have.

12                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** With  
13 respect, I am still in the air. Are you saying that now  
14 if we are successful, for instance, in convincing  
15 governments in Canada to create a number of processes to  
16 arrive at self-government for Aboriginal people, whether  
17 it is going back to a hereditary system for the Haida or  
18 whether it is for the Métis in the prairies that are not  
19 part of the settlement, to sit down and arrive at a Métis  
20 self-government agreement that is happy to them, what do  
21 the settlement people want in that area? Do you want a  
22 process that enhances your self-government ability here  
23 or are you satisfied with what you now have?

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** No, we are not  
2 satisfied with what we now have. We want something that  
3 would enhance the process or the agreement that we have  
4 here in the province.

5                   First off, something we never touched  
6 on I guess was to have a voice at the national level, so  
7 that we could sit down and speak on behalf of the  
8 settlements, for the settlements.

9                   You may be well aware that some of the  
10 comments I've made before and frequently you'd probably  
11 get a chuckle out of it, we were road allowance people  
12 at one time and during the last round of the Charlottetown  
13 Accord we were hallway people because we couldn't get into  
14 some of the conferences. That aside, I guess we need a  
15 voice at the federal level to speak on behalf of the  
16 settlements.

17                   **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What about  
18 in relation to land? Are you satisfied with the 1.25  
19 million acres or are you seeking more land at some point?  
20 For instance, are you trying to get back the land that  
21 was lost in the four settlements or what's your position  
22 on land?

23                   **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** Well, if we had

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 the option I guess to have a Métis homeland we would like  
2 to have Canada put sovereignty on the table, yes, and take  
3 all of Canada back -- as much land as possible I guess  
4 is what I am saying.

5 The eight settlements that we have, the  
6 1.25 million acres of land is a start. Yes, we did lose  
7 four other tracts of land and one fishing station, but  
8 we haven't looked at an immediate process to start further  
9 negotiations. We have to improve on what we have first.

10

11 I think Harry had a comment.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Did you want  
13 to add to that?

14 **MR. HARRY SUPERNAL:** Yes. I think  
15 from one of the smaller settlements that was one part of  
16 the agreement that I wasn't happy about in settling for  
17 what was in the package as far as three and a half townships  
18 is what we have. We had more than that historically.  
19 You take the amount of space that is readily available  
20 for if you wanted to go into farm production. Well, we  
21 don't have much as far as what we'd call the western culture  
22 as far as farming and everything else that goes with it.  
23 A lot of the land that is there is marginal and if people

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 are going to go into agriculture development they will  
2 need more land.

3 Like I said, the influx of people coming  
4 in, we have to shut the door down and say, "No, this is  
5 for our families," and I don't think that's right.

6 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I have one  
7 other question. What relationship do you have to the Métis  
8 Nation of Alberta? Are they speaking for you when they  
9 speak for the Métis? Is there some kind of protocol  
10 arrangement? What happens there?

11 **MR. KEN NOSKEY:** At present we don't  
12 have a protocol arrangement, but we have been talking about  
13 it and we talked about it at the last round of  
14 constitutional talks, where we would set up a protocol  
15 and the province would agree to it and the settlements  
16 would agree and so would the MNA. That never came to be.  
17 We got lost in the administration and day-to-day governing  
18 of our affairs, but that's something that is exactly what  
19 we are working toward is establishing some protocol for  
20 the Métis in this province because there is always that  
21 confusion, both at the provincial and at the national  
22 level. Now we are just waiting for the elections of the  
23 MNA or the President to be elected in August. So, we will

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 be working towards that end.

2 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** One of the  
3 things that the Métis Nation in each of the provinces that  
4 they have their organizations strongly encouraged us to  
5 do is to recommend that the Métis Accord resurface. First,  
6 non-constitutionally if that's the only way it can go ahead  
7 and eventually constitutionally.

8 I would presume from what you said you  
9 had originally wanted to do during the Charlottetown Accord  
10 that there would be a non-derogation clause in relation  
11 to you people? It's already in there, I suppose, one way  
12 or another?

13 **MR. GARRY PARENTEAU:** It's already in.

14 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Those are  
15 the questions I had. Is there anyone else from the floor  
16 that wanted to make a small comment before we finish?

17 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** So, we  
18 have two girls that are going to be performing for us.  
19 They are going to be doing "Love Can Build a Bridge" and  
20 they are Jennifer Lepine and Dodie Badger. It will be  
21 the closing part of this. Then we will have our Chairman  
22 do the closing prayer.

23 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** If that is

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 going to occur, maybe I should just say thank you now to  
2 everyone. We've really enjoyed being here. I'd like to  
3 thank the cooks for the food and the tour we had at noon.  
4 I think it was very, very informative being here. It  
5 is my first trip to one of your settlements, I hope it's  
6 not my last. It has been very, very educational.

7 If there is anything else that anybody  
8 wants to provide to us, we receive information in many  
9 ways. If you want to send us a letter or if you think  
10 of anything else you want to add, send it along to us.  
11 We certainly appreciated being here.

12 I would like to thank Ambrose here for  
13 being our Moderator.

14 **COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I'd like  
15 to take just a brief moment to also express my thanks to  
16 our hosts for your kind hospitality today. We were offered  
17 good wishes in working towards making our final report.  
18 I appreciate that very much. We are going to need good  
19 wishes and more.

20 You know that there are different views  
21 on any particular issues. There are different views  
22 between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.  
23 Within the Aboriginal people there are different views.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Within non-Aboriginal people there are different views.  
2 Our job is to consider with the greatest care all views,  
3 so that we are as certain as we can be that the  
4 recommendations that we make at the end are sound  
5 recommendations. So, our job is to do the best we can.

6 If we are general in the recommendations we make we face  
7 the possibility that the vagueness will not contribute  
8 to quick implementation.

9 On the other hand, if we are very  
10 specific to avoid that possibility, then we are bound to  
11 differ from some of the views that are expressed to us.  
12 All we can do is do our best.

13 We thank you for your very able  
14 assistance today and for your good wishes. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 **MR. AMBROSE LEPINE (Moderator):** I  
17 guess just one other thing is that I've been asked that  
18 we are to form a circle and join hands now as the song  
19 goes on.

20 **CLOSING CEREMONY**

21 **MR. WILFRED COLLINS:** Could I have your  
22 attention, just stay where you are and we will have our  
23 closing prayer.

**June 16, 1993**

**Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples**

1                   I would like to take this opportunity  
2 to thank everyone that was here today. It was great,  
3 educational and for me it was a learning experience also.  
4 Keep in mind when we say our prayers that it is towards  
5 the betterment of all peoples.

6                   **CLOSING PRAYER - MR. WILFRED COLLINS**

7 --- Whereupon the Hearing adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23



June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on  
Aboriginal Peoples

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE, to  
the best of my skill and ability,  
accurately taken down and transcribed  
therefrom the foregoing proceedings.

.....  
Bill Publow, C.V.R.  
Court Reporter.