

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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"for the record..."

STENOTRAN

1376 Kilborn Ave.

..... Ottawa 521-0703

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Commissioner Viola Robinson

Co-Chair René Dussault

Moderator Rhonda Alain

Moderator Patricia Saulis

**PRESENTERS
YOUTH CIRCLE**

Jeffrey Ward
Stephanie Francis
Phylis Barneby
Levi Nicholas
Natasha Peterson
Patrick Rideout
Eric Hachey
Judie Acquin
Marcel Saulis
Angie Acquin
Melonie Sock
Stephanie Wardman
Tammy Augustine
Maggy Paul Elder

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Fredericton, New Brunswick

2 --- Whereupon the Hearing commenced at 1:20 p.m.

3 on Wednesday, June 16, 1993

4 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS::** We are
5 going to get started now. So I would ask all the youth
6 to come up and sit in the inner circle and if there is
7 any space left over, those of you who are sitting on the
8 outside, come in and fill up those spaces for us.

9 My name is Patricia Saulis and I am
10 Coordinator for the youth circle that we are having here
11 this afternoon with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
12 Peoples. We have two Commissioners here with us today
13 and our Facilitator is going to be Rhonda Alain from the
14 Friendship Centre and Christine Saulis will be the Elder
15 doing the opening and closing prayer for us.

16 So I would ask everybody to stand while
17 we have the prayer.

18 **--- Opening Prayer**

19 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Good
20 afternoon. My name is Rhonda Alain. I am working with
21 the Fredericton Native Friendship Centre and the Royal
22 Commission.

23 I would like to introduce to you the

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Commissioners who are here with us today. Next to me is
2 René Dussault and then right next to him is Viola Robinson.

3 Thank you for coming all of you.

4 Today, what we are doing is that we would
5 like the youth to voice their concerns to the Commission.

6 When you come up to the mic, please state your name and
7 you can speak from there.

8 So we are going to open the floor.

9 **JEFFREY WARD:** Hello. My name is
10 Jeffrey Ward and I am from Red Bank Reserve.

11 The three topics I am addressing are
12 culture, administration and family breakdown. The
13 presentation will go as follows: I will address my issues,
14 the facts, the statistics and then followed by
15 recommendations.

16 First, I would like to talk about
17 administration. When administration comes to my mind,
18 the following topics are also addressed: resources,
19 economic development, education, unemployment and
20 training programs, initiatives, professionalization,
21 welfare and dependency.

22 When it comes to administration, I find
23 there is a big difference on the band. There seems to

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 be a lot of troubles. It is a fact that 45 per cent of
2 the youth -- we are looking at administration from a youth
3 point of view. So 45 per cent of Native youth feel that
4 the province is not treating the youth fairly.

5 Fifty-eight per cent of the youth feel that there is a
6 need for emergency shelters and youth in each community.

7 Twenty-five per cent of the youth surveyed are aware of
8 government employment training programs. So that means
9 75 per cent are unaware. Fifty per cent looked for
10 full-time. Out of that 50 per cent, 65 per cent were
11 successful.

12 When it comes to training on reserves,
13 what we really look for is more opportunities, more
14 employment opportunities on reserves, more training
15 programs and more education.

16 My next issue is family breakdown, but
17 before I go on to my issues, I would just like to tell
18 you where I am getting my statistics so you don't think
19 I am just making this up. I am with the Youth Council
20 in New Brunswick and I am the Aboriginal rep.

21 Two years ago, we did a tour. It was
22 called Youth Perspective Tour, a provincial tour report.

23 It is called Youth Perspective 1991 and we did an

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Aboriginal supplement, and these are the percentages that
2 we got. We surveyed 266 Native students across New
3 Brunswick, everywhere from Dalhousie, Red Bank, Newcastle,
4 Perth Andover, St. Mary's, I think, and so on. So I just
5 wanted to clear that up first.

6 My next issue is family breakdown. For
7 youth today, there are many troubles concerning youth.
8 There are many different issues to face, but one of the
9 main issues are family breakdown because that is where
10 the youth come from -- your family. If you don't have
11 a strong family, it is more than likely that you are not
12 going to be too successful.

13 When it comes to family breakdown, the
14 first topic that comes to my mind is alcohol and drugs.
15 It is a fact that 90 per cent of Native youth feel that
16 alcohol is a major problem and drugs. Fifty-five per cent
17 of the youth think that there is not enough awareness of
18 services and treatment programs on these reserves.

19 The three most common reasons for drug
20 and alcohol use are peer pressure, copying or self-esteem
21 and family problems. Also, another aspect to look at when
22 you look at family breakdown is peer pressure. Fifty per
23 cent of young people prefer a peer counsellor instead of

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 going to a real counsellor or professional people, or your
2 counsellor at school, or even a parent, or even other
3 people. You want to go to your friends.

4 So if we had peer counsellors on
5 reserves, you could help a lot of people because where
6 I come from, everybody on the reserve my age is my friend.
7 So when they have troubles, the majority of the time they
8 will come to me and I have the advantage or I am lucky
9 enough to have that peer counselling training and it really
10 does work.

11 To move on to other issues, there are
12 problems with family breakdown. Seventy per cent, when
13 they have problems, talk to friends instead of peer
14 counsellors and other counsellors. So it is a proven fact
15 that peer counsellors would be an asset to each reserve.

16 Other issues to look at when families
17 breakdown is teenage pregnancy. On the reserve today,
18 what we see is -- and it is not really nice to say, but
19 the fact is that babies are having babies. That is true.
20 Young people today are having children. Seventy-five
21 per cent feel that teen pregnancy is a problem on the
22 reserve and 70 per cent say that there is not enough support
23 or services for pregnant teens. That is a lot of people

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 who are not getting help on our reserves.

2 To move on, education. Ninety-five per
3 cent of youth on all of the reserves are in school. That
4 is nice, but 80 per cent have dropped out at one time or
5 another.

6 What are the reasons for people dropping
7 out? Family problems are number one. Drug and alcohol
8 problems are number two and number three is having
9 difficulties and stress.

10 Eighty-five per cent of youth feel
11 Aboriginal language should be taught in schools also.
12 A lot of courses in school do not appeal to Native people.
13 They are really hard and the education system is not coped
14 for the Native people.

15 To move on, I would like to talk about
16 culture, my third topic. When it comes to culture on the
17 reserve, it seems that culture is being lost and simulation
18 is slowing simulating all of the reserves and that our
19 language is lost when you go around the reserve and you
20 look at young people. They can't understand the Elders
21 when they speak their own language. That is really sad.

22 Also, when you go to some reserves, they don't even have
23 drumming groups or do not know too much about traditions.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 The aspects that would help culture
2 would be support programs, programs to help cultural
3 oriented themes or things to go on on reserves. Also,
4 Elders should be really looked at and there is also a really
5 big deception about culture. Our own Native people have
6 to be educated on their own culture which is really sad.
7 There is a big deception that culture is bad, but of course
8 it is through simulation. If we had culture education
9 in our schools, culture would not be such a problem.

10 For example, I go to school five days
11 a week. You are in school from 8:00 a.m. to three o'clock.
12 When you come home, you eat supper. After that, if you
13 are in an academic course or any course at all, you are
14 doing homework that night. So that gives you two days
15 a week from school -- Saturday and Sunday. So in two days
16 you get to learn about your culture, if you are lucky.
17 If you are lucky, you will have traditional people on your
18 reserve to learn from.

19 Also, I feel the government and people
20 around in the education system should recognize our culture
21 because when it comes to our culture, we talk about
22 spirituality. It is not a religion. Spirituality is a
23 24-hour day-to-day thing. You live your spirituality.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 It is not one day a week where you go to church. It is
2 not a one-day thing. Spirituality is what you live with.

3 Also, another important thing -- and the
4 reason why I don't have statistics or facts about our
5 culture. Culture is like our history. It was passed on
6 by word of mouth. So that's why I don't have any
7 percentages or statistics to back up my comments.

8 I will just go to my recommendations
9 which are as follows: I feel Aboriginal language and
10 history should be taught in school. It should be
11 mandatory. It should not be optional and it should be
12 taught to Native and non-Native students. It is all in
13 the process of dialogue. It is all in the process of
14 working together and so on.

15 My next recommendation is that federal
16 school systems should be examined and upgraded to the
17 provincial level. We should examine these schools. A
18 lot of people -- I have percentages in my Tour Report that
19 people feel -- and I will quote it.

20 "Since most Aboriginal students living on reserve attend
21 federal schools in their
22 community, to complete primary
23 grades up until approximately

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Grade 7, many youth stated that
2 they felt unprepared to make the
3 transition to reserve, base
4 schools to provincial schools to
5 complete junior and senior high
6 education."

7 You know, there is a student in
8 elementary school who will have really good marks and be
9 right into school. It seems that once he gets to Grade
10 7 and up, they have troubles. They have many troubles
11 not only with the transition of moving from an all Native
12 school to a mixed school, but also from the school work
13 being harder or even different.

14 Now, on to my next recommendations. I
15 feel that the band administrations should be examined and
16 studied by a professional board commission and should be
17 brought up to professional standards.

18 Another recommendation is that programs
19 offered to the youth should be examined by the youth in
20 order to be put into effect. They should have youth
21 commissions to go over programs. They should have even
22 youth people come to see the youth to know what the youth
23 want. No offence. You look young and all, but I am not

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 really sure.

2 That is all for now.

3 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS::** Thank you.

4 **JEFFREY WARD:** Is there going to be a
5 question period?

6 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS:** Yes,
7 afterwards.

8 **STEPHANIE FRANCIS:** My name is
9 Stephanie Francis. I am not from here, but I live on St.
10 Mary's.

11 I just wanted to say that I agree with
12 teaching culture and that in schools. We had a talking
13 circle up at FHS which was weird. It was different, but
14 we are saying that they should have equal credits for
15 courses -- like, instead of taking music and what the white
16 man teaches you, maybe drumming chanting, learn how to
17 make a flute and then play it and get the same credit.
18 The same with history. I suppose you could learn about
19 their history, too, but I know in Canadian history, Grade
20 12, they wouldn't even talk about Natives in that class
21 and I kept trying to get them to talk about them and he
22 just didn't want to offend me and my friend there. So
23 he was like, "Oh, no. We will talk about that later,"

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 which he never did.

2 Languages. Instead of taking French
3 and Spanish and courses that can get you into university
4 like that, why not Maliseet and Micmac?

5 I agree with the peer counsellors
6 because I would feel more comfortable going to somebody
7 who has trained in that -- you know, my peer instead of
8 -- no offence -- some old man or some old lady just sitting
9 there -- they forgot what it is to feel like a teenager.
10 They are like, "Oh, ghee. Whatever." I think they
11 should give some training to the youth and whatever.

12 Emergency shelters. I agree on that
13 totally because what happens if a kid gets kicked out of
14 the home or has to leave because there is drinking and
15 abuse going on in the home? Where are they going to go?
16 To the shelter in town? Yes, right. Nobody is going
17 to -- they will be saying, "No, no, I can't go there.
18 I will be with white people or whatever. I am just too
19 scared to go over." So they are going to end up going
20 back into the home and put up with it.

21 As he was saying, in the schools, from
22 primary into Grade 7, they are on the reserve going to
23 those schools and then their marks go way down. I suppose

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 one way is having schools from primary to Grade 12, but
2 what are you going to do after that? How are you going
3 to get integrated into the work world? You are going to
4 have to go to school and work with a white person or a
5 black person, Asian. There is no way to get around that.
6 You can't get on the reserve all your life. There are
7 just not enough work opportunities there.

8 I don't have any stats, but I agree with
9 what he said and I will pass.

10 **PHYLLIS BARNEBY:** Hi, my name is Phyllis
11 Barneby.

12 I am original from Burnchurch (PH). I
13 work with the youth group up at the Fredericton Native
14 Friendship Centre and I think my main concern would be
15 post-secondary education in total. In my institution,
16 I attended St. Thomas University and last year we had maybe
17 roughly 80 to 100 Native students attending St. Thomas
18 and UNB and about half-way through the year, it dropped
19 down to about half.

20 Recently, I heard a rumour -- this is
21 just a rumour -- that in 1995 they are going to cut our
22 post-secondary funding. Back in October, I did a
23 presentation in front of the Commission up in Tobic (PH)

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 and basically I said that the funding that we are getting
2 now -- like \$675 a month -- is grossly under the poverty
3 line.

4 So I am always encouraging student,
5 youth, young people to continue their education and I
6 figure that it is almost like giving us no encouragement
7 to do this when they are not going to do anything to up
8 our funding or cutbacks. St. Mary's is only going to have
9 maybe eight people funded this year considering that they
10 had 15 maybe last year or something.

11 So I think that it should probably looked
12 into anyway. I am always encouraging education, like
13 always, to better our people. I, myself, am going to go
14 back to my own people and help and I am sure that most
15 of these youth are going to do the same thing.

16 So I think that is one of my major
17 concerns.

18 **LEVI NICHOLAS:** Hi, my name is Levi
19 Nicholas. I am from the Tobic (PH) Nation. I am a
20 third-year university student at UNB and my major concern
21 also is post-secondary education.

22 I have too heard that they are going to
23 be cutting off funding and that came from a very reliable

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 source. It will be starting in 1995. The details of it
2 aren't very clear as to whether it will be cut completely
3 off or whittled away.

4 I feel -- this is my own personal
5 feelings here -- that the reserves of the Maritimes will
6 not be prepared or adequately trained to handle
7 self-government if this happens. Without education,
8 without the funding we receive from the government, there
9 is not very many Native students in the Maritimes that
10 could afford to go to university and get the education
11 needed to be trained in the positions that will need to
12 be manned after self-government is brought in. It is a
13 real shame that this is going on and I am actually feeling
14 quite disgusted about it.

15 Without this education and if
16 self-government does come in, it is going to be proved
17 disastrous to all reserves in the Maritime provinces, I
18 feel. We are not that self-supported like the other
19 reserves out in the west that have oil fields and land
20 rights and mineral rights out there. We are not like that.
21 We are very different and it is going to be really bad
22 if that happens.

23 I don't know how much the Royal

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Commission is involved with that, but that is my opinion
2 and I really don't agree with the government on pulling
3 that move.

4 Thank you.

5 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS:** Thank you,
6 Levi.

7 **NATASHA PETERSON:** Hi, my name is
8 Natasha Peterson and I am from Dalhousie.

9 I am not a full status Indian, but I am
10 with a local in my area and I was asked to come here, but
11 I am a little nervous.

12 I totally agree with peer helpers
13 because in my area we have a lot of problems with drop-outs
14 from school and people who just don't have anybody to talk
15 to. Basically, my opinion is to really try to help each
16 other as friends and not have to go to somebody older and
17 someone who is going to have to always tell you what to
18 do and tell you how to do it. You should have someone
19 who is going to help you do what you want to do.

20 As for education, I feel that people
21 should stay in school and try as hard as they possibly
22 can to get where they really want to go and not have to
23 be told what they are going to do or how they are going

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to do it.

2 That is basically all I have to say.

3 **PATRICK RIDEOUT:** My name is Patrick
4 Rideout. I am a Secretary of the Local 18 Youth Native
5 Council.

6 My topic is how Aboriginal and
7 non-Aboriginal people can learn to respect each other.
8 I feel that we need to teach both Aboriginal and
9 non-Aboriginal people about each other to show
10 non-Aboriginal people that we are here not to take from
11 them, but to teach and learn about each other.

12 A good way of doing this is through the
13 education system, by teaching both Aboriginal and
14 non-Aboriginal peoples at a young age that there should
15 not be a barrier between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
16 peoples.

17 Both Natives and non-Natives will be at
18 an advantage versus people who don't learn about this.
19 I feel that Native and non-Native peoples should learn
20 about each other and not only Natives learning about white
21 history and omitting Native history.

22 Thank you.

23 **ERIC HACHEY:** My name is Eric Hachey.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 I live in Dalhousie and I agree with the gentleman over
2 there about the education and everything else.

3 I took a Native educational course in
4 my school and they gave it to a teacher -- he knew as much
5 as we did. All he would do is read through the book.

6 What I would like to suggest is to get
7 more Native teachers inside high schools instead of just
8 giving, like, for my Native Studies class just a regular
9 history teacher. That is one of my things.

10 The gentleman over there pretty much
11 covered everything I would like to say. Thank you.

12 **JUDIE ACQUIN:** Hello, my name is Judie
13 Acquin and I am from St. Mary's Reserve, but I live
14 off-reserve and I think that is going to be my main topic
15 for today.

16 I live off-reserve and I chose to live
17 off-reserve with my white mother, and I will say that.
18 My father does live on the reserve and I will go on to
19 that.

20 It is really hard for me because when
21 I am on the reserve, I am considered to be white. I am
22 half Indian; I am half Maliseet. When I am on the reserve,
23 I am considered white and then it just seems so unfair

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to me. But when I am off-reserve, I am considered Indian
2 and I would just like to point that out because people
3 don't understand that sometimes.

4 People just pass it by that -- you don't
5 know which -- you are living two lifestyles when you live
6 off-reserve and you are half or whatever. I was brought
7 up to know two cultures, but I am one or the other. I
8 am always thought of as one or the other.

9 I don't mean to offend any of my family
10 because I know that people are going to be watching this.
11 So I don't mean to offend anybody, but it feels unfair
12 to me.

13 My second topic would be the fact that
14 because I live off-reserve and I chose not to -- I say
15 that again. I chose not to live on reserve. Because of
16 that, I get no privileges. I get no school supplies and
17 sometimes you get clothing vouchers for clothes or whatever
18 and I don't get that because I live off-reserve. I do
19 know of people who do live on reserve who are not Native
20 who get all of these privileges.

21 Another thing that I would like to say
22 is about the school, about the courses. At my high school,
23 at FHS, there are only two Native courses. That is Native

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Art and Native Studies. Native Art is taught by a Native
2 teacher and it is an excellent course. I have seen art
3 that has come out of there and you would think that the
4 teacher did it. It is very excellent.

5 The Native Studies course is taught by
6 two teachers, one who is non-Native and one who is Native.

7 The non-Native teacher taught the archaeology part and
8 the Native teacher taught the spirituality part which is
9 very, very helpful. So I think that was very good on behalf
10 of the high school to put two people in there, one which
11 was Native and one which was not, because I think everybody
12 learned a lot from that course.

13 Thank you.

14 **STEPHANIE FRANCIS:** I just wanted to add
15 something in. The Native art teacher isn't even paid like
16 a teacher is. It is like this little program that is funded
17 or whatever. So this year was his last year. They are
18 not going to pay him any more.

19 But for Native Studies, the non-Native
20 who is teaching it is paid like a regular teacher and the
21 Native guy who is helping with the spirituality part --
22 that is done voluntarily. I am sure there is a Native
23 person who knows about Native Studies who is educated and

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 has a university degree. It just makes me mad.

2 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Before you
3 get started, Marcel, I just wanted to say thank you to
4 Judy. Thank you, Steph.

5 **MARCEL SAULIS:** My name is Marcel
6 Saulis. First of all, I would like to say hi to Mrs. Saulis
7 over there. She was my Maliseet teacher in Kings Clear.

8 I realize now that there is no Maliseet
9 teacher at Kings Clear and that is something that really
10 bothers me now.

11 As Mr. Ward pointed out, there is no --
12 you go on the reserve and no one speaks the language.

13 That is why I have a lot of respect for the Micmacs now.

14 I am a Maliseet and that is probably one of the first
15 languages they learned.

16 Working at the Recreation Department at
17 home, you try to talk Maliseet to some of the young kids
18 and they just kind of laugh at you, like, "What is this
19 guy?" They are not familiar with it and so I would really
20 like to see probably funding for a Native teacher teaching
21 the language and get more involvement with some of the
22 Elders with the younger children with our language.

23 Another point is that I am also a student

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 at UNB and they are cutting back from what has been said
2 here and from talking to some of the people at the Ben
3 Hall (HP) at home. So that is a real concern to me --
4 seeing the high unemployment rate and the high drop-out
5 rate on the reserves.

6 So, as a suggestion, maybe there should
7 be more scholarships available for Native students just
8 specifically designed for Native students, whereas having
9 to compete for the entire full entrance scholarship or
10 whatever.

11 Let's see what else. This is really a
12 last-minute thing. I have so much, but it is kind of hard
13 when you have the mic now.

14 Well, that is all for now.

15 **ANGIE ACQUIN:** Hi, my name is Angie
16 Acquin.

17 I am just now beginning to get in touch
18 with my Native side. I am also half Maliseet, half white
19 and I am just now beginning to get in touch with my Native
20 side.

21 I think it all happened when I was
22 started -- I am in the Native art course at the high school
23 and that is where it all started, getting in touch and

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 seeing what you could do with wood, seeing what you can
2 do with certain things and going out places and meeting
3 people who are Natives and Elders.

4 I am also now getting involved with the
5 Native Friendship Centre and I think it has really helped
6 me a lot just being around the people over there. I am
7 going to the Block A Trials, and stuff.

8 I think one of my concerns is all of the
9 children, the girls my age having babies and some my age
10 having two babies. That really upsets me because there
11 is no need to have all of these kids here.

12 I heard this thing a couple of weeks ago.
13 It was, "Without recreation, we have wee creation." So
14 I think that if we have more stuff like at the Native
15 Friendship Centre where we have a lot of stuff and if we
16 had even more, it would keep more kids from having more
17 babies.

18 I would just like to read something I
19 wrote.

20 "We cry out in our youth. Please listen. We want the
21 people to hear. Cry, cry. We
22 won't give in. We want you people
23 to hear. We will grow together in

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 our ways. The youth, the old,
2 together we will join. Let the
3 people hear. Stronger hour, dark
4 arms lifted to the hills. You
5 cannot silence us. We will cry
6 until you listen."

7 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you,
8 Angie.

9 **MELANIE SOCK:** Hi, my name is Melanie
10 Sock and I am from the Bay Cove Reserve.

11 I have many concerns as a youth in our
12 society and unfortunately I wasn't here to hear most of
13 you when you were talking about your concerns.

14 My concerns from what I have seen growing
15 on the Bay Cove Reserve -- I have seen a lot of teen
16 pregnancies. I have seen a lot of alcohol and drug abuse,
17 sexual abuse, incest, suicides, high drop-out rates and
18 there is a lot of need for recreational facilities for
19 the youth today.

20 There is just a lot of issues facing us
21 as youth today and to me, the path I have chosen is through
22 education. I would like to express my views today on what
23 I think we, as Native students, as Native youth in general

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 need in our communities.

2 I believe that we should have an
3 educational, productive program in our communities that
4 would not only benefit the students who are going to school
5 and getting an education, but the ones who have dropped
6 out, the ones who have no hope, who have kids or whatever
7 the situation may be.

8 I also think that if those programs were
9 to be brought into our communities, they would be prove
10 to be beneficial not only for the youth, but it would
11 benefit the whole community.

12 What I mean by setting up these programs
13 in our communities, as I said, is involving our youth,
14 us youth with our leaders. I would like to see more youth
15 actually getting involved on how communities are run and
16 I feel this would open communications between our youth
17 and our elected leaders because that is what we need.

18 We have to tear down those barriers
19 because we are the future. These programs would give that
20 incentive. It would give that initial drive to us to
21 better our communities and to better ourselves. I feel
22 that we as youth should have that say. I think we should
23 all have that say.

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 Painting ball fields and picking up
2 garbage for summer employment -- that doesn't give any
3 incentive to work. They go for the money; that's it.
4 They say, "Oh, the money," whatever and it doesn't look
5 too good on future resumes. If you go for a job, they
6 are going to say, "What did you do? Pick up garbage?"

7 These programs would open up doors.
8 They would give a sense of how things are run because we
9 are the leaders. We may be followers right now, but we
10 can change all of that because we are going to be leaders.

11 Thank you.

12 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you,
13 Melanie.

14 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS::** Is there
15 anybody else who would like to join the circle and say
16 something?

17 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** I want to say
18 thank you to all who have spoken. It takes a lot of courage
19 sometimes to talk, but once you get going, it starts to
20 come out better.

21 Go ahead, Mr. Ward.

22 **JEFFREY WARD:** First, I would like to
23 talk about something different.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 I agree with what everyone says because
2 whatever they are saying, they are saying from the heart
3 and a lot of this stuff is true and it is not made up.
4 It is what we go through.

5 A lot of reserves would really benefit
6 from speakers, other speakers coming to reserves talking
7 to people and from role models. When you see and look
8 up to somebody who is Native and you see what route they
9 went through, you can relate to them more. When they come
10 and talk to you and tell you their story of success, they
11 say, "Look, I was in your position and now I am here.
12 I could do it and now you could do it." Do you know what
13 I mean?

14 For example, I went to Edmonton last year
15 to a conference called "Healing Your Spirit Worldwide".
16 It was a drug and alcohol prevention conference.

17 At this conference, I met a man named
18 Fred Henderson and when he spoke, he really touched my
19 life. He was Native and he talked about alcohol and drugs
20 and he said it in such a way that I realized everything
21 he said and I went through everything he said. If it was
22 not everything he said, we had so much in common and it
23 kind of turned me around. It turned me around from the

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 direction I was going to the direction I am going today.

2 Also, traditional people. I am very,
3 very lucky to have an uncle who is traditional. I have
4 three uncles and one is George Paul and he is probably
5 well known. If you don't know him, you will know him.

6 Having him as my uncle, he taught me so
7 much about my tradition. It was not only me, but other
8 people and I saw how he affected other people and how he
9 changed my life and taught me about tradition and also
10 taught me how to keep balance. This is what a lot of Native
11 youth need -- direction.

12 Now, to move on, today we live in a
13 mainstream society. There is no two ways about it. You
14 can look at it as non-Native and Native and reserves and
15 non-reserves. You can say, "This is all our land. Live
16 free or die." Sure. But it is a mainstream society.
17 Look at it realistically.

18 We share this land. There is no god damn
19 way we are going to get all of this land back. All right.

20 We have to work together. We, as youth, have to work
21 with other youth and other groups, Access Centres, Youth
22 Councils, Reserve Councils, Reserve Youth Groups,
23 non-Native Youth Groups, everything. You have to work

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 together. You have to be integrated in order to go in
2 the workforce.

3 As someone said earlier, you have to go
4 out and you have to get your education. You have to go
5 out into the workforce. You have to go beyond and it is
6 true.

7 Networking. Networking is very
8 important. With us people just here at this conference
9 getting together and talking to each other, sending letters
10 from reserve to reserve, we could change a lot of things
11 by getting a Youth Council together, by going to each
12 reserve and having everyone together. Get petitions
13 together and talk to more different people. Instead of
14 this Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, us youth can
15 take it other places. We could talk to everyone and send
16 letters. That way, they are not going to listen to one
17 person. They are going to listen to them all, a big group.

18

19 It is just like when we talk about
20 self-government. Native people talk about
21 self-government and then you really wonder and you say,
22 "We have the Métis. We have non-status, status, Bill C-31.
23 We have Inuit." My lord, that is confusing. Native

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 people are Native people.

2 Everyone is so spread out. See what
3 they did to the Native people in the south. So youth have
4 to get together in order to be strong, in order to solve
5 these problems.

6 There are other things. Another great
7 idea would be that there should be programs to take youth
8 that are trained and highly motivated and take them to
9 each reserve and to teach the youth there to motivate and
10 to take initiative, to take initiative to make these
11 programs, to take initiative to see problems, try to
12 recognize these problems, get the youth together, discuss
13 these problems and do everything possible to solve that
14 problem with what they have.

15 For example, as they say, do what you
16 can with who you can, where you can and when you can.
17 Get people together. With whatever you have, work
18 together.

19 I would just like to talk about
20 initiative, the word "initiative". It is very important.

21 The first step -- here is what it means. I have my
22 dictionary here.

23 "Introductory step and movement; energy displayed of

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 action; a process by which law may
2 be introduced or interact directly
3 by vote of people."

4 It is that first step. It is getting
5 everybody together and going over. So I feel that we,
6 as Native youth, should work together and get that first
7 step going.

8 Thank you.

9 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you.

10 Go ahead, Steph.

11 **STEPHANIE FRANCIS:** I just wanted to say
12 that they should have workshops on different subjects,
13 like self-government treaties. When they had those
14 blockades, you asked somebody, "Why don't we pay taxes?"
15 "I don't know. Because we don't have to." Nobody knows
16 and I thought, "Oh, they are not supposed to do this because
17 of the treaties, but then somebody told me that New
18 Brunswick Indians never signed any treaties."

19 So I don't know nothing about it. They
20 don't teach us in school and they don't have workshops
21 on it, even in a newsletter. Band staff can at least do
22 that if they know something. Maybe they don't, but there
23 should be more information to educate everybody on the

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 different communities.

2 A lot of people don't care. Believe it
3 or not, there are just a few people who do care. Look
4 at this gym today. There are only a few of us when there
5 are so many more people out there. It is either because
6 they have to stay home with their kids or, "Hey, I don't
7 want to go there. I would rather stay home and get high."

8

9 I think that they should have -- like
10 you said, people need motivation and that. What she said
11 earlier about -- somebody talked about teenage pregnancy
12 and that. They should have workshops on safe sex and stuff
13 like or planned parenthood just to teach these kids. As
14 you said, there are kids having kids.

15 About the drop-out rate and that, I just
16 think they should have different workshops and that to
17 educate everybody about different subjects.

18 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you,
19 Steph.

20 **STEPHANIE WARDMAN:** Hi, my name is
21 Stephanie. I am an off-reserve Native. I think most of
22 the people here are on-reserve, aren't they? I am not
23 really sure. Well, except you.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 I was in Ottawa last weekend and we had
2 the protest rallies and I really learned a lot, but not
3 as many people showed up as we were expecting. I think
4 there was something like 400 Natives there. They had
5 enough cops and policemen there to cover a crowd of 5,000
6 people. I don't know. It was really disappointing.
7 There weren't a lot of youth. There was about five or
8 six youths from New Brunswick there. I was the only one
9 who went as a representative. None of the other youths
10 wanted to be involved.

11 So most of the non-reserve Natives
12 across Canada have a Youth Council. So this weekend I
13 am going to be giving a report to our Board of Directors
14 and hopefully be forming one for New Brunswick for
15 off-reserve Natives. I hope it works out.

16 I agree with a lot of the things
17 everybody has been saying, but I think there is more for
18 reserves than there is for non-reserves because none of
19 the youth off reserve have really much contact with each
20 other. But on reserve, you are surrounded by your own
21 people and just stuff like that. We need more programs
22 and stuff for off-reserve and on-reserve.

23 It is hard to explain, but down in

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Ottawa, I really learned a lot. You listen to some of
2 the Elders talking and you realize that you are not alone
3 with all the fighting and hard times and stuff. It makes
4 you want to keep right on going and fighting for what you
5 believe in.

6 I guess that is all I have to say. Thank
7 you.

8 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you,
9 Steph.

10 I see some young girls in the back. Come
11 on in and join the circle. Brad, you are welcome to come
12 in, too. Come in and don't be shy.

13 **TAMMY AUGUSTINE:** Hi, I am Tammy
14 Augustine from Bay Cove.

15 I want to talk about culture and
16 education and I am just going to read from my notes because
17 I don't want to look at anybody. I am real nervous and
18 I don't want to forget anything.

19 First, I will start off with my
20 discussion and then the solutions and recommendations that
21 I thought o.

22 First of all, a lot of youth do not know
23 what culture is. The youth are losing our culture. They

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 are not taught much about Indian history in school or at
2 home. Some parents don't know much about Indian culture
3 or Indian history and they can't teach their children
4 something they don't know about.

5 The schools on or near the reserves do
6 not teach enough Indian history mostly because there are
7 not enough books that have a true account of the history.
8 Most books are biased or fictional when dealing with
9 Indian culture or history.

10 It is hard to find a good book or books
11 and if you do find one, it is hard for a child or a youth
12 at the elementary or high school level to understand.
13 Most books give white man's view of Indian culture or
14 history and is not a Native person's view.

15 Some youths have no interest in
16 participating in traditional ceremonies or don't know
17 enough about them and are afraid or reluctant to
18 participate in them.

19 Another thing that is affecting our
20 youth is the lack of use of their Native language. Many
21 youths speak little or no Micmac or Maliseet or whatever
22 language. We are very quickly losing our language which
23 is a major part of our culture. If the language is spoken

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 by youths, many of them speak a mixed language such as
2 Micmac and English or Maliseet and English. There are
3 only a few youths who can speak fluent in Micmac.

4 Solutions or recommendations. First of
5 all, parents should be taught Indian culture courses.
6 These classes should be held at night so that those parents
7 who work can attend. Many information sessions should
8 be held so that if someone misses, they can attend some
9 other time when they are free.

10 Once the parents are educated about our
11 culture, they can turn around and education their children.

12 People should listen to the Elders when they have
13 something to say. The Elders have been around for a long
14 time and have seen many things happen. They have seen
15 the history we read about.

16 A long time ago, Native people learned
17 by watching and listening to the Elders. Today we learn
18 by reading books and listening to teachers. We learn by
19 the white man's way. There are very few people who still
20 learn by watching and listening to Elders.

21 People who know a lot about Indian
22 culture and Indian history should write history books that
23 will be used at the elementary and high schools levels.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 The schools should have a Native historian who specialize
2 in Native history to teach the children. If the youth
3 were taught Indian culture classes from Grade 1 all the
4 way up until they graduate, they would learn to be proud
5 of their culture and feel proud to be Indian.

6 The children would have more respect for
7 the Elders and their parents. More teachers should be
8 teaching in Micmac or teaching Micmac to the children so
9 that they will not lose their language. Parents should
10 also encourage their children to speak Micmac when they
11 are at home or whatever language you speak.

12 The schools should also teach the
13 children about traditional ceremonies. The youth should
14 be taught what the purpose of each ceremony is, why the
15 Micmacs practice certain ceremonies and what they meant.

16 If the youth learned about the ceremonies, they would
17 not be so reluctant to participate in them such as sweet
18 grass ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodges and
19 sharing circles.

20 Teaching the youth about Micmac or
21 Maliseet culture, including language, history and
22 traditions, will teach them about who they are and make
23 them feel like they belong. They will have self-identity

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 and self-worth.

2 Thank you.

3 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** Thank you,
4 Tammy.

5 Anyone else?

6 All right. We are going to take a
7 five-minute break here. There is juice on the back table
8 and some fruit. Thank you all for coming out and
9 participating. We really appreciate it.

10 --- Short recess at 2:10 p.m.

11 --- Upon resuming at 2:30 p.m.

12 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** We will start
13 again. We have 25 more minutes. Thank you for coming
14 back.

15 Is there anyone else who is interested
16 in making a presentation?

17 **MELANIE SOCK:** My name is Melanie Sock
18 and while we were outside, I was talking to some people,
19 a friend of mine. What I was talking about was the youth
20 getting involved with programs, like if there were more
21 programs for youth to get involved in actual committee
22 work, like community work; setting up something that would
23 be beneficial to youth like how we have the Chief in

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Council, how they are elected and stuff like that. They
2 should get youth involved in that also and they shouldn't
3 discriminate with age.

4 If somebody has an understanding of what
5 they want and what they think our community needs from
6 what they see, then that should be applied when the Chiefs
7 gather at annual assemblies or things like that. There
8 should be more youth there to express -- it shouldn't be
9 just for Chief in Councils of the whole province or
10 whatever. It should be the youth there, too, and there
11 should be something like a committee, a youth committee
12 on every reserve and every community.

13 That program could be set up by
14 individuals who are motivated -- excuse me, Jeffrey, I
15 would like to use you as an example. Jeffrey himself here
16 was talking to me and he has a position on the Aboriginal
17 Youth Council. He was the spokesman and he has a lot of
18 ideas, but people like him getting his ideas across would
19 be difficult because he is just one person. If there was
20 a lot more represented everywhere, it would be a lot easier
21 for us to be heard. It would be a lot easier. Instead
22 of just a handful of us here, there would be assemblies
23 of us here.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Thank you.

2 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN::** That is a good
3 suggestion.

4 I am going to open this up to the
5 Commissioners. Do you have any questions for any of the
6 youth who have made a presentation?

7 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Good
8 afternoon. My name, as you can see, is Viola Robinson.
9 I am a Commissioner and I want to welcome you all here.

10

11 I feel very privileged to be here today
12 to be listening to you. I must say, you are one of the
13 more vibrant communicators that we have had in youth round
14 tables. I think you have given us a very good picture
15 of your problems and you have also been very frank on
16 describing some of the initiatives or ways or solutions
17 can be done.

18 I want to say one thing. When you talk
19 about some of your solutions here and, for instance,
20 talking about the very thing you just got done talking
21 about -- and that is organizing yourselves into a committee
22 and getting more involvement within your government
23 structures, whether it is Chiefs and bands or meetings

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 or assemblies. You don't need a Royal Commission for that.

2 You are here to talk to us today and we
3 are here to listen. I think we have provided you with
4 a forum to create a networking process to learn from each
5 other and to share your ideas, but anything that is going
6 to happen to you for the future has to come from you.
7 It has to be.

8 I can see the way that you are talking
9 and by the way you present yourselves that there is a lot
10 of motivation. There is a lot of initiative and there
11 is a lot of inspiration there. All you need to do is
12 support each other and begin to do a lot of these things.

13 There is nothing, I don't think, that
14 the Royal Commission can do to make the things happen that
15 you want to see happen. I think things are there. You
16 just have to do it. It is difficult because you are sitting
17 here and I know you are coming from different parts of
18 New Brunswick, some from this reserve, some from Bay Cove,
19 some from Woodstock and other areas and it is unfortunate.

20 I know there are a large number of Micmac and Maliseet
21 youth in New Brunswick and I know you have a lot of problems.

22 You don't have to tell me that; I know that.

23 It is unfortunate that there is only one

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 or two coming from each community, but one or two is better
2 than none at all. I think this will grow and you need
3 leadership. You need people like yourselves who are
4 motivated to take the bull by the horns and start
5 organizing.

6 If you get one person on your team and
7 you get another person, what often happens when you are
8 into this -- and I have been in organizing new groups all
9 my life. I have been working for the Aboriginal movement
10 and cause for the last 20 years. You will find that
11 everybody has concerns and you will find that everybody
12 has a lot to say and everybody wants to do something.
13 But when you go to do it, you will only find one or two
14 people who are really going to move and actually physically
15 begin to do the work and who will contribute to the work.
16 You will go through that, but you have to go through that
17 and that is the only way to do it.

18 So I just wanted to offer that as a word
19 of encouragement. I enjoy what I hear. I support you
20 and I want to encourage you to continue your thinking and
21 to promote your thinking. You said it yourself -- peer
22 counselling. Well, you are all peer counsellors. You
23 are. You don't need anybody to tell you to do that. You

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 don't need permission from anybody to do that. You just
2 do it. That doesn't cost anything to do.

3 Friends. As somebody said, we need
4 friends. We don't need somebody up there getting paid
5 a high salary to tell us what to do. We need friends.
6 Well, you are the friends. It doesn't cost a lot of money
7 or a lot to get a friend to sit down and to share your
8 concerns and to talk about what you want to do.

9 The second thing I wanted to mention here
10 is that somebody said, "Yes, peer counselling is important
11 and the Elders," and you don't need older people always
12 telling you what to do and giving you orders and this type
13 of thing.

14 To be quite frank with you, I have gone
15 to a lot of communities across Canada. How many
16 communities? I don't know. Maybe 100, 200. I have heard
17 a lot of people and I think it is the first time that I
18 have heard young people say, "We need to talk to each other
19 because we are the ones who understand each other and we
20 are the only people who can deal with our problems because
21 we know what they are all about."

22 Often what I have heard is that we need
23 to connect the Elders back to the youth. We need our Elders

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to guide us. We need our Elders in our educational
2 institutions. We need them to be respected. We need
3 their advice. We need their wisdom. We need them to bring
4 us back to the culture and the language. We have to have
5 that and that has been what has cost the loss of language
6 and the loss of culture because that tie has been broken
7 and the Elders have been sort of pushed aside.

8 You have a different generation of
9 people today who are so busy trying to govern and trying
10 to do certain things that they have lost track of their
11 Elders and their youth and everything else, but people
12 are starting to see the light now -- the younger people
13 and the older people. But again, you know, I'm just
14 sharing this with you.

15 I think there is that option too and I
16 think they are both right. I think they are probably --
17 the Elders are important but also the peer counselling
18 and the friendship between young people is equally as
19 important and there is nothing wrong with blending the
20 two streams and you would be all that much more fruitful.

21 The other thing I wanted to -- the young
22 lady that spoke, Stephanie Francis, I think said that you
23 have to adjust to the outside world and in reality, in

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 particular in the Maritime provinces because our provinces
2 are small, our reserves are small and we have a lot of
3 youth, we have to get educated. I always say that our
4 reserves and our bands cannot accommodate all of the youth
5 that is going to get educated and to get into professions.

6 There is no two ways about it. If you
7 want to get ahead, there are some of us who will go back
8 to the communities and be able to help our people and work
9 there and that is great. But there is not enough for
10 everybody. So some of us have to make a choice. But
11 either way, you have to aspire, you have a vision. Just
12 because you can't go back to your community and your
13 community doesn't have a job for you doesn't mean that
14 you can't excel, which means you may have to leave your
15 community to go out and to seek independence and to grow.

16 So that's unavoidable. It is important
17 and I was very deeply touched and encouraged by the fact
18 that you have to include the non-native society, the
19 non-native youth because I think that is where the mistake
20 has been in the past. I don't think we can afford to repeat
21 history. I believe that history has neglected the
22 Aboriginal history, culture, language. We have been
23 ignored. It has been neglected in the past. Today, we

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 have a generation of people in this country and in New
2 Brunswick, Nova Scotia and everywhere who don't know very
3 much about our people. Why? Because there has not been
4 anything there for them to learn by.

5 So it is up to the young generation like
6 yourselves and the non-Native young people to get together
7 and to start working together to promote a change in the
8 education system and, as you say -- and it is up to you
9 to pressure your councils and whatever has to be -- to
10 say that things have to change and they have to change
11 right from the day you are born.

12 You go into Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8,
13 that the education system of each province should respect
14 the Aboriginal culture and traditions of that indigenous
15 to that province along with other cultures and traditions
16 as well because you are willing to learn the other side
17 of the culture, the other side of the culture, I'm sure,
18 is willing to learn our side of the culture as well.

19 The problem is the learning system has
20 been there for us to learn theirs but it hasn't been there
21 for them to learn about us. That has to change and you
22 have got the right idea. I think you have to promote that.

23

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 All the remarks I think that were made
2 here today were excellent things and I'm not -- I think
3 I have made the comments that I wanted to make. I sort
4 of generalized them because as I say, I don't think you
5 should sit around and wait for this Royal Commission to
6 make a report, to make those kinds of recommendations.
7 I think a lot of those things, they are not new.

8 We have heard -- education, that is
9 another area. That issue has surfaced in just about every
10 community we have gone to, everywhere we have gone, in
11 the cities, we have gone to the communities, everybody
12 has got a concern for education. Everybody's priority
13 is education. Everybody is saying for us to achieve
14 self-government -- they talk about our four touchstones,
15 talking about a new relationship and development and
16 self-sufficiency -- if we are going to succeed in those,
17 we need education. Everybody has prioritized education.

18 Now somebody, somewhere in this country
19 must be listening and must be hearing that. It disturbs
20 me as well to hear that there are rumours of education
21 being cut, but surely it is going to be heard. It is being
22 expressed over and over and over again. Everybody says
23 education is the most important thing and we need to change

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 a part of the education to incorporate the values and the
2 traditional values of our people and cultures into that
3 education system, including languages.

4 There are ways to do that. Mind you,
5 there are some areas in the country that has had some
6 movement in that area and have been able to do something.

7 I do hope that -- well I don't hope, I know it will be
8 that when the report does come out, I'm sure there will
9 be some very strong recommendations dealing with the
10 education of Aboriginal people in this country, not only
11 for the youth, but as well as we have a lot of people who
12 need education, who are adult. Adult education is
13 important too.

14 Having said that, I'm going to stop now
15 and I really didn't have any questions for you. I just
16 wanted to commend you on your presentation. I don't think
17 there is any question in the remarks that you have made.

18 I don't know if it was a proper thing for me to do or
19 say but I felt I had to say it. So thank you very much.

20 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** First of all,
21 I would like to thank you for the contribution you made.

22 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is really
23 working for young people and this is the reason why we

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 decided from the outset that we would not speak only to
2 national leaders or provincial leaders, but that we would
3 visit as many communities as possible to see the living
4 conditions, to speak with women, to speak with the youth,
5 to speak with people who are in many, many instances living
6 conditions that are difficult, both on reserve and
7 off-reserve.

8 There are situations that vary across
9 the country. For example, in eastern Canada, the rate
10 of incarceration of young Aboriginal people is much, much
11 lower than it is in western Canada because of the social
12 problems that are different. In western Canada, young
13 people come from the -- they don't go from reserves to
14 the jails. They go from the reserves to the cities and
15 they have all the adjustment problems there. There is
16 no support services and then they end up in jail. This
17 is not acceptable.

18 What we wanted to convey to you and Viola
19 Robinson did it very well, is that you have the number,
20 half of the Aboriginal population is below 25 and close
21 to below 20 years of age. You are really baby boomers
22 and you are the only generation in Canada that are in this
23 situation within your own people and the group itself is

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 growing. So I was quite interested when one of you said
2 that, "I don't even know if there was a treaty signed in
3 New Brunswick by the Micmac with the Maliseet. I'm not
4 aware of self-government on and off-reserve" and all those
5 things.

6 Obviously as Viola Robinson said, it
7 belongs to you to make sure that you are participating
8 in those discussions. I know we are just at the cusp of
9 a situation where you are coming in and I am totally
10 convinced that in 10 years the situation will be completely
11 reversed. Of course, you need some help, but

12 fundamentally, this belongs to you and is in your hands.
13 We have witnessed many, many sad situations within the
14 reserves and also within the cities. We heard a lot from
15 women, both publicly and in-camera sessions. This is a
16 major concern to us, the situation of family violence,
17 child abuse, the abuse of substance and drugs.

18 I was in Bay Cove a year ago, the week
19 of May 25th, we had hearings. Mary Sillett, another
20 Commissioner and I, we spent two full days of hearings
21 in Bay Cove and while we heard a lot about suicide during
22 our hearings because there have been many attempts in many
23 communities and many that were committed, I was struck

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that we didn't hear about suicide when we were in Bay Cove
2 and we know, of course, the sad situation that developed
3 in the following month, in June.

4 We realize that the healing process and
5 the burden that there is on social and health services
6 within the communities is very, very heavy. We realize
7 that the few people, or the professionals who are there,
8 the few people who are working there are very often burnt
9 out in a situation because the problems are enormous.
10 Not always, not all the times, not at the same level, but
11 still, and that is the reason why we didn't come up but
12 one of the touchstones has to do with healing and it is
13 fundamental.

14 A debate we have had so far was whether
15 we should work on the social problems first and then only
16 move towards self-government. Many people keep telling
17 us, well, you can't move towards -- we are not ready to
18 move towards self-government until we have erased those
19 or at least really get those things on hand and under
20 control on the social side. But at the end, as everybody
21 knows that self-government is a long process, we realize
22 that the consensus is that we should work on all those
23 touchstones, the healing process, the economic

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 self-sufficiency, both personal and collective, it is not
2 easy, and to say a few words on that, the self-government
3 as such, and this will enable a new relationship or to
4 renew an old relationship, the way it should be with the
5 non-Aboriginal people.

6 But you have to be part of that debate.
7 You can't be absent. It is your debate. I think that
8 you were saying that you don't have sufficient say in the
9 assembly within the communities. So you really have to
10 put pressure there because it won't happen if you don't
11 do so and you are concerned by that.

12 Largely, this thing belongs to you but
13 obviously the Commission is going to make recommendations
14 that are -- if they are strategic enough to be understood
15 by both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, they
16 are going to be implemented and they are going to have
17 a major impact on your life, for the better we hope. But
18 we need your input on issues of course like education
19 because you are right there, you are in the process.

20 I understand, in a way it is great to
21 hear young people saying, well we fear that there might
22 be funds cut off for post-secondary education in 1995.
23 It is quite something already to fear that because it means

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 that you want to participate in it. But as my colleague
2 just said, we are certainly going to -- education and
3 economic development are central in the two pillars of
4 self-government.

5 As one of you said, if self-government
6 is done -- if the public service is done by non-Aboriginal
7 people, it is useless. It is changing four quarters for
8 a dollar. It will be only the politicians that will
9 participate in self-government but the public service,
10 the administration of Aboriginal government to be handled
11 by Aboriginal people, that means -- this is a question
12 I would like to put to you and to get your best shot at.

13 There are many Aboriginal people as you know going into
14 the Human Sciences and Social Services, not in nursing,
15 in the health profession, in the sciences. We are going
16 to need people in management, in financial institutions.

17 So these areas at this point are not
18 chosen or picked up by young Aboriginal people not as it
19 should be. We are told sometimes the level or the standard
20 of the school or high school in the reserve is not exactly
21 the same. Some people say we are not good in Mathematics.

22 That is not true. I am very convinced of that. It
23 doesn't have anything to do with that. It is a matter

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 of -- and you have to work on those things because we need
2 your best shot as to what are the barriers.

3 Because obviously you have been over
4 many barriers up to now because you are here and you know
5 many young people who would not have been ready to
6 participate in that and having done the things that would
7 have brought them in this room this afternoon, but when
8 you were talking about peer counselling, it starts with
9 brothers and sisters within the family and the friends,
10 the extended families and on and on and the values attached
11 to education is the motivation. Of course the motivation
12 is knowing that there will be jobs, but it has to be more
13 fundamental than that.

14 On top of that, you know that if you get
15 an education, you are likely to get employment much more
16 than if you don't. This is truer as we are certainly moving
17 towards self-government and a greater control by
18 Aboriginal people on the administration of their
19 governments. So if we could -- apart from the obvious,
20 that is the money, if I could hear some of you talk about
21 the barriers that very often make people afraid to pursue
22 an education. Is it because the parents do not attach
23 the values, the leadership? I realize that it is different

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 in northern communities because then it is a big gap to
2 move south for a couple of years, different society.

3 Viola and I and the other Commissioners,
4 each time we had hearings in the communities, we have met
5 with young people in Grades 10, 11, and 12 to try to know
6 what should be done to help because very often the money
7 is available, the post-secondary education is available
8 but the young people don't go. Of course, it is different
9 in New Brunswick, but there are still many barriers. Could
10 we have a quick shot at that?

11 What is refraining? At this point, is
12 it because young people say, well, it is a bit useless,
13 we won't get a job at the end? Is it because the values
14 attached to education are not strong enough within the
15 community, that people are afraid to cross over and to
16 lose their soul in getting into the mainstream society
17 and really leave their roots? Because young people told
18 us, we were ready to open up, but we want to define what
19 we are and that is why so much is heard about cultures,
20 language, the Elders that could help to do that. But they
21 are quite realistic at the same time in saying we want
22 to relate to the past and open up for the future.

23 Could you maybe tell us a bit more about

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 the barriers? What is in the minds and souls of young
2 people that prevents them to forge ahead, the
3 self-confidence because I think we have to work on the
4 self-confidence. There is a lot of difficulties sometimes
5 to have enough self-confidence to forge ahead and say,
6 I'm going to do it. Am I right, am I wrong?

7 Yes?

8 **JEFFREY WARD:** You mention barriers.
9 For Native people, it seems upon the Native people and
10 through history, we have lived around barriers. We live
11 in reservations. Reservation is a barrier. We have been
12 brought up in barriers. We have been brought up in family
13 barriers, political barriers. When it comes to
14 reservation, every family is divided up. When it comes
15 to election, every one is in a barrier. So we kind of
16 grew up into it.

17 A lot of Native people, a lot of Native
18 youth get this aspect of life, saying, oh, we are Native,
19 you know, we are not good enough. A lot of times, prejudice
20 and racism is reversed here. A lot of times, Native
21 shortchange themselves which is really sad. You mention
22 barriers and you looked at me. I thought it was really
23 funny because I got no barriers ever. I barely stayed

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 home. I got -- to me, anything is possible. Like I think
2 -- you know -- realistically, I probably could not do
3 anything, but to me, I'll try to do anything. I'll give
4 it a try.

5 But for Native people -- I got lucky to
6 be motivated with all this strength and energy and
7 motivation and I got lucky, but I would like to teach other
8 youth. A lot of Native youth are not highly as motivated
9 and it is sad on reserves. It is probably due to a lack
10 of organization, lack of culture, lack of a lot of things,
11 but it is up to people to take the initiative and to take
12 it up to the -- to bring it upon themselves. It is up
13 to us Native people to bring it upon ourselves.

14 Sorry, I just went blank for a second.

15 A lot of Native people as youth because we are not in
16 positions, because we do not have recreation facilities
17 and because we don't have organizations, we don't have
18 people to fall back, on to lean up on, to look upon to,
19 but we have on these reserves is a band administration
20 and everyone here looks at the band administration and
21 looks at it backwards. The band administration is
22 obsolete. As youth, the number of youth I have talked
23 to feel negative towards band administration due to the

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 fact they are neglected. They are neglected.

2 She's so funny because she said earlier,
3 you get summer jobs. A lot of times, the people that try
4 to get a summer job, only get us half the jobs that we
5 were able to get. So right there, we only get half summer
6 jobs. So it means half the youth are working, only half.

7 She said, picking up garbage and painting fences.

8 Actually, I used to do that and I loved it, but it is true,
9 we do not get the experience that we should, like even
10 office jobs, anything. Even if they put us right in
11 administration beside somebody, to help them with their
12 job and to learn that procedure.

13 When you talk about barriers, it has kind
14 of grown up upon us. That's why when I mentioned earlier
15 that if we had a workshop as she mentioned, or a commission
16 -- not a commission -- a workshop that went to each reserve
17 to teach youth to be motivated, to teach youth to go out
18 there and to teach youth to take nothing but the first,
19 don't take second.

20 I'm sorry to put you guys down, but this
21 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, instead of taking
22 all this money, let's put it that way, and put into a
23 workshop in which you guys came and taught us how to be

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 motivated, taught us how to go and work things instead
2 of coming here and listening to us.

3 That would be my strongest
4 recommendation is to have people come around reserves to
5 teach and to motivate young youth, to break down these
6 barriers. Any more questions?

7 **MODERATOR PATRICIA SAULIS:** Is there
8 anybody else who wants to address these issues?

9 **ANGIE ACQUIN:** What was I going to say?
10 The community that I grew up in, it is
11 very conservative and I think a barrier that was there
12 was ignorance. It was right across from Kingsley Reserve
13 but they didn't know anything about anybody. I had a lot
14 of racism put towards me and it got to the point where
15 we almost moved out of the community because of this racism
16 attitude and I think it's all part of the non-Natives'
17 ignorance of the way our people are.

18 I think they need to learn a lot about
19 us, same as we have learned about them. That's it.

20 **MELANIE SOCK:** We are in the subject of
21 barriers and there are a lot of barriers everywhere, like
22 Jeffrey has stated in our communities, amongst Native
23 people themselves and then all of a sudden, there will

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 be a protest and that puts up more barriers, a lot more
2 barriers.

3 There is nothing wrong with standing up
4 for what you believe in. It is the ignorance of the white
5 society as I see it, the ignorance, that they don't
6 understand why we are fighting for the rights that we are.
7 We get racism at the workplace, if you work off-reserve.
8 You get racism even on the reserve. You get racism at
9 school.

10 You get racism everywhere and there is
11 a lot more barriers, especially when you are a Native youth
12 going out to look for a job. You go into the Canada
13 Employment Centre, they will refer you to a Native
14 counsellor. They will not take you, they will refer you
15 to a Native counsellor and that Native counsellor will
16 put you in a Native programme specified for Natives only
17 as if we were stupid or as if we were dumb, as if we didn't
18 live up to standards as white people have put themselves
19 up there.

20 Those are the kinds of barriers and we
21 should be able to be as equal as everybody else and I think,
22 if not better. Thank you.

23 **JEFFREY WARD:** Another point I would

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 like make is for Viola when you were speaking. You were
2 speaking about peer counselling and you said, your friends
3 are your counsellors. I agree with you, but to a point.
4 Peer counselling, there is a programme for it. I talk
5 to my friends and they never went to peer counselling and
6 they never got the training and I can't tell -- some people
7 you just can't tell nothing. Or they will tell you
8 something wrong.

9 When it comes to counselling, there is
10 a way of doing it. There is a training for it, you know,
11 not just anyone could counsel anybody because you may take
12 a different approach, maybe like she might tell me all
13 her problems and I will tell her what to do which is the
14 last thing counsellors ever do as a peer counsellor. I
15 was taught never to tell anybody what to do.

16 I could tell you all more about peer
17 counselling, pretty short, you know. Anyway, peer
18 counselling, it is not just talking to your friends and
19 listening to them and tell them what to do in solving their
20 problems. As a peer counsellor, you are not a problem
21 solver, you are a listener. And there is also different
22 methods you must do. So if you youths ever hear about
23 peer counselling, get into it because it is really, really

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 important. Like not really important, but it is really,
2 really good to have. You could help a lot of people.

3 Another thing you mentioned, you said,
4 we must take the initiative. You said we had a lot of
5 fibre and a lot of everything. What I'm -- I want to talk
6 to all the youth now. As I mentioned before, I'm with
7 the Youth Counsel of New Brunswick and I'm one of the
8 Aboriginal representatives. If anyone here is interested
9 in forming a Native youth provincial counsel, just come
10 and give me your name and your address and your phone number
11 and the things -- you guys don't mind if I talk about this?
12 I'm not stealing anybody's time?

13 What is this Youth Counsel of New
14 Brunswick? It is a provincial body representative of the
15 youth's voice and interest needs, concerns and
16 perspectives of the youth, young people aged 15 to 24 and
17 represents recommendations to the government and the
18 public. This is achieved by acting as an advisory and
19 advocacy body through resources and coordination and by
20 research and consultation. Through its actions, the Youth
21 Counsel of New Brunswick strives for the increase of youth
22 involvement in our society.

23 So what I would like to do as an

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 Aboriginal rep is to form a Native youth counsel in each
2 -- and get one rep or two reps from each reserve and a
3 couple from off-reserve and just give me your name. If
4 you know anyone either -- also if you know anyone
5 interested, even your parents, know anyone that you might
6 think would be an asset or would help the youth or have
7 leadership aspects or whatever, just advise them to me.

8 Thanks. That is all I got to say, I
9 think.

10 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Just another
11 point. I understand that many of you are living on
12 reserve, others are status people living off-reserve and
13 others are apparently non-status people and we are told
14 all these distinctions are harmful for the relationship
15 among the various people and, very often, there are
16 different benefits attached to that.

17 So I don't know if you thought about it
18 because we were told -- we had hearings in Moncton and
19 people living off-reserve that are not status, don't have
20 the post-secondary education benefits even if there is
21 caps coming up.

22 So this makes the situation difficult.
23 Also moving towards -- we would have liked to date to

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 have half and half young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
2 people to discuss and to share. It was not possible
3 because it is not spontaneous and the networks are separate
4 and different. But is there -- if there are means --
5 because you are together in schools very often and
6 certainly at university, for example. I would like to
7 ask you, for example, you are at university, is there a
8 mix of young people that are young Aboriginal people
9 grouping together and doing their own things or is it --
10 because it has to start somewhere, the relationship between
11 both.

12 **PHYLLIS BARNEBY:** We have an
13 organization that UNB in St. Thomas which is the Native
14 Student Counsel. That started about 10 years ago and
15 roughly just last year, we have been funded from DSRU which
16 is the student counsel at St. Thomas. So the last time
17 we had our cutbacks in education, we fought them. Like
18 we went mainly on fasting and stuff like that. Like we
19 went crazy.

20 I encourage every student to join these
21 organizations. The numbers are low and we are very vocal.
22 Just this last year, we are vocal. I have been with this
23 organization two years. So there is some sort of

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 organization for Native youth in the university level.
2 It ranges from 18 to 40, if not older, 60, 65. We will
3 take anybody.

4 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** What about the
5 recreation facilities, sports, very often a good way to
6 have a relationship because people are all the same when
7 you are part of a team, you aim at winning a game. One
8 of the things that we were told across the country is the
9 sore lack of sport facilities within the reserves in
10 particular.

11 **JEFFREY WARD:** Yes, there is lack of
12 recreation facilities on each reserve, but it varies from
13 reserve to reserve because some reserves have rinks, some
14 others don't, some have baseball, some don't have baseball,
15 some have different -- some have gyms, some do not have
16 gyms. It all depends. But having more recreation
17 facilities would benefit the young Native youth. I coach
18 baseball and when I was 16, I realized when I grew up I
19 had nothing to do so I figured once I got 16, I get a licence.

20

21 I never played ball ever in my life.
22 So I started a little league baseball team just to get
23 the kids to do something and you see the change from kids.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 The parents come up to me and tell me, you know, since
2 you've been coaching ball, all they think about is
3 baseball. They sleep with their baseball glove and stuff
4 like that. All they talk about is baseball and they watch
5 baseball. Even teachers will tell me they write stories
6 about baseball, but it is what Native people need on
7 reserves is facilities such as that.

8 **STEPHANIE FRANCIS:** I want to say that
9 on this reserve, there's the recreation centre. They have
10 a summer programme and a winter programme from kids ages
11 6 to 13. Okay, what do you do when you turn 14? I know
12 I went out and got high. There is nothing for the youth,
13 like our age, you know. Oh, there's no money there for
14 us and whatever. We have to do a lot of ass kissing --
15 excuse my language -- but that is what you gotta do to
16 get any funds to start something for the youth.

17 Okay, so we had a youth group meeting
18 last night. There was four of us. That is pathetic
19 considering there is so many youth up here. I don't know,
20 I just think that -- oh, and another thing I want to say
21 is you guys should have one of these circles or whatever
22 and invite the chiefs to hear our concerns. Okay, we are
23 telling you guys. You guys are federal representatives

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 or whatever you are. The chiefs should hear our concerns
2 too because right now they don't know what -- or they don't
3 have the time or you know, because they are busy travelling,
4 going to Las Vegas.

5 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN:** Okay go ahead
6 Angie, one more.

7 **ANGIE ACQUIN:** At our high school we had
8 a Native -- which is an acting troupe and at first, just
9 started up being during school time and we had a lot of
10 people show up. Like there is a lot of people. But then
11 they decided they were just going to do it at lunch time.
12 It dropped. Then they decided that we were just going
13 to do it after school, from like 4:30 to 6:00 or 6:30.
14 It dropped. Now that school is out, it has stopped
15 completely.

16 I enjoyed it a lot, like going there and
17 get to know everybody, meeting people that you didn't even
18 know, that even lived on your reserve and the motivation
19 stopped as soon as -- they weren't missing time from school.
20 As soon as they had actually put some effort into it,
21 like getting there, like being there, and that really upset
22 me that these people then had the motivation, how are we
23 supposed to get the motivation?

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 If we had the show written and
2 everything, we just had our lines to rehearse it and as
3 soon as school stopped, everybody stopped going. Where
4 are we supposed to get the motivation from? We are trying
5 with ourselves but there is not enough of us. Today, there
6 is like three or four of us here that were over on the
7 street giving donations -- and now three or four people
8 are here. It's the same people doing the same things.
9 Where are we supposed to get the motivation from?

10 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN:** Thank you.

11 Would you like to say anything else?

12 Okay, go ahead, Madam.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I just
14 wanted to raise one thing here that was said and I think
15 it was you that said it about the Native counsellors and
16 I was a little surprised to hear you say that. But it
17 just goes to show the differences in thinking and how people
18 think. I don't know, but these Native counsellors in the
19 Employment Centres, the chiefs and bands and leaders fought
20 hard and long to get Native people working in these places
21 to work with their own people.

22 Because what we used to hear from our
23 people was that we go to the CEIC or we go -- anywhere

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 we go, they are all non-Indian people and we don't get
2 treated properly and they don't understand us. We want
3 our own people working in there because we can relate to
4 them and we relate better with our own. We need our own
5 educated, we need our own in there. So they really worked
6 hard to get these counsellors in these centres so that
7 they could deal with their own people.

8 Now this is a switch. You're saying
9 that that is not a good thing?

10 **MELANIE SOCK:** If they're going to have
11 them in there to help us they should have more of them
12 and they should have some for the youth too. Because I
13 went into --

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** You don't
15 have a youth one in there?

16 **MELANIE SOCK:** Not at the Native
17 Employment Centre for youth.

18 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** No?

19 **MELANIE SOCK:** No.

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Because
21 in most places they do. They used to anyway. They used
22 to hire a youth one for the summer to work with the Native
23 youth. Maybe they have stopped that, but it used to be.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 It is something that maybe should be -- well not myself,
2 but somebody could maybe bring it up somewhere.

3 **ANGIE ACQUIN:** I think we should have
4 our choice.

5 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well you
6 don't have a choice?

7 **ANGIE ACQUIN:** Usually when you go visit
8 them, they send you to a Native counsellor.

9 **MELANIE SOCK:** We should have a choice.
10 At our high school, we have a choice. We've got Native
11 counsellors there and we've got non-Native counsellors.
12 We have a choice to go to either one.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well, I
14 would have thought it would be. I would have thought that
15 it would be a choice. Have you asked if you can have a
16 choice?

17 **MELANIE SOCK:** It is automatically
18 assumed.

19 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well you
20 should change it around and say, well just a minute, do
21 I have a choice? You might get an answer that might say
22 yes, you do. Give it a try anyway.

23 Thank you.

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 **MODERATOR RHONDA ALAIN:** I would like
2 to thank all the participants that spoke today and came
3 out to listen. I would like to thank the Commissioners
4 for coming to the community and Christine thank you for
5 opening and she is going to be doing a closing prayer for
6 us.

7 So could you all stand?

8 **--- Closing prayer**

9 **MAGGIE PAUL ELDER:** I was late. I drove
10 by and saw all these cars and realized that I was late.

11 You know education is a thing,
12 education. What I was thinking about all through when
13 the youth was talking about eight or seven years ago, I
14 went to Alberta and there was a little community. It is
15 called Alexander Reserve and I went visiting there to their
16 school. I guess these people, the ones that lived there,
17 asked if they could have their own education, the reserve
18 there. They fought for it so they finally gave them their
19 own money to teach their own.

20 These people that lived on Alexander
21 Reserve were 100 per cent -- almost 100 per cent alcohol
22 and drugs and 99 per cent of 12, 13 year old girls were
23 pregnant. These people that got together, they wanted

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 to do something for their people, so they formed -- their
2 parents got together and they wanted a school that had
3 an old school, there was nothing being used, you know.
4 That school was just standing there. So they asked for
5 that building and they said go ahead.

6 So they fixed the school up and they had
7 from Grades -- not even Grades, they didn't even have Grades
8 at first -- they started from the children that were about
9 two or three years old all the way up to 99 years old the
10 school was for. So they started. The school that they
11 had, every room that they had was a different colour.
12 Each colour, like when you enter, when you first enter
13 the school, it puts you in a different frame of mind, how
14 you think and how you feel when you first walk in there.

15 In the next room, it makes you feel in
16 another different way. All through those rooms that I
17 was taken to and at the end of the room, this man that
18 was the -- he was the superintendent or whatever you call
19 those people at school, ahead of the school, principal,
20 or whatever he is -- he said you are not going to remember
21 80 per cent of what I have told you. He said you are only
22 going to remember 20 per cent. He said it is because we
23 have been conditioned all through our lives, the school

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 we went to, we were only taught a certain way.

2 So they taught the children the right
3 -- on the right side of the brain and on the left side
4 of the brain, they both taught them the both sides. And
5 how they taught the children was from the time you went
6 to that school, if you don't want to leave your grandmother,
7 bring your grandmother. If you don't want to leave your
8 dog or your cat, bring your cat until the time when you
9 can let them go yourself.

10 And if you got photo albums from your
11 family, bring them with you. If you got pictures you want
12 to hang on the wall, bring them. You should see the
13 pictures all over the wall, everywhere is all different
14 levels, at the level that you can see. They had in the
15 centre of the school, they had like a couch and chair,
16 a bed, trees, stuffed animals and music playing. They
17 told these children -- the people that were there -- if
18 you are tired when you come to school here, go lay down
19 for about an hour and rest and then you can resume what
20 you want to do.

21 In the mornings when they start the
22 school, they have well mostly on that reserve, they were
23 Catholic and traditional so they had your altar here for

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 your Catholic people, you have your Jesus Christ or Blessed
2 Virgin Mary prayer beads there and on this side, they had
3 sweet grass and a smudge bowl. You have your choice what
4 you want.

5 If you want to learn how to work with
6 your brain, you know, by physically or you want to learn
7 by computers, you have your choice. If you want to learn
8 how to make a drum or if you want to learn how to make
9 a guitar, you have your choice. Shakers or anything, you
10 know, you have your choice. They had a choice what they
11 wanted to do.

12 They had 80 or 90 per cent high school
13 drop outs, so they all went back to the school and they've
14 asked if they could do, you know, to fix the school up
15 and to fix the outside. They allowed them to do it. You
16 should see the whole one side of the wall that they did.

17 It was all done in their art, you know the kind of art
18 that they have there. It was all done through that way.

19 Towards the end of that year, with the school that they
20 had, there was 99 per cent young girls that weren't pregnant
21 and there was some 90 somewhat percent alcohol and drug
22 free with this school.

23 What they wanted to do was they wanted

June 16, 1993

Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples

1 to build a bigger school and I've heard just last month
2 that they did build a bigger school and it was in a circle,
3 a round school what they wanted. I guess they have and
4 they have -- they are doing really quite well.

5 I think this is coming from my heart.

6 We have to have a choice. We should have our own schools
7 and to know our own history. That is what I think. If
8 you want to learn how to dance, you have people on the
9 reserve that know how to dance. You want to learn how
10 to sing, you have people that sing. You want to go in
11 your sweat lodge, we have a sweat lodge. You want to learn
12 baskets, people here that live here, they know how to do
13 baskets. Sweet grass, I'm here. I know a lot about sweet
14 grass. I was born with sweet grass.

15 There are a lot of things here. You want
16 to learn bead work? We got people that know how to do
17 bead work. Kim right there, she's an expert. She is an
18 expert on bead work and leather work because it is within
19 her. She's got it right here. Everything that we all
20 know, what we are learning here right today, we all have
21 it in there already. It's just that we need it to be
22 wakened up.

23 But I think -- I've heard a lot of other

June 16, 1993

**Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples**

1 places that have colleges, Indian colleges, people, you
2 know, that is what I would like to see, Indian schools,
3 Indian colleges and have it open to anybody who wants to
4 come there. That is all I have to say and I love you all.

5 Thank you.

6 --- Whereupon the Hearing adjourned at 3:25 p.m. on
7 Wednesday, June 16, 1993 to resume on Thursday, June 17
8 at 9:50 a.m.