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23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN),DENENDEH
AUGUST 26, 1993

AFTERNOON, AUGUST 26/93

Meeting reconvened at 4:30

Welcome to MP of Western Arctic, Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

Chief Fred Doctor: I was hoping I did not have to speak and say what I have to say. When you have something on your chest you have to say it or it will bother you. At the beginning of the meeting, I stated that there are two things that we should look at. The good side and the bad side. I made it clear to people at this assembly that we look at the good side only and put the bad side away. If you want to hang on to the good or the bad, after the assembly, that is your choice. I have to interrupt the meeting because I do not like what is happening. In the past, when a National Assembly is being held in the community, there was money available. Today it is not like that. We got upfront money of $10,000. This mostly goes to coordinator's salary. Assemblies used to cost up to $400,000. The community has supported us a great deal for this assembly. The clean up and all the work by our people. I really appreciate it. Every region, every band who came to the Assembly had to accommodate their own travel, meals, etc. Out of generosity, we donated one meal a day at our own expense. We did our best. Today is wrap up. People will leave tomorrow. We won't see this many people again for a long time. The three regions will go their own way. The other two want to hold on to the Dene Nation. I am proud of you for thinking that way, and for the direction they are taking. If you want to make things work, each region and each community, we have to stay together, and be supportive of your leader. If no, things are not going to work. The reason I am here is because I am hurt. I seen it too many times but never said anything because I do not want to hurt my people. If there are areas you are not satisfied with, you have to let your community know and deal with it.

Some of my people are against this thing. I wish they would come to us so we can iron it out ourselves. Instead it has to be done through the Dene Nation or another group. Many times I ask people to come to meetings. That is how you learn things. It is no good to go to other regions to try and solve problems.

Even though we have differences, you should respect what the other people want. I wish that now on these things do not occur. We

have to learn to work together, stick together, deal with things to the best of our ability.

George K: Relationship between Dene Nation and others. Dene Nation is Deh Cho, NWT Treaty 8, bands who wish to stay, and individuals. I am a Metis and I am a member of the Dene Nation. We have agreed there will be no forcing out of the organization. We will keep the doors open. That is my understanding. We don't know how it will work over the next few months, how it will work in the future. We may know there are a number of individuals in the regions who left who want to stay with Dene Nation. How will you deal with that. Do we talk with them to see how they want to participate, or do we ask the tribal council. We can't deal with that here. Just like the three regions who left have to work out how they will work together. There are no details on their alliance. They and the public will also have to understand the Dene Nation will working out many of these questions also. As a chairman I can accept Chief Doctor speaking about this and getting it off his chest. Some people and elders are feeling bad as what they see as a break up. They have to be allowed to speak on their own and do what they think is right. We as the Dene Nation have to accept people speaking. Each person has that right to speak. I hope we do not spend too much time on this topic as we have agenda items to deal with.

DIAND staff were asked to the table.

Lorne Tricoteux: I would like to extend my best wishes to all Chiefs, delegates and special guests. I am Regional Director of the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program. With me are Hugh Richardson, Director of Lands Revenue and Trust, and Jeff Scheftner, Area Manager of the southern Mackenzie Valley.

Before proceeding further on an number of issues, I would like to acknowledge a number of people. First Chief Freddy Doctor and the community of Fort Norman. Congratulations on a job obviously well done. Also, Chief Bill Erasmus and the staff of the Dene Nation. I understand significant changes are before you. Our regional office has had a long standing relationship with the National office, with the executive and staff. While we have not always agreed, we have always found Chief Erasmus and his staff very professional and reasonable. Our department's thanks. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Sahtu Tribal Council, and the Dene and Metis from this region. They recently ratified their

claim and are preparing for the signing ceremony. Many difficult choices had to be made. I want to wish their future well. I know everyone here has had a long week of intense discussions. I will keep my comments on a number of issues direct as possible.

The first issue is associated with financial support that the Government of Canada, through DIAND, provides to tribal councils and bands. We have achieved further considerations on how we apply the formula for calculating. We will now be able to consider bands as if they are on reserve lands. Also, we will now be able to consider sub-bands as though they were bands. As some may be aware, the national formula for tribal councils, there is a difference if their bands were on or off reserves. If communities are located off the reserve, the receive less money than if they were on reserve. These distinctions have been waived for the northwest Territories. The result will mean approximately $1 million available in support of tribal council. This increase along with other adjustments will bring the level to 2.8 million for tribal councils. With this increase, we are now receiving the maximum amount available for tribal councils. They will now be funded the same as in southern Canada. This has been a long time concern of the chiefs. We have been working on this for three years. I believe we now realize substantial progress in this matter.

We also have received progress in our efforts associated with band support funding and the application of that formula. We have been successful in getting an agreement from Ottawa. Sub-bands will be considered bands. The existing formula sub-bands receive less funding than if they were a band. In dollar terms this is an additional $100,000 in band support funding, bringing the total NWT to 3.4 million dollars.

As a comparison to the rest of Canada, the funds have grown in less than five years of ?. In other parts of Canada, it has grown less than 50%. We are now comprising the budget figures and will be writing to the bands to confirm specific numbers.

The other development I want to share with you is associated with changes at the executive level management within our department. As you may know from the minister's June 25th announcement, there is major restructuring in the Department, driven by a policy vision of the government which sees a more streamlined government. It is the most extensive of this kind ever undertaken in Canada. Part of

the June 25th announcement was to reduce the number of departments, and the number of deputy ministers. Of the original 32 federal departments, only 12 will continue in their present form. Also, all departments, both new and old, will be required to examine their structures and operations and resources with a view toward improving services and identifying savings. Indian and Northern Affairs is one of the departments continuing in its present form, is required to undergo that examination. Part of the first process is the review of executive management, and this has taken place. Within the last two weeks, Dan Goodleaf, has made a number of announcements in regards to management. Mr. John Raynor is the new assistance deputy minister for the north. Immediately following that, it was announced management at the regional level of the NWT (on August 20) has changed to Mr. Warren Johnson. He will be responsible for overseeing the Northern Affairs program as well as Indian and Inuit. This is similar to changes made in the Yukon. As part of the announcement, the Deputy Minister announced that I would retain responsibility of the Indian and Inuit program, answerable to Warren Johnson. Bill Stephen will be taking up a new position in southern Canada. Mr. Stephen's new assignment has not been announced yet.

Both Mr. Raymond and Mr. Johnson have had extensive experience in the department and a lot of experience on the Indian Affairs side. As a regional office, recognizing some of the priorities, that puts us in good standing to work together to achieve some of the objectives we have set out to do. Mr. Raynor was involved in Indian Services, controlling Ed. Mr. Johnson, Economic Development

Mr. Johnson will be relocated to Yellowknife in the near future and is looking forward to meeting with you soon. They both have extended their greetings to you.

Chief Gerry Antoine: There is correspondence regarding funding the Denendeh National Office which you have sent to the National Chief. I want to make it clear Dene Nation still exists and that your office should continue funding the National Office and to increase the level. You had indicated you were not clear as to the mandate of the Dene Nation. It is very clear to us, and I want to put it on record in front of the National Assembly in regards to this particular initiative you were displaying the past few months. There seemed to be an impression in your office that Dene Nation was not going to continue. I wanted to mention, on record, that the mandate of the Dene Nation is very clear.

Lorne Tricoteux: Over the last few months, the question of providing financial support to the Dene Nation (CORE) has certainly been an issue. There have been many correspondence and discussions with Chief Erasmus. My understanding is that a number of communities from regions verbally and in writing indicating they no longer wanted financial support going to the National Office of the Dene Nation, that they wanted it redirected to themselves. That is not a secret and I did not approach it as such. We have tried to reinforce is the basis funding is provided to the Dene Nation as a organization representing bands is that in order for us to continue providing funds there has to be clear indication they have a mandate from the bands they represent. That issue is a matter of internal business of the Dene Nation and the bands and we have approached it on this basis. At the request of the Dene Nation and the decision of the Chiefs, we have supported the Review Committee.

Given the decisions this week, I would be less than forthright if I did not tell you if another organization is formed, the amount of money would not be affected. Similar to the situation in Alberta when bands withdrew from the Alberta Indian Association, the funding was split to each of the respective organizations. If the situation appears to go as they now appear, I would expect that there would be a request from the other regions. The funds would be reduced to allow support to another organization. This is an issue we would have to deal with. Any development in this regard we will undertake to have open.

George K: There is some confusion about what you said. Will a new organization or alliance affect the Dene Nation funds.

Lorne: Yes.

George: If an alliance if formed with the other three groups, then Dene Nation funds will be affected.

Frank T'Seleie: I have two questions, and one supplementary. One has to do with the relationship of ourselves and the department in this part of the country. As you know, within confederation on the broader scale, in the east the first nations consider the treaties pre-confederation treaties. Under those treaties the department has responsibility to deliver services and if I heard you right you stated all bands now will be considered as on reserve. What does this mean for policy matters, or for instance taxation. As you

know the status of tax is dealt with differently on and off reserve and rules have been applied differently to the Dene Nation.

Lorne: Clarification is the words I tried to use in my presentation "for the purposes of calculating band support funding and tribal council funding". It would have no application nor would there be any legal basis to put forward an argument that these bands were located on a reserve.

Frank: I am aware there is a program called alternative funding arrangements. I am not sure what that program is and a lot of people are not aware of it. Perhaps you can shed some light.

Lorne: The AFA is in reference to financial agreement the government is employing in providing in funds to bands across Canada. There are different kinds of financial agreements, with different characteristics. AFA's is a kind of an agreement where the dollars are under the control of the bands who receive it. They establish certain undertakings, such as in respect to education, it would probably read that the Band commits itself to provide education services to 2 or 3 hundred students. Money for several activities are rolled into one. If the band can provide the services according to the standards within the agreement and say if they do it for less money, they keep the money. It is a complicated agreement. They have not be employed up here because the kinds of activities AFA's are used for is for money to bands for roads, social services, etc. The department do not fund the band up here that way. It goes through the Territorial Government. Up here, Bands receive grants, and grants are not include din AFA's.

Another is CFA's or comprehensive funding arrangements. Some communities are looking at that type of agreement. We are prepared to use this kind of agreement here. There are processes we have to go through and sometimes they are not practical. If bands want to know more about them, we are prepared to have our staff do a detailed presentation on the different types of agreements available.

Bill Erasmus: Welcome Lorne and his staff. Two points. I want to be straight forward to him and his staff. We don't always agree, but we sometimes make progress. Funding for Dene Nation, it is clear from the last few days that the majority of the Dene Nation want to be active. 17 of the 28 communities. Those people

requires necessary funds for this body to operate. It seems that the Dene Nation are getting less and less. Tribal councils are getting more and more. It appears that they are doing this to make the regions more independent, and us less, so we cannot get together like this. We want people to be strong in their regions, as well as strong collectively. The amount we get now is at 1979 level Core funding. This year we got another 10% decrease. We know economic times are rough. But we cannot be seen the same as other people in Canada. There is a fiduciary responsibility. The government has to work with us. The other issues which could go on over the next few days is the issue of programs and funding arrangements.

Some time ago we wanted a meeting to talk relationship and programs. Rather we dealt with the internal issue. Now that is getting resolved, we now have to get to the point and sit with DIAND and clarify these points. What is available from DIAND, grant, loans, why is there differences in the south and north. They cannot be answered here today. I suggest the department acquire funds so that we can answer those questions in the future. It is important to stay open with each other and move forward.

Lorne: Thank you. I hear your message. We would be interested in participating in such a session. We perhaps have not been doing a good job of this, but have been trying to deal with the bands and tribal councils individually. I hope now with the new regional director, we will have more time to do this. This would be a good chance for the Regional Director General to meet you.

Chief Darrell Beaulieu: Welcome to the Dene Nation Assembly. From your presentation in regards to bands being treated as reserves, how far does that go in regards to taxation, or housing, how far does this new approach go. The NWT housing corporation are asking for BCR's to lease land for individual band members to build house on band lands. They consistently ask for these BCR's. If the new approach is implemented does that mean we do not have to issue the BCR's on new land.

Lorne: You question is similar to Frank T'Seleie's. This is only for calculating funds. There is a different formula used for those on and off reserve...any changes can only be made with accordance to the Indian Act.

Hugh Richardson: With request for land, as always we have taken a

stand that we would not agree for the release of land without the approval of the Bands. The GNWT Housing Corporation will still continue to put homes on crown land with the consent of the Bands.

Chief Richard Kochon: I would like to address Indian Affairs. Maybe you heard that we want the Dene Nation to represent us and you probably heard this on the news. As for your department you should have funding available for the people. A long time ago with the signing of the Treaty, it was agreed that you would provide for the people. We thank you for participating at the Assembly and appreciate your support and would not like to see any disagreements. They should also thank us for living with us on our lands. I am the Chief of Colville Lake and sometimes white people come amongst and they are welcomed. I would appreciate it if the Dene Nation would be funded. We have been discouraged by the withdrawing of the three regions and would not like to see this happen also with your department. The government should recognize and acknowledge our Treaty. I have listened to what the Elders had to say about the signing of the Treaty. White and Dene people need to work and live together. I would like to see that the Dene Nation gets funding.

Gerry Antoine: Thank you Mr. Chairperson. I would like to raise two issues. First is how the formula is used to give Bands funding for administration resources. It is given according to the number of Federal Government programs they run, programs which are given to the GNWT up here; and two, southern Bands get 6 or 8% for employee benefit packages.

Chief Darrell Beaulieu: I would like to add about the Indian Act and how it is applied. Will it be applied the same way the lands are...are we to follow the Indian Act or under the legislation of the GNWT. The issue of Ndilo is a sensitive issue for the GNWT and DIAND particularly in the case of land. Being treated as reserve or quasi-reserve land is very confusing to us. What are we saying when different approaches are made to deal with the Bands?

George K: A different approach will be, to have DIAND give in writing their position on the issues as identified.

J.C. Catholique: This is about post-secondary education. I was wondering if Treaty Indians have to pay taxes of monies received for their education?

Hugh Richardson: we consulted with Revenue Canada and will get back to you on this?

George K: The National Chief has requested that a response be given to all Bands. On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to thank Lorne and his staff for attending our Assembly. There is going to be a hat passed around to assist the Carrier-Sekani with their costs for attending the Assembly. Next item on the Agenda is the Dene Cultural Institute. They have a Motion drafted for the Assembly to consider. We would like to call the Dene Cultural Institute to the front.

The Dene Cultural Institute needs to meet in Assembly and I call for adjournment of thirty minutes when we will resume our Assembly.

THIRTY MINUTE ADJOURNMENT

Meeting reconvened at 7:15 p.m.

George K: Executive Reports are in your kits. That leaves us with other business.

Gerry Antoine: Bill C-103. I have been involved in the opposition on behalf of the Deh Cho Tribal Council and the NWT Treaty 8 Council also have been opposing it. It is in regard to the land titles repeal act. I would like to ask the National Chief to give some more background on it. I believe this will be a motion regarding this.

Bill Erasmus: There is a motion being drafted. If it pleases the Assembly, I would deal with it when it comes on the floor. I agree with Chief Antoine, it is a very serious issue.

George K: I have six motions in front of me that can be dealt with under other business. Draft Motion C is regarding future relations with Gwich'in, Sahtu and Dogrib regions. (Chairman reads Motions) Moved by Chief Tim Lennie. Seconded Arvin Laundry. Discussion? Motion carried unanimously.

Motion re: DIAND CORE funding. Moved by Chief Darrell Beaulieu, and seconded by Chief Gerry Antoine. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion re: CORE Funding from GNWT. Moved by Chief Dennis Deneron. Seconded by Chief Felix Lockhart. Carried Unanimously.

Motion re: Support for the Deh Cho Declaration of Rights. Moved by Chief Antoine Michel. Seconded by Chief Jonas Sangris. Carried Unanimously.

Motion re: Office of the Dene National Chief. Moved by Chief Herb Norwegian. Seconded by Chief Berna Laundry. Discussion.

Chief Tim Lennie: As you know the situation we are in now and what will be happening over the next while. In the past we have lost a lot of leaders and resource people. You have a lot of information. Like Arnold said yesterday, yourself and other leaders like you have done a lot for us otherwise we would not be here today. As an individual and as the Chief and representative of Wrigley, I would like to ask you to stay on that one more year.

Chief Herb Norwegian. Thank you. This motion regarding Bill Erasmus. We have to help him. He still has one year. He has sat there the past three days. The Dene Nation moved a lot. We as Dene Nation have to move forward and work hard. He being a leader for us and other who depend on him. Whenever he asks for help, we have to help him. Somehow we get by our troubles. Bill helps us a lot and I want to thank him. Whatever is ahead of us now, it seems we are alone. But we are still the Dene people and the Dene Nation. I want to thank him. He works hard for us. Whenever we ask questions, he helps us out.

Over the past few years, things have been pretty hectic. Just in the past few days the Dene Nation took a devastating blow. It looked like it was going to go down the tubes but we stuck together. We wanted to keep it in place. Usually when organization like this goes down, people point at the President. This case, Bill has been very strong. The things he has accomplished. We are glad he is going to continue being head of the National Organization. There were times when we asked Bill to come to the Deh Cho to help us and he was just a phone call away. Along with Bill, like I mentioned the past few days were hectic. He was strong and stood tall during some crucial issues. I am proud he stood firm on behalf of the people in the communities, especially the average Dene, at the grass root level. Also the other Chiefs who are part of this Dene Nation today. You were all very strong. You really had to have the integrity and strength to survive. Thank you.

Paul Wright: am thinking of our leader. We are asking Bill to

stay another year for us. If we continue, we will hang on to him until he is old and grey. It is a very important job and sometimes I used to worry about it. When we support one another, it upholds the leaders because he knows he has the support of his people. It is his own people who did this, but it is done. From now on maybe when we review our constitution we should make a strong law to our organization and things like this will not happen again. When sometime is not going right, you should talk it out with one another. If we had done this, if these people had been open with one another, maybe this would not have happened. From now on, who ever is left together I hope will be working close and support one another. If you do not discuss this together,;you will not get anywhere. Sometimes it is hard to come up with a decision. I hope nothing like this happens to us again. In the future, all of us, you young people, will support each other in all you do. When an elder talks to you, he wants everyone to get along. When we say Dene Nation, it means not only the people, but also the land and our ancestors. Everything that is on the land, that is what we call the Dene Nation. Whoever do not agree with that, all I can say is they are not a very smart person. If they had been open with the people, maybe they could not have come to the decision to withdraw from the organization. I hope you will try your best to support one another. That way you will remain strong. If not, it is going to be tough. I hope everything will work out for you. Thank you very much. And thank you to the Chairman and all of you here. Be kind to one another.

Chief Richard Kochon: I want to say something about our National Chief. He had been our chief for a long time. I know a lot of people were not happy with him, not only in the north but in the south too. And maybe some of the government people did not agree to the things he did and said. But I want to say thank ;you to him for all the work he done for us. When you are a leader, things are not easy. For all this time he has been working for us, he has kept the organization together. That is what I want to thank him about. At times it has been tough. We had a good meeting despite what happened and I am happy about that. When you are put in place as a Leader, people know you will work for them and they trust you. You never have to be afraid. Your people support you and you have to remember that. He had ben our national chief all this time and I hope he will agree to stay another year. If he stays longer, I will be glad. When you have a leader like that, you should respect him. They are there to protect you and speak up for you. Not everyone thinks the same way. Things were shaky the last few days

but it seems to me we are now back where we used to be. I want to say thank you to Bill.

Chief Felix Lockhart: Thank you Mr. Chairman. To the motion, I agree that this Assembly not accept the National Chief's resignation. I want to reinforce that we have supported this by a motion at our Tribal Council level. On behalf of our Tribal Council and Communities we fully support the National Chief reconsider and remain for the duration of his term. There has been a lot of conflict and tough times in the past and it will continue. We do not anticipate to sit back and think everything will be okay. The only way we can move forward and pave the way for our future generation is for us to be committed and work hard. The future relations with the regions who withdrew, part of Bill's mandate should be to work on the healing process to bring us back together. I agree with our elders, the Dene Declaration of 1975, and the Deh Cho declaration. Just last fall, when there were discussion with the first ministers and aboriginal leaders of Canada. Then there was a lot of conflict amongst our people here. There were people across Canada to thought the same as us. There are people in Canada who think we have the inherent right to self government. They wanted us to get into an agreement with them through an accord. Meanwhile the treaty chiefs were concerned about that position being subject the to Canadian charter of rights and canadian law, and change our relationship with the crown. The Nation Chief supported us in going against that accord. We are still here today. If we listen to Stephen Kakfwi about developing self government. Not all regions want to go land claims. We want to settle our long grievance with the government though our treaty entitlement. Our region, in our communities, we are going through healing. There is a lot of hurt from alcohol and drugs. There are some leaders taking the initiative to do something about that, and that is good to see. If you look around the table, you see a lot of healing which has taken place. A lot of sober people. If things go right, but the year 2000 we will have a lot of our younger people taking position that these people around the table take. The National Office, the Dene Nation as a organization has to continue to carry on and support the work the communities are doing. So I just wanted to say those words. Our communities are waiting and anticipating what will be coming out of this meeting. As a Chief, as Freddy Doctor said, I want to remind myself, I want to leave with a positive and good feeling. When I get back to my community, I want to talk to them and tell them we feel good about what we decided, no matter what the conflicts are, we have the same

intentions. Thank you.

Ethel Blondin-Andrew: I have to apologize that I am here on the last day. My children are going back to school in the south and I have to leave them this morning. I hear it has been a difficult time. I have been listening to people and to the radio. I know it has been a sad time. But we must not despair. We knew we had to go through what the Dene Nation went through. It has been difficult for all of us to decide what choices I have to make. We have to believe the sun will rise and the river will flow. We cannot make ourselves better than any one else. That is what respect is about. Every Dene in the MacKenzie Valley has equal rights. That is what makes it so difficult. It is not the end of the world. The difficult thing now is to be positive. There is a future to be won for our children and grandchildren. There are many challenges before us and lets not get stuck on the bad feelings. Lets be what we really are. The Dene have always been good people. When you talk about the Dene Nation, and you cry out for an answer as to what has happened, you were a Nation before the white man came, you will always be a Dene Nation. It is not affected by numbers. t is human to have conflict. We understand we are all different. You don't demand respect and trust. You earn it.

It is human to have conflicts. What is really human is the struggle to find the answers. Over the last couple of days and years, we have gone from a comprehensive claim to regional claims.

Be positive, we have been here 25000 years. If our people could survive the conditions of our land, the 1990's should be easy for us.

There are people out there, in those other regions, who care for ;you, who love you, and who are hurting. They will want answers but it will take time. We do not need more conflict, we need time and we need to work together. There is tomorrow and there is a future. No matter where you live you are Dene and we are all friends. There are a lot of things that will put pressure on you, but be positive. It is humanly Dene to be positive.

Elizabeth Yakeleya: Thank you. I feel very down. How many times we been to assemblies. We used to feel happy then. I do not know what is going on. I feel down, but still, where are we going to

go. We will have some place to go. When this time of year comes, our elders were happy. Now that I am old. Soon you will all go home and what will happen. There is only one god and he is the boss. A lot of them said everything will be okay and I am happy. The future generation will be okay, they say and I am happy for that message. I hope you do a lot about the alcohol problems. When I grew up we did not know about alcohol. We listened to our elders. We knew they were right. Even if they were not our relatives, we listened and asked them to tell us stories. They told us about when they were young, in their teens. I am not the only one concerned about our young people. Listen to the news about tragedies happening to our young people, on the water. It is sad. There are a lot of young people around. Make them aware and you will make me happy. I would like to be the one who closes the meeting with a prayer.

Arvin Laundry: In the short time I have been involved, I have been impressed with Bill as a Leader and I hope ;you accept the one year term. As Herb said, he stands strong and true.

Charlie Kochon: Billy is our National Chief. I wonder how you feel. We all got Dad's. Mine passed away last year. My bother's son is my Chief. I was chief for one year and I had lots of harsh words. Billy too went though harsh words but he survived it. When you pick on someone lots something happens. But the earth is always alive. If you think of lying. Jesus knows it first.

Bill has one more year. God is powerful. For God 1000 years is like one day. I went through hard times because of alcohol. I don't know how many years ago I stopped drinking. I heard on the radio they are making a highway to Laird. When that happens we will not be happy. Maybe Dene Nation will help us. 100%, Dene Nation. I was supposed to leave today, but how can I when Dene Nation is still meeting. My job is important, but Dene Nation is too. Tomorrow I will be leaving by boat. My people, I do not know where we are leaving.

Not all of us are saying yes to the regional claim. Some people in Colville Lake don't want it. I don't think they are being honest. If it gets ratified, there will be roads, and other people among us. We will have problems, our young people will drink, people will go south. My bother was here in Fort Norman, and he disappeared. No body knows what happened to him, even to this day. That was because of drugs.

We do not know what will happen to us but God will be with us. Billy I would like to thank you. Colville Lake is behind you. I would be thankful if you would stay on.

George: question re motion of National Chief position. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Bill Erasmus: I would like to thank all those people who spoke in terms of me working for another year in this position. We worked hard over the past few years on a lot of issues. The people in the room here really want to keep their land. We have an opportunity many other people in the world do not have. Our nation will be here for a long time. I made a decision a few months back not to continue this term because I felt in a position like this, if people don't want you there you should not be there. It was always in my mind it is not a position of authority I should be fighting over. It is something that is up to the people. I wanted to get all our communities to work together and in order to do that I was hoping changes would be made, a new beginning would take place and they would chose a new person to work on that. I talked to my family and we accepted that. Last week I was going to clean out my desk, and I don't exactly know why I did not. The other thing is I committed myself to work for my band back home. I see now that a vote took place and my chief had his hand up. The support is there and that is what is needed. If we are going to carry on we have to support each other. It is going to get harder. If we thought the last few years were hard. Government are going to doubt whether they should deal with us. We are in their way. Funding will be tough. They want to take over our lands. If we let them, they will. Unless we take care of our land, they will take it over. We are the only ones who can prevent that.

This organization was started by the Chiefs over 20 years ago. If you want me to continue in the position, I will do that. It has been a number of years I have spent in this position, but it has gone by very quickly. Some of the elders I talked with when I first started this job, they are no longer with us. But they told me never be afraid to speak. I am glad we are being sincere around the table, and I will work for another year. Thank;you.

George K: Next motion re Dene Nation opposition to Bill C 103.

Motion moved by Vice Chief Gerald Antoine and seconded by Chief Darrell Beaulieu. One abstention. Motion carried.

Motion re DIAND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH DENE FIRST NATIONS.

Motion moved by Chief Tim Lennie and seconded by Chief Dennis Deneron. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion re 1994 Dene National Assembly.

Motion moved by Chief Herb Norwegian and seconded by Chief Richard Kochon. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion re Treaty Day Dene First Nations Communities

Motion moved by Chief Pat Martel and seconded by Chief Dennis Deneron. Motion passed unanimously.

We have presentation to make to the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from the delegation of the Assembly.

Bill Erasmus: We will like to give this gift as our contribution toward your expenses.

...KEEP THE CIRCLE STRONG.

Chief Pat Martel: We would like to give thanks by feeding the fire and sharing a meal with everyone before our departure form this Assembly.

Felix Lockhart: On behalf of Treaty 8 I would like to thank our Creator and for those people that shared their prayers and to the people of Fort Norman. Other people from our region could not be here because of lack of funding but we will go home and share what we have learned. We thank all the people that made the Meeting possible in spite of what transpired.

George K: Travel announcements.

Margaret Donovan: I would like to thank you for allowing me to be your co-Chair. This has given me an opportunity to hear your philosophies. It was difficult sometimes for me to sit here and remain unbiased. I heard what the Elders had to say. I have worked for my people all my life. I would like to encourage all the young people to get their education and work for your people. Help those who cannot help themselves. I will be returning to my

region and helping them implement the agreement. I may not always agree with them but my people need me. I was appointed vice chief and December and worked with the other vice chiefs. I wish you all the best. I encourage you to be a dream catchers and not dream chasers.

Chief Lennie: As I said the first day, I did not feel very good. But we always feel good when we leave. We have had a lot of differences since 1990 but we must leave that behind. On behalf of Pehdzeh Ki I would like to thank George, Margaret and Elizabeth Yakeleya, the translators, the technicians, the staff of the Dene Nation, the media, to Bill who we thank for working on our behalf. Also the Elders and their words of wisdom which made me feel good today. I grew up with Paul Andrew and other from Fort Franklin. I was brought up by Fred Andrew and I wish the best to my people from this region. For those that have gone on from this life I hang onto their words. I would also like to thank Steve Kakfwi for his work and all the others who have contributed. I thank the people of Tulit'a for allowing us to have our Assembly here even though we have our differences. This land will not move. I would like to thank Chief Fred Doctor and his Council and all the volunteers for making this meeting possible and a success. I feel good about today. I would like to express my support to the other regions who have chosen to go with regional claims. I wish them the best in the future for the children.

I would like to suggest that we all stand in support of the other regions.

Bill Erasmus: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Chief Fred Doctor will make some closing remarks after I speak.

It has been difficult. We are facing realities. I have worked well with Fred Doctor. I thank you for all this organization. I also thank Agnes Naedzo. The Security and the RCMP. Other people who worked in the community, the helpers, the labourers. People from the community, the volunteers, those who invited us into their homes. Our translators, with their gift of language, we can communicate, the young and old. Our staff who call me the work horse. I am close to them and I try to give the some recognition. A lot they take criticism when I do. Without them, a lot of our words are not effective, and our meetings cannot take place. Thank you to our chiefs, elders and delegates. They have a lot of patience. Our Vice-Chiefs, thank you. You are busy a lot of times

in your regions, but you are always there for us. Other people who have came, Sam Gargan, Richard Nerysoo, James Antoine, Stephen Kakfwi, and other government people who came among us, thank you. Also to Ethel Blondin who seems to be always on the road and working as hard as she can. Our Chairs George and Margaret. It is hard work and this was a difficult meeting. The other people who we may forget, thank you. The media, as they sit with us I hope it helps them understand us. I ask that they continue coming to our meetings. Sometimes you cannot stay, but it is because some of our issues are very sensitive.

The next meeting will be in Lutsel K'e. we have to help them, raise money among ourselves so we can get there. I hope things work out all year for us. I ask that the creator take care of us.

George K: Congratulate the Assembly. The eyes of the world were on you. You conducted yourselves very well. A lot of vultures out there ready to pick the bones of the Dene Nation, but you disappointed them. Issues you have to deal with, Dene Nation is a growing organization. Myself, I have been following, I have been involved. I was in Good Hope in 1974. I have been to just about every meeting since there. I have seen the development. It has been a long hard trail, and there is one ahead of you. You have built yourselves into some very good leaders, and with you, there are a lot of good times ahead for the Dene Nation. This is very clear and I want to congratulate you. It has been a pleasure to be part of this with you as Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity.

Motion to adjourn. Chief Dennis Deneron moved. Chief Pat Martel seconded. Question. Motion carried unanimously. 9:20 p.m., August 26, 1993, the 23 Dene National Assembly is adjourned.

Chief Bill Erasmus: closing ceremonies: Chief Fred Doctor. Elizabeth Yakeleya will give us the closing prayer.

Chief Fred Doctor: Thank everyone who attended. It has been a pleasure to have you here in my community this past week. We have all enjoyed each others relationship, people have enjoyed themselves in evening activities, and most of all sharing with each other, as Dene always do. For awhile this afternoon I said I was hurt. After saying what I wanted, I went home. I felt bad but after hearing closing remarks, I felt better. I thank Chief Tim Lennie for doing what he did. I think this type of feeling we have

to share for the direction we are taking, and the direction the people sitting here have taken, I support you 100% and congratulate you. You just proven that the Dene Nation will not die.

Bill, your people are 100% behind you. We all know before this Assembly, we knew it would be difficult, but we had to make a decision about the direction for our people. We have to respect the directions we are taken. We have to respect one another so that things work out for our people. The future of our people, our young people, for a better life. We can't go on and on as we are today. Myself, I am glad of the direction I am taking, and with the support of the whole Sahtu region, if we stick together it will work. If not, it will be tough for us, just as it would be for you if you did not support one another. I wish you the very best towards your direction. Some of my own band members (mountain people) are still with the Dene Nation and I respect that. These people have been with the Dene Nation since it began.

I want to thank the Sekani Tribal Council for coming from Prince George, BC, to come all this way, and to meet the people. They have enjoyed the hospitality of the people here, they told me, and the way we live.

We have to remember that we can never close the doors on one another. For the direction we are going, if things do not work out, I know you will have the door open for us. And we will have our doors open to you. It is one thing to remember, we don't shut doors one another. We will meet each other in our travels. Thank you to the Chiefs, the delegates, for coming here. Everyone.

On behalf of the Sahtu region, and my community, I thank you for being here. It has been hard but everyone is going home with good feelings. Have a safe trip home. Hope all of our futures are brighter. Mussi.

Reminder. There is a fire ceremony at the Deh Cho camp afterwards.

Elizabeth Yakeleya. Thank you. Please remember what I told you yesterday. What is bad, throw it away. Keep your elders word. If you want to drink, take out your elders words instead, to remind you. I will pray for you like I did yesterday.

THESE ARE ONLY SUMMARIES

THEY ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED FROM

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 26, 1993

August 26, 1993 Morning Session

Meeting started at 10:30

George K: Welcome to Commissioner Dan Norris.

Commissioner Norris: Thank you. t is always a privilege and a pleasure to have the opportunity to address so many great Dene leaders thought the Northwest Territories. With the issues facing people today, I believe it is very important to communicate in the manner. This year I have noted with interest the settlement of the Gwich'in Land Claim, the near settlement of the Sahtu claim, and the beginning of talks of the Dogrib claim. Theses talks clearly demonstrate how the Dene hare addressing issues in their regions. While some regions have moved away from the Dene Nation, I believe they have done so only after careful consideration. Since its early years, Dene Nation has provided a clear voice for it people and an opportunity for the Dene to participation in all issues of the NWT, and this is demonstrated by the involvement in the government and the economy now. It has enabled them to promote their cultural heritage. The inheritors of the Dene Nation have taken the Nation's work achieved a land claims settlement.

I am pleased to hear that the meeting resolved in all regions agreeing to cooperate in matters of mutual concern. I know all of you will continue to provide excellent guidance and leadership to your people. It is with regret that I hear Chief Erasmus may step down. I am sure his skill and wisdom will be missed. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons I am here today is to recognize Chief Erasmus's efforts and achievements int he past. In 1992, the GNWT decided that in celebration of Canada's 125 birthday, a number of outstanding Canadians needed to be recognized. A number of us were given the opportunity to recommend persons we believe deserve recognize. Among those recommended included Bill Erasmus.

In presenting this Government General's medallion. I consider it a great honour to present this to Chief Erasmus for the work he has done for the Dene people.

STANDING OVATION
This standing ovation shows the respect for this man and the work he has done. To lose this leader at this time will be a sad thing. I recognize there are changes within the mandate of many Dene

areas, but I have confidence in the great leadership of the people here to have things work out. I know good things will come of it. There are great minds here, a lot of experience, and can only bring positive results. The Dene Nation has a very great future ahead of them.

Chief Bill Erasmus: Would like to accept his gift from the Commission. I have been involved over the years, and I am surprised to receive it. I have been a thorn in the side of Canada. But the commission represent the Queen, and I accept in that context.

George K: Chair recognized Lorne Tricoteux and DIAND staff.

Yesterday we heard from 16 elders, advice on how to move forward as a nation. It is difficult to summarize in a few short words, but we must go ahead with the agenda and I will try to summarize.

The main thing. There were a lot of strong words, but they had a common theme. That spoke about the land that the Dene people live on. The elders told us that the land is most important. They recalled the words of our grandfathers who signed this international agreement who wanted access to Denendeh for various reasons. They talked about how our ancestors were very smart people and had a long vision for how our people should be protected in the future. The realize from information which was coming into the country that Treaties were how government established relations with native people and gained access to native land. They felt it very important to set up a good treaty and have some very strong agreements that would stand into future generations. Now the words of our ancestors are very strong words and were repeated yesterday.

As long as the river flows, the sun rises and the grass grows, nothing will change for the people of Denendeh, you are in charge of your own affairs, and none of these things will be broken.

The people who lived at that time, this was very strong words. This was promised by the treaty party and the bishop. They said this was true. The elders said hang on to that. The reason why these words are strong is because our elders knew what they were doing and set something up to last a long time, for the Dene in the future. If government wants to change that relationship, it is because those treaties are very strong and in favour of the Dene,

more strong than the government wants it to be. The elders told us yesterday, do not sell the land,keep it. We have no right to sell it. It belongs to our children and their children. What we were told yesterday is that original mandate of the Dene Nation, that started off as the Indian Brotherhood, is still the mandate. The mandate which started the organization, what the organization works for. We got some very clear advice. We were told we were heading in the right direction. We were told even though times may bet hard for us, government will give us a hard time, stick to your mandate and keep the same direction which our elders have established. It is the right way to go. The elders of today reinforces what the elders of 20 years ago said, and what the elders of 90 years ago, done for us.

As we go on with the agenda today, we have to carry out our business in the proper way. Decision must be clear. The annual assembly is the major guiding force of the nation over the coming year. IN terms of that agenda item yesterday, that is the direction that the agenda is left in. We got very clear direction. There was not conflict in the advice of the elders. Even thought there seems to be conflict amongst the younger regions of each region, there is not conflict amongst the elders of all the regions.

This can now turn into good decision. It is too early to see yet what these decisions will be. As far as this organization is concerned, we have clear direction that we should remember when we move into the next agenda items, Overview of Existing Constitution and By-Laws and Report from Dene Nation Review Committee.
The elders spoke yesterday. We now need to hear from the chiefs before we go on, or should be go directly to the next item.

Chief Pat Martel: There is a lot of work to do. Yesterday when our elders spoke to us, we heard them. It is not for nothing that they give us their words, and we are not going to argue with it. Form here on, us leaders should look at how we will work together an go on from here.

Sam Gargan: Suggest we deal with the constitution and membership. We have our lawyer with us and perhaps we can talk about the new organization and how the constitution is affected. Sam is right, the whole agenda is related to future direction.

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 26, 1993

George K: We will move on to Overview of existing constitution and by-laws. Welcome Dick Spaulding to the table.

Dick Spaulding: There is a lot of detail that can be asked about the motion which was passed. Perhaps I will give a general explanation and have people ask question after.

The main question is what business can be done at this meeting. That is the main first question. It helps to think of the business the Dene Nation as three kinds:
Political: business with government and advocacy rights.
Administrative: Staffing, contracts, work to maintain an office
Constitutional Business: To made and change its own constitution.

It is the last that I think people are most concerned about when you ask what can be done.

Constitution Sets out procedures how you work and until that changes you are bound to do it this way. Certain communities withdrawing is not ending the organization, but it places procedural limits on what business you can do constitutionally and how you do that business.

At this point I will talk about one limit. The procedure in the constitution for change is the Assembly is responsible. In order for the assembly to do business it requires a quorum, 2/3 of the total delegates to the Dene Nation Assembly. It is my understanding that a quorum is not here.

That is the main procedural limit this morning if you want to deal with the constitution.

There are three options to consider.

One is to conduct the meeting from here on an informal basis,

without making legally binding decision. There is a lot of good will here and it could lay the groundwork for future decisions.

Another is to try to gather a quorum so a change could be made at this meeting.

Another is to put in place the beginnings of a new organization.

The second option would involve seeking the cooperation of enough delegates from those regions who have withdraw, strictly for the purpose of changing the constitution.

If those regions were asked to cooperate, there would be no need for them to participate in discussion on the new organization, but merely to vote. There is a technical problem, in that notice is ordinarily required.

The third option, to start a new constitution, you would not be bound by the size of the meeting or a quorum. You are the leaders of the communities you represent and have ability to set mandate. There are a lot of questions about a changed or a new organization. I have seen some documents drafted by the constitutional review committee, but I will not address that now. Questions?

I have been informed by Bill that notice has been given regarding constitutional changes.

Chief Gerry Antoine: Would like you to mention those three options again.

Dick Spaulding:
Conduct meeting informally and not make binding decisions.
Get a quorum and change constitution.
Start a new organization.

Chief Gerry Antoine: In regards to option # 2, due notice has been given, and in light of the motion of the first day to formally withdraw, the motion has been passed which means the change has occurred. Does not Article 11 of the constitution define that decision.

Dick Spaulding: The constitution does not provide for how to withdraw membership. I do not think a motion like that can make a constitutional change.

Sam Gargan: Curious if the necessary changes to the existing constitution have been drafted, and if the numbers for a minimum quorum are established.

Dick Spaulding: A draft has not been prepared,but could be

quickly, about an hour. For clarification, the question is about the simple changes required to give this group a quorum. As far as the number are required for that change, I gather from the staff that the quorum is 140 delegates. The delegates present representing the continuing communities number 81. So you would require proxies or people totalling 59.

George K: We started the Assembly with a set number of delegates. We need 2/3 of those delegates to have a vote.

Dick: The chiefs of the assembly are the interpreters of the constitution. My own ruling is that 2/3 of the total delegates available are required. If you interpret it differently, it is up to the chiefs to do that. You are within your authority to interpret the constitution, limited to things not stated expressly in the constitution.

George K: Reads constitution clause re quorum. "Personally Present" needs interpretation. Whatever is decided there, that is what you need 2/3 of.

Gerry Antoine: We got together as regions and we went on to proceed with the meeting. Since then three regions formally pulled out by way of the Motion. After some discussion it was decided that the three regions would withdraw. This means to me that business must go on without the three regions. They chose to go their own way. I have enough common sense to realize the line that has been drawn. It was the wish of the people yesterday that they would like to continue with business. The rules as set are of a technical nature. I realize the question of a quorum stands but the people have decided to continue which constitutes a quorum. And this is my understanding of the whole picture.

George K; I will ask the question directly to our designated person. The delegate list started at 210 which meant we needed 140 for a quorum. We now have 120 which would mean we need 80 people for a quorum. What we have is that we have 89 delegates with the remaining communities at the Meeting. So to have a quorum we need 59 delegates at the Meeting. Can the delegate list change during this Assembly? Can the delegate list shrink during the Meeting?

Dick Spaulding: In order to make any changes, there needs to be a change to the Constitution which would need for a Notice to be

given. ...

George K: Changed delegate list is the question. We need to be legally safe? We have a Constitution and Bylaws that govern us and we cannot be questioned on any decisions made. When the regions left they said if they ever need us they would provide help. If they are sincere they should assist in changing the Constitution.

Wilbert Antoine: I would like a legal opinion on the closing of the Assembly and reopen with a smaller group?

Dick Spaulding: We still have to deal with the Constitution and Bylaws that govern this Meeting. The Chiefs are the interpreters of the Constitution according to their intent.

Bill Erasmus: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on Gerry Antoine's comment. It is clear that the original numbers are not with us, but because the regions left, the remaining people will then proceed....the people that left do not want to disrupt what goes on with the organization and we should feel comfortable with the decisions made.

George K: I would like to welcome MLA Sahtu Steve Kakfwi and his family.

Felix Lockhart: We understand that there was a formal withdrawal. The concentration we are having is on present membership, not on those who pulled out. If that concentration cannot be solved here by our own interpretation. We should come to a conclusion soon to carry out the business here.

If we need to seek a quorum by getting cooperation from the other regions, they are here. Perhaps we can seek their cooperation so we can get on with it. I feel uncomfortable because we have to establish amongst ourselves to say we agree that we have the number required for a quorum, amongst ourselves. We have a motion, as of August 24. We are a new body of people comprised of two regions. The numbers are reduced to a certain number.

George K: Chiefs and Executive can interpret the constitution however they want.

George K: There is a quorum of the leadership still here, in which

case the chiefs can interpret the motion.

John Catholique: We did not come here to change the Constitution. We came to see what will happen to the Dene Nation but it did not die. We continue to be here and need to work toward a new direction. To have Constitutional change we need consensus from our communities. The three regions chose their path and others have chosen to remain with the Dene Nation. There are changes taken place at this present time. If we start talking about numbers then we will run into problems. Numbers are needed to change the Constitution but we are not in the position to do this at this time. We came here to do a job that was tough and a hard decision was made. Our Elders have given clear direction and they have reaffirmed that we are on the right road. Only the people in the communities need to tell us whether there needs to be changes. The Dene Nation is still alive and breathing. We can still do good things for our people. Before we get too carried away about numbers we should work with the people who continue to be at this table.

George K: We have been dealing with interpretation of the quorum issue and what we are hearing from around the table is that we have a quorum. We have been advised by the Sahtu that their walking away from the table should not disrupt the Meeting and any decisions made will not be challenged. We may need to have a Motion to declare a quorum to conduct its business. This would be a Leadership statement and you have this right according to the Constitution.

Bill Erasmus: If we have consensus on this issue then we do not need to have a Motion if there is no question on it.

George K: As your Chairman, I will recommend that a Motion will be stronger and I recognize that you have a quorum.

Wilbert Antoine: We are at a point where we need to present a united front to all.

Motion moved by Wilbert Antoine and seconded by Chief Darrell Beaulieu. Question called. Motion carried unanimously.

George K: Now we can move on. We had our overview on the existing Constitution and Bylaws and the Motion that was passed by the other

regions would need to be reflected in the changes. I would like the Constitutional Review Committee to come forward to make their presentation. Some of the Sahtu delegation would like to make a presentation to the Assembly.

George Cleary: As we will be leaving we will like to wish good luck to the Dene Nation. Our intent was never to kill the Dene Nation. We are looking a forum that would best meet our needs. We are looking at another organization that will meet our individual regional needs. We are looking at forming a Treaty 11 Confederacy which will have a mandate from the Bands and will have an alliance with the Dene Nation on common issues. ...The Confederacy will be made up of Bands if they so choose to be with us and if they choose to be with the Dene Nation that will be their chose. I want to make it clear that our intent was not to kill the Dene Nation. The Confederacy will get its authority from its communities. The National Assembly has taken place in the Sahtu Region and we hope you have enjoyed your stay. The GNWT and Federal Government have given approval on the Sahtu Claim. The signing of the Comprehensive Claim will be in Fort Norman on September 7th, 1993.

Dolphus Tutcho: Thank you. The Chief of Deline Raymond Taniton. We will be returning home by boat. Although we disagree we continue to all be Dene people. We all belong to this land and live the same way. We give thanks for everything. If we protect what we have we will continue by being relatives. I would like to thank you and Chief Fred Doctor of Tulit'a and wish you the best in your travels. I wish you the best in you Meeting.

George Cleary: I would like to congratulate Bill Erasmus on receiving the plague by the Commissioner. I worked with him for two years and although we did not always agree we worked on issues of commonality. I wish you the best and God Bless You.

COFFEE BREAK AT 12:25 P.M. Meeting resumed at 12:45 p.m.

George K: Announcements: Found some hearing aid batteries. Also, those who came by boat, the water is rough and you should secure your boats.

Frank T'Seleie: News/North pegged this assembly as the last supper of the Dene Nation. If I could draw a parallel between the last

supper and this meeting, the last supper was a significant event of something which still goes on today. With that, I will switch to my language.

I was listening to the elders yesterday, and I am thankful. Now I would like to report on what has happened since January. There was representatives from all regions, seven of us. In June we reported back to some of the things we did work on, but it all depended on what would happen at this Assembly. The people worked hard so they all worked for their regions. They have to go by what their regions say. There were five of us and we still did not come up with one agreement, because we did not have time. Since June we talked about four different issues and now it is down to two. There were papers passed out on this. We were supposed to be first on the agenda but because of the changes in the agenda and the motion passed, it seems we worked in separate ways. But that does not matter. We are talking about starting two organizations. There were lots of disagreements. Now we have to look at making some changes to the constitution.

The main purpose of the committee to review the mandate and structure of the Dene Nation and bring recommendations to this assembly. With the change of event two days ago, the committee's report has been pre-empted. That does not necessarily change the picture on how the future of the Dene Nation should look. Also, I want to acknowledge the elders who spoke yesterday. They provided an excellent overview and outlined how far we should go, the parameters of how the organization should be in its future.

After the January meeting, once members were appointed, we established the committee independently to be carried on arms length from the Dene Nation. It was funded by the Dene Nation, GNWT, and DIAND. Time and commitments were made by the regions themselves to contribute to the exercise either in funding or resources in kind. For example, those who work on the committee were already on salary, this was considered contributions.

The involvement of committee members varied region by region. Members were myself, Eddie Erasmus, Margaret Donovan who replaced Robert Alexi, Darrell Beaulieu/Felix Lockhart, Rene LaMothe.

Since April, there were meetings in Yellowknife, Fort Simpson and Arctic Red River. We discovered early on that the work plan had to

change because of the wide differences amongst the regions. I think those differences were underlined in the June Leadership meeting, this Assembly, and in the committee itself. We could not reach a consensus. An effort was made in Ndilo this summer to receive further direction and we received none. So we proceeded from there with what we had and we found we had to review a lot of documents. There is still a need for an alliance between the regions. This has been discussed here, about issues of common concern. Some of the immediate issues we have identified is traditional values.

We also found that the regions are no longer communicating with each other, which is also contributing to the break up of the organization.

I would like to think that it is always the protocol of Dene to include the elders in our decision making, and we should revisit that. A new constitution need to meet the varying differences and status of the communities in the regions. I think the word of the committee used is an "evolutionary" constitution.

Those regions withdrawing must have an avenue for communities to come back in. We recognized those pursuing land settlement, and those pursing treaty land entitlement, we speak different languages, are at different stages of development. A lot of the work previously done by the Dene Nation is now being handled by the Regions.

In a new constitution, there should be more focus on coordination and communication. Also, external and international relations, Federal and Constitutional matters.

Those who have withdrawn are stating that they are willing to participate in the organization. The doors should be left open and it should be designed that way. The other area which should be though t out is the source of authority and how it should flow. The current constitution provides for individual and collective membership. We have passed out two alternative constitutions. One is community based with a focus on aboriginal or Dene government. It provides for the administration of a small secretarial. The other one is a confederacy model, a confederacy of independent regions who would come together on common issues. The new constitution should include the definition of jurisdictions, bands,

regions, national. Our exercise found ourselves looking at the secondary organization such s DDC and DCI. We still see a need for a continuation of those organizations. The mandate should be reviewed. DDC in particular should be advocacy and promotional, giving immediate benefits to communities.

DCI is a very important institution. It purpose to maintain and promote Dene Culture and to protect our languages. We see a continued role there and it should be supported.

Other questions which come to mind, which we have to ask ourselves. Should Dene Nation be a government or should it be a vehicle for coordination and communication, on issues of common concerns.

Chief Herb Norwegian: Thank you. Before we were all sitting together. Maybe if the other regions were here listening we could have done something. We cannot do anything now. The thing is we will just have to look at it and put it aside for now. If we are to all work together it would have been good. Now we are separate. I would like to thank those who worked on it. Let us now get on with the agenda. We should accept the work and table it.

We now need to take a look at the present organization. We have strong ties to the organization, and are committed to keeping the organization alive. We need to evaluate the direction we are going.

Richard Kochon: I want to say something good about the present situation of the Dene Nation. The motion was made and the regions who withdrew said they would continue to work with us. I said we need some money, we will still be meeting every now and again, and we will need funds for future meetings. We should find funds for these kind of meetings. Whenever you want to work on something important to you, you have to go forward. The federal government still gets money from our land. So, the government should help us with this. The Dene Nation has been with us for a long time. Billy has worked for us for a long time. He wants to resign now, that is his decision. I want to thank him for putting all his time for us trying to help us. A long time ago people use to help one another. We always thank people for helping us. Now, Billy has put so many years working for us and we should let him know how thankful we are. Some people work hard for their people, and Bill is like that. There were people like that in the past. Nowadays

everybody looks for money, can't do things without getting paid. For the Dene Nation, we still need the Dene Nation because they are the ones who organize these types of meetings, bringing the chiefs and delegates together. If we do away with the Dene Nation, we will have a lot of problems. So, I wish Dene Nation to continue the way they have been going. It is not just for now, we have to think of the future too. The Dene Nation, we need it to help us organize these types of gatherings, to get the Chiefs together to discuss the issues important to them.

George K: DIAND people who are here, they have the most to do with the money coming through the Dene National Office. This is an opportunity to bring these people forward and talk about the financial implications. Maybe we could do this after lunch. Chief Norwegian suggests the Review Committee's report be tabled. The staff are drafting a motion to that effect.

Chief Gerry Antoine: Agree with the motion of tabling this item. Also, would like to thank the Dene Nation review committee and their staff. They were instructed to work on the mandate provided during the January Chiefs meeting, and they have achieved this mandate. Mussi.

Frank T'Seleie: The members at time found it difficult to work in the environment we found ourselves in. At times, it felt like I was walking on a knife edge. To try and reach consensus. Even among the members, we were unable to agree to one model of the Dene Nation. The opinion of the members reflected the realities of the regions. You suggestion that we table the two draft constitutions, which can be used as a mechanism for the regions to come back together again. If so, then some form of resolution is required, plus that there needs to be follow-up to whatever is decided here. I see a need for some type of committee to follow up on what has happened here. It is up to the Assembly from here on forward.

One additional subject matter which requires leadership attention is the status of the DDC. There are changes happening so fast, where regions are expressing more say in what happens to the organization. Questions regarding the board representation, etc., there is need for the leadership to resolved those issues.

George K: We also agreed to set some time aside for DCI. Those regions who withdrew are formulating and want to meet with the Dene

Nation at some future time to deal with mutual business and how it will be handled. There is not much that can be decided here, but everyone should be put on notice that the structure and future of DDC has to be addressed. We will deal with DCI later today. Unless more information comes in from the other regions, we will deal with it this way. Those other regions are on the boards of these other two institutions.

Frank T'Seleie: One other thing on the hand outs. Appended to that is a financial report, preliminary. A final report will be available upon the conclusion of the committee's activities.

Felix Lockhart: On behalf of Treaty 8, I want to express appreciation and thank you to Darrell Beaulieu for representing us on this review committee, which really began in Bell Rock, continued on in Wrigley, and then the January Chief's meeting. The intention was to conduct the reorganization of the Dene Nation ourselves. The Declaration of Rights of 1975 is still in existence and we are in concurrence with the suggestion that we can hold another meeting.

If anything is dying, it is colonize. The Dene Nation has strengthened our positions and our communities. We view ourselves not as a dying nation but as a living nation, as our elders have pointed out to us yesterday. We carry on the words of our elders, our ancestors they are still among us in spirit. We in Treaty 8 are agreeable that we can give thanks to the review committee. This is part of the process to ensure we continue on as a nation.

George K: Reads Motion. Whereas Review Committee was given a mandate. Whereas an interim report was given to the June Leadership meeting and a final report to the 1993 National Assembly; Therefore be it resolved this assembly accept the report and table the findings in light of the Dene National assembly motion 93/94 003. Finally, the Assembly thanks and acknowledge s the work and dedication of the committee members. Moved by Chief Herb Norwegian. Seconded Chief Antoine Michel.

Chief Bill Erasmus: I also want to state clearly that when the review started, the committee members got together to keep the work apart from the National Office. Our books were open and we tried to assist them as much as possible. They had some very good discussions regarding what it means to be part of the Dene Nation.

I want to thank Frank and Margaret, and Darrell Beaulieu, who are now here, for the work they put into it.

Part of the final report it is common that upon completion of work like this, the National Office then gets all the records, etc,. Part of the funding the Dene Nation got to assist the committee was from the Royal Commission. We now have to report to them also.

Motion carried unanimously.

Frank T'Seleie: I want to thank the other members of the committee. We are not all here now, but we are still all part of the North and we all live the same way, off the land. We had a good time together, we cooperated with one another, working together and I feel good about that. Maybe we still have a few days to complete the work and then we will be finished. In the past, I worked for along time with the people. Whenever I do a service for the people I feel good about it. I want to thank everyone who urged me to take part. It has been an honour and privilege.

George K: Recognize Bob Overvold. Also, Stephen Kakfwi, who we recognized earlier, is here on behalf of the government leaders.

Stephen Kakfwi: Ourselves as Dene people. We have been together for 20 years or more. When we got established, to complete a lot of things in the communities, the people were not that well off. We wanted to help one another. That was how the Dene Nation started. We should be thankful. There are many elders among us. Many old and young people participated in our meetings when we first started. There was no band offices. Now all communities have band offices, and there are jobs for people, and people own some of the own business, and are wage earnings. We have come a long way. A lot was accomplishments for our people. For more than 20 years, we have achieved a lot. We got this far because we all want the best for our people. Some of us think we cannot work together because of land claims. The Gwich'in did not want all their land taken away, that is why they rushed into claims.

What has happened now, it is our own responsibility. That is the way the people want it. The Sahtu and Gwich'in and Dogrib, they want to go their own way. The Deh Cho and Treaty 8 region, they do not want to go the same route, their people do not want them to go

this way. They are their own boss. For me, everyone has a different mind and if they want to be independent, we should not make comments whether they are right or wrong, we should be thankful they are independent. For how many years now, we have been disagreeing and arguing and it seems this had to happen. It is good to work together. That is why Dene Nation was strong. Maybe in a few years everyone could be together again, for now let us be happy and have positive feelings.

Today we have a woman sitting for us in the parliament of Canada. There are a lot of us within the Territorial Legislative Assembly. We have a member on the Royal Commission. We have a lot of positive things going for us.

For many years, many elders were chiefs. Now we have young people in the leadership role. Sometimes we strongly disagree, but that this the way we think...we think I am the one who is right, the other is not right. Then we get into strong arguments. The outcome is that we cannot work together. Sometimes myself I get into disagreement with my own people and they give me harsh words. When there is an elder among us, we do not act that way. When we say we are going to work together, we should get rid of our negativeness. Everyone do not have the same thinking. A long time ago we said the same thing, the elders sat with us, and we came up with one word. Now our elders very seldom talk. Why? We are like their children. Since I was a young man I wanted people to work together. Many of us are like that. That is why I feel strong all the time. People form all communities and regions, we need to work together. Otherwise it is a lost cause. That is why now the Gwich'in and Sahtu went independent. If we start disagreeing, we will go our separate ways. This is what happened. I feel we will be back together again in the future. Now you hear on the radio the things that are said. If we leave our issue to one another, maybe there will be a good outcome. Today I am with Territorial Government and they sent me here.

In 1978, people stated that they wanted people to sit on the Legislative Assembly. That is why I represent the Sahtu region. I work good with some people, not with others. I am here because Dene Nation asked me to come. It is hard to try and work together, but we are all Dene people, so we are here to support people.

We cannot say we are not a big family. We really know one another

because we travel a lot. We cannot abandon one another. In our communities, when we disagree, we work the way we want to work, we go our own way until we are satisfied. The Territorial Government is here to help you. If there is one voice, we are thankful. It is hard to made decisions on disagreements. It would be good to have one voice. As long as it is one voice, we will accept. Go the way you think is best for you, if you come up with one voice, we will support you.

In future there will probably be no more funding, I am not the boss of funding. It is important to know where be are. Until things work itself out, if you need funds, or need support for anything, we are there to help. Territorial Government still got work to do. Nunavut are forming their own government. They will have their own territory. The Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Metis, the Dogrib, the white people.....we will make our own policies. It will make one constitution, how we work and live together, what kind of government we want, we can all work at it together. We will make a new government. As Dene people, who want self-government, it is important to us. We need it. We are working on that. In the future, maybe in the fall, we should start working on that. The regions, maybe we could come up with one voice on what kind of government we want. We should work on that. We have not done that yet. All we concentrate on is land claims, land and money. We will have control of our land, but we need a government for our people. How come we don't mention that. We should be working on this, if this is the way we want to go.

We have to get along with one another. The Gwich'in have had a lot of harsh words. This region also, my constituency, they have had harsh words. It is because of disagreements. We will never work together like this.

The most important issue is the one of government. The Dene Nation, there will be changes but how we do not know. There has been a lot of changes for quite a while now, we have not agreed on a lot of things. There will be changes made.

The logo of the Dene Nation is the Fort Norman symbol. We cannot make this disappear. Maybe in the fall we can come to some type of agreement on this. If we want to go our own way for a while, we should work on what we agree on. If you start talking about one another on the radio, we should stop that. If we disagree, we know

about it, we talk about it, and then we come up with some type of agreement. Already it has happened. No use to worry about it. In Dettah in 1990, there were disagreements. Some wanted to vote yes, some no. That is the time the Gwich'in walked out, and the Sahtu started going their separate way. From that time, we can't agree on what we want to work on together. We seem to work individually. If you want to work on something individually the Dene Nation will change. Start working on Self government.

There are lots of people who are not here. They listen to us by radio. Maybe our people back home are feeling sad because they do not know what will happen. There may be bad feelings in our communities. If we want to work for our people, first let us start working together and then maybe we will be able to come up with an agreement. I am here until 5 p.m. Thank you.

Announcements: Tables in school for elders.

Bill Erasmus: Dick Spaulding has to leave. On behalf of the Assembly, I want to thank him. Dick worked for us as an articling student about 10 years ago, and has been doing work for us ever since.

THESE ARE ONLY SUMMARIES

THEY ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED FROM

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 25, 1993

The meeting reconvened at 4:25 p.m.

George K: We are resuming with the agenda item Future Direction. We heard from five elders. The elders are still welcome to give their advice to the assembly. The Dene Cultural Institute have asked if they could make a proposal to the Assembly to change the agenda.

Joanne Barnaby: It is our plan to have evening meetings throughout the week so we could deal with DCI's annual general meeting. But because the meeting has gone so late and there is significant involvement of our elders in this meeting, we have been unable to do this. We hope that if this meeting adjourns early enough, we could have a DCI annual general meeting at 7 p.m. tonight. We hope all delegates from the National Assembly will attend. It is a very important meeting as we are looking at our mandate for the next five years. If this meeting adjourns at 5 or 5:30, we could start the DCI meeting at 7.

George K: DCI are asking us to break early today.

Chief Pat Martel: It is important to deal with this. DCI has plans for many activities and programs, including a new building. DCI should be given the opportunity to have their meeting. We could reconvene Dene nation meeting tomorrow and discuss what our elders have said to us here today.

Chief Tim Lennie: Do not like to go against my fellow man. We do not have clear direction on where we are going yet. Is this the Dene Nation? I don't know if we can get into any other discussions. I came here to talk about the organization and how it is to be set up. Three have walked out. I still have a concern of how we are going to finance the organization. Still have a concern on the cultural institution, Denendeh Development Corporation, what happens to that. Are those regions pulling out of those institutions also? Thinking about my children and grandchildren who are hopefully going to come. Pretty sad. I would like to go home with a good feeling. I say we shut her down, split up the costs of 20 years amongst the five regions, and go our separate ways. Three of our regions are going for a claim. They have that right and I wish them luck. But they are moving ahead. I would like for us to sit together and talk about these issues. I cannot sit here with just these regions and talk about these concerns.

There is a lot of restructuring to do within the tribal councils now. Some are into regional claims. Restructuring has to be done from the community up. I have to do this from my community. That is why I am confused. We are not one people. I say we give it a year's rest. Then the five tribal councils get together and talk. Lets make more of an effort and pay our own way. Lets give it a year's rest, close the books, maybe set up another non-political body where we can address common issues. One of the problems we have are health, education, and the body can do fund raising, such as we are doing now. That is what the cultural institution is doing. A lot of people are saying there is a lot of economic activity around their communities. I thought that is what we had the DDC for. I have not heard from them for a number of years. I see no cause to continue. Talk about the DCI? We all go sit at the table? Will other regions be here? Unless they come back, I go home.

George K: It is unfortunate that Chief Lennie was not here when we had about seven hours of discussions on the issues which he raised. A summary of that discussion, Deh Cho and Treaty 8 indicated that they wanted all regions to stay together. The people who do not want to extinguish their rights see a need to continue with the Dene Nation. The other three regions, because they are heading in a "regional" level of government and claims, that is the direction they want to take. They want to take care of their own self-government issues, land base, wildlife, education, health, etc., and they spoke to that yesterday and said they need a number of years to go in that direction. In some point, they may form an alliance with regions who have settled a claim. Common bond associated with claims, they are no longer dealing with aboriginal rights and title. At some time in the future, if there is a need to work together with the other regions, they will. The message here was the communities who are left will be the Dene Nation, those communities who want to hold onto treaty and aboriginal rights. Goals in that area are still to be reached, including the development of a new western territory and Dene government. Two new directions, the parting was fairly easy, it was expected. Many people said they expected it. Some elders spoke and said not to do it, however the regional leaderships were firm in their decision and carried it through. It was not a parting based on anger and we were told we could count on each other if ever need be. So that left this agenda item. Now that we have developed a new membership, how will that affect the direction of the Dene Nation.

Some institutions may have to be re-adjusted. Some regions may form their own corporations. That has to be dealt with. The economic issues will have to be dealt with separately, because situations are different. DCI, there is word that the Gwich'in will take care of their own cultural affairs. That may be the same for the Dogrib and Sahtu. Those issues have not been addressed yet. That is the nature of the talk. We are faced with it. What that leaves us with is to deal with this new membership form. It is smaller, it includes 17 communities rather than 29. Approximately 12 communities have left. But there are still 17 communities left which need to reorganize. The media was here. Everyone now knows that the Dene Nation has changed. It is no longer the same. It is those people who live in the souther part of the western arctic. That is still a large group of people. So the Dene Nation has changed and the direction has to be addressed. It is a smaller organization, and many of the same goals are there. That is a summary of where things ended last night. We have certain amount of items left on the agenda, one of them a review of the constitution. That may be redundant now, because the review committee were to made recommendations based on the participation of all five regions. Those regions who left wanted it dealt with in a different way, and as a result that motion was passed. Now, what kind of adjustment have to be made considering the smaller Dene Nation which exists. The issue is still important to many people. Do we require a smaller office? The Executive is a smaller group. The adjustment process has already begun due to the motion of yesterday. The Leadership is also smaller. All those issues have to be addressed and decided in some form before we leave Friday. DCI want to take some of the agenda time and probably talk about some of the same things. If we do not do that, we will probably meet tonight on Assembly business. Or, if DCI meets tonight, we can use the rest of this afternoon to hear from our elders.

Joanne Barnaby: We recognize time is short. The main issue we need to deal with is clarify and establish a mandate for the DCI, under the circumstances. With the membership of Dene Nation changing, we are aware that may become a trend. The Dogrib, Sahtu and Gwich'in representatives have not been directed to withdraw from the DDC. We wish to deal with the one resolution regarding the mandate. We will deal with our AGM elsewhere. Our draft five year plan has been out for some time. There has been discussions held on it. I am hoping that will not take too long. We have

representation from all five regions here for the DCI Board. Instead of breaking into an AGM, we are asking for about one half hour before the Assembly ends.

George K: If there are no objections, that is what we will do. Now we will call on Daniel Sonfrere to continue with the presentations by the elders.

Daniel Sonfrere: It seems that it is difficult here among us. When it first began, Dene Nation, the elders knew something would happen. Those middle age people know, they see what has happened here. A lot of elders are sitting here with us. What has happened here, if you make jokes, or do not deal with it, what is on paper. You have not been listening to your elders. What has been said in times past by our elders, they have always kept their word. Whatever has been put on paper, keep that in mind. In the future, if we go through this again, remember what the elders have said.

We do not like to talk about money. I do not like to speak harshly to you. Listen and hang on to what the elders are telling you, follow their good steps, so you will know what they are talking about when they speak. What happened during the first treaty, what they have told you. I said yesterday our Leadership must stand strong and straight. In Hay river, every two years we have an election. That is policy. That is white man's way. People have been nominated. How did we do it in times past. We should look at this. Where there are problems amongst the people, we would rationalize what has taken place. You are put in this position to help the people during hard time. When you set nets, you have to work hard. You set two nets, one for yourself, and another for someone in the community who need help. Same with trapping. You go and look at another's traps for them if they cannot do it, and you do not look for payment for it. If you do these things, you will learn from them. You will also learn from your people. You do not run to your leaders all the time. You learn, teach each other, and step into leaders roles when the time come. It is the white man's fault sometimes. Indian Affairs have made a strong policy. They made promises, about the sun, river, and grass. They have stumbled on their words. They want to take back treaty rights. When we talk about the land claim, it is like they dump the money in the middle of us, say do with it what you want. People did not know what to do, the leaders became the boss of the money, and that is when stings started to go wrong.

It seems the white man took over a long time ago, schools started, we don't have enough educated people, but maybe if more elders spoke up then things may have gone differently. They cut off our right to hunt because they say we are making the animals suffer. Maybe we could have hung on to our traps today. If a person is trapping or setting nets they have to learn how to survive. You have to learn before nightfall. You can not break someone else's door down. You do not depend upon the stores. Now everyone is running with everything. That is why we are having difficulties now. If we split now, it will be a bad time for us. Let us look at these examples for the next few years or so. Let's help ourselves as a nation. Even white people make mistakes. In the past, if we were going to spend that much money, maybe we should have consulted the elders more. When I made Hay River into a reserve, I did not do it for the money. The town was trying to take our land away, that is why we done it. Since they were saying we were within the boundary of the town, that is why we made it a reserve. I was making little money then. I survived by hunting and fishing. As elders from that community, before the white man was giving us ideas, we were helping each other. Even people from Alberta would come to Wrigley to help. This morning's discussion about money. I was not pleased. The white man knows what he is doing, why is he doing it? If we split up nothing will work, but if we stand together and help and love another, things will work out okay. Just because some of our elders have passed away, that does not mean the words are gone. How we will stand as a Dene Nation, how we hold our meetings, how we treat each other, let us deal with these things. It is difficult to come to quality decisions on some of these issues, just remember what the elders have said and follow our words. If we do not help each other, we will not get anywhere. We still have our land and wildlife which we can survive on. We still have homes. We do not know what the future holds now. Whatever we heard this morning from the elders, I hope you receive it and I hope to hear these words again. When we were younger men, we listened to elders, many good men, speak. Just because I speak to you now does not mean I know everything. Those of you who are leaders, chose those elders in your community who can help you. Do not be afraid, we can make it. I thank the elders who have spoken this morning. I thank them so you will not lose sight of what has been said.

George Blondin: I would like to make a comment about the restructure of the Dene Nation and this is what we come here for.

I did not understand clearly yesterday but what the Chairperson has said gave me a better understanding. It is sad to see only 12 communities...it is sad that we do not have a central office to work on issues on our behalf. Only time will tell us how things will work for us in the future given the outcome of the vote yesterday. The government system is not willing to work with a large group of aboriginal people and to ensure control they have effectively split our Nations. I cannot say how we can work together and to create a Constitution for a smaller group. We need to form a smaller Dene Nation that will work for us. We also need to have a cultural group that will work for us. We continue to be bombarded with modern technologies that threatens our traditions and our children are affected in a very powerful way. All Bands have an idea of how to retain our culture but the opposing force is very strong therefore we need to have an even stronger force. We need to protect our culture. The intent probably of the government is to make all our people adapt to their way of life. If in the future we work on our self-government and are strong, we may be able to save our culture. There will be a meeting of the Dene Culture Institute and welcome the Chiefs to participate in our discussions.

Elder Annie Catholique: I have never been here and this is my first visit here. People came here from all over and wish everyone the best. I came here with Antoine Michel and brother. I am glad I came with them. We had some problems at our home, my sister passed away and suffered for eight years and another sister was also not well. There are only two of us left today. I have seen a lot of things happen in the past and know some of the people here. We are talking about the government and the land. The government is not taking us in the right direction. The place where my father raised us, the caribou and moose help us to survive. Now the land is not so beautiful. My father used to hunt year round. Now the children set nets and the fish are not so good, we had the children set the nets again and we caught fish that could not be eaten because of contamination. We now have dams and the animals are no longer plentiful. The dam has really affected our way of life and at no time were we consulted. Even our graves are in the water. In Lutsel Ke, tourists come in and do not consult with the people which caused the loss of a life. There are certain areas that is forbidden for use and this is not adhered by the people from the outside. They have no respect for our lands and way of doing things. Two boys drowned because of the lack of

respect for the lands. The lack of respect for the lands has affected our way of life. Alcohol is another issue that affects our younger people. We have young people that should attend meetings so they can learn how things are done and they should be able to spend so much time watching television and sitting in bars. Nowadays the children are going their own way. This problem is all over the world. Alcohol seems to plague our children and the fault lays with the parents. Our children are more fluent in English than in our aboriginal languages. Women should wear dresses like the Virgin Mary, you may think this is funny but it is the way I feel. I would like to thank all for allowing to participate in your meeting. I have travelled a long ways to get here and I am thankful. This is all I have to say for now. Tomorrow comes I will say for things.

Elder Elizabeth Yakeleya: Yes, my Children I am quite old and would like to say a few things. In 1921 some us were there at the signing of the Treaty in the month of May. At the time, the Roman Catholic boat St. Anne brought me back to Tulita. In 1921, my father found some oil and at the time I was five and my father, Francis Blondin was 35 years old. My mother had a lot of children and it was difficult to raise us with no help from anyone. We were told that my mother passed away while I was in school in Fort Providence. I returned here and only had my aunt and uncle. My aunt was married to a non=native person. Things are very difficult particularly when you are an orphan. I go to my aunts and uncles knowing they were not my parents and lived with relatives for five years. My uncle told me they could not leave me here ...tents were been set up for the signing Treaty. If the sun and rivers went reversed everything will change. This is also true for the beaver pelts. It is hard for me because I don't where we are going to go. Years ago non-native people use to visit with people and there was not talk about money. If people do not see the burning arrows things will change but people continue to see it. We asked the Bishop what the five dollars was for and were told that the money was for people coming onto our lands. My relatives told me that is was for the oil found by my father. As things went along I got married in 1925 and the game warden came to town. My husband trapped 10 martens and beavers. I wonder what direction we are going. At the time of Treaty they talked of the same thing. I wonder how things are going to go with our young people. Our ancestors suffered and pleaded with us to maintain our way of life. Meetings have been called and people went. We were happy to see

each other and now this is not happening today. I would like to see each other as brother and sister. I go to Willow Lake and probably now they will call me a Willow Laker. Sometimes when there were plenty of muskrat, I used to get about 300 muskrat. I use to hunt with my husband and now he is gone and I survive on a pension. I hear talk about the land claim and what is going to happen. I found out when I was forty what alcohol was. If alcohol did not come to our lands, things may have gone differently for us today. I think about a lot of things and we only pray to one Creator. Every Friday, people go to Norman Wells. I think about my children and grandchildren. I also pray for my brothers and sisters around the North. When we grew up the children fill the church. We do not have the same thing today. I sat hear and listened and felt I had to say something. Thankyou.

George K; I hear Elizabeth will be 87 years old on September 22 and we on behalf of the Assembly a special birthday. There will be a old time dance at the Band Hall and hand games at the school gym. Mass will be held tonight.

Elder Joe Bonnetrouge: I am from Fort Providence. I have been told many stories by my elders in the past. Richard Lafferty is one of the elders who always talks about Treaty in 1921. Four days they had meeting. Within four days they could not get anywhere so they had to get the bishop to come with the treaty party. Treaty party, he figures, they told the Bishop to sign the paper. He gave one person $10. Then the Bishop, with the government, gave him $10 and told the chief if there is anything you need, ie groceries, we will give it to you. That is how they got us to sign people. The came down from Norman Wells in November. A year after, in March, they were coming back and again they stopped where we were living and stayed there. We asked them where is that paper we gave you. We still go it, he said, and he showed it to us. He said whatever you want, we will send it to you. After so many years, the government said they were going to send us something, and they never did, so they started talking about it.

When I heard the elders talk about this, I remember it. My dad just be a chief. My dad taught me how to survive in the bush. At 10 years old I was sent to a convent for four years. I was kicked out then because you could not live there after 14 years old. My dad came and go me. So I started going out on the land and trapline with my Dad for about 3-4 years. Then my Dad said you set

yourself up. I usually come back to community around Christmas. I used dog team.

I want my sons to be like me. I like to spend one week with them in the bush. But when Friday comes they want to go back to town. They like television maybe. I was not like that. That is why it is like the elders say, it is hard to teach them. They cannot sleep outside either. I was not brought up that way. Now, everything has changed. Now we talk about land. In the past we had meetings about people trying to take away our land. I may not know these people but I know what is going on because I listen to my elders. Don't give away your land, our elders say. How will you hunt? They were right. We cannot give away our land. Because we hunt off it, we use the sticks and the water. Everything we use comes from the land. I only like to eat Dene meal. My sons mostly like white man's food. They don't go into the bush as much as I did. That is probably my fault. I don't go with them very much.

Alcohol kills people. It is one of the reasons we have so many problems. I drank for 10 years. I quite about 12-14 years ago. I live good without it. Every day I am happy to see people. That is how we should meet people, with smiles. That is how the world looks good for you.

David Etchinelle: Everybody says if you take advice from your elders then you are always on the right path. I was an orphan and was not brought up by my parents. I was raised in the mountain. My mother comes from Fort Wrigley. We are all relatives, native people. God created us that way...man and woman. Until today, since 1921 everything that has been said the elders pass on from generation to generation. When you loose your elders there is always an empty spot in your life because they help us a lot, they are always there for us. I have five children. If I had to sign something and if I know that my children are going to benefit from it. If they are not going to benefit, I am not going to put my signature on it. That is what the discussion is about. All 26 communities were supposed to work together. Albert Wright, the first chief of Fort Norman. When his mother found out he signed the paper, she was upset with him. She did not know what it was about. He told her the government made a promise about as long as the river flows, the sun rises and the grass grows, they will keep their word. Maybe because they could not keep their promises, they started land claims with us. When they discussed treaty the first

time, they say there were main spokespersons, Fort Franklin, Fort Norman, and the mountain people. What those people said was some of the things happening now today. Now we are not together but with the help of our creator, I hope everything will work out for us. If all of us sitting here form one mind and join together towards our future. We are glad everyone came to our community. We know our elders are very worried. When things like that happen in your community or your region, it makes you sad. If things are working okay, it makes you feel good. I heard all the elders speak and I understood everything they said. All the native people up here, it is very hard to come up with the same mind. I am not saying I am better than everybody. I am just thinking what the elders said to us in the past. In lived in the bush. Everything was fresh. Now it is different. If you go back to the mountains, the places we used to hunt, the waters, it is all different. It makes you think and it is hard to take. But God is our creator and he put things on this earth for us. We have to try and stay together and work together. A long time ago, I used to travel up towards the mountains with a boat and I never used to worry about anything. Now they say the government owns this land, and this belongs to government, and so on. I am confused.

The prophet Ayha spoke he said in the future it is not the non-native people who will upset the people of the north, it is the native people themselves who will upset the people, and they will no longer be together. The land belongs to no body in particular because no one made it. It does not belong to anybody. To me there is nothing more important than the land. So, my people, I want to say thank you for coming to our community, even though I am upset about what happened. I hope everything will turn out for us. I heard all the elders who spoke before me. I am not a good speaker like some of the elders but I wanted to say a few words.

Catherine Michel: I heard so many elders talking. They talk so wise. But I am really hurt. I think of what my parents and grandparents said to me. I did not know this would happen. I came to this assembly happy. I think to myself. Where is our unity. Where has it gone. I thought we were brothers and sisters. Even though we live in our communities. When my people from my own community said they were going to split, I was so sad. When you become an elder, very little can hurt you. When you get older, you think about what your elders said to you. It is very hard for me to say what is on my mind and how I feel. My dad went to Fort

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Smith every year, as a young boy from Fort McPherson. He said all the way down the river, he would stop and go to people houses and we was treated like one of them. My parents said no matter who comes to your house, treat them better than yourself. Is it because the white people have been among us. That we don't care for one another any more. We are still human. We are native people.

It is really hard for me to talk about this splitting up. When I leave I will remember all this. Maybe it is not sad for others but for me it is. We don't live for ourselves. God is the one who leads us in everything we do. We are not our own boss. Maybe we think if we went to school, university, we don't need God. To God, we are just dust.

I thought we were always talking about staying together and unity. In the Bible, it talks about love. What are we doing now. If I knew what would have happened, I would not have came. They may know what they are doing. I don't know. They never told me before I came.

I think leaving one another is very sad. I pray that you will get along and some day, those who walked away and think they can do things without one another, will come back. If we need help we will call upon another. That is the way we were raised. All that was said yesterday really hurt me. Let us have love for one another, no matter what happened. You heard Robert say they would not leave with a bad mind.

We did not have money when we were growing up. We had land, and everything on it. So lets be friends, brothers and sisters.

Rosy Stewart: When we were leaving, I heard there was a charter coming in from Fort McPherson. We did not know this was going to happen. Since I have been on the Board of the Cultural Institute, they are doing good things.

These young people talk pretty strong and that is good. Like most meetings I went to, I heard parent and elders talking about the children and grand children. Why do we try to make young people to understand. We fight for them. and yet, they do these things. I felt pretty down yesterday, people from my town coming in and doing that. Robert is my nephew. He surprised me with his message he

gave to you people here.

We tried to go around and give the messages from our elders. There are not many left. I try and talk to those who are.

If you ever need information or want to get in touch, contact the elders. I am glad we have heard from the elders here at this meeting. We have heard a lot of good messages and heard a lot of good words here. I want to thank you.

Charlie Kochon: No one is boss of me. Only God. It is like I am left all alone. I came to participate in the Dene National Assembly. I did not come here to just be an observer. Like the lady who talked ahead of me. I know there are some from the Deh Cho who know me. My dad is Isadore Kochon. He passed away last spring. I would have to be crazy to let go of my dad's words. It seems now we are afraid of one another. Because we are afraid of one another we are not happy with one another. Treaty happened 70 years ago. Nothing happened. James Wahshee was talking about changing the constitution, and then he went out.

I was thinking what am I doing here. I could not stay quiet. You probably know my grandfather. The Dene Nation has been in existence since James Wahshee was president. They want to help our people.

Who made heaven and earth? The government? I believe in one God. The Deh Cho people, I heard Herbie talking on the radio. Who is lying to us. It seems a lot of people lost their religion. It is no use for me to stay quiet. I am still sitting here and if you think I am crazy, let me know. It is a difficult time we are going through now we are being separated from Dene Nation. I don't know what they think they are doing. Maybe Dene Nation can help us. Elders who have talked before us are right. We cannot ignore our elders words. I just feel alone. I may talk again tomorrow.

Elizabeth Blancho: Listening to the elders, I am happy. I thank them. It is the first time I heard so many talk. My husband passed away many years ago and that is why I do not travel with dogs now. When I married his Dad, Alexi was a young boy. I married him when I was 19. He was much older than me and he taught me a lot. I could not understand much of what he said. But now when I listen to the elders I understand them and I want to thank them.

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Paul Wright: Sitting here listening to elders. Our messages are the same. It is for our children. Whatever we talk about, we have heard it before. That is the way the elders speak. We talk about how we survived. That is the way we were taught to speak. That is how we were raised. As people, that is how we grow. I have been thinking, we have to think about one another, positive things for each other. If we are leaders of something, we have to hold each other together. Us leaders travel to different places and talk to each other. There are a lot of elders who spoke. I am thankful. They did not make up what they said. Their elders taught them. Those kind of messages are very important. We have to protect it and keep it and people will not suffer, our children will grow up right. That is the way things are.

Three different issues. How people work. I do no want to say anything against anyone. We have to talk about the land and what is happening to it. What is happening in the bush. Just recently, across the way, David spoke and I was thinking, when listen you pick up messages and keep it with you. There are many message on this land, things good and important. Those are the kind of stories and advice we need to tell each other. I was brought up on this land. Young people, elders, visitors, people are different when they come from different places. This land is here and we are keepers of the land. Also, treaty days. We are supposed to go in the right direction and that is why we have taken treaty. That is what it is for..harmony. Wildlife is now different.

When you talk to each other regarding the land, if you do not keep it and protect it, if it is disturbed, if you are upset about it, then you should take care of it. Treaty is for us to live among one another in peace. Now things are very different on our land. As young people, I will tell you stories. I am now 73.

This land is very beautiful. I was raised on the land. Around 1960 the water started to change. That is how quickly things changed. The rivers went down, wildlife changed, things are very different. When we go on the river in September, even though the boat is heavy, the boat would not touch to bottom. Now there is hardly any water. We have to look at these things. It is how we survive. If it is spoiled, what will happen. In the past our elders looked after it and it was like brand new. Now that these other people go out on our land and find gold, rocks, miners who blow up our land. Now when we travel, there is hardly any water,

it has gone down. We want to have a good life and we want our people to look after the land. We want to tell our young people to protect our land so nothing spoils. If the water is spoiled, there is no one in this world to make it clear again. The reason we are talking to you is we don't want our land to spoil. The wildlife will go with it too. Including us. We don't know what will happen in the future. When the treaty was signed, they told us this would not happen. Now they talk about our traps. How will we survive? A lot of people, trappers are asking what are we going to do. When we signed treaty they said this would not happen.

Just recently there are new illnesses. Everyone lives differently. There are many things to discuss. It is right in front of you. The children are not the same. I survived with animals of the land. Now we buy food from the store and it spoils in two days. Our traditional food does not spoil like this. Z

If we looked after our land the way it was before, with everyone working together, this would not have happened. People would not go so far into our land without our permission. The people who are looking after our land is not our people. The people who were brought up on the land and love the land, they know now to take care of it. Now others are taking care of our land. They do not know how to take care of our land. Our way of life has changed.

Here we are sitting among each other. We are asking you to look after it. I know that I have done it already. Now I am old. I am asking you. I am telling you. When I talk to you as an elder, I am telling you to hold it and keep it. It is not only one person telling you this. I want you to help one another. If you are talking to one another, do it in a nice quiet way, be good to each other. Those who are doing something, we should thank them.

Those people who are here, and talking about this, we should be listening to them. It is for our own survival.

When we talk to each other like this, it is important. We should not argue, it is too important. This land was given to us.

I am really thankful to be here listening to you. Young people, listen to your elders and you will not suffer so much.

When you are chief, you are there for your people. When someone

speaks to you, you should always thank them. If our leader is two-faced, you cannot talk to him or her. I am speaking to you. I have a lot of friends, the elders here. I am talking to the young people here. Thank you. Thank you for letting me speak.

Joe Martin: Of all the Elders, they spoke with words of wisdom. There can be no better words spoken. The new generation are the new leaders now. Long time ago, the regions had Elders with them. They were asked to have Elders travel with them. But some places this is not taking place. They only take others and not the Elders. Me and Joe Charlo from Dettah are the only ones who have been travelling with our group for some time. I understand the languages that are spoken. We as Dene people have to work together. If this had been the case in the past we could have gone a long ways. Things have changed. Some matters are being settled without the Elders. Even the young people can deal with things if they have the education and background. It is hard to do things sometimes even at meetings like this...Jesus was sold for money and this is how he died...for the leaders we have to thank the Lord. All the Elders and Leaders are here to work for us. When we come to meetings, we talk about things for our children but when it comes to money it seems to control us. We as Dene people need to take control. The Elders have talked about the Treaties and not here to talk about what the Elders have already said. David Sangris told me about the first signing of the Treaty also Pat Buggins' father, Frank Laviolette...they all told me the same thing. For the first two years of the Treaty 12 dollars was given out. In exchange for net, flour bacon and tobacco we were told that 7 dollars would be taken back. In 1949 things continued to be taken back and the only things left was the nets. To date we continue to receive less and less and we should continue to discuss the issue of compensation. Compensation is not been mentioned. We continue to be fooled by the government and we do not talk about it. As young Leaders you should talk about it. If we count all the peoples' 7 dollars, it may come to 3 million dollars in compensation that may come in handy in the future. We have to think our families and forefathers and the words given to us things may be good for us. The Bishop chose for the people to accept the Treaty and we continue to receive the 5 dollars. As long as the sun shines and the river flows and the grass grows we will have the word of the government. We have words of wisdom of the Elders and we have a lot to learn from it. Way back them there was no Indian Affairs only the Bishop...they chose the wording of the Treaty.

The river continues to flow to this day. I think alot about what was said to me in the past. Our young Leaders need to keep the wisdom of the Elders and have that to guide them in the future. The wisdom is the same as the word of the good Lord. We give thanks each day the Lord's creation. Since we are here in Fort Norman we did not bring food but food has been provided to us by the people and we are thankful for that. Our words of wisdom I hope will assist someone someday. I would like to thank the Leaders and for the things being discussed today. You are there to also to give direction. Everything said today is being recorded and may be of use to the future generation. All our Elders are dying and our eldest Elder is Alice Abel and she is 103 years old. All the communities are losing their Elders and we will then be left with the new generation. God willing, we may meet again at another Meeting.

George K: I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Elders this afternoon for their words of wisdom.

Arnold Hope: I would to speak about my heartfelt thoughts. It has been a very difficult few hours given what happened last night. This was spoken to by the Elders. It was hard for me to be here. I came and I suppose there is a reason for it. When Catherine Mitchell spoke, I realized that I was not the only one who felt the way I do. I appreciate what the Elders had to say especially when Catherine Mitchell spoke. I came by boat at the very last minute because I wanted to be amongst you people. It is obvious that I am sad but have alot of hope. My home town has alot of young people who will make good leaders in the future. I have no problem that I am sad today but what happened was yesterday because we have tomorrow. At lunchtime I met George Kursewski and told him he did a good job when there were hard decisions being made. He said to me that maybe it is a good thing it is happening because it is given us room to breath. Michael McLeod said that this also happened with the Metis Nation but they are all back again. I heard George Cleary on the radio and there was an element of hope. The doors are open to the Dene Nation. There is a time for sadness and happiness and the process will happen. I tried to enjoy myself at the dance but I couldn't. Listening to the Elders they keep referring to the land. I was raised by my grandmother who died when I was 21 and my grandfather at age of eight. The short time they were with me is that the land is very important. I use this land to be at peace and to be at peace with my Creator and my

fellow human beings. The fall is the most important time of the year for me. I love the land, river and hunting for moose. The land is beautiful and this is what the Elders are saying to us. A few years ago when the Gwich'in walked out I took my sadness to the bottle. I quit drinking two years ago and have enjoyed my life since that time. I come to the realization that the changes have come about because of my sobriety. And that I have to be at peace with my Creator, friends and myself. Robert Alexie quoted the serenity prayer and accepting things we cannot change. ...I wonder why people are so greedy and this is what it is all about. I cannot understand this. I can walk around Fort Simpson with nothing in my pocket....the government has succeeded in dividing us. Bill Erasmus has often said "it's alright",. He is right, life goes on and do this to the best of my ability. I hope to do as good a job as my grandmother. I needed to speak the same way the Elders did about their feelings. It is nice to see everyone again. I came here to rejuvenate myself and to be happy again. This has been a struggle for me for the last little while. I am a strong person and will overcome this feeling. I would like to say to Bill Erasmus that I as a small person of the Dene Nation would like to see him finish out his term and if he chooses not to then "it's alright".

Arvin Landry: I am youth delegate from Fort Providence. I would like to thank all the Elders for what they had to say. I went to school to work with my people and I now work with the youth. I have learned alot in school for the last 13 years but have gained more today from the words of the Elders.

THESE ARE ONLY SUMMARIES

THEY ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED FROM

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 25, 1993

Meeting called to Order at 10:30 a.m.

Opening prayer offered by Elder Zepp Cassaway.

George K: There are matters pertaining to the Meeting that need to be clarified. Given the outcome of yesterday's vote, we will need to determine what would constitute a quorum. We are of the understanding that delegates that abstained from the vote will continue to participate in the Meeting. Colville Lake Chief and delegates would like to continue participating. What are the feelings of the Assembly delegates? I would like to recognize former Chief of Fort Good Hope, Charlie Barnaby.

Chief Herb Norwegian: What happened yesterday, I would like to address the issue. The people that voted for the Motion opted to do so. We are open to those that want to participate. At the Dettah Assembly when the Gwich'in walked out of the meeting, they felt we were happy to see them go but this was not the case. Now with the people sitting here we have a lot of issues to discuss and should begin to work on such. Since the walkout of the Gwich'in, we in the Deh Cho and Treaty 8 continue to participate and for those people that voted to walkout that is their choice. What happened yesterday, was yesterday and today is a new day and we must continue to support each other. We now have only half the Chief present but we must continue to have good feelings and look forward and not backward. This is all I have to say.

George K: What the Chief has said is consistent with the Constitution. The Dene Nation is made of individual members of the communities and the registry is through the Band Membership and Declared Dene. There is no allowance for regional and Band Membership. The participation of individuals is their individual choice and this should not be a problem for the conduct of the Meeting. We will get a legal reading on this in the afternoon. We have an auditor who is available to make his presentation and will be leaving this afternoon. Following this we will continue with the Agenda. I would like to welcome Mike O'Dell.

Mike O'Dell: Thank you Mr. Chairman. The audited statement is on page 88. No changes in the advances to Dene Rights Claims, just changes to the interest. Under members equity, overexpended funds,

will be dealt with on page 90. The change from one year to the next is $2700, so very little change from one year to the next. This $2700 is represented by programs, as per page 90. Another difference is the $10,000 environmental trust fund which was set up. Page 91 show each of the programs. Basically, you operated on a break even basis. Page 92 is a picture of all the meetings, and this is then included on page 91 under the column called "Meetings". If you go to the "Over/Under" line on page 91, you will see the net balance of the 92/93 fiscal year. Schedule 1 was included to show the various meetings which took place, where and when, and how much they cost. There was a small surplus of $11,573 in meetings. Page 93 contain notes to the Financial Statements, which is also part of the picture. Note 1A. is important, it notes that your current liabilities exceed your current assets. All funds have been disbursed from the Dene/Metis trust fund, as shown on page 95, except for a small balance of $1574. That is a quick overview.

George K: Floor is now open for questions.

Chief Tim Lennie: Good Morning. We came by boat to the Fort Norman Region, people are happy we are here. I would like to share with you what I think. The way we talk about these things, the 27 communities, the communities of the Dene Nation, I do not know what happened yesterday, and I do not understand. It really disturbs me what took place yesterday. What happens from here I do not know what the future holds. We cannot discuss the issues of the money on paper. We have be talking issues for over 20 years. For the past three years only, we have been talking money. If that is the way you want to go, to have meetings like this, we will participate. We have talked about these issues for many years. I am just a young person, with two children. That is what I am talking about. I have to hold on to what I speak. Sometimes we have white people among us. Even though we say no they still work on our land. Unless we work with them. We have to work together to achieve anything. If we are going to work together, we have to have something there. Some people are different in the communities. Me I am a Dene and I want to work for my community. Herbie says we cannot shut doors to anyone. Anyone who wants to work along side of me, that is good. Let us work together. When I look at people who are in the world, even the animals and how we hunt, how we play handgames, and how we settle land claims. We have to settle all this. Only one thing is different, it is the

treaty. Ever since the treaty ...(scribe lost translations)....

Dene Nation means we work as one. How much money has been spent the past 20 years. Look at the Development Corporation and the Dene Cultural Institute. What will happen to that. The Dogrib and Sahtu and Gwich'in will sit with us there? All the people must have a say in this, people in the communities. It is their money we are spending. From here on, when I think about it, it will be very hard for us because we are not together. I like dances, like yesterday's drum dance, I was there and I felt good, but yesterday I felt kind of different. Maybe it is because of what has happened. But still, when you talk about the money, what will happen from here on, we have to help each other. We will do this today. Government do not give us as much money as they use to. If we are going to talk to each other, we better do it now or all leave.

I would like for the other regions, even though they left us yesterday, for them to discuss these statements with us, and to discuss the finances of the past 20 years.

Michael Canadian. The amount of the long term liability, severance pay, should this money be paid to the chiefs, I would like the opinion of the delegates.

Mike O'Dell: Page 89 on the Balance sheet. Termination Benefits $72,145.

George K: Is there a breakdown of how much is Chief and how much is employee's severance pay?

Mike O'Dell: Yes, there is a detailed breakdown at the Dene National Office.

Bill Erasmus: This figure of $72K includes benefits that would go to chiefs that we used to have on salary. Up until 1990 chiefs were on salary, until funds were stopped by government to negotiate claims. Chiefs who have resigned since then, I believe we have paid. There are some chiefs still in office. We do not have the list here showing how much belongs to staff and how much to chiefs. As you are aware, some staff have been there for some time. The Chief who we owe money, the arrangement is we were setting aside money in our books to account for it. It is my understanding that

of these chiefs who were on salary before 1990...if there are chiefs who are no longer part of the Dene Nation, we owe them money. If there are chiefs who are part of the Dene Nation but resign or whatever, we owe them money.

Chief Gerry Antoine: The Deh Cho Tribal council reviewed the audit and questioned the National Office. The major concern was the deficit of the prior year. Looking at the financial statements, there is almost a break even. Considering the various circumstances the Dene Nation as gone through, it is incredible that they have managed to break even. The deficit was our main concern. For the record, I wanted to share these things with the auditor and the national chief. The other thing, aside from the audit, I would like to see some sort of reserve funds put into our bookkeeping, because there is a serious problem with cash flow, and if we have a reserve fund, this may alleviate that particular situation.

Sam Gargan: Cost of Dene Rights Claims, principle and interest, is that being paid by regional claims and is it being subtracted? Also, it is possible that we should relocate to help with taxation.

Mike O'Dell: The exact amounts. The total amount is the build up from day one until now. The Gwich'in have settled and DIAND have said a portion will be paid back by them. It has not been taken off from here. One of the problems the Dene Nation is facing is the cut off point to determine how much costs were put in there. There were certain amounts issued around that date, and those amounts, it appears to me, should have be included in the 15%, but they did not do this. I have discussed this with Dene Nation that they should d be dealing the the Government of Canada to deal with this. When this gets clarified, once the three settle, the balance would be what is owed by the other two. We have to determine the "cut off" date. Yes, it is accruing interest.

Chief Bill Erasmus: Last year at the assembly this became an issue and a motion was passed on it. Refer to page 80 of the annual report, summary of motions. Reads motion re outstanding balance pay-back. The reason why the motion was passed is from the beginning, in the early 70's it was understood by our people that we would not pay this loan back. The government are taking millions of dollars from our land each year. The very least, the

government would pay for us to research and negotiate our claim. When the agreement was initialled in April 1990, it was also understood that this was a negotiating item. When the Gwich'in went to the table, and the Sahtu, they agreed to pay a portion. That is their choice. I do not know what the Dogrib want to do. If the Gwich'in are paying some of the, it should be reflected in our statements. It is not because the government have not confirmed it. We notified them about last year's motion. They sent us promissory notes to re-sign, but I would not sign them. That is where it stands now.

Sam Gargan: Liabilities from yesterday back, I understand it is a liability from each region.

George K: Liability cut off date is yesterday. It is a matter of how people look at it. the Government, because they advance money, it has to be paid back. The Dene Nation has never made a case of all the money the government has taken from the land, plus interest. For example, $500 million dollars was the figure in 1990 in the claim for compensation. I do not know if a case has been made that figure in 1990 dollars is reflected in today's dollars, or if we are still dealing with the same figure, which would be less in 1993 dollars. In terms of interpretation, it was the Federal government who initiated land claim negotiations, after the Paulette case, so they could acquire 82% of Denendeh and get clear title to this. The cost of getting clear title of the vast majority of Denendeh...who should bear those costs? It was always identified since the beginning that it should be the federal government because they were benefiting the most, through the power and riches they gained. What Bill told you is true. It is good that we do not forget these facts. We have to understand how the outstanding bill came about, because it is not fair according to the understanding from the beginning. Alaska was the first claim and the cost was forgiven by the USA, James Bay claim costs were forgiven, Inuvialiut claim was forgiven, and when it comes to the Dene/Metis claim, the government wants us to pay up.

Chief Gerry Antoine: I would like to suggest that following the words of the host chief, we should be positive. We should also be pro-active. This bill is being divided among the five regions. I suggest we should send the federal government a bill. If we know of all the things they have done on our land, on a business like approach, we should formulate a invoice. In the 1980's the Dene

Nation started a process to determine how much the government owed us, and I believe this work should be taken up again and brought up to date, plus interest.

Chief Tim Lennie: I want to be more direct. I would like to see a breakdown of what the governments say we owe. Then I would like to see what the communities owe. The communities signed treaties. I would like to show my community how much the government say we owe them for negotiating.

For example, page 96, Lease Obligations: How are we going to continue without the other regions. It is either we do it together or not at all. I do not know where the funds will come from. Denendeh Development Corporation, we have not hear from them. Our lease agreement is until 1996. We as a few communities or regions, are we willing to put money into this organization, to run it.

Tribal Councils: Made up of the Chiefs. How do we continue the Dene Nation. Are we going to talk about the future. Just to keep the organization together, I as a Chief, would like to use our own funds. Would like to ask the rest of the communities sitting at the table how we are going to run this organization.

Chief Felix Lockhart: Under the circumstance, with the remaining membership, and what people are saying about money which is owning to or from the Federal Government, I think that the motion which allowed us to be apart yesterday, I believe there is a lot of unsettled feelings today, and the cut off time for liabilities and debts of August 24th, there needs to be discussions with everyone involved. It is not clear cut. We should formulate a committee, with a view to our re-organization, to look at this more closely. Such a committee should be looking at the numbers and make heads and tail of where we are at. The audit looks okay, and we are ready to make a motion to accept it and get on with other business.

Chief Pat Martel: Issues concerning the time past, it has already happened and we cannot change the situation. We have to think of the future now. The way I hear things, I am not satisfied, it seems we are drifting aside. We cannot give up that easy. We have to think about those things. Money received time past, they talk about it on television. Our elders talk about the money. Sometimes we think of money only. The elders today, did they struggle for money? Now we are starting a new issue and we don't

know what will happen in one year or six months. The new system we are looking at, our relatives and elders are still sitting here with us. We cannot confuse them. We are looking at the future and take care of them. Money is not the issue. The younger generation who are well educated. There are many educated people among us now. We have tomorrow. Where we are headed is up to us. What happened has happened and we must go forward. We are not always satisfied with every situation, but we always have to make the best of what we have.

Chief Bill Erasmus: Support Chief Martel. We cannot lose sight of the bigger picture. Of course finances are important, but it is just one part. Last summer in Wrigley, it was when we first discussed in length our deficit. It was a result of the break down in claims and the government cutting off our money. We continued to have meetings and that is where most of our deficit was created. Core funds has also been cut back, every year since 1980. We are now getting the same amount of funds as we did in 1979. Again this year, we got another 10% cut back.

Last year, we said we would break even this year. We recognized that we had to maintain operations and stabilize the situation.

We were in the same position in the mid-1980's, in a worst deficit. By 1990, we had evened out our books and eliminated that deficit. That is the year the comprehensive claim was terminated and funds were cut. The cost of meetings is one of the major expenses. We have to start thinking of how we can continue to meet. Communities look at how to help raise money. For example, we have been taking several steps over the years to reduce spending.

At the AFN meeting last month, we were able to get a position for a vice-chief for Denendeh. AFN will cover the costs for this position, salary, office, etc. One idea is that the AFN vice-chief could also be the Denendeh National Chief. There are other ideas, such as Felix's suggestion for a committee.

We now only have two regional vice-chiefs, Felix Lockhart and Gerald Antoine, who are executive members of Dene Nation.

Since claims were cut and disputes amongst regions, it has been very difficult getting funds from DIAND. In 1991, Secretary of

State who provided funds to us for almost 20 years, transferred the money to DIAND to administer. Since then, we have had a very difficult time getting our CORE funds.

During the January meeting in Yellowknife, the Chiefs supported the Denendeh National Office getting CORE funds from the Territorial Government. Other organizations such as the Metis, the French and women's groups get CORE funds from them, but we have never been able to.

Chief Richard Kochon: I want to say something about the money we owe the government. I don't look at it as something we owe the government. I do not see it as a debt. Since the signing of the 1921 treaty, I thought the government was supposed to be helping us. They take more money from our land than what we owe them. If we did not sign the treaty with the government, maybe today we would have be rich people. We do not care about money. We care about our land and the wildlife. The government is not always fair with us. They keep away from us when we have our assemblies. They do not answer our questions. I do not trust them. They do a lot of things that is not honest. So when they say we owe them millions of dollars, I do not see it as a debt. If the white people did not come on to our land, we would not be worrying about the money, or about settling land claims. When they signed the treaty with the Dene it meant they were going to work with us. That is how I feel about the finances.

Chief Raymond Taniton: Look at the interest on the loan. Look at the National Assembly last year, the motion that Dene Nation will not pay the loan back...was there a quorum at last year's assembly?

The loan is for the land claim.

Mike O'Dell: The interest is $3,164,331 as of March 31, 1993. There is not deduction for the Gwich'in claim.

Chief Bill Erasmus: Last year the question of a quorum arose on the first day. The people present said that the Dene Nation's intention was not to develop a constitution which stopped the Dene Nation from conducting business. They said they came to this meeting, they would make decision, and if people questioned the legitimacy of these decisions, they could be brought to future assemblies. There was no intention to hide anything or leave

anyone out. Some communities did not go because of funding, but most did not go because they did not want to be there. So, the active members of Dene Nation made decisions. If this assembly decides, they can endorse last year's decisions.

George K: I believe Richard Kochon's understanding of the larger picture is accurate and it is not good to criticize other people's opinion.

15 MINUTE COFFEE BREAK.

Chief Antoine Michel: We have to talk about how to work together, how Dene Nation is to work, how to form a board to work together. We still have to keep the Dene Nation going and I still thing there are important things before us. That is why we come this far. It is good to say whatever is on our minds. Of this debt that we owe to the Government, we have to figure how to clear it up. How the money to the Chiefs. We have to form a board with vice-chiefs and think about how we can work together. Everything always comes together.

Chief Tim Lennie: We have discussed the financial statement of the Dene Nation. I would like to move that we accept this audit.

George K: Reads Motion. Seconded by Chief Darrell Beaulieu. Question. Vote. Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: FUTURE DIRECTION

J.C. Catholique: I notice that as Leaders sometimes we have to seek advice and I know every region brought with the Elders and this may be a good time to see what is on the minds of the Elders as we are going through a change. We as young people tend to forget why the organization was established. We still rely on our Treaty 8 and try to understand the intent of the Treaty. We therefore rely on the understanding of the Elders for direction for ourselves and the future generation. I am asking the delegation whether this is the proper way to go by hearing what the Elders have to say about the direction to take.

George K: We will now ask the Elders to address the Assembly about the future direction of the Dene Nation.

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Zepp Cassaway: I am not going to say very much but we have been here for two days and am happy to hear what has been said in the discussions. When the white man first came onto our lands there was money and this was called Treaty money. I don't understand much about the Treaty money but will tell you of my understanding. The Treaty was accepted before me but still recall what happened. I have been working for twelve years with the Head Chief and have worked as a Councillor. I come here to share my information and think about the children. All the information I have shared over the years have been recorded. Young people who are growing up now do not understand us and this is the fault of the white man. We must continue to keep our tradition and this is what was told to me by my mother and father. I do not know how to read and write but continue to share my knowledge as taught to me by my mother and father. There were wise words given when the money was given out. People were live quite happily when the white man came. The Treaty was given first in Fort Resolution....the white man came in pitched up their tents and flags. Whoever the Chief was back then told the people to come out and the white man tried to get the people to take the money. The Chief was not willing to accept the money because they did not know what the money was for. He knew the money was for the exchange of the land and they were not willing to accept the money. After three days they were still trying to convince the people to accept the money. From then on people started to leave but the white man still wanted to give out Treaty money. I still can recall what had taken place which was not the will of God. The priest wanted us to accept the Treaty money. The Bishop told us that if the money was accepted it was not for the exchange of the land. The money was suppose to be given out for the people to work together. Because we trusted that the Bishop was working for God, we were told to accept the money. Then the Chief told us that the white man would give us a promise that would last until there is a last person and the money was not for the exchange of the land. Then he rose and said that as long as the sun shines, the promise will hold true until there is a last person on earth. As long as the river flows, the promise will last and this is what we were told. I was young at the time but the words of my mother and father continue to stay with us. Do you see the rivers flow backwards and have you ever seen the sun go backward? I have never seen the river or sun go backwards. In 1910 after the acceptance of the Treaty, I am now telling you what was said to me by my mother and father. to date, my mother and father continue to be alive with me. What the creator has given us we must not

destroy if we do we will go against our mother and father. If we go against our mother and father, where will we go? ...everything is recorded in the Bible and all the words given us by the Creator we continue to live by. We have to think about the words given to us with our children in mind....we were given a book about the Treaty money and this Treaty as signed is important to us as Dene people. I have no money now but without the five dollars I really have no money and if I am sick all my needs will be looked after. ...if you accept money from the government and the money is gone what will become of us without our lands. You should think hard before any direction is taken. Don't ever try to lose anything and try working together. Forget what is past and look positively to the future. We must not bring harm onto one another. Don't ever be fooled by the government. I am old and will not always be here forever. Be good to you children and wish the best the people that will be travelling home on Friday. Good feelings will go a long ways when we get back home.

Morris Mendo: I have heard what was said by the people and Elders. We have to continue to respect the lands that we live on. This is the same way we protect our house. To do otherwise is to go against the word of our Creator. Any decision made should not go against the will of the Creator and if we do we will suffer. We must continue to seek and take the wisdom of the Elders to heart. If everyone did the right thing things will go right if not things will go wrong. We now tend to follow the knowledge of the young but we must continue to talk in the wisdom of the Elders. An Elder from B.C. said that the Creator put many medicines on our lands that we do not know about. I do not consider myself an Elder at 64 years old. We hear what the Elders have to say but are we really listening. The land does not change but people do. To be one is hard and we continue our struggle created by the white man. We cannot be perfect people....whatever is said to me by the Elders is very sacred and they are saying things to us is to protect us. Some people think that the Treaty is funny and want to continue land claims. We disagreed about the land claims and the Elders of Tulita were very upset. I feel that our lands was given away and this was not our right to give it away. We are in a very difficult situation and have thought about it a lot. We wanted to wait but this is not what has happened. If we fall apart as a Dene Nation we will go away from the intent of the Elders. Whatever the Elders have to say is very sacred. We will always continue as a people. Daniel Sonfrere has shared with me many things and is a very humble

person. Our Elders say things to us for our and children's future. On the news we see people suffering and the only the Creator knows what will happen to our lands. If there is no money, food or land then we have done something wrong. We have to work together but this is not the way it is going. Though things are difficult we have to go with whatever decision is made. We will have to continue to work together and would like to thank the Elders for the information they shared. If we live by what our Elders have to say we will have a good life.

Joe Charlo: I know even though we don't understand each other, we can communicate through the translators. I am grateful for that and for being here. It is something big to say thank you. Listening to my friend Zepp, even though he spoke his language, we understood. When he spoke about the treaty, he spoke the truth. When they had the meeting with the Treaty Party, when they had the disagreement, Susie Drygeese was there, and it is the truth what Zepp has said. Yes we need the sun to shine and the river flows. As long as this happens, the land will last.

Before he died (Susie Able), we still consider our elders alive because of the words they left with us...the sun rising and the river flowing. We have to care for our land. The government did not make this world. It was our creator. Since the white man arrived on our land, we seem to fight among ourselves. It is not our fault what we are doing here. Even though we have our differences, we should care for one another and we should face the fact that we were brought up on this one land as one people. We are not the foreigners. We have to work together. Don't let the government take the land away from us. We have to care for our land, we make our living on it, we eat from it. We have to care for our land with our mind and our hearts. We don't know how many children will be here i the future. Whenever we select small amounts of land for ourselves, that is what will be there for our children. We have many educated young people here.

It is like having two parents with us...the sun and the river.

Some people have left the Dene Nation. Still we have to care for one another and respect our leader. Regardless of who we are or where we are from, we have to care for each other. If I make a mistake, we will be there for me down the road. We have to respect what our leader is doing. Let us work together and be together in

the future. I have attended every meeting of Dene Nation. I have a lot of people on this land, I consider them my people. Despite the differences amongst the regions, let us consider each other as one people. To separate is like saying I do not respect you and I do not want to work with you. Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, we are still one people. We have to work together to be strong. Let us look at our future for our young ones. We don't know how many of us will be here in the future. When we talk about the millions of dollars, and when we talk about the deficit. We have a lot of minerals, oil, and a lot of money is taken from our land. The government takes millions from our land every year. The government should be giving us money for taking the resources from our land. The mines.

I have been in Ottawa. I know the government is making a lot of money from our land. The young chief we have here from Dettah, and the Chief of Dene Nation, is working for us. Susie Drygeese, even though he was not educated, he worked for us and he said the truth. We have to remember his words. I wanted to talk with you more, but is almost lunch time. I am not saying I am smarter than others here. I wish everyone a safe trip back. It is important that the elders work with the young people. Think of us as living under one roof. Thank you to the translator. Remember, what Zepp said is the truth.

Paul Wright: I had talked to you before at this meeting and you all probably heard me. When we talk it is good to listen to one another. Sometimes we have good ideas. I think the elders who have spoken here, and the elders who spoke yesterday, I would like to thank you, I like to listen to you. Ourselves, when we grew up we had a lot of elders and we listened to their words. Today, we still hold on to their words. I am not saying I know everything. But, they taught us how to live on the land, their wisdom. When people travelled on the land, they told us about it, how to respect people and the land we are on. So we listen to one another and that is the way we work together. When we make decisions, think about the future so everything will work out good. Give one another words of wisdom. Today, looking at everyone, I think about the past, our past leadership, our elders, and when I hear the elders talking they know there are changes. They want to work out these changes, but they want to stay together. We are all one people. We all live the same way and we want to continue being one people. When we are at a meeting, sometimes we wonder if we are right. This is why we are sitting at the table, to come out with

one word. We did not start this Dene Nation to split apart. We started it to be united people. We are talking about something important here. We are not here to disrupt the organization. We should learn how to share everything. When there is a speaker, we should listen good and work together. When the elders were talking, that is the way it is all over...that is the way it is the way the elders are talking now. They give good advice. Telling people to work together. Even as old as I am, I keep my elders words. It is wise to keep their words. We don't want to see the organization separate. We want it kept together. I have been to a lot of meetings.

I was at a meeting with elders and priests in Ottawa. The Bishop asked that we tell about our concerns in the North. I said I cannot. They asked why? Our Bishop said it appears our people will split. It saddens us but it seems it is what the people want. Another Bishop from another country. He said the white people never said anything about the Dene, that they were here first. e asked if this was true. I told him I worry about that because the Dene were here before the white people. It is important for people to know that.

Now we are talking about the treaty. I was told about all that happened when treaty was taken. Some of the young people went amongst the elders, travelled to different communities. They all said the same thing. During the time, there were a lot of elders who were worried. When they were going to sign it, they said we could not change it...as long as the river flows and the sun rises, that is what they were saying. If that changes, then we will change the treaty. As soon as the grass stops growing, we will talk about it again. That is what I was told. Why did they talk about the sun? We always see the sun. It nourishes the earth. The water nourishes the land. We live by water. We make use of the timber on the land. Everything that is on this land. There is lots of things that grows on the land. It is the way of survival of the Dene and the wildlife.

They were giving us all types of promises when they gave out treaty. There is not one change yet...about what they said about the sun and the river and the grass, there has been no change. They said it would be ours to live on.

Everything that is important. That is what we are talking about.

The Dene Nation. They are keeping their word. It is sad for me to witness what happened yesterday. My dad was at the treaty. The white people have not left us alone yet. The Dene Nation are there to help us. There is a lot of things they worry about. They will not abandon the Dene people.

When we talk about Dene Nation, it is important to know there were a lot of elders involved in that and there is membership there of the people of all regions. Then today there is news that there is a breakaway from Dene Nation. We made decisions for survival for our people in the future. I wonder who will be our leader after this? This is my personal thinking. Nowadays, a lot of people have concerns about the land. That is why we have meetings. The governments and the Dene Nation. If everyone is going to be involved, groups that don't belong to the Dene people, we are going to have problems. We will be like an island, alone. If groups that don't belong to the aboriginal people talk about claims, it will be like a storm that never stops. When we talk about issues, we should make one voice together, one idea, one heart. Listen to one another. Everything we work on, that is what we talk about. When someone is talking, we have to think about what the person is saying. Talking about money, land, money, land...what do you think is most important. For me, land is the most important. That is what we survive on. Really think about this. When you talk about something you want to give them good ideas. For tomorrow. We do not want to hurt one another, so talk with your heart. When someone is talking, Listen good and keep his word to your heart. I don't know what will happen. Us sitting here, we want to work together, and we want to use our ideas in a good way, everything work in a good way. We should be thankful for everything. If we do not think that way, we will not be happy. When we talk to one another, it is like we are scared of one another. White people have their own laws. Us too, we have our own laws. We must respect one another. I wonder if things will work out good now?

If we say oh it is no use, it is none of our business...will it work out? We still live on one land and we live the same life. We should made a good trail for our young people to have a good life.

My grandchildren talk to me. I tell them Respect your people, treat everyone kind. Someone talk to you, listen to them, treat them good. If they need help, help them. If you want to be treated good, treat other people good and they will treat you good.

If we break into regions, in future if something goes wrong, or if something bad happens in the land, what will happen? If we talk about one land there would be no problem. But now we are talking boundaries. Thank you for listening. Keep thinking about the future and what will happen. My heart is saddened by what happened. I worry about it. I am concerned about the break away from Dene Nation. Nowadays it seems we just want to listen to the ones who are well educated and we ignore people who are not educated. People should put their mind and heart into their work and work at it until it is finished.

Since 1933 there has been many changes, disagreements all the time. I want you to think about all the changes happening now. So we are working towards achieving something. It is a hard decision to make. Think about it hard. All this land, what's on it, you can see it. We do what we want. We go freedom to do what we want in the world, how we want to live. That is why the creator gave us this land. If we don hang on to what we were given, how we are going to live on it, what is going to happen? Think things out very clearly and good, and maybe things will work out. When the white people want to work on something, they keep at it and come up with new ideas to make it work. Us, we are way behind. A lot of times, I sat in Norman Wells with them. I worked with them. If you are going to decide on something, work at it hard, together. We don't want to upset anything. We don't want this organization to be divided. This is why the treaty was put into place. To protect our rights. We cannot be playing around with important issues. All you young people, listen to us elders good, and I thank you for that. Work for your people in a good way. Do not think..just let them be...do not think like that. We are all one people. If you see somebody struggling to solve their problems, help them, work together. This is how our ancestors used to work. This is why this land way made, so people could work on it in harmony. If one of our leadership disagrees with something on the land, there is disruption. Things are different now, and they want to dissolve Dene Nation. If we waited for each other, we would still be together. Once when the Dene Nation looked after funding, we would give money to the Metis, because they are our people too. Now, who are we going to listen to. Now they want to leave. If that happens, we will not be strong as a person. Who will win? The Government will win. Everything will work out if you work together. Today, elders have spoke and maybe having elders speak this morning, some of you are listening. Thank you.

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 25, 1993

Alexie Blonjeaux: What I have to say are not my ideas, they are from my dad and Elders. My father raised us by himself. We continue to see changes around us for instance the traps. We have lived off the land by trapping and are concerned that will we continue to trap off our lands or will this also change. The B.C. people spoke and said we were brothers and sisters and wanted to raise the issues that were of concern to me.

LUNCH BREAK AT 2:32 P.M.

THESE ARE ONLY SUMMARIES

THEY ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED FROM

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24, 1993

AFTERNOON SESSION: AUGUST 24, 1993

Meeting reconvened at 4:03 P.M.

George K: The approved Agenda has been posted on the wall for the convenience of the delegation. Before we get into the regional and community concerns, I would like to call Chief Fred Doctor to the headtable.

Bill E: We will give our customary gift to Chief Fred Doctor, artwork by Isadore Betsedia of Fort Franklin.

Chief Doctor: Surprise! I wasn't expecting something like this therefore did not have a speech prepared. I would like to thank the Dene Natin and the artist for the wonderful gift. I am lost for words here...as I said at the opening, the differences that we have in every region, community and Bands - the direction we are all taking, we have to respect for that and what the elders are telling us. Whatever the outcome of the meeting, I already said that we should look at the good and bad feelings. We should leave the bad feeling and work with only the good feeling. If you want to deal with bad feelings then it is your own individual choice. I am a young Chief and served as a Councillor. I have been elected for the next two years and this is a big challenge for me. Prior to this I did not participate and did not care what was going on. Since then I have begun reading and asking questions to find out what was going on. I would like to thank Bill Erasmus for his service with the Dene Nation. On behalf of the people of Fort Norman I would like to thank you for the gift.

George K: A couple of announcements. John Catholique has lost his wallet and would appreciate having it returned if it is found. There are three jerry-cans dropped off at the Deh Cho camp and can be picked up there. We will now proceed with regional and community concerns. We would like everyone to speak to the Agenda items. There are two Motions to go on the floor and we will proceed with those after the regional and community concerns.

Chief Herb Norwegian: I would like to bring the Deh Cho Regional concerns forward. After our gathering at Kakisa Lake, there were many questions at hand about our particular future. We talked

about the future and we talked about our relationships with the other regions of the Dene Nation. We talked the question of our lands and after three days we came to the Declaration of the Deh Cho First Nations on August 14, 1993. The Elders made it very clear about what the Leaders had to do about our land. The Deh Cho is looking at our own way of governing ourselves.

READING OF THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS DEH CHO FIRST NATION.
That was a statement arrived at during the Kakisa Lake Assembly. The document was signed by the Chiefs and witnessed by the Elders and members of the Deh Cho region. It is very clear that the ten communities of Deh Cho have not got the right to extinguish the rights of the future generations. The Deh Cho Declaration flows from the Dene Nation Declaration. ...we will continue the support to the region. It seems that everyone around is settling their claims. We discussed that we should follow the Sahtu Claim ....READING OF THE DEH CHO DECLARATION in South Slavey.
The declaration is a step forward for a lot of our peole, it makes things clear for our people. This is reinforcing the Dene Nation from our region, not taking anything way. We are here to give more than take. The idea is to send a very clear and firm message to the government. The days of extinquishment is long gone. We are living in the 20th century. People should be getting back their land and controlling their lives. This is why we came forth with this declaration. We feel good about this and are prepared to talk to the regions and want to have the regions stay together under the Dene Nation. We can make that first effort, then there are many good things in store for us. If we stay together we can do good work for our future generations.

Chief Pat Martel: We have difficulties but we all speak in our own language and we are relatively close. Whatever you have talked about, we have talked amongst ourselves. Our elders have spoken to us and in future we can help the younger people about all these things. If we work together and talk about these things. There are elders here and if they want to speak that is good, not only leaders should speak. Those who are behind us also have a right to speak.

Chief Gerald Antoine: I am thankful to be in your presense here. We have to think about ourselves and our communities. When we talked about these issues in Kakisa Lake it was our elders who talked and told us of things past. They are the ones who have the

wisdom and we the younger generation have to learn about their way of thingking and we have to respect them. The elders expressed their thoughts and it is their wisdom and understanding which we have shared. So we have to think of one another and address this situation. We obtained agreements in Kakisa. We have to keep our word and stand behind what is said in our communities. This is what we have talked about since treaties began and a lot has changed. Because of schools and other changes, we have been taught to think like white man. Our elders taught us to speak from our hearts and that is a good example to follow for future years, so that our children will do the same. Since last year we were talking about this meeting and we were looking forward to meeting with you all together and it seems we have a big...we have to struggle with disappointment because of disagreement and misunderstandings and I am grateful to be together with you now.

Chief Raymond Taniton: We had a public meeting Aug 12 and made a motion to break away from Dene Nation and so we talked about this in this afternoon's caucus with Sahtu, Dogrib and Gwich'in. Two motion were make from this caucus. THe National Chief and Chairman now has those motions and I wish him to read this in front of these people.

Draft Motion B read by the Chair re Membership withdrawal. Moved by Raymond Taniton and seconded by Joe Rabesca.

George K: These motions just being read..not being put to the floor.

Draft Motion A re Denendeh Development Corporation: moved by Raymond Taniton and Seconded by Joe Rabesca.

Chief Felix Lockhart: Under the circumstances, I wanted to briefly say we are going to be able to participate in discussions according to the agenda. We have been having discussion ourselves with the government on how our position is. Other speakers will have a chance after me. We are six chiefs in our communities and right now, as I indicated earlier, there are some communities, Fort Smith and Fort Resolution, who are not here. They are trying to get here. We have been negotiating a protocol agreement to get some type of pathway towards a settlement for treaty land entitlement. That developed from the Dettah meeting. We are seeking Canada's fulfillment under our treaties. We will be setting out our issues,

timeframe and issues. We understand the other regions have undergone a type of an agreement and we firmly believe that we will in no way possible be subject to exstinguishment. With changes to their policy, we will be able to have a satisfactory agreement..not give up aboriginal entitlement to lands. This is already within the Canadian Constitution. We have to come to a decision, how are we to come out of this meeting.

Chief Jonas Sangris: I have been thinking about this community and regional concerns. We the people sitting here are considered Dene Government. This government is thinking about separating. That is what the (Fed) government wants us to do. The Dene Nation is the Chiefs and the people. We are supposed to be working together. We of the Yellowknifes do no want to do without the Dene Nation. Who is our government? Without the nation, where will we be going. Who do we turn to? Those without our ancesters...who do we turn to. To the white people? To separate is not our way of doing things. When Gerry Antoine spoke, he talked about Nunavut. Us who live in the western arctic, we have to be strong and work together. There are a lot of white people who will not support us. The Inuit will have their own territory, and we will be in separate regions. We have been listening for quite some time. We the Treaty 8 people do not want to let this go, we want to be with the Dene Nation. We are not working on a claim. We seem to be fighting each other. We should not be doing that. You, the three regions, it will be up to your people, and we will support you. The motion in January said this. It seems to be the white man's way of doing things, separating each other. It is not every day we meet like this. There are more native people here together than usual.

Chief Darrell Beaulieu: From the Treaty 8 perspective on aboriginal treaty rights, and from our community perspective. We have the mandate from our band membership to uphold aboriginal and treaty rights, and a mandate from the Treaty 8 region to pursue outstanding treaty rights. The background to that over the past year, with Bill C103 passing, the changes to the lease only policy, the territorial government negotiating with communties and regions, the DIAND expanding their office and their staff, the mining companies and the population expansion in the western arctic, and the latest stats or proposed stats of a population growth of over 100 thousand people. The feds gave GNWT provincial like powers without provincial status. Without interim protection the lease only policy is a fallacy.

Indian Affairs have indicated that they are giving more responsibility to tribal councils, yet they are expanding their offices. Should the constitution of the western arctic go through without the participation of the Dene? The Dene of the western arctic will be in a much sorrier state than they are in southern Canada. That's some of the background on why we are mandated to pursue those treaty obligations. The Federal Government is changing very soon. The territorial Government is setting up to be a province. The question is where does that leave the Dene, after we deal with this resolution.

Chief Antoine Michel: The first time Dene Nation started was over 20 years ago. The way I look at it as treaty people, we made peace treaty. Now that we are all together we are arguing amongst each other. We are Indians, we talk to each other and one way or another we help each other. Treaty 8, we are still not finished with treaty. The three regions who say they will walk away. We will not walk away. This Dene Nation is still useful to us. One way or another, whether it is smaller or not, the people who use it still need it. When the government splits us up, then we will have a problem. We are not even finished our claims yet and already we talk of splitting up. I had a meeting with my group about what we will do. Some elders talked about the first time Dene Nation started, the way they made motions which they have not broken yet. But some people have. I have been working on treaty 8 for a long time. We still have our treaty. We talk about support from five regions, I can give support. I am still thinking about Dene Nation. We can make Dene Nation a little different but we can stil work with it. Our work is not completed yet, our work on the land.

I know we have difference. It is better to let it out, as Gerry Antoine said. We are having problems with money. Some of our communities cannot show up because they have no money. Our chiefs said put our differnace aside and work together. Maybe we can change Dene Nation and make it work for all of us. If our current work falls apart, where do we go? We still have a lot of work to do together. Government wants us to split and make us weak. They will put us back like pieces to a puzzle.

George K: Because of that Draft motion B, the agenda is going towards the future of Dene Nation. The motion should be put to the floor and the assembly can address it directly.

Gerry Antoine: The Deh Cho would like to caucus and to inform our elders in regards to the particular meaning of draft motion B. It is our protocol.

George K: The motion is not presently on the floor. The three regions..do you want this brought to the floor.

Gerry Antoine: We want to causus before it is brought to the floor.

Richard Kochon: The Dene Nation. I would like to say when we gather like this together, when we sit among each other, we should respect each other. The name Dene Nation means something big and important. We have a hugh land. If we have money, the money which come from the land should go to Dene Nation and not to government. The reason why we are thinking of desolving each other is because that is the way the government wants it. There are a lot of people here I would like to thank. The Dene Nation should be looking after us. When government people talk they talk big words and seem to talk well. I wonder if they have survived without money. I have been thinking about our ancesters, and I wonder what happens to us as a Nation, to Dene Nation. We have a lot of chiefs here and if we help one another we will not have any debts. As for myself, Bill Erasmus is my national chief and I respect him very much. Other people in the south and many people also respect him. The federal government sends a lot of money to the territorial government and it belongs to our people. Some of it should go to the Dene Nation. Maybe we will not gather like this again. We cannot fall apart, we must stay together or we will have a very difficult time in the future. I want the people and the chiefs to hear this from me.

Chief Joe Rabesca: I would like to say a few words about the reason we support the motion. We did not attend the assembly last year. We are here today. Before we came we had a meeting in Snare Lake. About 500 people went to that meeting. What the people said at that meeting is in that draft motion. Listening to the people from the Dec Cho, I respect what they have said. We have listened to Treaty 8...we will looked at what is going on in our regions and in 1976, I attended my first meeting and have attended many since. The Dogribs have been talking and should respect what is going on in each region. Not only the young have talked. We are talking on behalf of our people. We will continue to stay and listen to what

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is going on even though the Motion is passed. We have been planning and working on the land process. We are going to do what is best for our people and leaving it up to the Treaty 11 Council. It is up to each region to decide what they want in their communities. We are not here to speak against anyone and will as Dogrib communities respect what is being said. We will ask for the same respect and support for our Motion. We brought the Motion from our Treaty 11 Council. We have been asked on the Treaty 11 Council to proceed in the land claim process. We will not participate with the Dene Nation and I am not saying we will not work with the Dene Nation. We have alot of things to work out and have to think about the future. The Dogribs are here for a purpose. We realize that you will not be happy with our Motion but that is the will of our region.

George K: Is there any more clarification that should be brought to the attention of the Assembly before the Deh Cho region goes into caucus.

Chief Doctor: I thank you and understand what is being said. This is the 23rd annual assembly. Before me there were other Chiefs and they know what has been going on. There are many people from the regions who held their own Assembly. This is how they gather and make their decisions. After they meet, they come to the Dene Nation Assembly to give notice of their intentions. At the Dogrib Assembly they chose to withdraw from the Dene Nation. When we decide on these types of decisions, we go to our communities but this does not happen in Fort Norman. I called for such a Meeting but this did not take place. When we finally had the Meeting, we only had ten people show up. There are still people in Fort Norman who want to see Dene Nation continue and be part of it. There needs to be support from my community for me to go forth with community decisions. I like the comment made by Gerry Antoine to air our differences. At one time we were not shy to talk and the Elders were active participants. We now need to be more open and honest with each other to reach decisions. We have continious meetings to discuss our future and should not hesitate to actively participate to reach solutions. We were given brains to make good decisions..we are not in the USSR and we have our freedom and should take advantage of that. There is a Motion on the floor from the three regions - Dogrib, Sahtu and Gwich'in. I cannot say that all my people are in favour of the Motion. In being the Chief we have to make hard decisions. That is all I have to say as the Deh

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Cho want to caucus.

Robert Alexie: Hello! My name is Robert Alexie and delegate from the Gwich'in Tribal Council and bring regards from the Gwich'in Nation. I hope to resolve the issue of the future of the Dene Nation. This could be an historical issue. The Dene Nation has done some great things in its time ie Paulette Case and the Dene/Metis comprehensive land claim agreement. They have played an important role in the political development of the NWT. There has been differences between the Metis and Dene about the land claim process which was resolved with the Dene/Metis Secretariat. With change, there is differences which is evident today. We are all aware what happened at the Dettah Assembly. We have negotiated and since then the Gwich'in Agreement is entrenched in the Canada Constitution. We have gained control of our future. In my mind and other Gwich'in we have come a long way with little resources and our great determination. We take full responsibility for all our decisions but that was yesterday. We can't change that today but can make change for tomorrow. We did not come to argue but to resolve the issue at hand. I honestly believe that the Dene Nation cannot fulfill its mandate given the differences of the regions. The Gwich'in cannot afford to discuss how the Dene Nation can represent the Gwich'in. In 1990, the Gwich'in passed a Motion that the Dene Nation does not represent them and the Motion still stands. It was felt that the Dene Nation did not adequately represent the Gwich'in. Even though we cannot work together, we will not work against each other. ....decision to withdraw from the Dene Nation and the decision made at the Dettah Assembly was also not an easy decision. We are not after the dissolution of the Dene Nation....we will not participate as we will work on our issues. The comments made by other communities within Denendeh seems to support our decision. We know what the Gwich'in want and what has to be done. What ever decision is made will only determine our ability or our inability to work together. If we cannot agree to disagree, then there is something fundamentally wrong. We will give our full support for the two motions put to the floor.

Chief Herb Norwegian: Thank you. Before we caucus, we would like to get clarification on the wording on what is meant by "significant differences". It implies problems with the Dene Nation. We feel that we have not done anything wrong. What wrong has been to the Dogrib, Sahtu and Gwichin? Also, on the issue of

debts and liabilities, I would like to get clarification.

George K; Can the Mover and Seconder please give clarification.

Chief Taniton: If you look back to twenty years, we have differences amongst the regions. The five region do not always agree. We don't want to be liable for what the Dene Nation does since the Sahtu is in the land claims process. George Cleary will speak to that issue on my behalf.

George Cleary: To provide some background, there has been differences in philosophy and ...there have been differences and this came to light in 1988. The Charlottetown Agreement is a case in point when we gave our support along with the Gwich'in. The Dene Nation then took the position in support of the south. We did not advocate to split even though we chose in 1990 to speak to our own issues. We continued to support the Dene Nation but now feel that they have done great things in the past but have outlived their usefulness. The communities now have more autonomy ...there is talk about an alliance that may work with the Dene Nation. We are not talking about isolating ourselves from the Dene Nation. What the motion is saying is that we do not want to be responsible for any further debts incurred by the Dene Nation following this date. We will pick up a portion of the debt incurred by the Dene Nation to date and will not be responsible for those of this date.

Chief Rabesca: We will be responsible for our portion of the debt and we will not be responsible for any debts incurred by the Dene Nation as of this date.

George K: How much time is needed by the Deh Cho for their caucus?

Gerry Antoine: I think everyone is anxious to eat and would like to meet this evening and reconvene in the morning.

George K: The Gwich'in and Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council will meet at the Band office.

Chief Doctor: The Gwich'in will leave this evening and we should meet again this evening to deal with the Motion. We have Father John from Fort Good Hope and if people wish there will be a Mass.

George K: The Deh Cho want to caucus this evening and are prepared

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to meet at 9:00 P.M.

Robert Alexie: We are supposed to have left about one minute ago. We are prepared to break now and suggest reconvening at 7:00 P.M. to deal with the two Motions. We are scheduled to leave tonight and will discuss with the Gwich'in delegation. We will stay if the rates are reasonable and the costs for overnite are covered by the Dene Nation.

George K: The Deh Cho are requesting a longer caucus. We may have to make alternate arrangements for the Gwich'in.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK AT 6:09 P.M.

George K: Call for delegates to return to the table at 6:22 P.M.

George K: Deh Cho has caucused. They will respond to the request from the Gwich'in that the motions be dealt with before tomorrow.

Chief Herb Norwegian: There is one elders sitting by me from Hay River who would like to talk before I address this.

Daniel Sonfere: I am small. You are big and you have strong minds and have strong words. Our forefathers had good words. We come from good people. When our elders worked for us, they looked ahead for us. You talk about the treaty and it seems you really think about that. Those who are well and have good thoughts I am thankful for. Those who did not understand written word, and when they first met white people, I wonder what the white people thought. When our forefathers met white people he told him what his mind is and he foresaw what would happen. Because we come from smart people, and we never saw white people, still the land is there for us, but is is becoming way the white people want. What is it our elders put ahead for us. Our forefathers, our dads and mothers. It is their words we have to use. They know they left us with good words. They will leave their family and they leave us good words to follow and that is why they took treaty. When you think treaty you think your dads and moms. After one hundred years after treaty, we have to fight our our rights and struggle. Still we have survived. I wonder how the next one hundred years will be for our people.

It can be hard on us but we have to look forward. We have to

listen to our elders. It is hard in this world today. When you make this decision, we wish you luck. Help one another. If you look back, the land and animals have changed. You have to look at everything. There once was a lot of sickness, a lot of hurt. We lost elders. Many elders went to different places to help others. I do not know how long we will sit among you. We cannot outspeak you. Remember, someone might give you good words to keep. Hold on to them. It is our fault sometimes, being Dene people. We have to respect one another. It is our land, and it is us who will live on it. Our forefathers taught us how to keep it. That is how our elders are living now. The Dene law is a good way. Since the white people came, we follow the white law and things have changed us a lot. Us being Dene, if we have our strength, we know where our strength comes from. We let that go for a long time, now look back on it. I wish you luck. I wonder how your future will be. Until then, our elders are pitiful, but we will always be there for you. People help us, we get pension. We will always be there to help and support you. In this world, even us we fool each other and don't work together. It will be hard, but we have to work straight and honestly. Chief Sunrise from Hay River was the first to accept treaty and when he got the money and spoke to the people...as long as the people living in the world and the chiefs and councils live a straight life, until then peoples voice will be strong and they will be heard. If these people are not strong and true, our people will disappear. As Dene we have to respect each other, our creater.

We also have to respect our leader. We have to be proud he is straight. If we leave him alone, it will be hard on him. If we have trouble, he is the one who stands for us. We have to think about this. In the future, our life ways may be gone because the land and animals are changing. The way I used to think in the past. Some things came clear to me today. I worked with councilors for a number of years. After I worked with them in 1963 after the flood and the white society was going to take over. They said, since he sat with us for a long time, let us make him chief becasue the other are too old. Then I was thinking, I am not only here to be chief for treaty people. When you are chief, you are good person, you try hard, and you work to help all people. This is what I tell you chiefs now. If you are chief, you stand straight, you help everyone, the metis, the white people, the RCMP.

Thank you. I am glad you listened to me. Whatever you work on, may

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the creator help you.

Chief Herb Norwegian: Other people in my region want to talk. Also, The Mountain people want to talk.

Paul Wright: I am going to say some things regarding the history of our people. We have to respect each other. As people, we are one. If we stay that way we will be stong. It is not that way now. In the past I spoke to you to be one people and I did not expect this to happen. There are different regions, and there is one land. You all live on it. That is why we are talking about the land now. We should help and respect one another. The reason we are on it and we are here is that it keeps us together. My ancesters told me do not touch the money...keep your people together. When they told me, they said when you talk, speak about what is in your heart, and you should help everyone. When there is things on paper, they said, do not change your mind and go in a different direction. Also, inform your people so they do not go astray and go in a different direction. We are now going in all different directions. Whoever is sitting among us and is holding our elders messages from the past, speak up. We cannot just go out. We must all go in one direction. This land is ours...its is Dene land. When our elders spoke to us, since 1921 during the treaty days. It is still in my head and my memory. I cannot forget it. My eldrs and ancesters taught me this. This the the land we are on today. They want us to consider this motion. For me, it is no, I do not want to separate. Whoever wants to do this, this is their opinion. So, now they have talked about separating. For me the Deh Cho people are in the right direction. We shold be working together. I wanted to speak to the motion that I why I said what I have said. This land is for us to work on. I cannot tell people they are doing the wrong thing, I cannot tell them they are doing good. I am saying what my elders taught me. If there is something to be worked on, I am thinking about what my elders told me.

As long as the sun sets, as long as the river flows....the land survives on it. This is important. Animals eat the grasses and we eat the animal...that is the way we survive. We are part of this land. That is the kind of thing which came about from this land. That is what the land is there for. The reason we have come so far is because we wanted Dene Nation to work for us. There are other peoples like Japanesse and Russian. A lot of our elders will be different. What they have told me is still with me. There is

still a lot of discussion left about this and whatever your decision is, I will be thankful. There will be negative and positives and whatever happens here is for the future.

Georeg Blondin: I am an elder talking on behalf of the elders, because I am the chairman of the Elders Council. People came here for one purpose...to re organize the Dene Naiton. This has been bothering us all winter. Twice we tried to solve the problem because all the chiefs never came. Here is a good time to deal with it. All the Chiefs are here. We are not talking about throwing out the Dene Nation, we are talking about reorganizing so that all the regions have a central office which they can be used. A lot of time has passed since Dene Nation Constitution was written. Lots of things have to be talked about. We don't even start talking about these things yet. If we do not talk about these things here and now it will block us in the future. We have another two days to talk about these things here.
Every since Dene Nation has started over 20 years ago, we have been together, except for the past few years. What we are saying now is to change the structure of the Dene Nation because it is not for all the regions now because of the split. When some pepole hear that some want to break away, they take it as if everyone wants to leave Dene Nation and dissolve the whole thing. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about changing the structure. Since last winter, there has been two meetings and at both meetings the same issue was brought up and no decision was made . Now is the time when we can come up with a decision because all the chiefs and councillors are here together. That is the way it is. Dene Nation can still work with us. Everyone must say what they think.

Chief Fred Doctor. I am disappointed, as host of the Assembly. There is a motion in front of you and it should be on the floor. Once the motion is on the floor if there are any questions ....it is not going that way. It is going backwards. I said earlier as Chief as this community I have asked for public meetings to get direction from the people and it seems that the Deh Cho are using my own people against me. That is the way I feel. Maybe I am wrong. Many times I call for public meetings and ask for direction. If the people gave me direction before the assembly, I would have addressed it that way. I would like to ask the chairperson to keep the meeting in line.

George K: The motion was not brought to the floor because the Deh

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Cho asked for a caucus before the motion was brought to the floor. The Gwich'in asked that the motion be dealt with tonight. The way the Deh Cho has structured thier response is not within the Chairs control. Dene Assemblies have always be structured that community people always speak on items, and the chair must respect that aspect of Dene Nation meetings. We are following tradition and Dene Nation protocol. Maybe I will ask the Deh Cho to address the specific point...can this motion be put to the floor.

Chief Herb Norwegian: We met and looked at the motion's languague and suggest we change the motion.

George K: Reads Motion draft B, re Withdrawal from Dene Nation. Moved by Chief Raymond Taniton and seconded by Chief Joe Rabesca.

Chief Herb Norwegian. With Chief Taniton and Chief Rabesca's agreement, I would like to make changes. First paragraph, dfinition of aboriginal and Treaty Rights; eliminate 2nd paragraph; and add "until such time they decide to return to the Dene Nation." Further be it resolved .....not responsiblile effective August 24, 1993.

Chief Raymond Taniton. In talking to some of my members, we agree to change the last paragraph only to provide a specific date.

Chief Norwegien. The intention is to give an option to those communities who are being forced to go with the flow. Those communities who wish to stay with the Dene Nation, they should be able to do so. These communities should be given the opportunity to decide if they stay or leave. In the final draft, the idea is to come up with a decision which is not final, if our peole want to come back and take their rightful place within the Dene Nation. We cannot close the doors to anyone. If we go with something like our suggested changes, it can work this way. The reality, the world is changing and things work in a cycle. They eventually come back to their rightful place. The Dene Nation will continue to be alive and the door will always be open.

Chief Joe Rabesca. The only change, except to the date, is to add "treaty 11" to the regions who are withdrawing. How can I go against the resolution of the Treaty 11. It is the assembly of Treaty 11 who gave us direction. That is a mandate given to me and that is what I am doing.

Robert Alexi. I agree with Joe Rabesca. However, the changes to the second wherefore, I suggest that the remaining members of the Dene Nation ensure that the provision for the bands who leave now have that opportunity within the constitution of the new Dene Nation, the intent be there to accept back band councils who withdraw at this time.

George K. This is confusing. People think that a this motion will mean a formal withdrawal. We need a clarification on what this means. Do bands have to made a BCR to formalize it. Does this motion constitute a formal withdrawal by every community from each of the regions, or does individual bands have to pass a motion.

Chief George Cleary: What constitutions a formal withdrawal is if a community passes a formal council resolution. That is something which we discussed this afternoon. I know in all our communities we do not have 100% concensus. The intent is not to force all bands in the communities to withdraw. It does not say we want Dene Nation killed. We know the Treaty 8 Tribal Council and the Deh Cho still want the Dene Nation. Maybe the three regions will join together, maybe some of our bands will stay with Dene Nation or re-join at a later date. Maybe the bands will join other alliances and do away with Dene Nation at some other date. The motion is not intended to force anyone out. Robert Alexi's suggestion is good, when the new constitution is drawn up, to leave the door open.

The are distinctions in the Sahtu region regarding Metis and Treaty People. There are clear differences and legal definitions amongst our people. Each Metis local and each Dene Band have a land base. It is structured on community land bases. We are in a sense evolving. We are not saying everyone has to come with us and stay away from Dene Nation, or not to become part of Dene Nation again later on.

George K: It is now clear that this motion will not be final for all bands.

Herb Norwegian: If you read the motion and listen to what people are saying, they are two different things. What is being said should be put in writing, and our people will be more receptive to it.

George K: Maybe there is need for fine tuning, as the motion does

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say all bands, etc, of the regions. We are coming to an agreement.

Robert Alexi: It is getting on to 8 o'clock. Our aircraft is leaving at 8:30 p.m.. Each of our bands will have something in writing to you in the next day or so, despite if a motion is passed here. This discussion shows that we cannot even agree to disagree. The Gwich'in have not been part of the Dene Nation since July 1990. We simply disagree. We have one half an hour before we catch a plane and I would like to see something move on this motion. The intent of the motion is clear. If in the future, the Gwich'in want to return to the folds of the Dene Nation then I suggest the Dene Nation constitution reflect this provision. It does not have to be in this motion. We have to go and we leave with no hard feelings. We are doing what we have to do. It is not personal. I wish you all the best of luck in whatever you do. We will always be up north, and will lend support when requested, and we will ask for support when we need it. With or without a motion, however, we are going to withdraw from the Dene Nation.

George Cleary: As far as the formal process of withdrawing from the Dene Nation, there is nothing in the constitution addressing this issue. That is the reason the motion was advanced in this form.

George K: Correct, there is nothing n the constitution about this. This meeting has run over the agreed upon time. I want to congratualte the delegates with how this has been dealt with. As Chief Doctor said, good feelings have prevailed. Speakers have shown patience and it is an example of parting in good faith and not as enemies, and being good with one another. It is not has bad as some people may think. We should allow discussion to continue.

Chief Bill Erasmus: There is nothing in the constitution for withdrawal. There was never any intention to withdraw. The intention was to build strength.

We can now bring this information back to the communities, let them know how people think and feel. In previous years when we tried to address this, people never came, so we had to wait. I hope the elders understand this. The interpreters must be tired. If people are confused, they should ask questions.

I agree with what Robert Alexi is saying. It is unfortante the

mover and seconder does not want to change the motion. The Dene Nation will continue, and the Dene Nation will deal with the question of membership as part of their business. We are ready to call question and vote, and people have to vote on how they feel.

We will have to take an official vote and count, so be prepared to keep your hand up.

Chief Isadore Manual. The question I have is what happens if we have a vote and the people who withdraw go home? The other question is how do we work out the issue of debts and liabilities.

George K: This can be dealt with tomorrow when we deal with future direction.

Chief Richard Kochon: We did not discuss the motion at Colville Lake so myself I do not know if I can vote on it or not. I do not understand it. I should go back to my community and see what to do. What option do we have? Do we stay involved? Should we give new mandate to Dene Nation?

George Cleary: Article 11, section 1, interpretation: If we decide the process at this meeting, that is the way it will be. If the process is each band, or by motion at this assembly.

In the past, if a band wants to be affiliated, it is a motion passed at the National Assembly.

George K: Only official delegates can vote. All delegates who hold a proxy, please raise both hands.

Question called.
For: 91
Against: 0
Obtension: 80
Motion Carried

THESE ARE ONLY SUMMARIES

THEY ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED FROM

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24, 1993

AUGUST 24, 1993: MORNING SESSION

Meeting called to Order at 11:02 A.M.

Opening ceremonies offered by Chief Fred Doctor and membership.

Opening prayer offered by Elder Paul Wright.

Welcome speech by Chief Fred Doctor to the 23rd Dene National Assembly.

Chief Bill Erasmus: Thank you Chief Doctor. Normally we proceed by choosing our Chairperson. We are suggesting George Kursewski and Harry Allan. Chief Allen could not be here. We can go with George or another person. If the people are comfortable with George, we can entertain a Motion.

Motion moved by Vice Chief Felix Lockhart and seconded by Chief Deneron.

Magaret Donovan: I would personally like to see a Co-Chairperson.

Chief Erasmus: We would like suggestions for a Co-Chair or go with Vice Chiefs.

Margaret Donovan: If the other Vice Chairs are in favour, I would like to put my name forth.

Felix Lockhart: I agree with Margaret Donovan as Co-Chair.

Motion Carried.

Chief Erasmus: Request George and Margaret come to the front.

George K.: Good morning to Chiefs and delegates and school children. I am honoured to work with you. I wish you good luck in your deliberations as the issues are tough to deal with. To begin, all Chiefs and delegates introduce themselves.

INTRODUCTION OF CHIEFS AND DELEGATES.

John Bekale: I feel uncomfortable with my Chiefs sitting back and not at the table.

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George K: The matter is going to be dealt with after the formal introductions.

FORMAL INTRODUCTION PROCEEDINGS.

George K: Thank you. The only region not introduced is the Delta. I would like to have Margaret Donovan make the introductions.

Margaret D: Addressed the Assembly as Co-chair, and introduction of the Delta delegates.

George K: We have to establish rules for the Meeting. Please raise your hands when you want to speak. We will keep a list of speakers and we request that each one introduce themselves. We started late therefore will go until 2:00 P.M. and lunch will be served at the school gym. We will continue the Meeting until 7:00 P.M. During the remainder of the week, the Meeting will start at 9:00 A.M. and break for lunch at Noon. .....Resolutions committee will be Margie Gorman and Minnie Letcher and they will be available to draft up your Motions. The security people will be available for assistance. The Hamlet is requesting that there be no smoking in the building. There are also telephones and washrooms available. The media are here and can continue to do so until such time that they are requested to leave. There is translation equipment available for the people. Lunch will be happening everyday. The community would like to inform people that prohibition is in existence. From time to time we will be introducing people as they arrive. I would like to introduce again the delegation from Prince George, B.C. We also have another group observing the Meeting and they are the Dene Cultural Institute delegation. We have people from the GNWT Health, Carole Mills and Harriet Kuhnlein from CINE. We will now move onto the Agenda and the approval of such. Invitation of Chiefs and delegates to speak to the Agenda. If there is no interest in changes to the Agenda then we should proceed in moving the Motion.

Chief Taniton: I would like to see changes to the Agenda.

Chief Norwegian: We have always talked about important issues and suggest that we deal with the issues at hand particularly the issue of the status of the Dene Nation - Constitution and by-laws. We

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should also hear what is going on in the Dene Nation and the community concerns.

George K: We will have to get the Dogrib translation organized before we proceed with the Meeting. Then we are going to deal with the Chipewyan translation. While we are getting things organized we will call for a five minute break.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK.

George K: Call for delegates to return to the table. We will like to welcome the Dogrib delegates to the table at this time. There will be lunch procedure - each Chief will have tickets for their delegates for each day. After delegates are served, tickets will be available to observers at $5 per plate.

Joe Benoit suggested different changes.

George K: First Change: Chief Taniton: move item 3 below item 9. Chief Norwegian: Communinity Concerns be # 3 and the rest moving down. Joe Benoit's change is to move Executive Reports to end, start with Approval of Audit, Community Direction, Future Directio, Overview of exiting constitution, & 6 and 7 as it.

Chief Isadore Manual and Chief Joe Rabesca supported Joe Benoit's suggestion.

Chief Doctor also supports this suggestion. The Delta for here for the day only and wish this dealt with before they go. Can we have this confirmed?

Joe Benoit asked if more tables could be added. George K. said this will be done during lunch, along with the necessary wiring for sound and translations.

Chief Gerry Antoine: The Deh Cho is here for three days. This is an annual thing and we respect the differences. We are here for three days, some of us have travelled by boat and aicraft and we want to make sure this meeting goes on. The way of the agenda is very important and we ask that you reflect what the elders said when they prayed, as well as the host chief, about putting differences aside. A way we can start this Assembly is to bring out community concerns. It is part of introduction. Dene history

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..it is protocol to deal with community concerns. Plus all the hot and cold air comes out before we sit down and make decisions. I know there are some people not confortable with this but since we are discussing the rules of our aAssembly, this is the way to go, before we make decisions. If we do not let everything out we will hold up things. Our Nation is rebuilding and a healing process is going on. We know we have to open up and let out our thoughts. We have to do community concerns. No use to put something down and say "take it or leave it". That is the way government deals with us and we are starting to deal with each other that way. Lets talk and see where the communities are coming from There may be some common things we want to work on together. The Inuit are pursing their own government. We have to sit down collectively and work this out. We want the same things. Lets air it out first, face to face. That way we will feel good about ourselves and walk around honourably. Our elders will respect this too.

George K: The auditor is not here yet..the plane has not arrived.

Chief Herb Norwegian: If the auditors are not here we should begin by having the chiefs talk about community issues so we can best know what is going on before making decisions. Then we can proceed with the auditor's report.

Chief Felix Lockhart: We consulted and wish the community concerns to go ahead. Executive reports can be held later. Auditor's report can be accommodated when he arrives. First item, community concerns, second item, future direction.

Joe Benoit: Deferring the Audit is not a problem. It has been suggested that we talk about regional concerns, and then go into future direction. As regions, we should know where we are at, and the future direction will be where Dene Nation is going. This is another possiblility.

George K: Some communities may wish to present their concerns on a regional basis, some may present them individually. Is this correct?

Joe Benoit: For those regions who wish to do this, yes.

George K: First item: Community or Regional Concerns, Future Direction, Overview of Existing Constitution, Report from Review

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Committee, Regional Caucus reports, Executive Reports. The audit will be presented accordingly. Other Business & Closing Cermonies.

Agenda approved: Moved by Chief Herb Norwegian, Seconded by Chief Fred Doctor. Carried Unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL CONCERNS

Chief Taniton: As you know Sahtu have ratified their agreement. Our president, George Cleary will be here later today. We wish for him to be here before giving our report.

Chief Felix Lockhart. It has been indicated to me that we break until after lunch so that regions can talk. If there are speakers, we can go ahead.

George K: The auditor is now here. We can hear the audit, or we can caucus.

Mike Canadian: Suggest we break for lunch. Wish our Chief to be here when we talk about community concerns, as well as the future of the Dene Nation.

George K: Lunch will not be ready until 2. I will suggest the auditor be called forward, unless there are objections.

Chief Doctor. We would like to take a break and have regional caucus.

Chief Norwegian: Support this. Lets get down to business after lunch. Would like security for our camps while we are at meetings.

The meeting broke at 1:16, to reconvene at 3:30, to continue with Community Concerns.

MOTION #93/94-001

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: APPROVAL OF CHAIRPERSON

BE IT RESOLVED George Kurszewski be appointed as Chairman of the 23rd Dene National Assembly, August 24-26, 1993; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Margaret Donovan be appointed as Co-Chair for the 23rd Dene National Assembly, August 24-26, 1993.

MOVED BY: Vice-Chief Felix Lockhart, NWT Treaty #8

SECONDED BY: Chief Harry Deneron, Ft. Liard

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 24TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

C

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-00[illegible]

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: AGENDA

BE IT RESOLVED that the agenda be approved as amended

1. Opening Ceremonies and Prayer

2. Meeting to Order
   a) Approval of Chairperson
   b) Approval of Agenda

3. Community/Regional Concerns

4. Future Direction

5. Overview of Existing Constitution and By-laws

6. Report and Recommendations from the Dene Nation Constitutional Review Committee
   a) General Discussion and Question Period
   b) Regional Caucus

7. Regional Caucus Reports

8. Executive Reports

9. Approval of Audit

10. Other Business

11. Closing Ceremonies and Prayer

MOVED BY: **Chief Herb Norwegian, Ft. Simpson**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Fred Doctor, Ft. Norman**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 24TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-003

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: GWICH'IN, SAHTU AND DOGRIB TREATY 11 FORMALLY WITHDRAW

WHEREAS there are significant differences within the Dene Nation with regards to the protection, recognition and definition of aboriginal and treaty rights;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gwich'in, Sahtu, and Dogrib Treaty 11 communities and associated Band Councils formally withdraw membership in the Dene Nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Dogrib Treaty 11 communities and associated Band Councils shall not be responsible or liable for any and all debts and liabilities of the Dene National Office effective immediately, August 24, 1993.

MOVED BY: **Chief Raymond Taniton, Ft. Franklin**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Joe Rabesca, Rae**

FOR: **91**

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS: **80**

MOTION CARRIED THIS 24TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-00[illegible]

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: DENE NATION AUDIT 1992/93

BE IT RESOLVED that the 23rd Dene National Assembly accept the Dene Nation audited Financial statements as of March 31, 1993.

MOVED BY: Chief Tim Lennie, Wrigley

SECONDED BY: Chief Darrell Beaulieu, Yellowknives Dene

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 25TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/93-005

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: QUORUM TO CONDUCT CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

BE IT RESOLVED that this 23rd Dene National Assembly of the Dene Nation on August 26, 1993 has the quorum to make constitutional changes and to conduct any Assembly business at this Dene National Assembly.

MOVED BY: Wilbert Antoine, Ft. Simpson Delegate

SECONDED BY: Chief Darrell Beaulieu, Yellowknives Dene

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-00[illegible]

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: ACCEPTANCE OF DENE NATION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

WHEREAS upon the recommendation of the Dene Leadership, a Review Committee was given a mandate by Motion #92/93-017; and

WHEREAS a Interim Report was presented to the Dene Leadership at the June 1993 Meeting; and

WHEREAS a Final Report has been presented to the 23rd Dene National Assembly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly accept the Final Report of the Review Committee and table the findings in light of the recent Dene National Assembly Motion #93/94-003;

And finally that the 23rd Dene National Assembly thanks and acknowledges the work and dedication of the Review Committee Members.

MOVED BY: **Chief Herb Norwegian, Ft. Simpson**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Antoine Michel, Lutsel K'e**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-007

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: FUTURE RELATIONS WITH GWICH'IN, SAHTU AND DOGRIB PEOPLE

WHEREAS the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Dogrib Treaty 11 communities have chosen to withdraw from the Dene Nation; and

WHEREAS the Dene Nation regrets this choice, but respects the decision of those communities; and

WHEREAS the Dene Nation wishes to affirm in a spirit of good will and cooperation, its continuing relationship with those communities; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that membership in the Dene Nation will continue to be available to all Gwich'in, Sahtu and Dogrib Treaty 11 individuals and communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly looks forward to working cooperatively with the communities that have withdrawn from the Dene Nation.

MOVED BY: **Chief TIm Lennie, Wrigley**

SECONDED BY: **Arvin Landry, Ft. Providence Delegate**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-00[redacted]

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: DIAND CORE FUNDING

WHEREAS there has been a steady decrease in Core funding to the Denendeh National Office; and

WHEREAS the Core funding remains to be at the amount given in the 1970's and not consistent with the rising costs of the day;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 23rd National Assembly give notice to DIAND to increase the Core funding to the Denendeh National Office consistent with the Dene Leadership Motion #92/93-022 of January 1993.

MOVED BY: **Chief Darrell Beaulieu, Yellowknives Dene**

SECONDED BY: **Vice-Chief Gerry Antoine, Deh Cho**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-009

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: <u>CORE FUNDING</u>

WHEREAS the Dene Leadership passed Motion #92/93-022 directing the Government of the Northwest Territories to commence provisions of Core funding to the Denendeh National Office;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 23rd Dene National Assembly hereby supports the said motion that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide Core funding to the Denendeh National Office.

MOVED BY: **Chief Dennis Deneron, Trout Lake**

SECONDED BY: **Vice-Chief Felix Lockhart, NWT Treaty #8**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-010

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: SUPPORT FOR THE DEH CHO DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

WHEREAS the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation met in Assembly at Kakisa Lake; and

WHEREAS on August 13, 1993, the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation passed unanimously a Declaration of Rights; and

WHEREAS the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation have affirmed their inherent political rights and powers; and

WHEREAS the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation will not and do not want to extinguish their Aboriginal and Treaty Rights;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 23rd Dene National Assembly fully support the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation in their Declaration of Rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this 23rd Dene National Assembly support the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation's process of self-government.

MOVED BY: **Chief Antoine Michel, Lutsel K'e**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Jonas Sangris, Yellowknives Dene**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-011

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: OFFICE OF THE DENE NATIONAL CHIEF

WHEREAS the Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus has given notice of resignation effective August 30, 1993; and

WHEREAS it is recognized that the Dene National Chief term of office continues for one more year;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 23rd Dene National Assembly instruct the Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus to fullfil his term of office.

MOVED BY: **Chief Herb Norwegian, Ft. Simpson**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Berna Landry, Ft. Providence**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-012

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: DENE NATION OPPOSITION TO BILL C-103 LEGISLATION

WHEREAS the Dene Leadership by Motion #93/94-004 strongly opposed the passing of Bill C-103, the devolution of land titles authority;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 23rd Dene National Assembly give notice to the Government of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly to amend the Northwest Territories Land Act to ensure that the legislation will not be in effect within the Dene Nation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that discussions begin immediately to have the Dene Nation Communities administer their own land titles registry.

MOVED BY: **Vice-Chief Gerry Antoine, Deh Cho**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Darrell Beaulieu, Yellowknivws Dene**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS: **1**

MOTION CARRIED THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-013

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: DIAND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH THE DENE FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS it has been the practice of DIAND to arbitrarily interpret policies in their dealing with the Dene First Nations; and

WHEREAS their practice has often not been in the best interest of the Dene First Nations; and

WHEREAS the Dene First Nations continue to administer their Bands with limited resources as they are not afforded the same benefits of other First Nations in Canada pertaining to the administration of programs and services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that DIAND ensure that all benefits afforded to other First Nations in Canada be instituted for the Dene First Nations

MOVED BY: **Chief Tim Lennie, Wrigley**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Dennis Deneron, Trout Lake**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-014

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: 1994 DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

BE IT RESOLVED that the 1994 Dene National Assembly be held in Lutsel K'e.

MOVED BY: Chief Herb Norwegain, Ft. Simpson

SECONDED BY: Chief Richard Kochon, Colville Lake

FOR;

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-015

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: TREATY DAY IN DENE FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS Treaty Dene participated in Treaty with the Crown; and

WHEREAS it is the duty of the Federal Government to ensure that the process of Treaty payment be conducted by senior officials to deal with the concerns of the communities as has been the practice of our forefathers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that DIAND will hereon conduct Treaty payments in the spirit and intent of our forefathers by ensuring that only senior officials be present on Treaty Day in the Dene First Nations Communities.

MOVED BY: **Chief Pat Martel, Hay River**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Dennis Deneron, Trout Lake**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

MOTION #93/94-016

23RD DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TULIT'A (FT. NORMAN), DENENDEH
AUGUST 24-26, 1993

RE: ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the 23rd Dene National Assembly be adjourned.

MOVED BY: **Chief Dennis Deneron, Trout Lake**

SECONDED BY: **Chief Pat Martel, Hay River**

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTENTIONS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1993

CERTIFIED BY:

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief

ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
INTERVENOR PROGRAM

BRIEF SUBMITTED BY DENE NATION
NOVEMBER 1993

The process of land negotiations has had its mark on the Dene Nation. The question of land ownership is still not settled. In 1973, the Federal government steered us away from pursuing this question legally, through what is known as the Paulette Case, proposing instead the comprehensive negotiations process.

Events since then, and what is currently happening in regards to Aboriginal Rights, can only be described as a fiasco. (See Appendix A, "Dene Nation: An Analysis")

We as Dene Nation believe we have never lost rights to govern ourselves, nor have we lost our land. Land ownership is not an issue of negotiations, and we are not "reclaiming" rights.

One of the most fundamental questions before Canada today is that of ownership of the land. To the Dene, the land is everything. The land is how we survive, and all our rights flow from the land. Dene title in Denendeh is superior to that of the Crown. Once this fundamental understanding of Dene title is understood by Canada, discussions can continue to determine how our nations can co-exist. It appears from all recent polls that average Canadians do not have problems with this concept of title.

...2

The laws passed down to us by our prophets and our elders teach us to share. Treaties existed already all around us when the non-Dene arrived. Because of our practice of entering into treaties for peaceful co-existence and sharing, we entered into Peace Treaties with the non-Dene. Our people had no concept about ceding, surrendering, or extinguishment. There were no Dene words to describe any of this. It was impossible for the Dene to have entered into the type of treaties suggested by federal government officials over the years.

Unfortunately, instead of pursuing these arguments legally, we entered into a process of grappling, budget disputes and management regimes who called the shots on the outcome of negotiations even before they commenced. Some examples include:

> The Government of Canada, whom we were negotiating with, were approving our budgets, administering our agreements, and basically holding the purse strings. When negotiations failed at any one time, the cheques stopped coming in until a compromise was reached. In order words, the government has been "judge and jury".
>
> The Dene were to accept a wide-sweeping policy regarding extinguishment of aboriginal rights in lieu of any rights contained in a final negotiated settlement. To the Dene, this meant giving up existing rights provided within the Treaties and the Canadian Constitution. The rights associated with the final land settlement were already belonging to the Dene. Through negotiations they were being defined, for the purposes of continued peaceful co-existence. Why would the Dene ever agree to extinguish their rights for this definition?

The Government of Canada carried on negotiations with others, such as the Territorial Government or Industry, which affected the Dene and our land during the course of negotiations with the Dene, without our involvement or consent. (See Appendix B)

We believe the strength of our treaties are such that Canada has used the process of negotiations to confuse and delay the question of ownership over land. Through this process, they have attempted to create "new treaties", defining or assuming our rights for the purposes of Canada.

The process of "Land Settlement Negotiations" has had many negative impacts upon the Dene, including segregation amongst the Dene and the descendants of the Dene, colonization of foreign governments, suppression and poverty, and assimilation. Now, in 1993, the Dene are looking at the results of the negotiations process, the continued interference of government(s) in the evolution of the Dene, and ways in which our Nation can go forward in our best interests.

In the minds of many Dene, the question of land ownership in regions where there has been settlement is still outstanding. This is the case because self-government was not included in the process and jurisdiction in the end is controlled by the Crown.

No Nation should have to go through this experience.

The Dene Nation has survived thus far. Structurally, we have changed from that which we envisioned back in 1969, but fundamentally we have not. The 17 remaining communities reinforce our original purpose and mandate...to uphold aboriginal and treaty rights...and we have renewed energy and purpose to continue our work.

...4

We believe the Royal Commission, through its concerted efforts, can make major change in this country. However, in the end, only our Nation can truly fend for ourselves.

DENE NATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

BOX 2516, YELLOWKNIFE, NT, XIA 2P8
PHONE/FAX 873-2726

MEMO TO: All Dene Chiefs

FROM: Members of the Dene Nation Review Committee

DATE: August 7, 1993

RE: Draft Constitution - **DENE NATION**

The Committee has, over the past three months, held a total of seven meetings to review the role and mandate of the Dene Nation. In order to solicit regional input to the process, the Committee held meetings in as many of the regions as possible. Early in the process it became apparent that there were widely opposing views as to what the role and responsibility of a national organization should be and it was clear that there existed some fundamental differences between regions.

On one hand there were those that felt that the Dene Nation should continue as a strong national organization and should assume the lead role in discussions and negotiations in regard to constitutional development in the Western Arctic and push for the establishment of a Dene government. This group also saw a national organization assuming jurisdiction and responsibility in a number of areas. On the other hand, others (largely those seeking comprehensive agreements) felt that, while the Dene Nation had served the Dene well in the past, its current structure and mandate does not reflect the realities of the present and that its "usefulness" in the current environment is limited. The Committee's observations "in the field" regarding the differing perspectives on the Dene Nation were underscored at the Leadership Meeting in Ndilo when the Committee presented four options to the Chiefs and received no clear direction as to the preferred option due to a lack of consensus as to the most appropriate "model" for a national organization.

Despite the differing views of the role and mandate of the Dene Nation the Committee is aware that there is general agreement on the need for some sort of facilitatory mechanism.. This is apparent from discussions of Committee members in their respective regions and from the comments of the Chiefs made during the January Leadership Meeting in Yellowknife.

The Committee was challenged to come up with a structure for a national organization which would accommodate the perspectives of all communities and regions. Committee members recognized that failure to develop a model for a national organization which meets the needs of **all** would, in all probability, result in further fracturing and polarization of Dene into regional "camps" and negate any possibility of accommodating the expressed need for a national organization for which there is, apparently, consensus agreement. Committee members also recognized that the development of model for a national organization which would receive consensus approval required compromise by all parties.

With the foregoing in mind, the Committee focussed its energies toward the development of a structure and mandate for a national organization which initially meets the minimum perceived requirements for such an organization but allows for an expanded mandate and operations subject to changing circumstances and the political will and requirements of Dene leadership. The Committee also sought to develop a structure which reflects and incorporates the traditional Dene order of jurisdiction and authority and which accommodates the immediate need for co-ordination and communication between Dene on issues of common concern at minimum cost.

Two draft constitutions for a Dene organization have been developed as a result of the Committee's work. As Committee members have been unable to reach a concensus

agreement as to the most appropriate model for a national organization, both models are being presented to you at this time for your consideration prior to the Dene Assembly later this month.

In pursuing the mandate given to it by the Leadership, the Committee also reviewed the operations of the Dene Cultural Institute and the Denendeh Development Corporation. The Committee's review of these organizations was in the broader context of their relevance as central Dene organizations and did not include exhaustive detailed analysis.

In the Committee's opinion, both organizations are, or can be, complementary to a national political organization. During the course of the Committee's work it was apparent that, for communities to work together effectively at the national level, traditional values at the community level need to be re-enforced and re-instated and elders need to be more involved in the decision making process. The mandate of the Dene Cultural Institute is to preserve and strengthen Dene culture and elders are actively involved in the development of the Cultural Institute's policies and guide the operations of the Institute. **The Committee believes that the Leadership should lend political support to the Dene Cultural Institute as a national organization.**

The structure and operations of the Denendeh Development Corporation have been a cause of concern for some time. This corporation has operated for several years without clear direction and has largely been ineffectual. For the most part, the Board of Directors, has operated in an information vacuum.

Despite these problems, the Committee believes that the Denendeh Development Corporation, like the Dene Cultural Institute, can fulfil an important role. This will require,

however, significant changes in the way the Corporation operates and interprets its mandate. In particular, there is a need to recognize that the environment in which the corporation presently operates has changed significantly from that which existed when the Corporation was established.

Generally, communities and regions no longer lack the capacity to pursue large scale economic development opportunities and there exists today a number of regional Dene corporations which have the capacity to join forces on a project by project basis to capitalize on opportunities which are "national" in scope. This suggests that the focus of the Denendeh Development Corporation be on advocacy and promotion of Dene economic development rather than business development. Such a focus would be entirely in keeping with the Corporation's charter and mandate. The Committee has developed general recommendations regarding the structure and operation of the Denendeh Development Corporation which it believes to be appropriate.

The Committee has worked diligently over the past several months to fulfil the mandate given to it by the Leadership. It is submitting this summary of its observations and conclusions together with draft constitutions so that you have an opportunity to review and discuss same with members of your community prior to the Assembly later this month.

Mahsi Cho

Frank T'Seleie
Chairman
Dene Nation Review Committee

Encl.

DENE NATION

DRAFT CONSTITUTION
(PREPARED BY THE DENE NATION REVIEW COMMITTEE)

Part I - Preamble

The Dene peoples of the Northwest Territories are born of a common heritage, with a traditional territory, culture, laws, beliefs and languages. The order of the Dene Nations is based on traditional land use and the traditional laws and customs of the Dene. The family is the fundamental economic, social, political and cultural unit of Dene.

Jurisdictions are exercised by families and are delegated to community groups, represented by Bands, according to traditional custom and practice. Community groups may establish regional organizations and, from time to time, delegate jurisdiction and authority to these regional bodies.

Dene community groups maintain authority and exercise jurisdiction over their lands and social, cultural, spiritual and economic well being but maintain traditional alliances to address and promote issues and initiatives of common concern. These alliances may involve two or more Dene community groups and/or all Dene community groups in the Northwest Territories. There is a need to foster and facilitate an alliance of all Dene of the Northwest Territories on an on-going basis and a requirement for a central organization to maintain co-ordination and communication between Dene community groups on issues of common concern. The jurisdiction and authority of an alliance of all Dene of the Northwest Territories is determined by the Dene community groups.

Part II - Constitution

Article 1:

The name of the Society is "The Dene Nation", hereinafter called the "Dene Nation".

Article 2:

The Dene Nation is a Confederation of autonomous, independent Dene Communities which, *for purely practical reasons (to be re-worded ??)*, is incorporated as a society under the laws of the Northwest Territories.

Article 3:

The objects of the Dene Nation are:

(a) To uphold the individual and collective Treaty and Aboriginal Rights and interests and Comprehensive Agreements between Dene and others.

(b) To discuss, develop and promote policies which further Dene self-determination and self-government.

(c) To provide policy and program support for the economic, social, educational, health and cultural benefit of Dene.

(d) To provide Dene with a strong voice both nationally and internationally.

(e) To co-operate with other First Nations of similar or friendly purposes.

(f) To facilitate communication between Dene community groups

Article 4: Mission Statement

The purpose of the Dene Nation is to provide a vehicle for Dene to lobby and advocate, as a collective, on issues of common concern and to protect and enhance the social, cultural and spiritual well being of Dene by undertaking, from time to time, programs and initiatives on behalf of the treaty peoples of the Northwest Territories when requested to do so by Dene communities.

Article 5:

The operations of the Dene Nation are to be carried on throughout the Northwest Territories and elsewhere.

Part III - Bylaws

Article 1: Membership

1.1 Membership of the Dene Nation shall consist of the Dene Leadership or Chiefs of Dene communities selected or appointed by Dene family groups according to traditional custom or practice.

Article 2: Leadership

2.1 The Leadership, as appointed or elected by Dene communities, shall manage the affairs of the Dene Nation.

2.2 The Leadership shall determine the jurisdiction and authority of the Dene Nation and establish general policies for the management and operation of a Secretariate in support of the Confederation's operation..

2.3 The Leadership may elect a spokesperson from among themselves or other Dene individual, for a term to be determined by the Leadership, to oversee the operations of the Dene Nation's Secretariate; to co-ordinate the administration of those jurisdictions which may, from time to time, be delegated to the Dene Nation; and to act as ambassador for the Dene Nation. Public pronouncements of the spokesperson for the Dene Nation will be governed by protocol established by the Leadership.

2.4 The Leadership may strike committees of its members to carry out any of the Leadership functions, on such terms as may be established by the Leadership.

Article 3: Meetings

3.1 An Annual or General meeting of the Dene Nation shall be held at least once in each calendar year at a time and place to be fixed by the Leadership.

3.2 Any Dene of the Northwest Territories registered on a Band membership register is entitled to attend Annual or General meetings of the Dene Nation to voice his/her opinion on any issue under discussion.

3.3 Voting members at an Annual or General meeting of the Dene Nation shall be the Leadership.

3.4 The Leadership may convene Special meetings whenever they deem it advisable and when at least one leader from each of the five regions has indicated, in writing, a need/desire to hold such a meeting.

3.5 An instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing and signed by the appointer. A person appointed by way of proxy must be registered on the same Band membership register as the appointer.

3.6 Two-thirds of the Leadership, either personally present or represented by proxy, shall constitute a quorum at any annual or special meeting of the Dene Nation.

3.7 Not less than one (1) month's notice of any Annual or General meeting shall be given by radio announcement, by newspaper advertisement, by mail or otherwise as the Leadership shall determine.

3.8 Special meetings of the Dene Nation may be held at anytime following notification, in writing, of all Leaders

Article 4: Informal Sessions

4.1 A resolution in writing signed by two-thirds of the Leadership shall be valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Leadership duly convened and held.

4.2 In all matters requiring action by the Leadership, and when the leadership is not in formal session, the Leadership may act by faximile, letter or long distance telephone.

4.3 Meetings of the Leadership may be conducted by conference telephone or radio telephone hook-up simultaneously linking all members of the Leadership, and such members may take action on the matter brought to their attention provided, however, whenever action is sought by any of the foregoing methods, all members of the Leadership shall be polled. Such action will be as though the Leadership was in formal session; providing however, that such action shall be confirmed at the next formal session of the Leadership.

Article 5: Secretariate

5.1 The Leadership shall create a Secretariate to serve the needs of the Dene Nation.

5.2 The mandate of the Secretariat shall be to facilitate and co-ordinated the workings of the Dene Nation and the attainment of its goals and objectives.

5.3 The jurisdiction and authorities of the Secretariate shall be determined by the Leadership.

5.4 The size and scope of the Secretariate's operations shall be determined from time to time by the Leadership but, at minimum, the Secretariate shall consist of an Executive Director and an Assistant.

5.5 The job descriptions for the Executive Director and the Assistant will be determined and approved by the Leadership.

5.6 The Executive Director shall have no policy making powers and shall not be empowered to make representations on behalf of the Dene Nation.

5.7 An annual operating budget for the Secretariate's CORE operations shall be approved by the Leadership and funded at the request of the Leadership.

5.8 From time to time the Leadership or one or more of the Dene communities may delegate jurisdiction and/or authority to the Secretariate for certain functions, programs or initiatives. Costs in support of additional responsibilities flowing from delegated jurisdictions or authorities shall be borne by and flow from those Dene communities delegating such jurisdiction or authority.

5.9 The Dene Nation's Secretariate will work only on those jurisdictions for which it is mandated and funded or resourced.

Article 6: Borrowing

6.1 Subject to a resolution being passed by all members of the Leadership, the Dene Nation may approve the borrowing or otherwise raising of money for any purpose of the Dene Nation or the securing of payment of any indebtedness created in the name or on behalf of the Dene Nation, by the sale, mortgage, pledge or other disposal of any property or assets of the Dene Nation, and may likewise authorize the Executive Director of the Secretariate for the purpose to sign any required documents or papers in connection with the name and on behalf of the Dene Nation.

Article 7: Audits and Records

7.1 The books and records of the Dene Nation shall be maintained by the Executive Director and shall be open to inspection by any member of the Leadership at any time

7.2 The accounts of the Dene Nation shall be audited by a firm of chartered accountants or such other accountants as may be designated by resolution of the Leadership at the annual General Meeting except that the Leadership has the right to waive the requirement for an audit of the accounts.

Article 8: Amendments

8.1 These by-laws shall not be altered, varied or rescinded unless at a annual General Meeting of the Dene Nation. The notice period required for any proposed by-law amendment shall be no less than thirty (30) days.

Article 9: Interpretation

9.1 The decision of the Leadership upon any question of interpretation not expressly provided for in these by-laws or in any resolution made thereunder shall be binding

9.2 In these by-laws if the context so warrants, the singular shall include the plural and the plural the singular, and the masculine shall include the feminine.

Article 10: Fiscal Year End

10.1 The fiscal year end of the Dene Nation shall be March 31.

THE CONFEDERATION OF DENE NATIONS

DRAFT CONSTITUTION
PREPARED BY THE
DENE NATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

PART I - CONSTITUTION

SECTION 1.

1.1 The Dene are a nation, born of a common heritage, with a traditional territory, culture, laws, beliefs and languages.

SECTION 2.

ORGANIZATIONAL ORDER

2.1 The order of the Dene Nations is based on traditional land use and the laws of the Dene as given by Yamoria and the past customary leaders of the Dene.

2.2 Jurisdictions are divided and exercised by the traditional families, the gathering of traditional families, the Tribal Councils and the Confederation according to customary practice.

2.3 THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY is the fundamental economic, social, political and cultural unit of the nation.

2.4 THE GATHERING OF TRADITIONAL FAMILIES govern through a Council of Elders, the Chief and the Councillors.
i. The gathering of Traditional Families maintain an office with Core funds from the Federal Government.

2.5 THE TRIBAL COUNCILS are structured by the coming together of the leadership, having a common language, to work towards the common good at a regional level.
i The Tribal Council maintains an office with Core funds from the Federal Government.

2.6 THE CONFEDERATION OF DENE NATIONS, is structured to provide services to the communities. Mandate and jurisdiction of the office is delegated by the leaders at the Gathering of the Traditional Families.

i. The Confederation of Dene Nations will maintain an office with core funds from the Federal Government.

ii. Costs to administer delegated jurisdictions will flow through the office of the Gathering of Traditional Dene Families.

SECTION 3.

THE LEADERSHIP:

3.1 Dene leaders are recognized Elders, the other natural leaders of the extended families, their representatives on the Gathering of Traditional Families, the elected Chiefs, the Tribal Spokespersons and the National Spokesperson.

3.2 Dene laws provide for men and women to have specific spheres of responsibility and authority.

3.3 Each Traditional Family selects and appoints its leader to represent them at the Gathering of Traditional Families.

3.4 The Chief of the Gathering of Traditional Families is elected by the membership of the Traditional Dene Families by secret ballot.

3.5 The Chief and Council meet to deal with issues affecting the Gathering of Traditional Families.

3.6 Elders recognize each other and meet at the level of the Gathering of Traditional Families to advise the Chief and Council and to deal with issues affecting the Traditional Families.

3.7 The Chiefs and one Elder from each Gathering of Traditional Families meet to deal with Tribal issues.

3.8 The Chiefs represent the Gathering of Traditional Families at the Confederation of Dene Nations.

SECTION 4.

Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Confederation of Dene Nations is to retain Dene sovereignty by strengthening the Dene spiritual beliefs and cultural values in Denendeh.

OBJECTIVES:

4.1 To uphold the individual and collective Treaty and Aboriginal Rights and interests and Comprehensive Agreements between the Dene and others.

4.2 To develop, discuss and promote policies for the peace, order and good government of the Dene.

4.3 To conduct, foster and support programmes and policies for the economic, social, educational, health and cultural benefit of the Dene as these may, from time to time, be delegated by the Gathering of Traditional Families.

4.4 To provide the Dene with a strong voice both nationally and internationally.

4.5 To co-operate with other nations of similar or friendly purposes.

SECTION 5.

JURISDICTIONS:

5.1 Traditional Family jurisdictions:

i The Traditional Family retains its customary land base.

ii. All activities and uses of the Traditional Family's customary land base are shared between the Traditional Family and the Gathering of Traditional Families.

iii. The Traditional Family maintains its jurisdiction over the family's culture, social development, economic activities within its customary land base.

iv. Membership in the Confederation is decided by the Traditional Family in consultation with the Gathering of Traditional Families.

v. Dene laws specific to the Traditional Family remain the jurisdiction of the Traditional Family.

5.2 Jurisdictions of the Gathering of Traditional Families are delegated by the Traditional Dene Families. These may include:

i. The customary land base of the Traditional Families is protected and administered by the leadership of the Gathering of Traditional Families.

ii. Disputes within a Traditional Family, and between Traditional Families are resolved by the Elders of the Gathering of Traditional Families.

iii. The Gathering of Traditional Families will provide for the education of its members.

iv. The Gathering of Traditional Families will provide administration and development work to fulfil the Traditional Family's juris-diction over culture, social development, and economic activities.

v. The Gathering of Traditional Families will maintain the records of membership.

   i. The Traditional Family has the right to inspect the records of its members at any time.

vi. The Gathering of Traditional Families will record and maintain the code of laws of its Traditional Families.

vii. The leadership of the Gathering of Traditional Families will take direction from its members, in annual assembly, in deciding the delegation of jurisdiction(s) to the Tribal Council and the Confederation of Dene Nations.

5.3 Tribal Council jurisdictions:

i. All matters pertaining to a region which have been delegated to the Tribal Council by the Gathering of Traditional Families.

5.4 Jurisdictions of the Confederation of Dene Nations:

i. All matters which are delegated by a Gathering of Traditional Families according to its custom.

ii. The office of the Confederation of Dene Nations will work only on those jurisdictions for which they are funded or resourced.

PART II PROVISIONS GOVERNING THE CONFEDERATION OF DENE NATIONS

SECTION 1.

MEMBERSHIP:

1.1 All individuals registered on a Band membership register and being eighteen (18) years of age have full rights in the Confederation of Dene Nations.

1.2 All registered members have the right to vote.

1.3 It is the responsibility of registered members to atten a polling station to vote.

SECTION 2.

ASSEMBLIES:

2.1 An Assembly of the Confederation of Dene Nations shall be held at least once in each calendar year.

2.2 The Assembly shall be held at a place to be fixed by the preceding Assembly of the Confederation.

2.3 Voting members at the assembly are the Chiefs from each of the Gatherings of Traditional Families.

SECTION 3.

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION:

1.3 The Chiefs in Council of the Confederation of Dene Nations may elect a spokesperson from among themselves or a member at large to oversee their office; to coordinate the administration of those jurisdictions which may, from time to time, be delegated to the Confederation; and to act as ambassador for the Confederation.

DENE NATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

BOX 2516, YELLOWKNIFE, NT, XIA 2P8
PHONE/FAX 873-2726

MEMO TO: Regional Tribal Councils

FROM: Frank T'Seleie, Chairman
Dene Nation Review Committee

DATE: August 23, 1993

SUBJECT: Committee budget and expenditures to date

I would advise that the Committee's budget and cash position is as follows. Expenditures to date do not include costs associated with a meeting of the Committee in Hay River and costs related to attendance at the Dene Nation Assembly. The information is therefore preliminary in nature.

Total Budget: $90,000

Source of Funding:

Dene Nation	$30,000
I&IA	20,000
GNWT	20,000
Tribal Councils	20,000
	$90,000

Received to Date:

In Cash & Kind:

I&IA	$20,000
GNWT	15,000
Dene Nation	22,500
Dehco TC	4,000
	$61,500

Expenditures to Date: (Cash & Kind)	$61,858
Cash Deficit (to end of July)	($358)

Higher than expected costs were incurred in the early stages of the Committee's work and the decision to hold meetings of the Committee in the regions has added significantly to costs. Our original work plan called for four meetings of the Committee. To date a total of eight meetings have been held.

Both the GNWT and I&IA have agreed to additional funding totalling $15,000 ($7,500 each). In addition, there is still approximately $7,500 to be received from the Dene Nation and some $16,000 from the Tribal Councils as per their original commitment of support to Committee operations.

A detailed financial report will be made available on completion of the Committees activities.

Mahsi Cho.

Frank T'Seleie
Chairman