

# **Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples** **Final Report**

**July 30, 1993.**

## **Introduction**

The Royal Commission's Report introduces various Gwich'in Tribal Council initiatives and a path to the future for the Gwich'in. The report is divided into five major topics based on the Tribal Council's Mission Statement: Gwich'in Land, Culture and Economy for a better future. In particular, special attention is given on future plans within each of the categories identified in the Mission Statement.

The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement received Royal assent on December 22, 1993 entrenching the Gwich'in Agreement in the Constitution of Canada. The Gwich'in spent many years in the negotiations; as well, it required a great deal of financial and human resources to complete the agreement. The investment in negotiations is finished, and now we must invest in our communities.

## **1. GWICH'IN**

### **1.1 Enrolment Board**

The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement establishes an Enrolment Board that shall identify all Gwich'in and control the process of enumerating our membership. This Board has started the application process by having participants fill out registration forms. These provisions of the agreement recognize Gwich'in control over their membership; as well, a key matter for self-government negotiations shall be membership (citizenship). The Agreement does not distinguish a blood line and all Metis are included in the Comprehensive Agreement. It is hoped that distinguishing factors in legislation (Indian Act) will also follow the Gwich'in Agreement at the conclusion of a self-government agreement.

### **1.2 Training and Education**

Our greatest investment is in our people. The Gwich'in Tribal Council, for this second year, provides a scholarship to post-secondary students. We have worked with the University of Lethbridge in the development of a Management Training program that shall give Gwich'in individuals university-accredited skills to further their education or take management positions in government, Gwich'in organizations or businesses. As well, we have continued in our partnership with the Canada Employment and



Immigration Commission to operate job-entry, upgrading, and literacy programs.

It is important to work with our children to improve the quality of education. Our efforts with the Divisional Board of Education will increase the grade level in Aklavik and Fort McPherson to 12. We have taken part in the development of the Teacher Education Program to increase the number of Gwich'in instructors in our schools. These two steps must also be followed up with improvements in the quality of education. Several initiatives will ensure that the quality of education shall include Gwich'in heritage, culture and language.

- The Tribal Council and government are supporting a comprehensive 5 year study to identify heritage sites in the traditional Gwich'in territories. Unlike projects of the past each heritage site shall also have a historical profile description.
- The Gwich'in Language Centre continues to build on curriculum developed by printing of program materials for the classrooms.
- The Gwich'in Tribal Council is funding two major "spirit camps" and will lobby government to integrate social and cultural programs within the camps.

We continue to develop and implement different training programs in our businesses, such as: heavy equipment operators, truck drivers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians.

### **1.3 Social Programs**

Another aspect to the development of our people is improving social programming. Changing the justice system is a priority. Justice Committees are in place in each of our communities and we have received some support from the Territorial Government for these committees. As well, funding is provided for the creation of on-the-land camps for corrections, alcohol counselling, etc. These camps follow up on the "spirit camp" concept approved at our last Assembly. We shall be working with government to redirect programs and services to use these camps.

In Fort McPherson the concept of a community based mental health worker has been accepted by government as an effective means to address mental health problems such as suicides. A proposal to expand and fund community-based mental health workers in our communities is now being considered by government.



Another major initiative is to transfer control over government programs and services to the communities. To date each of the four Gwich'in communities have developed workplans for the negotiations of community transfer initiatives. If negotiations are successful we will see actual transfers occurring by March of 1994.

Self-government negotiations have also started. A self-government agreement will enable the Gwich'in to directly control their own affairs and make their own laws. We are involved not only in direct negotiations with government but have created a committee with the Inuvialuit to reshape public government in the Beaufort and Delta regions. The committee will develop a government model for the region and communities that also respects Gwich'in and Inuvialuit self-government aspirations. If successful the Western Territories Constitutional Development process will create a new order of government prior to the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

Community Transfers, Self-government Negotiations and Constitutional Development will give Gwich'in First Nations the control necessary to dictate the manner in which programs and services are developed and delivered in our communities. It will no longer be government deciding what is best for the community but rather a community will decide.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council formed the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and is seeking to hire a Director of this Institute. The Gwich'in Social and Culture Institute will begin to develop social and cultural programs and services that shall be responsive to Gwich'in needs and strengthen Gwich'in culture. The Institute shall address the following issues:

**Social:**

- Social problems shall be solved in an integrated fashion, taking into account the environment of the Gwich'in: economy, mental and physical health, social services, justice, housing, education and culture.
- The primary goal of social programs is the promotion of self-reliance rather than dependence, in order to achieve a fairer distribution of income and meet the basic needs of the poor.
- The Institute will promote and develop the role of women as equal participants in the Gwich'in Nation because women are an under-utilized resource.

**Education and Training:**

- develop a comprehensive system of life-long learning;



- conduct a permanent life-skills training to enhance self-esteem;
- develop academic skills to increase the range of career opportunities;
- assist individuals to achieve career goals; and
- monitor the training needs of the Gwich'in.

#### **Health:**

- develop preventative health programs and services directed at reducing dependency on treatment of health problems and in the long term establish a greater control within community health systems;
- promote community participation in the health systems; and
- develop and implement mental health programs such as stress management, self-esteem, self-confidence and counseling services.

#### **Social Services:**

- develop community-based social action programs for child welfare, substance abuse, family assault and other problems associated with the disintegration of the family and community;
- develop an integrated system of social counseling;
- develop a system of assistance which respects an individual's self-esteem and lessens dependence.

#### **Justice:**

- create a community-based justice system modeled on traditional values, while involving the community in policing, sentencing, legal services, and corrections.

#### **Housing**

- assist Gwich'in in obtaining affordable housing.

## **2. CULTURE**

In cooperation with the Divisional Board of Education, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute will manage the Gwich'in Language and Cultural Centre. The Centre's major initiatives are to improve the use of the language by developing teaching materials, language immersion programs and



Gwich'in literacy workshops. Another program supported by the Tribal Council is to identify various place names in the Settlement Area. Beginning in Arctic Red River, the research will also identify important Gwich'in heritage sites.

The Centre works to revitalize, promote and protect Gwich'in heritage. Some of the worktasks of the Centre are:

- research and integrate traditional values and knowledge in government programs;
- develop curriculum and programs for language and cultural instruction;
- institute language immersion in the schools and on-the-land programs; and
- promote the use of elders as educators of the language, traditional skills and values, and advise the Gwich'in government.

#### Relevant Cultural Programs and Services

The Community Transfer process is being used to begin the redesigning of government programs and services. To date initial work has been completed on Justice, social financial assistance, housing, education (language curriculum and program), and community based mental health services. This work shall intensive in the next six months as negotiations begin and conclude with a community transfer agreement. The Gwich'in are the only group that have clearly stated that the programs and services must be changed instead of taking over the program and services as they are now delivered by government.

In addition, to ensuring the program or service is culturally relevant is to transfer control over the program and service to a community authority. Community based delivery shall guarantee that community problems are dealt with rather than a government authority being unable to respond because of criteria or program design.

### **3. LAND**

The issue of land and resources was resolved when Parliament passed the Gwich'in Land Claim Settlement Act enacting the provisions of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. However, there are many implementation worktasks arising from the Agreement. Three of the most important are:

- the creation of a Renewable Resource Board and local Councils;



- the creation of land and water regulatory system;
- the development of a Gwich'in land administration for the management and control of Gwich'in lands.

#### Renewable Resource Board and Renewable Resource Councils

The Renewable Resource Board will be the main instrument of wildlife management and conservation in the settlement area. It may introduce policies and propose regulations for forest management, wildlife harvesting, and the operation of guiding, outfitting, hunting, fishing and naturalist businesses.

The Renewable Resource Board held its first meeting in June and decided that because of the Board's numerous worktasks and interrelationships between the Board, Government and the local Renewable Resource Councils, a major organizational review would be carried out. A major task in the next year will be to develop the wildlife and harvest studies. The Board shall be located in Inuvik in the new Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council building.

The Gwich'in communities have established their renewable resources councils. The councils, which will have boards of no more than seven local people, will work to encourage and promote local involvement in conservation, harvesting studies, research and wildlife management. The RRCs may also take on an additional role of land administration in the near future.

#### Land and Water Regulatory System:

Land Use Planning, Environmental Impact Review and the Land and Water Boards are to be created by government legislation in the next year-and-a-half. The development of legislation requires a high degree of consultation between the Gwich'in and the federal and territorial governments and a Tripartite Coordinating Committee has been created to facilitate this consultation process. Major issues such as the regulatory control Gwich'in will have on their own lands and the process for the review of land and water use applications must be detailed in the legislation.

The Interim Land Use Planning Board has also been created until the previously mentioned Boards are formed by legislation. The Board has developed a Terms of Reference which will be considered by government and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. The Board will also be hiring a Land Use Planner and may hire a trainee. The permanent Planning Board will be responsible for land use planning in the settlement area. When the land use plan is approved by government and the Gwich'in, authorities with



jurisdiction over licensing, issuing of permits and other forms of land authorizations related to land and water use will have to conduct their operations in accordance with the plan. The board may propose amendments or exceptions to the plan.

The Environmental Impact Review Board will assess development proposals in the Mackenzie Valley to determine the impact on the environment. During a review, public consultations or hearings will take place in the affected communities. Following its assessment or review of a development proposal, the board will recommend to the appropriate Minister approval, with or without terms and conditions, or rejection.

The Land and Water Board will begin to regulate land and water use by December 1994. This includes Gwich'in, Crown, and private land. It will amend, issue or renew licenses, permits and authorizations for all land and water use, including those necessary for exercising subsurface rights.

It will be a challenge to create these boards and ensure that they manage land and water in the Gwich'in Settlement Region in a manner consistent to Gwich'in tradition and land use.

#### Gwich'in Land Administration

The Gwich'in Land Management and Control Rules have been developed and are presented to the delegates of the Assembly. These rules will determine the process for the management of Gwich'in lands, such as, land use approvals and inspections. We have attempted to make the application process as simple as possible, not only encouraging development of the land but as well to make our process understandable and ensure that the environmental integrity of the land and the renewable resources are maintained.

To date we have issued several permits and leases on Gwich'in lands. These rules will govern our land and it is important for local people to know these rules and enforce them. Our experience to date is that non-Gwich'in are not aware of Gwich'in lands and have not learned to respect the concept of private lands. These rules set out the procedure that other people must follow if they wish to use our lands. We must also begin to monitor our lands and inspect any land use to ensure that terms and conditions we set for land use are met.

#### Gwich'in Laws of General Application

The Gwich'in Tribal Council proposed to amend the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement to include an additional matter for self-government negotiations to allow for the negotiations of law making



powers over Gwich'in lands. This will enable the Gwich'in to pass laws that shall replace laws of general application and bring about a greater degree of control and autonomy over Gwich'in lands and resources.

#### **4. ECONOMY**

The growth of the Gwich'in economy has received the highest priority of the Tribal Council and member communities. In particular, the success of various construction projects (Fort McPherson Old Nursing Station and Inuvik's Old Fire Hall) and various road construction projects has generated not only income for individuals but employment and trades skills. A major interest of the community corporations is to develop Gwich'in businesses so they are competitive and will be able to carry out construction projects generating employment initiatives. In this manner, the Gwich'in will be able to retain all money spent in the community. This will improve the income levels of our people and hopefully the quality of life.

Another aspect of the economy which we are currently investigating and developing is tourism. The On-the-Land Program will build the facilities that can lodge tourists on our lands for various tourist-related activities. Some other initiatives are:

- survey training;
- parks management and development and maintenance;
- brush clearing contracts;
- computerized information systems (GIS, data base etc.);
- real estate ventures;
- provision of housing and rental units; and
- business loan fund (CAEDS).

The Gwich'in Tribal Council is using the resources from the land claim agreement to leverage financing to build infrastructure in the communities. The construction of buildings also improves the overall financial capabilities and is viewed as long term investments that have an improved return on investment than commercial investment agencies.

As well economic development is viewed as an investment in people. All economic ventures must have an improvement in the human resources. Construction shall have carpentry, plumbing and electrical training as well as construction management training. Road construction and maintenance



shall ensure that all drivers and equipment operators have the proper license. A geographic information system will ensure that local renewable resource council personnel are computer literate and can input relevant data. As well, it is important to note that management training will begin to be offered to local businessmen in workshops and certificate programs for management students.

## **5. THE FUTURE**

The Tribal Council shall continue to coordinate and assist the communities in the following areas:

- community transfer initiatives and negotiations in all four Gwich'in communities;
- self-government negotiations;
- work with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on the development of a public government institution for the Western Arctic; and
- Constitutional Development for the Western Territories.

It is hoped that within the next year the communities will begin the long process of assuming control over government programs and services.

The continued development of Gwich'in social and cultural programs will also be a priority, such as:

- the implementation of a On-the-Land Program;
- the continued developmental work of community-based justice committees; and
- the implementation of an education and training strategy.

The economy will be a major priority of the Tribal Council, its Development Corporations, and community businesses. It is important for Gwich'in individuals to have a source of employment and we will continue to negotiate and bid on projects in the area. Government is the major spender in the region and it is with government that we have started a dialogue in obtaining control over any funds expended in our communities.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council has met extensively with investment councilors over the past three years, and is still discussing different approaches to preserving land claim payments for future generations. The investments to date are all qualified investments as defined in the Agreement under



Settlement Corporation and are not subject to taxes. To date the Gwich'in Tribal Council has received a total of thirteen million dollars in land claim payments and has earned nearly \$900,000 in interest on this money. In addition, the remainder of the \$75 million land claim compensation earns about 9% interest as long as the government holds this money.

Approximately \$1.1 million has been committed to two building renovations: the old Nursing Station in Fort McPherson is now the new Tribal Council headquarters and Tetlit Gwich'in Council office, and the old Fire Hall in Inuvik will house the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council, as well as some Tribal Council and land claim board offices. These two buildings are 60% owned by the respective community organizations, and 40% owned by the Gwich'in Development Corporation. These projects also created a great deal of employment income for Gwich'in participants.

In conclusion, the Tribal Council supporting the lead role of the communities shall strengthen a governing role in the region, improve economic conditions and revitalize our heritage in the next year. It is the support of our people that shall determine how far we as a leadership shall be able to take these goals.



## **Appendix I Workshop Format**

### **Day I**

- 1) Development of Mission Statement(s)
  - Community Development Mission Statement
  - Mission Statements for:
    - Education/Training
    - Social/Cultural - includes spiritual
    - Economic - includes renewable resources
    - Political - includes institutions, organizational development

### **Day II**

- 2) Identification of Goals and Activities to achieve Mission Statements
  - presentation and review or preparation of "wish list";
  - group discussions on methods to achieve wish lists.

### **Day III**

- 3) Integration of Activities into Goals
  - some activities will seek to achieve the same goal it may be necessary to coordinate several activities
- 4) Prioritize Goals
  - presentation on existing resources (internal and government)
  - which goals with their attached activities are a priority to solve community problems or which goal is realistically obtainable.
  - determine what ground work may be needed to prepare for the implementation of activities which are to be implemented immediately and which are not to be implemented.



## Appendix II

### Gwich'in Tribal Council Activities Interim Report

#### General

The following is an update of staff activities directly or indirectly related to the Royal Commission project. The following reports on all of the activities of the Tribal Council to provide an overview of the issues, developmental areas, and potential opportunities for the future.

- **Implementation** - carry out activities and obligations as stated in the Gwich'in Implementation Plan, such as:
  - Reallocation of funds - budgets must be adjusted by Implementation Committee to suit changed activities and delay in the passage of Settlement Legislation;
  - appointments to Boards (appointments of RRB, Interim LUP, Arbitration Panel, Peel River Watershed Advisory Committee {as well description of nominees background and press release must be prepared});
  - Renewable Resource Council's - establish RRC's, budgets must be approved, investigate option of GNWT HTA payment pooled with RRC;
  - Land Use Planning - review Beaufort/Delta Land Use Planning Commission Plan to see what work is to be carried out by Interim Land Use Planning Board -may require adjustments in Implementation funding;
  - Renewable Resource Board - liaison work with Gwich'in Board members;
  - Enrollment and LUP board coordinators - to be advertised;
  - Interim Measures agreement - system of land use permits to be negotiated;
  - royalties for sand and gravel - negotiate fair and reasonable compensation;

- negotiate - self-government institutions and authorities.
- **Community Transfer Initiatives** - the GNWT proposes to transfer greater responsibilities over programs and services:
  - funding - complete service contracts for this years funding;
  - draft Framework Agreement (Plan) - that shall set the general terms and conditions for transfers (for cabinet and community approvals);
  - funding - complete contribution agreement proposals for '93 - '94 funding; and
  - design Gwich'in programs and services, (i.e. Social Financial Assistance Pilot Project).
- **Training** - the Gwich'in are partners with Canada Employment Centre in Inuvik in assessing training needs and allocating funds for training programs. This arrangement extends to Arctic College and Advanced Education.
  - Pathways - prepare and organize Pathways Board '93 - '94 funding submissions and develop One Funding (block funding) agreement for CEIC's consideration;
  - Management Training - assist in the development of a management training program with the University of Lethbridge, such as: funding proposals, needs and assessments and design of program, may also wish to incorporate the development of a community transfer training plan; and
  - Arctic College - develop and create a mechanism or process to monitor Arctic College activities.
- **Education** - the Divisional Board of Education proposes to extend grade levels in Fort McPherson and Aklavik to grade 12 over the next 3 years, this will require long distance education methods; as well, a Teachers Education and Aboriginal Language Instructors program is proposed for this year.
  - Long Distance Education - assist in the development of a long term education strategy/workplan;
  - TEP - assist in the organizing of the Teachers Education Program;



- Grade Extension - monitor work on grade extensions in Aklavik and Fort McPherson;
  - Culture and Language - develop relevant cultural curriculum and language instruction; and
  - Grollier Hall - monitor Grollier Hall staff and assist wherever possible (appoint member to the Grollier Hall Advisory Council).
- **Health**
    - Health Board - monitor activities and restructure Health Board
  - **Social and Cultural** - the GTC Annual Assembly approved a workplan for the social and cultural development of their people.
    - Social and Cultural Institute - incorporate Social and Cultural Institute's and charitable status application, advertise for social and cultural coordinator;
    - Justice Committees - educate, organize and advise Justice Committees and develop supports for Justice Committees (corrections and counselling services);
    - Language Centre - develop agreement to turnover language centre funds, organize language and cultural centre's workplan for next year funding; and
    - Immersion Programs - the Tribal Council will conduct studies on methods of immersion including in the home, bush and within the community.
  - **Economic Development** - there is a great deal of interest in the creation of businesses and employment within the communities:
    - Business Development - business plans must be developed (community to initiate concept and develop plan and reviewed by accounting and legal experts);
    - EDA - direct economic development consultant to prepare EDA submissions based on community ideas;
    - CAEDS - develop CAEDS funding proposal; and

- surveys - Gwich'in involvement in surveys;
  - communication strategy - prepare information to the public on agreement;
  - Implementation Committee meeting - with RRB, LUP and Enrollment Boards (March) in Inuvik to brief on work tasks and discuss budgets;
  - Coordinating Group - develop legislative drafting guidelines for Land Use Planning, Environmental Impact and Review and Land and Water Boards;
  - Gwich'in Corporations - ensure all Corporations are properly set up, formal appointments should be completed;
  - Gwich'in Land Administration guidelines and fees schedule - to be drafted and in some cases negotiated with government; and
  - proposal to Enrollment, RRB, LUP Boards prepared to use Gwich'in administration - (secretarial, office rents and other supports).
- **Constitutional Development** - since the establishment of Nunuvut there is a need to develop a constitution for the Western portion of the Territories;
    - review constitutional development workplan - attend Political Leaders meeting and Constitutional Conference;
    - prepare funding proposals; and
    - Gwich'in Self-government - prepare position paper.
  - **Self-government Negotiations** - the Gwich'in Self-government Framework Agreement obligates government to negotiate self-government agreements:
    - prepare funding proposal;
    - Gwich'in Institutions and Public Government - prepare discussion paper on self-government institutions;
    - Inuvialuit/Gwich'in Committee - to develop a working model for government within the region that shall seek to balance aboriginal and public government, regional and community government; and



- Investment - determine the most appropriate investment portfolio for claims financial payments.
- **Information** - there is a need to provide the GTC membership with information on the worktasks above:
  - Community Development Indicators Study - develop a data base that can monitor statistics on goals and activities of the Tribal Council;
  - Newsletter - develop a paper similar to Gwich'in Seasons;
  - Communications Network - develop an efficient system of communications between the Gwich'in organizations; and
  - GIS - develop a GIS capacity in all communities.
- **Administration** - once the worktasks have been reviewed and considered it will be important to know who will carry out the worktasks and identify funding sources.
  - prepare '93 - '94 funding proposals (CAEDS, Self-gov't, Tribal Council)
  - budget for Tribal Council
  - organizational plan
  - job descriptions (after jobs have been identified and where located)
  - personnel policy

**Appendix III  
Methodology Report  
Whitehorse Workshop  
February 12, 1993**

**Introduction**

The primary method in completing the Royal Commission Report was to conduct a elders/youth conference. This conference used a workshop format with the Gwich'in leadership presenting material to the delegates and facilitating the workshop.

Resource persons were deliberately left out of the workshop to ensure that the delegates were able to develop positions and strategies without interference. The resource persons were used purely as recorders and recorded documents were verified by the leadership and delegates as accurate accounting of the discussions. The following methodology report is divided into two sections: a summary of statements and summary of group discussions.

**Summary of Conference Statements**

**Robert Alexie**

Introduction on the purpose of the workshop. The Gwich'in Tribal Council is going through dramatic changes. Will provide the delegates with some financial information and a list of activities. Perhaps we can break into groups to discuss some of these major issues. We must work out the mandate of the GTC after the settlement of the land claim. Some of the major changes are:

- There is a need to change the GTC's organization structure, for example, technically, the Band Councils and Metis Locals cannot have anything to do with the agreement. We must figure out how the new structure of DGO's is going to work. After we know the organizational structure we will need to know what staff is necessary to carry out the work tasks of the organizations.
- We know that the GTC Annual Assembly approved of the headquarters to move to McPherson and we must figure out what staff is necessary and how that staff shall serve the other communities.
- The role of the RRC and the establishment of the RRC is questionable and we must know what these bodies are going to do;
- Perhaps some of the things that the GTC has developed are wrong so we may have to change what we are doing.
- We must also make some Board appointments (5 Boards).



- Self-government must be discussed, we are also discussing community transfer initiatives with GNWT. We are having problems with certain programs and services. Come up with some of your own ideas on self-government. Some initiatives are already being undertaken ( for example the transfer of the AEDO in Fort McPherson). The basic thing we want to work out is what do we want to see in the region. There are very large issues to be worked out, for example, corrections, alcohol problems etc.
- Investments - we have a large amount of money and we have some investment firms looking after the money. But how do we make the money work for us.
- Public Relations - how do we let the people know what is going on. We had a paper Gwich'in Seasons. We must keep people informed. The Inuvialuit have a newspaper, perhaps we can buy one page out of it.
- Dene/Metis - how do we work with them or do we want to work with them.

The workshop is like a brainstorming session. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Put any of your ideas down on a paper.

### **James Ross**

Since we are in the Yukon Territories we should let the Yukon native organizations know what we are doing. CYI went through a reorganization several years ago. Along with Judy Gringell of CYI the Government Leader has been invited for lunch. Richard Nerysoo will be flying over and should be here by lunch. We must work with the Yukon to hopefully establish better relations.

You have a lot of economic and political power, so you must determine what you want to do with it. Before we had to go and meet with people now people must meet with us. We want to start off this claim right. Each of the communities is doing different things. Other people want to use Gwich'in money as well. There is a lot of pressure from outside and within our communities to do things with the land claims. The negotiations lasted for 20 years, and we asked every one to vote for it because it contains land, money and management. A lot of people are wondering where their land claim is, and they receive no benefit (don't have a job, or trapping is dead). Our own people are asking what are we going to get out of the agreement. We never had the time to sit down and figure out what we want or how to solve problems. A plan of action must be prepared and who is going to do what. A lot of people are confused and don't know where they are going so they will get mad at us for not keeping them informed. So this workshop is to set out our goals for the future - where do we want to go, then we will figure out how we will get there.

### **Charlie Showshoe**

I would like to say that I am happy to be with the group. It has been many years since this land claim started. A lot of people are asking what is going on. We must do some planning. I know that our elders with their prayers has got us where we are today. We also have our sobriety. People are having problems on the other side of the world. Here I am thankful for what we have today, we must thank God for what we have. There are not to many of us left who started this process. The Chief of Arctic Red River has the future of his children in mind so I am glad to see the young people here today. We had to listen to government in the past but now our young people have the knowledge to tell government what to do. I will rely on the young people for their knowledge.

### **Dale Blake**

A lot of people do not know why they are here. But we must begin to work for ourselves. A lot of money is going out of town.

### **Tommy Wright**

We should not be mad at each other. We may think differently but maybe when we finish we will have things worked out.

### **Peter Ross**

The GTC has a lot of things on there plate. Perhaps the community can take on some of these worktasks. This leadership has done a lot of work, it is so much work that we can't think straight, we must begin to delegate the worktasks out. We must work together, we must make people feel that they are part of the claim and our organizations. Perhaps they will have ideas that can make things work out better for us. We must also get the best people possible to sit on the boards for implementation. The leadership will not last for ever, so we must get young people involved. We must be very tough with government and other people about our land and use the elders who have a good knowledge of the land.

### **Ernest Firth**

Why don't we take notes and present them to the workshop or pass on to other people. So this will get all of the ideas down.



### **Mary Teya**

We start a meeting with a prayer. We should ask for God's strength. We are not expressing our feelings and coming together. At one time our leaders were our head people and they had respect for their people. We must care for our people. We are all confused with this land claim it is too much and it gives us a hard time but we must get involved. This is the time when we can fight the white people with their own weapons this is why we need the young people. I am concerned with the money and how it can work for us. People with education can help us. What kind of future for the little ones is there. We are going to have to work hard for them. They can sit and drink and watch TV or we can be concerned and help them. We should explain to our people what is going on even though we may not get a response. The same thing as a dog team, you have a lead dog for a few years and you must replace him with another one. People and leaders never used to ask for pay to do something for someone else.

I used to have a problem with alcohol so I quit drinking. But my problems did not go away. So I have turned to my spirituality. My father used to provide for us. When he died I felt good because he gave me everything and he was going to have a good rest. When we have a discussion we should work together because we must work hard.

### **Robert Alexie Sr.**

I would like to see everything in our four communities to be run by our own people. What is going to happen in the future after our leaders are gone today. We must involve the children.

### **Ruth Carol**

I am proud of you people because you speak up and tell people what is on your mind. I know how hard it is to work in your communities. My mother is in long term care and taught me what to do. The person that she talked about was Chief Julius and people were having sports days. One of the favorite sports was wrestling. Chief Julius would play wrestle even with old women. Maybe we should have a big wrestling match so we can get our frustrations out.

### **Robert Alexie Jnr.**

All my life I have worked alone. I never worked with people, and it took me a long time to get up the nerve to talk to people. It is something that you must get comfortable with. We should try and keep this kind of discussion going.

**Jo Benoit**

I am the Aklavik delegation. We generally know what is wrong. We elected our leadership and something's are carried out well by staff. Last Assembly there was talk about the spirit camps and we must do something about it, the Divisional Board is funding a summer camp for the Inuvialuit.

**Peter Ross**

Why do our children go to school in Inuvik to finish school?

**James Ross**

We have a lot of children dropping out of school. There is a lot of issues in which you have brought up in this short session. The problem that we have is that we have so many issues and they are all important. Education , alcohol, spirituality, and working with ourselves, and housing etc. What we have to do is come up with a plan - what do we do about it and who we get to do it. We will come up with all of the issues and make a big list.

**William Greenland**

Our language is important to us. How are we going to teach our young children. We should all put on paper what the issues are. We must talk amongst ourselves. You will get use to speaking in front of people. We must educate our own people and give out information. We should have our own newspaper. We were selected to come to this workshop because we all have something to offer and to put our mind together and take it back to the communities, this way we can get more input from the communities.

**Catherine Mitchell**

We should put our minds together and work together. We must get to know each other.

**Charlie Snowshoe**

During negotiations one of the problems we had was with the Inuvialuit. In the LUP meetings, the Inuvialuit said this is our Commission. This was the first time that we sat with them. What we did by working together was show the Inuvialuit leadership that we can work together. The trips I made to their communities I did not have the knowledge of their land so I could not answer their questions. The people asking questions did not have to make me look foolish because I have the same educated people at home. If I have a



problem I bring it up in the meetings even if I feel stupid in asking the question.

**Robert Alexie Jnr.**

The newspaper idea has been around for a long time. It is run like a business. Peter Ross stated something about education. But this education system is not our own. We do not know our own history for example. What is wrong with our education system and how can we make it work for us. If it is not working for us get rid of it. For example, the Liquor Act will not allow us to restrict liquor sells in Fort McPherson because we have a liquor outlet, so change the Liquor Act. We know the problems and we must work out solutions.

**Robert Alexie**

Explained the basis of membership in comparison to the CYI claim as presented by Judy Gringell. The membership is a basis for the organizational structure of Gwich'in institutions. The DGO, and Gwich'in Tribal Council were explained. The Gwich'in Tribal Council is the sole member in the Gwich'in Trust, Gwich'in Settlement Corporation, Gwich'in Land Corporation, Gwich'in Development Corporation and the Social and Cultural Institute. We need in all of these organizations Board members appointed.

We have many different worktasks that we may identify in this workshop and these organizations will have to carry out these worktasks. The worktasks are carried out by Tribal organizations and communities and there are different types of organizations carrying out related activities. We must figure out how we may streamline all of our activities. In particular the DGO at a community level must be come activated.

**Willard Hagen**

The appointments to various Boards shall be carried out by the GTC but the nominations will come from the community DGO's. We should not mix the political and economic institutions because they may have different goals.

**Peter Ross**

Where can we replace the Band with the DGO?

**James Ross**

We should not get hung-up on name of DGO (Designated Gwich'in Organization). We should just replace this DGO concept with our Councils. We can use the existing administrations for the new Gwich'in Councils. In

this manner we are utilizing existing money more effectively. We have our own money to carry out worktasks and we should not be scared of using it. We have to identify the work loads and then seek the moneys to implement them this may mean that we may have to use our own funds.

**Robert Alexie Jnr.**

Went through the current funds of the Tribal Council. We don't want conflicts or duplications between our organizations and worktasks. So we must come up with solutions (referred to the construction company). We have to identify the problems, for example high drop out rate. With a solution we must identify who is going to carry out the work tasks.

Explained the DGO and RRC for the delegates.

**Robert Alexie Jnr. - continued**

Summary of the questions that each delegate or working groups should address.

What is the problem?

Why is there a problem?

What is the solution to the problem?

Who is going to carry out the solution?

How are they (it) to carry out the solution?

General discussion about Gwich'in participants mistreating the land and wildlife by Dale Blake. Mary Teya also stated that we pollute our land and we don't do anything about it. It is important that we regulate not only other users of land and wildlife but don't be scared to enforce our own laws own our own people.

The land claim agreement does allow the Gwich'in to regulate their own activities.



## SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Whitehorse Workshop

February 13, 1993.

The Delegates were placed in groups to answer the following questions:

- What are the problems that the Gwich'in face today?
- How do you solve the problem?
- Who is going to carry out the activity to solve the problem?
- When will the activity be carried out?
- Where is the activity carried out?

### Education

#### Problem

- Generally people felt that the education system is foreign to their children's future needs.
- The parental guidance and elders involvement is no longer part of the child's upbringing.
- The separation of the children from the parents disrupts any parental guidance.

#### Goal

- To benefit our children and make them aware of our history and the culture of our people.

#### Activity

- Grade extensions are a positive activity but we should ensure that the children have the best education and fullest opportunities to further their education.
- Cultural and language instruction must improve and include Gwich'in history, family trees, traditional environmental knowledge and traditions (Northern Studies Course). It is essential to involve the elders.
- We must involve the parents in the education of the children. One method might be to educate the parents on the importance of education.
- Grollier Hall should have a Gwich'in counsellor.
- Teachers should be hired for longer periods of time. Familiarize teachers with the culture (parents, children and community). The Teachers Education Program will begin to develop a home produced teaching staff.
- Students should be given trades or career orientations (career presentations). Role models should be used.

- Summer camps should be established to improve the students academic standing. Tutoring programs will also assist the students and force students to do their homework.
- Literacy and lifeskills programs are necessary to ensure people are trainable.
- Community Gwich'in Councils must be more involved, teachers should feel welcome to go to community organizations for resources and problem solving. CEC directors must be knowledgeable about education.

#### When

- Education is on-going but should begin immediately to implement worktasks for the next two to three years.

### **Renewable Resource (Councils)**

#### Problem

- The change from a Hunters and Trappers Committee to a Renewable Resource Council has caused confusion.
- Some people do not look after the land and wildlife.

#### Activity

- We must regulate our own activities on the land hunting and trapping.
- The RRC should be established as soon as possible (committee of the DGO), determine election process (what is the voting age).
- We should begin to educate our own people about environmental issues so they will become self-regulating and look after the land. Radio programs, communications, signs can all be used to educate people on littering, environmental issues, etc.. RRC members to go in the schools and talk to the children.
- We must begin to enforce our own traditional laws to protect the environment, land and wildlife.

### **Justice**

#### Problem

- The current system is not working to help people through troubled lives. The system does not give these people hope for an improved life.
- There are not enough resources or supports for a Gwich'in Justice System.

#### Activities

- Make our own laws.
- Treat everyone equally.
- Perhaps a Regional Committee will help us inform each other on Justice issues.
- Judge ourselves (own justice of the peace).



- Create a young and old offenders camp.
- Treatment of offenders.
- Group homes should be set up and run by the communities. Open custody or foster homes will also benefit young offenders.
- Should develop conflict of interest guidelines for Justice Committees.
- Sentencing should take into account more community service orders so the community can benefit from the sentence and the offender feels that he/she is contributing to the community.

## **Health**

### Problems

- All Gwich'in should have the same health benefits.
- Arctic Red River needs a full time nurse and health centre.

### Activities

- People should be able to get a second medical opinion upon request.
- Educate people on health issues to ensure that they are able to take care of themselves and not always go by a nurse's opinion.
- Interpretators and escorts for elders.
- More Health workers should be Gwich'in.

## **Social Services**

### Problems

- There is a great deal of social disruption in the community (alcohol and drugs), dependency on government, no cultural or community values etc. and this affects the spirituality of the Gwich'in.

### Activities

- On the Land Programs will occupy people in traditional pursuits and away from the chronic unemployment in the community with the social problems.
- Spirit Camps for alcohol and drug treatment and to strengthen an individuals spirits.
- More control over Social Financial Assistance.

## **Culture**

### Problems

- Young People are losing their culture and language we must learn to share our culture and language with them.

### Activities

- Form Youth and Elders Councils.

- Create spirit camps to heal our people.
- Respect our people especially elders.
- Teach traditional games.
- Museum.
- Teach traditional skills.
- Teach Gwich'in history.

## **Housing**

### Problems

- Not enough people have houses or home ownership.

### Activities

- Work together to build more home ownership houses.

## **Economic Development**

### Problems

- There is a lack of coordination between economic interests.

### Activities

- Every community should have an economic development person (funded by GTC).
- Each community should have an economic development committee (or corporation Board of Directors) to look for business opportunities (or operate businesses).
- All community committee (corporation) should meet every two years to discuss future business plans.
- Form Financial Committee to jump on idea's ASAP.
- All economic development projects should be screened at a regional level (investigates, drafts proposal and negotiates).
- A Regional Construction Company should be formed and owned by all Gwich'in communities, it will bring down the prices and avoid bidding against each other.
- Should develop a non-competition policy, whereby: everyone bids the right amounts, splits up work, meetings of contractors, be fair, take into consideration family size.

## **Relationships with other Native Organizations**

### Problem

- Dene and Metis Nations have not been supportive of the Gwich'in.

### Activity

- Restructure both organizations (regional representation).



- Encourage Metis to sign up for Bill C-31.
- Obtain CORE funding from the organizations.
- Get ride of Bill.

## **Communications (Public Relations)**

### Problem

- We do not communicate in an honest manner amongst ourselves and between our communities.
- There is not enough information given to the people, and Board or committee members.
- We do not try to listen to what people are saying.
- We don't have to be scared of each other we all own the land, it is ours and we must learn to be honest with each other.
- We must take ownership of our communities and our agreement, we can no longer pass the buck.

### Activities

- Band Councillors and fieldworkers must make home visits, more visiting amongst ourselves will help information to get out to the community members.
- We must solve our own problems by working together.
- Begin to respect each other and opinions.
- Make use of radio shows, print newsletter or paper, make use of video.
- Visit the schools.

## **General**

### Problem

- Overall there is to many things that we are doing, to few people knowing what is going on, not enough people who know what to do, and very few people doing anything.

### Activity

- Involve more and more people in the process and activities by communication strategy and education.
- We must have respect for each other and the elders.
- We need a foundation built on mutual respect and the elders who have in the past organized family and community affairs.
- We must stop having favoritism for relatives or friends, it destroys respect for leadership.
- We should develop a Code of Ethics.
- We must give our people hope so they have something to live for.
- We must have some issues dealt with in confidence.
- Support for other communities that maybe having problems.