

## SUPPLEMENTARY BRIEF

Written by  
B. Harrison, Project Coordinator

This supplementary brief is submitted in addition to the brief forwarded to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People on August 31, 1993. Please refer to the conclusion of the final brief submitted on that date, as it addresses the barriers that contributed to the difficulties in covering all of the points in the contribution agreement.

The first point indicated in the conclusion referred to the timing of the project. Two months of the project fell over the summer holidays (July and August) and the other two months fell during the time of final examinations for students (May, June). The difficulties encountered were the inability to access schools because the school administrators were concerned with our research interfering with examinations. When the summer months approached, a large percentage of Aboriginal high school students headed to their home communities in remote areas of Manitoba.

One workshop that was scheduled for the communities in the West Region was held in Dauphin at the end of July. This workshop was successful in terms of attendance but the difficulty was getting the young adults to become comfortable enough to open up. In my experience working with groups, it takes weeks before a group is comfortable

and trusting enough to talk freely. At this same workshop, I encountered difficulty with the interference of the adult chaperones. Some of the adults who were present challenged my position as a representative of the Royal Commission and posed questions that were off topic. With the adults doing most of the talking, the youth that were present did not have the opportunity to express any of their views.

In reference to the political nature of the whole process, it is my opinion that involvement of the tribal councils and band offices can sometimes interfere with their extent of involvement. With topics such as self-government and future of Indian Lands, there are communities that have taken their future into their own hands and may feel a 'thorn in their shoe' when another study is presented to them. In an informal discussion with a member of a Manitoba community, I learned that any requests to meet with anyone in the community would be turned down because "they're sick of talking".

The remoteness of a great number of communities posed a problem which ties directly with the timing of this research project. Most students return home during the summer months and these communities are not accessible by vehicle.



The last two points in the conclusion of the final brief refer to the overall lack of interest and insufficient information. As previously mentioned in our last telephone conversation, these points became apparent at the visit I made to Teulon Residence. This residence becomes home to many high school students from Island Lake and Northern Ontario. During the time that I spent with these youth, I discovered that many of the topics were foreign to them. They were unaware of what the Indian Act was or what kind of impact Indian and Northern Affairs has had on Canada's Aboriginal people. Their lifestyle was basically all they knew. These topics were not taught in school nor at home. I could not expect them to make recommendations on topics they were unfamiliar with.

After the first few workshops, it was then that I decided to focus my research in a manner that would help me to relay to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples what would be the most important changes for tomorrow. In the next meetings, I allowed the youth to decide what was important to them. The majority of youth decided that education was a big step towards obtaining the 'four touchstones'.

In conclusion, I hope that this document clarifies the rationale behind how the original brief was written.

# N.A.Y.C.A.C.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Commissioners, associates, elders, friends:

On behalf of the National Aboriginal Youth Career and Awareness Committee, we are pleased to be participating in the Round III Hearings. It is important at this point, to acknowledge the organizations and individuals who have provided information and contacts. Also, acknowledgement goes to those who have generously contributed their views, opinions and solutions toward the content of this report and their personal effort to accommodate to the time constraint imposed upon them:

- \* Professor Storm and Special Interest Group - Brandon University
- \* Native Student Council - Assiniboine Community College - Brandon, Manitoba
- \* Manitoba Metis Federation, Southwest Region - Brandon University Student Representation
- \* Native Education Committee - Brandon University
- \* Native Studies Class - Crocus Plains High School - Brandon, Manitoba
- \* Children of the Earth School - Special Interest Class and Staff - Winnipeg, Manitoba
- \* Brandon School Division and Administrators
- \* Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council - Brandon



- \* Sioux Valley School Administrators - Sioux Valley
- \* Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres - Winnipeg,  
Manitoba
- \* Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata - Winnipeg, Manitoba

N.A.Y.C.A.C. began researching through the Intervenor Program only four weeks ago. Although every contact that was made throughout the month has been very receptive, we have observed what has become quite a barrier to our work, is the attitude of some Canadians that we are yet again bound for failure in our attempts to heal the relationship of the Canadian people. A major factor contributing to this attitude is the limits of time given to forecasting our future. Another factor is the belief that the process we are undertaking is considered another "study on Aboriginal people". In the last thirty years, advocate groups, judges, lawyers, Aboriginal governments, etc. have committed themselves to the cause of First Nations peoples. These individuals blazed a trail for the First Nations, yet we have an incredible journey ahead of us.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to convince Aboriginal students and youth that the examination of the economic, social and cultural situation of Aboriginal people will be considered. With all do respect for the Royal Commissioners



and their genuine efforts, there is a need for more information available to the young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. In a very short time, we have become aware of how uninformed some students are in terms of what the mandate of the Royal Commission consists of. It has, therefore, become part of our process to provide sufficient information to these young Canadians. What has to be recognized at this point, is that it is apparent that the youth are aware of the concerns and problems that they are facing and are aware of what they want and need as individuals in this society as a whole.



## II. ACTIVITY REPORT

[The process that has been undertaken by N.A.Y.C.A.C. in the previous four weeks has consisted of interviews, informal discussions, group discussions and a public forum style hearing. Concentration has been on the urban centres of Brandon and Winnipeg.] The appendices of this report consists of the transcripts of the forum style hearing of May 20 held in Brandon, Manitoba.

The first week of the process consisted of mainly preliminary preparation and making various contacts to access youth and students in the quickest, most effective way possible. That is, to approach various schools in Winnipeg and Brandon. The first school the writer attended was to the Children of the Earth School. A meeting was held with the History teacher and Social Studies teacher to make arrangements to meet with some of their students. An informal group discussion took place at a later date with the students of the Special Interest Class.

[Information was presented on the Royal Commission and N.A.Y.C.A.C. and the issues that we are addressing, namely:

- \* Aboriginal Self-Government
- \* Aboriginal Justice System
- \* The Future of the Department of Indian Affairs
- \* The Future of Indian Lands



- \* Taxation of Indian Lands
- \* The Indian Act

Week two consisted of a meeting with Mr. Grundy, Principal, Crocus Plains High School; a meeting with Assiniboine Community College Native Student Council; and a meeting with students and councillors from various departments of the Brandon University. At this point of the process, it had become apparent through informal discussions with the students that they were not prepared to recommend solutions to the above issues without some preliminary research and contemplation on their own time. It was then decided that setting up a forum-style hearing for the following week would be a more effective process.

Information packages were developed and distributed to various organizations interested in Aboriginal issues throughout the City of Brandon (Appendix A). The packages consisted of an invitation to the forum, information on the Royal Commission and N.A.Y.C.A.C.

In the third week of May, students representing the various organizations and associations presented their recommendations formally and were recorded on tape (Appendix B through F). Informal discussions took place after the presentations. It is noteworthy to mention a particular conversation between the



writer and one student. During this conversation, the writer was asking for assistance in accessing some youth in the particular community he was from. The student went on to say that there would not likely be a response to this request because his community has refused to participate or talk to anyone outside the community. Interestingly, the previous evening, Ovide Mercredi was making a presentation on the issue of employment equity. He is quoted as saying "There is a silence among the people, but it is not a good silence."

The third and fourth week of May was concentrated on contacting two Tribal Councils for assistance in accessing students during the coming summer months. Students are nearing examination time, therefore, action plans are under way to overcome this barrier. The Tribal Councils contacted have been extremely helpful in this aspect.



### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOLUTIONS

- A. { It is with vast agreement among Aboriginal youth and students that before any of the major issues of concern can be contemplated, the healing of our communities is of the first and foremost issue that needs to be addressed. } Until First Nations people are healed from the oppression and discrimination that has been suffered over the past, self-government cannot become a reality in the whole sense.

Programs that are controlled at a community level is twofold in the solution toward healing. The aspect of the Aboriginal people healing Aboriginal people, taking care of ourselves, is a step towards self-determination. Secondly, implementation of programs focused on specific needs of individuals within the community, by the community, are far more effective and culturally appropriate.

To corroborate the need for youth programs, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council haven't any program focused on youth, nor does Southeast Resource Development Council. Why? No funding. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg has a program called "New Directions - Healing Our Youth". But because of funding restraints as well, they run the program once every five weeks for a group of twenty five youth at a time. As well, as of April 1, 1993, the million dollar budget for the Manitoba



Association of Friendship Centres was cut by the government. These organizations have the facilities to accommodate the youth programs needed but their hands are tied financially.

The following recommendations address steps toward healing:

1. Elders should be funded through appropriate resources to teach the younger generations about Aboriginal traditions and values that are the makeup of Aboriginal culture.
2. Education plays a major role in the healing process by learning our Aboriginal history. Implementing Aboriginal history throughout the entire school system would be a positive start.
3. Implement more programs for youth that are focused on a combination of life skills and traditional teachings.
4. Implement programs to combat illiteracy which is a major barrier for youth who wish to enter secondary educational institutions.
5. Implement more treatment and rehabilitation programs with government funded therapy and counselling services.

B. It has been noted that the educational institutions have very little Aboriginal staff in teaching positions and the administration departments in the urban areas. Youth and students are well aware of this and would benefit from more



Aboriginal role models in positions of sharing their knowledge and experiences.

The following recommendations refer to Canada's educational system which would go hand in hand with the healing of our First Nations people.

1. Implement Native language courses as early as the elementary grades, much like the partial or full French immersion schools.
2. Implement mandatory Native Studies courses in the high school curriculum for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
3. A re-examination of history textbooks should be of major importance. Revisions undertaken by First Nations people would be far more accurate and would also include all Aboriginal people. This would also eliminate the term "the forgotten people".
4. Early years development programs gives pre-kindergarten children a 'head start' prior to entering the school system. It is a known fact that children are moulded at a very early age. Having a positive beginning eases the daily struggles and peer pressures.
5. Implement elders programs in the school systems to provide guidance and counselling to Aboriginal students in need.



6. Establish more Aboriginal schools. These schools will also create employment for Aboriginal teachers and administrators.
7. A requirement for non-Aboriginal teachers to teach in Aboriginal communities is to be trained for cross cultural settings.
8. Because of the diversity of Aboriginal peoples in urban centres, there needs to be equal representation of Indian, Metis and Inuit in our educational systems.

C. Aside from agreeing that the governments need to recognize the necessity of judicial control of Aboriginal people and transferring the necessary power and authority to do this, the following recommendations address concerns that need to happen immediately. It is understood that an Aboriginal Judicial System will take considerable time to establish, therefore, these recommendations should happen prior to its establishment.

1. The question of funds becomes the immediate response to implementing programs of this nature. Taking a look at the disbursement of Correctional Services budget may allow for supplementary funding.
2. Preventative programs controlled by First Nation communities would avoid band-aide solutions.



3. Again the key issue plays a role here; education. Mandatory sensitivity training for officials of Canada's judicial system. Opportunities for Aboriginal people to understand the law and the institutions that enforce the law, especially those who are in the remote areas of our country.
  4. It is not sufficient to consider an occasional pow-wow a cultural program in our correctional institutions. Cultural programs include all aspects of Aboriginal Culture; Native, Metis, Inuit. Although Federal Prisons have taken steps to address this concern, it especially needs to be addressed in the Provincial correctional facilities such as Brandon Correctional Institute.
  5. Legislation which makes it a criminal offence for any person who knowingly discriminates or commits any discriminatory act such as racial comments.
- D. In an attempt to provide services consistent to the legislation of employment equity, the programs that have been implemented by the government have failed to recognize the diversity in Aboriginal culture. As one program meets the needs of Status Indians, it is unsuccessful in recognizing the Non-status Indians, Metis and Inuit people of our country. They have failed to give the same opportunities to people who wish to expand their knowledge and skills. These programs have been described as tactics to "divide and conquer", and



have pitted one group against the other.

The recommendation for solutions are:

1. Each group has the opportunity to govern the training programs specific to their own unique needs.
2. Equal representation of Indian, Metis and Inuit on advisory boards created to address the concerns of Aboriginal people as a whole.

E. It is in agreement with those who have contributed to this report that defining and implementing self-government would take a considerable amount of time. Some are of the opinion that First Nations are not ready for self-government; some are of the opinion that we are ready and all that is needed is the initiatives to implement it. Regardless, every community across this country has not gone untouched by the effects of the Europeans coming to this country. Each community has been touched in different ways and different periods of time. Individuals have had varying degrees of contact. Each individual has unique circumstances which are virtually impossible to document in a short period of time. Yet, again, we are forced to accommodate to time. To recommend definitions and strategies toward self-government at this time could mean a great future for one community, but could be the demise of another.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

The reconciliation of Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is two sided in terms of healing the relationship. The comments recorded in the appendices demonstrate the efforts some Aboriginal youth are prepared to make aside from the adverse opinions in the beginning of this report. If any recommendations develop from this, it would be through the determination of a few committed people who inspire our brothers and sisters.

Some issues have not been given ample time to make concrete recommendations at this time. We also believe it's important to note that this report does not give justice to the hundreds of other voices yet to be heard but has just the same been given the effort to make sure that each contribution is as valid as the next.

To summarize this report, it is of very strong opinion that the healing of our communities have got to be the priority in this whole process. As young and as innocent as a child should be in his/her early years, the effects of the past five hundred years live on in our children. The cycle has got to be broken.

It is also revealed in this report that as the steps are taken to heal our communities, self-government and self-determination will fall naturally into place. Each issue has a time and place that will allow it to nurture and flourish as long as each step is given the consciousness and attentive efforts of First Nations people. More importantly, the efforts of all Canadians will lead the journey to a better future, especially those who are the next generation.



## APPENDICES

Distribution List and  
Transcripts of public forum held  
in Brandon, Manitoba  
May 20, 1993

Participants represent  
Assiniboine Community College  
Brandon University  
Manitoba Metis Federation  
Native Education Committee

Communities represented:  
Thompson, Manitoba  
Brandon, Manitoba  
Sandy Bay, Manitoba  
Little Black River, Manitoba  
Cross Lake, Manitoba  
Split Lake, Manitoba

## APPENDIX A

### Distribution List:

Brandon University Native Organization  
Native Education Advisory Committee  
Assiniboine Community College  
Crocus Plains High School  
Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council  
Manitoba Metis Federation  
Program for the Education of Native  
Teachers  
Brandon University Northern Teachers  
Education Program  
New Careers  
Brandon University



## APPENDIX B

Oral Presentation - Doug Racine, member of Manitoba Metis Federation, Southwest Region - Brandon, Manitoba - Brandon University Student

The Southwest Region of the Manitoba Metis Federation are under no illusions that the recommendations in this report will be fulfilled or even contemplated. If anybody looks at the history of Royal Commissions, 95% of all Royal Commissions are completely ignored. We really have to start off on the right foot here because it would be too easy to jump into this position thinking that anything concrete is going to come out of this, you'd be fooling yourself if you thought there was. If you take a look at the information that has been produced already before the Royal Commission, there's tremendous amounts of materials written about the progress in which Metis and Aboriginal people are experiencing and the Federal Government has not acted on any of it. One of the criticisms of the Royal Commission is the fact that the governments implement them to buy themselves time. The process takes five, six years and by the time the whole thing is done, people have already forgotten that there is even a Royal Commission. The Royal Commission itself states that the reasons they set it up is because some of the problems that they experienced during the 1980's; the Inuit, Metis and Indian people of Canada lobbied to be included in the 1982 Constitution; another reason was the Kanasatake/Akwasasne upflares; another reason they used was Elijah Harper helping to kill the Meech Lake Accord. So they're using all these different reasons to implement the Royal Commission, although they definitely do have a problem and they have to address it. But, whether or not the recommendations from the Royal Commission are followed is going to depend heavily on the resolve of the Canadian people and whether or not the Canadian people as a whole are going to hold the government responsible. So there in lies the problem, are we going to get the support of the Canadian people. I suppose the only hope for this



is that somehow the Canadian people push the Federal Government to implement these recommendations. This puts a heavy workload on our shoulders to make sure as Native people we get out there and advertise ourselves, and advertise our problems and make sure that these recommendations are adhered to.

Now I'll just quickly talk about some of the stuff that I'm looking at in my submission. I'll start off with the Justice System. Anybody that has delved into the justice system at all will know that although the Provincial Government says in our society we have criminals, they themselves are criminals. What's happening to Native people in the prison system right now is absolutely criminal. I'll give you an example. I did some research in the Brandon Correctional Institute, of the people that were sentenced in Brandon Correctional Institute, 72% were Native. 11% of that 72% were Metis. If you take a look at, for instance, the amount of Natives being employed in the Brandon Correctional Institute, from what I know of, there is two; one guard, one elder. There are no programs implemented to ensure that Natives have cultural programming. One of the big things that I've learned is that this society likes to set up advisory committees, but yet these advisory committees have no constitutional power. I went to the last advisory committee at the Brandon Correctional Institute, and they were talking about having pow-wows, which doesn't really relate to Metis; a lot of Metis enjoy pow-wows but it doesn't really relate to Metis, the majority of them are Christians by religion. So I wanted to do some Metis workshops and we talked about it and they wanted to try and get another pow-wow and at the end of the meeting we were talking about when we were going to have the next meeting. I said "well, you better have it next month because there is a lot of things that have to be covered here and a lot of things looked after." The superintendent said "Oh no, we got lots of information off you guys this time, I don't think we'll meet til September." Criminal, absolutely criminal! It seems that these advisory committees are token and this also goes into the education system.



The education system, I've did some research there, and what I did was phone six of the school districts in south western Manitoba and I talked to the superintendents and asked them four questions. How many Native teachers do you have, do you have any Natives in your administration, how many Natives do you have on your school board, and do you have any Native curriculum. Two school have Native curriculum as far as Native Studies Programs; one high school in Brandon and one in Portage. But what's important here is that those Native Studies programs are good and gives a chance to learn but are not required courses. The big problem is that we have got to get Native information into our basic history courses. Ask anybody that goes to school now and ask them who is the founder of Manitoba and I'll guarantee you that 80% or 90% of them won't know. We have got to get Metis and Indian information in there and we've got to put it in. If we can't get it into the full scale of the curriculum, it'll do two things; it'll make Native people feel better about themselves, that's of course if we put the information in, because every information that's been put in from outside has been biased and in a lot of cases racist. So it'll make the Native people that are going there, educated about themselves and who they are, who their people are, give them a little pride to stand up. We won't be scared to say "I'm Native" and that's a particular problem with the Metis because in a lot of cases the Metis can pass themselves off as white, and they do. Why suffer the discrimination? The other thing it will do is if we can get it into the main core curriculum means that everybody has to be touched by this Native curriculum. Say in grade eleven English, they have to learn about the Reil Rebellion or the Metis and the provisional governments in the start of Manitoba. It's really going to combat racism. We have a tremendous problem with racism in this City of Brandon and the surrounding areas. By showing the Natives and Metis in a positive sense, we will be able to combat racism and that's the reason we really, really have to work hard. Anyway, of the six school divisions, there's only two Native teachers, and one Native administrator. Now when you take a look



at Crocus Plains with four hundred Native students, with a staff of seventy-five to one hundred, they have got one Native teacher. One Dakota Language teacher. That's Crocus, what about the other schools. That's it, there's none in the rest of the schools in Brandon, that I know of, and that's what the superintendent told me. Brandon School Division is making efforts, they've hired Herman Greene as an education consultant. He's a Native from Ontario, and he's doing a tremendous job. But this is one of the big areas that we're going to have to combat and one of the big areas that I'm going to talk about. One superintendent said to me, "Well we've got one Native in administration, we have a janitor that's Native."

You look at the correctional institute and you look at the schools, it all paints the same picture that our destinies are still being controlled by the Canadian society instead of by ourselves. If Natives looked after their own correctional institute, the Provincial Government would be out of a job. But yet, they still have all those non-Native people jailing the Native people.

Economic-wise, there are two programs being delivered to the Manitoba Metis Federation right now. One is the CADEs program and the other is Pathways. Both are complete failures. Pathways, for example, is run through the Canada Employment Centre and is to train people, give people one year at college or one year of upgrading. So what's the criteria for that? Well, you have to be unemployed or on welfare. So perhaps if I wanted to access that program, I quit my job, run down and get myself onto the welfare payroll and then sign up. There's other problems, we don't have any money to implement the programs. For example, Amaranth wants to implement an upgrading because no one there has got an education, nobody in the community. But they don't have the education to right up the proposal to get the education. In some aspects the program is working, especially for the reserve people because you see what's happening is that the board structure of



Pathways is dominated by Status Indians. There are six Status Indians and two Metis. And the Metis are saying no, we have a whole different set of problems with the Metis. We want to look after our own funds. It only makes sense. Status gets funds for certain things that Metis just don't. So we are looking for control so we can implement things the way we see them. As far as Pathways is concerned, we haven't been able to put anybody through anything yet. When they delivered Pathways, they told us you'll be able to set up these different boards at local levels, then you'll be able to change the criteria so that you can access maybe a year at university or something like that. But you see, we have specific problems and if we have to follow their criteria, and then you have to come down and go through that big sausage machine down at Canada Employment Centre, even then they could turn people down. What has to be done as far as Pathways dollars are concerned or programs like Pathways, is that money has to be directly given to the Manitoba Metis Federation. Well people might say, "well, you don't have the education, you don't have the infrastructure to do stuff like that." Well the reason we don't have the infrastructure to look after our own selves is because we don't have the money, we don't have anything. "You don't have the experience to set it up", of course we don't have the experience because we have never been given the chance. "You'll make big mistakes and you'll lose money", well, we just might, but at least we're going to learn and we're going to start looking after our own people and they're not going to come in and hear that we'll train this group of people here but they have to be on unemployment or on welfare. God knows the rest of the criteria you have to follow by the time you get through the Canada Employment Centre. See, we have specific problems and we don't need all the red tape to sort through in the government bureaucracy. If we see a problem, we'd like to just go in and fix it. We've got no funding for secondary education. We have no funding to send people to university. Myself, I'm going to university here; how many Metis do I know; I might know three or four, maybe ten, I don't know. Lorraine, maybe ten, fifteen?



(response: "Ten, if that.) We have a serious problem with secondary education. A 1988 survey showed that from the south west region (MMF) we had two people going to university. What we'd really like to do is get somebody in as an education counsellor. Because when the Pathways was being delivered, they started telling us that you can only take one year of college, and you can only do this and here's the criteria for one year of college or one year of upgrading, and one Metis elder stood up and said "You mean to say you'll make my son a welder, but you won't make him a doctor?" That spells it out right there. We need to be block funded so that we can look after our own problems, so that we can look after ourselves, and we can decide where we want to spend money and what help our people need. In a lot of ways, when you look at the judicial system, one of the accusations is that the Metis say there is no darn way that we'll ever be funded to do any research on justice, because as soon as they give us money to research on justice, then all of a sudden the government is going to have to be held accountable for whats happening in our penal institutions. Where should the money come from? If you look at the corrections budget, millions of dollars, right, I think that a lot of that money could be routed through MMF and we could start implementing child and family services. If they rerouted that money into preventative programs and we could deal with those problems.



## APPENDIX C

Oral Presentation - Richard Roulette - Sandy Bay Reserve  
Assiniboine Community College Student

My name is Richard Roulette. I am a student at \*A.C.C. College. I am representing the Native Student Council. Basically the issues that Douglas talked about are the same to all Aborigines. I wrote down everything here that I did collect from the College from various students and sort of compact it into a presentation.

Aboriginal Self-Government; the students of A.C.C. feel that self-government is a very broad and complex issue. We feel that in order to have an understanding of self-government, that it should be studied and researched over a number of years. We don't believe the government is acting in good faith when it says to go out and ask people what they want, when they fully know that it is a very complex issue and that it does take a lot of time. Even to pass a simple law in the House of Commons takes a lot of time and money. To better understand the First Nations people and what they went through will take a life time to heal and maybe longer, but until our people are healed from the oppression and discrimination that they have gone through, then self-government and all the other issues that come out of these talks.

We feel that as First Nations society, we should be grant a specific time in years to develop a self-governing body that will work for our people. We are sure that the government that governs us now didn't only take a mere few months to develop. We feel that given a time span that is comfortable to our people, we could develop the self-government issue. We do believe that it could be done in a democratic way where people vote on the candidate and campaign in a way a president would to get into office. By adopting a few of societies ways of doing things, I think it would be better understood by our peoples. It would also have a positive



effect on our relations with the rest of society.

As for Aboriginal justice systems, we agree that there should be an Aboriginal Justice System put in place in order for our peoples to defend themselves in their own ways. We feel that too many natives plead guilty to offenses that they did not commit just to get the matter behind them. It is very uncomfortable for a Native person to be standing in a courtroom where all whites, I guess the same feeling would be if the circumstances were changed in the opposite. We have discussed the issue of Aboriginal Justice System to a small degree and have decided that a system such as the one mentioned could be developed over a few years to perfect it. Where it would help a lot of the First Nations people understand right and wrong, that laws are made to protect the innocent. Another key issue plays a role here is education. In order for laws and rights to be understood and the people who are affected in a negative way, I think should be educated in this area. We feel that the communication in this area has broken down to such an extent that the majority of our prisons are filled with First Nations people as a result. By adopting an Aboriginal Justice System, we feel that many of the judgements made against our peoples would be less biased.

As for taxation on Indian lands, we feel that taxation on Indian lands would be inappropriate and would also be humiliating, because of the simple fact that First Nations people would not be able to afford the tax at whatever level it is applied. I have lived on reserve for most of my life and know that 85% of reserves have unemployment. Who and what would be advisable to tax these circumstances? The only way we see reserve lands as being taxed is if First Nations people were to be 100% employed and then maybe it would be a good idea. We feel that the question of taxation on reserves is highly unadvisable as well as an awkward way of trying to raise revenues.



The Indian Act, as far as a lot of people are concerned, is outdated and the recommendations we've come up is it should be revised in the presence of First Nations leaders. The future of Indian lands; it is hard to say just what might happen to Indian lands. The only thing that would be good for these lands would be to develop the lands to make them economically stable and self-sufficient. Then again, this may be hard because most reserve lands are situated on marshy, rocky or sandy terrain. We feel that reserve lands with Crown land should be conserved. Too many of our Crown lands are being clear out destroyed due to the growing need for farm lands.

On the final issue here, the future of the Department of Indian Affairs, we feel that Indian Affairs has delegate our affairs for too long a period, and that it would be in the best interest to First Nations to deal directly with the government themselves.

This concludes my presentation on behalf of A.C.C. Native Student Council.

\*Assiniboine Community College, Brandon, Manitoba



## APPENDIX D

Oral Presentation - Betsy Bloomfield - Thompson, Manitoba  
Assiniboine Community College Student

I would like to thank the \*A.C.C. students that helped out to put this presentation together. There were many things to say and we all agreed that in order for Native people to succeed in life, they must help heal themselves. Many Native people don't understand their culture. I for one didn't understand my culture until a person told me about it, so I tried to understand.

A student wrote this at A.C.C. and I feel I should read it.

'My opinion and feelings of the healing process for Aborigines - The first thing that Native people have to do is to learn to trust and to care for one another. This means that no matter what tribe you're from, whether or not you're full or half, and even if you've never experienced the lifestyle of your culture. I feel the elders should begin teaching the young generations, for most of the parents of the young generations have lost their roots. I for one have been lost in white man's culture because my parents didn't do anything about their roots and didn't follow them. Some issues that Aborigines have looked at is to help those that feel that they stand alone. Help each other realize that drugs, alcohol and other forms of abuse can be put to rest. With the education of individuals, knowing where they come from and what life was like long ago, they will begin to realize that they stand together, they will be strong. So I feel that the healing process should begin in our own back yards, learning to trust and respect one another which will help us in achieving these goals we as Native people wish to conquer. Educate ourselves, trust ourselves, and respect ourselves. If we achieve these, then we can achieve anything.'

She also wrote a poem. (Not recorded without permission from author of poem.)



Many Native people don't understand their culture, for I didn't understand my culture until a person told me about it, so I will try to answer her problem. One of the ways is to educate people to understand their cultures through listening to elders talk about their knowledge and also taking a life skills course. Native people love listening to stories, for story-telling is handed down from generation to generation. Everybody has a story to tell about their life experiences. In my opinion, taking a life skills training and literacy program geared towards Native Culture will help Native people in achieving their identity and self-worth. For example, I took a life skills and literacy program in Thompson. This program taught me to understand my culture and enabled me, as a student, to feel proud of my heritage. It continued to help with my education and I know these trainings will assist anyone who wants to learn about their identity as a Native person as well as to learn their culture. Keeping these programs is important for Native people to learn more about their culture and finally identify themselves as a Native person in a full sense as Aborigines. This is why I stress the importance that these type of programs are beneficial to Native people who are illiterate and cannot get funding to enter other programs offered by community colleges or other secondary institutions. These types of programs should not be taken away from Native people. The centre can also teach our children about Native culture. Maybe once they learn who they are and learn their language and their culture, they won't use alcohol or drugs as an escape from reality. Another reason these programs are helpful is to listen to people speak with knowledge about culture and the difference between a Native and a non-Native person. As we are people who listen, for instance, our ancestors kept their knowledge that was told generation to generation. This is why programs of this type should be kept open. As a society who listens, we will all be proud of our culture and heritage so it is vital that these centres be kept open for all people. Also, non-Native people can take part in these courses, too. I feel this is a solution for all. Another reason for keeping people



interested, is to keep them involved and not giving up on people, no matter if there is only one person you're trying to reach. Because I believe if you talk to one person, it will be continued on to other people. In the centre, in the literacy program I was taking in Thompson, there was a healer, and she spoke about what happened to medicine men that continued and practiced their Native ways of healing.

Yes, there are many hardships our ancestors when through, but they were strong enough to come and pass them on to a special child. This special child was taught its secrecy. These people that spoke to us in the program learned from elders that teach us our culture. An elder came to talk to students also. He spoke to us on the wheel and circle of life. We also had a pipe ceremony with him, but respected those who didn't wish to participate. This was my first ceremony and I'm sorry to say I never attended any more since.

Another topic we spoke about was for people to go to a treatment rehabilitation centre program. They should have a following in therapy and counselling. They should be enforced in the treatment process and people should not be sent home and forgotten because they are likely to return to a rehabilitation program again. Maybe taking a literacy course will help improve their self-image but if courses are provided in remote areas, it will enable them to maintain a life style with no alcohol or drugs. These are solutions I feel will help people in healing themselves. For I hear many Native people complain about not knowing their culture or their heritage.

I would also like to thank the A.C.C. Native Student Council for sharing their thoughts and feelings.

\*Assiniboine Community College, Brandon, Manitoba



## APPENDIX E

Oral Presentation - Lorraine McKay - Brandon, Manitoba - Brandon University Counsellor

My name is Lorraine McKay, and I wear a couple of hats in Brandon. The first being that I'm chairperson of the Native Education Committee and secondly, I am also president of the Brandon Native Council, and I am employed with Brandon University as a counsellor and I've been in this position since 1981. Over my thirty years in the City of Brandon, I have observed that we need to become fully involved in the many areas that affect our lives. The reality is that in the 1990's, there'll be more and more of us moving into the urban settings and so as a result, we need to look at various programming for our people and start implementing them. I find that over my last twelve years in my current position, I have found that when our people are serving our students, they tend to feel more comfortable and they tend to be in a position in wanting to be healed and so on, and I feel that we need to do that type of healing and disclosures in many areas of our lives. And those areas would be all the topics that have already been mentioned here; the areas of self-government; taking care of our own programs in the areas of justice; the legal system the students from A.C.C. just mentioned; in the area of education; and other areas such as social services, child and family services; even taking a look at the housing for our people in Brandon. I feel that in the area of housing especially, which is going to be one of my priorities this year. I would like to pursue the whole idea of expanding what happens out on the reservations in regards to allocations of houses. It should be made available to First Nations in the urban settings. I have observed that over thirty years our people have been renting and many times I have been told that those rental accommodations haven't been the best. You'll probably agree to that. I've heard of horrendous stories about the accommodations that some of our people have been forced to rent. Everything from



rats to roaches and not very acceptable accommodations. In fact, some of the students are saying that the reserves back home are much cleaner in some situations.

In the whole area of self-government, I have been asked for my opinion as to what I think that is. I find that people wanted it defined precisely. This is very difficult to do, as has already been mentioned here. I'll just go back to what our leader said a few years ago. "When the Europeans came to this country, did we ask them for a precise definition as to how they were going to rule us?" You know, they went ahead and started taking over this country and I feel that we don't need a precise definition because all our situations are different. I've been hearing that in many situations some of our people are against self-government. Even they wanted it defined. But I think rather than complaining and so on, I think we should just put our heads together and try to help each other chart the best course so that we will get to full self-government. The reality is that it is going to come, now we just can't predict when it is going to happen. Some of the communities are more advanced than others. Examples would be Peguis and so on but I know in other communities, no matter how little it may seem, at least now our people are believing that they have to take over our programs and they want to. So I think that we should just amalgamate together and make the best possible plans in order to carry that through.

In the area of education, I was saying I was chairperson of the Native Education Advisory Committee. We have been instrumental in doing a number of things and I guess that you could say that's the start of self-government in the City of Brandon. We have been meeting for the last four years and some of our accomplishments are that we are talking together, we are sharing together, and we are planning together. Those accomplishments are, we hired a Native counsellor some years ago, which never did happen in the school division. We saw the need for that and we voiced it. And then we



saw the need for a Native education consultant in which we were fortunate enough to get that position. He started in that position a year ago. We have managed to have our meetings right in the school division office which has never happened before, but we just went ahead and asked to have our meetings there. Now we have submitted twenty seven recommendations in the whole area of education to various people, decision makers who could do something about it. Now we realize that all these recommendations, there is twenty seven of them, we realize there has got to be some prioritization. We know that things cannot be done over night but I will point out that out of these twenty seven recommendations in the area of education, some of them are already in place. For instance, the Brandon University has Native representation on the Board; Assiniboine College, we also have Native representation on the Board of Governors; and so there is some progress being made. We will continue to meet to address these concerns, to prioritize them and recommend ways to make sure that they become a reality. Just to give you an example of some of the things we have recommended in addition to Native reps on the Boards is that the whole area of early years development should be looked at; programming such as 'head start' programs. If you haven't heard of 'head start', its giving those pre-kindergarten kids a head start in the school system, because you know that some of our children are being held back and put back. So, we feel that we need to have a thrust in that area; getting those little kids better prepared for school. We are looking at an elders program as well to serve the three institutions in Brandon, the three institutions meaning Assiniboine College, Brandon University and the Brandon School Division. We are involved in the curriculum of the Native Studies. One of the biggest areas that we are going to be pursuing is a native school in Brandon. That is going to take a lot of hard work, it's going to take a lot of dedicated people to carry it through. It's happening in Winnipeg and in other centres so why can it not happen in Brandon. And if we did have such a school in Brandon then some of our Native teachers can also get jobs.



To conclude, I would say that we need to just get proactive and start making recommendations and finding ways to make sure that it reaches the proper people and that we all support one another. If we are all divided into different camps, we're not going to get very far as far as self-government is concerned. We are all in this together, we are all Native and I think that we should be helping one another toward our pursuit of full self-government.



## APPENDIX F

Oral Presentation - David Bird - Little Black River - Brandon University Student

I didn't come here to speak about anything. I just came here to visit but listening to you guys presentations, I started thinking about what we're putting up with at home and how we're fighting all this. I guess I'd like to start at education. First year students, white students, white teachers, they go and teach on the reserve and they know nothing about Native culture. They just go in there and they assume, well, these children should be able to speak English right away. They just go in there and start speaking English and keep going without giving any thoughts to the children's needs. The way I see it anyway and the way we are trying to do it back home is we are trying to teach our young their own language at the kindergarten and grade one level. We see it as once they have their own language, they will have their own identity, they'll have their own pride in being Native. Also at that point when you interview teachers, especially non-Native teachers, they should be made aware of the cultural activities and the way the life is on the reserve for children, especially Native kids. Once they have their own cultural identities, they'll be proud and they'll have their own language. When you speak your own language, it has a stronger meaning, instead of sitting there and listening to someone speak English. I can speak my language, and when I say something in my language, it has a stronger meaning for me and also when someone says something to me in my language, I understand perfectly. When someone says something to me in English, I have to stop and think about it. Lately I have been finding myself very biased against whites. It's an attitude I picked up in Winnipeg because I lived in Winnipeg for about fourteen years. I was one of those people that became an 'apple'. I just wanted to belong with the white community, but I found out later I just wasn't accepted. I started hating my own people, I



didn't want to hang out with them. Stuff like that, that's what we're fighting back home. We are starting also to bring back our culture and we're teaching the children our culture, like the ceremonies. We have a sweat lodge, we have a teaching lodge. These ceremonies, they all have therapy built into them. If you listen to the way the elders speak, there is therapy in their messages. There is so many things that's happening now a days. Like drugs and alcohol, for instance, they weren't meant for Native people and yet that's all you see of Native people, especially in the media, t.v., movies. They portray Native people in a negative way, always drinking, always doing drugs, always ending up in jail. Most young people today, they're scared of our ways, they're scared to learn their cultural ways. They just go to drugs and alcohol and also another thing, they are so brainwashed by the churches. We were taught we were heathens when we were little kids. We were told our ways were wrong. To me, the Native way of life is not a religion. It's a way of life and it's up to you how you want to pray. Back home we have different religions and this is only a community of about 350 people. We have four or five different religions there and they're all fighting. (end of tape)