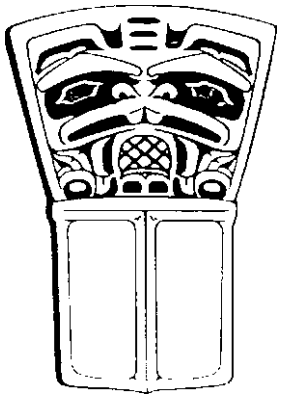
ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 25, 1993
INN OF THE WEST
TERRACE, BRITISH COLUMBIA



by

NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL
LOCALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL PRESENTATION to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Nisga'a Nation are the aboriginal people that have owned and occupied the territories as described in the 1913 Petition since time immemorial. Over the centuries have lived under a sophisticated form of Nisga'a Government over the entire area, under the jurisdiction of the four tribes, Eagle, Wolf, Raven and Killer Whale. Each tribe has hereditary head chieftains and under their authority are sub-chiefs.

Each tribe has large areas of land for the use of their respective members. The identity and names originate from the land, therefore, the identity of the Nisga'a is tied to the land.

I would proceed at this point to provide for your understanding the historical, as well as legal and constitutional nature, of the land claims in Canada.

Too often I hear public comments based on assumptions, not on historical facts, which impacts on our negotiations. Following are the facts of the Land Question controversy in Canada.

The issue of aboriginal rights is the oldest question of human rights in Canada. It has now resurfaced and has once again entered the conscience and the political, legal bloodstream of Canada, that there is the unfinished business of resolving the land question controversy in Canada. One can say that it had its beginning when the Europeans came and occupied a continent already inhabited by the First Nations with their own institutions, cultures, languages, and their own way of life.

Today the Nisga'a Nation is in tripartite negotiations with Canada and British Columbia based on the principle of sharing and co-existence over lands we owned and occupied since time immemorial. Aboriginal rights are the rights we are entitled to by virtue of the historic fact that we are the original peoples of Canada, we are indeed the history of Canada.

The Nisga'a have been at the forefront of establishing aboriginal rights, not only for ourselves, but for all First Nations throughout Canada. Following the proper legal procedure of going through the British Columbia Courts, where we did not fare very well, we took our case to the Supreme Court of Canada on November, 1971 in quest of British Justice.

Seven judges of the Supreme Court of Canada sat on the Case. The argument of the appeal took five days. The judges reserved their decision for fourteen months.

Mr. Justice Wilfred Judson speaking for three judges, found that the Nisga'a before the coming of the white man, had aboriginal title. A title recognized under British law but went on to say that it had been extinguished by pre-confederation enactments of the old colony of British Columbia. Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, speaking for three judges, found that the Nisga'a, before the coming of the white man, had aboriginal title, that it had not been lawfully extinguished, and that this title could be asserted even today. The court was tied.

However, all six judges who addressed the main question supported the view that English law recognized Indian title to the land. Canada'a highest court affirmed the concept of aboriginal title. In 1972, the All-Party Standing Committee on Indian and Northern Affairs passed a motion that approved the principle that a settlement of Native claims should be made in regions were treaties had not been entered into. Following that the Liberal government formulated a comprehensive land claims policy titled "In All Fairness".

In May 31, 1990, the Sparrow judgement was rendered in favour of Sparrow. The court also resolved a long standing debate about the extinguishment of Aboriginal Rights. The court rejected the argument that aboriginal rights could be extinguished, even partially.

It was most interesting whereby the court adopted Hall J.'s view in Calder v. AGBC 1973 that only a *"clear and plain"* intention to extinguish aboriginal rights would suffice to constitute an extinguishment.

The Nisga'a and all First Nations for that matter are at a critical juncture as we negotiate a new relationship with Canada. Once again, we will be victims of another national election which will halt negotiations while the incoming government gets organized. There will be many more elections that will impact future land claim negotiations in British Columbia.

The Royal Commission should strongly recommend that governments

continue to negotiate with First Nations based on the existing policy. We also strongly recommend that Canada put at the top of their national political agenda the just and equitable settlement of our comprehensive claim.

The Nisga'a Nation have long sought a more productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Canada. In our negotiations, we want to protect and enhance our culture and way of life, to become self-sufficient, more involved in the harvesting and the development of natural resources, business and commerce. This new relationship is achievable through negotiations. We view the negotiations of our comprehensive claim as the main vehicle in reaching agreements towards social, political, economic and cultural development. The national interest will be served if agreements or treaties are reached with First Nations with certainty defined for Canada and First Nations. A renewed relationship with Canada is essential; that recognize and respects our rights to self-government, allows us to become self-sufficient.

The Federal government, in the past, sought to clear title to the land by extinguishment. Legal clarity for the disposition and development of land and resources does not require that aboriginal rights be extinguished. We recommend that Canada and First Nations negotiate and agree on joint management systems to guide the use and development of land and resources which will allow all parties to evolve with changing needs and circumstances.

Canada insists on extinguishing title in order to establish certainty. This is not necessary when all it requires is clarification of rights to develop and use land and resources.

The Nisga'a Nation the owners since time immemorial have enjoyed the natural resources the land has to offer and yet we are afforded little participation in making decisions how land, water, wildlife will be used and developed.

We have been offered advisory roles and limited decision making roles. We recommend joint management regimes with governments in areas of their jurisdictions to manage wildlife, land, water and other natural

resources on Nisga'a lands. We have the proper philosophy to manage. We have knowledge how not to manage the lands. i.e. clear cutting.

There is much to be said about the negotiation process that it should be pursued more vigorously as delays such as mentione earlier are costly to us in finances and other resources as the cost of research and negotiations are escalating. We are not privy to any grants but must borrow from Canada and repayable at settlement for the costs of negotiations.

Other nations are now calling on us for guidance and our expertise we acquire at tremendous cost. Canada should re-examine who should be paying the cost towards the resolution of the land question controversy in British Columbia. We state this because of the history how ourland and authority were arbitrarily taken away from us without consultation and negotiation.

The role of the Federal and Provincial negotiators are crucial to the success of the comprehensive negotiations. They must have the proper mandates to conclude binding agreements on behalf of the governments they represent.

The decision in Sparrow is the court's recognition of the existence of aboriginal rights, and the courts refusal to regard such rights as extinguished.

We now call on the Government of Canada and the populace to put a stop to this denial of the realities of the Constitutional and legal recognition of our unextinguished aboriginal rights. This denial is adversarial which has been the reason for First Nations taking civil disobedience actions across Canada.

It has been 20 years since the landmark Calder decision, only two agreements have been ratified north of 60.

Rod Robinson, Executive Director
Nisga'a Tribal Council

SUBMISSION TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES by the Prince Rupert/Port Edward Local of the Nisga'a Tribal Council May 25, 1993 Terrace, B. C.

INTRODUCTION

The Prince Rupert/Port Edward Local of the Nisga'a Tribal Council is a local chapter of the central government of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, the representatives of the Nisga'a Nation. There are seven Locals altogether. Three of these chapters are in the urban centres as follows:

1. Terrace
2. Prince Rupert/Port Edward
3. Vancouver

Each Local holds a democratic election each year to elect officers to carry out the work of each local throughout the year on land claims and socio-economic programs available to their membership.

For several years, we have been concerned about the denial of rights and services to the urban or Off-Reserve aboriginal peoples. So, we are pleased to have this opportunity to voice our concerns on legislations and statutes that affect our aboriginal rights. They are:

THE 1880 INDIAN ACT CHAPTER 28, SECTION 2

2. The following terms contained in this Act shall be held to have the meaning hereinafter assigned to them, unless such meaning be repugnant to the subject or inconsistent with the context:

The 1763 Royal Proclamation

"And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interest and the security of our colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom we are connected and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of our Dominions and Territories as, not have having been "ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them".

British North American Act
Section 109
The provincial Crown's ownership of land within the province is subject to any trust existing in respect thereof, and to any interest, other than that of the province, in the same.

British North American Act
S.91 (24)
Section 91 (24) by its second branch, confers on the federal Parliament, legislative power over "lands reserved for the Indians." This phrase obviously includes the lands set aside as Indian reserves in various ways before and after confederation. However, it also includes the huge area of land recognized by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 as "reserved" for the Indians. The phrase may extend to all land that is subject to unextinguished aboriginal title. The words "lands reserved for the Indians" are, according to their natural meaning, sufficient to include all lands reserved, upon any terms or conditions, for Indian occupation.

Indian Perspective
Interpretation and meanings assigned to Indian Act is subject to Chapter 28, section 2. 1880 Indian Act, which forbids interpreting the Indian Act in meanings that re Repugnant to Indian people. Chapter 28. section 2., protects Indian people from abuses of intepretation by lawyers, courts and any body of

government which intent is to use the Indian Act against Indian people in an abusive and Repugnant manner. This Rule of Law has been, and is presently being violated, causing constant divisions among Indian people.

"Speaking for the Privy Council, Britain's highest court of appeal, Lord Denning told the Government of Canada that the treaty rights of the indigenous peoples must be respected and where there were no treaties yet concluded, the honour of the crown had to be maintained through equitable negotiations. Should there be any questions in interpreting Indian rights, decisions should come down on the side of the Indians. These rights were to be respected and recognized by the Crown for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow."

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NON-ABORIGINALS AND ABORIGINALS IN GOVERNMENT MUST RESPECT THE OBLIGATIONS ASSIGNED TO THEM BY THE CROWN.

- EDUCATE IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA, PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE AS TO WHO ARE THE REAL LANDLORDS. PERHAPS A FEATHER ON THE CANADIAN FLAG.

- EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE MUST BE INCLUDED IN CITIZEN'S NATURALIZATION PROCESS.

- ONGOING INSULTS AND ABUSES TO ABORIGINALS BY GOVERNMENTS AND BUREAUCRATS SHOULD FACE CONSEQUENCES.

- INTERPRETATIONS OF THE INDIAN ACT BY NON-ABORIGINALS MUST NOT BE MEAN AND NARROW. DIVIDE AND CONQUER TACTICS ARE STILL EVIDENT.

- FREE TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VENTURES STRIPPING NATURAL RESOURCES IMPACTS INDIAN CULTURE, FORESTS, LANDS AND WATERSHEDS.

- FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN URBAN CENTRES NEED SUPPORT FOR HOUSING FOR ELDERS, AND OTHERS. FUNDS FOR REPAIRS OF HOMES ARE NEEDED.

•FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN URBAN CENTRES NEED CONSISTENT FUNDING FOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

•ALL WEALTH FLOWS FROM ABORIGINAL LANDS AND NON-ABORIGINAL PERSONS HAVE BENEFITTED GREATLY AT THE EXPENSE OF ABORIGINAL NATIONS.

•THERE IS A NEED TO ADDRESS AND AMEND STATUTES AND LEGISLATIONS AFFECTING ABORIGINAL RIGHTS. SOME OF THESE HAVE NEVER BEEN REVIEWED SINCE FIRST CONTACT WITH THE EUROPEANS.

•THERE NEEDS TO BE A NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CROWN JUST AS THERE IS A NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ABORIGINAL NATIONS.

CONCLUSION

These are only a few of the concerns that we have as an Off Reserve Urban Local. We have several relating to economic development potential, land base for urban centres, funding for buildings to house economic ventures, social programs, local government, accessing parliamentarians, educational institute for urban members, food fishing, and the list goes on.

We will be pleased to speak to these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Tommy Dennis
Trustee
Prince Rupert/Port Edward Local
Nisga'a Tribal Council

From the Office of the Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 92 (NISGA'A)

Board Office 2500 Tait Avenue,
P.O. Box 240,
New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0

Phone 633-2225
Fax 633-2425

NISGA'A
RECEIVED
MAY 18 1993
TRIBAL COUNCIL

May 17, 1993

Rod Robinson
Executive Director
Nisga'a Tribal Council
P.O. Box 231
New Aiyansh, BC
V0J 1A0

Dear Rod:

As requested earlier, enclosed is the Position Paper from School District No. 92 (NISGA'A) in response to the visit of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

When your office informs our Board Chairman of the date of the Hearing, he will appoint a Trustee member to speak on this paper.

Yours truly,

Alvin A. McKay,
Superintendent of Schools.

AAM:sng

cc: J. McKay, Board Chairman
A. Azak, Secretary-Treasurer

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 92 (NISGA'A)

Board Office: 2500 Tait Avenue,
New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0

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Position Paper - School District No. 92 (NISGA'A)
"Social, Economic and Cultural Issues of Concern"

Response to Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

PREAMBLE

A. Road Connection to Kincolith

Kincolith is at the mouth of the Nass River, and the access is via float planes from Prince Rupert (dependent on weather conditions, so is not a regular or predictable service) or by Gillnetter fishing vessels, and a small B.C. Ferries vessel out of Prince Rupert once a week. There is no indistrict travel supported by the highways/ferry system. All food items have to be transported in as expensive freight, and all building materials, maintenance supplies, furniture etc. have to be barged in from Prince Rupert, a cost of several thousand dollars, so only happens couple of times per year. When all of these modes of transportation are grounded by weather conditions, the matter of medical evacuations are almost impossible. Approximately, 50/60 high school students are forced to live in New Aiyansh in Group Homes, from September to June. Because of the unavailability or quick access to parents, many parents and students experience some very traumatic times, as these young people live away from home without parental guidance/love and direction. A road connection would mean that these young people can go home to their parents on most weekends.

The feasibility study for the road is being studied by all parties - major portions of this road will go through Indian Reserve lands, therefore, D.I.A. should be directly involved. The Provincial Government is willing to commit to half of the costs, the hold-up, is that the Ministry of Indian Affairs office has not responded.

B. Highways/Road System - Within the Nass River Valley there is an all seasons gravel road system (predominantly used by logging trucks). It is substandard/dangerous to travel; main parts are inundated by annual Spring, Summer and Fall floods. The bussing of school children is often disrupted, to the point that one or two weeks of school is missed during each season.

C. Low Socio-Economic Level

(a) Unemployment year round is approximately 60%; seasonal unemployment adds another 30% - overall, at times there is 80% unemployment. Lives are then unpredictable/parents are at full time effort keeping above sustenance

level therefore, there is no time in their lives for higher aspirations of education - End result, many young Nisga'a drift through the in school program (grade 1 - 12) without the proper parental guidance and encouragement.

(b) Lack of Economic Development opportunities for the Nisga'a Villages due to Indian Act/Band Council restrictions/constraints. There is no Nisga'a Economy, all of the limited earnings from the four villages end up in the urban centers of Terrace, BC or Prince Rupert, BC. This bleak picture is the strongest disincentive in the Nass Valley for continuing education in a focused manner, after grade 12, most students and parents reaction is "why bother - there are no jobs, no employment for our young people to get into in the Nass Valley!" Those young Nisga'a who are succeeding in Post Secondary fields, find it necessary to move away from the Nass Valley, in order to make use of their training.

D. Federal BC Governments Bureaucracy and Red Tape

The Indian Act has had a very damaging impact on the lives of all First Nations people - in essence - it attempts to coral First Nations people on Indian Reserves and all aboriginal rights of these original inhabitants of Canada were suspended, and whether some of them are recognized and to be used by First Nations people is dependent on the whims of the Bureaucracy that is in power. Therefore the Band Council set up does not allow these people to make decisions or give directions for the major aspects of their lives - everything is contingent upon the goodwill and the whims of the Senior bureaucrats. In all cases, Senior bureaucrats first concern is to protect the status quo and the prestige of the system - the needs of the system must be met before the needs of the people are considered. The BC Government supports and reinforces these constraints in their policies. All in all, one can say that one of the major barriers to the First Nations efforts to promote a proactive, positive, constructive, self-determining way of life is the Federal and Provincial Government Bureaucracy, as dictated by the Indian Act.

School District No. 92 (NISGA'A) is a Provincial School District, created by an order in council in 1974. It's feeder communities are four First Nations Villages - Kincolith, Greenville, Gitwinksihlkw and Gitlakdamix - and the fifth community and area Nass Camp, represents the Non-Indian families. In any given school year, the district enrolment is approximately 96% Nisga'a and Non-Nisga'a 4%. The district enrolment fluctuates between 480 to 550 students per year. The High School numbers approximately 200 students - because of the size , numbers of course offerings are controlled by Ministry of Education, and the variety and scope of these courses are very limited - this factor limits or constrains individual students to taking what is offered, and having to omit some essential senior year courses.

POSITIONS

The Board of School Trustees, School District No. 92 (NISGA'A) have worked diligently, industriously and consistently to improve the learning environment for the young people of the Nass River Valley. While there are many areas of successes and educational growth is happening, the Board have faced a "stone-wall" situation in trying to assist in alleviating the foregoing five barriers to quality education, and therefore, are offering the following positions:

I. Road Connection to Kincolith - The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples must communicate to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, that his Department take immediate proactive action to this urgent life threatening/life destroying matter.

II. Nass Valley Highways/Road System - the RCAP must communicate to the BC Government, Ministry of Highways and Transportation, the urgency to complete the upgrading and the paving of this highway as soon as possible, for the lives of three thousand resident Nass River Valley people are subjected to use the current substandard, dangerous road system.

III. Low Socio Economic Level - the RCAP must understand that the solutions to these degrading semi-genocidal life pressures is consistently destroying a Nation of First Nations people - the major avenue of resolution is the finalization of the Nisga'a Land Question Negotiations. It is tantamount to the mandate of the RCAP, that the everyday way of life of the First Nations people be changed, therefore, the RCAP must write strong letters of support for the final settlement of the Nisga'a Land Question Negotiations, urging that the Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and the BC Government Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, move into a proactive critical path directions to guide their respective negotiation teams.

IV. Federal and BC Governments Bureaucracy and Red Tape - The RCAP must understand that the negative impact of the Indian act is promoting damages to the lives of First Nations people, and therefore, the RCAP must recommend to the two senior levels of Government - that they abandon the "letter of the law" interpretation of a semi-genocidal legislation, and move towards a proactive "spirit of the law" interpretation of the Indian Act. For example, the D.I.A. is refusing to honour their fiduciary responsibility to the education of First Nations people, in that they ignore and procrastinate about major decisions re capital monies for education. In the operation of maintenance capital needs - they have refused to fund such essential school programs as the Nisga'a Language and Culture course developments, consequently, the progress of relevant up to date development is drastically impeded, and the learning of the children is impaired because there are not enough Nisga'a Language and Culture materials being infused into the instruction program. This new direction will focus on meeting the needs of the First Nations people, and downsize the efforts to meet the needs of the system.

In conclusion, the RACP must be aware of the critical importance to assist First Nations people to grow and develop in the areas of life i.e. the spiritual, the intellectual, the physical and the social components of our lives. It is impossible to promote let alone nurture these vital areas of growth, as long as such barriers described in the foregoing are allowed to exist and to continue to act as destructive forces, especially towards the youth of the First Nations.

Nisga'a Valley Health Board

256 Tait Avenue, New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0 (604) 633-2212 Fax (604) 633-2512

Traditional and Wholistic Medicine
Past Present and Future

Presentation of

The Nisga'a Valley Health Board

To

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

May 25, 1993

Terrace, B.C.

Presented by:

Mr. Peter Squires,
Chairman, N.V.H.B.

Nisga'a Valley Health Board
256 Tait Avenue, New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0 (604) 633-2212 Fax (604) 633-2512

Traditional and Wholistic Medicine
Past, Present and Future

World Health Organization
(1984)

Health Definition

"The extent to which an Individual or group is able, on the one hand, to develop aspirations and satisfy needs; and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment. Health is therefore seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is seen as a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities."

The Northcoast Regional Health

Plan

June 27, 1990

Quote: The current regional plan recognizes that Northcoast Natives will control more and more of their health care in the future. The resolution of issues such as "improved levels of service", self-determination, health transfer and "reducing the disparity in health conditions among natives" will require long term cooperation efforts among native and non-native residents in the Northcoast and between the Provincial and Federal governments.

The Northcoast Regional Health Plan was commissioned by the Social Credit government of the British Columbia.

The plan was never implimented, due to a change in Government.

Current NDP Position on Native Health Care

1. Provide Health Bursary, to Post Secondary Students, Expansion of Recruitment Incentive Grant Program for Health Care students.
2. Enter into small pilot projects thoughout B.C. (Not defined).
3. Encourage utilization of Traditional Native Medicine.
   - Legislation is being developed/discussed.

Our Vision: Our Vision as Nisga'a, as citizens of British Columbia and as a full and equal partners of the Canadian State, The Nation of Canada, is one of Healthy citizens and Health Communities.

Healthy Citizens: It is our belief that our Health, our land, our water, and our air are intrinsic to our life. Our approach and philosophies to life are wholistic. It is common knowledge that Healthy Citizens take personal responsibility for good health habits. Research has also shown that healthy citizens are able both financially and socially to make informed and effective decisions and choices regarding their health. Rather than denigrate, they contribute positively to each other well-being and to the Health and quality of life of their communities.

Healthy Communities: Federal and Provincial Governments must encourage and recognize local development in Aboriginal Communities, and to further encourage, individuals, big business, big labour, and others to cooperate and work together with us (Nisga'as) to identify and resolve issues effecting health, and create supportive environment for health, and recognize the quality of life for every individual within our communities. All levels of Government must as we do, recognize the social, ecological and economical variables that effect our collective health and quality of life.

All Participants must recognize that any vision we create together, must take into account the challenge (rather than obstacles) that force us in re-defining the way in which we want our health system to work:

To quote the Recent Royal Commission on Health Care in British Columbia, we must ensure:

1. An equitable opportunity for Health and quality of life for all individuals.

2. That the Health needs of individuals and communities are addressed in a comprehensive, effective and integrated manner.

3. That all effected parties are involved, and feel involved through the development of new management and service delivery structures based upon

partnership, and open decision making.

We want to work with the Government of British Columbia and Canada to focus on:

(a) Healthy Public Policy

(b) Promotion of Health and Prevention of illnesses and,

(c) Treatment

As full and active partners with British Columbia and Canada, we want a guarantee that our new relationship for the Provisions of Health Care in our communities will remain and continue to be protected under the "5" "Principles of Medicare", as defined under the Canada Health Act as:

1. Accessibility

2. Universality

3. Comprehensiveness

4. Public Administration, and

5. Portability

"Fiscal restraint", and "cost cutting", must not impede the winds of change in our communities. Treasury Boards, Federally and Provincially must review and reallocate funds directly to us, through consultations with our leaderships, based on our needs, not upon the advice of Regional Directors or Regional Director Generals. 125 years of neglect and bad advice based upon colonial mentality was and is no longer acceptable.

High quality medical and hospital care based directly in our Nisga'a communities is a priority. We recognize that this will not on it's own be conducive to achieving good health, but is a requirement in order to achieve stable, strong, growing economies and communities.

In order to promote Healthy Communities and Healthy Citizens, it is no longer acceptable to transport our citizens hundreds of miles to receive primary, secondary and tertiary care when required.

The Government of British Columbia and Canada must stop immediately their practices of encouraging our membership, to leave our Aboriginal communities either on a Short-term Basis, or permantly, (as encouraged with the Neilson report), to have

access to services such as:

1. Long-term Care
2. Mental Health
3. Home Based Nursing Care
4. Physician Services
5. Ambulance Services
6. Specialist Services, Cardiologist, Physio Therapist, etc.
7. Acute Care (Hospitalization)
8. Social Services
9. Rehabilitation Centre for families for substance abuse

In order to provide the above, restrictive and discrimantory Policies and legislation must be reviewed, and rescinded concerning, The Indian Act, and Narrowly Focused Interpretation of Provincial Participation on Indian Reserves.

Canada must be encouraged and must continue to contribute financially as a full partner to encourage positive change regarding our community development.

It is the position of the Nisga'a, that Canada has not relinquished this fiduciary responsibility as defined and recognized in the:

(a) Constitution Act of 1867

(b) The Canada Health Act, and

(c) The Indian Act

Canada must not unilaterly breech this trust and ignore its moral and ethical responsibility for its Aboriginal peoples on Indian Reserves, based on its contemporary interpretation of Division of Powers between Canada and its Provinces for the delivery of services. Historical obligation cannot be over looked in the name of fiscal restraint and building new

partnerships, and new relationships.

The Federal Government must not interpret that Aboriginal Participation in its Federal Health Transfer Program is an abrogation of its fiduciary responsibility to provide Health Care to Aboriginal peoples, on Indian Reserves. The Federal Transfer of Health should not be limited to Nurses, Community Health Representatives, NNADAP and Janitors. Services must be expanded beyond para-professional services, and beyond the ad-hock mentality. Transfer does not mean that aboriginal people automatically become provincial responsibility. Federal responsibility must remain intact. Must be identified as a responsibility within the Canada Assistance plan as a cost sharing arrangement.

We as Nisga'a are voicing our concerns that our participation in the Federal Health Transfer Project is not a corroboration of their position.

The Federal Transfer of Health must now move to a self-government model.

Federal participation must remain strong interms of the contribution of Financial resources in the development of:

(a) A New relationship between Native and Non-natives

(b) Self-determination, and

(c) Self-sufficiency, (the chance to thrive), and of

(d) healing

Local Control, and Local Development must be encouraged, not discouraged with a narrow interpretation of Federal and Provincial responsibilities.

Federal Transfer of Federal finances to First Nations, such as the Nisga'as, should be viewed by Canada as assistance to a developing Nation with sovereignty and dignity remaining as, an ideal sought by both partners.

We must remind ourselves that there is nothing new in reinforcing old colonial Mentalities, of coercement, continued confinement and, forced assimilation.

Positive change can only happen if the Federal government is sincere in consultation, development, and implementation of programs as directed by First Nations.

Civil servants in Policy and Planning departments of both the Federal and Provincial government must not have the final say, along with their counterparts in the departments of finance, on what, how, and when service's ought to be made available to aboriginal peoples on Indian Reserves in Canada. To continue on with this old practice is to continue on with old ethnocentric perspective regarding, access and universality, which states if you want access and universality, you must move off your Indian Reserve. We must encourage new development in our communities.

We are not here to quote statistics, we have heard them a million times. We are here to tell you that change must happen quickly, because without it, we as Nisga'a and other First Nations will continue to die at alarming rates, while the gate-keepers of Federal and Provincial programs, (civil servants) continue to find constructive ways of not providing services based on needs to our communities.

On behalf of the Nisga'a Valley Health Board, I thank you for listening.

Traditional and Wholistic Medicine
Past, Present and Future

Nisga'a Valley Health Board

256 Tait Avenue, New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0 (604) 633-2212 Fax (604) 633-2512

Background and History

of

Nisga'a Valley Health Board

The Nisga'a Valley Health Board

The Nisga'a Valley Health Board was established in 1984 with a formal inauguration during the annual assembly of Nisga'a Tribal Council at Kincolith, B.C.. The Health Board is a recognized Society in accordance with the Provincial Society act and has a registered constitution in keeping with the British Columbia Health Act. A Chairman is appointed by Nisga'a Tribal Council with elected representatives from New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, Greenville, Kincolith, and Nass Camp; each member serves a three year term. The Health Board meets on a monthly basis and has established a portfolio system to review and oversee all programs under Health Board jurisdiction within the Nass Valley.

The People of the Nass Valley

The people of the Nass Valley are located in the communities of Lakalzap (Greenville), Gitlakdamix (New Aiyansh), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City), Gingoilth (Kincolith), and Nass Camp, altogether a population of approximately 3500 people. In addition, there is a migrant population that peaks during Pine-mushroom season in the fall of each year, during the summer tourist season and during peak periods of heavy logging activity. Last year during pine-mushroom season, the migrant population was estimated at 5000. The closest urban centre is Terrace, approximately 65 miles away on hazardous roads. Further, inclement weather conditions often times prevent access between communities during flooding and mud slides in the Spring and Fall and then with snow slides and icy road conditions in the winter.

History

The Nisga'a people of the Nass Valley communities are fundamentally healthy and have prospered in the Nass for many centuries. A rich and vibrant culture and highly structured social order have reinforced a traditional respect for the family. The leadership is strong. Hereditary Chiefs, elected political leaders, active, caring clergy and dedicated community workers are all important influences in the maintenance of Nisga'a values and ways.

When education was a problem, the Nisga'a created a School District and built a school. When shelter was required, houses were built and water and sewage developed. When Nisga'a rights were challenged, land claims positions were developed and actions taken to preserve the land and resources that are the Nisga'a heritage.

And when the stress of leaving the Nass for basic health care cost too many lives, the Nisga'a created a Health Board (1984) and then successfully negotiated for the building of a Treatment and Diagnostic Centre in New Aiyansh. The Diagnostic and Treatment Centre was a cost-sharing initiative between the provincial, federal government, including the Regional District. Public Health Programs are a federal responsibility and Provincial Ministry of Health provides funds for treatment services. (1)

In 1987 the people of the Nass Valley were able to establish yet another milestone on their journey of self-determination which has always been an inherent part of the life and culture of the

valley. This was the year that the Nisga'a Valley Health Board assumed control of community health services from Medical Services Branch, terms of the relationship are stated in the Interim Health Service Transfer Agreement dated April 1, 1987. At the same time, the Nisga'a Valley Health Board entered into a contractual arrangement with the Province for the administrative and operations associated with the treatment and diagnostic facility which has come to be known as the James Samuel Gosnell Memorial Health Centre.

The transfer of health services to Nisga'a control has been from the onset an experience which juxtaposed the Western way of doing business with the Nisga'a way. As with other community-based programs, the emphasis has always been to give credence foremost to the Nisga'a way. Suffice it to say, that this marriage of western and Nisga'a culture has at times been a difficult and time consuming task. Still, the relationship has proved to be advantageous for community-based program initiatives and the literature clearly supports this concept of community-based planning. Recent reports prepared by First Nations agencies clearly state that the provision of health and social services to First Nations people is most often fraught with cultural insensitivity at the worst and at best, accessibility, availability, and quality of care continue to be a hindrance for people seeking care. In short, if the present way of doing business with First Nations People is to change, we have much to learn from doing things the Nisga'a way.

learn from doing things the Nisga'a way.

We believe that health services to all people of the Nass Valley, both Native and Non-native, has improved during the last three (3) years of operation and an evaluation will provide us with the opportunity to examine program operations and consult with community members regarding the transfer of community health to local control.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PETER SQUIRES, CHAIRMAN.....NTC

ANGUS, REBECCA, TRUSTEE.....GREENVILLE

MOORE, CHESTER, TRUSTEE.....GITWINKSIHLKW

YOUNG, WILLIAM, TRUSTEE.....NASS CAMP

NYCE, HARRY, TRUSTEE.....
KITIMAT/STIKINE REGIONAL DISTRICT

WILLIAMS, GEORGE, TRUSTEE.....NEW AIYANSH

STEWART, RAYMOND, TRUSTEE.....KINCOLITH

Our Board is responsible for the following programs and services:

1. Physician Services
2. Dental Services
3. Public Health Programs
4. School Programs
5. Environmental Health Services
6. Mental Health Programs
7. Drug and Alcohol Programs
8. Laboratory Services
9. X-Ray Services
10. Emergency Response Preparedness
11. Ambulance Services (Road and Air)
12. Pharmaceutical
13. Medical Equipment and Supplies
14. Specialist Referrals
15. Nursing Programs and Services

Personnel for the Nisga's Valley Health Board are as follows:

New Aiyansh:

1.5 Physicians

1.0 Medical Records Clerk

1.0 Director of Nursing

1.0 Treatment Nurse

1.0 Public Health Nurse

2.0 Community Health Representatives

2.0 Drug and Alcohol Counsellors

1.0 Administrator

1.0 Executive Director

1.0 Maintenance Supervisor

1.0 Accountant

1.0 Administrative Assistant

1.0 Clerk Receptionist (Full Time)

1.0 Patient Transportation Clerk (Half Time)

1.5 Janitor/Housekeeper

1.0 Student Support Worker

1.0 Lab/X-Ray Technician

0.5 Environmental Health Officer

1.0 Psychologist

Dental Suite, with full Staffing

Canyon City:

1.0 Community Health Representative

0.5 Maintenance Man/Janitor

0.5 Drug and Alcohol Counsellor

Greenville:

1.0 Nurse Practitioner

1.5 Community Health Representatives

1.0 Drug and Alcohol Counsellor

1.0 Clerk Receptionist

0.5 Maintenance Man/Janitor

Kincolith:

1.0 Public Health Nurse

1.0 Treatment Nurse

1.0 Receptionist

1.0 Clerk

1.0 Adult D & A Counsellor

1.0 Youth D & A Program Counsellor

0.5 Maintenance Worker

0.5 Janitorial

1.0 Community Health Representative

1.0 Community Health Representative

Gitlakdamix Council

NEW AIYANSH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
SKATEEN AVENUE, NEW AIYANSH, B.C. V0J 1A0

PHONE 633-2215
FAX 6[illegible]-[illegible]71

PRESENTATION OF

THE GITLAKDAMIX BAND

TO

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

MAY 25, 1993

TERRACE, B.C.

Presented by:

Sim'oogit K'eexkw
Herbert Morven
CHIEF COUNCILLOR

And Councillor
Reg Percival

Simgigat, Sigadim Haanak, Tkubaawilkwksihlkw ganhl txaanitkwshl Kubatkihlkw, hli gook dim dip luudihitkwhl gaagoothl hlitsaph Gitlaxt'aamiks ii dip kax sisgihl t'ooyaks ahl wagwim ganhl gimxditgwim, T'simsan wilaa dii dip wilaxdit, ahl wilt ka'ax diithl gaagootdiit iit anookdiit ahl dim misim naxnahl ga'alimidim ahl lax ts'eetsikskwdiit, ahl yuk dim dip gwin wilaayint loosim dii wila luujaxjabaxahl gaagoodimsa ahl wila yeehl gandidilst loom.

Chiefs, Matriarchs, those of you of the Noble class and certainly all the children, before we proceed with our presentation, I would first like to express on behalf of Gitlaxt'aamiks, our heart felt gratitude to our Brothers and Sisters from the Tsimsan Nation for allowing us on their lands to express our common concerns.

So to our Brothers and Sisters from Kitsumkalum and Kitselas thank you for your kindness. Our Community known to you today as New Aiyansh appreciate the opportunity you share with us.

In preparation for today I took my wife's advice to read Chapter 6, from Thomas R. Berger's book entitled A Long and Terrible Shadow. The specific chapter is entitled John Marshall and the Indians. As you know he was the Chief Justice of United States from 1801-1835. During his tenure as the Chief Justice he tried to base his judgement and his decisions by trying to answer this question: "How does one people, one race justify the taking of lands of another people, another race?" We cannot answer this

question for anyone who has exercised and continues to exercise this option but you will hear the results of this action and the impacts it has on our lives.

I do not believe that there has been one Royal Commission which has benefitted our lives. We have recorded in our lives the results of some of the Royal Commissions today and in the past. It appears that each new generation of "Euro-Canadians" are always seeking answers from "Aboriginal Canadians" to questions which will further restrict our lives as aboriginal peoples from becoming "Whole".

We continue to pray for a relationship which has Sovereignty as its basis. This new relationship should exercise giving and receiving, sharing not taking, listening not telling, healing not abusing and seeking not hiding. This new and real relationship should be based on Truth and Honesty, human values which respect Life, not based on corporate values which through our experience to date has shown us more destruction than construction.

In closing I wish to express to you the Commissioners Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ and _____ appreciation for being willing to listen to act on your findings.

When expressing appreciation we have being taught to encourage. So I can only quote our Nisga'a Elders.

"Si aamhl wilsim" ahl yukhl misim sayt doxhl gaagoots dip nidiitgiihl yayt jaxjogat ahl lax tseets'ikshl dii ksax ginamahl Sim'oogit Lax Ha ahl aluugigat.

"Continue to be Brave" as you listen to and gather the concerns of our respective Aborginal Nations who have lived and will continue to live on their respective lands each has received as a gift for survival from God our Creator.

"Ii hagwil huu wilsim" jidaa yukja misim tiixootkwhl luusisgit ahl tsim gaagoodim.

"Continue to be True" to your selves as you contemplate how to share in bringing our lives as Aboriginal Nations whoe again.

"Ii Simgit Wilsim" jidaa misim ginamhl genx hlaa ksgaasim ahl dim luuyoxgwis dip Nidiitgii ant xbiguhl dii Xalkaksgwin ahl lax ts'eetsikshl dii ginamtkwsit loom yuk dimt wilaxhl txaanitkwshl gathl jogat kwidaayimsa wil k'ap yaynit dim hoyihl hliluugadihl Canadahl hli sigootkwhl Sim'oogit Lax Ha hligaadanhl sat'gun.

"Continue to be Pure" in your minds, in your hearts and in your souls when you bring the results of your "Commission" to those who have assumed authority of our "Lands" and our "Lives". Base your findings for our new relationship on the Human Values that God our Creator provided for us, so that we can maintain our

Spirituality as a Nation within Canada. We pray that after today the Nation of Canada will be True and Honest to your direction.

We thank God for this opportunity.

GITWINKSIHLKW
BAND COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 1, GITWINKSIHLKW, B.C. V0J 3I0
TELEPHONE (604) 633-2294/2285
FACSIMILE (604) 633-2539

Our File:1530

NISGA'A
RECEIVED
JUN 03 1993
TRIBAL COUNCIL

May 23, 1993

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
P.O. Box 1993
Station "B"
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1P 1B2

Dear Sirs:

As an Aboriginal leader and a member of the Nisga'a nation, I wish to convey my appreciation to you for taking the time to hear our respective positions in the Northwest.

Attached is our position paper which highlights some of our concerns, our hopes, our dreams, and our cares.

We are hopefull that positive results will evolve from the hearings conducted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Yours truly

Perry Azak, Chief
GITWINKSIHLKW BAND COUNCIL

cc Nisga'a Tribal Council

Attach.

GITWINKSTHLKW

BAND

POSITION PAPER

A. HISTORY

1. Before the arrival of the Russian and European fur traders to the Northwest, the Nisga'a were firmly in charge of their social, educational, economical, transportation, and communication affairs.

2. The Nisga'a were cognizant that their culture evolved as new exposures and experiences were encountered. They allowed changes to occur to adapt to the situation at the time in our history; therefore, our Nisga'a forefathers were in charge of our destiny and had control over the evolution of our culture.

3. The fur traders were aware of our system of government and utilized same to their benefit. Yes, we were aware some of the fur traders took advantage of some of our people through the use of alcohol. However, our Nisga'a Chiefs were firmly in control so the alcohol related social problems were minimal.

4. With the arrival of the missionaries and the government, the Nisga'a Chiefs were bilaterally condemned, as well as their people, with such terms as: heathens, pagans, children, savages, dummies, etc. The Indian Act of the time reflected such prejudices through its discriminatory policies.

5. Legislation was passed to destroy any initiatives we entered into for our economic wellbeing, merely due to the competitive prices we offered on the "free world" market.

> "An Order-in-Council of August 9, 1888, (amended the Indian Act) concerning penalties to (non Native) possessors of presents, root, grain, and other crops given or sold to them by Indians."
> (Treaties & Historical Research Centre, 1978:93)

> Reverend McDougall stated in 1880, "If he is an Indian he cannot visit a friend on a neighbouring reserve without a permit... (nor) go to the nearest town without a permit. He cannot buy or sell without a permit. He can raise cattle but he cannot sell them unless the (Indian Agent) allows. He cannot sell firewood or hay from the land that is his by divine right and citizen right, and thus reap the result of his own industry, unless subject to the caprice and whim of

> one who often become autocratic."
> (Getty & Lussier 1983: 222)

7. When our Nisga'a forefathers complained about the injustices, no one listened nor cared in democratic land that is called Canada. More often, our forefathers were charged and placed in goal (jail) for the all-purpose, catch-all offense of disturbing the peace.

> "The discovery of gold almost eliminated the Indians. If he got in the way a pistol shot would remove the difficulty. The Indian found himself to be an intruder in his own country with no rights and no one to enforce them if he tried."
> (Johnson 1966: 15)

A prime example is the incarceration of our late forefather, Chief Timothy Derrick. He was arrested and charged for merely presenting the concerns of the Nisga'a. He died in prison after many years of indefinite incarceration.

8. The foregoing demonstrate the Third World form of treatment our Nisga'a people endured from many factions of civilized non Native people.

B. GENERAL

1. Many of our problems today stem from the dehumanizing treatment of our forefathers during the past century.

2. We are moving ahead now, notwithstanding the roadblocks and subtle denials against our cause and hopes.

C. PROBLEMS

1. Indian Affairs policies with regard to the registering of Native people is discriminatory and contravenes the provisions of the Human Rights Legislation. There are Nisga'a persons living on our reserve lands who have twenty-five percent (25%) Nisga'a blood and cannot be registered as Indians under the present legislation. The Indian Act must be amended in this area to correct a bad law.

2. The Band Council must be permitted to make its bylaws without the necessity of meeting the Minister's legislated requirements. I would think the majority of Band governments have lawyers as consultants who help draft the bylaws so that it will meet the needs of the community and will be fair.

3. The Band Membership system is a "bite out of an apple" or just a small piece out of a pie. It definitely provides the Band with control of its Band Membership list but it does not bring with it right to assume

control of the registering of Aboriginals as Indians.

4. The Residential School system was more of a failure than it was a benefit. Such a system was recommended by zealot missionaries to satisfy their pedophilic obsessions. The results were devastating:

   a. Family breakdown
   b. Loss of parenting skills
   c. Loss of cultural values
   d. Loss of Nisga'a language
   e. Child sexual abuse
   f. Physical abuse
   g. Mental abuse
   h. Absence of family support
   i. Suicide. One should wonder if the priests murdered some students because they feared that some students may disclose the sexual abuses.

5. Educational is the foremost tool in securing a job, a career, a source of income, or the means towards competing a job.

   With the cutback of thirty percent (30%) from our estimates based on the number of high school students who wish to pursue post secondary educations through university or a college of technology.

   Unemployment is a major problem due to a lack of exposure of some youths to post secondary training.

6. Considering that we, the Nisga'a (and probably many other Bands across Canada), are using lawyers to handle our lease and permit agreements, we fail to see why Indian and Northern Affairs are adamant in being involved in the process, the Indian Act notwithstanding. In the spirit of self Government, the letter of the law should be deemed ultra vires the present day state of affairs.

7. We appreciate the Social Housing system on reserve lands through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, but we are concerned that they are more interested in taking funds from us rather than teaching us how to prepare those annual returns they demand.

   We realize that C.M.H.C. receives excellent reports from the Auditor General practically every year. That, however, must not be used to provide them with powers to deny funds to the Bands merely because we have not mastered the completion of those forms they make.

8. Public Works Canada has cost our band valuable Infrastructure Capital funds due to the interference in Band Council's decision-making. We hire engineering consultants who plan

for our needs based on our decisions and we do not need P.W.C. to "baby sit" us.

9. The Federal Fisheries employees have caused us, the First Nations of British Columbia, extreme grief and stress over many years.

   Germany had Hitler, South Africa had aparthied, and Canada had the Federal Fisheries!

   We have non Native friends in the Lower Mainland (LMD) and we have been advised or informed about certain statements that were made by some of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) enforcement employees:

   "Those Indians are going to get it"

   "Those Native people are not going to egt away with nothing."

   "They think they own the bloody fish."

   We are tired of having to answer to DFO when litigaton after litigation have been in favor of our Aboriginal right to fish. Not every Nisga'a is going to fish! The undesireable attitude of the DFO enforcement personnel had better change...

10. In the area of hunting, we do not like to hunt during the whiteman's hunting season while the Moose are Making love. How would the hunters feel if they were shot in the butt while they were making love to their wives or mistress?!?! Furthermore, some of these hunters are dangerous with their guns because they shoot at anything that moves.

11. The Child Welfare jurisdiction should be expedited so that the Nisga'a may provide considerable improvement to the existing week system of Social Services. Often, under the existing system, our Nisga'a children were placed in homes where they are abused sexually or physically.

D. EXPECTATIONS or OBJECTIVES

1. With the advancements in the computerization of global financial affairs, the new role of Indian Affairs (until a new process is developed) should be to disperse funds based on weighted per capita population records kept at Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

   We are not in favor of new bureaucracies being formed, whether Native or non Native, to dispense funds from the Federal Government.

We would rather see an automated and down-sized Indian Affairs that has no decision making powers, save for the Minister under certain conditions, such as theft of Council funds or misappropriation of same.

Under the auspices of a new self government legislation, which will replace the Indian Act, the Nisga'a government could, in ten (10) years or so, be negotiating with the First Nations Branch of Treasury Board on behalf of its member Bands. With the technology that is available, the funds will not have to pass through the hands of high paid bureaucrats, whether Native or non Naive; therefore, the entire amount negotiated will find its way to the Nisga'a Bands.

2. Only until the foregoing occurs will be able to truly Be accountable to our people, the electorate of the First Nations.

NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL
Vancouver Local
Mailing Address

ANOTHER ROYAL COMMISSION

AN ABORIGINAL PERSON WOULD WONDER IF THE COST OF THIS PROCESS IS PAID FOR BY FUNDS DESIGNATED FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, ONE MORE ROYAL COMMISSION WILL ADD ANOTHER VOLUME OR CHAPTER OF STUDIES ABOUT OUR PEOPLE.

E D U C A T I O N

INDIAN AFFAIRS POLICY REGARDING FUNDING OF STUDENTS FOR EDUCATION WHICH AFFECT THOSE LIVING OFF RESERVE CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED WITH ONE WORD ----DISCRIMINATION----

THE RESULTS OF THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAD ATTENDED THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IS THE REASON SO MANY ARE LIVING IN THE URBAN AREAS. IN THE PAST, THE STANDARDS OF EDUCATION WAS UNSATISFACTORY, AND THE LACK OF ADEQUATE ACCOMMODATIONS ON RESERVES IS ONE OF MANY REASONS WHY SO MANY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO RAISE THEIR FAMILIES IN THE URBAN AREAS NOT FORGETTING A MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR: LACK OF EMPLOYMENT ON THE RESERVES.

OUR NISGA'A PEOPLE LIVING IN THE VANCOUVER AREA ARE FORCED WITH VERY LIMITED FUNDS.AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS, WHAT IS HAPPENING WHEN FAMILIES CANNOT AFFORD TO PARTICIPATE IN A CLASSROOM OUTINGS WHERE COSTS ARE REQUESTED FOR TRANSPORTATION, THESE STUDENTS WOULD RATHER MISS SCHOOL THAN BE EMBARRASSED, WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE INFORMED THE SCHOOL THAT THEY CANNOT NOT AFFORD TO GO ON THE FIELD TRIP. THE HIGH COSTS OF TEXT BOOKS, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE MORE THAN ONE FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDING A SECONDARY SCHOOL. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH AFFECTS THE MORAL OF THOSE STUDENTS WITH LIMITED FUNDS, IS HAVING NOT ENOUGH TO BUY CLOTHING.

POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENTS CAN BE CHANGED,

THEY ARE NOT LAWS.

--HEALTH--

THE MOST FRUSTRATING PROCESS WE FACE IN THE LOWER MAINLAND WHEN REQUESTING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR COVERAGE, WHETHER IT BE FOR DENTAL OR OPTICAL CONCERNS, IS BEING DIRECTED FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER TO ANOTHER; ONE DEPARTMENT TO ANOTHER; FROM ONE BUILDING TO ANOTHER.NOT TO MENTION THE COSTS OF LONG DISTANT TELEPHONE CALLS,TO THE BAND OFFICE. THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH STUDENTS FACE WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH IS THEIR APPEARANCE.THE MOST COSTLY WOULD BE DENTAL REPAIRS OR CORRECTIONS, ANOTHER WOULD BE EYE GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES. THE INDIAN AFFAIRS REQUIREMENT TO HAVING TO FIRST PAY THE INITIAL 50% OF THE COST FOR DENTAL BRACES, MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR FAMILIES WITH FIXED INCOME TO EVEN CONSIDER PURSUING THE DENTAL CORRECTIONS ON THE STUDENT.THE INDIAN AFFAIRS WOULD RATHER APPROVE EXTRACTIONS THAN APPROVE SOME PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.THE APPROVAL OF EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR LONG TERM INJURIES OR MEDICATIONS APPEARS TO BE OF LOW PRIORITY TO THOSE WHO HAVE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE SUCH ITEMS, WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE. THE COST OF PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IS LESS COSTLY IN THE LONG-RUN THAN TO MAKE LITTLE EFFORT TO CORRECT THE DAMAGE DONE, AND IN MOST CASES, THE ACTION TAKEN IS TOO LATE. INDIAN AFFAIRS APPEARS TO HAVE ONLY A SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK. OUR ELDERS NEED AN ABORIGINAL HEALTH CARE CENTER WHERE OUR PEOPLE WILL CARE FOR THEM, INSTEAD OF BEING THROWN INTO INSTITUTIONS WHICH DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

A HEALTHY CHILD IS A HAPPY CHILD.

======H O U S I N G ======

THERE HAS BEEN GREAT CONCERNS REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF **SAFE, HEALTHY, COMFORTABLE and MOST IMPORTANTANTLY, AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATIONS.** THERE STILL EXISTS THE FACT OF OVER-CROWDING IN A MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLES HOMES IN THE LOWER MAINLAND. SOME OF THE NATIVE HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A WAITING LIST WHICH DATES BACK TO 1986.THOSE ACCOMMODATIONS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE ARE IN SUCH UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS THAT THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHICH OUR PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO AFFORD. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THESE CONDITIONS ARE CORRECTED BEFORE THESE SUB-STANDARD CONDITIONS ARE ACCEPTED BY THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS.THERE ARE VERY LITTLE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR FOOD,CLOTHING, AND OTHER NECESSITIES FOR COMFORTABLE LIVING FOR A FAMILY ON A FIXED INCOME TO AFFORD COMFORTALBLE HOUSING.FOR THIS REASON, MOST FAMILIES ARE FORCED TO ACCEPT SUB-STANDARD LIVING CONDITIONS SO THEY CAN AFFORD THESE OTHER NECESSITIES.

SINGLE MOTHERS ARE SUBJECTED TO ALL AVENUES OF ABUSES BY LANDLORDS IN ORDER TO GIVE FAVORS IF RENT IS NOT PAID ON TIME. SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS HIGH IN THESE LOW RENTAL AREAS. YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE EXPOSED CONSTANTLY TO THESE ABUSES.

C.M.H.C. HAS MADE IT KNOWN THAT THERE WILL BE NO ALLOCATIONS OF SUBSIDIZED RENTAL UNITS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

IT APPEARS THE CIRCLE WILL CONTINUE--THE OVER-CROWDING OF OUR PEOPLE.

NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL
Vancouver Local

Mailing Address:

?????? WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ??????

1-- What does the COMMISSION hope to achieve from this?

2--How will our PEOPLE benefit from all this?

3--How soon will the report be available to us?

4--Will all the recommendations be implemented?

5--**WHAT ROLE WILL POLITICS PLAY IN FINALIZING THE REPORT???**

Ben Stewart
Vice President
Vancouver Local.