

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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"for the record..."
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1 Moose Factory, Ontario

2 --- Upon commencing June 9th, 1992, at 9:10 a.m.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Before
4 we get under way I would like to ask Reverend Mervin
5 Cheechoo to come and say the opening prayer.

6 **REVEREND MERVIN CHEECHOO: (Opening**
7 **prayer)**

8 **PAT CHILTON:** Can I ask the people at
9 the back of the room to take a seat around the table, please?

10 Chief Norm Wesley will be making some
11 opening remarks -- welcoming remarks.

12 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** (native greeting)
13 Good morning.

14 On behalf of the Council of the Moose
15 Factory First Nation, I would like to welcome everyone
16 this morning. A special welcome, of course, is extended
17 to people from Moosonee, my fellow chiefs and members of
18 their communities, from the coastal communities, and
19 especially a very warm welcome to the staff and to the
20 Commissioners of the Royal Commission. We know that we
21 have been looking forward in anticipation to this
22 Commission, all of us here in this community, and all the

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1 other surrounding communities, to be able to be afforded
2 the opportunity to say that which is very -- to say those
3 things that are deep within our hearts in terms of what
4 we would like to see for our people.

5 We have walked a long road in this life
6 and we continue to walk that long road. And it is our
7 hope that, as a result of today's opportunity to speak,
8 that it will be a means of hope for the future of our people.

9 On that note I would like to welcome you
10 all and we hope that you will have a very fruitful meeting
11 today.

12 Meegwetch.

13 **PAT CHILTON:** Okay, I think we would get
14 into next is, we would like some opening remarks, or some
15 remarks from the Commissioners.

16 We also have a Commissioner of the Day,
17 Derek McLeod, representing the youth. We have our
18 Commissioner of the Day Elder, who has not been able to
19 make it yet. As soon as he comes in we will introduce
20 him.

21 So, we will start off with Georges, Viola
22 and Derek.

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1 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Good
2 morning, ladies and gentlemen.

3 I welcome the opportunity to be here
4 today as a Commissioner with our Co-Chair, Georges Erasmus
5 and I want to thank you for your warm words of welcome
6 once again. And we see that we have quite a heavy agenda
7 before us today.

8 I look forward and anxious to hearing
9 your thoughts on what the Royal Commission should be doing
10 with respect to your issues.

11 So, I am not going to take too much time,
12 because time is of essence here today. We want to make
13 sure that we get to hear everybody.

14 So, once again, thank you for your
15 welcome and hospitality.

16 Thank you.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** My name
18 is Georges Erasmus. I am the Co-Chair.

19 We represent a Royal Commission that was
20 appointed by the federal government last August. We are
21 in the midst of our community hearings. We hope to be
22 in operation about three years. And, for about a year

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1 and a half of that, we will be holding hearings across
2 the country like this.

3 Myself and Viola are the two
4 Commissioners here. There are two other teams of
5 Commissioners travelling in different parts of Canada.
6 So, simultaneously, at the same time, we are holding three
7 different hearings in different parts of the country.

8 This way we hope to make sure that we
9 cover as broad an area, as many places as possible. We
10 have to make sure that we hear from both aboriginal people
11 and the larger, non-native population in Canada. We have
12 to make sure that in the urban area we hear from aboriginal
13 people there. And we go to Metis communities, Inuit
14 settlements, First Nation communities and that over the
15 time of our existence we get a very good cross-section
16 of opinion and that we get some good dialogue going on.

17 I will not repeat everything I said last
18 night. Some were here -- it looks like I see some familiar
19 faces and others that I have not seen before
20 -- but we have been commissioned to do work in a very large
21 number of areas, elders' issues, womens' issues, youth
22 issues, urban questions, the Indian Act, Indian Affairs,

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1 self-government, economic development, language, culture,
2 self-government, justice issues, traditional hunting,
3 fishing and trapping questions, health, education, on and
4 on, virtually anything you can think about that affects
5 aboriginal people -- land, treaties, aboriginal title --
6 all of those issues that affect aboriginal people -- social
7 issues, child care, child welfare.

8 We have a mandate -- it is very, very
9 comprehensive -- like no other Royal Commission has ever
10 had.

11 The other unique thing about this Royal
12 Commission is that, of the seven Commissioners, four of
13 them are aboriginal. We have an aboriginal majority on
14 this Royal Commission. We have been making an extra effort
15 to make sure that we hire aboriginal people on this Royal
16 Commission. And somewhere between 60 and 70 per cent of
17 the people working for the Royal Commission are aboriginal
18 people.

19 The Commission hopes to be here for the
20 next couple of days and we have a long list of people we
21 want to hear from, so I am going to be very, very brief.

22 I am going to introduce some of the other

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1 people that we have here with us, and I will just ask them
2 to briefly stand, so you know who they are. Of course,
3 you are aware of our community representative, Pat Chilton.
4 He is well known to everybody here.

5 We have Allen Gabriel with us, from our
6 Communications Division; Dolores Comegan from our Public
7 Participation -- she is in the back over there. Dara
8 Culhane, she is also in the back. She is from our research;
9 Brad Michael, Policy Analyst, over here; Ava Hill, she
10 is my Executive Assistant.

11 And we also have a court reporter that
12 follows us around. His name is Bill Jones and he is sitting
13 over here. He is the fellow with the interesting thing
14 on his face there. He does not have an illness. He is
15 just recording what we are all saying.

16 And, for your interest and awareness,
17 the National Film Board has a new section to it which has
18 been created in the last year or so. It is an aboriginal
19 film studio that is created in the western part of Canada,
20 the Edmonton area. And they have a couple of people here.

21 They are filming what is going on today. And, as you
22 present, they will probably contact you and ask you for

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1 permission to use the presentation you made.

2 The two people there are Marilyn Dumont
3 -- I am not sure where Marilyn is from but, with the last
4 name Dumont, it is probably Manitoba, and Paul Rickard,
5 who is from here. You are more familiar with Paul than
6 I am. I just became acquainted with him in the last day
7 or so.

8 You have already met Derek McLeod. You
9 know him very well. He is our Youth Commissioner for the
10 Day. Later on we will have an elder, who will be a
11 Commissioner for the Day with us also.

12 We have not used the Youth Commissioner
13 idea very often, so it is going to be kind of interesting
14 for us to have a Youth Commissioner today.

15 What we have been doing in that area is,
16 we have asked people to join us, whether one or two, as
17 Commissioner for the Day because, as I said, we have broken
18 into three subgroups and we are travelling around. So,
19 it makes it a bit nicer for us to have assistance in the
20 local area.

21 Well, with that, I will stop and I will
22 ask Derek here to say a few words before we begin.

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1

2

YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK

3

McLEOD: Good morning, honoured guests, Elders,
4 ladies and gentlemen.

5

6

7

8

9

I am honoured to be able to participate
in such a historical event. This is an event in which,
after 125 years since the conception of this country, have
the voices of native people across Canada been harkened
to.

10

So, this indeed, is a historical day.

11

12

This is a day which gives native youth
all across Canada a chance at a better and brighter future.

13

14

There is too many times I have witnessed to young people
who think they have no chance of success in the future.

15

16

This leaves many broken in spirit. And it has been
written that the spirit of man sustain him during sickness.

17

So, then, what sustains the spirit?

18

19

20

These young people have lost all hope.
When this happens they turn to false comfort, such as
drugs and alcohol. For some, the only answer is suicide.

21

22

And, granted, there are those that
persevere the hardships and grow into mature men and women,

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1 and it is these people that keep the rest of us going.

2 And again, it has been written that a
3 nation will not prosper without guidance. A nation with
4 many advisors is assured of good success. But, where are
5 we going to find the nations next generations of advisors?

6 It is the youth of today.

7 And it is imperative that we address the
8 needs of the young people. We are losing too many to
9 alcohol and drugs. The number of alcohol and drug-related
10 deaths among native youth is alarming. Those that are
11 not claimed by death end up in shelters, unemployed, or
12 in prison.

13 It is time to change that now, while we
14 have the chance today. The traditions of old are vanishing
15 and our future is closing in very fast. And now is the
16 time to plan for the future. Our common futures depend
17 upon the youth. And what I hope to see addressed in this
18 meeting today -- hopefully by the youth themselves -- are
19 expectations for the future and how native youth can be
20 an integral part of that future. As leaders and role
21 models we must not turn away deaf ears and blind eyes to
22 these young natives. They are looking to us for answers.

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1 And if we turn away from them, who do they have to turn
2 to?

3 Let's put aside our own selfish
4 interests and help them. Let's strengthen the foundations
5 of our future today.

6 Thank you very much.

7 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Perhaps
8 now we can hear from our Elder, who has just joined us,
9 Thomas Archibald.

10 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**

11 **ARCHIBALD:** Good morning, my fellow countrymen, and all
12 the people that are sitting at the front table here.

13 I come here this morning and found out
14 again I'm in for a surprise. I totally did not know, nor
15 was aware of the position the people put me in today.
16 They said, "Tom, you are now Chairman of the Day." So,
17 I don't know how I'm going to make out, but certainly I
18 cannot let my people down and say I could not do, because
19 I, for some reason, have been made aware upon hearing
20 stories of how the native people have suffered over the
21 years of neglect by the superior powers of the white
22 society.

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1 So, I hope this meeting will correct some
2 of that, the bad memories of the past, and we have a better
3 future for the native people of Canada.

4 I will close now, but will be able to
5 comment later on different issues. I, myself, cannot put
6 my views on the table. My hands will be tied because of
7 my position as Chairman of the Day, but I must thank you
8 all.

9 Meegwetch.

10 **PAT CHILTON:** Thank you, Tom.

11 Our first presenter today is Chief Dan
12 Kooses from Kashechewan. For your information the
13 community is about 100 miles north of us, on the western
14 James Bay coast.

15 He has been chief for a couple of years.
16 He has been chief before. He is no stranger to anybody
17 who is with the Assembly of First Nations, or Chiefs of
18 Ontario, or to anybody around here. We've known him and
19 he's attended residential school here.

20 So, Chief Dan Kooses.

21 **CHIEF DAN KOOSEES:** Good morning,
22 everybody. Chief Dan Kooses, from Kashechewan First

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1 Nation.

2 (native language)- (through
3 interpreter)

4 I would like to thank you for listening
5 to us to express our views and to express the views of
6 our people.

7 (to English)

8 Our community of Kashechewan, located
9 90 miles north of here, urgently needs better housing,
10 proper waste and sanitation services today. Like many
11 other communities in northern Ontario, we want better
12 employment opportunities, local control of our education,
13 better health services, recreation programs, a better
14 justice system, access to more economic and business
15 opportunities to reinforce our plans for self-sufficiency.

16 We also want more meaningful
17 government-to-government relationships with Ontario and
18 Canada. Our treaty and aboriginal rights must be
19 respected and honoured. We want our own form of aboriginal
20 government, which will be accountable to our local people.

21 Finally, with all our desires and
22 aspirations, we want a better quality and standards of

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1 life for our people today, and our children tomorrow.

2 The community of Kashechewan consists
3 of approximately 187 housing units, school and
4 teacherages, community and recreational complex, airport
5 and airstrip, northern stores, band office, nursing
6 station and water supply and sewage collection and
7 treatment facilities.

8 The roads network is comprised mainly
9 of grave surfaced roads with minimal ditching. The lack
10 of proper grading causes pooling of water near the homes
11 and subsequently creates problems to the foundation of
12 houses due to frequent shifting.

13 The housing units throughout the
14 community are generally the typical INAC type of housing
15 found in the James Bay communities. These home are, for
16 the main part, 840 square feet bungalows set out on crib
17 foundations. The lots are poorly graded and there is no
18 plumbing connected to sewers and water mains on the street
19 line. There are 25 CMHC section 95 housing units as well,
20 that have similar characteristics to the INAC type housing.

21 Due to a difficulty in accessing other
22 resources to supplement our housing subsidy of

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1 approximately \$42,000 a unit, the housing units being
2 constructed are of an inferior quality and extensive
3 problems are being experienced with the existing housing
4 units. The past construction programs have produced a
5 community with inadequate housing and inadequate
6 infrastructure.

7 The housing construction has not kept
8 pace with the demand for annual growth and backlog housing.
9 Until now, surveys were never carried out to establish
10 the current demand for housing. Surveys in the past have
11 established annual housing demands. These demands,
12 recognized in past years, are not being satisfied with
13 current annual construction programs.

14 Our unemployment rate is extremely high.
15 It never goes below 90 per cent. We need over 170 homes
16 now. If we count all the substandard houses in our
17 community we may require over 350 homes today. We have
18 no sanitation facilities for toilet or washing. Our fresh
19 water supply, which was installed by INAC several years
20 ago is not even connected to our homes, which lie along
21 the water line.

22 So, to complete our own circle of

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1 government-to-government relationships with Canada and
2 Ontario, we are also presenting you, Mr. Commissioner,
3 our plans for the community development of the Kashechewan
4 First Nation.

5 In September, 1991, the Kashechewan
6 First Nation commissioned the Kashechewan Housing and
7 Infrastructure study with the consulting firm of B.H.
8 Martin Consultants Ltd. of Timmins, Ontario. The main
9 goal of this report was to propose a realistic development
10 strategy for a five-year housing and infrastructure
11 development plan for the Kashechewan First Nation.

12 This strategic development plan
13 integrates the Kashechewan First Nation's current capital
14 planning process which was initiated by Indian and Norther
15 Affairs Canada in the early seventies. As the Kashechewan
16 First Nation Council assumes greater control over its
17 community capital planning cycle, the opportunities now
18 exist to develop such plans within the framework of
19 evolving self-government structures at the local level.

20 We want you, Mr. Commissioner, to
21 support the attached proposal, "Kashechewan Housing and
22 Infrastructure Report," which I am submitting to you on

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1 behalf of the Kashechewan First Nation.

2 This report recommends a major housing
3 and infrastructure construction program estimated at \$32.3
4 million over the next five years. This major capital works
5 program involves the construction of 171 new homes,
6 renovations to 185 existing houses, including associated
7 water and sewer installations.

8 This report identifies the urgent need
9 to alleviate the current physical and social conditions
10 of our community. It will assist the Kashechewan First
11 Nation to develop the capability to initiate project
12 planning and management support of its capital assets and
13 investment.

14 Finally, this report was presented to
15 the federal and provincial governments as a request for
16 financial contributions, technical assistance and, above
17 all, a commitment to improve the standard of living for
18 the Kashechewan First Nation.

19 Mr. Commissioner, my Council wants you
20 to appeal to the Department of Indian Affairs, Canada
21 Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Ontario Ministry
22 of Housing for the purpose of supporting this program with

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1 adequate financial and human resources, so that the
2 standard of living in Kashechewan at the end of this period
3 will improve the social and economic conditions of our
4 community. Good and durable housing will contribute to
5 improvement in the study environment that our students
6 require to upgrade their level of education for the future.

7 The physical conditions of our
8 community, once brought up to acceptable, modern
9 standards, will lead to a healthy and viable community
10 which will enhance our future self-sufficiency and
11 self-government development.

12 In conclusion, I wish to thank you for
13 accepting and listening to our presentation. The
14 Kashechewan First Nation Council looks forward to your
15 response to support our community development initiatives.

16 Meegwetch.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
18 thank you, Chief.

19 Certainly, your proposal is very clear
20 and straightforward. A lot of what we are supposed to
21 be doing is, not supposed to be working on the day-to-day
22 issues. There are many government agencies that are

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1 around for that.

2 We are looking at the longer term
3 solution, but his certainly gives us the kind of
4 information we need to get a bigger picture of the housing
5 needs in communities.

6 Could we ask you a few questions, if you
7 do not mind?

8 You said that you have houses that are
9 not connected to sewer and water. And then you also said
10 that Indian Affairs assisted the community in putting sewer
11 and water into the community.

12 So, does that mean that throughout your
13 community you actually have the water and sewer pipes laid
14 down already, but just the housing -- they just have not
15 been hooked up, is that the problem?

16 **CHIEF KOOSEES:** We have a water main
17 line, but then -- constructed about five years ago, right
18 across the community. But the only people that are hooked
19 up is the nursing station, the schools, the Bay store and
20 other non-natives that live in the community.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** But, is
22 the existing lines near the housing of your people, so

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1 it is just a matter of hooking it up?

2 **CHIEF KOOSEES:** Yes, the existing lines
3 are all in the housing -- on the housing main streets --
4 and they're just not hooked up to the residences, band
5 residences.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay.

7 Well, we certainly can pass this on to
8 the appropriate government departments, you know, with
9 covering letters, without any problems.

10 What we will be doing is trying to get
11 a comprehensive view of community needs across the country
12 and make recommendations to fulfil that across the country
13 in a number of ways.

14 If you do not mind, I will ask the
15 Commissioners if they have any comments, or questions,
16 before you are complete.

17 Viola?

18 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
19 you.

20 I do not have any questions. I do want
21 to thank you for your excellent presentation. It is very
22 straightforward and you have got all the information there.

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1 And certainly we will ensure that some follow up is taken.

2 Thank you.

3 **CHIEF KOOSEES:** That document I gave
4 you, Georges, is -- it has everything there that the study
5 we did -- the study of every unit, renovations and
6 requirements for housing over next five years. It's all
7 in that document I gave you.

8 The Department of Indian Affairs, the
9 CMHC and the provincial government has that document.
10 It's got five volume in it.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
12 you.

13 Let me just see if either the Youth
14 Commissioner -- no? -- do you want to make any comment
15 or ask a question, or anything?

16 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**
17 **ARCHIBALD:** I would like to make a comment that the Chief's
18 statements do reflect of what taking place and what it's
19 like on the reserve where he resides.

20 I would like to paint the picture that
21 we send our children out to school, to North Bay, Timmins,
22 with all the modern conveniences. And when they come back

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1 from these colleges or schools, they come back to
2 non-facilities in their home towns. And that must
3 shocking after dealing with sanitary systems in where they
4 spent the last nine months of the year.

5 And this is what we hope will be
6 corrected, so we will be able to have a better sanitation
7 in our communities.

8 Thank you.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
10 you.

11 Thank you, Chief.

12 **PAT CHILTON:** I hope you understand that
13 our agenda is going to be thrown out of whack here, because
14 some of our people that are supposed to be here to make
15 presentations aren't here yet.

16 So, you have to bear with us. And I
17 think later on in the morning we will have a more definite
18 agenda because of switching and people.

19 Because of that, our next speaker is Stan
20 Louttit. He is the Interim Chairman of the Mushkegowuk
21 Council. If you look at the agenda, he was supposed to
22 be just prior to lunch time. He's moved up. He's not

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1 hungry. He's all set to go.

2 Stan has just been appointed the Interim
3 Chairman, effective April 1st, up until the upcoming
4 assembly.

5 So, Stan Louttit.

6 **STAN LOUTTIT:** Commissioners, friends,
7 chiefs and other visitors to Moose Factory, wherever you're
8 from, my name is Stan Louttit, Interim Chairman for the
9 Mushkegowuk Tribal Council.

10 The presentation I am going to be making
11 is short, but it reflects, I think, some of the things
12 that Dan Kooses was talking about in relation the problems
13 that he's having in his own community.

14 I'd like to personally welcome you to
15 Mushkegowuk Territory, to the land of the Omushkegowuk.
16 That task that the government has undertaken is no easy
17 one, but I feel at ease knowing that the structure and
18 calibre of people such as you, who will hear and bring
19 the message of the native people, will assist the
20 government in gaining a better understanding of the
21 aboriginal peoples of this land.

22 Best of luck to you as you travel across

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1 this country and meegwetch for the opportunity -- to be
2 given this opportunity to share with you some thoughts
3 on the government's relationship with aboriginal people.

4 We need to share a vision, I think, for
5 the future. And did not our grandfathers and forefathers,
6 did they not envision themselves with as government and
7 their own people? I think certainly they did.

8 We need to refocus our energies in a
9 spirit of sharing, rather than unilateral decision-making
10 and what's been the practice in previous years.

11 To make this vision a reality the
12 government -- I'm not only speaking of the federal
13 government here, but also the provincial government --
14 need to deal with the very real problems that exist in
15 our communities today -- and you heard them from Chief
16 Dan Kooseses -- and you will be hearing more in the next
17 day or so.

18 It would be nice if we as First Nation
19 people could rely solely on our own resources to tackle
20 these day-to-day headaches. But, the reality of the
21 matter is that the resourcing probabilities lie with
22 governments through treaty obligations, and we have to

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1 work in partnership to make our communities better places
2 to live.

3 Granted, the government has come a long
4 way in a short time to attempt to strengthen the
5 relationship with aboriginal peoples. It's too bad that
6 circumstances such as that of Oka would open the eyes of
7 governments to realize that maybe there's a need to open
8 dialogue on a government-to-government basis with
9 aboriginal peoples of this land.

10 In line with this new relationship is
11 the reality that the most beneficial way to improve
12 conditions in the native communities is to offer
13 flexibility in how programs and resources are managed.

14 The government still has a primitive
15 notion that their way is the only way in managing resources.

16 There is a definite need for aboriginal people to exercise
17 their own authorities in resource management. Not until
18 this happens will the native people feel a sense of
19 ownership and real partnership with the government.

20 The government has gone on record across
21 this country that they wish to engage in a new
22 relationship, find new ways of doing things with the native

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1 people. But, when First Nations come to the table and
2 offer suggestions on new ways of doing business, the
3 government says, "Sorry, we can't do that." No wonder
4 we don't trust the government.

5 We hear about housing conditions in
6 Indian communities. We hear about non-existent or
7 deficient infrastructure in the communities. We hear
8 about substandard educational facilities in our reserves
9 and the list goes on. These are well documented and nobody
10 has to tell you about them.

11 Why is that so? Is it because native
12 people are poor managers, or poor planners? Do you think
13 that native people with adequate resources designed and
14 implemented all these facilities? Of course not. These
15 problems exist because the Government of Canada cannot,
16 or will not, realize that native people themselves need
17 to have a say in managing what's happening in their own
18 land.

19 Just as an example of what I'm talking
20 about there, Chief Kooseses, the previous presenter,
21 developed a project with his people on how they might be
22 able to alleviate the problem of housing and infrastructure

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1 in their communities. It's not a fancy project. What
2 it is, is utilizing resources that are targeted for the
3 community of Kashechewan over the next five years.

4 Chief Kooses is not asking for any more
5 money from the government. It's money that's already
6 planned. It's there, targeted.

7 What he's saying is, in line with your
8 new relationship and in line with the fact that you're
9 trying to develop news ways of doing business with the
10 government, just take a look at this and try to do it
11 differently, rather than the normal way that we've been
12 doing business the last twenty years.

13 That's why I feel very suspicious when
14 a government goes across the country and says, "Let's do
15 things a bit differently." But, when somebody come along
16 and tries to do something differently, they can't do it.
17 No wonder people get really pissed off about that.

18 I get a little bit excited when I talk
19 about that project.

20 The government created these problems
21 and has a responsibility to rectify the wrongs that has
22 been over the years. Now is the time to do it. And let's

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1 be serious about it, too. Let's not have the government
2 hopping all over the country saying they want to find new
3 ways of doing things, when they really don't want to.

4 Having said that about the government,
5 I think native people have a responsibility here, too.
6 We need to retain our governing structures of yesterday.

7 I don't mean to say that we should live in teepees again,
8 but we've got to make them work in today's society.

9 Simply, we need to re-establish, in a
10 lot of cases, revitalize and strengthen our relationship
11 with the Creator and Mother Earth. Only then will the
12 other factors of language, culture and traditions fall
13 into place. Each one of us here has a responsibility for
14 that.

15 Getting back to governance, we, as
16 native people, need to begin establishing a vision of what
17 we want for tomorrow. The Mushkegowuk Council and its
18 community has a vision that is probably not much different
19 from that of others.

20 Let me share it with you.

21 The ultimate goal for First Nation
22 organizations is that of attaining a self-government

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1 structure suitable to their unique values and traditions.

2 To achieve this, the first and foremost task is define
3 the traditional territory with the Mushkegowuk First
4 Nation.

5 Once this exercise is achieved, then the
6 process of how we manage within our traditional lands and
7 waters begins.

8 Notice, when you talk about traditional
9 territory you most often think of lands. But, what about
10 water? But, what about air? We don't want the same thing
11 happening like the people in Labrador where the military
12 is practising their manoeuvres over their traditional
13 territories.

14 We need to define and implement
15 harvesting laws and practices, law and justice models,
16 educational structures, health management systems. The
17 sky's the limit. And the process has begun.

18 The Mushkegowuk First Nations have, in
19 the past two years, developed partnerships with the
20 province and the federal governments, most notable in
21 health and in education -- partners in change if you will
22 -- but certainly managers of our own institutions.

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1 Only by this means will the First Nations
2 governments be able to effectively change for the better
3 those systems that are currently in place within our
4 communities, systems that have been unilaterally imposed
5 upon us by the government.

6 With the current constitutional
7 discussions going on in this country and the seemingly
8 positive mood that has happened regarding aboriginal
9 issues, there is a sense that the government and aboriginal
10 people are at a very crucial time in their relationships,
11 crucial because at no other time in the recent memory have
12 aboriginal peoples been allowed the opportunity to sit
13 on a government-to-government manner with other
14 governments.

15 This very point only proves to me that
16 the governments of yesterday were totally engulfed in the
17 paternalistic attitudes that we hear so much about, even
18 today. I cannot believe that the government took this
19 long to come to its senses.

20 The average Canadian, don't they have
21 responsibility here, too? Probably so. It is up to
22 forums such as this and the most recent constitutional

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1 circles that portray a sense of unity with other Canadians.

2 But we can do more.

3 About two years ago the Mushkegowuk
4 Council hosted a bridge building symposium with non-native
5 peoples of the Timmins area -- Georges, you were there,
6 you remember that -- this exercise proved to be a very
7 crucial -- proved to be very crucial in opening dialogue
8 with our non-aboriginal neighbours. It also proved that,
9 yes, indeed, there was a need for the non-native people
10 to learn about us and also learn about them, and to learn
11 about what we're all about.

12 This needs to be -- this needs to happen
13 more in this country.

14 In conclusion, again, the path that you
15 have undertaken -- mandated to undertake is a difficult
16 one and the Mushkegowuk Council appreciates your time to
17 be here.

18 I heard you saying the other day that
19 -- yesterday -- that perhaps there'll be another round
20 of hearings going on, possibly in this area. And maybe
21 at that time you will have an opportunity to see more of
22 the Mushkegowuk territory.

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1 I would like to close by borrowing a
2 paragraph from the Mushkegowuk presentation to the First
3 Nation circle on the constitution.

4 We cannot lose sight to the fact that
5 it is the First Nations themselves who will define what
6 and who we are, not governments telling us who we can be.
7 This definition will be based on our language and our
8 culture. It will be based on an understanding of the land
9 and our role in the cycles of nature. This is what gives
10 us dignity as Mushkegowuk people.

11 Before I completely sign off, look at
12 the back of the presentation there, the last two maps.
13 The last one shows the Mushkegowuk community that you are
14 aware of. But the one before that, when we talk about
15 traditional territory, I think really puts it in
16 perspective. One-third of the Province of Ontario,
17 basically that, belongs to the Mushkegowuk people. And
18 when you look at those little dots, those are the little
19 dots that the government came along with and said, "Okay,
20 you guys live there. We know you lived in all this
21 territory, but we don't want you to live there. Live in
22 these little spots." That really puts it in perspective,

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1 I think, and that represents 0.3 per cent of our traditional
2 territory.

3 That's just an afterthought.

4 Thank you for listening to me.

5 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
6 you for your presentation.

7 We certainly will be back into northern
8 Ontario again, there is no question about it. What
9 particular community, we cannot say just yet, we have not
10 worked that out.

11 I am going to see if the Commissioners
12 want to ask you any questions or have comments, and then
13 I will ask you some later on.

14 We will start with Viola.

15 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want
16 to thank you for your excellent presentation here.

17 **STAN LOUTTIT:** Let me give you a hand
18 here. I'll ask myself a question.

19 The terms of reference that are
20 developed as to what's supposed to be -- what the Commission
21 wants to here -- and there's a number of them here in terms
22 of woman issues, land issues, education and the Indian

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1 Act, and all those kinds of things. I think my
2 presentation makes the very point that all those things
3 that are within your terms of reference, all the everyday
4 problems that we have today, can be taken care of by one
5 very simple task, going through a process of a
6 self-government exercise. That is defining our
7 territory. Once we do that, then start setting up the
8 structures as to what we want to do to deal with those
9 issues.

10 Granted, there'll be some things that'll
11 take long because of legislative problems, because of rules
12 and regulations of the government. We understand that.

13 But, there's also a lot of other things
14 that we can do right away. And that's what we're working
15 on now.

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Yes,
17 I am just wondering about -- I understand that there has
18 been some progress made in Ontario with the present
19 government where there has been agreements signed with
20 the chiefs and to get on with some -- I guess treaty
21 recognition and some form -- recognition of
22 self-government.

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1 And I am just wondering just how that
2 is progressing and at what stage is that? Or do you feel
3 you are making progress in that area?

4 **STAN LOUTTIT:** You're referring to the
5 Canada/Ontario/Nishnawbe Aski Memorandum of
6 Understanding? The timeframe is tight and they're working
7 on it.

8 But, what we're saying as Mushkegowuk
9 people, is that we definitely need to go through an exercise
10 of determining our own pace as to what we want to do in
11 a self-government process. This was recently recognized
12 by the provincial government consultations that happened
13 within the Moose River Basin with aboriginal and
14 non-aboriginal people.

15 One of the things it recognized is that
16 the Mushkegowuk people should be listened to and should
17 be dealt with in a self-government way. And, because of
18 that provincial government recognition of that, and also
19 the fact that the memo states in part that any tribal
20 council or groups of people who wish to do something at
21 their own pace or in different ways, then by all means
22 we respect that and we're taking advantage of that.

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1 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** So, do
2 you accept the fact, then, your responsibility of
3 government, by your self-government, should be a joint
4 one between the federal and provincial governments? Or
5 do you think it should be -- it sounds like to me you are
6 accepting a joint kind of responsibility -- jurisdiction.

7 **STAN LOUTTIT:** The reality of 1992, and
8 as we near the year 2000, is that the provincial and the
9 federal governments are there, they have structures in
10 place. And though, inasmuch as we'd like to go back to
11 the days before the governments, in which we had total
12 freedom -- and what we have to do -- I think the reality
13 is that we have to work with both governments, some in
14 partnership, others not. And I think this is a process
15 that we'd like to undertake.

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Just
17 one last point here is, that we have heard at other hearings
18 about the importance of language and culture and the
19 importance of linking elders back to the youth, and having
20 a very important role for the elders in any community or
21 self-government development.

22 And there is a big concern there as --

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1 how do we -- some are calling it a healing process, you
2 know, that has to be established within communities
3 themselves as they move into areas of self-government.

4 Do you have any comments on that?

5 **STAN LOUTTIT:** I think one of the strong
6 values that we as native people have is that we've always
7 looked to our elderly people as guiding lights, if you
8 will, in our discussions on matters that affect us, and
9 moreso in this day and age, as we go along and develop
10 these self-governing institutions that I referred to.

11 I think moreso we'll be needing the
12 people, such as Tom, to guide us in our discussions. And
13 also, in the matter of youth, I think Derek put it very
14 well in his opening remarks that there's a lot of work
15 that needs to be done now. There's got to be some guidance
16 from elders and other leaders in terms of the youth because,
17 definitely, the youth are going to be the ones that'll
18 lead us tomorrow.

19 And there's got to be a transition there.

20 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
21 you.

22 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I will

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1 see if either the Elder or Youth Commissioner want to say
2 anything, or ask questions.

3 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**

4 **ARCHIBALD:** I think it will be more interesting as we hear
5 from the rest of the presenters with their problems that
6 they have in their own communities. And this will, I hope,
7 will establish some recognition of our problems that exist
8 in northern Ontario.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:**

10 Derek?

11 Excuse me, if you do not mind, Stan, I
12 was going to ask you one or two questions -- sorry -- I
13 was just checking to see if these people had any questions
14 of you.

15 The work of the Commission is going to
16 have to get a bit more specific as time goes on.

17 You talk about getting back to original
18 governing structures suitable to the unique vales and
19 traditions of the Mushkegowuk people.

20 Could you begin to describe that for us?

21 You are probably well aware that people like myself in
22 my former jobs were asked repeatedly by people out across

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1 the country, "What do you people mean by self-government?"

2 And I always had an answer.

3 But now, what this Royal Commission has
4 to do over the next two-and-a-half years is, with First
5 Nation communities and nations, answer many of those
6 questions.

7 So, what you have done here in your
8 proposal is, you have just teased our real interest. What
9 are the self-governing structures suitable to the unique
10 values and traditions of the Mushkegowuk people?

11 You know, you say you want to retain the
12 governing structures of yesterday and make them work today.
13 Can you provide us with, you know, a bit more information
14 as to what that might look like?

15 We are well aware that a lot of work will
16 have to go into it. Leaders have to be involved, elders,
17 and the community has to be consulted, and eventually you
18 will come up with something that is acceptable to
19 everybody.

20 But perhaps you could just start to give
21 us some guiding post along the way, so we can understand
22 what that means.

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1 Is there going to be a community
2 structure? Is there going to be a regional structure?
3 What relationship is this going to have to, you know, the
4 Nishnawbe Aski, and the larger territory of the people
5 in norther Ontario? We are quite curious. And, if you
6 do not have all the answer now, then we certainly will
7 want them over time.

8 But, if you could just begin to paint
9 that picture for us?

10 **STAN LOUTTIT:** Yes.

11 Well, when people say we cannot define
12 self-government, to me self-government is very simple.

13 It's being able to do your own thing,
14 being in control and being able to make decisions that
15 affect your daily lives, without relying on anybody. It's
16 very simple. Being in control and doing your own thing.

17 And a couple of examples I'll give you
18 is, take, for example, harvesting, hunting, fishing,
19 trapping. And I should be careful here, because I have
20 some of my bosses sitting around here, the chiefs, who
21 will probably agree or not agree, because we haven't talked
22 about it at great length around that table. I consider

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1 myself lucky, I have seven bosses. You probably only have
2 one.

3 Talk about traditional harvesting.

4 One of the ways we can go about it and
5 get away from the practices of the Canadian Wildlife
6 Service and MNR, is to set up a board representative of
7 all our seven First Nations -- eight, if you count Moosonee
8 -- because 90 per cent of them are from Mushkegowuk
9 communities -- set up a board and determine how you are
10 going to manage within those traditional territories that
11 I spoke about.

12 What are going to be -- what are the
13 harvesting criteria going to be? How will you sustain
14 the land in order for the future generations to be able
15 enjoy the traditional pursuits that you now do?

16 Right now, MNR plays a large role in our
17 day-to-day lives in terms of harvesting. So does the
18 Canadian Wildlife Service. We need to take control of
19 that. We have to set up a board representative of
20 everybody and determine our own practices.

21 I would be appropriate too, probably,
22 if the federal and provincial government representation

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1 was sitting on that board. That's no problem. We still
2 have control. There's eight of us and two of them.

3 In the area of law and justice, in my
4 presentation I spoke about some things that we cannot
5 legislatively change. We have to work on those, and they
6 will take time. But in the area of law and justice, why
7 don't we take a program, such as the one that's in the
8 community of Attawapiskat north of here, such as the one
9 that was in Sandy Lake -- demonstration projects, if you
10 will -- and evaluate them and take them a bit further and
11 design how it would fit into that individual community?

12 Yes, there's today's white laws that we
13 probably cant' get away from, like I said. But, let's
14 work around that and start with something that we can live
15 with. And then, over a period of time, we'll have
16 something that will be totally controlled by that
17 community.

18 I say "by that community," because law
19 and justice probably cannot or should not be in a regional
20 way. It should -- because communities have their own
21 values and traditions that they want to undertake -- and
22 it should be unique to their own communities.

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1 So, those are two examples of what we
2 mean by self-government. Some in partnership with federal
3 and provincial governments. Others in total autonomy of
4 the Mushkegowuk communities.

5 And we've started in a couple of other
6 areas. And I don't really wanted to get excited about
7 it and say this is self-government. What it is, is
8 evolving into a partnership. And I gave two examples
9 earlier in the areas of health and education. It's a
10 start. We have to start somewhere to work with the
11 governments on how we do things better in those areas.

12 And, over a period of time, as we go along
13 further in those projects, we may see opening that crop
14 up and then we'll be able to take control and to be able
15 to run the show totally, ourselves.

16 This is going to be a long process, but
17 the process that I outlined in terms of defining first
18 what our boundaries are, we can do that in a year or two.

19 And then start working on the institutions within the
20 next five years, let's say.

21 So, I hope I've shed a bit of light on
22 a couple of examples and what I mean by self-government.

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1 To me, it's control and nobody looking over your shoulder
2 and telling you, "Well, that's not really how it should
3 be done."

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I am
5 curious to know if -- I have always presumed that if First
6 Nation communities were to outline the kind of jurisdiction
7 they wanted and the kind of structure they wanted, they
8 would start at -- perhaps at the family level, or else
9 the community level, and then they would build up to the
10 region. And perhaps they would build up to the area of
11 their nation, or else a larger organizational area.

12 You have mentioned both the community
13 level and that of the tribal council.

14 Do you see any role for a larger
15 structure, like Nishnawbe Aski, or any other structure
16 beyond the regional level? Or do you see self-government
17 for the First Nation people in this part of the world simply
18 stopping at the tribal council level and having no
19 authority beyond that?

20 **STAN LOUTTIT:** I think there's got to
21 be some flexibility there. One good example that I
22 mentioned is the Canada/province/NAN/MOU process in which

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1 they say, "Well, we like to work on certain things that
2 are of a regional nature," and to be able to develop in
3 the long term maybe a self-government framework.

4 Some things in there may be of value in
5 terms of doing them within territories. But there's
6 others that I think that most people will agree that they
7 are unique and solely in the position of those individual
8 communities.

9 For example, I said something about
10 harvesting, law and justice, you know. There's -- if we
11 were to do that in a very regional way, you know, I don't
12 think it would work. The communities have a -- that's
13 where it all started from, the communities, in terms of
14 developing these structures.

15 I made a point at one of the meetings
16 in Nan when I sent that -- and I will be critical here
17 of NAN meaning -- I don't mean to be totally ignorant,
18 but I'll be critical a bit in saying that, when they were
19 developing their framework it looked like they're starting
20 from the bottom and working up, sort of like an upside
21 down teepee. It was point on the bottom and wide on top.

22 And the point I made was, since when did

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1 an Indian live in an upside down teepee? We've got to
2 turn that over and make the bottom larger and all the
3 communities are there, and eventually work to a point --
4 see, I'm getting excited again --

5 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You have
6 a way of making your point.

7 **STAN LOUTTIT:** -- work to a point of
8 getting to that one point, if you will, and having either
9 a Mushkegowuk framework or a NAN framework.

10 And I think within Canada, or even
11 Ontario, it's -- they're puzzles, that's what they are.

12 And once the Mushkegowuk does their thing and has a
13 framework in place -- let's say Windego (phonetic) Tribal
14 Council does the same thing -- Windego Tribal Council and
15 Shebougema (phonetic) do their own thing -- and after
16 awhile NAN has a process in place whereby all the individual
17 groupings and tribal councils are maybe under a overall
18 NAN framework, if you will.

19 But, certainly autonomy and
20 responsibility rests with those individual groupings --
21 authorities also, more importantly.

22 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Viola

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1 asked a question in relation to the Province of Ontario
2 earlier. You gave here an answer. And I wonder if I could
3 expound on that a little bit, just add a little bit to
4 that.

5 The impression that people are getting
6 from outside of Ontario is that you have a province here
7 that is prepared to negotiate on land and has recognized
8 that aboriginal people have the inherent right to govern
9 themselves -- have always had it. They are taking a lead
10 role in the constitution. They fought for the national
11 organizations being part of the constitutional process
12 at the national level.

13 So, I think what Viola and I would like
14 to know is, okay, what does that really mean? What does
15 that translate to on the ground here now? You know, has
16 the province recognized that you have a proper, legitimate
17 claim to land? Is there going to be a process to deal
18 with your land?

19 You talk about one of the first steps
20 being to kind of outline the large traditional territory
21 of each of the tribal council areas within NAN.

22 Having done that, do you expect that the

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1 government will treat you any different than the previous
2 governments that were here in the past?

3 **STAN LOUTTIT:** I'd like to answer that
4 in a couple of ways.

5 One, I think the time is ripe that we
6 start getting serious and start talking about these
7 self-governing frameworks and the definition of land.
8 Because, like you say, the NDP government has gone on record
9 that they wish to work with the First Nations in a more
10 positive way and they recognize some of the things that
11 we're trying to do in a self-government way.

12 So, we have to take advantage of that.

13 If another government comes into power
14 in a couple of years or two, they might not think that
15 way, and we're back to square one. So, we've got a lot
16 of work to do now.

17 The other thing is that, inasmuch as the
18 NDP government publicly says that they will support First
19 Nations and tribal councils in any self-government
20 discussions, I think the reality of the fact is that the
21 bureaucrats who advise the top politicians, they're the
22 one who make the day-to-day decisions and policy

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1 recommendations to the upper people. And they're the
2 ones, usually, that have the more clout in the
3 decision-making of governments.

4 And, if anything, government leaders
5 should not change, bureaucrats should, and maybe we'll
6 get further -- mover further in our day-to-day
7 relationships with the federal and provincial governments
8 if that was the case. Some of these guys have been there
9 for 20 years. And their ideas haven't changed in 20 years.

10 And how can we move if they advise politicians the same
11 kind of advice they've been giving them in the last 20
12 years? Some of these guys are old and ready to retire.

13 They should send them away.

14 I hope I answered you.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Just
16 one last question, if you do not mind.

17 You talked about retaining governing
18 structures of yesterday and you did give us some ideas
19 on that.

20 I am just a little curious about
21 -- in the past, what system of government actually existed
22 here? Was there some clan system? Was there --

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1 obviously, you did not have the Indian Act before any of
2 us had it in the country. What was some of the features
3 of the governing system in the past that you think might
4 be retained in the future?

5 **STAN LOUTTIT:** I was just about going
6 to say if I am weak in an area, but I probably found, like,
7 that you don't have any weaknesses if I start off by saying
8 that.

9 If I am weak in area it is that of being
10 a historian. That I'm not.

11 But, what I will say though, is, in
12 looking at information and talking to people in how we
13 possibly may have conducted business years ago, and we
14 talked about regional governance -- and also take a look
15 at that in relation to regional governance and Mushkegowuk
16 Council in the last 10 years, when we started organizing
17 -- that was nothing new.

18 There was probably regional governance
19 a hundred years ago, when people got together in their
20 small groupings and families and friends and travelled
21 around and hunted and trapped in their various traditional
22 areas. Those were governments.

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1 And they organized in such a way that
2 they respected each other and probably had unwritten rules,
3 if you will, in how they conducted their day-to-day
4 practices. And we can take that, I think, into today.

5 What we can do in relation to that,
6 again, is to go back to those and define those various
7 grouping areas. And by that we come up with the
8 traditional territory and also with the teachings of our
9 grandfathers from a hundred years ago, in that they were
10 quite very autonomous in how they did things in travelling
11 and hunting and fishing and trapping.

12 That's basically what we need today, to
13 be able to do what we want, how we want to do it, where
14 we want to do it, why we want to do it, and so forth.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
16 you for your time.

17 **PAT CHILTON:** Thank you, Stan.

18 The next presenter is Gilbert Cheechoo.
19 He was born and raised here in Moose Factory, but now
20 lives in Timmins and works for the Nishnawbe Aski Economic
21 Development Fund.

22 Here he is, the man himself.

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1 **GILBERT CHEECHOO:** (native language -
2 no interpretation)

3 Good morning, Georges, Viola, Tom and
4 Derek.

5 What I have to say -- again, I don't have
6 a written statement -- this is a message to you and to
7 my people that live here in Moose Factor and for all those
8 that are connected to the airwaves through the radio
9 system.

10 One of the things that seems to confuse
11 a lot of our people is the way that the government has
12 dominated the way that aboriginal representation should
13 be decided.

14 It started for us in 1905, when the
15 Treaty was signed. The government insisted on a chief
16 and council, a representation from the Indian Act. A good
17 way to ruin a community is to have an election. And that
18 was when our society started to fall apart, was when the
19 Indian Act introduced an election process.

20 There was no more consensus. That was
21 the advent, the destruction of what was once a very strong,
22 harmonious, governing structure. It was set up for the

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1 purpose of government.

2 And from then we move on to the tribal
3 council era. Again, the Department of Indian Affairs
4 gathered the chiefs, put them around a table and called
5 it a tribal council. Again, these are foreign things that
6 were given to our people.

7 Again, a very small group of people made
8 a decision over territory that didn't belong to them.
9 Jurisdiction was eliminated. Assimilation was
10 introduced.

11 Because our people needed food, they
12 needed housing, they needed all these things to live, what
13 could they do?

14 We were strapped in school when I was
15 a kid for speaking Cree. We were strapped in a school
16 that was right in the middle of our own community, strapped
17 by white people for speaking Cree language.

18 Anybody that tried to introduce their
19 culture was mocked by the system and eventually mocked
20 by their own people.

21 Eighteen years ago I started with my
22 cousin a drum group in Moose Factory. Eighteen years ago

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1 I still didn't give up. I returned from a pow-wow the
2 other day and we were mocked by our own people of what
3 we were trying to do.

4 I didn't get mad at anybody for teasing
5 us, for putting a lot of pressure on us. And there was
6 no hard feelings. I didn't give up.

7 Like Mary Lou Iahtail said last night,
8 "When the going gets tough, you work harder." And to this
9 day I wear my hair long and I do not cut it. My mother
10 once told me, "Don't cut your hair." Some day I will
11 understand why she told me that.

12 She always told me to continue to do what
13 I believe in. Do not let anything bring me down. You
14 make a decision to work with your people, don't think you're
15 smarter than them, because you're not smarter than them.
16 There are some smarter than you.

17 She asked me to humble myself. She
18 taught me a lot of things.

19 The other elders that I've listened to
20 over the years in my travels have also instructed the same
21 thing. The healing process began a long time ago, but
22 we just didn't know it. We've struggled. We got pushed

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1 around. We got pushed off our land. Our culture was
2 slowly, slowly becoming eliminated.

3 Genocide was working, until a couple of
4 decades ago.

5 When we lose jurisdiction we lose
6 autonomy. When we are forced to remove ourselves from
7 who we are and from what we had that kept us together,
8 that's when we lose our dignity, we lose our self-esteem.

9 Then we become very confused. We get
10 thrown in a big pot. You are told that everybody is Indian,
11 there is no difference. You're all Indian, because
12 that's what the Indian Act says. Because you have a card
13 in your pocket that says you're a certified Indian.
14 There's no certified Frenchman card around, nor anything
15 else like that.

16 You're a certified Indian. You're all
17 the same.

18 When I travel the country -- I travel
19 all over the place -- I buy a highway map at the gas station.

20 I look at the white man's map and there's a lot lines
21 on there. There's district here and district there, and
22 everything. I just use it find my highway, that's all.

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1 But, when I look at a map, I see Ininu
2 (phonetic), Nishnawbe territory, all the different
3 nations, their territory is what I see. I go to Sudbury
4 -- I'm not in the District of Sudbury -- I am in the
5 territory of the Nishnawbe people, and I respect them.
6 I do not take anything from them, as much as -- that has
7 been taken away from them. I am not an Indian. I am an
8 Ininu (phonetic).

9 I come from this land. The very land
10 that I sit in right now is the origin. That is where the
11 descendants of my family come from. I am home.

12 But somebody took that jurisdiction by
13 giving us an election system and chief and council. Then
14 they gave us the tribal council. Then they gave us the
15 Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

16 I have a lot of respect for the people
17 that work in these organizations and for those people that
18 are here in this community. But it doesn't mean I have
19 to like the system that they work in, because I cannot
20 be denied my rights.

21 I think the systems that we see today
22 do not work. AFN doesn't work, because I didn't vote Ovide

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1 Mecredi in power. Nobody here did. Only one person was
2 allowed to go there. AFN doesn't represent me. It is
3 that system again that we were forced to use.

4 That same system that we were forced to
5 use is deciding what self-government is going to be. It's
6 going to decide on nationhood. It's going to decide on
7 a lot of things. But it's too bad that it gets money from
8 the side that's making all the decisions.

9 It's making all these decisions.
10 Someone is making decisions on the future of our nation,
11 not the Indian nation, the Ininu (phonetic) nation, because
12 we have our own language, we have our own traditions, we
13 have our own governing structures that are different.
14 So do the other nations in Canada.

15 So, that is the area that concerns me
16 the most right now as an individual, is that area.

17 Jurisdiction. Who has jurisdiction?

18 Do you look at a band list? And the
19 people that are registered on that band list, do they have
20 jurisdiction? Or do you look at inherent rights?

21 Who on that list has inherent rights to
22 that very territory that we are negotiating with the

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1 federal government, the provincial government, to deal
2 with these issues of self-government, lands and resources?

3 Or, does the one that we elect to chief
4 and council have the power to decide on jurisdiction?

5 How can we use a system that has failed
6 and failed, and failed, and failed, and failed for
7 generations? I moved out of this community four years
8 ago. I was here for 10 years when I came back. I went
9 to every council meeting -- community meeting. There was
10 very few people in that meeting. And, to this day, I hear
11 -- living in Timmins -- that there are still very few
12 people.

13 The land is who we are. I don't hunt
14 on the land. I don't fish. I work in an office. But
15 I did not give up my nationhood. I did not give up my
16 rights to that land. That's the way the white man wants
17 it. He wants to prove that Indians eat more Kentucky Fried
18 Chicken than they eat beaver, so they can go and dam up
19 the rivers.

20 They want to prove that the Indian, the
21 Cree, the Ininu (phonetic) in Moose Factory have jobs,
22 they don't need the land. Well, that is wrong.

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1 The more jobs they have, the more they
2 need the land, because now they can afford to buy boat
3 and motor, skidoos and guns and hunting equipment. They
4 can take their kids out hunting. The more jobs they have,
5 the more use they have for the land.

6 Just because they have a wage economy
7 doesn't mean that they gave up the land -- their life on
8 the land. These people here that sit behind me do not
9 book the travel agency to go to Florida for vacation.
10 They go hunting. They go to the land.

11 As hard as they work to live off the land
12 and to go out there, that is much as -- that's how hard
13 I work in what I do for a living, working with my people.
14 And occasionally my friends give me some geese, some moose
15 meat, some fish, and I respect that. I share what they
16 give me, because I know how hard it is to go and live that
17 life.

18 And as hard as they work to get out into
19 the bays, to go out there to go and fish, as hard as they
20 did, that is as much work I do for them, too, in the job
21 that I have. Coming here, I paid my own way to come here.

22 I took a couple of days off, because I know that my people

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1 are listening.

2 These systems have failed us. What are
3 we doing here? The government come and give us a Royal
4 Commission to question what? Georges, you go so much
5 experience. You don't need a Royal Commission. You
6 probably can go and talk to Mulroney and tell him what
7 you're going to tell him in four years from now.

8 It's an insult to put someone like you
9 on this Commission, as well as Viola and others. It is
10 an insult.

11 So, when we negotiate with the
12 government, what does the government do? I talked to the
13 government people. I know lots of government people.
14 They know me. I ask them questions. "How do you decide
15 what you're going to do in the Moose River Basin," after
16 they gave out this report. "How're you going to make a
17 decision? Who are you going to talk to? Are you going
18 to talk jurisdiction with a Cree that doesn't come from
19 Moose River Basin just because maybe they're a chief, maybe
20 they sit on a board?" Because I know a lot of them.

21 Or, "Are you going to talk to those who
22 have inherent rights in the Moose River Basin?" Because,

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1 again, if we send the wrong person to represent us, it's
2 like proving we eat more Kentucky Fried Chicken than we
3 eat beavers, or moose meet.

4 They'll look at someone who doesn't come
5 from Moose River Basin and say, "You don't come from there."

6 So, where does inherent rights come from? If I
7 transferred to Peawanuck, do I have inherent rights there?

8 I don't think so. But these are some of the things that
9 we have to look at.

10 And these are some of the issues that
11 I wanted to get across, not only for yourselves, but also
12 for the community here. I have a lot of respect for a
13 lot of my friends here. They come from different areas.

14 But, when it comes down to jurisdiction, we have to take
15 a darned good look at who we're talking to and what we're
16 talking about.

17 So, inherent rights doesn't mean which
18 band list Indian Affairs you to sit on. It means it comes
19 from those that originate from that territory. That's
20 going to be the issue. It's starting to become the issue,
21 because we're talking about land. Self-government, we're
22 talking about self-government, how we're going to govern

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1 ourselves.

2 We have no government when we got no
3 land. And so these are some of the things I wanted to
4 point out.

5 It's a very tough road to walk, eighteen
6 years ago, when I tried to find my culture. I braided
7 my hair and people teased me. So, no matter what you do
8 to try to do something for yourself, there's always going
9 to be obstacles.

10 But we have to stand up for our rights
11 and stand up for what we believe in. And for people not
12 to take it personally, because I don't do things in this
13 way.

14 I look at what the government's going
15 to tell us one day.

16 Meegwetch.

17

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
19 you.

20 It has been a good presentation, very
21 well done. If you don't mind, we might ask you a few
22 questions.

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1 I will see if Commissioner Robinson here
2 wants to ask you any.

3 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want
4 to commend you on your very inspiring presentation.

5 I think the message that you are giving
6 us here is one that is shared by many, many people across
7 this country. There are a lot of First Nations people,
8 people, aboriginal people, who have the same perception
9 as you do about inherent rights.

10 And certainly I think you have made a
11 very good point about a system that is foreign to our people
12 and that has been imposed on us, as far as the federal
13 government's relationship to aboriginal people and how
14 they wished -- the way that they proceeded to administer
15 the affairs of our people.

16 I wonder if we were to -- if you had a
17 solution to that now and you had the power and the authority
18 to come up with some straightforward solution, a corrective
19 solution, what would you propose?

20 **GILBERT CHEECHOO:** Solutions work two
21 ways, you know, that's a problem.

22 There are a lot of solutions, but there

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1 are some people that don't want to give up.

2 If I said the solution is to dismantle
3 Mushkegowuk Council, how many of the people would want
4 to quit their jobs? If I said the solution is to dismantle
5 the Band Council and the Band Office, how many people would
6 be willing to step down and quit their job?

7 If I said the same thing about AFN and
8 all these other places -- all these organizations -- it's
9 very difficult, because I know a lot of these people depend
10 on a livelihood, they need their jobs. And so, if some
11 of these solutions are to dismantle what we have, it is
12 going to be a process that is going to be between aboriginal
13 people.

14 Right now we're always sitting here and
15 we're facing the government. But sometimes the problem
16 is trying to work it out amongst ourselves. And, like,
17 for example the AFN, AFN -- you know, what does it take
18 to be a member?

19 If a traditional council is set up some
20 place would the representative of that traditional council
21 become members of the AFN? Or do they have to be an elected
22 community structure? Even there -- like I said, with

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1 Ovide Mecredi Grand Chief -- National Chief, I didn't vote
2 when Mecredi ran, or anybody else. I didn't vote.
3 There's a lot of things that have to be put in place in
4 aboriginal communities. There's a lot of things that have
5 to be looked at.

6 We sit here and we bang our heads against
7 a wall. I mean -- like I said -- I really meant what I
8 said when I said it is an insult for you guys to sit here.

9 If you guys would turn around and face the government
10 and told them exactly what you felt, that's exactly what
11 we're saying right now. That's how much experience is
12 sitting at this table.

13 And so I look at it and say, "Well, what
14 is really going on? Do we need another Royal Commission?
15 Do we need another task force to confuse us?"

16 Or, do we look at ourselves in the
17 community and start looking at what has to be done within
18 that community? If that community needs to change the
19 governing structure -- because, like I said, chief and
20 council system is a foreign process to us.

21 If we need to change that system, then
22 we have to have the courage to change that system. We

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1 have the wisdom. Our elders are here, and our elders are
2 in the communities. I listen to them all the time. We
3 have the wisdom, but we don't got the courage to try to
4 change that system, to try to move aside and do something.

5 We don't have that. And so, we could
6 have solutions, but sometimes it's hard to swallow them.

7 People can't seem to swallow it, and people say "We need
8 more jobs." We need this and we need that, and that sort
9 of thing. But sometimes these are symptoms of a bigger
10 problem because this is -- you know, our identity is at
11 stake, the Cree people. The Ininu (phonetic) identity
12 is at stake, like Mary Lou said, you know.

13 It's ironic, because what she said about
14 teaching the kids in Cree in here, in James Bay, I seen
15 an advertising in the local newspaper here for a French
16 instructor to instruct in French at Northern College in
17 Timmins.

18 You know, they advertise it here? It's
19 an insult! And here's our Cree teachers -- our Cree
20 teachers are saying we can teach mechanics in Cree. We
21 can teach housing in Cree. We can teach nursing in Cree.
22 We can teach all these things.

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1 I remember the kind of insult that we
2 get. I remember one year I was working at the Friendship
3 Centre in Moosonee, in the '80s, and there was housing
4 problem there in Moosonee for students to come to Moosonee
5 to go to school. And I called the president of the Northern
6 College and I wrote him a letter and we had meetings here
7 in Moosonee. I got some people involved. And the
8 president told me, "I'm sorry, but we're not in the business
9 of housing. We have to find another way."

10 Six months later his face is on TV
11 complaining that some regions, or whatever in Toronto
12 turned down his housing project for the campus in Timmins,
13 the same guy six months earlier that said, "We're not in
14 the business of housing." But they sure as hell are in
15 the business of taking our money and giving us programs
16 that don't mean anything to us -- 'cause I know a lot of
17 students that went to Northern College while living in
18 Timmins in the last four years that have said, "This is
19 native drug and alcohol. Where is the native in this drug
20 and alcohol program?" So the teacher, about two months
21 before the course ended, walks in with three video tapes
22 on native people. And one of the deans were asked, "Why

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1 did you do this? Why did you have a program that's called
2 'Native Drug and Alcohol,' and there's nothing native about
3 this?" And his response was insulting and said, "Well,
4 you need bait to go fishing."

5 So, he was baiting us in. Students come
6 from Labrador. The Ininu (phonetic) students are there
7 right now that went to school this year from Quebec, from
8 Six Nations, from all over the place. They come there,
9 they're disappointed. Native social work. There's
10 nothing native about that social work program.

11 Like Mary Lou said, they don't even teach
12 the Cree language to these courses. And I truly believe
13 that this dean that's still working there today, that it
14 was just bait to bring the Indian money in.

15 So, if you want solutions, we have a lot
16 of examples. All we have to do is look at them. And we
17 have a lot of horror stories. But that's all they seem
18 to be right now. We have to find a way to get solutions
19 out of these stories, quit getting so depressed.

20 So, that's where some of our solutions
21 are. They were being told to -- everybody -- you guys
22 were telling the government for years. And so some

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1 solutions are within our problem, but we just kind of hear
2 our problem and push it aside -- "Let's hear the next
3 problem."

4 So I hope that this Commission -- or,
5 you know, doesn't do that, sort of push the problem aside
6 and say, "Okay, let's listen to the next problem here."

7
8 But that's the kind of thing that came
9 into my mind when I came here. I said this is -- maybe
10 Georges needs a job, you know, sit on a commission. But
11 it's the same thing we've been telling the government.
12 And so we're going to do it again.

13 But I think if anything is going to come
14 out of this the Canadian public is going to hear it again.
15 Our aboriginal people are going to hear it again. Wawatay
16 is filming and they're put things on the radio for all
17 of James Bay to listen to these talks, to listen to these
18 hearings.

19 And so I encourage, and I want everybody
20 that can hear me to come out and talk, say what you feel
21 and not to look at it and to take it personal. We are
22 a nation. We're not just brown Canadians, brown Ontario

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1 citizens. We are a nation, Ininu (phonetic) Nation.

2 So, I encourage everybody to come out
3 and say a few words. Some of our elders that have been
4 very vocal in the past have gone.

5 Meegwetch.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You
7 sound like a warrior that has been at battle for most of
8 his life and is getting a little tired.

9 I would like to try and lift your
10 spirits.

11 None of the Commissioners on this job
12 here have -- are doing this because they feel this is not
13 important.

14 Viola stepped down from the presidency
15 of the Native Council of Canada when the Native Council
16 was obviously going into a very important round on
17 constitutional talks. Mary Sillet did the same thing from
18 the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. She was the Vice-president
19 when that

20 -- when ITC was just poised to create Nunuvut (phonetic)
21 in the Northwest Territories and also go into the First
22 Ministers' process on the constitution.

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1 At the same time she was the president
2 and founding leader of the Inuit Womens' organization.

3 I was going to take a number of years
4 off. I did not need a job. That is why I stepped down
5 from the AFN. If I needed a job -- and I had a very good
6 one -- I could have fought to stay in the one I was at.

7 This Commission, I believe is -- you
8 know, is really going to do something useful. But we
9 really need the information that people like yourself are
10 providing.

11 I personally believe that people like
12 yourself that have, in your own communities fought very
13 hard for traditional things to continue on living, will
14 be vindicated and it will not be long.

15 What we are seeing now, travelling
16 across the country is really interesting things.

17 When we launched our hearings in
18 Winnipeg we went to Stoney Mountain and we went to Children
19 of the Earth High School, in downtown Winnipeg. In both
20 places the thing that the aboriginal people were hanging
21 onto was, they were starting to learn their language again,
22 they were starting to learn the values and the cultures

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1 and the spiritual practices of the past.

2 People in prison were saying that they
3 were -- you know, it ironic that they had to come to prison
4 to find out who they were. But, over and over, they told
5 us about how important the sweat ceremony, the building
6 of the lodge, the traditional elders coming in, how
7 important that was for them. And how they had gone through
8 ever other type of treatment, group therapy, drug and
9 alcohol education, anger management training, and none
10 of it had ever had any impact on them, like sitting in
11 a circle with elders that traditionally brought in things
12 from the past.

13 And it was so powerful that even
14 non-native people were joining those circles. There were
15 people that were Korean extraction, blacks, that were
16 finding that this healing circle, where all races and all
17 people on earth are regarded as equal, was inspirational
18 for them. They even participated in the drum group, sang
19 traditional aboriginal songs. It is really interesting
20 seeing a black or a Korean as part of a drum group.

21 The same thing in the Children of the
22 Earth High School, a high school in downtown Winnipeg,

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1 all around us non-native schools, aboriginal children in
2 large numbers going to them. The only school where they
3 can come to and immediately, when they come through the
4 door, they are respected. They are amongst their own.
5 They feel at home. They want to come there. They get
6 inspiration.

7 And what is inspiring them again is that
8 the whole system is based on recognizing the contribution
9 of aboriginal people, recognizing that to be an aboriginal
10 person is something special, that you have something from
11 the land, that you understand how to live in harmony with
12 Mother Earth.

13 And the young people there are learning
14 about who it is they are. And some of them left their
15 reserves -- lived on reserves all their life and, until
16 they came to Winnipeg, they never heard one thing about
17 what it was to be an aboriginal person.

18 So, again, it was ironic for them to go
19 into the middle of the city he city to learn about their
20 values.

21 And, yes, it is hard. You are
22 absolutely right. But I think it is going to get easier.

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1 And, yes, aboriginal people have gone through an
2 indoctrination, a colonizing experience, where they have
3 heard this stuff for so long, that they are inferior, they
4 are not as good as, nothing their people did in the past
5 was very important, and so they start to accept that.
6 And the next thing you know that stuff is coming out of
7 their mouths. And they are doing the same thing to their
8 own people.

9 They belittle those amongst themselves
10 that are the traditional people. They are belittling the
11 very remnants of what they used to be in the past. And
12 it creates a schizophrenic, divided people in their minds,
13 mentally, because obviously the more you reject your past,
14 the more you are rejecting yourself, because you can never
15 become the other culture, no matter what you do.

16 So, it is obvious that the kinds of
17 things we are learning now is that some of the things that
18 are really helping bring back the strength of aboriginal
19 people is things from the past, from the traditions of
20 aboriginal people.

21 And so, as time goes on, I think you will
22 find that there will be more and more people you can --

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1 you can be full comrades and friends with. You will not
2 have to go south to seek other people that have come to
3 the same realization as you.

4 But, getting back to the work of the
5 Commission, you talked about -- when Viola asked you what
6 are the solutions and what would you propose, you said,
7 "Well, if I proposed that the institutions that are here
8 now should be replaced, then the people in them would
9 probably be reluctant to do that." Probably so,
10 particularly if you were not telling us what was going
11 to be replacing those institutions.

12 I think what Viola was trying to get to
13 was, what would you want to replace those institutions
14 with? And I think the reality is that the opportunities
15 are there. It is hard to say how long the opportunities
16 will be there for, but the opportunities right now for
17 change are there.

18 The Province of Ontario, the federal
19 government, the country, seems to be now ready to listen
20 to aboriginal people. That window may last a few years.

21 It may be just a beginning of continuous change. There
22 may be a strong conservative reaction in the next five

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1 or ten years if the Reform Party gets in and Preston Manning
2 puts his thumb down on that, and that is that, we will
3 never hear of it again. Who knows?

4 But, at the moment, there is a window
5 of opportunity. And everyone that is following the
6 concept of the recognition of aboriginal people knows that
7 there is going to be some changes. Indian Affairs has
8 people following us everywhere. They want to make sure
9 that they know exactly the changes that are going to happen
10 to them, so they are keeping a close eye on this process.

11 But, more importantly, what we are
12 trying to get a really clear handle on is, if there is
13 going to be change obviously there has to be a transition.
14 It is not going to happen overnight. It is going to occur
15 over a period of time.

16 You talked about how the election
17 process -- and others have talked about it -- how it was
18 not what was here before and, if anything, it has been
19 divisive. In some ways you talk like an elder. We have
20 heard these kind of things from elders.

21 And then you talked about how it replaced
22 consensus.

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1 Could you tell us a bit more about what
2 it either used to be like in the past, or what you, ideally,
3 would like to see in the future? And how far up the ladder
4 does this system go? Is it a family structure you are
5 talking about? Is it a community structure? Is it a
6 regional structure? Does it impact on the Chiefs of
7 Ontario? Does it impact on the AFN?

8 And then I was a little surprise when
9 you said "I didn't help elect Ovide Mecredi." And I
10 thought, "Well, what tradition was he going to use to do
11 that?"

12 So, if you could tell me a little bit
13 about that?

14 **GILBERT CHEECHOO:** One of the things I
15 look at right now -- if we are a nation, then we have to
16 behave like one -- and we have to have -- I think it was
17 pointed out this morning -- we have to assert our rights,
18 not ask for them. Not demand them, but assert our rights
19 that we say we have as a nation.

20 And when we look at traditional
21 structures, a lot of that knowledge has sort of been put
22 aside. It's not dead. It isn't buried. I think the

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1 knowledge has just been put aside, 'cause when I listen
2 to elders remember things -- because not everybody
3 remembers everything, like a book -- as soon as you ask
4 them a question. Maybe it takes two weeks, three weeks,
5 maybe a month, somebody will come back and say, "The thing
6 you asked me, I remember now." As much as this technology
7 helps us with the video cameras and the writing that we
8 do, sometimes it plays a role in destroying our culture,
9 destroying our way of life, 'cause our culture is not the
10 same as what Hollywood projects, and other things project
11 to us from non-native society.

12 I asked one elder one day to write those
13 legends out because he knows a lot of them. And he said,
14 "Well," he said, "I have to write one legend maybe 10
15 different ways, so that I can show you how they were used
16 a long time ago." He said, "They weren't just stories.
17 They weren't just things to kill time with. They were
18 actual things used to counsel young people, to counsel
19 direction for the community."

20 Some legends took years to tell, because
21 they couldn't tell the child the whole story until they
22 got older. And that's when I learned that writing our

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1 culture in paper will destroy it, because it's a living
2 culture. We can't just put these elders into the video
3 camera, tape recorders. That's only a little chunk of
4 what they know, and it could change, because the situation
5 will change.

6 So, some of these elders, they know what
7 has happened in the past, where the traditions come from.
8 We have to sit down and work them out, because times have
9 changed from those to now, 1992.

10 But the source of our structure, our
11 governing structure, has to come from our culture, our
12 way of life, or we will lose our identity.

13 I don't have a precise structure the way
14 things should work, who you should talk to if there's an
15 Indian/Cree formed government here, Cree style government,
16 who you should -- I don't know. But there is so much wisdom
17 in the elders that they can guide us towards something
18 that has within it the foundation. It comes from our
19 culture, our belief as a people, why we didn't need jails,
20 why we didn't need Royal Commissions to solve our problems,
21 why we didn't need judges and lawyers -- Pepto Bismal --
22 all these things that give us stress.

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1 I mean, there was an answer. Now we go
2 to school. Even the kids are having ulcers. I mean, this
3 is strange, you know.

4 The white people complain about their
5 taxes. They force us off of our land. They start to
6 destroy the wildlife and the environment, where we can't
7 hunt and fish. Then they fly in cows and chickens. Well,
8 what are we going to buy with -- you know, buttons?

9 We have to have a job. There's nothing
10 here we can create money with. And these white people
11 in the south, in Timmins, they complain, "Oh, my taxes
12 are going up, my taxes this and my taxes that." I say,
13 "Well, geez, you wouldn't complain if you took care of
14 yourselves and left us along and managed our own systems,
15 managed our own traditional trapline systems, instead of
16 MNR giving us little chunks of land here and there," and
17 whatever. We would have animals. We'd have wildlife.
18 We would be able to sustain ourselves.

19 Because it's not how much money you have
20 that makes you who you are, it's what your society is all
21 about. It's how your society is.

22 So now we create jobs. How? We create

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1 a job for every problem that comes along. That's how we
2 survive. And so, you look at a traditional system. Those
3 are the things that I'm looking at. I'm not saying, you
4 know, is there going to be a chairman here, a vice-whatever
5 here? And who is going to work here? No. It's what this
6 system will promote for our people. It's what the system
7 will do for us.

8 It's not who's going to be the chairman,
9 who's going to do this job? Who's Mulroney going to talk
10 to, then? How much money will you need then?

11 But, if our system of government, like
12 our traditional systems promote it so that we don't have
13 to have jails -- because I volunteer at Monteith
14 Correctional Centre for the last four years -- I go to
15 those jails over there. And I see them guys in there from
16 here, from up the coast. A lot of them are in there because
17 of alcohol. I did four days with the jail guards in March,
18 workshop, cultural awareness, the 100 of their staff.
19 And I said, "If there's one thing that we don't need, it's
20 a jail. But, if we adopt your system we will definitely
21 need a jail, probably a bigger one than Monteith."

22 Our system of government did not have

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1 jails, did not have courts, did not have lawyers, did not
2 have mental institutions. It did not have these things
3 because of the way that they governed themselves, not
4 because they were well behaved, or they were poor and they
5 couldn't afford it, or they didn't have the skills to have
6 counsellors. They had a system that promoted a strong,
7 healthy society, because we were not standing along the
8 shore of James Bay waiting for the European to come here
9 with the welfare cheque.

10 We were happy. We were healthy. We
11 were all these things.

12 If you're talking to me about a system,
13 that's the system I want to hear about. That's the system
14 I want to promote. Everybody always talks about, you know,
15 little blocks here, little blocks there, the structure
16 lines go this way -- no way. That's the system that
17 destroyed us. It is so easy go govern yourselves.

18 But we went to school and complicated
19 our lives. Now we're trying to find it.

20 And so these are some of the things that
21 I think -- no specifics -- but I think that's the main
22 point, is to say, "That's the kind of system I'd like to

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1 see, a system that'll promote those things."

2 Get those structures out of there, the
3 drug and alcohol program that's in there, because if you
4 have an Indian, a Cree traditional governing system,
5 there'll be no need for the program sitting in there.
6 Listen to the wisdom of the elders and seek some courage
7 to take their words.

8 And so that's the thing that I would like
9 to see, if anything. I think I said enough, so I'd like
10 to leave it there.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
12 thank you, Gilbert. And if I could ask, anytime over the
13 next two years if you have the time, to put together for
14 us some information that either you are discovering talking
15 to elders, or otherwise, on structures or the way things
16 were in the past -- we could go on for a long time here
17 -- you talked about consensus earlier, so I presumed you
18 meant that everyone was involved.

19 There are lots of things that would be
20 very useful for us to know, you know, what precisely that
21 would mean.

22 We intend, as a Commission, to come back

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1 to the regions a number of times to suggest ideas and point
2 certain directions. But we do not envisage ourselves
3 solving all the problems for First Nation people, or
4 aboriginal people. And certainly we are not trying to
5 stop people from working on their own institutions.

6 In fact, we are strongly encouraging
7 people to roll up their sleeves and actually get to work
8 on it, because that really is the only way it is going
9 to be done. What we hope to do is flesh out a number of
10 models with communities and regions -- and perhaps nations
11 of people that could be used as examples. Obviously, no
12 one is going to adopt somebody else's nation's
13 institutions, but they might find that there are clues
14 in there for themselves.

15 So, if you have anything useful you think
16 you might want to share with us again in the future, please
17 do. Come to other hearings. Send us your ideas. If you
18 ever do sit down with elders and record some of the things
19 -- and I know what you mean by the conflict about whether
20 or not -- since aboriginal people come from an oral society
21 there is always a debate -- anyone with a camera or a tape
22 recorder is -- or a writer -- wonders whether they should

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1 write down things of the past from the elders.

2 In the communities -- in the nations
3 where they are rich with elders that still remember from
4 the past and it is being passed on, perhaps it is not
5 necessary. But, unfortunately, we are going to
6 communities and regions where sometimes there is five
7 people left that speak the language, that understand the
8 histories of the past. And in the last few years we are
9 aware of an elder in one of the language groups from the
10 far west -- she was the last speaker in her nation of people,
11 and she passed away recently.

12 And so, if you did not record what that
13 woman thought and understood, the whole traditional way
14 of life for that people virtually disappeared. You do
15 not hear that language any more.

16 So, yes, it is a living tradition, an
17 oral passing on of values and so forth. But there is --
18 because there is so many young people and there is so many
19 nations crying out now for something in relation their
20 people -- and in a written way -- I think that we need
21 to do both. We need to record, we need to tape, we need
22 to put it on film and pass it on.

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1 We need to bring it to the universities
2 where young people are going and it should be there also
3 for non-native people to experience and to understand,
4 because people are hungry right now. Everyone is really
5 hungry to find out aboriginal people. And the people that
6 are most hungry are aboriginal people themselves.

7 And, for a lot of people, the best way
8 for them to start would be to sit down in a corner with
9 a book, or to watch a video, because they have not got
10 the courage yet to go to an elder and say, "Well, could
11 you start to tell me about who I am? How did we live in
12 the past? What makes us different from non-native people?

13 So, as much as there seems to be a
14 contradiction and it seems to run against the fact that,
15 for a living, strong culture to have people pass on, I
16 think to give our cultures a kick start again we are going
17 to have to record. But, obviously, if it is -- if our
18 cultures again are going to become strong and vibrant and
19 growing and flourishing and expanding and being passed
20 on, then we must practice it. And so those legends that
21 can be told in 10 different ways, so that there are 10
22 different stories, perhaps people at different times in

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1 their lives when a particular message needs to come into
2 their life -- yes, obviously, it is not good enough for
3 it to be sitting on a shelf as a book somewhere -- it has
4 to be practised and we have got to do that, too.

5 Thank you for your very valuable
6 contribution. And please feel that your money was well
7 spent, because it was very good for us.

8 We are going to take a very brief break,
9 for about five or ten minutes, just to stretch our legs.

10 RECESS AT 11:15 A.M.

11 RESUME AT 11:30 A.M.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could
13 I ask you to take your seats, please?

14 I am going to ask Gilbert to come back
15 for just a few minutes. Our Youth Commissioner would like
16 to ask him one or two brief questions.

17 So, I am going to ask Derek McLeod here
18 to ask the questions that he had in mind earlier.

19 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**
20 **McLEOD:** When you were speaking, while you were
21 giving your presentation, you said something about the
22 legends were used in counselling the young people.

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1 Do you think it's conceivable to have
2 elders within an educational system, or within a new type
3 of system of whatever to teach the youth? Do you think
4 this would be a good start in building a foundation?

5 **GILBERT CHEECHOO:** It would bring to a
6 lot of young people, for one thing, pride and dignity.
7 Because I remember my experience, for example, when my
8 son was -- he's now 13 -- he was about five years old,
9 going to school here at the public school. And he had
10 a friend that lived with a staff member -- a friend, the
11 same age as him -- the father worked for Indian Affairs
12 while they were still here.

13 And he used to go visit his friend over
14 there to go and play. One day we were driving by the houses
15 up there, Indian Affairs houses, and he said, "I wish I
16 was white." I said, "Why?" He said, "So I can live in
17 those nice houses over there."

18 And that's when I realized that, you
19 know, that my child is going to a school right on here
20 on Moose Factory Island, with about three or four hundred
21 other native kids, but yet he still has this very low
22 self-esteem, that a five year old wants to be white so

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1 he can live in nice houses.

2 And that's when I look at it and say,
3 "Well, what in fact is our school system doing here in
4 Moose Factory? What alternatives is the school system
5 giving our children? Are you trying to educate our
6 children so they can get good jobs to replace or to fill
7 that void, losing self-esteem and dignity, to say 'At least
8 I'm making money.' You know, 'I don't care if I'm Indian,
9 whoever I am.'"

10 I don't think that's possible.

11 I went to a national conference last year
12 in Edmonton, economic development and there was young
13 business people there. And they said, "I went to school,
14 lost my language, lost my culture and now I want it back,
15 but I still want to do business."

16 I think that's the voice of a lot of young
17 people today. They want some of their culture back. They
18 want some of their self-esteem, their dignity. A lot of
19 people always look at it and say, you know, "Culture is
20 just so you know who you are."

21 That's not what culture's all about.

22 Culture is something deeper than knowing

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1 who you are, knowing -- you know, your ancestors made canoes
2 out of birch bark and they made snow shoes and all these
3 things. We say astung (phonetic) in our language for "Come
4 here," rather than "Come here." I mean, that's not what
5 culture is all about.

6 Culture's about dignity. It's about
7 pride and self-esteem. That's why I say those parts of
8 our culture we can never write down, because we need to
9 use them, because they promote self-esteem and dignity.
10 And I've seen a lot of native leadership that had no
11 dignity, didn't do any good for us. They were afraid to
12 do something.

13 In my Nishnawbe Aski job that I do right
14 now, the development fund, the first comments I used to
15 get four years ago was, "Well, I'm Indian, you know, what
16 do you expect?" You know, "Of course it's not going to
17 work, because I'm an Indian." And it took me four years
18 to try to pump up some of these clients, you know, get
19 them going. You know, that's why I really promote the
20 use of culture, even in the business sector, the use of
21 the language, and that sort of thing, and through that
22 I learn as well.

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1 But, when you talk about -- like, in the
2 school system with the elders, don't bring them in to the
3 school and give them a little classroom, or teach them,
4 the little kids, or whoever the students that may be --
5 either in elementary or university -- just, you know,
6 something to take home and show mommy, you know.

7 No, that's not what it is all about.
8 Like Mary Lou said, teach the language in that nursing
9 program, because the language is where you learn a lot
10 of things. The way you say something in English is
11 different than if you said it in Cree. The meaning is
12 different. It's more -- it means a lot more in the heart.

13 So, when the elders come in -- I learned
14 a lot, for example, from Tommy, you know, meeting with
15 him over the years. And from the different things he'd
16 share with me, the way he did things, the way he looked
17 at things. I know white man didn't train this guy, as
18 well as the other elders here. I know white people didn't
19 train them.

20 So, anything that they think and they
21 say has to come from their culture. So I really pay
22 attention to it, I really pay close -- so, these are some

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1 of the things that I think -- if you look in the schools
2 the elders can play a big role in teaching, through legends
3 and through different stories. And to tell that school
4 system that these aren't just stories. The system has
5 to believe in that, that they're not just stories. They
6 have to be told the way it was done, like the legend use.

7 Like this one elder told me, you know,
8 you can't -- "You have to understand, they were used for
9 counselling, they were used for different things, he said,
10 "and you don't want to lose that."

11 And so these are some of the things that
12 can be taught in counselling programs as well, how to use
13 a legend, how to use this and how to use that.

14 And I went to the jail, like I said, to
15 do some workshops over there. I said, "I can't tell you
16 much sitting in this room about native people, because
17 our stories are out there where the trees are. Our stories
18 are out there where those hills are. Our stories are along
19 the rivers."

20 I remember legends passed on to me about
21 different situations, about different attitudes, about
22 the individual who was so greedy, he ate so much meat,

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1 and how asked these trees to bend and press his stomach
2 together. And he didn't stop and he bent them. And
3 that's why some of the trees look bent in a certain way.

4 And my elder said, "That's who did that."

5 But it's not just a story of where that
6 tree came from. It's a story of this greedy person, this
7 person who wanted to accumulate. That's what he was trying
8 to tell me. To remind you, when you walk in the bush,
9 that tree that's bent, about that individual that was
10 greedy, accumulate for himself only. That's the legend.

11 The origins of things are not just stories and a beautiful
12 little thing here and there.

13 And we talk about where Indians come
14 from. There are origin stories in our culture where we
15 come from. Anthropologists say we come from Bering
16 Strait, that way, wherever. But we have our own origin
17 stories that have a deeper meaning than crossing the Bering
18 Strait, because it relates to who we are.

19 And so when you look at the elders you
20 can't put them in a classroom and expect them to teach
21 about how to be strong in your heart and how to look at
22 these things, like greed and different weaknesses and

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1 strengths that you need, and those type of things. You
2 can't learn it in a classroom.

3 So, you have to set up a situation where
4 you can take those elders, take them some place with the
5 children, with the school kids. Summer holidays are in
6 the school system -- one guy was telling me -- because
7 of farming. They needed kids and the youth to help with
8 the farm, so they kind of break for summer, or something.

9 Our school systems don't have to
10 -- we can put those kids through school in the summer.
11 There's a lot of things the can learn. You can take the
12 kids out in the summer months, rather than take them out
13 in the winter months. You can take them outside and so
14 they can learn these things that I look at when I go in
15 the bush, the things that I remember being told.

16 So, it's not just bring in the elders.
17 It's what and how we could set them up and establish that
18 dignity, that pride, that self-esteem, so that our young
19 people will stand up one day and say no, like Elijah Harper
20 did, and all these people that have struggled for us, so
21 they can have some pride and dignity.

22 So, that's what that's all about.

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1 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
2 you for coming back, Gilbert.

3 **GILBERT CHEECHOO:** Thank you.

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I just
5 wanted to make a small announcement before Pat tells us
6 who is speaking next.

7 During the coffee break I was talking
8 to a few people and some people said they did not want
9 to make presentations because they did not have a written
10 submission.

11 There is no need for written submissions
12 to present to us. You can present to us verbally or orally.

13 And the other thing I wanted to let you know is, we have
14 translation, so if there are people that are more
15 comfortable speaking in your own language, please do.
16 We will be able to understand. It will be translated.

17 So, there is no need to always speak
18 English for our convenience. Speak in your own language.

19 Pat?

20 **PAT CHILTON:** The next presenters are
21 Chief Edmund Metatawabin, from the Fort Albany First
22 Nations and also a youth, Cecilia Scott.

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1 Edmund was telling me that he is going
2 to be speaking in Cree, so if anybody needs interpretation
3 services, they are over there.

4 As well, after the next presenters,
5 which are Stan Wesley and Eli Chilton, lunch will be served
6 here, so there is no need to leave.

7 I should also let you know anybody else
8 who wants to make any type of presentation, orally or
9 whatever, let us know here and we will revise the agenda
10 again accordingly, okay?

11 Edmund?

12 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN (through**
13 **interpreter):** I would like to express my greetings to
14 the Commission and guests, to express to you our concerns
15 and some of our thoughts when it comes to native
16 self-government.

17 The people that have already made their
18 presentations this morning made very good -- expressed
19 very good concerns how this direction should be taken from
20 now on.

21 At the outset I would like to ask Cecilia
22 to represent the youth and also to express what their

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1 aspirations are and what their concerns are in the future.

2 Cecilia will speak.

3 **CECILIA SCOTT:** I would like to speak
4 about education today for self-government.

5 I think that it's the main, key point
6 that we should be getting ready and to get educated to
7 work under self-government, to prepare ourselves so we
8 can work together as a team.

9 This year I just realized with myself
10 that education is very important to me and that I am going
11 back to college and try to fulfil my long term goal. And
12 it makes me sad to see in my community that I see my --
13 the students I went to school with, as I grew up, they
14 all settled down and they're married. They have a lot
15 of kids. And I talk to them and they ask me, "I wish I
16 could out to the city now." And "You still can," I tell
17 them. They say, "No, I have to stay home. I have to take
18 care of my babies," and all that.

19 And I'm glad I went out and I still them,
20 "You can still go out." But they say no.

21 And then one time I, myself, almost gave
22 up. But back then I didn't know what I was giving up,

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1 and I'm glad I didn't.

2 And this is only a short presentation.

3 It's the main point I wanted to tell you all, and I hope
4 it was clear.

5 That's all I can say for now.

6 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Okay,
7 thanks, Cecilia.

8 I will start off with a quote from the
9 National Chief, Ovide Mecredi, when he said,

10 "I don't enjoy being what I am, National Chief or a
11 politician, or whatever you want
12 to call me. It scares me. But in
13 our society the First Nations, we
14 are not very numerous and that
15 means that the people who have the
16 time and the capacity for fight for
17 rights have an obligation to do so.

18 Many of us are dedicating our
19 lives to the struggle for
20 self-determination, the struggle
21 for rights, not because we want to,
22 but because the future of our

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1 children depends on it."

2 (through interpreter)

3 In reference to the discussion on
4 self-government we have been given that responsibility
5 to be determined, if we look at our land -- our lands
6 -- our land bases, if we look at housing and other
7 discussions that took place this morning, how our lives
8 should be, because (system cuts out).

9 However, it's saddening if we look at
10 the conditions of our communities and I wonder if we --
11 if we were to fight and be obligated to work for the interest
12 of our own people to control our own interest in our
13 communities. And also I think maybe we should take a
14 moment -- to take a moment of -- and even eliminate some
15 of our problems, our interferences to get up in the morning
16 to give thanks to our Great Spirit that he has given us
17 another day so that we can go on with our affairs and to
18 work -- and to work and even abide by the generosity for
19 our own people and for our own children.

20 And also in the evening and at dusk we
21 even give thanks that we have made -- or given granted
22 and even to give thanks for the importance of that day

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1 and to go on from what we have learned throughout the day.

2 My discussions -- my discussions and
3 issues that -- these have already been discussed in our
4 communities and this is being implemented.

5 It hasn't come to a final conclusion.
6 We just -- it's been in the discussion stage.

7 The way it was traditionally there's a
8 lot of responsibilities on one chief and, because of the
9 workload, it was very impossible for the chief to carry
10 on his responsibilities because of numerous burdens.

11 However, in our communities, there is seven councillors
12 within the council to assist me in discussing these issues.

13 And I think it would be important to give
14 the councillors -- perhaps maybe an education before you
15 -- health issues, or housing portfolio, so that they can
16 have all these programs that they can administer and
17 perhaps they can have their own assistants, the people
18 in the community, to support these councillors within their
19 own portfolios and also the programs that they've been
20 obligated to take upon.

21 And I think that this is probably the
22 best direction for every community to be involved and the

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1 overall daily deliberations of his community. And I
2 think, not only would the chief be responsible, but also
3 the most importance would be built upon the councillor
4 and also the assistants to carry on those activities and
5 to carry on their portfolios.

6 These are some of the issues that I
7 wanted to express.

8 However, I would like to revert to
9 English so I can discuss some of these, so that the guests
10 will thoroughly understand.

11 I will give the presentation in English
12 to indicate what direct the Fort Albany First Nation
13 Council and the membership are thinking about.

14 The Fort Albany First Nation membership
15 holds the firm belief that the terms "First Nation" and
16 "self-government" are more than media catch phrases. We
17 are a nation. And we will govern ourselves, not simply
18 administer according to policies and procedures
19 established by other non-members.

20 Given the shortage of financial and
21 other resources, as well as our traditional collective
22 decisional procedures, we have decided to establish local,

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1 voluntary boards, councils of authority, to direct the
2 administration and operations of the various service
3 organizations and agencies operating within our
4 jurisdiction for the benefit of the nation's membership.

5 On the 8th of April, 1992, the Nation
6 Council, formerly Band Council, passed Nation Council
7 resolution -- formerly BCR -- number 91-92-2004, legally
8 authorizing the establishment of these boards, councils,
9 of the records.

10 We believe that such bodies are as vital
11 to the foundation of a real structure of self-government
12 as they are the structures of self-administration.

13 We believe that they are necessary in
14 order that the nation membership resume their inherent
15 right to govern themselves, yet acknowledge that while
16 we are free to follow traditional means of collective
17 decision-making, the pragmatics of real politics dictate
18 that a structure must be functional in terms of today's
19 legal and economic reality.

20 The nation may, however, decide to add
21 to, remove from, or otherwise change this proposed
22 organizational structure.

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1 The First Nation Chief and Council
2 function as the executive of the Nation. They deliberate
3 the issues placed on their agenda by the members.
4 Councillors and chief are authorized to make the formal
5 decisions on the adoption or rejection of recommendations
6 put forward by the councillor responsible for the service
7 area concerned.

8 I will expand that later.

9 They are also responsible for the
10 approval of policy applicable to any and all areas of First
11 Nation jurisdiction. Further, the First Nation
12 administration, i.e., financial and support services, is
13 accountable to the Chief and Council.

14 The Chief's main function is that of
15 Chair to the meetings of the Nation Council. He or she
16 is also the primary representative of the Nation in formal
17 meetings with all diverse, external governments, their
18 agencies, departments, et cetera.

19 As Chief Executive Officer the Chief may
20 delegate any of his functions to any Nation council member
21 at his or her discretion. And, by the same token of office,
22 the Chief remains the ex officio chair of all groups,

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1 committees, councils authorized by the Nation Council.

2 The Chief will also ensure that the
3 members of the Nation Council co-ordinate their individual
4 portfolio related tasks and that each councillor
5 establishes and maintains close and constant
6 communications with the Nation membership on issues
7 related to his or her portfolio.

8 The chief also has the right and the
9 obligation to directly consult with Nation members in privy
10 or at large on issues related to the Nation as a whole.

11 Example, land claims and treaty rights, or changes to
12 the Nation's organizational structure.

13 The Council, upon assuming office, each
14 of the council members will be delegated a specific
15 portfolio of responsibility by the Chief. Each portfolio
16 will encompass an area of service to the Nation membership.

17 To date, seven such portfolios have been recognized,
18 social services, public works and security, education,
19 housing, community development, health and economic
20 development.

21 The Chief, as I said, chairs all these
22 things and is a member of external -- or liaison to external

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1 agencies.

2 Councillor responsible for health, his
3 mandate is to be responsible for the direction,
4 development, administration, supervision, delivery,
5 evaluation and support of quality health, health related,
6 medical, dental and similar services for the well being
7 of all residents of Fort Albany First Nation.

8 Some concerns have been made by
9 councillors -- a fulltime doctor, traditional medicine,
10 a health committee, policies and procedures should be
11 reviewed regularly, publicized, a residence designed for
12 the disabled, transportation to medical services -- some
13 of the concerns that they are dealing with at the moment.

14 Social services, responsible for the
15 direction, development, administration, supervision,
16 delivery, evaluation and support of quality social
17 services, programs, projects, facilities for all residents
18 of Fort Albany First Nation.

19 Some of their concerns: seniors
20 residence, children's emergency shelter centre, computer
21 training, again policies and procedures, job descriptions
22 of all staff, day care centre.

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1 Public works and security, responsible
2 for the direction, development, et cetera, for all
3 residents of Fort Albany First Nation in the areas of water,
4 sewage, electricity, transportation, waste collection and
5 disposal, fire protection, public security.

6 I want to mention something on police
7 protection. What has been commented by Gilbert, Gilbert,
8 our previous speaker, when we said we had our systems in
9 place.

10 It is impossible for us to work with the
11 O.P.P. at this time because of their reaction. We cannot
12 go into any situation until somebody has been injured,
13 somebody has been shot, or something has been done.

14 Traditional form of protection has been
15 more preventative, rather than reactionary. With our own
16 police system we would be more concerned with preventative
17 measures and making sure that the whole family unit is
18 kept in tact, rather than breaking up the family unit.

19 Some of their concerns is residents in
20 the community, sewer systems, garbage trucks, crime
21 prevention and job description, smoke/fire detectors,
22 water treatment plant system.

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1 Economic development, to provide for the
2 economic growth and well being of public and private sector
3 enterprise. Some of their concerns is a bank, a
4 co-operative store, traditional arts and crafts. The
5 Ghost River Store for traditional harvest, hunter,
6 trapper. We have a store about 100 miles up river that's
7 closed now. And there's a renewed interest since more
8 and more people are now heading into the natural
9 environment that there be facilities for them to use up
10 in those places.

11 Housing, is responsible for
12 development, design, construction, renovation,
13 maintenance, repair and upkeep of quality housing and all
14 other facilities required by the residents.

15 Some of their concerns: housing
16 quality, new housing. Present housing needs renovation,
17 repairs and new construction to have water and sewer
18 systems, better heating systems and senior citizens' home.

19 Some of the major ones would be an arena, a new school
20 building, a high school and training for local people.

21 Community development would be in the
22 areas of evaluation of quality cultural, social and

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1 recreational projects, programs, activities and
2 facilities for the benefit of all residents. Some of them
3 would be a day care -- and, again, an arena, drop-in centre,
4 community hall recreation, a cinema, a youth council to
5 be encouraged for the community, a radio station -- again,
6 arts and crafts and programs by Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

7 Education. Quality educational
8 service programs, projects, facilities for the benefit
9 of all residents. Concerns, physical education
10 instructors, to cut the drop-out rate in high school,
11 computer training, grade nine and ten in the community,
12 continuing education and adult education, traditional
13 knowledge and Cree language and culture in kindergarten
14 through to grade 3. Kindergarten to grade 3 should be
15 entirely in Cree. All primary school should be taught
16 in Cree. Teacher training in Cree should be offered for
17 community residents.

18 Some of the issues and concerns that have
19 been discussed.

20 The Chief will retain the responsibility
21 for inter-governmental affairs. Each Nation Council will
22 attend, report to and accept the recommendations of the

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1 Board or Council of Directors managing the affairs of the
2 Nation in terms specific to that councillor's portfolio.

3 He or she will also advocate, promote
4 and, if required, represent the interests of his or her
5 Board or Council at meetings internal and external to the
6 Nation. The Nation Council members will present to the
7 Nation Council the recommendations made by the Board's
8 Council, given that the Board Council members have
9 collectively the time and the resources that the Chief
10 and Councillors individually do not.

11 The Boards of Directors. The Boards of
12 Directors for each of the seven service areas of
13 jurisdiction will be recruited by the Nation Council
14 members responsible for that particular service. It is
15 expected that as the power and efficiency of these groups
16 grows to a higher profile in the community membership may
17 become (convention) on election, rather than appointment.

18 For the present, experience working in organizational
19 settings, while a definite asset, is not a requirement
20 for appointment as the Nation Council has the obligation
21 to provide all training and support required by the Boards
22 to develop their levels of competence and commitment.

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1 Rough drafts of mandates that I've just
2 briefly gone into for each of the boards has been
3 elaborated, but the official, duly approved mandate for
4 each board will be developed with precision by the boards
5 themselves, as they become familiar with the scope and
6 complexities of the service administration and operations
7 they will manage for the Nation.

8 Given that each board council will be
9 made up of at least seven individuals and that each will
10 have access to the financial and support services of the
11 Nation Administration Act and, when authorized by the
12 Nation Council, it is expected that the recommendations
13 to the Nation Council will merit very careful
14 consideration.

15 The members of these boards serve the
16 Nation on a purely voluntary basis with individual
17 honorarium provided on a per diem basis, while acting in
18 an official capacity in any location other than Nation
19 territory.

20 These Boards of Directors will provide
21 legally recognizable mechanisms to channel
22 community-based generation, research, development,

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1 implementation and evaluation of culturally compatible
2 cost-effective policies, standards, programs and
3 projects.

4 The chair for each board council may form
5 or dissolve ad hoc or subcommittees as and when required
6 to deal with issues that merit such procedure. They will
7 also be the primary medium for information flow and
8 consultation between the Nation Council and the Nation
9 membership.

10 We foresee a learning curve of 12 to 18
11 months following their first meeting, before these boards
12 become fully functional with minimal support. While
13 nothing prohibits membership to more than one board and/or
14 council concurrently, the standard policy on conflict of
15 interest is being developed and will apply to all persons
16 elected, appointed, employed or contracted to serve the
17 Nation membership.

18 While the structural model herein
19 described is but one among many being considered by the
20 First Nations in Canada, it is the model chosen by the
21 Fort Albany First Nation and, therefore, merits the
22 support, consideration and respect of those, native as

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1 well as non-native, doing business with the Nation.

2 While the information contained in this
3 document is far from complete, the reader is reminded that
4 it is a brief overview of an ongoing process and not a
5 description of a static or short-term project. There will
6 doubtless be changes required as the process begins to
7 realized and, as with any change in the organization, there
8 will be a period of adjustment by trial and error. But
9 we are confident that the people of Fort Albany fully
10 appreciate that the only alternative to action is
11 stagnation.

12 We present this information at this time
13 to the Commission on -- to the membership of the Royal
14 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that they can use that
15 represents this model for self-government and to remind
16 the Commission and the government that there must be dollar
17 value attached to these discussions.

18 We -- I guess I can say this without the
19 use of my notes -- it is a model that we have discussed,
20 but in the constitutional discussions self-government must
21 be funded. That's one of the issues being discussed.

22 And this model is only an overview of

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1 what we are thinking about, but we haven't presented any
2 dollar value of the self-government once it is in place
3 in the community. But we will be presenting this document
4 to the Assembly of First Nations, Chiefs of Ontario and
5 Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

6 (through interpreter)
7 ... local government within our
8 community because ... talking about ... within their own
9 communities. And it outlines ... because we have lost
10 time. Everything is talking about the constitution and
11 ... and they're asking us what direction that we should
12 get. And then we talk about self-government. It's very
13 important that some monetary value should be given to the
14 people if they're going to be able to accommodate their
15 -- of outline of their models when they were -- so they'll
16 be able to exercise their models within their own
17 communities.

18 So, I also understand that each
19 community have their own models and -- we should share
20 that information and, at the same time, it is very important
21 that all information should be given to -- First Nations
22 east of Ontario -- because -- able to realize the type

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1 of support system that they like to get in the future when
2 these models are being implemented.

3 I know that written information is
4 needed and also written models are very important. I know
5 that in my community there used to be eight chiefs and
6 councillors in my communities and if we satisfy ourselves
7 about this model we have to give certain authority to
8 individual councillors in our community.

9 And once each -- once each councillor
10 is given some of that program to administer I'm sure it's
11 going to cause a chain reaction because people have certain
12 authorities in implementing these programs and only then
13 there'll be an increase of their resources and at the same
14 time -- at the same time they'll be able to -- they'll
15 be able to implement some of these things that they're
16 trying to do, or take over some of the programs in their
17 communities.

18 But this is just a draft copy because
19 it's just a dream that we have outlined when we discussed
20 it with people. So it's a dream that we have -- and not
21 really accommodate our people within our communities, at
22 the same time utilizing the traditional values of the

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1 people and then also utilizing our own resource people
2 so they will be able to tell us -- will be the best way
3 -- yes, I know, each model like look like it's a white
4 man's system but what happened -- if this model has been
5 considered by non-native people it will be -- but I know,
6 I realize that there'll be -- at the present time because
7 we don't have enough educated people yet to really
8 understand.

9 But, at the same time, there is not
10 enough people -- resource people coming into our
11 communities to enhance the models. I know there's a big
12 bureaucracy that they have to deal with in order to convince
13 them to use our model -- some of the models at the community.
14 And I know we have to convince our own people too, that
15 this model is very important and respects our rights.

16 And finally I just want to say thank you
17 very much for listening and, at the same time, I'm glad
18 that you came down and listened our views.

19 I'd like to thank you for coming down
20 here to hear the thoughts and ideas the people of the James
21 Bay coast have on self-government.

22 Thank you.

StenoTran

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1 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
2 you for this presentation on the model that you have been
3 working on and how you plan on implementing
4 self-government.

5 And thank you for the presentation from
6 the youth.

7 I will see if any of the Commissioners
8 have any comments or questions.

9 I will start with Viola.

10 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
11 you for your presentation.

12 It sounds like your dream of your
13 aspiration for self-government seems to be pretty much
14 well organized.

15 Can you tell me, presently -- this is
16 the model that you are thinking about now and what you
17 would like to have in place -- presently, what is your
18 -- I guess your administration? How do you conduct your
19 affairs now in your community?

20 You have chief and council now, do you
21 not?

22 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Yes -- well,

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1 we're still in transition from the Department of Indian
2 Affairs, I suppose. And with the devolution process we
3 want to ensure that the community has the means to make
4 their own changes in the community.

5 The old structures, that of the chief
6 and council -- and they have all the mandates from the
7 community. They have all the portfolios and they more
8 or less discuss items that come from the external agencies
9 like, maybe, migratory birds. And even to the housing
10 ways -- the housing policies.

11 It doesn't allow us the benefit of long
12 term planning and adjusting the way we do business in the
13 community. But in the transition we see ourselves going
14 into the primary production of material that the housing
15 industry can use.

16 In our area we have a lot of gravel and
17 every breakup the ice brings and dumps gravel in our area.
18 We are looking at a way of taking advantage of this gift
19 from the natural environment to turn this gravel into
20 concrete material to be used on the housing.

21 The old way is, Indian Affairs to give
22 us a dollar value for each year and instructing us to spend

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1 all dollars within that given year and purchase material
2 from suppliers 400 miles away. And the material undergoes
3 a lot of handling and, by the time the material reaches
4 us, most of it has been damaged or, you know, it's not
5 fit for use.

6 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Okay,
7 thank you.

8 I have got something else, but I am going
9 to -- I will conclude my questions for now, so thank you.

10 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Okay, thank
11 you.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Does the
13 Elder Commissioner want to say anything or ask any
14 questions? If not, don't worry.

15 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**
16 **ARCHIBALD:** I just have a short evidence that we have here
17 and it's coming to the surface, of our history of the people
18 of the James Bay and inland, that they had self-government
19 prior to the entrance of the white man in our territory.

20 And the other part of my comment is,
21 dreaming was part of life that guides us through the
22 troubled elements that we had. And we also had visions

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1 by elders of the day to keep us in line of our lifestyle.

2 And also we had wisdom of the elders which maintained
3 a balance with nature.

4 So, them are the comments that I would
5 make at this time, because we're doing pretty good as far
6 as I am concerned.

7 Thank you.

8 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
9 you, Elder.

10 Chief, I would like to ask you something.

11 You talked about the vision you have of
12 the future being where the aboriginal language is taught.

13 The first three years in school are totally in Cree, and
14 I presume language instruction afterwards being taught.

15 What occurs today? Today is Tuesday.

16 Probably your children may still be in school. This week,
17 will there be any Cree spoken in the school? Will there
18 be any instruction? Will there be any instruction? Will
19 there any language taught at all?

20 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Not
21 formally.

22 Maybe the teachers' assistants will

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1 comment words like "sit down," or "quiet," or "get in line"
2 in Cree. But, for formal instruction of Cree we don't
3 really have it.

4 The Council has been voicing this
5 concern to the education area that we would like to see
6 Cree as soon as possible in the classrooms. We've even
7 threatened the teachers and the education authority that
8 we are very close to the time that we will issue a statement
9 to the teachers that they're not qualified to be teaching
10 in our system.

11 I find it very, very presumptuous that
12 a culture will invade another culture and begin to teach
13 in their own system, rather than recognizing the vitality
14 and the existence of an existent culture and thereby
15 attempting to understand and attempting to encourage that
16 culture to become independent.

17 Right now our system -- the system that
18 we have, is one of assimilation and one of an attempt to
19 break down our system where we make our youth, we make
20 our elders weak, by speaking in a foreign system, by writing
21 in a foreign system.

22 If my advisors walk into my office,

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1 attempting to advise what is happening in my government,
2 and all they see is English-written material their
3 effectiveness as advisors is diminished because of their
4 inability to read what I have written, or what is coming
5 into my office from external governments.

6 Part of this attempt of this human
7 resource development proposal is to have letterheads that
8 will be divided into two, with the left side being in Cree,
9 and the right side in English and all letters, hence forward
10 to be mailed externally will have those two languages in
11 the letter. And we expect that any letter that comes to
12 us will be in those two languages.

13 We are a Cree nation and anybody
14 attempting to communicate to us must communicate to us
15 in our own language. That's who we are.

16 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You said
17 you are coming close to threatening this educational
18 authority that is in place.

19 Could you explain to us what institution
20 you are talking about? Does the community not control
21 the local school? Are you dealing with some school board
22 that --

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1 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Well,
2 sometimes we have to force an issue. And if we are dealing
3 with all kinds of excuses that "We don't have the staff,"
4 and "We don't have enough people to manage the Cree
5 component of instruction," I know very well at this time
6 we probably have about 20 people qualified to go into that
7 classroom and teach the Cree language.

8 They may not necessarily have gone
9 through the system of instruction of the foreign system
10 -- through the foreign system -- but in our own system
11 we know that they're qualified to teach those young people
12 the system of language and the mechanisms of language for
13 them to at least allow them to read the language and to
14 give them the terminology to be able to speak with their
15 elders with confidence.

16 It seems to be a breakdown right now that
17 the youth, the very small youth, are unable to speak with
18 their elders. And we don't want to see that getting any
19 bigger any more.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** This
21 structure that you are dealing with, what is it? Is it
22 a school board from somewhere else? What structure are

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1 you dealing with?

2 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** It's -- in
3 terms of -- we're dealing with a lack of confidence, a
4 lack of vision and still feeling the effects of this whole
5 system we are dealing with.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Is it a
7 local school board?

8 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** They call it
9 the "Education Authority." They have the mandate to run
10 the educational program.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Is it
12 local?

13 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** It's local.

14 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes --
15 aboriginal people on it?

16 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Aboriginal
17 people on it.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** What
19 is their problem?

20 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Like I said,
21 no enough confidence, I guess, and the vision to know the
22 importance of making sure that the foundation of the child

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1 who walks into the classroom, making sure that the
2 foundation is solidified to speak Cree, at least for the
3 first three years of that child's life and then be able
4 to handle the other languages.

5 The basics of the language must be
6 learned in one's own language to be able to understand
7 all languages -- or the mechanisms, at least, of what the
8 language -- or what the structure of each language is.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So, how
10 long is the Chief and Council in the community going to
11 sit by and have their school, which is right in their own
12 midst, not instruct in their own language?

13 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** Not very
14 long.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think
16 that probably is the majority of the questions we had to
17 ask from you.

18 I want to thank you for coming down to
19 actually make a presentation to us. We will be back in
20 the region again, not necessarily to this community. We
21 would like to keep in touch and keep us informed on how
22 the aboriginal language is -- either moving into your

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1 community education system or otherwise.

2 Thank you for bringing one of your youth.

3 We appreciate that.

4 Is there anything else you would like
5 to say to us? If you or your young friends want to make
6 any further presentations to us, in any way -- if they
7 wish to write to us, if they wish to perhaps make another
8 presentation to us somewhere else, please, feel free to
9 do so. We want to hear from young people.

10 We want to hear their concerns and we
11 want to hear the kind of vision they have of the future.

12 For instance, we really want to know:
13 Do you want to learn your culture and your language?
14 And how do you think the education system should respond?
15 And the many things that young people think are important
16 to them, because what your parents are hoping for, what
17 your leaders are hoping for and what this Royal Commission
18 is working for is for young people.

19 So, if we hear from everybody else and
20 we do not hear from the young people, we may not be hearing
21 from the people of the future. And some of us that have
22 been around for a little while may be off the mark. And,

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1 on the other hand, we may be half right. We have got to
2 know where we are half wrong.

3 So, we really have to have young people
4 involved.

5 Thank you for presenting to us.

6 **CECILIA SCOTT:** Thank you.

7 **CHIEF EDMUND METATAWABIN:** I have this
8 proposal. A copy of it will be given to the Commission.

9 Thanks very much.

10 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
11 you.

12 **PAT CHILTON:** I'm going to need some
13 direction here.

14 Do you want to break for lunch for half
15 an hour, then get into the youth? Or do you want to --

16 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
17 if the youth are still going to be here in half an hour,
18 why don't we take a very brief lunch break and maybe try
19 to start as soon around 1:00 as possible.

20 Everybody is just going to eat here
21 anyway, so we will try and start as soon as possible.

22 **PAT CHILTON:** Everybody is invited to

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1 stay for lunch. And anybody else who wants to make any
2 presentation let us know now so we can revise our agenda.
3 WHEREUPON THE COMMISSION RECESSED FOR LUNCH AT 12:31 P.M.
4 TO RESUME AT APPROXIMATELY 1:00 P.M.
5

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1 WHEREUPON THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 1:05 P.M.

2 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Shall
3 we begin again?

4 We have a lot of presenters and we have
5 not finished our morning yet and the list keeps getting
6 longer.

7 Maybe we can begin with the youth
8 presenters that were going to finish the morning and I
9 will have Pat introduce them.

10 **PAT CHILTON:** Good afternoon.

11 Just a thank you to the Mushkegowuk
12 Council and to the women who work at the office for the
13 lunch. It was really, really appreciated.

14 The other day they saw me in a real bind
15 running around trying to make arrangements and the lunch
16 that we were -- the people who were supposed to make the
17 lunch, that arrangement fell through, so they filled in.

18 And thank you very much, Sharon and Karen and Sherry,
19 Gail, everybody and the Mushkegowuk Council for footing
20 the bill.

21 Thank you very much, Stan.

22 The next two presenters are the youth

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1 from Moose Factory, Moose Factory Youth Group. We have
2 Stan Wesley, the 19-year old -- hey, he sticks his thumb
3 out -- I guess I hit that right on -- Eli Chilton, I believe
4 he is about 17 -- 16 -- from Moose Factory -- my nephew.

5 Anyhow, welcome. Come up to the table.

6 **ELI CHILTON:** As you all know, my name
7 is Eli Chilton. I am in grade 10. I attend Northern
8 Lights Secondary School.

9 I will be speaking on social concerns,
10 such as abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse -- abuse --
11 education, poverty, off-reserve natives.

12 First of all, I'd like to speak on, I
13 guess, abuse. The concern that has been, quote, "beaten
14 to death," unquote, I believe that abuse can never be beaten
15 to death. It's always going to be here. And we have to
16 face this problem, as natives, with natives.

17 It will always be around. And also that
18 being aware of this problem is the most important fact,
19 just being aware and realization of this problem, and
20 denial is not just a river in Egypt and that we have to
21 deal with it.

22 I think it all -- I think we should go

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1 right to the root of the problem, which is youth.

2 A lot of people -- a lot of adults that
3 have drinking problems and alcohol problems and that very
4 violent behaviour, it all begins in their youth.

5 They bring their alcohol and drug -- use
6 -- right into their adulthood. And I think that we should
7 deal with the youth with compassion and understanding,
8 because they're not really getting that. They have to
9 deal with all these problems on their own.

10 I think they need that very much.

11 Also, they really -- because a lot of
12 -- I know a lot of people that have problems like this
13 and they don't really have anyone to be there for them
14 as an -- with adults -- and when they do get presented
15 with a presentation about drug abuse or alcohol abuse --
16 or just abuse in general -- it's just facts. They're just
17 being telled what to do and they're not being understood
18 very much. It's basically the same old thing.

19 And I think that adults need a lot of
20 understanding towards native youth and their problems with
21 alcohol or drugs. And I think it revolves around
22 education. There is one major factor with education.

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1 One must want it. And there are a lot of problems -- they
2 bring a lot of problems into the school, into their
3 education, such as, again, drugs and alcohol.

4 And they need a lot of -- there is a lot
5 of adversity for a native student nowadays and the longer
6 we keep ignoring this problem the more and more problems
7 are going to come up.

8 There are a lot of students nowadays that
9 are heading out down south. They're going to Timmins,
10 North Bay and other places. And the problems -- and their
11 adversity is just going to grow more and more because
12 they're going into a white society. They're going to be
13 presented with racism, peer pressure and they need a lot
14 of help out there.

15 And education is just so important now
16 for our natives. First of all there is a lot of people
17 here that have said that we need to build our pride as
18 native -- as natives. But, first of all, we need to build
19 our pride and dignity in ourselves as human beings. And
20 then build on it as natives, because there are a lot of
21 native youth out there that have no self-confidence, so
22 self-esteem. They basically don't like themselves. They

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1 don't want to approach elders, or just -- they don't have
2 the time or the strength to go ahead and chase their native
3 values and culture.

4 And I think that we need to help them
5 with their pride and dignity as a human being.

6 There is a quote that says, "Do not
7 become a victim of fear and envy because that will stop
8 you from doing good." There are a lot of native youth
9 out there that -- that have fears from -- maybe approaching
10 an elder, or just approaching an adult. And they envy
11 -- there's also envy -- envy of the white society, envy
12 of what people have. And, because of that, that stops
13 them from chasing -- or going after native pride or their
14 values as natives, because there's a lot of people that
15 I know that are keeping up with the NBA finals more than
16 this Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, this meeting
17 today.

18 And that's really quite sad, because
19 it's just -- they should be keeping up with this because
20 it has its whole effect on the future of native youth.

21 Often a lot of people leave for school
22 out down south. They learn to adapt to that white society

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1 and they stay there, and they leave the reserve. And there
2 are a lot of people on reserve, a lot of native youth on
3 reserve that say, "Why are they leaving?" Why are they
4 doing this? Why are they doing that? You know, because
5 they're off reserve I'm a lot more native than them. A
6 lot of conflicts in -- between natives, and we don't need
7 that right now.

8 We are striving for self-government and
9 for other issues and there are a lot of conflicts in
10 natives, between natives, and we just don't need that right
11 now.

12 Also, there's a lot of blame going around
13 on white society saying because they did this, we're doing
14 that, because of the presentation of alcohol we have done
15 this and that and we have ruined our future as natives.

16 We can only blame them so much. We have
17 to take the blame for ourselves, because we have to take
18 the responsibility as natives. And there's a quote that
19 says, "Freedom is the right to be wrong, not the right
20 to do wrong."

21 I think we're taking too much advantage
22 of what white has done, because we cannot blame them

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1 completely.

2 In reserves there are a lot of problems,
3 obviously, and there are only small groups to help people.
4 For example, I am on a child abuse committee and in the
5 beginning there was only, like, six people. That's quite
6 disappointing. And back in the olden days, when a person
7 had a problem, the tribe themselves helped out. And I
8 believe that the community has to help out and come together
9 to help, because we are all for ourselves.

10 And we need a lot of funding and a lot
11 of other things to get rid of these problems and just lift
12 up our communities and our dignity and pride as natives.

13 And there's a quote by Martin Luther King
14 where he says, "We ain't what we ought to be, we ain't
15 what we want to be, but thank God we ain't what we was."

16 This is not just for black America, but
17 this is universal, for all minorities. And we have went
18 through a process. We are going somewhere. We are
19 getting better and -- thank God we ain't what we was, and
20 we're going somewhere.

21 Thank you.

22 **STAN WESLEY:** Thank you, Eli.

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1 First of all, I'd like to introduce
2 myself. My name is Stan Wesley, a 19 year old youth from
3 this community.

4 To start things off, I'd like to
5 -- I was reading through the mandate of the Commission
6 this morning and it said very -- it said that, "To examine
7 a broad range of issues concerning aboriginal peoples in
8 Canada." And there are extremely a lot of issues,
9 aboriginal -- from aboriginal peoples in Canada.

10 First of all, I must commend each and
11 every one of you sitting on the Board in saying you've
12 got a lot of work ahead of you and you're doing a really
13 good job, to start things off.

14 Thank you.

15 When the white man first stepped on our
16 land, 500 years ago in 1492, we have seen a lot of stuff
17 happen to us -- and I'm putting it very nicely, "a lot
18 of stuff." We've seen tribal wars, foreign wars on our
19 soil, alcohol, different legislations put on our backs,
20 et cetera.

21 What we first seen when the Europeans
22 came over is that they depended on us, they needed us to

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1 survive on our land, because they didn't know how to, the
2 climate was too harsh over here. So they were dependent
3 on us for everything, for dress, food, hunting skills,
4 et cetera.

5 As they learned that from us they started
6 in to take control. We, then, became dependent on them.
7 We were dependent on them for money, for food, for almost
8 everything. We were a race -- we were a nation in trouble.
9 We needed help.

10 And, in a way, we're still dependent on
11 the government today. We get a certain amount of money
12 from each First Nation. We're getting a certain amount
13 of money from the government, a certain amount of dollars
14 every year. That's why this self-government is so special
15 to us, so we can -- so we can get from under the thumb
16 and to start working on our own.

17 Because, as long as we have money, as
18 long as we get money from the government, then we'll always
19 be run by them. And, don't get me wrong, we made a lot
20 of steps, we made a lot of steps through those years.
21 In 1951 the discrimination of woman was taken out of the
22 Indian Act -- no, that was 1985 -- sorry -- okay.

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1 We made a lot of steps. Some bands are
2 not in control of their education systems, which is another
3 issue among itself. It's about time we take the initiative
4 of saying, "Okay, let's do it our way, let's do it our
5 way, because it is our way, not their way."

6 In regards to the education system, I've
7 grown up through the education system. And I was taught
8 through the years that Christopher Columbus discovered
9 North America in 1492, okay? That's exactly what it said.
10 What wasn't said is the native people were here before
11 that, okay? And so and so, Joe Blow, discovered Niagara
12 Falls in so and so amount of time, okay? What wasn't said
13 in the history books is that the native people took him
14 on personal tours to get to those places, okay?

15 And, okay, 500 years ago so and so come
16 over, discovers -- discovers Niagara Falls, discovers such
17 a beautiful, scenic area. And he comes back over and he
18 says, "Yeah, there's beautiful native American people.
19 They showed me all over their country, their great, vast
20 land. And I was just a tourist."

21 What are people going to say? "This
22 bloody guy, he's not a bloody explorer, he's a bloody

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1 tourist over there." You know, really, really, you know,
2 he's not a tourist, he's there for -- to a be hero, okay?
3 People, get with me here.

4 He's there to be a hero. And, in their
5 eyes, he was. But, he was taken on guided tours over those
6 places.

7 And throughout the years so many people
8 have been misled through the education system. And we
9 must change that. We must change that so and so did not
10 discover this land. The native people discovered this
11 land. The native people lived in this land. So and so
12 did not discover Niagara Falls. The native people
13 discovered Niagara Falls.

14 I was sitting here since 10:30 in the
15 morning and I was shocked that no one really brought up
16 the environmental concerns that we face in today's society.

17 It's pretty tragic that in 500 years how much destruction
18 can be caused in our lands, over here in the Americas,
19 the depletion of the rain forest in Brazil, the La Grande
20 dams in norther Quebec. And the list goes on, and on,
21 and on, and on.

22 When a bear is in the bush, okay

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1 -- get with me here -- another analogy -- when a bear is
2 in the forest and some guys come down and cut down their
3 land, the bears moves on, okay? -- the bear moves on, okay?
4 New habitat. He reaches new habitat, until there's no
5 more habitat and then the bear just dies, it's gone forever.

6 What do we do when our land is cut from
7 us? Say Moose Factory as a whole burns down, or blows
8 up in some disaster, what happens? We get evacuated.
9 Money start flowing. Everything starts flowing. Just
10 total chaos, total chaos.

11 What we got to do is, we got to start
12 speaking for the animals who cannot speak. That's what
13 native people do. They take care of the environment.
14 They're the speakers of the environment, since the other
15 animals and the other beings cannot speak. You see, a
16 bear cannot go to the provincial government and say, "Don't
17 cut down my land." He can't do that. A bird cannot go
18 to the farmers and say, "Don't pollute the fish, because
19 my eggs are thinning out." They can't do that. It's
20 inconceivable.

21 And it's about time we start slapping
22 it down and say, "Okay, every animal on this earth was

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1 created for a reason, every being." Although 95 per cent
2 of all beings are insects, everything was created for a
3 reason, a specific reason. The Creator did not create
4 something for no reason at all, no reason at all.
5 Everything falls within that circle. One thing is gone
6 and the circle weakens. It must stay strong.

7 And right now it's weakening very
8 quickly. It's weakening bad. We must preserve that
9 circle and keep it strong.

10 But, then there's the other side of it.
11 What about the population boom? In 50 years the
12 population has doubled to 2.5 billion people. What are
13 we going to do, start piling people up on -- amongst each
14 other? That doesn't do that. We must start thinking out
15 things and planning things, saying, "Okay, where can we
16 put people, if there's another 5 billion people in 50 years
17 going to be on the earth?"

18 Or, should we start regulating and say,
19 "Okay, let's try and cut down the population."

20 That's going to be the biggest issue of
21 the '90s and so on, is the environment.

22 And right here in Moose Factory we have

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1 a lot of environmental concerns as well, hydro coming in,
2 proposing 12 dams, I think it was. The Grand Canal
3 concept, damming up the James Bay, converting that into
4 fresh water, diverting it down.

5 And not even us, all over the place in
6 North American water and project -- North America water
7 and power lines, damming up so many rivers to send the
8 water down to our good fellow friends in the United States
9 of America.

10 So many things we got to do now, eh?
11 It's just -- it's unreal. And you think that when the
12 Creator created all of us he was saying, "I know they're
13 not perfect, but I'm pretty sure he'll look after our land,"
14 because our land we must conserve -- we must preserve for
15 ever, and ever, and ever.

16 And what are we doing now? We're
17 killing it. And the thing that bothers me is that when
18 I take a walk in the bush down in the reserve here I go
19 back and there's garbage all over the place, there's just
20 garbage, garbage, garbage. And I'm thinking, "Hey, hold
21 on, hey, wait one second here. The native people, supposed
22 to be the guardians of the land," and what's going on here?

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1 There's garbage lying in the bush, untreated. There's
2 a dumping facility down there for everybody to use. People
3 dump their stuff in their front yards. People dumping
4 their stuff on the river before breakup, thinking the ice
5 will just carry it out in the bay. That stuff stays at
6 the bottom and pollutes the water.

7 I think that's common sense, you know.
8 It's tough to say. I don't know, it's really tough to
9 say. Some people just -- I don't know, I just don't know.
10 I don't know.

11 I got a letter -- I got a letter on --
12 no, I should say I wrote a letter -- I read a letter, okay
13 -- at Wawatay, where I work -- and it said -- it started
14 giving us some ideas for programming there -- that's a
15 television station -- and it said, "I used to be from
16 Attawapiskat. What I want to see on your program is
17 specials on solvent abuse and different abuse of
18 substances. You see, I live in Moose Factory now -- it's
19 Moosonee," it said, "because my parents moved me away from
20 that influence of solvent abuse and different abuses."

21 And it said, "Please, we need your help."
22 And it said, "Addressed from the youth of Attawapiskat

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1 First Nation."

2 And they were addressing a television
3 station. And it was like a letter -- it was pleading --
4 it was more or less pleading to us, "We need your help,"
5 from Attawapiskat First Nation.

6 And when you look at it, it's not -- what
7 we got to do is -- I'm not bringing any proposals down
8 to the table, or anything -- but we can't always rely on
9 the government funding, you know. Okay, what are we going
10 to do now? Oh, no money, we need more money, you know.

11 You know, we don't need money all the
12 time. What we need is our nation, our people, our
13 communities to come together as one and to work together
14 as one, to sit down and say, "Okay, this is what we got
15 to do. The government is obviously not doing anything,
16 so we'll just -- never mind the government for now -- we'll
17 shift that off to the side -- we got to generate to
18 ourselves."

19 It's our people who are in trouble. We
20 have to work as one people, one nation. We must do that.

21 It's extremely important.

22 When one moves to the city one's usually

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1 known as an urban Indian -- urban Indian. And they go
2 through a lot of stuff there, eh? You know, when they
3 move to the city, especially for the first time off reserve,
4 or off their community. They have to handle a lot of stuff,
5 a lot of stuff like -- they move to a predominately white
6 neighbourhood and -- I used to live in a white neighbourhood
7 in Thunder Bay, when I used to go to school.

8 And I heard one of the people talking
9 and he said, "Oh, those God damned Indians. They're moving
10 into our neighbourhood. They're going to destroy our
11 whole neighbourhood." You know, they're thinking, like,
12 World War III was coming along, you know. They say, "Oh,
13 they're kids are going to be running around in the road.

14 And my kids are not going to be seen on the road, because
15 my kids belong in my yard." It seems like we can't do
16 anything at all, you know. We don't -- like, we're savages
17 -- savages!

18 They treat us like we're savages. And
19 it's not only -- what I'm trying to get at is -- the youth,
20 when they move down to the cities, they need a lot of help
21 to adjust, to adjust to their surroundings, because there's
22 a lot of stuff. There's a lot of temptations, drugs,

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1 alcohol. They need counselling services, not only from
2 -- not only from the schooling systems, but from the parents
3 as well, parents, bands, friends, peer counselling. So
4 peer counselling falls in as well.

5 Because I feel I could learn off someone
6 who's my age and who knows their stuff instead of sitting
7 down with someone who's 50 years old and dealing with that
8 intimidation factor. I could easily sit down in front
9 of someone and get the question -- or get the answer --
10 very easily, very easily.

11 This is what's got to be done for those
12 people down there, because there's a lot of native people
13 in the cities and we do end up getting really messed up.
14 They drop out of school. They live on the streets. So,
15 what are we supposed to do with those guys, you know?
16 Maybe bring them back to the reservation and start them
17 over again? I don't know.

18 In my area where I'm from, Moose Factory,
19 it's tough to grow up here. It's tough to grow up here
20 and learn your tradition, learn your culture, learn your
21 language. Everybody around here, all the little children
22 -- I don't know if I should say 100 per cent -- maybe 99

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1 per cent of all the kids around here know how to speak
2 English. The only words they know in Cree is swear words.
3 That's basically it, okay?

4 Everybody I know can swear in Cree. You
5 know, it's a start, I guess, I don't know.

6 But, what we got to do is, we got to start
7 getting down to it. We got to say okay
8 -- if someone knows the language here, we got to say, "When
9 I have children I'm going to teach my children the
10 language," or else, what's going to happen? No language,
11 no culture.

12 That's why I like to see kids here. It
13 really makes my day. It's very important for one to have
14 a language because I was at a point where I was a -- I'm
15 a native person, I'm trying to learn my culture, but I
16 don't have my language. When one says I'm native and they
17 say, "Okay, you must know your language." The way I look
18 at it, every native person should know their language.
19 It's tough, because I don't know my language. Just like
20 anybody else, I know how to swear, but that's basically
21 it.

22 But I'm trying to learn my language.

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1 I'm trying my best to learn my language. At the television
2 station they have Cree lessons every week. I ask my
3 parents to speak Cree to me on a regular basis, so I can
4 pick it up.

5 Every parent should take the initiative
6 of saying, "Okay, I'm going to start teaching my child
7 Cree today, not tomorrow, but today. While I'm still here
8 I'm going to teach my child Cree."

9 What we are doing in this community here
10 is, we're setting up a Youth Council. I know it says on
11 the agenda a Youth Group, but we're not a youth group
12 because we don't just hang out and play games. We're here
13 to assemble things, to assemble things that'll help the
14 youth in the future. We're organizing a youth conference
15 this summer, actually, which would really help the youth
16 of our community.

17 You know, we've got to do that more.
18 We've got to start involving our youth. We've got to start
19 involving us and saying -- giving us some funds to work
20 with. You know, the elders have their funds. The other
21 guys have their funds. How much money does a band spend
22 on their youth per year? I must say my band is very

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1 generous in giving us an amount of money for our conference
2 this summer, which we're very thankful for.

3 But, up to that, before then, how much
4 money did they give? Nada. Just for the summer, right?

5 They have kids come down and they work. They work to
6 get money and they go out and buy clothes, pants, whatever.

7 But it's about time that we start involving our youth
8 and getting us prepared for the future.

9 Because this here, this hand here, is
10 the hand of youth. Every youth has a hand of youth. It's
11 in a fist. We want to be respected. We need to be
12 respected. If we're not respected, we can't respect back.

13 That's not right. This will be representing our nation
14 in the next generation. When our political leaders are
15 gone, we'll be the only ones left. With or without our
16 language we'll still have to represent our nation.

17 When I first spoke at the Nishnawbe Aski
18 Chief's meeting I ended off my presentation with the same
19 ending -- I'm going to cover it now.

20 I said, "When my father got elected Chief
21 of the Moose Factory First Nation he was not only my father,
22 but the father of Moose Factory First Nation." And without

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1 the mothers and fathers of our nation as a whole, not just
2 Canada, United States, South America, everywhere, all the
3 Americas where is native, aboriginal people around,
4 without the mothers and fathers of every nation on this
5 whole earth, there would be nada. There would be no nation
6 whatsoever.

7 That's why I have total -- I have all
8 the respect in the world -- all the respect for the world
9 for all of our leaders, and for all of our future leaders,
10 because that's what makes a nation, leaders, strong
11 leaders.

12 Thank you very much.

13 Meegwetch.

14 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I really
15 enjoyed the presentation from the two of you. You both
16 seem to have wisdom of the ages, far beyond what biological
17 years you would have.

18 I think you probably are challenging
19 your parents and the adults, and the people in this
20 community. It is really important that the youth get
21 organized.

22 One of the things I learned in my life

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1 was, if I want a change I had to organize for change, and
2 that the structures that are in place already only move
3 when they are pushed and continuously challenged. Even
4 friendly leaders constantly need pressures, because they
5 are being pressured from everywhere. And so they must
6 respond to competing pressures. And if young people
7 respectfully wait and only talk to themselves and their
8 frustration and anger is kept inside and internalized and
9 the adults of the world that have trouble understanding
10 young people, even when they are communicating to them,
11 we are really bad at guessing what -- something happens
12 to us as we get older -- because we were all young at one
13 time -- something happens to us. And we forget.

14 It is amazing how fast we forget. And
15 so I am really, personally pleased to hear that your
16 organizing and I really hope that it means that the young
17 people here will not lose patience. Do not get frustrated
18 the first time you are refused.

19 If the aboriginal movement had -- in
20 North America -- had stopped the first time they heard
21 "no," we would not have been able to do very much.

22 So, if you really want to see aboriginal

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1 languages being taught, you are going to have to do
2 something about it. Your parents and your elders and the
3 adults think that they have made a wise decision by making
4 sure that you learn English. They think that is what you
5 are going to need in the future.

6 But, what is becoming very, very clear
7 to us now is, the reason that there is such breakdown in
8 aboriginal society is that the very essence that young
9 people need to feel secure and to be able to become
10 universal citizens, is not being given to them. They do
11 not start off with their language and their history and
12 their culture, and then they can build on it -- and other
13 languages, other understandings. That is the thing that
14 is so vital that is missing.

15 So, what the adults of the community are
16 really going to need hear, what your chief and council
17 are going to need to hear, what your elders are going to
18 need to hear is that -- over and over again, they are going
19 to have to hear, "We want the language. We want the
20 culture." When it sinks in, then you will get it. And
21 it will become a priority.

22 They do not believe it yet. And,

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1 meanwhile, young people are dying every day in North
2 America. And when they hit the big city they do not have
3 enough inside them to stand up on their own two feet and
4 be able to withstand the information that hits them,
5 because they do not solidly know, they are not secure about
6 who they are and why they are on earth. They can go in
7 any direction.

8 As aboriginal people, we have not
9 learned our lesson yet that we were stronger when Columbus
10 came here. We were stronger, even 100 years ago, than
11 we are now. And that the more we try and make our young
12 people like other people, like European people, the more
13 insecure our people get. We are not learning it, even
14 though we see it every day.

15 And so you are our future, in more ways
16 than one. It is really important young people get
17 organized and really push for what you are talking about.

18 I will see if the other Commissioners
19 want to make comments, or ask you some questions.

20 Viola?

21 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I do
22 not have any questions for you, but I want to commend you

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1 on your presentation. And I support my Co-Chair's words
2 to you of encouragement. I encourage you to continue on
3 the road that you are on here. And language -- and again,
4 I have to say that language is surfacing as being a very
5 important issue to our people.

6 So, language and education, and it is
7 something that we do not have to wait two or three years
8 to do something about. We do not have to wait for our
9 report from this Commission for something to happen.

10 I think there is enough evidence and
11 testimony in Canada that aboriginal language is a major
12 issue for aboriginal people in this country. And I think
13 it is time, the time is here. Something has to be done.

14 So, it is your kinds of testimonies, I
15 think, that are essential and so crucial to -- I guess
16 it is to force somebody, somewhere, to do something about
17 aboriginal languages.

18 So, thank you very much.

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Does
20 our Elder want to say anything, or ask any questions?

21 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**

22 **ARCHIBALD:** No, it is just that I want to hear more

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1 activities presented by the youth of this area.

2 If you do not let us know, or your peers
3 know what your needs are, then our hands are tied. But
4 if you continue under what you presented today, the
5 position that you took, then we will be able to serve you.

6 And I am sure the educational counsellors in the area
7 would like to hear more of the Youth Council.

8 Thank you.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:**

10 Derek?

11 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**

12 **McLEOD:** I want to congratulate both of you. It
13 was really good, really enjoyable.

14 I wanted to ask Eli, speaking of school,
15 how racism is in the school, peer pressure, this racism
16 from the students, I presume and racism from maybe even
17 teachers, do you see any, like, racial prejudices in the
18 way native students are taught in the education system?

19 Is there any specific area of the education system where
20 you see any racial prejudice?

21 **ELI CHILTON:** Well, not really. I
22 don't really see any racial prejudice, like you say, in

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1 the education system down here. Maybe in the knowledge
2 that we may know outside of school, as in, "we're not aware
3 of this," or, "we're not aware of that," or, "we're not
4 aware of this." Maybe, like, stereotype, I don't know.

5 It may be good or bad, but stereotype -- stereotyping
6 is bad.

7 Basically it's what -- as native
8 students, what we're aware of outside of school. They
9 may say that you are not aware of this, and that is kind
10 of an insult, as a native student, because we are native.

11 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**

12 **McLEOD:** Stan, I would ask you one question now.

13 You're speaking about the family and how
14 we should -- how the parents should encourage their
15 children.

16 Do you think that there's enough family
17 support groups right now, or any kind of support groups
18 for the family, those families of broken homes right now?

19 Is there enough being done for them? Do you see that?

20 **STAN WESLEY:** Personally, I do see a lot
21 of families and I do see some families breaking up. And
22 it is a very sad occurrence, and not only because they're

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1 personal friends, because it is a family. And I know how
2 close a family bond can mean, especially if a family is
3 not secure. That family setting is so precious. It
4 doesn't matter if it's broken -- especially if there's
5 children around as well -- the children bounce back, bounce
6 back and forth between different obstacles. It's hell.
7 It's hell for the children.

8 I can understand the child, when the
9 child grows up to be very insecure, anti-social, et cetera,
10 because of that, because of the broken home.

11 And, to answer your question, I know
12 there's some family support services here, but I don't
13 know if they're capable of doing all of it. It's just
14 I haven't done any research on this, but I know there is
15 support groups. And I know they're doing their job, which
16 is a start.

17 How much they're doing, is a different
18 question, but it's the intentions they have is very
19 important, and they're intentions is great.

20 Thank you.

21 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**

22 **McLEOD:** Okay, I've got one question for both you

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1 guys now.

2 If there was anything about this island,
3 like, this area, Moosonee, Attawapiskat area, if there
4 was anything about the band office system, anything about
5 any local governmental authorities or whatever, if there
6 was anything that you could change, what would be the first
7 thing that you would change about it, and why?

8 I open that up that to either one of you.

9 **STAN WESLEY:** I would probably change
10 the process of having youth -- I know that's changing --
11 I know youth are starting to speak up and say, "Okay, we
12 should be respected, we should be respected." And I know
13 the youth should take the initiative.

14 Before that, the adults say, "Okay,
15 let's do something for the youth. Let's show that we care.
16 The youth obviously don't seem like they care, but let's
17 do it for them anyway. You know, they're our next
18 generation, let's do it anyway."

19 The Nations should be aware that there's
20 youth around and there's a lot of youth and that they should
21 start accepting their proposals. And I know some of their
22 proposals probably are radical in a way.

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1 But it's a start. It's a start. And
2 I think we should be respected, not only that we're the
3 next generation of everything, but that we have to start
4 from somewhere. And that should be respected. It should
5 really be respected.

6 **ELI CHILTON:** I agree totally with Stan.
7 It should be from the -- the (ripes) of the roots, which
8 is the youth. In school and out of school, I think we
9 need the respect and just to be heard, basically.

10 I think Stan spoke for me and for a lot
11 of other people also.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You
13 know, it is funny you say that, that aboriginal youth should
14 have respect in school and outside.

15 When people like myself go and speak to
16 non-native people and we try and describe the difference
17 -- because they are always trying to think, "Well, what's
18 different about those aboriginal people?"

19 So, people like myself and your leaders
20 and your chiefs, when we are down south and we are doing
21 public education, one of the things we try and tell them
22 is: The difference between aboriginal people and

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1 non-aboriginal people is, we respect everything. We
2 respect our elders. We respect our environment. And we
3 respect our youth. Because we think our youths are gifts
4 given to us. They do not belong to us. And that
5 traditionally we always believe in reincarnation.

6 So, these are wise people coming back
7 again to experience yet another life. And so we must show
8 respect to young people, because sometimes they are elders,
9 even at an early age.

10 And so, when young people come to us and
11 say, you know, "We want respect," it is just showing how
12 much change has happened to aboriginal societies, that
13 we are going back to even needing to put in some of the
14 basic elements that were there all of the time before.

15 And I suspect that, as other presenters
16 said here, it is there, it is in the community. It just
17 needs to be used.

18 So, once again I think you are really
19 challenging. Some of the things you said about not needing
20 to wait before some things should occur, not always needing
21 to wait for money, not always blaming -- let's not use
22 the non-native people as an excuse for aboriginal

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1 conditions and for not doing anything -- very, very
2 powerful statements.

3 I hope that you encourage other young
4 people to talk to us. But really, far more important,
5 talk to your community here. I know that this is an
6 opportunity. They are hearing you and perhaps through
7 the media there are other places where parents are also
8 listening to you.

9 The views of young people are extremely
10 important. And unfortunately, the way we have organized
11 our societies, young people do not get enough opportunity
12 to influence. And so I hope that you will continue on
13 with the kind of things you have done. And I would like
14 to end up by saying that the evidence of you two coming
15 forth and making the kind of strong presentations -- and
16 having the security to do this as young people -- speaks
17 well. It speaks well for your parents. It speaks well
18 your community.

19 And so the very fact that you can be as
20 clear, as eloquent and say the kinds of things you are
21 saying, speaks for a real strength still in the
22 communities, which we have to build on. And so it gives

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1 me hope that we are going to hear from young people like
2 you two.

3 Thank you.

4 **STAN WESLEY:** Thank you.

5 **ELI CHILTON:** Thank you.

6 **PAT CHILTON:** Well, according to our
7 agenda we are only going to break for lunch. But we are
8 running behind time, so we are going to request that maybe
9 to make it to the point and leave some time for questions
10 from the Commissioners as well.

11 We amended the agenda again, effective
12 12:40. There will probably be another amendment by 3:00
13 o'clock.

14 Our next presenter is Ernie Rickard.
15 He wanted to make a brief presentation before he runs off
16 to catch a plane. So we know that Ernie is not going to
17 take a long time because he has to catch a plane.

18 **ERNIE RICKARD:** Thank you, to address
19 this Royal Commission.

20 I just wanted to address some of the
21 topics on your --

22 **PAT CHILTON:** Put your mike on -- just

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1 push the button there.

2 **ERNIE RICKARD:** -- some of the topics
3 on your terms of reference.

4 The first is the economic issue.

5 I just wanted to comment that this issue
6 is very important to the community, economic development
7 growth. Not only that, that it also would sustain the
8 self-government for the community to run its internal or
9 community affairs. And by that I mean the financial part
10 of it.

11 We know -- I know for certain that the
12 government, in order to run its government, it must finance
13 it. And by that it taxes its multi-corporations, whether
14 they're foreign or not. And also it has its own Crown
15 corporations. And also that it taxes its own people so
16 that, in that way, it can sustain its -- running its
17 government affairs.

18 I think we in this community will also
19 look at things and how to look at -- in acquiring revenues
20 for economic development purposes and to run future
21 self-government -- or that self-government development
22 process.

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1 In our treaty -- our treaty, it states
2 where the government has made a provision that we would
3 be assured of benevolence and bounty. That term, when
4 I look it up in Black's Law Dictionary, it seems to indicate
5 that some sort of -- I guess a piece of pie of whatever
6 the government of the day gets. And today I don't think
7 we ever seen or received any piece of that pie which --
8 it's in a financial context, is what I'm referring to.

9 So, here in our community, we have
10 established this building here which you see today and
11 this was done by the community effort that's been put in
12 with very little help from the government. And the next
13 building that you see, just across from this building,
14 this building was constructed through grants. And those
15 grants, there were conditions that we had to -- that we
16 had to honour.

17 And what I'm saying in the economic
18 development fact is that if we are to have economic
19 development growth, we cannot sustain that by receiving
20 grants. From our natural resources that the present
21 government uses to sustain its economic development and
22 its government, we have to have and use those resources

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1 that belong to us here, in our Mushkegowuk country, whether
2 land and water, the timber, the mining and the damming
3 of these rivers that do exist today.

4 And certainly the government has
5 generated revenue for that -- for its own government.
6 And I think we the people of First Nations here in Moose
7 Factory, to have that economic development growth and to
8 run and finance our self-government, we have to get that
9 financial security.

10 And I would just refer to that
11 benevolence and bounty which that treaty statement -- that
12 the government has assured us on that day -- I think that's
13 what precisely -- in my opinion -- would be the
14 interpretation.

15 So, whatever developments that are going
16 on in our area here, in our treaty area, we have to be
17 informed and be part of the development process and to
18 sit down with the Ontario government -- or any
19 multi-corporation that the government recognizes or give
20 them those exploration rights -- that we would participate
21 and somehow secure whatever -- well, whatever -- that piece
22 of pie, so to speak -- for our own development and growth.

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1 That is one of my comments on the issue
2 of economic development.

3 In the area of justice -- I thought maybe
4 I'd touch on that -- the issue of justice is that -- let
5 me just share you an experience I had and maybe I can make
6 a comment to that effect.

7 Some time passed I seen a notice where
8 they required a native justice of the peace. And I was
9 encouraged to apply for that. My perception was that to
10 be a native justice of the piece would be to work in the
11 betterment, I think, for the community and work with the
12 elders and try to see how things can be handled within
13 the context of that justice system.

14 Now, when I went into an interview --
15 the interview I went through -- was that the perception
16 what the Ontario government had and the justice of -- the
17 native justice of the peace program was different from
18 mine, I think because that they had it pretty well
19 interpreted already. And the interpretation I had was
20 that I would work within the framework of the First Nations
21 and work within the framework of how we can resolve those
22 immediate problems within the community.

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1 And those problems -- whatever, civil
2 or social in nature. And a lot of these problems stem
3 from alcohol or the social, you know, situation within
4 the case -- whatever the matter would be at the time.

5 So, I was very interested and I'm sure
6 there are people who are interested also in the issue of
7 justice system.

8 And that surprised me, where the
9 perception was quite different from mine as a native
10 person, and how this would work within the community and
11 to resolve those civil issues, social issues, using the
12 elders and using those problems that do exist and how we
13 can evaluate and come away with solution, right within
14 the community where the -- those problems did exist in
15 the first place, where today we don't have that.

16 Today we have to go to court in Moosonee.

17 And when we go to court in Moosonee you hear the court
18 officials come from out of town, hear the cases, but don't
19 know the social and problems right within the community,
20 where the community should be dealing with that in the
21 first place.

22 And a lot of these court restitutions

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1 and fines are paid to the court and they don't pay the
2 restitutions somewhat into the community. They go within
3 southern Ontario, or to the purse of the Ontario
4 government.

5 Now, those things, I think is very
6 important also, to be addressed, and I would think that
7 -- I think more interpretation from the local members
8 should be recognized or be listened to, and be heard, by
9 the Ontario government. And I hope from this Commission
10 some of those things can be carried and be taken to the
11 Ontario government, or the attorney general, anyway, to
12 reflect that.

13 I thought I was going to share that with
14 you because there's two conceptions, is what I'm saying,
15 is that one was a native person who wanted to be actively
16 involved at the time when the selection process was made.

17 It's somewhat different from what the Ontario government
18 under the Ontario Attorney General's office on that
19 particular issue.

20 So, I thought maybe I'd reflect that.

21 The other issue is education.

22 I, myself, right now, you know, my father

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1 is fluent in Cree and he writes and speaks Cree. And my
2 generation, I only speak Cree and understand Cree.

3 And what scares me that -- I know a lot
4 of these were mentioned earlier -- but to see children
5 today who are much younger cannot converse in Cree, but
6 maybe understand a very little bit of that language, which
7 is our language that is very important to us today.

8 I would like to see the Ontario
9 government change its Education Act or entrench -- or make
10 amendment to that -- to incorporate a conversational native
11 language. In our case, in our area here, that will be
12 Cree, Cree language. And so that, you know, our children,
13 we can catch our children today at this age to understand
14 and speak and write the Cree language.

15 We are rapidly losing it and I can
16 testify to that, which I am doing here today.

17 So, some of the important elements and
18 the problems we have with that is because the Education
19 Act, which we are under here in Moose Factory educational
20 system, it prevents us from teaching the Cree language
21 conversational as one class unit on a daily basis. I think
22 that's what I'm getting at here.

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1 I certainly would like to see a change
2 in that area for my children and other children. And,
3 hopefully, that we preserve our tradition and cultural
4 language.

5 I came here with no immediate brief.
6 However, I just wanted to add those comments to the
7 Commission so that some of those things that I'm reflecting
8 here would be carried with you.

9 Thank you very much for this
10 opportunity.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
12 you.

13 I will see if any of the Commissioners
14 have any comments or questions.

15 Viola?

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I
17 would just like to thank you. I do not have any comments
18 or questions. You were quite straightforward.

19 Thank you.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** The
21 Elder?

22 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**

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1 **ARCHIBALD:** I'd like to thank Ernie for presenting his
2 -- and he hit upon the justice system.

3 In our courts, when a native person is
4 up for the injustice he's done, he has to speak in his
5 own language and I happen to be one of the interpreters
6 for the District of Cochrane. And I, over the years, have
7 note that the judge and the lawyers do not recognize the
8 native culture, or even know what a -- an Indian says "Yes,"
9 when he says, "A'ha, (native language)" (through
10 interpreter) and this occurs quite frequently and it's
11 not recognized within the court systems.

12 And naturally, conversational Cree, the
13 native language uses or utilizes words, short phrases to
14 indicate certain things. And sometimes there is maybe
15 a sense of encouragement in whatever phrasing is used.
16 And this is what I'm using. This is why I'm saying that
17 the lawyers and the judges do not understand the native
18 culture and also the nuances within native cultures.

19 And there should be some ... available
20 to talk to, to speak to with these court -- with the lawyers,
21 to talk with the judges and to inform and consult with
22 these people or individuals that represent the court

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1 systems.

2 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
3 you, Ernie.

4 I am not sure if the people here are
5 aware, but the provincial government is in the middle of
6 reviewing the Education Act right now. They have got a
7 committee looking at changes.

8 And, as far as I know, there is very,
9 very little involvement from the First Nations in Ontario,
10 virtually nil, I think.

11 So, perhaps, you might bring that up with
12 the chief and council.

13 Thanks.

14 Pat?

15 **PAT CHILTON:** Thank you, Ernie.

16 Just for your information, that note I
17 passed Ernie said "Your plane is leaving."

18 The next is Emile Nakogee, who wanted
19 to say a few words, Attawapiskat First Nation.

20 **EMILE NAKOGEE (through interpreter):**

21 Greetings to everyone here in this
22 conference centre and to the four individuals here

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1 comprised of the Royal Commission. And I want you to
2 understand what I need to express.

3 Since I came to this conference this
4 morning I listened to the presentations of these each
5 individuals and I hear discussions on native culture.
6 And I hear also discussions and issues on native languages
7 and also the non-native society, which was -- which was
8 -- it was -- forced on native people to follow which --
9 in educational means.

10 I just wanted to inform you that I have
11 followed native culture ever since I was aware when my
12 grandfather and grandmother began educating me.

13 I realized the importance of all the
14 resources within -- above the land and also the importance
15 of the non-native society and also the importance of the
16 native culture. It's very important, as we're created
17 -- culture -- nations have been created -- however, our
18 culture and our languages, our lifestyles that we follow,
19 that we implement those in the future.

20 And this is what I've heard within these
21 discussions this morning.

22 However, it is very difficult that we

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1 -- that we can follow those directions, what our
2 aspirations are. Only when we take that responsibility
3 ourselves to conserve our lifestyles, our culture, our
4 languages and also to follow what our Creator created for
5 us within the lands.

6 I am not talking about -- I am not talking
7 about the lifestyle within -- I am not talking about poultry
8 -- but our -- within institutions -- and also the essential
9 -- the importance of those creatures that we were supposed
10 to be following and what we have -- what we gain our
11 sustenance.

12 The way we are now, it is as if we are
13 selling our children. It is as if we are selling our
14 languages. We use non-native people to come to our
15 communities to educate our people. This is where the
16 source of problems are.

17 If a child begins his or her growth at
18 the age of five they're taking (taken) away and this is
19 very easy for that child to -- for a child to forget the
20 upbringing of her parents are bringing. And it's very
21 simple and easy to lose the language, very easy to lose
22 the culture and also those other aspects that his

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1 grandfather and father used traditionally.

2 It's unfortunate that this occurs.

3 However, I haven't heard since I brought up my children
4 that the government provides funds for native education,
5 for native language, for native -- and I have never heard
6 of this type of thing that is provided for the communities.

7 I have never heard the government -- and
8 I know -- and I have heard that the government provides
9 money for those other immigrants that come into -- within
10 this country.

11 I think it is very, very difficult, my
12 beloved friends to do what we need to do, to begin and
13 start doing what we are discussing, because there are so
14 many problems within our communities, there is so many
15 problems.

16 However, it is not our responsibilities.

17 We didn't create these problems. Many of our people have
18 been led into tragedy since the introduction of these
19 problems, influence from alcohol, drug abuse and also the
20 abuse that our children use.

21 This spring I was unable to finish my
22 spring hunt because I was interfered by this tragedy among

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1 our youth. And I think this is the very important issue
2 that we should try to discuss, to alleviate some of the
3 problems as a people and to -- if -- if we look at a house
4 and only half of the house -- half of the roof is there
5 -- the other half will not benefit the whole household.

6 And I think this is important for
7 discussions here, if we are to put all the elements that
8 will benefit us, I don't think it will benefit us even
9 more. If we can practice and we can use -- and even try
10 to alleviate some of these problems that we have.

11 I have heard many things that are
12 discussed. I believe in -- certain individual here that
13 there was no jails, no institutions, no police force, nor
14 was there any judicial system traditionally. And this
15 I saw -- and I was able to use the advice of my grandmother.

16 And when I was -- when I didn't go home for the evening
17 she took away my shoes and I wouldn't -- I wasn't allowed
18 to touch those -- my shoes, for two days. And she was
19 trying to educate me.

20 How is it now, my friends?

21 The parents -- many parents have
22 neglected their children. I have found within the bible

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1 that a parent who brings up his child is used by the Great
2 Spirit to pass on the knowledge that he or she is allowed
3 to do. A parent has the responsibility -- has the
4 responsibility to bring up his children. A parent has
5 the -- will have the hope and the interest and the benefit
6 from the Great Spirit -- if at the time -- and he will
7 be vindicated of all this -- and it is very important that
8 we should use the bible, how we can direct our lives on
9 this earth, and also beyond this earth.

10 My friends, this is what I wanted to say.

11 There are -- there are many programs,
12 or many benefits that I could use like the young people,
13 and there's many support systems.

14 For instance, as far as I can remember,
15 there was no separation among couples, there was no cases
16 of children being taken in custody somewhere else. And
17 today, there is no -- there is no -- there's difficulties
18 of couples to love each other, to support each other,
19 because of those -- because of those interferences, because
20 of many interferences and influentials.

21 A person who will strike his or her child
22 will immediately be put in court, or the couple -- or the

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1 couple that has problems will immediately be called for
2 separation. And this is very unfortunate.

3 If we are to make or improve our
4 relationship as native people, then these are things that
5 we should consider.

6 Yes, we will ask of the government --
7 every four years we'll ask for our vote so that person
8 will be able to be a member of the federal government,
9 or the provincial government.

10 There is -- that has this powers also.
11 If we are the voting members, then we can have the power
12 and the responsibility to say what our interests are.
13 This is -- my concerns and my wishes and aspirations and
14 I just wanted to tell you that there is many problems and
15 I've heard these two young people here, the words -- and
16 the fine words that they spoke and the expressions -- and
17 their experiences. And I'd just like to -- my interest
18 is to attempt from the chief and council level and every
19 community to co-operate -- not only for financial means
20 or interest, but to improve -- but to improve their
21 communities and also their levels of council.

22 Because it is like the chief who has been

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1 taking responsibility. The father of the community. And
2 I think that's the responsibilities -- as the
3 responsibilities as a father to improve and to alleviate
4 the problems of each community and members of the
5 community, and also the -- I realize that there are many
6 elders, and I have seen this and experienced this.

7 I have never been approached by an elder
8 to tell me that I've done wrong. I have always gone to
9 the chief maybe -- perhaps maybe four councils --
10 councillors, to give some advice.

11 If we can only approach what will benefit
12 us, then that will benefit us. Not to wait -- not to wait
13 and then eventually that we can be burdened with more
14 problems. And I think that the responsibilities and the
15 responsible of the life. And I am very, very happy --
16 and I have -- since I left my spring hunt I was only at
17 home for 14 hours, where my wife is. And, because of that,
18 I left my community to help and assist my own people, as
19 long it -- as long as the belief as a people and the youth
20 of our communities and I would really like the youth to
21 come and approach me and ask some of their questions.

22 I have brought up children and I have

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1 had lots of interferences -- whether I should know --
2 whether I should use the educational systems, and I've
3 come across support systems as the family allowance.
4 This, the family -- it was never asked of the government,
5 but they just brought it to the communities. The DIA have
6 always -- have told me if I didn't give my child to the
7 education system they would take away my support.

8 And that's the interferences that have
9 been caused throughout the years. And there's been
10 threatening -- people were threatened, the communities,
11 individually, and this is what our circumstances are at
12 this time.

13 And the problems -- and the problems,
14 the difficulties that we have, the difficulties in the
15 languages, the threatening circumstances that occurred
16 within our children.

17 I remember a long time ago when Hudson
18 Bay Company didn't establish itself alone. I remember
19 my grandfathers, that they solely established the Hudson
20 Bay Company by transporting their supplies so that they
21 can gain wealth from this type of activity.

22 Once they reached it, then they -- the

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1 Hudson Bay Company just totally ignored them afterwards
2 and neglected them ... reference to the federal government.

3 The federal government should recognize
4 us and consider native people and to realize where the
5 wealth has -- where the source of wealth has come from.

6 And I realize like, that the people that have gone to
7 school represent me. I just don't want to say very much.

8 I just want to take and thank you very much for allowing
9 me to talk to you and I hope that your work is very
10 successful. And I hope that the chief and council find
11 a source of success and for their -- for their communities
12 and for their support and work.

13 And thank you very much and may the Great
14 Spirit help us today and in the future and the final
15 conclusion of -- that we can take over of our own
16 responsibility.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
18 you very much for your presentation.

19 We normally ask questions, but perhaps
20 we will just move on.

21 **PAT CHILTON:** Okay.

22 The next speaker is Chief Norm Wesley.

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1 Norm -- and we're not going to move you
2 back any more -- but we've been doing that all day. Sorry
3 about that. I'll give you a break.

4 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** Members of the
5 Commission, my fellow chiefs, elders, councillors, members
6 of this community, we've been sitting here for quite some
7 time.

8 Much has been said. And I want to begin
9 with a very brief meditation, hopefully to recharge my
10 mind and to recharge the Commissioner's minds, hopefully,
11 and the rest who are with us this afternoon.

12 So, in quiet meditation I ask you bow
13 your heads, and I pray.

14 Our Father who has placed a restlessness
15 in our hearts and has made us visionaries after that which
16 we can never fully find, keep us the tasks too hard for
17 us, that we may be driven to thee for strength.

18 Amen.

19 I want to begin my talk this afternoon,
20 my presentation to the Commission this afternoon, by
21 qualifying who I am.

22 As Chief of Moose Factor First Nation

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1 it is my responsibility, my duty, to speak on behalf of
2 my people, to protect their interests and their rights,
3 along with the council that sits with me.

4 Because the nature of the Royal
5 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is long term in seeking
6 a vision of where we want to go, I ask for the forgiveness,
7 I guess, of my membership, my council, in saying that I
8 will not be addressing those things that are specific in
9 our more immediate desires as a member of the Moose --
10 as a Moose Factory First Nation, because that's not the
11 nature of this Commission.

12 The nature of this Commission is to
13 present views, present perspectives and present,
14 basically, that vision that we see, not for ourselves,
15 but for our children and our grandchildren.

16 So, I speak to you as a Cree (native
17 language), not as chief. I speak to you as a father.
18 I speak to you as a husband. I speak to you as a grandfather
19 -- three times -- and probably more.

20 This year marks the 500th anniversary
21 of the discovery -- as it's known in more contemporary
22 times, I guess -- of North America. Five hundred years

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1 of discovery.

2 Many of us are of the opinion that what
3 we have witnessed in the past generations, over the past
4 500 years, is 500 years of survival. It's common among
5 us as aboriginal people that indeed, that is exactly what
6 we have gone through.

7 I can sit here for the next little while
8 -- or even for the remainder of that day, for that matter
9 -- and look back at those 500 years and speak on many,
10 many, many tragedies of aboriginal people throughout this
11 continent. And that has been done many, many times.

12 But I don't believe that this is the
13 nature of this Commission, to go back and to tell the
14 Commission the tragedies. We all know too well what those
15 tragedies are.

16 I believe that the nature of this
17 Commission and the nature of my talk is to look back to
18 those 500 years and beyond those 500 years, to instill
19 in our songs who we are as aboriginal people, not what
20 we have gone through in the last 500 years, but why we
21 have survived the last 500 years because of who we are,
22 what we believe in, the very foundation on which we stand

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1 on as aboriginal people.

2 If we are going to make it for another
3 500 years, we have to go back to the future.

4 Not too long ago there was a movie, a
5 full feature movie that was out that did quite well in
6 the movie industry. It was called "Back To The Future."
7 Many of us saw that. There has been a number of sequels
8 of "Back To The Future."

9 I believe that another sequel of "Back
10 To The Future" must be made and that Back To The Future
11 will hold a different theme altogether, that that theme
12 will be aboriginal in nature, where we have to turn back
13 and look where we have come from as a foundation of who
14 we are individually, as aboriginal people, and
15 collectively. The values, the beliefs, the legends, the
16 stories, the history, has to be entrenched in every single
17 one of us, for the sake of making sure that we have an
18 existence that goes beyond our generation. We have to
19 go back, in order to look to the future.

20 The very essence of our being, who we
21 are as an individual and who we are collectively will
22 determine how quickly or how sensibly we will proceed from

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1 this generation to the next.

2 Eight years ago my wife and I -- no, it
3 was nine years ago -- I'll probably get in trouble over
4 this one when I get home -- maybe it was ten years ago
5 -- my wife and I were looking at each other when we were
6 sitting across the room in the living room one time and
7 our boys were getting quite old. And we said to each other,
8 "What do we do now?"

9 And we wanted very much to have a little
10 girl. So we searched and we said we will adopt a little
11 girl. And we were very fortunate in a very short while
12 to be able to be given this gift of a young daughter, a
13 young lady who felt that her life was so troubled she could
14 not raise this young child. And we took that child under
15 our own wing. We adopted the child.

16 We called her Tannis and Dannis. She's
17 very close in my heart. I know very close in the heart
18 of my mother and grandmother, my wife and his brothers.

19 She's a very special person in my heart -- in our family.

20 And I could not love that child any less than my natural
21 children.

22 As a matter of fact, I can say with

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1 certainty right now -- and I hope I don't get into trouble
2 over this one either -- that I probably love that child
3 just slightly more than I do the other ones, because I
4 know that she needs that protection.

5 I say these things because there is
6 concern from time to time within this community and other
7 parts of this country about membership, who is who within
8 membership. In my family and in the families of the past
9 in my generation, there was never a system of class.
10 Everybody had equal opportunity. Everybody had equal say.
11 One was not less than the other.

12 And when we look at ourselves as
13 aboriginal people, within a First Nation, among collective
14 First Nations, that we will look at each other equally,
15 as equals, none, not one better than the other. This is
16 the firm foundation on which we must build on. We have
17 seen societies throughout this world build on a system
18 of class. That instills and generates conflict,
19 revolution within. If there's anything that we need today
20 as aboriginal people, is a sense of togetherness, a sense
21 of family, a sense of equality, and a sense of sharing.
22 All those things that has been bestowed upon us by the

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1 Creator (Che Manitou) (native language) to our inherent
2 rights that we have. And that inherent right, in my mind,
3 is a collective right, inasmuch as it's an individual
4 right, because we come from a communal society.

5 I want to speak a little bit about
6 self-government.

7 We've come a long ways. As I've said
8 to others just recently, who would have ever thought that
9 within the last 12 months -- or even just before that --
10 that aboriginal people in this country would be afforded
11 an equal say within the constitutional talks of First
12 Ministers, in forming the foundation of this country?
13 There's been changes.

14 Now, we have Ovide sitting there.
15 However indifferent we might feel about it, we are now
16 recognized. Who would have thought that within the last
17 few months that the discussion around those constitutional
18 talks would be one that's -- that would accept the term
19 between First Ministers that yes, there has to be some
20 consideration of some nature that aboriginal people must
21 have some form of third level -- there must be a third
22 level, or a third order of government?

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1 We have come a long way to that end.

2 I believe, personally, that in this
3 country that we live in we must co-exist with the
4 non-aboriginal people. There is no conceivable way in
5 which we can send every single one of these people back.

6 We must co-exist. We must become tolerant of one another.

7 And we must accept one another for who we are and what
8 rights we have. Not to say that anyone is above the law.

9 We have many laws in this country. And in this country
10 there are laws that recognize who we are as aboriginal
11 people and that is what we want. And we want that
12 respected.

13 And we want very much the non-aboriginal
14 community to be afforded the opportunity to know what those
15 rights are and the foundation of those rights, and the
16 recognition in law in this country of what is rightfully
17 ours.

18 Inasmuch as the Government of Canada,
19 as our fiduciary trustee, has a responsibility to
20 demonstrate that to the Canadian public, we, as aboriginal
21 people, also have that responsibility to bridge that gap
22 between us and aboriginal (non-aboriginal) people, to sit

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1 across and side by side with non-aboriginal people, not
2 politicians, but business people and others, who are not
3 politicians, to explain and say "This is who we are and
4 we ask only that which is recognized in law."

5 It is only through that type of
6 initiative can we ever begin a process of tolerance between
7 aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. We cannot, in my
8 view, demand respect. The only way in which you can
9 command respect is to go to people in a very respectful
10 way. This is what I believe.

11 The inherent right to self-government
12 is something that is becoming recognized in this country.

13 I have had -- I want to say something very, very briefly
14 to that end -- that this whole business of self-government
15 is something that is a dream. And it's a dream that I
16 believe will come true -- perhaps not in my generation,
17 perhaps not in fully within the generation of my children,
18 but perhaps in the generation of my grandchildren.

19 I say this because I am told -- Charlotte
20 Kooses speaks to me at great length in my office, at home
21 -- and she says, "I don't think we're ready. But we can
22 work towards it. It'll take time. We need the resources,

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1 not the natural resources" -- she doesn't mean that --
2 she means the human resources of our own people to be
3 educated to begin to have the abilities and the skills
4 to build upon those various institutions that we need very
5 much in self-government -- education, health, social
6 services, construction of houses, infrastructure -- and
7 the whole gamut
8 -- lawyers, doctors, nurses and so on. It takes time.

9 And it is not because she says it is why
10 I believe it, because I've seen it in my generation. The
11 Moose Factory First Nation right now as we know it is one
12 that has seen good progress in managing the various
13 programs and services of the Department. But I can say
14 with certainty that if we were to have started the process
15 in the '50s, that we would have been in big trouble, because
16 we would have not had the human resources to do these
17 things.

18 As each generation passes, as good as
19 we would like -- as good as we think we are right now,
20 that there will be better coming in the future.

21 The young people have spoken and that
22 they will speak, is a testimony to that.

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1 Last summer I had the opportunity of
2 going to the Assembly of First Nations' annual assembly
3 in Winnipeg and doing something that I've always wanted
4 to do, participate in the election of the National Chief
5 of this country. This is something I've always wanted
6 to do. It was indeed an exciting time, full of
7 apprehension, not knowing what the outcome would be,
8 getting right into it, right from the very morning right
9 'til 2:00 o'clock in the morning. A very trying time.
10 A very tiring time.

11 I distinctly recall walking home after
12 Ovide Mecredi was declared our National Chief. And I
13 went to bed that night and I fell asleep, 'cause I was
14 so tired. And I woke up around 11:00 o'clock in the
15 morning, just in time to catch my plane back to Toronto.

16 I've thought of that day several times and I've looked
17 at the course of events that took place at that hour, that
18 day, the way in which we conducted our affairs as aboriginal
19 people in selecting our National Chief.

20 And I apologize -- because I have no
21 other way of putting it to those people who might feel
22 offended -- and I said to myself, "How white of us to do

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1 it this way." I've seen the talk in the halls, in the
2 meeting rooms, in the caucuses, in the hallways in and
3 around Winnipeg Convention Centre, and I said to myself,
4 "This is not us. This is dirty. This is not us."

5 Exciting -- and you get so swelled up
6 -- swallowed up in that whole process -- but yet, when
7 the dust cleared, I said to myself, "This is not us."
8 And I say this primarily because there must be a better
9 way in which we can choose our leaders -- even myself,
10 as a chief, or the next chief that's going to come down
11 at a chief's level, within First Nations, within tribal
12 councils, within provincial territory organizations and
13 up to the National Chief, that we must find a system, a
14 way in which we can choose who are elected leaders will
15 be, in a way in which we can go back to the very cultural
16 roots of who we are as aboriginal people. And that must
17 be based on consensus of who will lead.

18 I've watched many conventions,
19 leadership conventions of the Liberal Party, the P.C.s,
20 the New Democrats, and that's what we used. And I said
21 to myself, "No, that's not us." Even in this -- even in
22 the Moose Factory First Nation I have been a part of trying

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1 to put together a system of elections for the leadership
2 of this First Nation. And we have presented that to the
3 membership and they've come back and said, "This isn't
4 us."

5 And I felt so confident at that time,
6 along with my fellow committee members, that this is the
7 proper thing to do. And perhaps maybe it is a proper thing
8 to do for now, but I fully understand and appreciate now
9 what we have been told, that we've got to find a better
10 way that goes back to our roots.

11 And I want to say that I do not have the
12 answer to how we go about doing it, but let me say a couple
13 of things.

14 Because, within the matter of -- shortly
15 after this Commission will be pulling its report together
16 I'll probably be getting close to 50 years old and almost
17 qualifying to be an elder -- if I survive that long --
18 I wanted to say very briefly about the role of elders.

19 We of this generation and of the younger
20 people, both male and female, we represent the energy.
21 We represent the energy, physical, mental energy,
22 spiritual energy of our people. The elders represent the

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1 knowledge, the truth to who we are.

2 If I was an elder I would not be
3 -- I would feel that I would not have the energy to do
4 the things that the younger people can do day to day.
5 But I know that -- and I pray -- that in the workings that
6 I do with the elders right now that I will be afforded
7 the knowledge, the truths. For, when my time comes to
8 be able to go to the people who have the energy and say
9 that, "Yes, you are on the right path," or, "No, you have
10 strayed," based on the values and the beliefs that we have
11 as aboriginal people, as Cree and as (native language),
12 because we are charged as humanity, a responsibility to
13 the generation behind us to provide that direction and
14 to give that knowledge and to speak those truths. And
15 we must prepare now, before we get to a point where we
16 don't know those things when we are asked.

17 So, the role of the elders must be key
18 and central in determining leadership, the course in which
19 we take as aboriginal people, as First Nations, as
20 provincial and national native organizations, central.

21 I've done a lot of hunting around here.
22 I believe the first time I went out hunting I was about

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1 eight years old, using a 12 gauge shotgun and my dad taught
2 me how to hunt. I still hold that shotgun at home and
3 I think my boys are going to be fighting over who gets
4 it, in the next little while.

5 But I've been taught many things by my
6 father, my mother. I've been taught many things by others
7 who have been very close to me when I go outdoors, like
8 my brother-in-law, Bob Vincent. I hold him as a brother,
9 almost as a father in what he has taught me.

10 And basically -- what they have taught
11 me basically is to be very watchful and take the lessons
12 from nature and to observe. And one thing that I have
13 observed is the interaction of animals amongst themselves,
14 specifically waterfowl. You will notice, if you take a
15 good close look, that when ducks fly in pairs, who leads?
16 It's the hen who leads. The drake will always follow.

17

18 The technique that we have -- that I have
19 -- in shooting ducks is that, when they come to you, you
20 shoot the hen because the drake, as a protector, will always
21 come back, will have that animal instinct that is given
22 him to come back and search for his mate. It's the

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1 protective instinct. And that is one example of how nature
2 works. And we as human beings, we as aboriginal people,
3 are a very central part of that -- to the natural
4 environment. We are not separate from it. We are very
5 much part of it.

6 And that example that I give in who takes
7 the lead in the animal world, in the waterfowl world, the
8 woman, the hen, is something that we have lost. We have
9 put it aside.

10 I believe, as many people do --
11 aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike -- that the woman is
12 the giver of life. And the man is the protector. As giver
13 of life I strongly believe that the woman should be afforded
14 the right, their place, their rightful place in our society
15 as aboriginal people, to determine who we are as aboriginal
16 people in terms of our constitution, for them to determine
17 basically the Charter of Rights that we have as aboriginal
18 people, the individual and the collective rights that we
19 have, and to be a very central feature in terms of
20 determining how we choose our leadership, to the very point
21 of being afforded that opportunity and having a say in
22 who are leaders will be.

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1 That, in my view, is the rightful place
2 of woman. They are the givers of life and we, as men,
3 are the protectors, physically strong, but we will know
4 that many, many, many woman in our society -- and in other
5 societies as a whole in this world that we live in -- the
6 potential and the rightful place of woman has been
7 disregarded far too long.

8 Now, I believe that if we are to go
9 together as aboriginal people and make any form of
10 progress, that we have to put the woman back in to their
11 rightful place in our society because, in my view, they
12 are the givers of life and they hold very closely --
13 probably closer to us as men -- those children that they
14 bear from generation to generation.

15 As aboriginal people I want to say
16 clearly that, individually and collectively, we have to
17 stand on the essence of our own being. But, more
18 importantly -- or, as important as that -- we, as aboriginal
19 people, have to stand on public ground in terms of --
20 physically -- in terms of land. What we are afforded right
21 now in law are reserve tracts of land that are far too
22 small for us to make any kind of economic, social and

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1 political gains in this country.

2 I asked my mother one time, I said to
3 her, after meeting with a number of elders over the concern
4 of some burial ground that we found of twenty-some odd
5 sites just up the streets here, back in the mid-80s --
6 she said to me, "That should to no surprise because every
7 single river, every single point is a testament of who
8 we are and the land that we once survived off up and down
9 the coast of this bay and inland." This place is dotted
10 with burial sites all over and that is a testament of our
11 past and who we are.

12 It's a clear statement of basically who
13 we are and the traditional lands on which we occupied as
14 aboriginal people -- throughout this country, for that
15 matter -- but specifically within -- we that lived in the
16 James Bay area, Mushkegowuk/(native language), the land
17 of Mushkegowuk, it is no different.

18 The signing of the treat in 1905 and the
19 ensuing perception of the government on lands and lands
20 reserved to Indians is very clearly that -- which remains
21 within the confines of a reserve -- in our particular case
22 about 60 square miles -- 12 miles upstream from here, in

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1 addition to the small tract that we are meeting on today
2 -- and it seems to me that the opportunity is not afforded
3 to aboriginal people to take those things that were
4 promised. When we were promised the traditional right
5 to hunt, trap and fish on our traditional lands,
6 undisturbed, the intent, in my view, was to allow us
7 aboriginal people to be able to grow and prosper in the
8 way in which we had been doing in the past and also into
9 the future.

10 The unfortunate thing that has happened
11 is that we, as aboriginal people, have been locked in time.

12 The governments' view today, federal and provincial, is
13 that we will afford you the opportunity and the right to
14 hunt, trap and fish as you have been doing in the past,
15 since time immemorial.

16 I think the Government of Canada and the
17 Province of Ontario has forgotten that times change and
18 the resources in which we rely on within our land is not
19 specific now, these days, to hunting, trapping and fishing.

20 The riches of our land go far beyond that. But that is
21 not to belittle -- either to belittle hunting, trapping
22 and fishing -- it has its place, as John Turner will testify

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1 to later on this afternoon.

2 But we have, for all intents and
3 purposes, been locked in time. What we need for the future
4 is for the government of this country
5 -- if we are to co-exist -- for the government of this
6 country to recognize that our inherent right to
7 self-government requires that we are equal beneficiaries
8 to the resources of this country, to the resources
9 specifically of our traditional lands, that goes beyond
10 the boundaries of reserve lands, to share in the revenue
11 of the resources.

12 Our land, as aboriginal people, goes
13 beyond the boundaries of any reserve, of any 60 square
14 miles, or whatever was designated back in 1905 -- or under
15 any treaty.

16 We must have that, because a people
17 without a land is nobody -- nobody. And it is a heresy
18 to think that in this country we as aboriginal people,
19 the original people of this country, will have no land
20 and we become nobodies and strangers and even outcasts
21 in our own lands.

22 The Commission has a very broad mandate

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1 and I don't intend to talk and speak and deliberate on
2 all the areas. And I will conclude this afternoon in
3 saying to you that I know that every single one of us who
4 are here today will appreciate and wish you well in the
5 work that you have as a Commission, in holding hearings
6 throughout this country -- and even moreso, our prayers
7 and our wishes for you when you attempt to pull together
8 the voice of aboriginal people across this country because,
9 as I said earlier today, that you are one of our hopes,
10 you, as a Commission, in shaping the destiny -- in helping
11 shaping the destiny of who we are as aboriginal people
12 in this country.

13 We who are in positions of leadership,
14 as chiefs, as councillors, have a duty, a responsibility.

15 And I say to you, as Commissioners, and I say to others
16 within this community one thing is, that those of us who
17 are in positions like this -- and I hope that I speak for
18 all of them -- that we will never forsake our people
19 because, if we have, then we have to move to another
20 continent.

21 Meegwetch.

22 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank

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1 you, Chief, for a wonderful presentation. We see some
2 glimpses of where your son gets his ability.

3 I will see if the Commissioners have any
4 comments or questions.

5 Viola?

6 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well,
7 I would like to thank you for your presentation.

8 I just want to make one comment on your
9 talking about the need to co-exist, the need to co-exist
10 and the need for, I guess, society in general to reach
11 an understanding of what our issues are.

12 And, if we are really going to be
13 successful, then we need the support -- support each other
14 and to co-exist.

15 I just want to say that one of the --
16 certainly I think the task of this Commission is one of
17 educating, of an educational process for the public in
18 general. I certainly feel that there certainly is a lack
19 of understanding of aboriginal issues out in Canadian
20 public.

21 And I am hoping that this Commission will
22 be a tool that will overcome a lot of this ignorance about

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1 aboriginal people. And that I feel that with the kinds
2 of media and the kinds of recording that we have here during
3 our hearings, I think we are in the best position in Canada
4 right now to educate the public, and with the kinds of
5 information that is going out and because we have said
6 we are a Commission that is very open and we want to be
7 up front and we want to share and we do not want to keep
8 anything from anybody.

9 So, we hope that one of those things will
10 happen as this Commission winds down that, by the time
11 we are through, that Canadians will have a lot better
12 understanding and will be ready to move on with the
13 co-existing that you have talked about.

14 But, other than that, I think you have
15 made -- you have given us some very good insight of what
16 you think the Commission is about and how -- your vision,
17 of course like you say, you do not really have an answer
18 but, hopefully, before it is over somebody will come --
19 you will

20 -- yourself and others will come up with some kind of
21 solution or an answer as to how we can change, how we --
22 I should not use the word "elect," but how our leaders

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1 are chosen or selected, that will reflect the views of
2 the people, more than what it does now.

3 So, I thank you very kindly.

4 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** You're welcome.

5 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Does
6 our Elder want to say anything, or ask any questions?

7 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**
8 **ARCHIBALD:** The only thing that I would tell Norm is that
9 my prayers go with him.

10 Thank you.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
12 you.

13 Derek?

14 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**

15 **McLEOD:** No, questions, thank you.

16 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I was
17 just wondering how old you are, Chief. You are saying
18 you are going to be near 50 when we report, so I was
19 wondering how long we are going to be at our job .

20 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** I'm 49.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You
22 talked about "Back To The Future." You talked about

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1 equality. You talked about the role of women, life givers,
2 communal society.

3 Can you give us some more thoughts on
4 what that is going to mean?

5 You are right, you have got, I think,
6 your finger right on the pulse of what we are trying to
7 do. There are many, many, many communities that have
8 problems today that they want some immediate answers on,
9 housing and all kinds of things.

10 But we are trying to put our attention
11 to the long term. And so, seeing as you are aware of our
12 attempts, can you build on what you were saying? What
13 does that mean for the society of the future? What does
14 it mean for the kind of institutions we are now seeing?

15 And I think we accept that there will
16 be a transitional period and that it will be an evolving
17 one. But it seems to us there needs to be a vision of
18 the future firmly implanted in both the aboriginal people
19 and Canadians at large, which we are all moving to.

20 And so there should be some road signs
21 that are fairly clear and something that will inspire our
22 youth and get them involved, and something that our leaders

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1 can work to also.

2 You did not say very much in the way of,
3 for instance, aboriginal language. Do you see a role for
4 aboriginal languages in the future? Or is it too late
5 for them?

6 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** My view on
7 aboriginal languages basically is something that I
8 formulated some time back. And my view on aboriginal
9 languages was cast in stone, I guess you could say. And
10 in my dealings with the elders who spoke and thought in
11 the aboriginal tongue.

12 You see, we have to bear in mind that
13 through countless generations of the past that we were
14 not idle thinkers as a society, as aboriginal people.
15 We have very distinct and clear understandings in our past
16 of our world view, how we viewed the world, where we came
17 from, the view of the universe.

18 It's all there. And it wasn't spoken
19 in English. It wasn't spoken in French, Greek or Latin.
20 It was spoken in the aboriginal tongue -- in our case,
21 in Inuviak (phonetic), Cree tongue. And the Cree language
22 is an expression of our interaction with our fellow man,

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1 with nature, with the universe as a whole, and one that
2 made it.

3 For us to lose that would be a very tragic
4 day. So we must hang onto it. We must maintain it. And
5 there must be a desire for us, amongst us, to do that.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** We see
7 many times that aboriginal people are going to non-native
8 people for resources in planning their future, in the work
9 that they are doing. And is it really going to be that
10 the only time aboriginal people are going to be able to
11 draw on their own resources is when we have turned all
12 aboriginal people into doctors, lawyers, social workers,
13 architects, engineers, moon scientists?

14 What is going to be different, then,
15 between those people which at one -- they are the
16 descendants of the original nation. What is going to make
17 them different from having a Chinese computer scientist,
18 a British teacher, a social worker from the United States?

19 What is going to make those people
20 different from those professionals, besides the fact that
21 at one time their people lived on the land in a traditional
22 way?

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1 If we were successful in making every
2 young person into a doctor, a lawyer, or a social worker
3 and all the rest of it, and every one of them was employed
4 now, I mean, what would make that community different than
5 a totally non-native one that was exactly the same where,
6 again, you had social workers, lawyers, and all the rest
7 of it, and they were all employed?

8 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** What makes them
9 different?

10 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I mean,
11 is that what --

12 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** Yes, okay, yes --

13 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Is that
14 the future for aboriginal people?

15 I mean, is that what we are all trying
16 to do? Is that our --

17 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** I'm not sure what
18 your question is, but I think I know what you're asking.
19 I'd like to respond to it.

20 What makes us different?

21 I think what we have to say to ourselves,
22 basically is, what is it that we want to be? That is the

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1 question, what is it that we want to be?

2 We want to, on one side, say to ourselves
3 that we can recognize ourselves and know ourselves as
4 aboriginal people. And the basis and the fundamentals
5 behind that is what we believe in and those things that
6 we hold very close to our hearts that are known as values.

7 To be able to walk around in moccasins
8 and all the other regalia are extra. That's the physical
9 side of us.

10 It's the inside of us, that which is up
11 here, inspired by what is in here, in our hearts, in our
12 soul of our very being. That's the most important part.

13 It's not the physical thing that you see. It's that which
14 is inside of an individual that's most important. It's
15 critical to knowing who you are.

16 And, in order to be able to progress in
17 this world that we live in, you have to be able to do that,
18 stand on a firm foundation -- but, at the same time, venture
19 out into the modern world, modern society also, knowing
20 exactly who you are -- but at the same time, challenging,
21 being equipped to challenge the modern society.

22 The thing that makes you different, the

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1 thing that makes me different as I venture into the
2 non-native world, is that I know who I am. And I hold
3 those things, the values and beliefs and the respect also
4 for the values and beliefs of others, and I hope that it
5 will be a two-way thing as I venture off and do my thing
6 in the modern world.

7 That is the difference. The tools that
8 you have, basically, are elements in how to survive. It's
9 changed from my parent's generation to today. I could
10 never do what my parents did and hope to survive. We don't
11 live in that world any more.

12 But there's a value to that. There is
13 a value to that, because those things that we do in the
14 modern world today, we have to hold and respect those
15 values, those beliefs of our past to ensure -- because
16 those values and beliefs of the past are those things that
17 ensure our survival from generation to generation.

18 If we discard those, can we really
19 survive in our Indianness, in our aboriginalness from this
20 generation on? And can we truly survive, not only as
21 aboriginal people in our Indianness, but in humanity as
22 a whole?

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1 That is the difference. I hope I have
2 been able to answer your question.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think
4 you are really, certainly answering it, there is no
5 question.

6 If I could go one further step -- I know
7 I told you I would not ask you any tough questions and
8 I do not think I am asking you tough ones -- you said it
9 is what is inside that is going to make the difference.

10 So I presume, as you say, it is the
11 values, it is the traditions, it is the beliefs, so that
12 you will see an aboriginal social worker, a non-aboriginal
13 social worker. You will see an aboriginal doctor trained
14 in western medicine and you will see a non-aboriginal
15 doctor over there. You will see an engineer over here
16 that is an aboriginal person -- so, will there be a
17 difference in what they do?

18 Will the values actually translate into
19 an education that is different, a social services system
20 that will be different, a medical system that will be
21 different?

22 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** I know there is a

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1 lot speakers behind us and I don't want to cop out of this

2 --

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** It is
4 the last question.

5 **CHIEF NORM WESLEY:** -- but I will answer
6 the question by saying the answer to me is yes and no.
7 Yes and no, because of what I said that we have to co-exist
8 in this world that we live in.

9 Yes, it will be different in some cases.

10 And, no, it will be not different in some cases.

11 How do you heal a broken hand?

12 There's only one way to heal a broken
13 hand and, regardless if you are aboriginal or
14 non-aboriginal, that's the only way.

15 That's one answer.

16 How do you deal with a broken spirit?

17 The answer there is very clear. You have to go back to
18 where you came from. And the answer there is very
19 different.

20 So, yes and no.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
22 you for your very, very interesting presentation. It has

