

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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"for the record..."
STENOTRAN
1376 Kilborn Ave.
Ottawa 521-0703

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1 (Short break in proceedings at 3:27 p.m.)

2

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** We will
4 try and get finished today, so we have agreed here, as
5 Commissioners, to ask less questions and give more time
6 to just listening so that we can make sure that everyone
7 that wants to present to us presents.

8 So we are going to ask each of the
9 presenters to try and be as short as possible, succinct,
10 as they say, to the point. We want to hear the point you
11 want to make.

12 So try and present it clearly and in as
13 brief a time as possible and we will try and hear everyone.

14 The next presenter has a small video as
15 part of his presentation, so perhaps we can direct our
16 attention to Pat, here, and he will introduce who will
17 present next and the video.

18 Maybe the Commissioners can just move
19 over here briefly.

20 **PAT CHILTON:** Neil Thompson, will you
21 come up, please?

22 Do you want to give a quick overview --

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1 introduce yourself -- a quick overview and I will click
2 it on. Just give me the nod.

3 **NEIL THOMPSON:** The mike is on, so I hope
4 everyone can hear me.

5 My name is Neil Thompson. I am the
6 Newspaper In Education co-ordinator for the Daily Press
7 in Timmins. And our manager, general manager and
8 publisher, John Farrington wanted to be here this evening
9 to make a brief statement and present this video to you,
10 but time didn't allow him to come, so he has asked me to
11 do this in his stead.

12 I would like very briefly to present a
13 statement that he has prepared, and we will leave copies
14 for the Royal Commission and others who wish to have a
15 look through it later on.

16 If I could just read it very briefly --
17 I know the time is far spent and you would probably like
18 to be going other places a little later on.

19 So, it was prepared last evening by,
20 again, John Farrington, the publisher of the Daily Press
21 and it reads this way:

22 "It is a pleasure and honour for me top address you at

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1 this first meeting in Ontario of
2 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
3 Peoples.

4 The Daily Press has started something with the video which
5 you will see in a few moments, which
6 could have a tremendous impact on
7 the understanding between the
8 white man and the native.

9 For as long as we have been sharing this wonderful land,
10 there has been a thinking that to
11 live together the native people
12 should copy the white man's way of
13 life.

14 It has not worked. You have told us so many times and
15 in so many ways that you don't like
16 the way we do things.

17 Our lifestyle is not for you.

18 We have forced education systems on you, raped your lands
19 in the name of progress, and
20 generally tried to keep you second
21 class citizens.

22 And we justify all of our actions whenever we see a drunken

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1 Indian.
2 This is an over-simplification of the situation, but this
3 is the perception of the white man.
4 The lack of government initiative to tackle the problem
5 which face the aboriginal peoples
6 of this country have been
7 conspicuous by their absence.
8 This Royal Commission, I hope, as much as you dream, will
9 be the start of a new direction
10 which will enable this country to
11 benefit from the talents of all is
12 people.
13 As much as I have admired the sensitivity and sensibility
14 of George Erasmus, I think he will
15 agree that he alone can not fix up
16 the mess.
17 I have been impressed with the native leaders I have had
18 the pleasure to meet all across
19 this country - especially those I
20 have met along the James Bay
21 coastline in the two years I have
22 been publisher at The Daily Press.

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1 Collectively, and through this Royal Commission, I am
2 hoping that there will be the kind
3 of input that governments will have
4 to take notice; that standoffs,
5 such as Oka, will never have to be
6 a part of your life ... in the
7 strive for justice.

8 These are difficult times in the history of the world.
9 The civil strife that is plaguing
10 Europe right now is a terrible
11 price to pay for years of
12 inadequacies and inequalities.
13 We don't want that in Canada. And
14 you don't want that.

15 The placidity of the native people over the years has
16 certainly helped governments to
17 turn away from making tough
18 decisions, or even making decision
19 period.

20 Well, those days are gone, and will never return.

21 The native person is on the verge of real status in this
22 country.

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1 I am getting too political. Let me tell you what is
2 happening with the video you are
3 about to see.

4 The people in the video some of you will recognize as
5 friends from Attawapiskat and
6 Peawanuck.

7 The film was shown to Northern American publishers in
8 Pittsburgh in February, and last
9 month an international literacy
10 conference saw it in San Francisco,
11 and next week British publishers
12 will view it at Stratford-on-Avon.

13 The video is being used all across North America at the
14 moment. The film is the central
15 part of a 15-minute speech provided
16 by Thompson Newspapers to all its
17 publishers and Newspaper in
18 Education consultants.

19 Attawapiskat is a community that is becoming well known
20 among service club members,
21 community leaders, school children
22 and, of course newspaper people,

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1 all across North America.
2 Simply, we send newspapers to the schools each day free
3 of charge - they are paid for by
4 sponsors in Timmins. We have been
5 to the schools and trained the
6 teachers on how to use the
7 newspaper to teach anything from
8 math to science to English - and
9 even Shakespeare.
10 The kids love learning through the newspaper. There have
11 been many positive stories as we
12 have worked together.
13 One of the most interesting, is the fact that we published
14 an eight-page newspaper for
15 Peawanuck. Now, Peawanuck has a
16 population of only 260 people.
17 Next week they will publish their
18 second newspaper.
19 The Grades 4, 5 and 6 students are doing the writing and
20 photography.
21 Later this year I would like to see The Daily Press printing
22 a newspaper each week produced by

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1 students in the native communities
2 on both sides of James Bay coast.
3 While we send newspapers to Kashechewan and Fort Albany,
4 we have only been to Attawapiskat
5 and Peawanuck to train the teachers
6 on how to use the newspaper in the
7 classroom.
8 I would like to see the program developed in every school
9 along the coast.
10 We have encouraged young people to take part in our literary
11 contest -- and last year we had two
12 winners. Both girls were 13 or 14
13 and they flew to Timmins to pick
14 up their prize - and read their
15 works in front of 200 people at
16 Timmins High auditorium. We are
17 expecting more entrants this year
18 from our native schools.
19 The young students at Peawanuck have a neat idea. They
20 would like to start a blue box
21 program to separate garbage. And
22 they even suggested that the Air

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1 Creebec freight plane that flies
2 there every Monday might be able
3 to be used to bring the empty pop
4 cans etc., back to Timmins and then
5 on to Sudbury for recycling.

6 While our program is aimed at the school children, I would
7 expect that eventually there will
8 be interest among the adult
9 population in reading the
10 newspaper.

11 One in five Canadians are functionally illiterate, they
12 have problems reading and writing
13 their own name. It is an invisible
14 handicap - one that far too many
15 people are able to keep hidden.

16 Reading the newspaper can help to bring joy to the lives
17 of the people on the coast. We are
18 touching the children but we do not
19 have any adult literacy programs
20 at the moment. I would suggest
21 that if any of the chiefs or
22 directors of education who are here

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1 today have any ideas on how we can
2 become involved with your adults,
3 please let us know.

4 The Daily Press also started something this past Christmas
5 which we hope will become an annual
6 affair - and that's a Santa Claus
7 fly-in.

8 Again, with the courtesies of Air Creebec, we took a
9 planeload of Timmins, Cochrane and
10 Kapusksasing businessmen to all of
11 the communities on the west coast
12 of the bay. We brought along Santa
13 for the kids, and the businessmen,
14 many of whom had done business in
15 the communities before, had never
16 had an opportunity to visit them.

17 This was a resounding success. So much so that next year
18 we expect that two planeloads will
19 make the trip.

20 And we are also looking at the possibility of making a
21 second trip at Christmas, this time
22 along the east coast communities.

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1 Mr. Erasmus, you were among the native leaders to attend
2 the "bridging the gap" conference
3 which was organized by the leaders
4 from here and other coastal
5 communities.

6 That conference was the ice-breaker. There must be more
7 of those conferences if we are
8 going to have the trust and faith
9 in each other.

10 Timmins businessmen have not realized the full impact of
11 a trade arrangement with the native
12 population. They are learning,
13 but for some reason it is a slow
14 process.

15 Not all the projects will succeed, but there is plenty
16 of scope for a lot more successes
17 to be shared between us.

18 Let me thank you again for permitting me to make this
19 presentation today, and I wish you
20 well that as you travel the country
21 you will be inspired to create a
22 document that will emphatically

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1 chart the course for native peoples
2 for year to come.

3 Respectfully submitted,

4 John A. Farrington, Publisher and General Manager."

5 This video presentation that we have is
6 only three or four minutes long. It highlights some of
7 the things that we have been able to do with the students
8 at Attawapiskat and Peawanuck.

9 So, if we could play it?

10 (First tape of video presentation faulty)

11 **PAT CHILTON:** Sorry about that. The
12 machine is hungry and didn't have lunch. It ate it up.
13 So I guess we'll have to talk to the owners.

14 You want us to try this second one?

15 There's a second tape there. You
16 brought two, just in case. We'll see if this one eats
17 this one too.

18 (Second video presentation played)

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** The
20 newspaper that is being produced, that is being produced
21 by the students?

22 **NEIL THOMPSON:** Yes, all the pictures,

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1 all the art work. In fact, we have examples of the first
2 one we will send out to you, also the one that we will
3 be helping the students put together, they gather all the
4 information, all the stories, all the pictures, all the
5 art work and we just show them how to lay it out, run it
6 off on the press and they run it back to their community.

7 So, it's entirely produced by the
8 students of the school, grades 1 through 8.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** How
10 often does it come out?

11 **NEIL THOMPSON:** As often as they like.
12 We've had two from Peawanuck this year and the other
13 communities are starting and we're slowly introducing the
14 program to the other communities along the coast.

15 Hopefully, before Christmas next year,
16 each and every community on both sides of the bay will
17 be aware of the program and have an opportunity to produce
18 their own.

19
20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Very
21 interesting. Interesting, indeed.

22 Do you have any comments?

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1 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I don't
2 know, maybe you mentioned it, but where did this idea
3 generate from, what you are doing?

4 **NEIL THOMPSON:** It generated from
5 Timmins, from The Daily Press. Newspaper In Education
6 is a program that's been around for years, primarily in
7 the United States. Thompson Newspaper recently has picked
8 up on the program through all of their newspaper empire
9 in North America and now over to England as well.

10 And many of these programs that we have
11 here are being developed here in Timmins. We had one that
12 was just developed for Ontario concerning mining. We have
13 a number that are on the go, one called "Press Club," and
14 this one that deals with the native communities and helping
15 them create their own communication network has been
16 created right here in northern Ontario -- it originated
17 here.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** If the
19 students wanted to produce the paper in some of their own
20 language, syllabics, or other written forms, would they
21 be able to do that?

22 **NEIL THOMPSON:** Sure, it would be great.

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1 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So, what
2 do they do? Do they actually have their own equipment
3 locally to do it? Or do they send the -- perhaps type-ready
4 press, or feature-ready, or whatever it is, to Timmins
5 and then it is published there? Is that how it works?

6 **NEIL THOMPSON:** I'll be going up to
7 Peawanuck on Monday and we'll spend three days there with
8 the students. And what they have done is, they have
9 prepared art work and stories -- whether it's in English
10 or their own language -- and photographs. And I'll bring
11 up layout sheets. And what they do is, they and we arrange
12 it on photo-ready layouts. It goes to the newspaper and
13 a picture is taken of it and it's run off the presses.

14 So, it's virtually created by the
15 students in the school -- teacher assisted. The columns
16 can be done up on their own computers in the schoolrooms,
17 if they have them. If not, some of it's brought back to
18 Timmins where it can be typeset as we receive it. And
19 then it's set in the columns and published.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Very
21 interesting.

22 I think we would probably be very

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1 interested in hearing some more about it so, if you have
2 any written material on it, perhaps you can just send it
3 to our office in Ottawa.

4 **NEIL THOMPSON:** Okay, glad to.

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

6 Great.

7 **NEIL THOMPSON:** Thank you for your time.

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

10 **PAT CHILTON:** The next presenter is
11 Chief Ignace Gull from Attawapiskat.

12 Ignace?

13 **CHIEF IGNACE GULL:** Thank you.

14 I just want to say thank you (native
15 language)

16 I guess, first of all, I'd like to say
17 -- I will introduce myself. I'm with the Attawapiskat
18 First Nation and I came here to say a few words to the
19 members of the Royal Commission.

20 And I would first of all like to say that
21 the words that I use may be a poor choice of words. I'd
22 like to express my feeling at the way I understand my

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1 community.

2 I guess I'm one of those people who is
3 not a very highly educated white society. I was a trapper
4 in my younger days and that's how I learned to survive.

5 Ladies and gentlemen, elders,
6 delegates, guests and members of the Royal Commission,
7 first of all I'd like to say thank you again for giving
8 me the opportunity to say a few words. And today I want
9 to share with you some of our frustrations as aboriginal
10 people.

11 I know these frustrations are felt by
12 every First Nation in this country.

13 I came here today to put forward my hopes
14 and my concerns on behalf of my people and under the
15 conditions we live back home. It's a shame and it's sad
16 to see that a third -- or the fourth world conditions,
17 to be more precise -- are still in existence in our
18 government's backyard.

19 And still today I came here to tell you,
20 which my predecessors and our elders have done so many
21 times in the past, expressing their desires to improve
22 the conditions so people can enjoy the same basic things

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1 in life.

2 We hear so much about social problems
3 that exist in our First Nation community -- or in our
4 communities, whether it be alcohol, drugs, substance
5 abuse, marriage breakdowns, family violence, suicides,
6 vandalism, and so on, hopelessness and frustration under
7 those conditions can be felt.

8 But, with all this going on, our people
9 can still smile and that makes me feel wonderful.

10 I feel it's important to address the
11 following, although you may have heard this many times
12 from all walks of life.

13 First of all, I'll go by the list what
14 I have, what I need to address, and I think it is the only
15 opportune time that I may have to address these needs in
16 our community.

17 Our housing; water and sewer; energy;
18 social services; education; economic development; lands
19 and resources; policing and by-laws; transportation, sea,
20 air, land; culture and traditions. And the list goes on.

21 Our housing, we have a huge backlog in
22 housing our members which consists of families, single

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1 parents, bachelors, seniors and the disabled, for people
2 who require medical attention and other special needs.
3 Some cases we have 12 to 17 people sharing a 24 by 36
4 bungalow without indoor plumbing. And we are forced to
5 dump our sewage in our open pits and use our outdoor privies
6 at 30 to 40 below winter temperatures.

7 This practice causes people of all age
8 groups to get sick.

9 The subsidy that's provided by the
10 federal government doesn't allow the First Nation to
11 provide good housing and to meet the standards in terms
12 of health and safety.

13 Although we have the opportunity to tap
14 into other sources, such as CMHC, RRAP, Homeownership and
15 other opportunities, we are very limited in terms of the
16 policy that exists within these sources and our special
17 access situation.

18 I asked the province whether they would
19 consider to gear their housing program to meet the needs
20 on reserve housing. Their response is that it is the
21 responsibility of the federal government. I wasn't asking
22 for free housing. I know some people who can afford those

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1 type of houses.

2 But I think that First Nation must look
3 into other avenues to meet their needs, although I
4 understand that there may never be a system in place that
5 will solve this problem.

6 Water and sewer. This is the other
7 major obstacle in providing the basic needs to improve
8 the quality of life on our reserve.

9 We have water lines, the backbone of the
10 system -- which I call it -- of which half of the lines
11 are frozen due to the way they were installed and due to
12 the lack of funding to maintain the system. We can't
13 provide the things we feel are in need to deal with our
14 social problems, or to provide fire protection -- adequate
15 fire protection -- which we feel is a priority service
16 to the community.

17 To lose someone's home is a very
18 devastating experience and to lose a human being is even
19 more tragic, because this is something that you'll never
20 get back once you lose it. There are other agencies that
21 can provide the training to recruit more tradespeople,
22 but their criteria doesn't meet these isolated

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1 communities. Either you have to move to Moosonee, to
2 Timmins or Kirkland Lake, or to Kapuskasing, to be able
3 to take that course that you need in your community.

4 But we don't have these opportunities.
5 People can't afford to live in cities and there are no
6 accommodations in Moosonee to accommodate these people,
7 even if they are interested to go out.

8 Energy. Most isolated communities such
9 as ours -- as you may be aware -- we still have to rely
10 on diesel generating stations, which limits the community
11 to have basic services. And it is the responsibility of
12 the Ontario Hydro to meet those needs, to forecast those
13 needs in each community.

14 The INAC has the responsibility to make
15 sure that there's enough energy to accommodate the
16 communities growth. Lighting is their responsibility.
17 I think when the treaty was signed that was the meant for
18 it, that they have to look after the people in some way
19 to have good services.

20 But this is not always the case. Even
21 if we try to tap into other energy sources it is either
22 too expensive for the government to do it, or we have

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1 environmental issues that puts us on hold whenever we want
2 to do something for ourselves.

3 Although there is government subsidy on
4 our hydro, there's only enough money left for people to
5 be able to buy the things they need the most, or to be
6 able to provide the things that their children need.

7 Social development. When I say "social
8 development" I mean changing the quality of life. Earlier
9 I mentioned the type of social problems that exist in our
10 community. In order for us to be able to come up with
11 solutions we must be given the opportunity to exercise
12 some control over our lives.

13 And I think this is where
14 self-government means a lot to us, to be able to decide
15 what we want to do. The methods that are often used by
16 the non-native society to deal with our problems is not
17 always the answer. We're not saying that we don't need
18 their medicine. The native people have something very
19 special -- their culture, their traditions and their
20 beliefs.

21 So the two must co-exist in order to
22 change. But first we must explore our identity as native

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1 people. And it is apparent that this will take time to
2 change the government's way of thinking.

3 How many people -- or how many more young
4 people must we lose before we can convince the Canadian
5 government that their method is not always the answer?
6 And how many more years do we have to wait before something
7 can be done?

8 About a month ago we lost a 14 year old
9 from sniffing. And there is a growing statistic -- even
10 after just what happened -- we're not asking the government
11 or the providers to come up and solve our problems. The
12 community has taken some steps to deal with this problem.

13 But we need the funding and the resources to provide
14 prevention and to provide the education.

15 The native people, or native
16 organizations, should have more say in allocating dollars
17 to any program services.

18 Earlier I listened to a youth
19 representative from Moose Factory, Stan Wesley, about the
20 problem in Attawapiskat. We can hide these things away
21 from the younger people, like gas, glue and so forth.
22 But I think we need to look at the grassroot level of the

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1 problem.

2 I listened to our elder Emile Nakogee
3 expressing his concerns about alcohol abuse, or drug abuse.
4 Taking away the alcohol, or any other substance abuse,
5 is not going to solve the problem. But, by educating
6 people, by educating the public and resourcing those needs
7 that we need so badly in our community. And the community
8 has to be involved -- they have to be involved. And there
9 are four groups of people in a community. That is the
10 community itself, elders, the youth and women. And it's
11 sad to hear -- listening many times -- people saying that
12 the chief is responsible to come up solutions, answers
13 with all these problems that we face today in our community.

14 How can one man father 1,200 people in
15 one community? We only have so much energy that we can
16 use to deal with these problems. And I have a family to
17 look after my own.

18 So, the community must demonstrate on
19 its own, individuals must demonstrate, what is the best
20 way -- what is the best way for them in the future. And
21 they have to decide that themselves.

22 But we need these programs. We need the

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1 resources. But the system that is in the government today,
2 it will take years before we can actually bring these
3 resources to our community. It's frustrating when you're
4 trying to find the answer what you can do for your community
5 with all the government red tape that you have to go through
6 trying to convince government providers what are the needs
7 that you need in your community.

8 We have to do feasibility studies in
9 order to convince government and providers that we need
10 those services. And I don't think that should be the case.

11 Economic development. We all know that
12 economic opportunities are very limited to most First
13 Nation communities, due to the lack of renewable and
14 non-renewable resources. But yet we see so many short
15 term and long term opportunities that can benefit our
16 community.

17 When training programs become
18 available, most of the time they are not designed to help
19 isolated communities, or we don't meet the criteria and
20 we're left to live the way we are today.

21 Sometimes you have to move to another
22 town, like I said before, because it's not feasible to

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1 bring the course up north to your community. We need to
2 take our people away from welfare dependency, nor do we
3 blame them for being there, because this is the seed that
4 was planted by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on
5 those reserves.

6 And even the fur industry, which our
7 people relied on so much, it's being shot down to where
8 we can't even use that any more. And there are so many
9 things that we can look at, that we only have so much
10 resources available to us. The further north you go you
11 will see the problem.

12 Being here in Moose Factory today, or
13 Moosonee, you see those needs that I talk about. We need
14 to have the same basic things in life. Like, for instance,
15 to have a building, an arena, that we can use to provide
16 recreational activities, or even employment
17 opportunities. But the community is in a very awkward
18 situation in terms of cost and doing things. The way
19 things that you do here in Moose Factory and Moosonee
20 doesn't always fit up there.

21 Policing, by-laws. We all know the
22 importance of these two areas. As you are aware, the First

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1 Nation has no control over the local First Nation
2 constables. The province has more say in this because
3 they're the employers and they control the type of laws
4 that they can be enforced. But our community has a very
5 unique situation in terms of the measures they want to
6 apply for the safety of the public and adequate protection
7 for public property and to prevent the loss of life.

8 Even our judicial system is not designed
9 to benefit our community. We'd like to design our own
10 laws to meet local control and penalty to be geared towards
11 traditional methods. But I'm not saying that I shouldn't
12 be working with the Province of Ontario. We have to work
13 together.

14 The provincial court system that's held
15 every three months up in Attawapiskat creates many
16 problems, especially for the isolation. You have to wait
17 three months in order to have a judge come up to the
18 community. And while you're waiting there are sometimes
19 repeated offences and sometimes it has to be put off by
20 the provincial judge until next three months.

21 Sometimes the cases are so far behind
22 and there's nothing much we can do about the offender --

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1 whether it's the young offender, or the adult.

2 Lands and resources. We talk about
3 co-management. Eventually -- and eventually, in the long
4 term, to control our own resources. In defining our
5 traditional areas, such as trapping, hunting, burial
6 grounds -- which are most important to us in the Mushkegowuk
7 area -- we don't want to feel fenced off on a reservation.

8 We like to call our area as a territory where we can
9 practice our traditional methods which have been in
10 existence for a long, long time, and which myself and my
11 future generation can have the freedom to practice the
12 thing I practised in my younger days.

13 We don't RCMPs or MNR conservation
14 officers to come and seize our guns, skidoos, canoes or
15 motors, which is part of our livelihood and survival.
16 We can design and use our own traditional laws which have
17 been in existence since time immemorial. We're concerned
18 as much as anybody in conservation and protecting the
19 environment for our future generation.

20 I'd like to share with you this -- that
21 there has been a pressure from the Canadian Wildlife
22 Services, Ontario Anglers and Hunters, MNR, native people

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1 to restrict their traditional methods of harvesting,
2 spring and fall hunt. And this is due to the decline of
3 one particular species that come in this area to nest in
4 the Hudson and James Bay area.

5 We understand the importance of
6 conservation and because there is the method that's been
7 practised since time immemorial. Non-native people and
8 conservationist have to realize that native people who
9 are hunting in this area need that right to hunt, to
10 supplement their food on the table.

11 There are no supermarkets or restaurants
12 readily available up north. The cost of living is so high,
13 high unemployment rate. We understand that it is not a
14 question of a treaty right -- we do understand that --
15 it's a matter of saving the species, nor do we want these
16 people to blame the native people who are still practising
17 their traditions. We don't want that. And that's the
18 case what's happening right now.

19 There's all kind of newspapers, even
20 from the States, saying that the James Bay population --
21 the James Bay native people are responsible for the decline
22 and Attawapiskat has been pointed at, because they're the

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1 major users of the Island.

2 I think there is a will to work together
3 with the province, MNR, and all these people.

4 But a system must be worked out that will
5 work for both parties so there won't be any restrictions
6 but, rather, accommodate the need for each family of what
7 they want, to provide the food that they want. But we
8 want to continue to hunt, because it is our survival and
9 we want our future generation to continue and enjoy the
10 same privileges that we have today.

11 But I think there's a lot more to that
12 than just saying that we have a treaty right to hunt.

13 I think we need to look at the future
14 and come up with our own conservation laws and to be geared
15 towards the traditional way of handling penalties --
16 whatever you may call them.

17 And proposed hydro dam developments in
18 the Mushkegowuk area, this is another concern that we have
19 because in our area, such as Attawapiskat, that's our home.

20 And we need that land to survive and our future generations
21 to survive. And we must protect the environment, animals,
22 air and sea migrants, in this area. This is probably the

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1 last frontier that's free of pollutants. And it is the
2 last frontier for a refuge for these migrations that come
3 from the States and the southern part of Canada.

4 I think we need to look at that. We have
5 a long history of hardship and survival which our great
6 grandfathers faced in their days. We respect this land,
7 the resources that were put on earth by our Creator. And
8 we have such landmarks to prove this was the line of
9 survival.

10 Earlier, I mentioned that there are
11 burial sites, and these should not be disturbed in any
12 way, nor be flooded. I understand in order to gain
13 economic opportunities that sometimes you must sacrifice
14 for a return. I understand that. And we're not against
15 development -- at least I hope we're not against it. But
16 it must be done in a manner to protect the environment
17 and everything that belongs to this land.

18 Education. In our little, tiny
19 community -- that's a word I always hear whenever this
20 media talks about Attawapiskat -- in our community we're
21 struggling to promote more high level of education for
22 future generations, to have high school and to be able

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1 to provide those needed skills which will be used to improve
2 the quality of life in our community, to promote the
3 traditional outdoor and survival skills to our young people
4 as well as, at the same time, recognizing the importance
5 of academic achievements and skills that will be of
6 importance to compete the outside world.

7 This tool is very important to us so we
8 can achieve the positive results which will improve the
9 lives of many to come in the future. But we do realize
10 the limitations of INAC when we deal with the federal
11 government, so we must be creative in order to improve
12 the system, to look at the Province of Ontario, whether
13 they can come up with something that will supplement that
14 need, realizing that there are certain guidelines that
15 we must follow to meet provincial regulations, thus, taking
16 away our local control or the way we want to design our
17 curriculum, these are the type of things we need to be
18 recognized and understood by our regional and national
19 leaders -- our native leaders -- as well as both levels
20 of government.

21 Our culture and traditions. We want to
22 maintain our culture and traditions, language, for our

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1 future generations. I think that's the most important
2 thing in life, growing up, that you have to learn how to
3 speak your language, how to write your own language and
4 to know your traditions, how your grandfather and
5 grandmother lived in the past and to practice the same
6 traditions.

7 When I had a meeting in Timmins I had
8 the opportunity to sit with Thomas Archibald, our elder.

9 When he mentioned about the spring hunt of our traditional
10 methods, it's not so much to take the geese for food.
11 It's another way of renewing your spiritual beliefs and
12 your spiritual growth. You can use those methods in many
13 ways as a native person. And that is why I say it's
14 important to save the native language. We don't want it
15 to be assimilated within the education system.

16 But there has been significant changes
17 over the years in many of those areas which I mentioned.

18 But I think you have to focus more on the isolated
19 communities which are accessible by air only. And there
20 are special needs in many communities. We don't have the
21 same needs Moosonee and Moose Factory has, or Fort Albany,
22 Kash, Peawanuck -- you name it.

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1 And I'm looking forward to see you up
2 in our community so that you'll have the chance to see
3 the conditions that we've been living for the last -- God
4 knows how many years. And, while we're waiting government
5 to hear our voice, these problems that I just mentioned
6 to you will be there for another 10, 20 years.

7 So, we have to look at those areas. We
8 want the same basic needs, like any other Canadian in this
9 country they enjoy. And I think that's important. I have
10 heard people say, "Even if you change, even if you make
11 our community a nice place to live, good housing, good
12 roads, we'll have the same problems. First, we have to
13 look at the problems."

14 I understand that, but I think it's also
15 important to enjoy the same needs like everybody else and
16 I think that's important to everybody. And that's
17 basically my presentation to you.

18 Thank you. Meegwetch.

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
20 you, Chief, for coming down and giving us a very thorough
21 presentation on the needs of your community.

22 And, rest assured, this Commission will

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1 definitely be seeing many small communities and we will
2 definitely get a good impression of the needs of small
3 communities before we are finished. And if you do want
4 us to visit you, then send us an invitation and we will
5 give it some very serious thought.

6 We intend on coming back to northern
7 Ontario again, in the James Bay area, so certainly, give
8 us an invite.

9 I will just check if there is going to
10 be any brief questions or comments here. We are running
11 behind the clock, so we are going to keep them short.
12 I will just see if there is any comment.

13 Viola?

14 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I do
15 not have any real comments, except to thank you for your
16 strong presentation. I think you have hit on -- as Georges
17 says, you know, we are mandated to pay particular attention
18 to northern, isolated communities, communities like yours.

19

20 But, other than that, I do not have any
21 questions. We will keep you in mind.

22 Thank you.

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

2 Elder?

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

4 **ARCHIBALD:** I'll say this much.

5 What Mr. Gull has said, Georges, I think
6 you have to visit these communities and see from your own
7 vision of what he's describing to you and I hope, God
8 willing, will be able to grant you the chance to visit
9 these communities.

10 Thank you.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Did you
12 want to say anything?

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

14 **McLEOD:** No, thank you.

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

17 **CHIEF IGNACE GULL:** Thank you.

18 **PAT CHILTON:** The next presenters are
19 a couple, actually, with the Moosonee Metis Association.
20 We've got Ron Spencer, who is the President and Clifford
21 Trapper will be joining him to relay a message from his
22 father, who can't be here today.

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1 **CLIFFORD TRAPPER:** Good afternoon. My
2 name is Clifford Trapper. I'm here speaking on behalf
3 of my father, my grandfather, an elder from the James Bay
4 communities.

5 To the Commissioners: As an elder in
6 my seventies I have seen and observed a lot of wrong for
7 the natives of this great country we call Canada.

8 As I was growing up we were taught what
9 was right and what was wrong, also the ten commandments.
10 It seems to me that the government that was and is elected
11 have never learned the ten commandments, or heard of it.
12 Yet, the natives try to abide by it, but where does it
13 get them?

14 They can't be blamed for protesting and
15 demonstrating -- or even taking up arms, or other drastic
16 measures, like Okay. Natives believe and know they belong
17 to the land which the Creator made for them and their
18 children.

19 As I observed in the past I have noticed
20 that natives who were elected to represent their people
21 were doing quite well telling the government what their
22 people's rights are and what they wanted. And then I would

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1 read or hear they had a government job doing next to
2 nothing.

3 I hope this Commission is not again
4 another token. I hope that you two will do your utmost
5 while on the Commission to bring the concerns and needs
6 to help our people to get back our culture and
7 self-government back.

8 Natives of this land are a distinct,
9 unique race of people. I am sure the natives would like
10 to see a strong federal government to look after their
11 rights. It was at one time that natives were able to take
12 care of themselves and families, but now that the fur,
13 wildlife and fish are decreasing it isn't possible to live
14 off the land, so it is up to the government to see that
15 the natives have other means of looking after themselves
16 and families by getting a good education, jobs from the
17 resources of this land.

18 There is not enough done for them in
19 those lines of industries, as I observed. I have worked
20 in mining, hydro, lumbering and pulp industries, but always
21 came back to hunt and fish and to keep in touch with my
22 relatives and people.

StenoTran

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1 As I was working I could see what was
2 happening to the environment, such as pollution, acid rain
3 and the diminishing of the natural resources and not at
4 all benefitting the natives.

5 In the line of justice I have seen and
6 heard of natives not being treated fairly. It is hard
7 for me to see that the law is equal to all when we have
8 different cultures, ways of living and different
9 environments.

10 In my years as an adult I have seen and
11 heard the aboriginal people across this land beg and plead
12 for their inherent right, but to no avail. I, myself,
13 have voiced my thoughts and ideas, but to no avail.

14 I know that the younger generation will
15 continue to fight for their rights. The younger
16 generation can and will govern themselves, if educated
17 and taught. In fact, they are now fitting into places
18 which were held by transients.

19 So, Commissioners, it is up to you to
20 tell the government what's on the other side of the fence.

21 We, the people of James Bay, are very peaceful people,
22 but not too law-abiding, as we fill the courthouses once

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1 a month and every month, mostly due to the liquor store
2 which is owned by the federal government. So, who's to
3 blame?

4 In closing, we must all stand together
5 and fight for our survival, for our children and
6 generations to come.

7 Meegwetch. Thank you, from Bert
8 Trapper.

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

11 **RON SPENCER:** I just want to say, with
12 Bert Trapper, Bert Trapper is our elder in the Moosonee
13 Metis Association. He is a long-standing member. He's
14 been a member for many, many years and well respected.

15 And when we have meetings we usually
16 invite our elders and also we have a youth organizations
17 that we do invite him to.

18 So, my part -- and I'm just going to make
19 it brief -- and when I first heard about the Royal
20 Commission and I said, "Here we go again, another study."

21 And when I heard who's going to be the
22 Commissioners, I said, "Now, the natives going to study

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1 natives now."

2 So, this has been going on for many, many
3 years now, the government doing a study, a study on the
4 natives, and still haven't figured out what makes us tick.

5 Okay, we came a long ways since the
6 Indian Affairs days. We are starting to work together
7 as natives and to keep going to that direction.

8 Let's not fight, argue. Let's not
9 dismantle any organizations or any services or programs
10 that we have worked for so many years now. And every day
11 coming to make tribes' actions -- talking about
12 self-government and the process
13 -- we shouldn't really have to disturb the services or
14 any other programs that we have now. It should be a smooth
15 transaction.

16 We seem to bring up a lot of resentments,
17 what happened in the past. We're all talking about
18 self-government. But self-government will represent
19 First Nations and aboriginal people.

20 What happened in the past is done.
21 Today is another day. We are talking about governing
22 ourselves. Do we have to start disagreeing to ourselves

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1 before we even start talking self-government?

2 Let us really try our best to get along
3 and work together, also let this Royal Commission hearing
4 be the last study towards the aboriginal people in Canada.

5 And we are going rewrite the
6 constitution. Let's do it. We are going towards
7 self-government. Let's do it. Like I said before, the
8 government seems to do a lot of studies and still haven't
9 figured out what makes us tick.

10 Is the government stalling to deal with
11 native people? What government is really going to say,
12 "Okay, let's start negotiations." And also, government
13 seems to think that there is only First Nations people
14 in Canada. They tend to forget the people that live
15 off-reserve.

16 It would also be nice to be able to have
17 a land base for the off-reserve aboriginal people. Also,
18 but must not forget that those people that live off-reserve
19 have a common with the people in the reserve, because they
20 are registered with that particular band.

21 I want to comment briefly on the Bill
22 C-31.

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1 How this monster was created, I don't
2 know. I also understood and understand, when you inherit
3 something, that's your right. It's something you have
4 that shouldn't be touched, it's not negotiable.

5 So, those people that got their status
6 back through Bill C-31 had the right to acquire that right.
7 They shouldn't be considered as Bill C-31s. So, there
8 was two people that met on the road and said, "I bet you,
9 Bill, your name is Bill." The next one says, "Yes, I'm
10 Bill C-31."

11 So I think I would like to see a change
12 -- to be changed and to the band whatever they belong to.
13

14 I'm also a member of the Moose River and
15 James Bay coalition. That's part of the First Nations
16 Moose Factory and Mocrebec, Mushkegowuk, Hunters and
17 Trappers Association, New Post, Moose Factory local
18 service and the Moosonee Metis Association.

19 We've learned a lot through getting
20 together -- sitting together -- discussion, what we want.
21 We just have one common goal. We are looking at -- to
22 the future. Maybe our forefathers didn't have a chance,

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1 but we have a chance to save this country by getting
2 together and talking together, getting along together and
3 working together. That's the only way it's going happen.

4 We had a lot of contacts from the media.

5 I recall when a media from Toronto called me, asked me
6 what we are thinking of trying to do to stop the mega power
7 -- like Ontario Hydro. And he phoned me. He said, "Well,
8 what 5,000 natives can do against big government?" My
9 response was, "It is not how many -- you can have a million
10 people here and five hundred thousand people there. Now,
11 these five thousand, if they can get along and work together
12 and these million people can't work together, we're more
13 effective by working together amongst each other."

14 That's where the effectiveness comes.

15 So my point, Commissioners is, we as
16 natives can work and agree with each other. We can really
17 make a difference in Canada.

18 So, as the coalition, I believe we made
19 a difference. Now the government wants to talk. They're
20 talking about co-planning. They're talking about
21 co-management. By talking of co-planning, co-management,
22 that means, I understand myself, that all the planning

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1 that they did in the past should be scraped and start right
2 from scratch. That's what I call co-planning, not to give
3 you a document about this and say "Let's start
4 co-planning." That's no co-planning.

5 There is direction right there and
6 co-planning is that we sit down with the government and
7 we start from scratch. That's what we call co-planning,
8 co-management.

9 I will just briefly mention education.

10 We are agreed that we have to have our
11 own people in the teaching profession. But we must go
12 slow. We must follow proper procedures, no shortcuts.
13 We have to be educated. But we must be qualified.

14 And it goes the same with our teachers
15 that come from the south. They also have to be qualified
16 to teach our children. The schools seem to have a tendency
17 to make a difference what nationality you're in. That
18 shouldn't be.

19 If a native or myself applies for a job,
20 there should be the same procedures that they do with other
21 people that are hired through the education system.

22 The education system is an old system.

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1 It has to be revamped. Don't ask me why -- how. And
2 school boards will have to take more -- more
3 responsibilities, or give them more power. Other boards
4 will have to be established to work with the Department
5 of Education. Being a trustee, really, they don't have
6 -- you don't have any powers. You ask for something from
7 the Department of Education. They tell you there's no
8 money.

9 I believe, myself, we need counsellors
10 in our schools, native counsellors. And more funds are
11 needed.

12 The justice system. We have to take
13 part in that. I've heard previous speakers. The local
14 J.P.s have to have more to say, more powers to decide what's
15 going be.

16 If we break the law, we get punished --
17 anybody breaks that breaks the law will get punished.
18 I feel the police have to be involved with the communities.
19 The only time the police talks to the kids, or anybody,
20 is when they get in trouble. Why can't they talk to them
21 just as friends?

22 And the communities have to be involved

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1 with the law -- with the -- not some people outside to
2 try to clean up the mess that's in with the communities.
3 We have to do that ourselves.

4 Yes, we do have social problems, but also
5 we have to train our own people to look after our problems.

6 It's internal, since you have a problem, that should be
7 solved internally.

8 Our youths have to be involved with the
9 decision making. We have to invite -- we got the elders
10 to sit on the committees and boards -- we have to have
11 the youths also to sit in our board decision making. We
12 tend to say that it's our future, but we don't seem to
13 try to train them. We don't seem to get them involved
14 in committees or boards, but what we intend to say, "Yes,
15 that's our future," but we have to start, get them in the
16 decision making.

17 Talk about self-government and social
18 problems, I would like to see in the education system a
19 curriculum to do with social problems. We say "They don't
20 know, you know, about our culture." How can they not know,
21 if we don't get them involved with our decision making,
22 or get the -- get our culture in the education system?

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1 So, both sides have to get involved.
2 Pathways to success this year, and have
3 a board of directors from each of the communities. So
4 I think the process has started within the community
5 towards working together.

6 Now, in closing, I encourage you
7 leaders, the former leaders, or the present leaders, to
8 think first, when the government approaches you guys to
9 offer a position within the government you are needed here
10 in the community.

11 Thank you.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** What
13 was that last statement? When the government offers us
14 positions -- what?

15 **RON SPENCER:** When the government --
16 well, anybody -- I guess the government -- tends to offer
17 a position with our former leaders to think first that
18 you are needed in the community first.

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
20 thank you for a very interesting presentation. I guess
21 we will be hearing more from the coalition a little bit
22 later.

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1 Could I just ask how many people you are
2 speaking for?

3 **RON SPENCER:** Eh?

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** How many
5 people are you representing?

6 **RON SPENCER:** I hope I speak for
7 everybody. Like, I think this is an individual thing,
8 here. I think that, you know, I'm almost spokesman for
9 the people that come from here. But, you know, that's
10 my -- you know, it's not a number game. There's no number
11 game. It is going to affect the people down the road.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes.
13 Okay, let me rephrase it in a different
14 way, then.

15 How many Metis people are there in these
16 two communities here, Moosonee and Moose Factory?

17 **RON SPENCER:** Well, more and more, since
18 the -- you know, since Bill C -- since they got their status
19 back. More and more get less. The last I've counted,
20 you know, around, is about -- just about 300.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay.
22 Okay, we are going to keep our questions

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1 brief so we can hear from other people. I will just see
2 if the Commissioners have any very quick comments, or
3 questions.

4 Viola?

5 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I
6 just want to thank you for your brief but, no, I do not
7 have any questions.

8 Do you have any questions?

9 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**
10 **ARCHIBALD:** No questions. I am a member of the coalition
11 also, so I'll pick that up later.

12 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**
13 **McLEOD:** I have just a comment here.

14 You spoke of the police should get
15 involved with the community.

16 **RON SPENCER:** Eh?

17 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK**
18 **McLEOD:** You spoke of the police should be getting
19 involved with the community. You also spoke of how
20 they should be getting involved with the youth.

21 There's a program right now at the NLSS
22 that a constable goes there every Friday and is there to

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1 answer questions for the youth, just to be there to inform
2 the youth of any laws.

3 So, they are starting to work in that
4 area.

5 I had a question.

6 You talked about the youth, that they
7 should be brought into the decision making. Now, what
8 types of decisions were you speaking of? Are you talking
9 of decisions in social problems? Decisions in local
10 problems, like, maybe sewage and, you know, whatever?
11 What type of decisions were you speaking of?

12 **RON SPENCER:** Whatever decisions that
13 the board's got. I guess it's a broad -- everything, you
14 know, that's -- you know, that's what I'm talking about,
15 that whatever -- if the youth sits on the board he makes
16 -- you know, he participates in that -- whatever decisions,
17 you know, the board has to make.

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

19 **McLEOD:** Okay.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So, the
21 point you were trying to make is that young people should
22 be put on boards and they should be part of decision making,

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1 yes.

2 **RON SPENCER:** Yes.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Good.

4 Thank you for the presentations that the
5 two of you have made.

6 **PAT CHILTON:** The next presenter is
7 Chief Randy Kapashesit and Greta Gunner.

8 Rany is the Chief of Mocrebec First
9 Nation here in Moose Factory, and also Greta Gunner, who
10 is also the President of the Northern Native Student
11 Alliance in Timmins.

12 They will be doing it jointly.

13 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** Good
14 afternoon.

15 I have a few remarks to make. First of
16 all, before I get into my comments, I just want to say
17 that while I'm referred to as a chief and while I'm referred
18 to as representing Mocrebec, I want to emphasize that
19 it's not by choice that I present myself to you in that
20 way today.

21 It seems that if you're going to be
22 recognized or if you're going to be heard in this country,

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1 you have to take on the clothing that the government puts
2 out for you. And they only seem to want to recognize things
3 that they're familiar with, like the Indian Act Chief and
4 Council system. And it was a decision early on that I
5 recognized I would have to accept, if I was to come before
6 Commissions and be treated with some respect and other
7 forums.

8 Consequently, the people that are
9 referred to as the Mocrebec people put themselves in
10 positions where they could be part of the formal process
11 around us, because our views and our concerns were never
12 considered in the deliberations of the formal processes
13 in place.

14 And so, with that brief introduction,
15 I will get on into my comments because I know it's been
16 a long day for you.

17 I don't want to spend too much time on
18 specific details. I think many people here before you
19 have done that.

20 If I could just speak briefly to some
21 of the major issues I think that are out there, I would
22 prefer to do that.

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1 I see your mandate and I see the kinds
2 of areas that you want to focus on. And I'm sitting there
3 reading it and I'm saying to myself, "This Commission is
4 trying to do something different in trying to be unique.

5 Yet, it speaks the same language, because it inherits
6 history and all the problems that history has created."

7 And the issues that need to be addressed
8 sometimes never get raised because people like myself come
9 before you -- and we're very appreciative of the fact that
10 we have a forum and a chance to express our views on what
11 affects us, or what moves us.

12 But I think the real issue is the issue
13 of power and how that has impacted on our lives and how
14 the distribution of power has never been fairly addressed
15 in any Commission or in any forum.

16 We can parade before you all kinds of
17 statistics about how our community life is plagued by
18 social ills -- and they are fact and we all know them all
19 too well. But I believe it's an insult to everyone's
20 intelligence if we are saying to ourselves we don't know
21 what the problem is, or we don't know what the answer is.

22 It's very clear, I think, if you think

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1 about it for a second, what that answer could be and what
2 it is in fact.

3 There are so many changes that need to
4 take place and it starts with ensuring that provincial
5 governments and federal governments understanding their
6 responsibility in terms of how we got to this point. I'm
7 aware of the discussions, somewhat, that are going on with
8 regard to the constitution. And there are some amazing
9 phrases and ideas and agreements that are being reached
10 there.

11 And, on the one hand, we'd all agree that
12 those things need to happen, because self-determination
13 is a good thing. But I fear, based on what I've been seeing
14 and reading so far, I fear that we've been through so many
15 Commissions and been put under a microscope so many times,
16 we've been screaming about what the problems are. Finally
17 the governments are saying, "We understand and we agree,
18 and you should have some form of self-government and
19 self-rule and we're going to give it to you."

20 And they do that by -- and if they're
21 going to do that -- they're doing that in a way that I
22 think is misleading ourselves collectively. There is a

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1 responsibility that governments have that they should not
2 be looking at these negotiations, for example, in terms
3 of the constitution. They should not be looking at those
4 as an opportunity to wash their hands clean, to make sure
5 that all the agreements and all the treaties and all the
6 arrangements that they could ever make with native people
7 are in fact dealt with once and for all.

8 That seems to be the motivating reason
9 for most people who are part of that process from the
10 provincial or federal governments, as I see it. And that
11 puts the communities, I think, in very difficult positions.

12 There are many recommendations and many
13 proposals that have been presented and are still on the
14 table for presentation. One of the possible outcomes of
15 the constitutional process, as I understand it, is the
16 possibility of developing aboriginal courts and an
17 aboriginal justice system, across the board. And, in
18 theory I don't have a problem with that idea; I can support
19 that.

20 But I think it's something that this
21 Commission should consider. If those courts get
22 established, what kind of a situation are we creating?

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1 I think the best way to try and challenge
2 our thinking and to judge how far we've progressed, or
3 whether we've progressed at all, is to put forth a
4 hypothetical situation and see how we would deal with that.

5 Let's assume that myself, I found that
6 yes, there were aboriginal courts down the road some day,
7 and there was an issue that fell into the jurisdiction
8 of that court. But in my own mind, my own legal opinion
9 that I've gathered, it tells me that if my objective is
10 to win my case my best interests are served by going to
11 a Canadian court.

12 What government is going to tell me that
13 I can't go there, that I have to stick to the aboriginal
14 court because that's in fact a constitutional arrangement
15 in place? At the same time, if that situation occurred,
16 at the same time I'm sure that I would have the to vote
17 in provincial and federal elections, I'd be forced to pay
18 taxes -- since, in my situation, I don't belong to a band
19 that has a reserve.

20 The situation can get very complicated,
21 I'm sure, if we put all kinds of hypothetical examples
22 before us. But my point is this: Through this Commission

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1 and through the constitutional discussions I have not yet
2 seen the issue of citizenship addressed front and centre,
3 because that's in fact what we're talking about.

4 There's a lot of motivation for
5 governments and for aboriginal governments to sit around
6 the table and talk about the constitutional changes. But
7 sometimes I wonder whether in fact we're dealing with the
8 real issue.

9 Down the road I'd like to know where I
10 stand and I'm sure many others in this room would like
11 to know where they stand, with regard to their rights,
12 with regard to their citizenship.

13 Basically, this country can't have it
14 both ways. I fear that in the future a situation will
15 occur where all of these advancements that we are pursuing
16 in the best interests of our communities will be used
17 against us, because I'm not convinced that the government
18 is sincere, that their reason for being at the table is
19 because they genuinely care about us.

20 It's the farthest thing from their mind.
21 They don't have to deal with the issues that we deal with.
22 They're interested in power and cutting deals. That's

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1 what inspires them to run for public office.

2 There are other issues as well I think
3 that come to mind when we talk about what is referred to
4 as "the latest rolling draft" of all the meetings that
5 have been taking place across the country between provinces
6 and the federal government and aboriginal governments.

7 But the most important issue is the issue
8 of citizenship. I do not want to see a day where anyone
9 who is an aboriginal person is told basically by law --
10 whether it's Canada's law or somebody else's law -- that
11 they have to go to this aboriginal court yet, at the same
12 time, the issue of citizenship hasn't been spelled out.

13 You can't tell an aboriginal person that
14 you should go to this court yet, at the same time, expect
15 him to vote for you come election time. And you go and
16 do the recruiting in that riding and do your lobbying and
17 then you try and get people to vote for you, yet at the
18 same time you're denying people the right to participate.

19 That issue has to be dealt with directly.

20 Perhaps people are afraid to deal with
21 that issue, but I think that is at the core of what we
22 talk about, what you've heard today, in many ways.

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1 The mandate that you have and that you
2 are pursuing is a wide, sweeping mandate. And my own
3 personal best wishes in coming up with a document that
4 can summarize everyone's views, because there are a lot
5 of views out there -- I'm sure that you all know that --
6 as there are many different views in this room.

7 But, what is important I think, for us
8 to understand and for us to embrace is a process where
9 we can talk with each other within the communities, beyond
10 our communities and to the public at large, so that the
11 point is made that, yes, we are the ones that are under
12 the microscope and, yes, we are the ones that are suffering
13 from all of the decisions that have been made -- or the
14 ones that haven't been made -- by society at large. But
15 is not our issue alone. We are not in this alone.

16 Our numbers across the country aren't
17 as significant as we may all like them to be. And there
18 is so many other people and so many other institutions
19 as part of the federal and provincial process that have
20 to be brought in line as well.

21 It makes no sense to put native
22 communities and native people as though they were stuck

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1 in time and in space and say that, you know, they were
2 institutionally complete at one time and they still are
3 in 1992 and, therefore, we can get self-government under
4 way and the problems will be solved.

5 The institutions that we have to deal
6 with, the programs and the services that impact on us and
7 we participate in, there's a great responsibility on the
8 part of the provincial and federal governments to engage
9 their citizens, to engage that public in this process as
10 well, because the situation will not change unless that
11 happens. We'll have another Royal Commission down the
12 road, because it's the public view that Indians don't know
13 what they want.

14 And they've never been made to feel that
15 they're part of that equation, that that businessman, or
16 that politician, or that student, or that professional
17 and what they do and their place that they occupy in society
18 is a part of this history that is before us today that
19 we're trying to change. And we're confronted with that
20 all the time.

21 And so, that's what I mean when I'm
22 talking about the responsibilities of the federal and

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1 provincial government. It's not just a power deal,
2 there's some responsibility if you want to change and move
3 into the future in a positive direction.

4 I also want to stress that -- picking
5 up on my initial comments -- I think one absolute necessity
6 for this aboriginal Commission to put forth is that the
7 idea of governments -- aboriginal governments -- cannot
8 be tied to Indian Act governments.

9 I think we see the product of that kind
10 of thinking before us. We had people who are identified
11 as Metis, on-reserve, off-reserve, treat, non-treaty, land
12 claims, no land claims, and then everyone else in between
13 who falls between that.

14 We have to take back our own history,
15 our own culture, our own identification. And the
16 governments and their legal history and their legal
17 instruments in managing our lives have no place in
18 determining that. And for our own people I think it's
19 necessary -- absolutely necessary -- to mentally
20 understand that we have to work ourselves back to the time
21 before contact.

22 I hear my cousins in northern Quebec say

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1 that life began for them in Canada and in Quebec with the
2 1974 James Bay/norther Quebec Agreement, as though that
3 validated who we were, as though that affirmed who we were.

4 Make no mistake about it, those are
5 important arrangements. But, they've always been in the
6 interest of the state to have treaties and to have
7 arrangements and agreements. We've never had the
8 opportunity to work out our relationship with each other,
9 within families, as individuals, between communities and
10 beyond communities, nation-to-nation.

11 And maybe we've never had the time, or
12 it never occurred to us to even do that work. But I firmly
13 believe that we have to do that work, if we're going to
14 make any progress into the future on all of these kinds
15 of issues that were raised today and that are being raised
16 by power brokers in Ottawa this week around the
17 constitutional discussions.

18 There are other things that can be said
19 and should be said. But I'd like to allow others to speak
20 as well, because the day has been long and I include my
21 comments to you in a formal brief later -- a written
22 submission.

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1 And I will pass it over to Greta Gunner
2 to give comments at this time.

3 Thank you.

4 **GRETA GUNNER:** I want to thank you all
5 for the opportunity to speak today.

6 Initially I am scheduled to talk about
7 my concerns regarding education, and the institution and
8 the roll back in South Porcupine.

9 But as I look over the agenda I'm sad
10 and I am moved to talk and to speak on behalf of native
11 women and that the views that I express today are my own
12 views, that I do not speak on behalf of the Native Women's
13 group.

14 So I am moved to talk about some of the
15 -- some of the prejudices our native women face.

16 First of all, I'm a resident of this
17 community. I'm also a student at Northern College in South
18 Porcupine. I'm originally from ... and I now belong to
19 the Mocrebec community.

20 My father, my grandfather lived off the
21 land and, as a young child, before alcohol -- before our
22 family became plagued by alcohol -- I had the rare

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1 opportunity of seeing a place of honour, dignity and
2 respect given to women.

3 Many of the views expressed today,
4 concerns and social problems which plagues our community
5 -- I wonder, where are the voices of our women, the very
6 life givers of our societies.

7 As native women we not only suffer
8 oppression by the white society, but we also oppression
9 by our own men.

10 Native women have many barriers to
11 overcome. We suffer discrimination because we are native.
12 We suffer discrimination because we are women. And for
13 too long our opinions and our concerns are reduced or too
14 readily dismissed, because they are seen as insignificant.

15 Women too often are reduced to an after
16 thought. Women are not adequately represented in our
17 current aboriginal leadership and existing aboriginal
18 organizations. Aboriginal women, historically, have
19 occupied significant roles of leadership in our families
20 and in our communities.

21 Why do our men want to treat us in a
22 manner that non-native men have treated their women?

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1 I believe that the denial of aboriginal
2 women's voices will be to the detriment of our communities.

3 Although our men talk about the place
4 about the place of women in our community and they believe
5 they are recognizing the importance of the role of women,
6 we need to see evidence of this in our communities, in
7 our leadership positions, in the home and in the community
8 at large.

9 In reference to this concern I'd like
10 to say, in closing, I once heard an elder state: "In
11 healing our women we will heal our communities. We have
12 to realize and recognize that the women are the backbone
13 of our society."

14 And if you have any questions, I was
15 going to suggest that maybe you hear some more from the
16 women on the floor within this community.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
18 that is what we are here to do. So, any of them that want
19 to talk to us can do so.

20 **GRETA GUNNER:** I look over the agenda
21 and I see one woman on there and it's my name, and I'm
22 supposed to be talking on behalf of the Northern Native

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1 Student Alliance. Yet, I am moved to voice my opinions
2 about the lack of respect that is shown to our women.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Well,
4 there are some women sitting around. If you can strongarm
5 some of them to come up, we will listen -- no problem.

6 But we have heard from women in other
7 places. Perhaps they might want to come up, you know,
8 in a small group, and we will accommodate them.

9 Thank you for your views.

10 You say not only non-native people are
11 disrespectful, there is a prejudice -- you say aboriginal
12 men do that too. What is it that you mean?

13 In other places -- let me give you and
14 example -- we have been told by aboriginal women that in
15 a traditional society they had a very important role, they
16 were life givers. And that what happened in residential
17 schools, what happened with contact with the new societies
18 that came from Europe, that the aboriginal society was
19 taught that the men should be the boss, should be superior,
20 women should be inferior, should -- in fact the residential
21 schools, they tell us, taught aboriginal women to be
22 submissive, subservient to men and to serve men and that

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1 it started a process of breaking down the traditional
2 society, that both the aboriginal males there and the women
3 were being taught new roles that they did not have prior
4 to that, and that the wife beating and the sexual abuse
5 and all the rest of it was more recent.

6 But what kinds of things are you talking
7 about that aboriginal men do that -- you do not have to
8 get into specifics. I mean, you can talk in generalities.
9 We do not need the specific.

10 **GRETA GUNNER:** I believe aboriginal men
11 -- our voices are not heard and that we are to remain quiet
12 and, like you say, subservient.

13 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You are
14 told this consciously, clearly? Or is this a hidden
15 message? Or is this very, very clear?

16 **GRETA GUNNER:** I think it's a hidden
17 message in the sense that there was some of our leaders
18 that stated earlier today that women -- we need to hear
19 from our women that the women should be granted equality
20 within these communities, just based on the leadership
21 that we have.

22 And, just referring to the agenda, the

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1 majority of the speakers there are -- the leaders are men
2 and they are also -- there's no women slotted on the agenda.

3 So, our communities in this area are
4 still very male-dominated.

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

6 It is a very good point. We should have
7 actually noticed that. We should have beaten the bushes
8 a little bit to make sure there was women presenting to
9 us. It is an oversight on our part and we will --

10 **GRETA GUNNER:** Pardon me?

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** It is a
12 bit of an oversight on our part. We will try and make
13 sure that we have some presentations from women at least
14 that we have conjured up by asking women to present.

15 Viola?

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want
17 to, again, thank the both of you for your excellent
18 presentations.

19 First, I want to assure you of the
20 women's participation on this Commission. It is on that
21 is certainly a very clear mandate for us. You know, we
22 do have to listen to the views of the women. And we have

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1 been getting views of women in other areas and, as has
2 been mentioned, I do not know what happened here. But,
3 certainly do not -- this is the first round.

4 This is going to be a Commission that
5 is going to go on for maybe another year or two. There
6 is ample time for women to prepare themselves. There is
7 even funding available to help women to prepare themselves
8 to make presentations to this Commission.

9 You do not even have to come and do it,
10 you know, physically. You can just present briefs.

11 Maybe you should write your thoughts and
12 put them on paper and send them to us to make sure that
13 we have all the concerns and issues that affect women.

14 So, you know, I do not want you to think
15 that you are going to be ignored, because it is something
16 we certainly have to deal with.

17 So, I will leave you with that.

18 I wanted to just mention, when you
19 started out I did not quite catch what you said about having
20 to be -- in order to be heard you had to go through some
21 kind of a formal process.

22 Well, I think this Commission -- you

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1 know, as far as I am concerned, we want to hear anybody.
2 Anybody that wants to make their views known to this
3 Commission, we want to hear. You know, that is what we
4 are hear for. We are not going to just listen to this
5 group, or that group, or just the hierarchy of the
6 aboriginal people. We want to hear people. And we want
7 to make every effort to try to do that.

8 Your twist on your presentation is
9 somewhat a little different than what we have heard. But
10 then, again, we have heard those same kinds of concerns
11 before, too, as we have gone to other communities. Your
12 concern about citizenship is a real concern of a lot of
13 people in this country, and I want you to know that as
14 well. And your concern about Indian Act governments, that
15 is another real concern about a lot of people in this
16 country.

17 So, when we get through the first round
18 and everything is being recorded, how we synthesize our
19 report, and what comes out of it certainly will be
20 circulated -- we hope will formulate some kind of a
21 discussion paper of what we heard -- to be discussed
22 further, hopefully, in the next round.

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1 So, your concerns are very well taken
2 here.

3 Thank you.

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** There
5 was one thing I wanted to ask you, Randy, but I will just
6 see if Derek wants to say anything.

7 **YOUTH COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, DEREK
8 McLEOD:** No, thank you.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You
10 said, in relation to aboriginal courts and so forth that
11 the big issue seems to be for you citizenship. You said
12 it a number of times, but you never said what the meant.
13 What is it you mean? Aboriginal people should have clear
14 citizenship in their own nation? In Canada? Both? Dual
15 citizenship? What is you are --

16 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** I guess that
17 is my exact sentiment as well. What is it? What is being
18 proposed and what direction are we going? Because I can
19 agree that there is a need for an aboriginal court, when
20 we compare it to the present and when we compare the
21 insensitivity toward the cultural realities that the
22 present legal system has no appreciation for.

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1 But, the point that I'm making is, I'm
2 getting the impression that the politicians and even our
3 own leadership are presenting the idea towards Canadians
4 that we are intact and that we are societies completely
5 intact, unaffected by the 500 years -- or the 300 years,
6 whatever years you want to account -- over time, unaffected
7 by those things and that we can function quite well as
8 the traditional society, you know, our ways of dealing
9 with things are still there.

10 Yet we all know for a fact that
11 government has had a long involvement in our lives.

12 Churches -- we can't forget them
13 -- have had a long involvement in our communities and in
14 our lives. And I would put forth the idea that in many
15 communities it is not the government of the elected chief
16 and council -- or even the provincial or federal
17 government, for that matter -- that is the most valid form
18 of government in the community.

19 In some communities I would say it's
20 probably whatever religion dominates. And, for the most
21 part that religion is not necessarily embracing things
22 Indian. In fact, their existence in those communities

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1 has been to de-Indianize us as a people.

2 So, my point is, aboriginal courts and
3 that future that may come, we must not live with that
4 illusion that we are intact. We've got a lot work to do
5 if we want to bring forth our own instruments and our own
6 reflections of justice that are found within our culture.

7 They might be there, but we won't know
8 until we're willing to look at that, free from the
9 influences that are there before us now, government
10 thinking on issues, or one particular religious view on
11 another issue.

12 We are very diverse and, some might say,
13 confuse people at times because of all of these influences.

14 I don't think that we should be creating the impression
15 that we are in fact intact.

16 And I feel that the attraction here for
17 provincial and federal governments is to wash their hands
18 free of that and cut us adrift, as though they had nothing
19 to do with it, as though the churches had nothing to do
20 with it -- then, or now, in this time, in dealing with
21 those issues.

22 There are people in communities who will

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1 say that women should be subservient to men, because that's
2 what it says in the bible. And these are people who are
3 involved in the formal process as representing Indian
4 positions.

5 And we can't let out people get away with
6 that. I think it's important for men to address that
7 issue, because that's the way patriarchy works. We're
8 here. We're here talking before you, because that's what
9 Canadian society recognizes the role of the men and what
10 the men will do.

11 Whereas, if you want to talk about
12 traditional Cree society, my understanding is that that
13 was egalitarian, or equal. And so, just as much as I'm
14 here talking to you, Greta is here talking to you as well,
15 that you should hear both views, and that they are equal.

16 And if anybody is going to be judged in
17 an aboriginal court you better be judging him by standards
18 that are reflective of our culture and tradition, not
19 colonialism.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** That
21 was my other question.

22 You said a couple of times about

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1 aboriginal courts that -- what was it? -- something about
2 you did not want aboriginal people to be told that he or
3 she had to go to an aboriginal court.

4 Citizenship must be dealt with.

5 Okay, then you rephrased it back to me
6 and you said, "That's what I want to know, citizenship,
7 what is it they mean?"

8 What we are hoping to hear from people
9 like you that bring these things up is, what is it that
10 you see? What kind of citizenship do you want your people
11 to have? What kind of citizenship do you want? Do you
12 want, first, citizenship in your own nation, then in
13 Canada? Or do you just want it in your nation? Not in
14 Canada? Or you want it in Canada and not in your nation?

15 What is it that you are actually aspiring
16 for? And, if there are going to be aboriginal courts,
17 what kind of link should they have to the existing Canadian
18 courts? Should the Supreme Court of Canada be the final
19 appeal court?

20 If you are going to have a court system,
21 are you going to have an appeal system before it gets to
22 the Supreme Court? What is your vision?

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1 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** To just give
2 you a background as to where that comes from, I had a
3 discussion with two lawyers who are involved in this
4 discussion formally, in the constitutional talks.

5 And their view is that if there are
6 aboriginal courts, that's it for aboriginal people. You
7 know, aboriginal people have been asking for
8 self-government, they're going to get it.

9 And my point is, the Canadian society
10 and the Canadian system can't deal with that issue in that
11 way, without dealing with the issue of citizenship. You
12 can't tell aboriginal people that, "There is your court,
13 there's all your three levels of the courts. You go there.

14 Just because you're an aboriginal person you've got to
15 try your luck there, and you have no access" -- that's
16 in effect what they were saying -- "you have no access
17 to any other court."

18 I'm saying if that's what is being
19 proposed, then I want to read that in black and white.
20 And that's what is in fact to me the issue of citizenship.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could
22 I assist you?

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1 Are you saying there should be choice,
2 more than one court? Because there have been situations,
3 many times in human history, when an invading country comes
4 into another and takes over. And there was an existing
5 court system there. There have been times when there have
6 been more than one court system. And an individual that
7 runs into problems with the law can choose which court
8 system they want to proceed down.

9 So, are you saying that aboriginal
10 people should be in that kind of situation?

11 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** I'm saying
12 that the people who are proposing these ideas now, I don't
13 believe have really thought this one out clearly.

14 I'll propose a specific situation to
15 you.

16 Let's say there's a couple that got
17 married and had kids, and then it becomes an issue of
18 custody at some point. Let's say they're from a different
19 nation, Cree and Ojibway -- or, for that matter,
20 native/non-native -- who's going to say that, you know,
21 this situation will be dealt with in aboriginal court?

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

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1 is it you would like to see? You are asking very relevant
2 questions, but --

3 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** I'd like to see
4 an amendment that comes forward that allows for communities
5 to understand the issue of citizenship first and foremost,
6 before they're voting on whether in fact they're going
7 to have this court system or that other court system.

8 That has to be dealt with first, is my
9 point.

10 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay.
11 But what would you like to see in
12 citizenship?

13 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:**
14 Personally?

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes.

16 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** For me, it
17 makes perfect sense to move to an objective, a common goal.
18 And if people in any community, or in any nation feel
19 that their goal is to be self-determining and independent
20 at some point, then you work towards that. And there are
21 incremental steps to get there -- and this time allowed
22 for that by the governments that have influenced the

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1 situation to this point -- and that we work towards that,
2 and we look at all these issues and we make sure that we
3 don't leave anyone in that community out in the cold.

4 And we make sure that the governments
5 understand that this is in fact necessary, otherwise we'll
6 have people who are standing at our doors, as they were
7 with women under 12(1)(b) under the Indian Act, saying,
8 "You missed us, you know. You left us out."

9 I think there's a great responsibility
10 on all of us to look at all of these issues and to not
11 easily believe that these things are going to change
12 overnight. We've got to work towards a goal.

13 And those provincial and federal
14 governments better understand that that's in fact the case,
15 because I fear that they don't think like that right now.

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

17 I am going to ask you one more question
18 to see if I am getting this right.

19 You see what is really important is the
20 transitional period, the educational period, the time to
21 implement the kind of court system perhaps that would be
22 acceptable to people.

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1 And, as you said earlier, people say
2 non-status, Bill C-31, and all that, it show the impact
3 of the present government system.

4 So, in your mind, you would see that all
5 people of a particular nation could come together and
6 operate, time for the women and so forth, to make sure
7 that they are part of it.

8 But, you are seeing a court system that
9 is a closed system, that is for aboriginal people and they
10 do not operate in the Canadian system -- if the time is
11 taken? Or do you see a situation where there is choice
12 and there are links?

13 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** My point is
14 that there will have to be choices somewhere along the
15 line --

16 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** A'ha.

17 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** -- to
18 accommodate our communities --

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** M'hm.

20 **CHIEF RANDY KAPASHESIT:** -- because we
21 are very diverse in terms of how we think, in terms of
22 whether we embrace individual rights or collective rights

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1 more than the other.

2 And, if we want to be self-governing we
3 have to understand that that is in fact what it means to
4 deal with those kinds of issues.

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

6 The only comment I will make in relation
7 to the aboriginal courts that are being talked about in
8 the federal constitutional rounds -- I understood, anyway
9 -- to be simply first putting the notion into the
10 constitution and then, over a period of time, implementing
11 them, the same way in which the federal government can
12 create courts.

13 They could even use an existing part of
14 the Canadian Constitution now where the federal government
15 can create courts. But a specific reference to aboriginal
16 courts would make it very, very clear we are talking about
17 aboriginal courts.

18 There would have to be a lot of work done
19 before they were implemented. Once you have the mechanism
20 there you could implement it later.

21 It could be the way that these particular
22 lawyers were presenting it, but I do not think it is the

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1 idea because there are so many different nations in Canada
2 amongst aboriginal people it is going to mean different
3 things.

4 Anyway, thank you for bearing with me
5 on my questions there.

6 I would like to thank the two of you for
7 coming forth and thank you for bringing the one woman
8 presenter today -- maybe we will have more.

9 **GRETA GUNNER:** I said initially I was
10 slotted on the agenda because I was a representative of
11 the Northern Native Students. And, as an elected
12 representative of the native students at Northern College
13 I want to bring these views forth.

14 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Are you
15 going to present with the other ones that -- there was
16 going to be a number of students.

17 **GRETA GUNNER:** No, I'm a post secondary
18 student at Northern College and the other students are
19 secondary students.

20 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay.
21 Would you do us a favour and turn the
22 volume a slight bit?

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1 **GRETA GUNNER:** Pardon me?

2 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Would
3 you speak a little bit louder?

4 **GRETA GUNNER:** All right -- I'm just
5 challenging your listening skills.

6 This institution that I'm enroled at,
7 that I'm a student of, the paternalistic and ... attitudes
8 of that hierarchy within that institution I believe robs
9 our native students and our groups of self-esteem.

10 And I believe that it deprives the native
11 student of motivation and many of them become engrained
12 into that role of passivity.

13 The majority of the native students at
14 this college drop out because they have not acquired the
15 social skills which are fundamental to their survival in
16 that western society.

17 Many of them do not realize that they
18 have a wide range of support services that they can tap
19 into, which will help ease their transition.

20 I also believe that our native students
21 at Northern College and all aboriginal people are entitled
22 to some degree of empowerment.

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1 These people have to realize and they
2 have to understand that the educational institutions that
3 take in native students -- or that have high enrolment
4 of native students, that they have to realize that these
5 native students have to be taught in a fashion that we
6 are accustomed to which is the fact that we are an oral
7 and visual society and that we have to be taught
8 accordingly.

9 With that I'd like to say thank you for
10 listening.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Do you
12 have any questions on this one?

13 How many students -- how many aboriginal
14 students at the college that you are talking about?

15 **GRETA GUNNER:** There's about -- at
16 Porcupine Campus they have close to 250 native students,
17 but there's different campus sites, too, different sites.
18 There's about five different sites.

19 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** What
20 is the dropout rate? Ten per cent? Five per cent? Two?

21 **GRETA GUNNER:** Well, it's really high.
22 It's quite high. They have a -- they talk about

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1 retention, retaining students and yet they lose the
2 majority of them toward the end of the year.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** They
4 lose the majority in the first year?

5 **GRETA GUNNER:** Toward the end of the
6 year they lose the majority of their native students.

7 And you've got one native counsellor
8 who's supposed to provide academic counselling, social
9 counselling, personal counselling to that many students
10 and that's a big job.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes.

12 And this is the college that people
13 mentioned earlier, before, that there is no aboriginal
14 language there?

15 **GRETA GUNNER:** There's no aboriginal
16 language, nor is there a native studies department to take
17 care of our needs.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** How many
19 aboriginal people are actually teaching at this college?

20 **GRETA GUNNER:** There's no native
21 instructors.

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

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1 is no native instructors? Oh, my -- okay.

2 Thank you for presenting to us.

3 Thank you for challenging our hearing
4 skills.

5 **GRETA GUNNER:** Thank you for listening.

6 **PAT CHILTON:** Okay, the next presenter
7 is Toby Beck. He is the Executive Director of Payukotayno,
8 Hudson and James Bay Child and Family Service. He's been
9 the executive director since it's inception back in what?
10 -- 1892? -- just kidding -- 1985-86.

11 **ERNEST BECK:** I'm not entirely sure that
12 fellow is on the agenda, but I'll gladly take his place.
13 My name is Ernest Beck.

14 I believe, as was previously said by
15 numerous other presenters, I know we're bound by time and
16 I'll try to make my presentation as quick as possible and
17 try not to, to any large degree, stray from it.

18 On August 22nd, 1984, a five-year
19 memorandum of agreement was signed by the Ministry of
20 Community and Social Services and the Nishnawbe Aski
21 Nation. The agreement recognizes that, wherever
22 possible, services to native children and their families

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1 should be provided in a manner that respects cultural,
2 regional and religious differences that Indian people
3 should be entitled to provide whatever possible their own
4 child and family services, which would recognize Indian
5 culture, heritage, traditions and the concept of the
6 extended family.

7 The memorandum of agreement enabled the
8 transfer of provision of certain services from those
9 currently providing them to, amongst others, Payukotayno,
10 James and Hudson Bay Family Services.

11 Since 1985, Payukotayno has been
12 operating as a child and family service agency servicing
13 James and Hudson Bay communities. The agency was
14 designated as a Children's Aid Society in April of 1987.

15 In addition to being a Children's Aid
16 Society, Payukotayno has also administered to young
17 offenders, both residential and non-residential service,
18 children's mental health and a variety of family
19 counselling and prevention programs.

20 Payukotayno, its board and staff, have
21 undertaken a major responsibility in a relatively short
22 period of time, taking direct control over service delivery

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1 to the communities of James and Hudson Bay areas. This
2 control has also been obtained at a cost to ourselves.

3 We inherited inadequate services and
4 improved them to the best of our ability, given the
5 financial constraints imposed upon us. Furthermore, as
6 a first step towards being a self-governing First Nation
7 social service body, we have not only taken responsibility
8 over native people, but native and non-native alike that
9 fall within our service area -- a first for any such body
10 in Canada, for that matter.

11 The demand for our services is
12 increasing. As our communities become aware of our
13 services, expectations increase. Not only are
14 communities asking us to delivery more services, but they
15 expect many of these to be delivered from their own
16 communities.

17 As the communities become more active
18 and determined to effect their own future the pressure
19 increases to provide culturally appropriate services.

20 There has been an increasing interest
21 by community leaders to undertake this responsibility
22 themselves. I agree that this is the first step towards

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1 dealing with community problems and that Payukotayno
2 should only be the resource to assist that process.

3 When Payukotayno first began to provide
4 services in 1985 great care went into ensuring that the
5 services taken over from the non-native delivery agents
6 were provided in a culturally sensitive manner. As our
7 communities developed they began to request services that
8 were relevant to their particular needs. In many
9 instances the services requested were not identical to
10 the services initially transferred from the non-native
11 delivery agents.

12 The needs for our community have been
13 changing. Increasingly, additional pressures levied on
14 our families as they become more exposed to the influences
15 of the south. As our communities' isolation diminishes
16 new pressures develop. The youth and our elders are
17 especially affected.

18 In attempting to meet these needs we have
19 been especially concerned with developing alternatives
20 to enable them to avoid the current systems. We are
21 attempting to find alternatives for adolescents who need
22 care but are too old for the Children's Aid Society, as

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1 well as to develop services programs for youth with
2 substance abuse problems -- for example, gas sniffing,
3 and alcohol.

4 Youth who are drawn into such
5 afflictions have been difficult to place and, still
6 further, are hard to service given that services are just
7 completely not available.

8 All these factors place a great strain
9 on our existing services and create demands of the youth
10 service.

11 But, where do we do now? Given this
12 period in our development, given the current restraints,
13 where do we go now?

14 This year we will only receive a point
15 five per cent increase to service the communities that
16 are already at the brink of crises. It's a concern that's
17 felt by all our membership, especially by our board. The
18 expectations are just too great.

19 When you really begin to look at it, the
20 percentage increase, probably to the janitor that services
21 this building, is probably greater than the percentage
22 we'll get to service our people this year.

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1 When Payukotayno established itself it
2 recognized their approach to service delivery would be
3 holistic and all encompassing, that the colour of
4 somebody's skin didn't make them any less important, but
5 that they were people in need of service and still part
6 of our community.

7 Furthermore, that it was not the vision
8 of our people to create a brown CAS, or to establish
9 something resembling what 50 of the other Children's Aid
10 Societies in this province are convinced doesn't come close
11 to meeting the needs of the people that they service either.

12 The task given Payukotayno is done by
13 way of the parameters given to it by the province. Our
14 incorporation into this legislation will not direct us
15 toward self-determination, but a systematic arm twisting
16 approach to service delivery.

17 I put little weight on how I'm perceived
18 by the community and put a little more weight on what I
19 can do for it. I'm here for a lot of personal reasons,
20 one being that I've decided to leave the field of social
21 work over the coming year and that your presence here allows
22 me to share the wisdom of what I have seen and learned

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1 over the course of some 12 years in social services.

2 I've seen a lot of changes. When I first
3 began things were a lot different.

4 I recall when I started I believe there
5 were only some two or three workers. And that consisted
6 of the social system for this entire area. I recall being
7 initiated into the system and going on my first trip to
8 the coast with a non-native individual that was providing
9 services there.

10 I learned a lot on that trip.

11 I was supposedly to take the
12 responsibility of servicing those communities and that
13 the clientele that we were visiting on this particular
14 trip were people that I would eventually have to service
15 as part of my job-related responsibilities.

16 I recall vividly the first visit we made
17 with this family. We weren't welcomed by any sense of
18 the imagination. We had a lot of difficulty just getting
19 into the house and talking to the people that were there.

20 It wasn't a warm welcome.

21 There was an elder in this house and he
22 asked me to interpret for this non-native that I was

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1 accompanying that we weren't welcome there. And he asked
2 me to tell him that we must leave.

3 So, we left. I told him that we're
4 having some difficulty here, we're not wanted, I think
5 we should leave. So we left the house. And as we got
6 outside the house this individual told me, he said, "Did
7 you see that?" And I said, "What?" He said, "Did you
8 see that native child tied up in the corner like a dog?"

9 And I had never given it any thought,
10 because I had grown up seeing a lot of things that I guess
11 were culturally appropriate, culturally different, that
12 it was a common thing to see a native child tied to the
13 corner of a tent to prevent him from reaching the fire,
14 so that he might prevent himself from being burnt. And
15 that's what he saw in this house.

16 I saw it too, but I never really thought
17 much of it. But it led me to realize one thing, that this
18 individual was given a lot of authority in terms of the
19 service of our children, and it only made me realize the
20 damage that was done.

21 These people had an enormous amount of
22 authority. And they visited the communities once a month.

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1 And it's not uncommon, from what I hear from the
2 communities, that children disappeared and it's hard to
3 believe, as crazy as it may seem, that children might have
4 been taken away for reasons such as that.

5 I've seen a lot of growth by the way of
6 Payukotayno's development, from some two social workers,
7 to Payukotayno establishing itself in 1985 to a staff
8 compliment of some 65 fulltime people today.

9 I recall a time when I had just completed
10 high school. This is quite a number of years back now,
11 I guess -- I won't get into it -- but I recall that one
12 time we were visited by the education counsellor from North
13 Bay who came down and visited the graduates at the time
14 to determine whether they were going to go post secondary
15 education, what have you.

16 And at that time it was a real thing.

17 I seem to recall that when I graduated you could count
18 the number of high school graduates on one hand -- it's
19 a far cry from what we're putting out today.

20 Anyway, this individual came by and sat
21 down with myself and my parents and began discussing where
22 I would be attending school. And we talked about the

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1 alternatives of college, as opposed to university and his
2 recommendation was that -- he said, "I'd like to see you
3 go to university. I'd like to see you try. I think you
4 can do it." And we threw those two options around.

5 And I distinctly remember him saying
6 that -- he said, "You're looking for some kind of
7 guarantee." And he said -- he was fairly blunt and
8 straightforward -- he said, "You're only guaranteed of
9 two things in this life. One, that you're going to be
10 born and the other that you're going to die."

11 But he said there's some assurances that
12 you have. And this recommendation that I'm making is based
13 on those assurances. He said, "If I've learned anything,"
14 he said, "it is this -- and I'll give you the benefit of
15 my experience." He said, "Rule number one" -- he said,
16 "If I've learned anything about mankind," he said -- he
17 said, "Rule number one, as long as there's people in this
18 world, people are going to have problems." This is the
19 guy that wanted me to go to university and take up social
20 work, I believe. And being the sarcastic individual I
21 probably was at that time, I seem to recall asking him
22 -- and probably believing that I was the only individual

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1 in the room that had a monopoly on brains -- I asked him,
2 "What is rule number two?"

3 And he said, "Rule number two is, despite
4 everything, you can't change rule number one."

5 I don't think there was anything more
6 truthful.

7 I've been in this field for some 12
8 years. And when I began I seem to recall saying that,
9 "If we only had one more social worker we'd make a
10 difference." Well, we're 65 strong and, to this day, our
11 people still suffer from depression, social aggression,
12 social withdrawal, substance abuse, marriage problems and
13 child abuse.

14 I couldn't recall anything more truthful
15 that this guy had told me some 12 or 15 years previous.

16

17 I'm hoping that upon my departure that
18 somebody will be able to continue in hopefully achieving
19 some of the goals around meeting the needs of our people.

20 Certainly I spent a good portion of my young life trying
21 to meet the needs of our people.

22 I'd like to maybe finish and close my

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1 presentation here by maybe making some recommendations
2 in hopes that maybe they will be heard by our membership,
3 maybe that they'll be heard by our community leaders, maybe
4 that this Commission would have the capability of carrying
5 those recommendations forward and that something positive
6 will result from that.

7 I believe that there needs to be a
8 renewed interest in social services by our leaders. Too
9 often our shortcomings are tabled with little or no effort
10 made to initiate change.

11 There needs to be a thorough examination
12 on the direction of social services. There is a need to
13 examine alternatives, such as an option to examine federal
14 jurisdiction and the possible development and
15 implementation of a federal piece of legislation aimed
16 at social services for our people.

17 There has to be direct and continued
18 involvement by our local leaders in the service development
19 process so it's understood that their problems are our
20 problems.

21 I think if those simple, few
22 recommendations could be adhered to, that more progress

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1 will be made in terms of our efforts to realize the needs
2 of our people.

3 But, despite the hardships, the
4 achievements and drawbacks, I think there is much to be
5 said for the efforts made in what I consider to be the
6 first few steps toward self-determination as it relates
7 to social services.

8 I think at this point we're like infants
9 taking our first few steps, but I'm assured that the journey
10 will take us many places.

11 Thank you.

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

14 The 65 staff you have, how many are
15 aboriginal?

16 **ERNEST BECK:** I would say a good
17 portion, maybe 97 per cent.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** At least
19 what?

20 **ERNEST BECK:** At least 95, 97 per cent.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Oh, my.

22 Yes, very good.

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1 What has made you decide to quit social
2 work? You are going to enter politics, or what?

3 **ERNEST BECK:** I never really
4 anticipated getting into social work. In fact, when I
5 did take this individual up on his offer, I went to
6 university. I didn't get into social work, but I found
7 on my return that I accidentally stumbled into it.

8 And I guess, despite the hardships at
9 that time, I felt the need for my involvement there and
10 I kind of stuck with it. I've more or less, I guess, been
11 there ever since.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay,
13 I will see if any of the Commissioners have any comments
14 or questions.

15 Viola?

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No,
17 thank you.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** No?

19 Elder?

20 Thank you.

21 **ERNEST BECK:** Thank you.

22 **PAT CHILTON:** The next speaker is Peter

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1 Nakogee, the Chairman for the Moosonee -- I have here Town
2 Council -- I guess that makes him a mayor -- I guess we
3 have two mayors speaking tonight.

4 His Worship, Peter Nakogee.

5 **PETER NAKOGEE (through interpreter):**

6 I'd like to say a few comments on what
7 I was acquired to present to this Commission. I'd like
8 to use, first of all, my language. It was bestowed upon
9 the Great Spirit of our languages to us and my great
10 grandfather was one of the signatories of the 1905 treaty
11 and thereupon carried the activities and traditional
12 pursuits -- the traditional activities that was stated
13 within the treaty and agreement.

14 I was not allowed to speak the Cree
15 language -- severe punishment if I spoke the Cree language
16 -- today I'm using this language. It's no more longer
17 strange language to me because it was forced to me for
18 a long time and have been left in the -- hard to understand
19 it and I thank the Creator that give me that power to learn
20 another language. And today I'm using it for my leadership
21 who the Creator has appointed me through the votes of the
22 community of Moosonee.

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1 I would like to start off, Mr.
2 Co-Chairman, and I'm glad here to talk to you as a brother
3 and Viola Robinson as my sister, that you would take these
4 words that we have heard all day long to the governments
5 of our leaders of our white brothers that are controlling
6 our country, our Canada, to better establish a positive
7 relationship, a positive communication and to identify
8 their accountability to us and their roles and duties and
9 responsibilities that we have given them.

10 So, these are the things that I'm going
11 start off is to describe to you exactly how Moosonee is
12 about -- that came about.

13 And I'll start off and break down
14 locations -- local governments and break down to fully,
15 clearly understand where my leadership and how it has been
16 appointed to where I am today.

17 Location is Moosonee is a community
18 comprise with 1,800 people, located on the west side of
19 Moose River, just across here as you know, when you landed
20 at the airport.

21 The Moosonee Development Area Board
22 covers approximately 400 square kilometres. The local

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1 governmentship Moosonee has been managed by the M.D.A.B.
2 -- the short version of the Moosonee Development Area Board
3 since 1966. The M.D.A.B. is governed by seven member Board
4 of Directors, comprised of five natives and two white
5 people -- white brothers -- each of whom is appointed for
6 a three-year term and assumes responsibility for the
7 specific area of service.

8 The Board currently has a responsibility
9 for the airport -- and hopefully that you going to take
10 off safely from there, Mr. Co-Chairman. Public works,
11 when you use the utilities in Moosonee, Mr. Co-Chairman.

12 Recreation activities, not just in this
13 building, Mr. Co-Chairman, we also have replacing halls
14 that are more cheaper than this community here -- naw,
15 just kidding -- just kidding.

16 Fire safety. We also have provide that.
17 Planning and development and tourism that will be
18 effective at the end of June. And these seven people are
19 appointed by an Order in Council through the Province of
20 Ontario. Although we were voted by the public in Moosonee,
21 we still are appointed by the Order of Council.

22 The role of the community. Moosonee

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1 serves as resupply point for the Moosonee area and as a
2 staging point for the resupply to coast communities further
3 north. Construction materials, petroleum products, food
4 and consumer merchandises are the main commodities moving
5 through that community.

6 Moosonee also serves as a centre for
7 government services to the region, including federal
8 offices for Employment and Immigration, Atmospheric
9 Environment, provincial offices for Citizenship and
10 Culture, Community and Social Services, Education,
11 Environment, Government Services, Natural Resources,
12 Northern Affairs and Ontario Provincial Police.

13 At the present time there is about two
14 -- two O.P.P. native policemen in there, but we like to
15 see more native constables there to be administered by
16 the Moosonee Development Area Board. Will be later on
17 negotiated because of comprising of the native people there
18 is about 85-90 per cent native -- aboriginal people that
19 are living on all the reserve.

20 Social profile. The main language in
21 Moosonee is English with many native people speaking their
22 first language, Cree, and a small percentage of the

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1 residents are French-speaking people, who are the
2 transients that are controlling our institutions and
3 government services, which they hardly want to let go of
4 their power for us control it the way we want it. Our
5 ideas they needs to be done appropriately to our culture,
6 values, traditions and norms.

7 Moosonee is served by five churches,
8 Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Protestants and Fellowship
9 Church -- chapels.

10 There are a broad range of recreation
11 activities for children and adults, such as curling,
12 bowling, hockey, skating, swimming, baseball, et cetera
13 -- and I have all the awards in those areas -- just kidding.

14 A community centre, we have a community
15 centre with a rink in the wintertime, curling rink and
16 a meeting hall.

17 Employment situation in Moosonee. The
18 main employers in Moosonee are federal, provincial and
19 local governments and institutional employers, such as
20 schools and hospitals. Other full time employment is
21 generated by the community's resupply role with grocery
22 stores, hardware, lumber, petroleum, general merchandise,

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1 service industries, including Ontario Northland,
2 Aircreebec, Canadian Partner, Huisson Aviation, barge,
3 tractor, trains, hotels and restaurants. And these are
4 the major businesses and somehow ... seasonal work by
5 hunting, fishing, trapping, native arts, construction,
6 fire fighting and government make work projects.

7 Unemployment rate, wintertime goes up to 60 to 70 per cent.

8 In the summertime when tourists comes in ... unemployment
9 in the summertime is 20 to 30 per cent.

10 The health needs served by our clinic
11 with one fulltime doctor, fulltime beautiful nurses, as
12 well as fulltime ambulance drivers.

13 Mr. Co-Chairman, here are -- the
14 M.D.A.B. will continue to be active participants by
15 directing our energies towards being equal partners
16 committed to improving the quality of life for all
17 aboriginal people and encouraging development of positive
18 relationships. And this is also an idea for our government
19 to give us.

20 And here are the point-by-point things
21 that I would like to request to be constituted in our
22 constitution.

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1 That provide cultural empowerment as a
2 foundation for all aboriginal people.

3 The other part is that aboriginal people
4 are human beings, regardless of what the external
5 government process labels them as. For example, status,
6 non-status; treat, non-treaty; Metis and Bill C-31.

7 The other point, bridge gaps between
8 people and governments and/or organizations, creating
9 networking links developing common understanding between
10 the groups.

11 Respect the autonomy of the existing
12 aboriginal community organizational structures.

13 Also, reaffirm and redevelop
14 organizational structures and mandates while respecting
15 the modes of operation or each of the aboriginal
16 organizations.

17 Reinstitute a consensus model of
18 decision making in any matters affecting the lives of the
19 aboriginal people.

20 Provide culturally appropriate service
21 that endeavours to empower aboriginal people, families
22 and communities, based on our own values and norms.

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1 Ensure that all urban or other
2 aboriginal people have access to and participate in
3 programs and processes, decisions affecting them.

4 And also, of all those above that has
5 been mentioned, Mr. Co-Chairman, it comes to my conclusions
6 and recommendations.

7 Furthermore, relationships between
8 organizations, communities and governments need to be
9 addressed -- readdressed.

10 Urban people have expectations
11 regarding communication, interface, et cetera.

12 Urban people see a need for
13 aboriginal-owned and operated institutions in their
14 community and a need to discuss the issues of who will
15 be responsible for the service provision and jurisdiction.

16 The processes in the development of
17 nationhood and governance must encourage communication
18 and input. Forums must be available for people to feel
19 comfortable participating in, irrespective of residency.

20 And process in the development of
21 nationhood and governance must proceed on the basis of
22 our own cultural knowledge, rather than accepting other

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1 government's definitions of who we are, who we should be
2 and how we should work together.

3 These are the things that we would like
4 to see as the people that are living in the off-reserve
5 situation, Mr. Co-Chairman.

6 And that's all the written that I have.

7 If any other questions that you might
8 want to ask, you got the answers there.

9 Thank you.

10 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I may
11 not have heard the specific number of people on the Moosonee
12 Development Area Board. How many native and how many
13 non-native are there?

14 **PETER NAKOGEE:** In the board there is
15 about 90 to 85 aboriginal people and in the board of
16 directors is about 80 per cent, which is five natives and
17 two non-natives. And they're all working for the
18 betterment of the community as well as -- although, Mr.
19 Co-Chairman, we have problems because of living
20 off-reserve, we don't have the benefits of the things that
21 are the federal government's that we are entitled of.

22 For one thing, I understand that the

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1 housing is the problem. Today, in the present situation,
2 some of the houses that are there is 40 years old. But,
3 when you look at them, it looks it has been built yesterday.
4 But, it's infested with insects and the only way to
5 terminate them is to stomp them -- the insects.

6 Talking about abuse, our elders have
7 been abused many times. They had a housing for the elders
8 in Moosonee. Every three months the elders are kicked
9 out so they could spray chemicals to kill the cockroaches.
10 And this is an abuse to the elders and nothing has been
11 done about it.

12 Although I talked to the housing
13 authority of the premises, action has been taken on the
14 paper, but never been put into an action, although they
15 have put the work order and apparently the funding was
16 the main source of the delay. Like every other
17 organization, the funding is always the problem.

18 And, due to the deficit situations of
19 other organizations -- as the organization I'm
20 representing in the Friendship Centre that I'm executive
21 director to that -- I'd like these two organizations to
22 come into a solid foundation for deficit recovery, thanks.

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1 So, we cannot go anything too much at
2 this time, until next year when we have the money after
3 we have successfully come out of the deficit. This,
4 because of the previous predecessors that were there has
5 used my money in 1992.

6 So, I won't do that the way they have
7 treated me, because whoever's going to be my successor
8 I want to leave him some money when he takes over, not
9 to wait as I have been inherited the deficit -- it hurts
10 my community. And when that happens it jeopardizes your
11 coming here and landing at the airport. While we're in
12 deficit, you're in danger. That's exactly that's how it
13 is.

14 But I am there, don't worry.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I
16 certainly shall not.

17 I was following a certain line of
18 questioning there. You said "We are elected, but we are
19 appointed."

20 You are elected by the people and then
21 you are appointed by the government?

22 **PETER NAKOGEE:** Yes, sir, just like it

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1 says, sir.

2 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** By the
3 province?

4 **PETER NAKOGEE:** What happened is that
5 on the November -- it was on the December that the people
6 have elected the runners to be on the Board of Directors
7 in the Moosonee Development Area Board. These are elected
8 by the public, which are the residents of Moosonee.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could
10 I ask why it is called "The Development Area Board?"

11 Why is it not some kind of municipality?
12 Why is not a town, or a village?

13 **PETER NAKOGEE:** No, we don't want to be
14 classified as village, township, or city or metropolis
15 of some kind. The reason is that we want to eliminate
16 that 20 per cent taxes that the people are paying there,
17 not to go to the social services which, at the present
18 time, which is 100 per cent funded by that provincial
19 government subsidized by the Indian Affairs, according
20 to their agreement.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So, this
22 is an internal choice of the people living in Moosonee

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1 to operate this way -- okay.

2 **PETER NAKOGEE:** Yes, these are the --
3 at this time when we are in the co-operation we are in
4 a better situation. If we are classified as a village
5 or a township we would be disadvantaged in some ways.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Got it.
7 Great.

8 Anybody have any other questions for His
9 Worship?

10 **PETER NAKOGEE:** Thank you.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
12 you -- I think you are one of the first mayors that have
13 been presenting to us.

14 **PAT CHILTON:** Well, you go the first
15 mayor. Now there's a second one coming up.

16 You have Lawrence Martin, who is the
17 Executive Director of Wawatay Communications and also the
18 Mayor of Sioux Lookout, Ontario. He is a Cree from Moose
19 River -- from Moose Factory. He is a Cree mayor in Ojibway
20 territory.

21 **MAYOR MARTIN:** Thank you for the fine
22 introduction, Pat.

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1 I wonder, are you guys ready for a little
2 bit of exercise before we get started. Maybe you want
3 to stretch your arms up a little bit, like that?

4 Come on, come stretch out. You got to
5 exercise. You guys have been here all day. Ah, there
6 you go. This guy's right into it.

7 Okay, (native language - through
8 interpreter) ... very important, for allowing us to really
9 express our concerns and issues and the feelings of our
10 community and also to express some of the frustrations
11 that they have and things that they -- and at the same
12 time giving you directions how things should be done.

13 And, as for myself, well, I'm working
14 right now. I just wanted to outline some of the things
15 I'm still working on.

16 I am the Executive Director for Wawatay
17 and this is what the main communication system is about.
18 We do control and communicate in the area of television,
19 in the area of translation and also the radio. And also
20 we do some kind of education programs.

21 (English) ... Okay, we're doing two
22 hours of television and we doing radio programming that

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1 is running now at 30 hours a week and, of course, a newspaper
2 which is bilingual comes out once every two weeks.

3 Thus, Wawatay provides translations
4 into print and also into audio.

5 As well, we are doing community radio
6 installation and maintenance. We now have 35 community
7 radio stations on the network.

8 In the last couple of years we've been
9 able to get started in distance education -- it's too late
10 for the exercise, Georges -- however -- and this is
11 education -- we're now running high school courses from
12 grade 9 to grade 12, out of our radio station in Sioux
13 Lookout.

14 One of the specific things about my
15 presentation is that I like to at recommendations that
16 I'd like to see pursued by the Royal Commission, especially
17 in the area of communications.

18 When Wawatay began in the early 1970s
19 it was founded by the elders and the chiefs. And they
20 said that Wawatay would be looking at the communications
21 aspects of our Treaty 9, what we know now as Nishnawbe
22 Aski Nation.

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1 And that has our work since then, when
2 we started off small with trail radios for the hunters
3 and the fishermen and then getting the newspaper started
4 and then eventually moving in radio and television and
5 now distance education.

6 These have been major progresses that
7 we've been making and we feel very threatened by the
8 possibility of more cuts that take place -- which took
9 place two years ago -- which eliminated our funding for
10 newspapers and eliminated part of our funding for radio
11 and television.

12 But, despite those cuts from the
13 Department of the Secretary of State -- from some of our
14 friends that we are involved with -- however, those cuts
15 have not really stopped us in a sense because of the
16 commitment that the board has towards the kind of services
17 we're supposed to be providing to the Nishnawbe Aski
18 people.

19 And so we kept it up. And we kept up
20 doing the kinds of things we've always wanted to do --
21 with great difficulty, but still doing it.

22 And the cost of communications is very,

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1 very expensive because, when we're talking about
2 communications in northern Ontario, we have to use
3 satellite and our telephone costs are a lot higher in
4 northern Ontario than it is in southern Ontario.

5 Using satellite technology is no easy
6 task either. For instance, when we compare costs that
7 Wawatay receives from the Department of the Secretary of
8 State, we receive \$8,500 per hour to produce a program,
9 a one-hour television programming.

10 CBC, in the meantime, spends an average
11 of \$40,000 per hour and TVOntario spends \$90,000 per hour.

12 And yet, we're expected to do a lot more with less
13 resources.

14 So, we end up having to lose many of our
15 people to the National Film Board, or we lose them to CBC,
16 or we lose them to other mainstream industry which can
17 pay a lot more than Wawatay can -- right, Paul Rickard?

18 Now, these are the things that we work
19 with, then, and it's very vital to us to make sure that
20 communications comes out in the forefront of the
21 recommendations from the Royal Commission, because it is
22 part of the native society which is very important. It

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1 is important to be used, to be considered as a healing
2 process. Today, when we're conducting these
3 hearings here in Moose Factory you're being heard
4 throughout all the 35 communities that are hooked up to
5 the network. It's going out live. And it's a healing
6 process to me because we often hear our leaders saying,
7 "The healing must begin." But, there's not really any
8 kind of directive as to what that healing should be.

9 However, I define healing as a process
10 such as this, to be able to talk about the problems which
11 you have and to be able to share those with other people.

12 By sitting here all day today I learned
13 so many things, so many different aspects of our presenters
14 and what they said. Now, I'm able to contact them so that
15 we can continue the relationship that we uncovered here
16 today. That is part of the healing, to be able to talk
17 about it, so that we become more aware of the issues.
18 That is a healing process, just to be able to educate
19 ourselves of what is really happening. That's a part of
20 the healing process.

21 So, communications is very important,
22 and I cannot stress it enough.

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1 It's, of course, you know, part of the
2 social development that needs to happen.

3 In Wawatay we often run into
4 difficulties in dealing with certain controversial issues,
5 issues that were raised here today, about child abuse,
6 wife abuse, family violence, and so on. But sometimes
7 we have to take those risks and confront our leaderships
8 so that we can deal with them.

9 Sometimes leadership is reluctant to
10 deal with those and sometimes the role of communication
11 societies such as Wawatay must take a hand -- must take
12 a leading hand in those events and deal with them.

13 And so many times that I've been
14 receiving phone calls of being sued. They say, "We're
15 going to be suing Wawatay for this and for that." But
16 it's part of our job and we must deal them and we're dealing
17 with them, and this is the consequences.

18 However, those are the things we must
19 keep on doing.

20 And, you know, back when Wawatay was
21 started, it was a very smart move for the elders and for
22 the native leaders back then to say that Wawatay will be

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1 separate from the political party of Treaty 9, it will
2 be separate. Wawatay will look after the communications
3 of man, rather than be part of what the chiefs were doing.
4 And, today, we're still having that relationship.

5 Today we can still report on the things
6 that the chiefs are doing, not to be married to them, but
7 to be able to understand the issues, because we're the
8 ones that are operating the equipment. We're the ones
9 that are going after the stories. And we need to maintain
10 that relationship, so that there is that accountability
11 to the people. And accountability means that people will
12 be able to make those kinds of judgments in a much proper
13 sense.

14 Those are the kinds of things that we've
15 been involved in and very happy to be working in this kind
16 of environment.

17 The mandate for Wawatay says that we must
18 bring the languages and the cultures back through
19 communications. And this is what we've been trying to
20 do.

21 We interview elders like Tom and many
22 other people, as you've heard here last night and tonight,

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1 as part of the teachings. And we use communication tools
2 -- such as television and radio -- especially for this
3 kind of purpose.

4 So, it's very important that we have
5 communications to be recommended as a vital part to
6 whatever else is happening.

7 And today, when you look at technology
8 and the way it's changing, it's progress into more
9 advancements, I get so excited, because I try to apply
10 the new technology as soon as it comes out,

11 Lately it's been the two-way video
12 conferencing, such as what you see on national TV -- on
13 the Journal, especially, when people are talking to each
14 other and they see each other when they talk to each other.

15 Last year we were experimenting with
16 that project. And in talking to many people across Canada
17 -- Georges, I believe we had spoke to you as well -- and
18 I got so excited I was going home right after that, back
19 to my grandmother's place. And I said, "... there's this
20 new technology, you should see it. And we can talk to
21 each other. We can see each other over all these miles."

22 And she said, "Well, that's nothing," she said, "because

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1 your grandfather used to do that. He used to use a shaking
2 tent and his sweat lodge. He used to be able to do those
3 kinds of things." She said, "Can you guys speak to the
4 spirits? Can you speak to the animals?" I said, "No."
5 She said, "Well, you're not there yet. You know, you
6 still got a long ways to go."

7 And, to me, that always sticks in my
8 mind, because the work that Wawatay does, because of the
9 history of how government and how religion had been playing
10 a part in taking away those kinds of our people, those
11 are facts and those are things that the elders are often
12 afraid to talk about.

13 But yet, in the back of their minds, or
14 once in a while, they will talk to some of our young people
15 about it. And those are the kinds of things that native
16 communications play. They replace those kinds of
17 communication tools.

18 In the area of language, which is another
19 recommendation I'd like to press, of course aboriginal
20 languages to be entrenched into the Canadian Constitution.

21 It's been said many times -- and certainly I'd like to
22 say that again, just to support that.

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1 It is very vital to the survival of our
2 culture. You've heard that many times also. And I can
3 see it. I could see the role that we had played in Wawatay
4 in bringing the Ojibway and the Ojicree (phonetic) and
5 the Cree languages together by being heard in northern
6 Ontario Nishnawbe Aski Nation area.

7 By speaking in our own languages we're
8 able to understand each other better and we're able to
9 communicate and to be able to do the things we should be
10 doing together as partners.

11 So, the language is a very important
12 part. And, of course, each language across Canada has
13 to be worked on, has to be revitalized, has to be
14 maintained, has to be promoted, because we just can't give
15 up and say, "There's too many languages." Well, that's
16 B.S. We can't just stop there. We have to work on it,
17 because it's a very important part, important part of what
18 our leaders are doing today in working with the
19 constitution and working our people -- to be more involved
20 in the whole country.

21 In my time by being able to be involved
22 in Wawatay -- I am from Moose Factory, from the Moose

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1 Factory area. My first language is Cree. But, by working
2 with Wawatay and being exposed to Ojibway and to the
3 Saulteaux languages I now can speak and understand those
4 languages. I have become versed in those different
5 languages and be able to understand them.

6 Now, I can go to a conference, a national
7 language conference, and be able to understand the
8 Atikonake (phonetic) and the Montagne (phonetic) and the
9 James Bay Cree, the Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta --
10 all the way to the Rockies and it feels so wonderful to
11 be able to understand everybody.

12 But it comes to being exposed to that
13 language and being to hear it on television and Wawatay
14 TV and especially on Wawatay radio. Like, to be exposed
15 to it is very, very vital and that's what -- again, brings
16 me back to the issue and idea of communications to be a
17 big part of what we're trying to do.

18 And, as well in the language area, it's
19 important to look at it from the changes that are going
20 on in the world so that we look at ourselves as
21 international human beings, that we are global. Because,
22 if you take a look around today where you're sitting, that

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1 chair was probably made somewhere -- maybe in Germany and
2 that camera over here was probably made in Japan. And
3 something else is made in some other country by some other
4 culture.

5 Whether we know, whether we agree with
6 or not, we are already being exposed to other cultures
7 around us. And it's an important factor in how deal with
8 ourselves as people, as aboriginal people, but also how
9 we deal with ourselves as Canadians, as people in North
10 America.

11 We are already in that sphere, that
12 global sphere and we just have to look around and become
13 part of it. And, in the process, many times we become
14 bicultural people. We cannot just stay within the
15 language group or stay within the one tradition. We can
16 hang onto everything that we have, that we have brought
17 up with, but we do not drop our languages because we are
18 now going to be learning how to speak English.

19 To learn other languages doesn't mean
20 you drop the one that you have. And that's a very important
21 factor to remember, to become bicultural, because that's
22 the way the world is shaping up, and that's the way

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1 everybody is doing business around the world. There's
2 only one way of doing business around the world, and we
3 must also be versed in that and be prepared for that.

4 In the area of education, again I'd like
5 to emphasize the importance of education.

6 I mentioned the distance education that
7 we're now involved in, delivering high school courses to
8 the communities in the Sioux Lookout area, high school
9 courses in which we make sure that there is native languages
10 being taught, that there are native studies, native studies
11 that are produced by our teachers so that it involved native
12 people making up the curriculum.

13 It involves the native history from a
14 native perspective. It involves the kinds of things that
15 you never see in the regular elementary schools, high
16 schools, universe -- maybe universities now are starting
17 to get to that -- but certainly it's a part that's been
18 missing. And we're doing that.

19 And that's what's really important is
20 that we're doing it. But we also have to include the true
21 history of our people and we must make sure that in the
22 general education Canadian system that the history of our

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1 people is in there, that the history of our treaties --
2 you take a look in this area of Treaty 9 that was signed
3 in 1905 -- that's very important but very, very few people
4 know of it, understand it. And those are the kinds of
5 things that have to be in there.

6 And that when we are devising our own
7 education system, as we take over our own education system
8 for the communities, that we don't just stop there, that
9 we promote, whether those be in books, or in video form,
10 audio form, or in data form, they be promoted also into
11 the urban centres and to the mainstream society so you
12 have the native history written in an elementary school
13 that the teachers are using in downtown Toronto, or in
14 other urban centres.

15 Those are the kinds of things that we
16 must be looking at.

17 Maybe just some other comments I'd like
18 to make.

19 In regards to the Royal Commission, I
20 guess the thing that really bothers me is that there is
21 really still a lack of understanding of the Commission
22 in general in the communities all over the place, and that

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1 we cannot just take it for granted that we are the Royal
2 Commission and here we are coming to town, let's hear your
3 problems and let's see what we can do.

4 I still see a real big need for more PR,
5 public relations that has to happen. More work has to
6 be done by the Commission in promoting itself to the
7 communications -- through the communications societies
8 into the communities.

9 I've received calls, you know, saying,
10 "Oh, I saw your name," this one guy told me the other day,
11 "that you're going to be making a presentation to the Royal
12 Commission. What is it anyways?" And this guy is a
13 counsellor for one of the bands around the area. And I
14 was quite surprised because, you know, there's been some
15 promotion here that's been happening, but there isn't
16 enough.

17 And we have to remember, too, when we're
18 trying to promote ourselves in the communities we have
19 to look at not just sticking to using print. Many of our
20 people don't use print. You have to look at other means,
21 such as radio and television, to be able to promote those
22 things. And so there has to be, I believe, a little bit

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1 of work in that.

2 And, like I said at the beginning, I see
3 this process as a healing process. And I see the need
4 for it to continue, as long as you can make your budgets
5 last, make your mandate last, that these kind of hearings
6 keep going, because these are the times that you need to
7 find out.

8 I know this is the first round, but there
9 has to be more rounds, certainly after some time, and we
10 have to keep this going, because this is part of the
11 education that needs to happen to the mainstream society
12 and to look for, you know, the kinds of presentations that
13 people brought together today, to look for different groups
14 that are not normally represented, not just leadership,
15 but certainly the common people, the people who are not
16 involved.

17 There's a awful lot of work that has to
18 be done in that.

19 It was mentioned by Pat that I'm the
20 Mayor of Sioux Lookout. Well, that is still true -- at
21 least it was true when I left yesterday. And what I'm
22 finding as mayor, I'm often confronted by the non-native

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1 public of Sioux Lookout asking me about the issues. What
2 are these issues that, you know, that are being talked
3 about in the constitution with regard to aboriginal people?
4 What do they mean?

5 And I find myself explaining these
6 issues as best as I can. But that just goes to show to
7 me of the need to really try and educate the non-native
8 public about these issues, that we just cannot talk amongst
9 ourselves about what our problems are, and we cannot talk
10 about the government being involved in it -- I mean, we
11 are the government -- we're supposed to be in this country,
12 a democratic country -- we are the government. And we
13 are part of that problem, if we don't do something about
14 it.

15 I hope that when you do make our next
16 round that you'll coming to Sioux Lookout and I'll make
17 sure that we get a real cross-section of different people
18 from the community to make the presentations to you.

19 But, in being a mayor and being able to
20 deal with certain issues, you know, environmental issues,
21 the kind of teachings that I was able to get when I was
22 growing up from my elders in Moose River, and to be able

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1 to utilize those in dealing with the issues is very, very
2 important. They seem to be able to have a different
3 perspective and that's what's important to have native
4 people become more involved in these kind of environment.

5 As whether the municipal government and provincial and
6 federal, that's the only way we can really get people to
7 understand that they are making decisions based on their
8 background and what they do know.

9 And hopefully in those three areas,
10 education, communication and in the language, I hope that
11 those are the kinds of things we will be able to see as
12 part of the recommendations.

13 And so, with that, I say thank you again
14 and I'm really glad you're down here.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
16 you for your very clear presentation.

17 Is there any comments or questions from
18 anyone?

19 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I
20 have no questions.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
22 you.

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1 **MAYOR MARTIN:** Thank you.

2 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** We are
3 going to take a brief break. I think we have a lot of
4 time -- it's a long way from 5:30. I think there was a
5 typing mistake. They had 5:30 p.m., but I think they meant
6 5:30 a.m., so we've got lots of time.

7

8 (SHORT RECESS)

9

10 **PAT CHILTON:** Okay, we made just a quick
11 switch here on the agenda, the Student Services -- the
12 students will be there first, John Beck, Allan Hunter and
13 Gaby Bird.

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

15 Whenever your are ready.

16 **JOHN BECK:** To the Commissioners, my
17 name is John Beck. I'm an education consultant,
18 currently working with the Moose Cree Education Authority.

19 I've been asked to address you today,
20 however, by the Board of Directors of our regional body,
21 "Kiskinnohamakaywi Weecheehitowin," or Mushkegowuk
22 Education. "Kiskinnohamakaywi Weecheehitowin," means

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1 working together in education.

2 Our regional body has no inherent
3 authority. It is a creation of the communities, under
4 the sponsorship of the Board of Chiefs.

5 For five years we have been designing
6 the terms of reference for this organization. It is a
7 service and support unit which recognizes local community
8 control as a fundamental principle. It provides service
9 in three areas.

10 Support to students is provided by
11 Mushkegowuk Student Services in Timmins. A staff of five
12 provides social, recreational, placement home counselling
13 to approximately 100 secondary school students. This
14 counselling unit was established through a partnership
15 between the Timmins Board of Education and our First
16 Nations.

17 And just last week we dedicated the
18 Francine J. Wesley Student Centre in Timmins, where
19 students can go for the homework club, or for watching
20 videos, playing pool, shuffleboard, cards, or just
21 socializing.

22 Two of the students are here to speak

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1 for themselves when I am completed.

2 I hope that the Commission will be able
3 to visit Timmins and to talk to our staff and students
4 at some point.

5 Support to teachers and counsellors will
6 be provided through a decentralized model with a
7 co-ordinator and three classroom resource teachers. The
8 federal and provincial governments will, we hope, co-fund
9 this proposal. It will see three educational specialists
10 located in Peawanuck, Kashechewan, Moosonee and Moose
11 Factory this fall.

12 One of the specialists will provide
13 expertise in native studies and culture. He or she does
14 not necessarily need to have a teaching certificate and
15 will be Cree.

16 The other two, who will have expertise
17 in math and science, reading, ESL, language arts. These
18 specialists will be on a one-year assignment, so that we
19 don't build a bureaucracy which is not responsive to the
20 needs of schools and of teachers.

21 While based in the three communities,
22 these specialists will travel to two or three other schools

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1 to assist them. In addition, in February, each of them
2 will organize a concurrent two-day workshop, or conference
3 for teachers. Again, decentralized in our communities.

4 A copy of this proposal can be provided,
5 if you wish.

6 Another focus of this service is teacher
7 training. Ontario is 15 years behind the rest of Canada
8 in providing community-based native teacher training.
9 Some of our communities are currently sending people to
10 Brandon, Manitoba, for teacher training. We hope to soon
11 see a program in our own region. However, through a
12 partnership among the Moose Cree Education Authority,
13 Mushkegowuk Education and Queen's and Trent Universities,
14 this part of our organization is a partnership between
15 participating First Nations and education authorities,
16 provincial school boards and universities because, by
17 working together, we can accomplish much more.

18 It is, however, native controlled by a
19 board of directors representing the Mushkegowuk
20 communities.

21 The third arm of our organization
22 provides support to education authorities. For example,

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1 in board training and benefit plans for staff.

2 Indian Affairs has indicated that it
3 will not fund this part of our operations, unless it is
4 rolled in with the federal/provincial pilot project.
5 Ontario sees this as offloading, so we are currently
6 approaching a stalemate.

7 We evaluated the local campus of
8 Northern College a few years ago and submitted a report
9 to the president. We proposed that the Mushkegowuk First
10 Nations collectively take over the governance of the
11 Moosonee Campus. While some community colleges, such as
12 Cambrian, in Sudbury, are making great strides to promote
13 aboriginal aspirations, this is not the case with Northern
14 College.

15 The Mushkegowuk communities have formed
16 a common front with Wabini Tribal Council, Ontario Meti
17 Association, Ontario Native Women's Association,
18 friendship centres and students to address this and other
19 concerns.

20 A visit to Timmins would confirm that
21 problems which exist there. And you've already had the
22 opportunity and the privilege to hear Miss Greta Gunner,

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1 President of Northern College Native Student Association
2 address the panel earlier.

3 Four of our communities, the four who
4 are north of Moosonee, have assumed control of their
5 on-reserve schools over the past three years. Here in
6 Moosonee and Moose Factory the schools are subject to
7 provincial rules and regulations. In our particular case,
8 even though we provide two-thirds of the students,
9 two-thirds of the funding to Winisk (phonetic) School,
10 we only are allowed two trustees on a board of five.

11 Even though our schools look modern,
12 they are overcrowded and our students are probably the
13 only ones in Canada who have to go to school by helicopter,
14 an inherently dangerous practice, especially at low
15 altitudes.

16 In Fort Albany, even under local
17 control, the children are still forced to attend school
18 in a former residential school where their parents were
19 brutalized culturally, physically, sexually, because
20 Indian Affairs does not recognize this as a factor in
21 prioritizing new schools.

22 That is a summary of some of the issues

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1 in our region, Commissioners, and I would be glad to answer
2 any questions, prior to introducing the students.

3 Meegwetch.

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

5 Perhaps it would be best to hear from
6 the students and then we will just open it up.

7 **ALLAN HUNTER:** Good evening, ladies and
8 gentlemen.

9 First of all we'd like to introduce
10 ourselves. My name is Allan Hunter and right here with
11 me is Gaby Bird. We're both students from Peawanuck and
12 going to school in Timmins High.

13 We're here to represent the Mushkegowuk
14 Student Services. And the purpose for the student
15 services is to support the native students that attend
16 high school in Timmins.

17 The Mushkegowuk Student Services is
18 native controlled. It is in the fourth year of operation.

19 And the board of directors are the staff and education
20 directors from the Mushkegowuk communities.

21 We are very pleased to be here to
22 represent some of the concerns of our generations.

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1 **GABY BIRD:** The first topic that we want
2 to bring up is the treaty. We know for a fact that the
3 Treaty Commissioners misrepresented themselves in 1905
4 and again in 1930, when the Winisk First Nations entered
5 our treaty. One of the Treaty Commissioners, D.C. Scott,
6 admits that a treaty was only explained in very simple
7 terms. Persons who trusted and respected as interpreters
8 and advisors, particularly the clergy, were their
9 accomplices.

10 In our oral culture a promise from a
11 respected and powerful person was trusted. We celebrated
12 an agreement with a handshake, tobacco, speeches, gift
13 giving and a feast, not with a signature on a written
14 document.

15 After the treaty was signed the
16 government started ruling us. We had no say in anything.
17 We were forced to speak English and the aboriginal people
18 think that -- we natives are not listened by the government,
19 because we're aboriginal and they think we're secondhand
20 -- and the government don't really understand the native
21 way of life up north, because it's really a different
22 society from where they are.

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1 At one time, in the early '70s and late
2 '80s that the Winisk First Nations asked if they could
3 relocate and the government said "No, wait." But, in order
4 for us to move we had to lose two lives, so which means
5 that they don't really listen to us.

6 The students of the Mushkegowuk Student
7 Services think to make a better Canada that all Canadians
8 should be educated on native culture and history, so
9 they'll know how we lived before the Europeans arrived
10 and how we live today. And they would notice how quickly
11 we changed from the time when the Europeans came.

12 I'm saying this because there is some
13 non-native people that don't anything about the first
14 people in Canada. I remember when I was in grade 6, the
15 only native student in the class in Timmins, and the teacher
16 asked me what I was doing for Christmas. And I answered
17 her by saying I was going home for Christmas back to Winisk.

18 And one of the students said, "By dog sled?" And I asked
19 the kid if he was serious and he said he was.

20 And the only way to eliminate -- so
21 non-native people understand the natives better is to
22 educate them.

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1 When I first came to Timmins it was in
2 grade 3 and there used to be lots of racism towards me
3 'cause I was like -- there was not many natives in Timmins
4 -- and they would say things like, "Go back to the swamp,
5 you savage." And I'd cry and I would want to go back to
6 the reserve and at the same time I didn't want to, because
7 of the alcohol and violence.

8 And one day the principal called me into
9 his office and he told me not to give up. He told me that
10 the students were ignorant about the native culture and
11 history. Even today they're still ignorant.

12 Some students still think we still
13 travel by dog sled and hunt with bow and arrows. And there
14 is still lots of racism towards natives because the white
15 society is very ignorant about the native culture and
16 history.

17 The only way to eliminate the racism and
18 ignorance is to educate the white society about native
19 education at an early age. Because, the first time I
20 learned -- they taught native history when I was going
21 to school in Timmins was in grade 8 and that was just small
22 things like we were just there and showed them how to live.

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1 And they never really talked about anything important.

2 And after that there was nothing.

3 And when I got into high school it was
4 just like courses you had to choose. They weren't
5 compulsory courses, you just had to choose them. And they
6 should, like I said, start at an early age teaching the
7 non-natives about the natives at an early age.

8 That's all I just wanted to say.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
10 you, the three of you, for your presentation.

11 I am going to see if the Commissioners
12 here want to ask you any questions, before I get into it.

13 Viola, do you want to start? Do you have
14 any?

15 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** No, I
16 don't think I have any.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay,
18 anybody else? -- okay.

19 The student services that you are
20 providing, do you feel that the program you have is adequate
21 to cover the needs of the native students? Or, if you
22 had more resources, would you do more?

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1 **MR. BECK:** The program presently
2 offered in Timmins is co-ordinated by a native individual
3 actually from here, from Moose Factory. And there are
4 home visits. And, relating to my own experience when I
5 was out in high school, the non-native counsellor never
6 once in the four years I was out at high school living
7 in a boarding home, never once stepped in my boarding home
8 and discussed the issues, or discussed the environment
9 I was living in.

10 While as the students now -- the two
11 students that you have before you and other students that
12 attend Timmins High -- have counsellors that visit with
13 the boarding home parents.

14 We have a boarding home parent that came
15 and escorted the boys here today. And they have a
16 committee and they're quite involved in trying to meet
17 -- address the needs of the students, address some of the
18 problems in terms of alcohol and peer pressure and all
19 the things that young adolescents face -- especially when
20 they're away from home, especially when they are, for the
21 first time, going into an area or an environment where
22 ultimately they're into culture shock and into

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1 homesickness.

2 And so, yes, the services have greatly
3 improved and hopefully will continue to improve.

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** They
5 are in a boarding situation
6 -- they are in a residence?

7 **MR. BECK:** No, individual homes.

8 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:**
9 Individual homes -- okay.

10 Is this the ideal situation that the
11 communities along the James Bay coast want to continue
12 to work with, they just want to beef this up? Or are there
13 alternatives that are also being considered?

14 **MR BECK:** No, I believe that the leaders
15 in each community feel that the ideal situation is the
16 have their own high schools, right in their own communities
17 by which, at this time because of lack of capital dollars,
18 they cannot build the facilities that they need in their
19 individual communities and, because of the restrictions
20 of funding from Indian and Northern Affairs, they cannot
21 meet those needs at that time.

22 So, they're making the best with what

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1 they have in Timmins and they are at the same time working
2 towards developing grade 9 and grade 10 courses in some
3 of the communities, right at this time.

4 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** All
5 right.

6 Now, this Northern College we have been
7 hearing about all day long, it seems like there is a move
8 to form a common front to take it over by aboriginal people
9 in this area collectively.

10 Is that something that is likely to
11 occur? Or is that something that is going to take a very
12 long time to convince the authorities to hand over?

13 **MR. BECK:** Hopefully, it will occur.
14 I can't say exactly when and I can't say if it will be
15 likely to occur, but that is our aspiration. They do have
16 a campus in Moosonee and the directors of (native
17 language), or Mushkegowuk Education, would like to take
18 over Northern College Campus in Moosonee, so that they
19 could provide courses that are relevant to the needs of
20 the individual communities.

21 And one of those right now that they are
22 seriously looking at would be native teacher training and

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1 they would, of course, need the facilities for the teacher
2 and classroom facilities for the students, and also
3 accommodations of some proportion.

4 So, in the very near future that is their
5 aspiration, that they would take over the -- this college,
6 it doesn't seem to be wanting to address the needs of the
7 various communities. It continues to ignore the requests
8 and the presentations. And so the board is doing their
9 best to help the student associations in addressing those
10 problems -- to the
11 President and to the Board of Governors.

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

13 You suggested if we do come to Timmins
14 we would take a look for ourselves.

15 We have not finalized the different
16 communities that we will be going to in northern Ontario
17 when we come back, but it seems fairly likely that, in
18 addition to trying to see smaller communities, that a
19 community like Timmins might be visited.

20 But we have not settled on all the
21 communities in the country that we will be visiting.

22 So, if we do come to Timmins, we

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1 certainly will try and make sure that things like the
2 Northern College and your programs are looked into.

3 I was a little curious. How often do
4 the students get home? I mean, you know, having to leave
5 their communities to go to high school, how often do you
6 get a chance to get home and see your parents?

7 **ALLAN HUNTER:** Christmas, you go home
8 for two weeks -- at least two to three weeks. And on March
9 break there is at least a week, and in June there's --
10 it's for the summer. You go back in September.

11 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Are you
12 off now? Or is it in a few weeks? Or when do you break
13 in June? At the end of June? Middle of June?

14 **ALLAN HUNTER:** At the end of June.

15 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Okay,
16 thank you for coming all the way here and making a
17 presentation to us. I hope we have not caused you to miss
18 your flight, but we have not reached 5:30 yet, so I am
19 sure you are okay.

20 **PAT CHILTON:** The next presenter, we
21 have Wilbert McLeod from the Moose Factory Claimant Group.

22 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** It looks

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1 like you are coming for a long stay.

2 **WILBERT McLEOD:** First of all, I should
3 mention that this claim was first presented in May, of
4 1986, to both levels of government and, since then, we've
5 been communicating. And at this present time we've got
6 sort of a deadlock. So at the present time we don't know
7 which way we'll be going.

8 So, this is one of the reason we're
9 having this presentation, to sort of look for some
10 guidelines from the Commissioners and see which way we
11 can go from here.

12 Ms. Robinson, Mr. Erasmus, dear
13 Commissioners, my name is Wilbert McLeod and I represent
14 the Moose Factory Claimant Group. Our grandparents were
15 arbitrarily excluded from Treaty No. 9 in 1905 by the Treaty
16 Commissioners.

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

18 Excuse me, could you bring the mike a
19 little closer to you and turn it on, if it's not on, please?

20 **WILBERT McLEOD:** It is on, yes.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Good.

22 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Ours is perhaps one of

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1 the best documented claims, but we are still getting the
2 runaround.

3 Back at the turn of the century it was
4 recognized that people of mixed European and aboriginal
5 ancestry could either be recognized as "Metis" and receive
6 script, or as "Indians" and be included in treaty.

7 In his book "The Last Stand of the
8 Lubicon Cree," John Goddard shows how this principle was
9 conveniently forgotten many years later, when an Indian
10 Affairs bureaucrat struck dozens of Indians off the band
11 lists. These officials were almost like gods, because
12 they wielded enormous power and were unaccountable to
13 anyone.

14 When Treaty No. 9 was still in the
15 planning stage, Clifford Sifton, the federal Minister of
16 the day, received a report recommending "if any claims
17 be made by halfbreeds, as distinguished from Indians, the
18 Province to grant 160 acres to each of such persons."
19 But, when the Treaty was finally worked out between the
20 federal and provincial governments, so-called halfbreeds
21 were left out.

22 So the Treaty Commissioners arrived in

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1 James Bay in 1905 with no instructions on how to deal with
2 our grandparents.

3 Before coming to Moose Factory, they
4 came down the Albany River to what we refer to as "Old
5 Post." There they included over 30 people of mixed
6 ancestry into the Treaty, the Louttit, Linklater, Faries
7 and Hunter families. And when they arrived at Moose
8 Factory it was a different story.

9 On August 10, 1905, the Morrisons,
10 McLeods, Moores and others, like the Gunners and Taylors
11 who they represented, were told by the Treaty Commissioners
12 that they could not join the Treaty. It was not because
13 they were of mixed ancestry, and it was not because they
14 worked for the Hudson Bay Company -- because this described
15 their counterparts at Fort Albany -- it was nothing more
16 than the arbitrary power of officials.

17 These officials must have told our
18 grandparents to write a petition to the provincial
19 government, because this is what they did. Indian Affairs
20 forwarded the petition to the Conservative government in
21 Toronto, but the province sent it back to Ottawa saying,
22 "the petitioners probably mean" the federal government.

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1 Indian Affairs sent it back explaining,
2 "the halfbreed title is of the same nature as the Indian
3 title ... They were refused treaty
4 by the Commissioners on the grounds
5 that they were not living the
6 Indian mode of life."

7 This will sound familiar to those of you
8 who followed the court case of the Crees of Quebec.
9 Government lawyers tried to prove that the Crees were no
10 longer Indian because they ate Kentucky Fried Chicken in
11 Val d'Or. It was the same for the Lubicon Cree. But the
12 issue should be very simple: Nobody else should be telling
13 us, then or now, who we are.

14 To return to the story of 1905, Indian
15 Affairs went on to say to the province,
16 "The only thing that might be done for these people is
17 to admit them into the Indian
18 treaty if you thought advisable to
19 do so; but as they are residents
20 of the Province and would come
21 under the same category as the rest
22 of your Indian adherents of Treaty No.

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1 9 and would be paid by your
2 Government, it is a matter which
3 you [Ontario] will have to decide."

4 The archives show that the province
5 considered allowing our grandparents 160 acres of land,
6 but this offer was never conveyed to them.

7 I should explain that the treaty money
8 (\$4 per year) is paid by Indian Affairs, but the province
9 gets invoiced for this cost, under the terms of pre-treaty
10 agreement between the two governments. This is why the
11 federal government passed the decision back to the
12 province. The federal government was willing; it was up
13 to the province.

14 And we're still bouncing back and forth.

15
16 When we wrote to Indian Affairs we were
17 told that to have a claim we would have to prove we were
18 a functioning society at the time of first contract, a
19 tough job for people of mixed ancestry. So we turned to
20 the province.

21 In the late 1980s the province gave us
22 some money to compile a community profile. Ontario's

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1 Native Affairs Directorate published a study on us,
2 labelling us as "Metis."

3 We call ourselves the Claimant Group.
4 Our grandfathers were arbitrarily excluded from the
5 treaty. We consider ourselves to be Indians.

6 We contacted Bud Wildman in May, of 1991,
7 and asked him to intervene on our behalf. He replied on
8 July the 3rd, 1991, stating:

9 "The issues which you raise ... are really issues which
10 the federal government must
11 address. While Ontario was
12 represented at the time of treaty
13 making, it did not have the
14 constitutional authority to take
15 the surrender. Ontario's
16 presence in the treaty process was
17 a recognition of the fact that it
18 would become the beneficiary of any
19 lands surrendered through the
20 treaty. It is the federal
21 government that took the treaty and
22 it is the federal government that

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1 has the responsibility to deal with
2 matters of Indian status and
3 reserve lands. I would encourage
4 you, therefore, to present your
5 request to the Minister of Indian
6 and Northern Affairs. If the
7 federal Minister responds
8 positively, I would be prepared to
9 consider what Ontario could do to
10 be of assistance."

11 In 1905 the federal government told the
12 province that it was up to them to recognize us as Indians.
13 Now, the province says, "Don't call us."

14 In June, of 1990, I had the honour of
15 travelling to Stromness in the Orkney Islands with Reg
16 Louttit, who was then Chief of Attawapiskat. I guess our
17 ancestors were what they call "Orkney Crees," a combination
18 of two nations of people.

19 Reg was welcomed with open arms by the
20 Orkney Louttits who told him, "You're no stranger here
21 with a name like that."

22 I met a family of McLeods who had hosted

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1 my late father when he visited there to make the National
2 Film Board production "Fiddlers of James Bay." Reg and
3 I have two ancestries, but he grew up as an Indian and
4 I grew up as a "white status." We were not allowed to
5 set nets in the river or hunt geese in the spring, as our
6 ancestors had done for thousands of years.

7 It did not stop us, but it made it
8 difficult.

9 When the reserve was surveyed here on
10 the island in the 1950s (1940s) my father was moved off
11 his land and we suddenly realized we were different.

12 Since Bill C-31, most of the Claimant
13 Group have been reinstated as Indians belonging to various
14 bands. Not living on reserve, however, we do not enjoy
15 most of the benefits of Indian status.

16 One of your mandates is to examine the
17 history of relations between aboriginal peoples, the
18 Canadian government and Canadian society. You also are
19 charged with making recommendations about the process for
20 resolving claims and implementing treaties, and the
21 special difficulties of aboriginal people living in the
22 north.

StenoTran

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1 We have a well documented and
2 outstanding claim for compensation. Two governments keep
3 bouncing us back and forth.

4 We're now again considering our options,
5 which include the Indian Specific Claims Commission.
6 Eighty-seven years ago other Commissioners refused to
7 recognize us as a distinct community of people with
8 inherent rights. We intend to see ourselves recognized
9 as a community, and would appreciate any suggestions you
10 may have about other avenues which we could pursue.

11 Meegwech!

12 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

13 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** That
14 is quite a story you have. Amazing.

15 Well, we will certainly deal with it in
16 a number of ways. You end up by saying that you are
17 considering the Indians Specific Claims Commission.

18 Are you going to be doing that?

19 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Well, as I said at the
20 start, we are sort of at deadlock at the present time and
21 we're considering going in which avenue we think is best.

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

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1 you met with the new provincial government since Bob Rae
2 has got elected, to see if you would be treated any
3 different by the province?

4 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Not since we wrote to
5 Bud Wildman.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Not
7 since?

8 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Bud Wildman.

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You have
10 met with Bob Wildman?

11 **WILBERT McLEOD:** We only wrote to him,
12 we didn't meet with him. The letter which I quoted was
13 the letter that he wrote to us after we wrote to him.

14 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I did
15 not quite understand that.

16 **WILBERT McLEOD:** We wrote to Bud Wildman
17 in the summer of '91.

18 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes.

19 **WILBERT McLEOD:** And that was his
20 response which I read in the presentation.

21 He sort of told us, "go back to the
22 federal government, we can't deal with you."

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1 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** And the
2 federal government is still giving you the same story?

3 **WILBERT McLEOD:** That's right.

4 So we go from one government and then
5 go back to the other. And we just keep flip flopping back
6 and forth.

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

8 **WILBERT McLEOD:** So, what we're hoping
9 to accomplish here is to get some sort of
10 -- I guess help from you, or whoever you can recommend,
11 but with some guidelines that we could use.

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

13 Any comments or questions?

14 Viola?

15 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** You say
16 that you do have a well documented claim, I guess --

17 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Yes -- in fact, I have
18 a copy here of the report which was done by the native
19 directorate.

20 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:**

21 Right.

22 **WILBERT McLEOD:** And if you want a copy,

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1 I can certainly --

2 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** We would
3 appreciate that. And certainly your presentation is one
4 that is quite typical oftentimes, you know, when aboriginal
5 people try to present claims to government, you know,
6 nobody wants -- they want to push people off as much as
7 possible.

8 But certainly, I do not know if you have
9 ever considered the courts?

10 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Actually, we've spoken
11 about the courts, but we tried to go the other way first.

12 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** It i
13 best to negotiate, yes --

14 **WILBERT McLEOD:** So, as a last resort,
15 I guess, we probably would have to --

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Yes,
17 that is the last resort.

18 Well, hopefully, you know, if you
19 provide us with your claim and -- and you are right, you
20 know, we do have all these mandates and it is something
21 we would want to take a very -- take a real close look
22 at with our research department.

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1 So, thank you.

2 **WILBERT McLEOD:** Thank you very much.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
4 you.

5 **PAT CHILTON:** Is John Turner here?

6 Okay, John Turner. He is the head of
7 Omushkegowuk Harvesters Association.

8 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Is he
9 the former leader of the Liberal Party?

10 **PAT CHILTON:** The Honourable John
11 Turner -- the Right Honourable John Turner.

12 **JOHN TURNER:** Now that everybody here
13 is finished laughing at me I will make my presentation.

14 Commissioners, elders, ladies and
15 gentlemen, good evening.

16 On behalf of the Traditional Harvesters
17 in the Mushkegowuk communities I appreciate the
18 opportunity to come before you today.

19 Before I begin I guess I would like to
20 say a few words on behalf of the Harvesters who are not
21 here. Some of them are veterans of World War II and they
22 are on a tour overseas in Europe. Many of them are getting

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1 on in years and can't attend things like this, and some
2 of them just by their nature don't bother to attend meetings
3 and things of this nature.

4 But I think that they are a very
5 important part of life in our communities and that they
6 deserve to be represented. And when I'm here today
7 speaking to you, it is those people that I have in mind,
8 people that have been struggling for years to make a living
9 from the land.

10 I won't bother to repeat a lot of what
11 the other speakers have said here today.

12 I'll basically just outline some of the
13 issues and some of our concerns, and also present some
14 of our ideas for what we see as solutions to some of these
15 problems.

16 For the record, there are some issues
17 that I should -- that I would like to put forward, although
18 I know that you are well aware of these things.

19 It's becoming harder and harder for
20 people in our communities to make a living in the
21 traditional way from the land, for a number of reasons.

22 Animal rights activists are continuing

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1 to campaign against the fur industry and to campaign
2 against trapping, and that has an impact on our people.

3 Sports hunting groups are campaigning
4 against aboriginal and treaty rights that people have to
5 hunt for their food.

6 And hydro electric developments that are
7 being proposed in the Moose River and in other rivers in
8 James and Hudson Bay are also posing threats to our
9 environment and to our people that depend on the
10 environment.

11 I'd just say these are some of the
12 examples of the issues that we're trying to deal with.

13 I won't go into a long discussion on
14 that, but I think that some of the issues that we face
15 could be resolved, if the will is there on the part of
16 the government and on the part of our people.

17 There has been a lot of changes taking
18 place just within -- even within the last 30 years. Of
19 course, there was always changes happening ever since the
20 time of European contact, but since the -- around the 1940s,
21 there have been some very rapid changes taking place in
22 our communities and the ability of our people to live their

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1 life on the land.

2 It seems that in the older days it was
3 much simpler for people to live on the land, if they wanted
4 to. And it seems to be that it's getting more and more
5 difficult every year, and it looks like it probably will
6 become even more difficult as time goes by.

7 One of the things, I guess, that had
8 quite an impact on people was when the -- I guess prior
9 to the government being here people basically governed
10 themselves as far as how they related to each other and
11 how they hunted, and how they lived their life, how they
12 related with the land and the animals.

13 But, since the government has come in
14 with the signing of the treaty and then after, with the
15 provincial government and by passing legislation and
16 making laws, they basically were extinguishing the rights
17 that people had and infringing on the ability that people
18 had to govern themselves.

19 And now that in the last couple of years
20 there's been a lot more attention paid to native people
21 and, I guess while attempting to resolve these issues,
22 the government is willing to talk about such things as

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1 co-management agreements or local management, those kinds
2 of things.

3 And it's true that the provincial
4 government has indicated to us that they're willing to
5 talk about these kinds of things.

6 But, before that can happen, I think
7 there are a number of things that have to happen.

8 As I said, previous to the government
9 being here, the people were very capable of governing
10 themselves and regulating themselves, and all that. And
11 when the government took control of that, what they
12 actually did was, by passing laws and making legislation
13 they effectively extinguished the ability that people had
14 to regulate themselves and to basically manage their own
15 lives and their own resources.

16 So, as far as I am concerned, what they
17 did was, they took away the ability that the people had
18 to manage their own lives and their own areas and their
19 own resources.

20 And if the government is serious about
21 entering into agreements such as this, what has to happen
22 is, the government has to hand back to the people the

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1 authority that they had to basically govern their own
2 lives.

3 But it's not a very simple thing.

4 The way I see it, originally every person
5 had some authority and some power to make decisions as
6 a group and to manage resources effectively, and that kind
7 of thing. And now that authority is not with the people
8 any more. It is held by bureaucrats and government people
9 in places like Toronto and Ottawa. And that, I think,
10 has to be transferred back to the people in the communities.

11 And another thing that the government
12 has to accept is the fact that the traditional knowledge
13 that the people hold is just as valid as scientific
14 knowledge and that the knowledge that has been accumulating
15 over generations is equally as valid, and the scientific
16 community and the government has to begin to accept that.

17 And in our communities the people -- like
18 the harvesters, both the men and the women -- are the
19 keepers of this knowledge and that they deserve to be
20 respected.

21 What I see happening -- as the result
22 of a number of things, I guess -- what's happening now

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1 is that even our own people seem to have the attitude that
2 if you have a good job and if you have a steady job and
3 you get a degree, maybe, or something, that means you're
4 a success in life.

5 But if you try to make a living from
6 trapping, that you're basically a failure and that you
7 can't get a job, or something like that. And I think there
8 is something very wrong with that. It's just an attitude
9 that has come about as a result of the education system
10 and the values that the people have been adopting from
11 Europeans.

12 And I think we need to reinforce and
13 support those people that have been struggling to try to
14 keep those traditions alive and to try to maintain that
15 contact with the land.

16 As I said earlier, right now it's
17 basically -- you might as well say you can't make a living
18 from trapping, not the way that people were doing in the
19 past, anyways. And that's something that I've been trying
20 to grapple with for a couple of years. But it seems that
21 there was nothing that we could really do that would be
22 able to keep that. Everything that we could do was

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1 basically not getting to the root of the problem.

2 So what we did was, we developed a
3 proposal. We call it our "Harvesters Income Security
4 Program." What we are proposing there basically is that
5 we would like to support the harvesters, people that spend
6 more time basically involved in harvesting activities than
7 working. And to encourage younger people to get into that
8 as a way of life.

9 And it's to basically make it a viable
10 way to live without having to worry about where the money's
11 going to come from.

12 And we're proposing to do that by --
13 rather than keeping people on welfare, which basically
14 discourages productive activity -- that we would pay people
15 a guaranteed income for those people that want to spend
16 most of their time in the bush.

17 And this would serve, I think, to address
18 a number of problems.

19 It would show that we value the
20 traditional way of life, that we that it's important, that
21 it's just as valid as any other occupation. And also
22 another thing that it would do is, it would fill a void

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1 that there is with the education system, because we all
2 know that there is going to be a dropout rate in the
3 education system, that not everybody is going to be --
4 is going to come out of school with a degree or something
5 -- and that for the people that drop out, there really
6 is nothing there for them now. The only option they have,
7 really, is to collect welfare. There are very few jobs.

8 So, a program such as that would be able
9 to catch some of those people. And, you never know, maybe
10 some of them would prefer to do that anyway.

11 One of the things that we did -- we're
12 just completing now -- we've been doing a harvest study
13 -- is, we're trying to show how important the traditional
14 economy is, really, to our communities. Even for our own
15 people, we seem to take it for granted, we don't realize
16 a lot of times how valuable it is and how serious would
17 it be if we were to lose that.

18 So, we did a harvest study in all of the
19 communities -- we're completing it now; it's not finished
20 yet -- but we do have some preliminary results.

21 And what we've been seeing is that even
22 though there has been a lot of changes taking place and

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1 a lot of people working jobs and spending shorter periods
2 of time in the bush, overall traditionally harvesting is
3 still very, very important. For example, right here in
4 Moose Factory, for something like goose hunting the
5 participation rate is about 85 per cent.

6 In all of the communities as a whole,
7 it's about -- closer to 90, 90 per cent of every household
8 participates in goose hunting. And we have a larger
9 percentage of people who spend quite a few days in the
10 bush.

11 But overall, the importance of it -- what
12 we did was, we applied a weight value to it in terms of
13 how many kilograms of meat and the total for all of the
14 Mushkegowuk communities was about 566,000 kilograms of
15 edible meat produced in one year by the hunters. And we
16 applied a value to that, based on the equivalent value,
17 or the replacement value of store food. And we came out
18 with a figure about \$6.2 in one year.

19 For the community of Moose Factor alone,
20 it was about a million and a half dollars in one year of
21 meat coming from the bush. And I think that says a lot
22 for how important that is to keep that. I don't think

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1 even our own people a lot times realize how easy it could
2 be to lose that, for example, with some of the things that
3 are happening with the fur industry and with some of the
4 forces that are basically trying to stop that.

5 I think from the very beginning there
6 has been a movement on the part of the governments -- either
7 on purpose or not -- to basically remove the Indian people
8 from the land so that the developers can take it -- come
9 in and take over the land.

10 And I think sometimes we find ourselves
11 following along with that, without even realizing it.

12 So, what I try to do is, try to bring
13 things like that to peoples' attention and to find ways
14 that we can keep that alive. Since I've been working on
15 this it comes as a testament to how tough people are and
16 how strong that way of life is, just by the fact that there
17 are still some people who spend a lot of time in the bush
18 trying to keep their traditional way alive.

19 And that's basically all I had for today.

20 I didn't want to repeat a lot of the things that the other
21 people have been saying. But I just wanted to bring some
22 of these issues forward.

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1 If you might have some questions, I'd
2 be willing to answer questions.

3 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
4 you.

5 The points you are making are really good
6 and they really speak to some of the things we want to
7 look at.

8 We certainly want to look at programs
9 that will supplement and support traditional activity on
10 the land.

11 So, we would really like to see the ideas
12 you have in that area. And the study that you are involved
13 in, with some of the initial results, all the kind of
14 information you have in this area would be very, very useful
15 for us. We are actually looking at maybe doing some of
16 our own research in this area.

17 So, before we finalize our research
18 plans, it would be very useful for us to know what it is
19 you are doing. We might find that you are doing a fair
20 amount of what we would like to do and we just need to
21 supplement what you are doing.

22 The points you make about a guaranteed

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1 annual income for people, do you see that being for part
2 of the population, not for everybody? This is a program
3 which would be there for people that would spend time on
4 the land? Is that the idea?

5 **JOHN TURNER:** Yeah, basically it would
6 apply to about 30 per cent of the total population, those
7 people that are now, anyways, spending most of their time
8 in the bush.

9 But I don't think it would be -- it would
10 be realistic anyways to expect everybody to sign up for
11 that. It's that kind of a life that's really not cut out
12 for everybody, first of all, and the land only has a certain
13 carrying capacity.

14 Just by the fact that the communities
15 have increased in population so much now that, even if
16 everybody wanted to, they couldn't go back to living off
17 the land in the way that it was done before.

18 But I think it's very important to have
19 some of the people doing that, because it brings a balance
20 into the communities where you're not all leaning towards
21 strictly European style development and that kind of thing.
22 And also it's important for the community as a whole to

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1 identify with a -- at least some of our people are still
2 keeping that alive and the whole community benefits from
3 that by getting a sense of identity that their relatives
4 are still being able to do those things.

5 But the way it is now in Ontario, there
6 is no program for anybody like that. If you're in Ontario
7 now and the price of fur is down, there's no place for
8 you to do. You just have to quit, or apply for welfare,
9 or get a job, if you're lucky.

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

11 I think those are the comments I wanted
12 to make.

13 I will see if anybody else has any
14 questions or comments.

15 Viola?

16 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I don't
17 think so, thanks.

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

19 Elder?

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

21 **ARCHIBALD:** I'd like to comment that if the market of the
22 fur prices were to drop, it is my belief that the aboriginal

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1 people would still be forced to harvest some animals for
2 food value, because all through your life you have, through
3 your culture, when you see a rabbit and you're staring
4 you get all excited, you know you're going to have a meal
5 out of it.

6 So that habit and tradition carries you
7 to harvest food and it's always with you, all your life.
8 And you cannot get away -- I cannot get away.

9 If I see a difference of a rabbit and
10 a chicken, automatically my instinct is to eat that rabbit,
11 rather than eat the chicken.

12 So the value of the animals that we
13 harvest have important value to our consumption of food.
14 I just wanted to add that to your list to support your
15 presentation, John.

16 Thank you.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So,
18 every time you see a rabbit you think about a nice stew
19 or a rabbit for a soup it could make.

20 Thanks a lot, John and I hope you have
21 better luck the next time you run for Prime Minister.

22 **PAT CHILTON:** The next speaker was

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1 supposed to be Andy Rickard, but I don't think he's here.

2 I think he's -- oh, yeah, he said he was going to go consult
3 with his constituents -- he came running in -- yes -- so,
4 Andy Rickard, who is the President of the Aboriginal Urban
5 Alliance is here.

6 He says he's only going to speak for 10
7 minutes.

8 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I guess
9 he didn't believe that we are really going to go to the
10 urban areas, so he has got to come home to present.

11 **ANDREW RICKARD:** I'll stand up, I want
12 to be different.

13 (through interpreter) ... which is one
14 thing that I wanted to discuss and it's one thing I don't
15 like and ... delegation their own language was being used.

16 It's very unfortunate that we have to lose our language
17 and ... so with that process we will continue to lose our
18 language, and that's what the others have been telling
19 you.

20 But you can see very clearly why this
21 happens. I know there is lots of ... things that we use
22 because -- and sometimes we try to neglect our language.

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1 And I know that I ... myself because I have serious
2 shortcomings when I come to the language because I've been
3 away, I've been living in urban ...

4 (English) and living an urban life all
5 my life, so I have a tendency to ... culture. I think
6 it's most significant in the sense that if you don't have
7 your language, you really don't have your culture, because
8 you cannot express yourself from the traditional
9 aboriginal context of your spiritual, cultural being.

10 And I don't say that to make fun of
11 anyone, especially our own people.

12 I have many questions in my own mind
13 about all these things that are happening. I heard a lot
14 of presentations the last 20 years about how terrible our
15 lifestyles are, how tragic the legacy of our people to
16 the present time.

17 We are told that on July the 1st Canada
18 will be celebrating 125 years of nationhood -- if you want
19 to call it that. But how many of us can really celebrate
20 a country that's been exploited of everything that we ever
21 stood for?

22 You see, I have a challenge, a question,

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1 a series of questions that I think ought to be addressed
2 in this country.

3 There are many of us who don't have a
4 choice but to work outside our territories. And when we
5 leave here -- for example, in my own situation, my own
6 case -- when we leave the boundaries of this community
7 where I come from, I have no representation to have my
8 aspirations reflected on what I want to see for myself
9 and my children in the future.

10 And that's not really comfortable to see
11 that, because I see everybody supposedly speaking for my
12 concerns. Some people march around this country saying
13 that they represent the aboriginal aspirations. Some even
14 will say that they speak for all aboriginal people living
15 off reserve.

16 And there are many of us in this country
17 who don't live in their because by circumstances we have
18 to live away from our communities.

19 So, I think what's going to happen and
20 will be addressed, and I think some of your Commission
21 case studies you will find within the next couple of years
22 -- three years of your mandate -- how many of our people

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1 actually live away from their communities. And some
2 people will say, "Well, we are represented." We're not.

3 There are some of us who work for Royal
4 Commissions and organizations who don't need
5 representation, because we're fairly articulate in our
6 capacity and we're able to survive. But there are still
7 a lot of us out there who require support and every means
8 open safeguard our treaty rights as well -- our aboriginal
9 rights.

10 So there are fundamental questions I
11 think that must be answered, and will be answered. It
12 might take the next couple of years.

13 For example, when you say inherent
14 rights to aboriginal government -- I don't say
15 self-government -- to aboriginal government -- when you
16 say that it means that something was recognized, or will
17 be recognized, hopefully in the constitution. And then,
18 flowing from that recognition of that constitution the
19 question comes then: Who and what group of people are
20 recognized by that inherent right to self-government?

21 Because what will happen is that you have
22 resourcing coming from fiscal arrangements with the

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1 government when this so-called "third level of government"
2 comes into effect.

3 So, we have to have a very definite
4 recognition of who in fact is there to enjoy the inherency
5 aspect of aboriginal government. I think that has to be
6 answered.

7 And today everybody in this country has
8 rights. As my old friend Dick Pine used to say, "Even
9 the racoon skimmers association have rights."

10 The axe handle makers association has
11 right. The toothpick makers -- they used to make
12 toothpicks out of hockey sticks down at Toronto Maple Leaf
13 Gardens, they said, and those associations too, have right.
14 Everybody has right.

15 But I'm wondering -- very seriously, you
16 know, you hear about hunting rights, fishing rights of
17 everyone. Some of my own ancestors, my grandfathers,
18 hunted in an area called Kapuskasing. It's in northern
19 Ontario. We had about, roughly maybe, 3,000, 4,000 square
20 miles of our territory. That was completely destroyed
21 by clear cutting of forestry companies, pulp and paper
22 companies.

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1 So we destroy that part of a lifestyle
2 of people, somebody has to replace it with something that
3 would sustain that group of people. They never did that
4 to us.

5 And I think we can't forget that kind
6 of a destruction. Now, something has to happen here.
7 And this is where we say, in terms of representation, you
8 know, the Indian Act clearly establishes that the band
9 council only functions within certain boundaries of the
10 reserve -- our reserve -- as they call it in the Indian
11 Act.

12 So we can't get any support from out band
13 councils, and it has nothing to do with the leadership
14 effectiveness of our chief and council. It's just the
15 way the system's set up.

16 And that applies true for our tribal
17 councils, as well as our political associations. They're
18 all based on the fact that they get funding from some kind
19 of terms of reference, or a terminology that mentions that
20 they are distinct -- administratively distinct people live
21 on a reserve and, based on that, this is where they get
22 their funding from.

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1 So, there's a big void there. It's a
2 big vacuum there that has to be somehow dealt with.

3 I just wanted to cover that. In order
4 for me to explain in detail what I'm talking about I think
5 it would take me longer than the 15 minutes that Ava Hill
6 has asked me to speak here. She said if I don't stop in
7 15 minutes she's going to come over and slap my head.

8 That's supposed to be a joke. You can
9 laugh at it.

10 But I can -- you know, as I said earlier,
11 I've been involved in listening to so many presentations
12 in the last few years. I remember the '68-69 White Paper
13 at a tender age of seven years old -- that's supposed to
14 be another joke, by the way -- I asked for a Royal
15 Commission, a Royal Commission to question them.

16 And, after all this time, you know, we're
17 beginning to see these things transpire. It shows how
18 long it takes government to respond to these kind of things.

19 And one of the things that I think will
20 happen is that -- you know, before -- we hear a lot about
21 aboriginal government, self-government and all this --
22 and a lot of people have a hell of a time trying to define

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1 what that means, you know, how it's going to work, what
2 does that mean in terms of structure, organization,
3 whatever -- funding systems, mechanism -- nobody is able
4 to define that because it's going to take a long time to
5 do that.

6 And I believe it's going to be the next
7 generation that will really articulate the leadership on
8 how this is going to be done. We don't have people here
9 in this country that has the managerial or business
10 experience to run our affairs effectively. And there is
11 nothing to be ashamed about that, because that is a fact.

12 But I think we can achieve that by taking
13 control of our education systems, by taking control of
14 our business initiatives -- not just within the context
15 of our communities, but beyond our borders.

16 Sometimes, you know, you try to find work
17 different places. I just came back from one of those
18 countries in South America doing a little work there.
19 And I saw a statue of Columbus up there on one of the
20 islands. I felt like a puppy would feel looking at a
21 telephone pole, but I didn't actually carry that out.

22 But that's the kind of emotions you get

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1 sometimes when you're reminded what happened in history.

2 But I just wanted to share with you some
3 of the possible things that will take place. And I pose
4 some questions saying that we have to be responsive as
5 into the needs of our people who live away from their
6 communities. There has to be a very specific response
7 system there so that we be included in the process of
8 governing ourselves.

9 I say that because I didn't leave my
10 status card, if you will -- improper, or imperfect as it
11 is -- when I left my community. I didn't leave my treaty
12 rights as well when I left this community.

13 You know, treaty rights, aboriginal
14 rights to me means land, resources, a sustainable
15 dependency on that, like we've done in the past. And we
16 have to be all involved in the process of establishing
17 these various structures. Unfortunately, it's going
18 to take a number of years before this will happen.

19 And those of us who still work for Indian
20 Affairs in this building, this island, or any place else,
21 I think we can safely say and predict what's going to
22 happen.

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1 I think Indian Affairs will be out of
2 existence the next 10, 20 years. I think we'll have maybe
3 a little administrative component to look after those
4 people who don't want to leave the Indian Act regime.

5 But, for those people who want to advance
6 and promote and articulate what they want to do, I think
7 the opportunities will be there. So, the pressure points
8 of this particular vehicle, this process you have, will
9 make that happen.

10 And the same thing with the discussions
11 in the constitution. I think those will unfold to provide
12 the framework on how these structures will be set up.

13 Now, I know it's been a long day. You
14 guys look all tired out and everything else. So am I.
15 I even missed my favourite show here "The Young and
16 Restless." I'm supposed to watch it a 6:00 o'clock and
17 I never had a chance to do that. So I sacrificed great
18 things too, in order to listen to all this exchange here.

19 But in summary, as I said, I haven't got
20 a prepared text. I just wanted to raise some questions
21 in terms of what kind of things have to be dealt with by
22 this Commission. And I think if we can do that, I think

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1 we're moving in the right direction.

2 And I'm not going to give you any
3 explanations and the usual charts I display here why we're
4 different than the white man and why we have to work
5 together in terms of achieving and understanding that we
6 are different and we have to understand that difference
7 before we can really build our futures together.

8 But what I will say, though, is that you
9 know, when I go to different places I get a chance to talk
10 to a lot of white institutions, you know, the churches,
11 the education groups and all that and I always try to
12 explain that there is a difference between our way of
13 thinking and the thinking of the white man.

14 And I can only share that in a story where
15 this was put an example. We used to have Americans come
16 up here for hunting and doing their leisure thing every
17 year. And we have a practice here where we used to relax,
18 you know. We get up early in the morning, at the crack
19 of dawn, and sort of relax around 2:00 o'clock in the
20 afternoon and work again perhaps around 5:00 or 6:00
21 o'clock.

22 It's exactly with nature and if you ever

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1 go out in the bush some place in the wilderness you'll
2 that there is certain activity in the morning. And it stops
3 at a particular time. And then it continues on at some
4 point, say around 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock.

5 So this guy came to this area, this
6 American, one time and we're all laying down on the bank
7 over here. And he used to say, "You know, you guys, why
8 don't you go to work." We said, "Why?" "Well, hell, you
9 guys can make, you know, \$100 a week if you go out." We
10 said, "Why?" "So you can make lots of money." "Why?"
11 "So you can retire." I said, "Why, we're already retired."

12 Right over your heads, right?

13 It's a much longer story than that, I
14 just tried to shorten it so I don't have to waste too much
15 of your time here.

16 So that's all I wanted to say. I didn't
17 want to waste my trip coming here because I wanted to be
18 able to say a few words here.

19 But I also wanted to serve notice to you,
20 Georges, and your Commissioners, that we'll probably have
21 to come back, maybe two years down the road to say that
22 these are the details of our concerns, you know, the people

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1 who don't reside on their communities permanently.

2 So, I think that's what going to happen.

3 So, with that, thank you very much for
4 listening to me for a few minutes. I hope I was able to
5 accommodate Ava's 15 minutes. Thank you.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
7 you.

8 **PAT CHILTON:** Thank you, Andy.

9 The next presenter is Vern Cheechoo.

10 **VERN CHEECHOO:** Good evening.

11 With that said, my name is Vern Cheechoo
12 and I come from Moose Factory here. I'm a member of the
13 Moose Factory reserve.

14 And, moreso, I'm a descendent of the
15 ancestors that originally come from this territory. And
16 I'm here because I'm concerned. At the same time I feel
17 I have the right to say what I feel and not be passive
18 because of the fear that we sometimes have ins saying what
19 we feel and what concerns us.

20 So, I want to talk a little bit about
21 our situation here in Moose Factory is, we have distinct
22 groups amongst the people here in Moose Factory.

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1 In the reserve alone, we have distinct
2 groups that are made up of treaty people, those descendants
3 of the original treaty signers that signed the treaty in
4 1905 and have -- like, we call original band member status,
5 because this is originally their territory.

6 And within this group there are three
7 distinct groups, because -- well, Europeans, they called
8 us "Indians," because they didn't know who we were when
9 they first came here. And then they gave us a name, they
10 called "Cree." But those two names are not aboriginal
11 names to the people here.

12 And, first off, those three distinct
13 group within the treaty Indians in this territory were
14 the Moose Indians and the Kasagani Lake Indians and the
15 Hanna Bay Indians. And my ancestral lands are in the
16 Kasagani Lake area. That's where I can trace my ancestry
17 back, there.

18 And also we have other distinct groups
19 that are within our reserve. And those groups are other
20 treaty Indians that have been transferred through the
21 Indian Act to this reserve. They come from other
22 communities further up the west coast of James Bay, and

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1 south, in other southern communities.

2 But they are still are treaty Indians.

3 At the same time we have native people
4 that have come from the east coast of James Bay. And those
5 people are not treaty Indians, because they never signed
6 a treaty with the governments, as we did here in Moose
7 Factory. And these people have been transferred, like
8 I said, through the Indian Act.

9 At the same time, off reserve, we have
10 a community of Mocrebec people that have settled on this
11 island who come from the east coast as well, on the Quebec
12 side. And they've settled here. And also, we have white
13 people. And, amongst those white people, there are
14 distinct groups as well, such as the Irish, the French
15 and the Italian and so on.

16 And I think that, in order for us to work
17 together as was being said throughout the day, is that
18 we must work together. And I heard a lot about equality
19 mentioned. And yes, I believe we can work together. But
20 I think first we must recognize our diversities amongst
21 ourselves.

22 I think the diverse cultures -- like,

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1 we talk about native culture in a general sense -- talking
2 about North America it'd be the culture of native people.

3 Okay, within that culture there is a great diversity in
4 terms of the different styles and the different ways native
5 people do things from one territory to the next.

6 So, we are different, we are distinct.

7 We go to the Europeans today and we ask the Europeans
8 to recognize us as a distinct society and then we turn
9 around and come home and forget our own distinctness that's
10 within our own communities.

11 We've failed, such as the government has
12 done is, we've failed to bridge those gaps and recognize
13 our distinctness amongst ourselves. Because I think
14 before we can move ahead on anything, in terms of
15 recognizing what our culture is, who we are as aboriginal
16 people, who we are as inheritors of these territories,
17 is that we have to recognize our diversities amongst
18 ourselves.

19 Because I know that many of our leaders
20 go south and they argue with the governments and asking
21 the governments to recognize the inherent right to
22 self-government, and then they come home and forget about

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1 what inherent right means within their own territories.

2 So, I think that in order for us to move
3 ahead is, we must recognize those traditional governments
4 that were in place long before the Europeans came here.

5 And you mentioned, Georges, that 100
6 years ago we were strong. And it's true. We were, 100
7 years ago. We had those systems in place. We had
8 territories that were clearly defined by the people and
9 the people always maintained that right they had to be
10 the caretakers of these territories and to look after them.

11 And the reason they say the elders, that
12 they must look after them, it's because they've inherited
13 the right from the Creator to take care of these lands
14 for their future generations.

15 And because of the influx of European
16 society in the last 500 years of colonization we created
17 barriers amongst ourselves, barriers in understanding who
18 we are as nations upon nations.

19 There are times when I feel like a
20 stranger in my own territory because, when I talk about
21 this, people generally get angry. And I'm not here to
22 make people angry. I'm not here to try to hurt anyone

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1 in any way. I'm here because I believe that I've inherited
2 the right from my ancestors to look after this land for
3 my future generations.

4 So, I think that the people in this
5 territory, for instance, their aboriginal title and their
6 inherent right to the lands have to be recognized by all
7 peoples in order for us to move ahead in terms of community
8 development, social development, economic development,
9 all these different things that we need in order to survive
10 as a nation.

11 And I believe that, yes, we can work
12 together, but we must, first of all, recognize our
13 diversities amongst our people. And that is clearly not
14 happening today, because -- I'm not saying that it's our
15 own people's fault, because I don't think it is. It's
16 not our fault. I think it's the fault of the system, the
17 system that's been imposed on us.

18 The Indian Act, like I said, allows
19 people to transfer to other areas and allows them to become
20 equal to the people that live in these certain territories
21 -- that come from these territories. The Indian Act allows
22 them to move in and become equal.

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1 And I think, because of that, the
2 tradition of inheritance becomes eroded.

3 Our culture is being eroded by these
4 kinds of -- the things that the system imposes on us by
5 allowing people from other areas to come in and settle,
6 without recognition of the traditional government that's
7 in place, or that was in place years ago.

8 And I know that the European government
9 is hard pressed on not allowing inherent right to
10 self-government into the constitution, because it would
11 clearly -- well, they want the conditions attached to it
12 and I think the inherent right to self-government alone
13 would detach them in terms of having any inheritance in
14 terms of Canada, or in terms of North America, or in terms
15 of Turtle Island, as it's called by the native people,
16 is because their inherent right comes from where they came
17 from and not here in Canada.

18 The inherent right of the people belongs
19 to -- to the Indian native people of this country. But
20 our inherent right, I believe, comes from these little
21 territories where we come from. Our inherent right does
22 not -- does not travel with us when we go to other

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1 territories and infringe on other peoples' territories
2 without asking their permission, as was done before. That
3 was in place before, where people were able to move from
4 territory to territory, as long as they respected those
5 people that were in those territories and asked permission
6 if they could use those territories from those people.

7 But, that's generally -- I think we have
8 to acknowledge those diversities and begin to cherish and
9 begin to give honour to each other, because of our
10 distinctiveness.

11 And that's about all I got to say at this
12 time.

13 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
14 you.

15 You seem to question people
16 intermarrying. It is a little confusing to me how small
17 communities would be able to find all the necessary
18 partners just in a small community.

19 The way I understood traditional
20 societies, there was a lot of intermarriage and also there
21 was a lot of taking of women from other communities in
22 some of our aboriginal nations.

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1 But, once they were -- once there was
2 either intermarriage, or prisoners taken or women taken,
3 they became part of the nation.

4 So, I do not understand how you are
5 having a problem with, say, your sister now marrying
6 somebody two or three communities down the James Bay coast
7 and her husband coming here to live with you and you
8 questioning that person having equal status.

9 I'm not sure what you are saying because,
10 if you had this system that the people had to stay in their
11 separate communities, either your sister would be unequal
12 in the next community, or her husband would be unequal
13 here, or they would have to live in a new community that
14 they would create for themselves of people of mixed
15 heritage or something.

16 So, you really lost me somewhere in what
17 you are suggesting for the future.

18 **VERN CHEECHOO:** Well, I, myself, am
19 married to an Ojibway woman from Sault Ste. Marie. And
20 I think that in those traditional societies that we
21 accepted that.

22 It's because of the laws today of the

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1 Canadian government we tend to define -- use definitions
2 to define the inherent right, when it's so simple.

3 When the Creator, as the elders say,
4 passed on that right to our people to look after -- to
5 take care of the lands for their future generations --

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** So, it
7 is the Indian Act --

8 **VERN CHEECHOO:** -- and if we --

9 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** -- it is
10 the Indian Act you have a problem with --

11 **VERN CHEECHOO:** Yes --

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** -- it is
13 not people intermarrying?

14 **VERN CHEECHOO:** No, the Indian Act is
15 a problem that erodes our culture in recognizing that
16 system that was in place before.

17 I'm not saying that other distinct
18 groups would be not recognized within these territories.

19 I think they were a long time ago. That system was already
20 in place long time ago.

21 But what I'm saying is what's happening
22 today is, the people that come from this territory -- for

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1 instance -- from other people because of MNR, they send
2 people wherever they want to go hunting and disrespect
3 whose territory that is.

4 We have problems where people have gone
5 out hunting, that don't come from this territory, that
6 have killed six or seven moose in somebody's territory
7 and have gone and -- and sell the meat, without asking.

8 But a long time ago, if that system was
9 in place the people would ask if they can go into that
10 territory. And the landowners would generally let them
11 go, would say, "Okay, sure, go ahead," because that was
12 generally the way we were as a people.

13 But they would say things like, "Well,
14 I'll only allow you kill one moose, because I need that
15 food that's provided by the land that I look after and
16 the food that's provided there I need for my family as
17 well."

18 So, those kind of things, you know.

19 But we have -- like, MNR there, that
20 says, "Well, you can go anywhere you want to go."

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes.

22 Okay, I think I now understand what you

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1 are saying.

2 Is there any comments or questions from
3 anybody? -- no?

4 Okay, thank you.

5 **VERN CHEECHOO:** Thank you.

6 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think
7 we may be hearing from some women, now.

8 **PAT CHILTON:** Brenda Small, Karen
9 Pine-Cheechoo and Grace Delaney is also joining the --
10 okay -- the three again, Brenda Small and Karen
11 Pine-Cheechoo.

12 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I think
13 I missed the third name. I have got Brenda and Karen,
14 but I did not get the last one.

15 **PAT CHILTON:** There is Theresa Neegan
16 and Grace Delaney, who is a fourth, just coming up there.

17 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** You can
18 start whenever you are ready.

19 **BRENDA SMALL:** Would you like me to
20 begin? I was going to wait until Mr. Archibald came back.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Oh, I
22 think he can hear you very clearly back there.

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1 **BRENDA SMALL:** Okay.

2 Good evening. My name is Brenda Small.

3 It is the English translation. In Cree my last name is
4 Kapashesit, which means "small."

5 First of all I would like to tell you
6 who I am. My family historically came from what is now
7 known as Quebec. I'm a member of the Mocrebec community
8 here in Moose Factory. And, in reference to what Vern
9 mentioned earlier, my people historically have always
10 lived on the Quebec side of the Ontario/Quebec border.

11 Our dialect is distinctly different from
12 the west coast and we continue to speak our language in
13 our communities.

14 We reside on the Ontario side of the
15 border now because of colonialism, because of the historic
16 relationship with the Hudson Bay Company. Many people
17 came from both sides of the coast primarily because of
18 that historical relationship.

19 I would like to address you tonight not
20 as members of this Royal Commission but, rather, as members
21 of distinct aboriginal nations in your respective home
22 territories.

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1 I would like to appeal to you as members
2 of your respective nations, not as people who have derived
3 or delegated authority from the federal government of
4 Canada.

5 I'm relying on your membership to
6 aboriginal communities as the place where we can both begin
7 to discuss the future of, not only the people who have
8 gathered in this room and the people who will address you
9 as you travel across the country, but people who are yet
10 unborn.

11 One thing I would like to say about this
12 process of the Royal Commission is that, once again, it's
13 an example of the arbitrariness of successive federal
14 governments in their efforts to continue to colonize
15 aboriginal people in this country. In many ways we
16 participate in these processes because there is very little
17 room for us to speak and to be heard elsewhere. It is
18 incumbent upon us to speak whenever possible because there
19 is very little room created for us as it is.

20 However, we cannot forget that this
21 process of the Royal Commission is inextricably linked
22 with the federal government's powers. That's why I say

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1 I appeal to you as aboriginal people and not as
2 commissionaires who have been appointed by whatever
3 members of the current Government of Canada.

4 Earlier today Greta Gunner spoke to you
5 about womens' issues. Her courageous efforts to address
6 the systemic discrimination of aboriginal women in this
7 country was noted by a number of women who were present
8 today, including myself, and we felt compelled to come
9 forward to you tonight to elaborate on some of the concerns
10 that Greta identified.

11 We also noted that the agenda basically
12 did not include women's voice and we also felt compelled
13 to come forward on that basis.

14 But I do not want to belabour that point.

15 The prospect of aboriginal women coming
16 forward to speak to this Commission is quite remote because
17 of the nature of oppression. People who are oppressed
18 do not believe that they have the authority or the place
19 in which to speak. Therefore, it's going to take a long
20 time and a lot of internal efforts in our communities before
21 we are prepared to come forward.

22 Although we see brown faces before us

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1 and we know that you are members of aboriginal nations,
2 it doesn't make it any easier, because the process is quite
3 arbitrary and, in fact, very foreign to us.

4 It would be much nicer if we could sit
5 across a kitchen table and talk with one another about
6 these issues, but we're forced to come before you, in front
7 of television cameras, lights that are much too bright
8 and we're often invited to write down our thoughts and
9 make submissions to commissions like this. It's not the
10 most appropriate way for us to communicate with you and
11 to communicate among ourselves.

12 The systemic oppression of aboriginal
13 women in this country is particularly acute in aboriginal
14 communities. Aboriginal men and women have learned to
15 internalize European patriarchy. The way that the
16 European societies have organized themselves in which
17 males dominate females has been learned in aboriginal
18 communities. We would like to see this eliminated, but
19 we don't expect that it will be eliminated in our lifetimes.

20 However, we are willing to stand up and
21 be counted. We want to speak and we are not speaking
22 because we've learned about this from some feminist

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1 analysis at university. We're talking about these issues
2 because they're very real to us. We learned them from
3 our grandmothers and our mothers.

4 They're not something that we can learn
5 from a book.

6 Native women have been bearing
7 tremendous burdens in their family, in the home, as well
8 as outside the home, in the workplace and in the political
9 arenas of this country. In order to eliminate the sexism
10 and the racism that is directed at aboriginal women we
11 have to see a concerted effort on the part of native male
12 leadership in this country. And I don't mean token seats,
13 I don't mean token representation on boards, and I don't
14 mean lip service.

15 I think that native men have to take
16 responsibility for their own actions in their own
17 communities and in their homes. We don't need to see any
18 more violence in our homes. We don't need to see any more
19 women that are going to be abused and assaulted by native
20 men.

21 We have to be willing to talk about these
22 issues, regardless of how scary or how sad they might be.

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1 It takes tremendous courage for women to come forward
2 to talk about these issues, because we've learned to become
3 complicit in the silence to cover up these crimes that
4 occur in our communities.

5 When we talk about this Royal Commission
6 and the constitutional process we're talking again about
7 exposing ourselves in coming forward and being vulnerable
8 and showing the public what we feel, how we live and how
9 we think. We make ourselves bare for all of the world
10 to see. And we have to speak the truth, because no one
11 else can speak for us, no one else knows our story.

12 So, we've come forward tonight, a number
13 of us, to talk each from our own individual point of view
14 but, ultimately, the points of view that you will hear
15 expressed come from the spectrum of our community.

16 I don't think that we should be
17 constrained by the Royal Commission and by the process
18 before us, because you have been active in aboriginal
19 affairs and have a lengthy record of political involvement.

20 I don't need to remind you about how process can constrain
21 people, how it can restrict our discussions.

22 It is my hope that we will transcend

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1 these processes, that we won't fall in line because
2 governments want us to, that we will learn to talk to one
3 another in direct a meaningful ways, regardless of whether
4 it's called a "commission," or whether it's called "the
5 constitutional process," or whether or not we're talking
6 in our own community centres, in our homes and in our band
7 council meetings, that there will be a place for us to
8 talk as aboriginal people, one-to-one and on a greater
9 scale as communities.

10 I don't think we should be restricted
11 by the Royal Commission, or expect that the Royal
12 Commission will provide us answers. We are in fact
13 stimulating discussion by this process, but I don't believe
14 that the Commission itself will provide the kinds or
15 results that we're looking for.

16 I am coming forward to talk about
17 aboriginal womens' concerns and to remind you that it is
18 not merely a question of listening, but actually sifting
19 through the information, of hearing peoples' voices and
20 realizing that people are telling you where they live,
21 how they live and that they're looking for an accommodation
22 of their experience, they're looking a place to be heard.

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1 But, more importantly, they're looking
2 for a place in which their community can begin to grow
3 and develop, so that their voices will be accommodated
4 in the context of their communities.

5 Aboriginal women do not need favours
6 from non-aboriginal people, nor do they need favours from
7 aboriginal men. They merely want respect. They want
8 accommodation. And they want to be heard, accommodated.

9 We want to participate as equals, but
10 not in the equality definition that exists in western
11 culture. Earlier today my brother Randy spoke to you and
12 talked about how our societies were traditionally much
13 more egalitarian, that equality was not a mere reference
14 in section 15, that in fact it transcended any kind of
15 constraint of legal definition.

16 So, when we talk about equality for
17 aboriginal women we're talking about equality that comes
18 from within our culture, not equality as expressed or
19 described by non-aboriginal people.

20 I would like to say in closing that, in
21 your travels across the country, I hope that you will engage
22 aboriginal women, that you will become very proactive and

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1 deliberate in approaching aboriginal women, that you will
2 make room for aboriginal womens' voices, because the women
3 not only speak for themselves, they speak as well for the
4 children that they take care of. They are the primary
5 teachers and care givers. I don't need to remind you,
6 because all of you have mothers.

7 I would like to say as well that, in
8 accommodating womens' voice aboriginal people beyond this
9 Royal Commission will begin a process of transformation
10 where we can in fact get beyond our colonialism, that we
11 can in fact teach other people how to live, that we don't
12 have to oppress women in our communities, because we're
13 not that kind of people.

14 We don't kill rivers. We don't kill the
15 land. And we shouldn't be complicit in the silencing of
16 our women.

17 Meegwetch.

18 **KAREN PINE-CHEECHOO:** My name is Karen
19 Pine-Cheechoo and the reason that I have two last names
20 is because I am from an Ojibway nation. And in that name
21 that I -- the name that I was born with -- is that I come
22 from a very strong political family also and I've married

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1 into this community and, thereby taking my husband's name,
2 Cheechoo.

3 I think that when I go to different First
4 Nations that it's always important to recognize who you
5 are and what your family line is, as to where you come
6 from.

7 And, in using both names, they recognize
8 that I am also coming from an Ojibway nation and married
9 into a Cree nation.

10 In terms of presenting to the Royal
11 Commission, I almost feel that I felt very compelled to
12 have to come before you and speak. When I looked at the
13 agenda this morning I was quite confused as to why there
14 was no women being allowed -- or, you know, volunteering
15 to speak. And even for myself I think that it does take
16 a lot of courage to be able to come before our people and
17 have to speak and represent our native women and to be
18 able to be -- have a voice in a part of these proceedings.

19 The issues that I would like to present
20 on are the issues that Greta presented on her speech.
21 And it took her a lot of courage and also fighting with
22 a lot of fear that people would not listen to what she

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1 had to say.

2 In terms of the work that I do within
3 my community and also the work that I've sort of struck
4 out for myself for the last 12 years, has been in community
5 healing, individual healing. My role as a mother and also
6 a partner is my priority. I don't want to have to be on
7 a crusade to say that womens' rights should be recognized
8 and they should be entrenched, or that I want to be like
9 men.

10 I do not want to be like a man. I want
11 the respect to be a woman. I want the right to be a woman
12 and to be able to speak as a woman, as a mother and also
13 a partner.

14 And this is things that we should be
15 going to our grandmothers and our mothers and our aunts
16 and asking them as to what they might want to say to the
17 leaders that have presented throughout today.

18 When I look at community healing I think
19 that -- and the Royal Commission has been referred to as
20 such -- I first have to look at what I've had to do for
21 my ownself.

22 To begin with, I had to realize that I

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1 was a victim of a certain amount of abuse within my original
2 home. And it's not -- I don't feel that I'm unique in
3 terms of those abuses. My home was a battleground because
4 of alcoholism. And with that I've carried on that search
5 and questions that I had and went to my elders in my
6 community and I asked my elders different questions as
7 to why my family was different.

8 My elders became my parents. They were
9 the ones who raised me, because my parents were not parents
10 for me as a young girl.

11 In being raised with elderly people
12 around you and then being your parents I realized that
13 I -- that I realized -- or, that I was taught the equality
14 of human beings within our nation.

15 We were equal and I was given a lot of
16 right at a very young age. I was given a lot of
17 independence and that independence has carried me through.
18 Plus, the right for equality has carried me through my
19 life.

20 In our communities women have the role
21 of being nurturers. We're the ones who raise our families.
22 We're the ones who spend the time to teach the values,

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1 to teach the emotions, to teach the understanding to our
2 children.

3 We don't want to have to fight for all
4 of this. We want to be able to be heard in terms of what
5 we've been able to give our children.

6 One of the things that I did touch upon
7 before is the community healing. In the work that I've
8 been doing -- there was a survey that was done across Canada
9 and it was done by the National Native Association
10 directors, where they had went to elders across Canada
11 and asked them, "Why is there such a high rate of alcoholism
12 in our native communities?" The elders response and the
13 majority of the response was that there's a deterioration
14 within our family system.

15 That deterioration has been because of
16 the competitiveness within the society, the predominant
17 society, that has made us feel inadequate as care givers.

18 Also, in terms of the family system is that it's
19 deteriorated. We no longer play the role of mother and
20 our fathers sometimes -- and most of the time are vacant
21 from the home.

22 So those role models are not there for

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1 our children. Our families are separating and also our
2 families are being raised by single parents -- men and
3 women are becoming single parents today.

4 If we are to begin our healing, we have
5 to begin that healing within our family unit. It has to
6 start with the individual.

7 As myself, I have done that. It has to
8 start from there and it has to go into our family and then
9 our community. It can't work from the outside in. All
10 of our answers are right here within our own families and
11 within our own community. But it takes individuals to
12 take risks. And it takes individuals to go out there and
13 seek the answers that they need for their own healing.

14 I hope that the Royal Commission will
15 be able to pave the way for other native women -- and
16 especially women from our territory -- to be able to come
17 before you and speak to you about what they are facing.

18 I, myself, have never been physically
19 abused by my partner. I also am not an alcoholic. And
20 yet, I still am involved in the recovery, in the healing
21 process of our people through alcohol and drug prevention
22 programs and now treatment programs that are being in --

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1 that are coming to our area.

2 And in that commitment I've made to be
3 able to assist the people has been a commitment that I've
4 made to my family a long time ago, to be able to understand
5 what alcoholism has done to my family and my community.

6 And one of the things that I needed to be able to recover
7 and no longer be a victim of it, but to let that become
8 a powerful tool that I can use in assisting other people
9 on their journey of recovery, and their healing journey
10 also

11 One time my partner and I went from
12 Moosonee to Cochrane. And we were on the train and we
13 met an elderly man on the train and he spent the whole
14 day with my partner. Towards the end of the trip I went
15 to look for him and they were still talking. And I said,
16 "Gee, you say women are bad," I said, "that women talk
17 a lot." And I said, "Youse men are just as bad." And
18 the old man said, "Just like a woman, always looking for
19 an argument."

20 And I don't think I'm looking for an
21 argument here today, but I think that we should be allowed
22 to -- like, we should be allowed to be -- to have a voice

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1 and to give those people that don't have a voice, or that
2 are unable to come forward to speak -- whether it be through
3 private consultation or preparing papers to make a
4 presentation, a formal presentation -- then if our leaders
5 will allow that to happen, then I'll feel that I am
6 satisfied.

7 So, this is all I have to present.

8 Thank you.

9 **GRACE DELANEY:** My name is Grace
10 Delaney.

11 I come to you as a mother, as a wife and
12 as a person who hears the cry of fellow women. I, myself,
13 have never been mistreated, I don't feel I've been
14 mistreated by my spouse, who is non-native. Whether he
15 would have been native, I don't know if he would've
16 mistreated me, but -- that's beside the point.

17 Anyways, I have felt the heartbeat of
18 a child within my womb. I have two young daughters over
19 there. And I feel very strongly the abuse of a life, of
20 any life, is so devastating to me.

21 And as human beings, as creatures of God,
22 we are given compassion for our fellow man. We are given

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1 that example by our Creator and his son, Jesus Christ,
2 that we recognize one another as creatures of God.

3 And I think it's about time we recognize
4 the misdeeds that people are doing in our communities.
5 We have the power to change that. We recognize the ability
6 of our people. We have the talents. We have the skills
7 to communicate with one another and teach one another,
8 and support one another, encouraging and helping from
9 whatever misuse or abuse anybody's going through.

10 I cannot conceive my children being
11 abused, so -- because of my children and because they are
12 women -- I have one son, and I will protect him as well
13 as I protect my two little girls.

14 If I can't hear the heartbeat of my
15 fellow man, my fellow friend, my sister, or the next person
16 to me, whether they're black, whether they're brown --
17 I'm at a stage in my life when I don't see colour when
18 I look at anyone -- I see them as creatures of God.

19 I can't accept the fact that we should
20 put aside our feelings, our feelings of one another, just
21 because a person is different colour or the creed of their
22 life is different, or the way they live is different.

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1 We must accept them for who they are.

2 And, unless we can see that, even among
3 our own people, unless we see each other as brothers and
4 sisters, we will not function to live in harmony with one
5 another. And we need harmony with each other as a nation,
6 whether we are native or non-native.

7 We are put here to service each other.

8 I pray every morning and I say "others," that I may do
9 my work for others, not that I do for myself, that I may
10 see my brother or my sister, that I may serve them first,
11 before I serve myself. Because, in serving them, I am
12 serving myself. The deed that I do for someone else is
13 the blessing that I bring to my -- that God bestows on
14 me.

15 And I hurt very much when I hear of
16 violence among anybody, women, men -- I know men -- some
17 men are abused and those things have to be recognized,
18 those things have to be brought to the front.

19 Like Karen said, we have to heal. And
20 we can't heal if we just keep shoving everything
21 underneath, underneath the rug. We have to bring it out
22 in the open and deal with it -- it doesn't necessarily

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1 have to be open -- like Karen had said, privately or in
2 a group session. But one major thing that we have to do
3 with each other is communicate.

4 And, without that communication, there
5 will always be a gap between the elders and the youth that
6 people have talked about. And we have to bring that
7 together.

8 I wanted to say as well, when I mentioned
9 I felt the heartbeat of a child in my life within my womb,
10 and that feeling doesn't stop. It doesn't stop. You also
11 feel the breath and the heartbeat of the person, whether
12 they're walking outside of your system.

13 And, as women, we've had that
14 experience, those of us who have had children, we know
15 what that feels like to have a heartbeat within you. And
16 you recognize the heartbeat of someone else.

17 And we must walk hand in hand, side by
18 side, with whatever race we are from, whatever position
19 we're in, any walk of life, that we may meet around that
20 circle each other.

21 And I commend all of you for bearing with
22 us all day. I want to thank you.

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1 Thank you.

2 **THERESA NEEGAN:** Hello.

3 My name is Theresa Neegan. I've been
4 living in Moose Factory about five weeks. I'm originally
5 from Constance Lake Reserve. And my parents were
6 originally from Winisk.

7 And I guess for myself I had to come up
8 here and -- again, looking at the agenda and all the people
9 that came up saying that we needed to go back to our
10 traditional values.

11 And yet those traditional values are not
12 reflected in our community leadership today.

13 If we look at the Assembly of First
14 Nations, tribal councils, we really are not practising
15 what we're preaching. And yet, when you see the families
16 at home you'll see the equal partnership, men doing the
17 cooking and dishes and women trapping.

18 And I guess it's because you have adopt
19 themselves to the dominant culture.

20 I remember when I first got married, my
21 mother came to me and said "Never, never" -- how do you
22 say that? -- I forget what I was going to say -- I wasn't

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1 going to lie, either -- oh, "depend on a man for anything.
2 You can look at him as your partner, but not as your
3 protector. You can do that yourself."

4 And I guess also in sense, being a
5 Christian, being a Catholic, she always stressed to say
6 the rosaries because she said it was the mother that was
7 telling Jesus what to do. You appeal to the mother.

8 And so I guess in a sense what I'm saying
9 is, that we have to be more proactive in involving women
10 in the decision making instead of token.

11 I was just wondering now if there are
12 any other women besides yourself -- would it be equal
13 number, equal representation, like 50:50?

14 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** There
15 are seven members on the Commission and three are women,
16 two aboriginal women and a non-aboriginal woman.

17 So, it's three and four.

18 **THERESA NEEGAN:** Three and four --
19 well, almost, and that's all I wanted to say.

20 Thank you.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I am
22 really glad that the four of you have come forth. It is

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1 really interesting, the presentations you have made.

2 They are different and yet they -- yet
3 they are the same in other ways and they really compliment
4 each other.

5 You really started out with a very
6 powerful presentation. Brenda has such a forceful way
7 of presenting herself that it was an interesting way to
8 start. And then we hear from Karen, who is very, very
9 soft-spoken, but equally as important a presentation.
10 And then we hear from Grace talking about feeling a
11 heartbeat and being a mother and finally Theresa -- her
12 mother tells her never depend on a man -- that is
13 interesting. I have heard about that one before.

14 It was also really nice to hear women
15 say that they have never been abused by a man. We have
16 been hearing a lot of the opposite. And personally I was
17 starting to wonder if I could find an aboriginal woman
18 out there somewhere that had not been abused by a man,
19 whether physically or sexually.

20 So it is kind of interesting to actually
21 have two women in one day actually tell us that they have
22 not been abused.

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1 The healing your are talking about that
2 needs to occur first to the individual is probably a message
3 we are hearing a number of times. It is kind of interesting
4 where we are finding it, though. We are finding it in
5 prisons and places like that. It is really strange where
6 we are hearing those kinds of things.

7 We do not have a majority of women, but
8 we do have a majority of aboriginal people. And the women
9 that are on the Commission are very strong. I do not think
10 it would be possible for the men ever to gang up on the
11 women on the Commission.

12 We try and operate by consensus. The
13 report that we came out with on the constitution, for
14 instance, was something in which we went through many
15 drafts and everyone had their input into it, until we were
16 all satisfied with the final draft.

17 So, you can rest assured that this
18 Commission is going to hear from women in many ways.

19 It is unfortunate that it was not
20 organized in advance here, but the first round hearings
21 we are holding, we are learning from. And what I just
22 learned today and I suspect most of us have learned, is

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1 that when we instruct our community organizers and when
2 our staff contact communities from Ottawa and so forth,
3 we should be in advance working out to make sure that women
4 are going to present to us, either in our hearing setting,
5 or else in another situation, because we do not have any
6 problems of doing it any other way.

7 We do not have a problem, for instance,
8 in having a womens' circle, or in fact meeting across a
9 kitchen table.

10 In fact, we do intend on spending a lot
11 of time meeting people in many different ways. That is
12 our intention.

13 Another thing for your interest, we are
14 going to have a round table on womens' issues. Obviously,
15 there is only going to be, you know, two or three hundred
16 women there, but hopefully that will give us a good
17 cross-section of aboriginal women.

18 I am really glad you found whatever was
19 necessary for you to come forth and present to us.

20 Viola?

21 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want
22 to commend you on your presentation, your eloquent

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1 presentations here.

2 And I just want to reiterate what Georges
3 has said about the importance of hearing the womens' issues
4 and how we want to try to accommodate -- and I agree with
5 you, you know -- this is something we talked about ever
6 before going out into the communities, you know, before
7 we even -- last fall, when we were organizing we were saying
8 "How are we going to reach certain people, aboriginal
9 people, who might have difficulty in appearing in these
10 kinds of forums."

11 And we want to -- you see, the way we
12 want to conduct our hearings is through community
13 participation. We want community involvement as we go
14 into the communities. And it is where you want to have
15 our hearings. We want you to set the agenda and we want
16 to be going where people are comfortable.

17 We do not want anything to be a barrier
18 to anybody, whether it be language or the forum, or the
19 structure of the meetings. And so it is -- you know, I
20 guess it is because we go into communities -- we only have
21 one day here -- and it is encouraging to see the interest
22 -- there is a lot of people -- and trying to accommodate

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1 everybody.

2 So I guess maybe that is something we
3 have to look at with our staff and how we plan our hearings,
4 because we do not want certain groups or people to feel
5 that they have not had the opportunity or the chance to
6 present themselves, you know, in the way that they would
7 be comfortable.

8 And as well as -- like Georges said,
9 there will be a round table or a conference just on womens'
10 issues alone. That has come as a recommendation from some
11 of the places where we have been, by some women presenters.

12 So, we would want to -- how that
13 selection process will take place, I have no idea. So,
14 if anybody has any ideas how we should be doing that, you
15 know, certainly we are open to those kinds of suggestions
16 as well.

17 The problem is, when we plan these things
18 everybody in the country wants to be a part of it and there
19 is just now way we can accommodate hundreds and thousands
20 of people.

21 But, anyway, we want to try and be as
22 fair as we can.

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1 As well, again, speaking on the healing
2 process, as Georges said, it is something we have heard
3 over and over again, because we have not been travelling
4 together -- we are always changing Commissioners -- we
5 are not always two Commissioners. We are always
6 interchanging and going to different places.

7 So, I have heard this, you know, what
8 you said. I have heard that in other communities, in the
9 Yukon Territories and, you know, that same approach was
10 made there.

11 So, it is something that I think is
12 really, really important, the whole healing process. That
13 has to happen in communities, outside of communities,
14 within ourselves, before we can move on to bigger issues
15 and it is good to know that people are coming out and saying
16 that and recognizing that.

17 So, I want to thank you all for coming
18 forward and I hope we will get to meet again and have the
19 opportunity to talk again at some length -- or depth.

20 Thank you.

21 **BRENDA SMALL:** In response to your
22 comment, Viola, I am afraid that if there are separate

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1 womens' circles, or separate processes for women, that
2 we won't eliminate the problem of women being put
3 separately, or being treated differently, of not being
4 heard in a holistic way, in that women are members of the
5 community as a whole, that if women have womens' meetings,
6 then women are only going to be talking to other women
7 and a few sensitive men that are willing to come out and
8 be seen there.

9 If we have meetings where women and men
10 can meet and talk together, I think that that would be
11 much more productive, because we're all in this situation
12 together. And to maybe create forums that are strictly
13 for women, would keep women, in essence apart from the
14 process.

15 And, although the accommodation for
16 women so women are comfortable is understandable, this
17 particular session here in Moose Factory was for the whole
18 community. And it was interesting to note that the
19 original agenda had men essentially and Greta was added
20 afterwards and other people were added as time went on,
21 and that is also understandable.

22 However, many of the names that were on

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1 the list originally were of men who have been involved
2 in the political process for many years, men are not only
3 chiefs right now, but have served in leadership positions
4 over a long period of time who are comfortable with process
5 like this.

6 So, if there could be a much more
7 informal way of doing that, of integrating both men and
8 women to participate, I think that that would be much more
9 productive. And it would also send a message loud and
10 clear to men who occupy positions of leadership, who make
11 decisions right now, that women have to be accommodated
12 in any environment and every environment, regardless of
13 whether or not it's for women alone, that in fact men and
14 women should be working on all of these problems and
15 creating solutions together.

16 Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER, VIOLA ROBINSON:** Well,
18 I thank you for that thought. I think it something that
19 we had not thought about, but certainly will keep in mind.

20 And it goes along the same, I think rationale that we
21 have talked about, aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

22 We are trying to have round tables where we are going

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1 to invite both, so that they can talk amongst themselves.

2 So that makes a lot of sense.

3 Thank you.

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

5 Perhaps we misinformed you on what we
6 are planning.

7 We are going to have a series of round
8 tables on different issues. And the first one we are
9 having is on aboriginal people living in an urban setting.
10 That is going to be in about two-and-a-half weeks.

11 And eventually we will have round tables
12 on issues that are most important to youth, to elders,
13 and to women and many other issues.

14 So, while we would have men, obviously,
15 at a round table on womens' issues, but the majority would
16 be women.

17 And in our hearings that is what have
18 actually been trying to do, is create a situation where
19 women are taking a role. You may be surprised that there
20 have been actually communities where the majority --
21 overwhelming majority of presenters have been women and
22 men have not been virtually anywhere in sight.

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1 And last fall, when we went around and
2 consulted with aboriginal organizations there are certain
3 places we went to in the country where 95 per cent, if
4 not more of the people in the room we were actually
5 consulting with, were aboriginal women. I don't know what
6 happened to the men, but -- for instance, in New Brunswick
7 I think there was one chief in the room when we were
8 consulting with the aboriginal people of New Brunswick.
9 And the rest were women or else a few male students, I
10 think they were, in the room.

11 So, we have had the other -- we have had
12 the flip side too, of more women by far presenting in
13 certain places.

14 Again, I think when we went to Eskisonee
15 (phonetic) we had more women presenters there than men.
16 So, we've had both.

17 But something I think we have really
18 learned today is, we are going to have to make sure that
19 every time we do have some women presenting.

20 **THERESA NEEGAN:** Could I have one more
21 comment?

22 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Oh, of

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1 course, please do.

2 **THERESA NEEGAN:** Well, if you have more
3 women and you don't have the equal representation of both
4 sexes sometimes one of the power games people play is not
5 taking -- or not participating in the discussion, like,
6 they choose to ignore it, thereby women talking among
7 themselves.

8 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Yes,
9 I think I hear you.

10 Does the Elder want to make a comment?

11 **COMMISSIONER FOR THE DAY, CHIEF THOMAS**
12 **ARCHIBALD:** I just want to comment that the women certainly
13 did a wonderful job in presenting their views to the
14 Commission and I hope more of this attitude, is forthcoming
15 in the future.

16 Thank you.

17 **PAT CHILTON:** There is one more
18 presenter. It is Andy Poonae. He is a journalist for
19 Wawatay Communications Society, here in Moose Factory.

20 **ANDY POONAE (through interpreter):**

21 ... it's been a long day that some of
22 the people that are saying and it's very ... to discuss

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1 their views. It's very comforting to -- when they talk
2 about the future and they talk about the local government.

3 My name is Andrew Poonae. I am 34 years
4 old. I've been working in Wawatay for five years. For
5 now I just want to say -- to talk about the things that
6 happened to me in the past.

7 And first -- the first time I remember
8 when I was a kid that there were lots of times I thought
9 about all these -- what I do, or who I am. I don't really
10 know who I really was, whether I was a native person or
11 a white person, because of my parents, because that's what
12 my parents were taught. They didn't really -- they were
13 urbanized -- they were urbanized because they really living
14 off the land, or something -- discourage them not to
15 practice their traditional life -- teachings that -- young
16 people -- or parents have told them.

17 But at the same time they knew what
18 happened to them in the past, because they have been grown
19 -- or they have been taught by grandparents.

20 I know two of my parents lost their own
21 parents when they were kids -- I remember they were just
22 young when my parents lost their young kids -- they were

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1 only seven years old then when they lost their parents.

2 And so I used to ask my father can you
3 tell me or teach me -- teach me some of the things about
4 my past, or even some of the legends. And that's what
5 they used to tell me -- like they didn't have the time
6 or not able to do it, but I used to force them to -- pray
7 them to give me some legends what the young people would
8 like to hear when they were just young at that time.

9 So we didn't really know about the
10 legends because of this young age that he has lost his
11 grandparents -- or he wasn't brought up by the parents
12 because they died at a young age. So he wasn't able to
13 accommodate me, or even my brothers, because they were
14 asking about the different directions because their
15 livelihood, they thought it was better to live down south.

16 I know they came from a place called
17 Gibiskaw (phonetic) River. It's between Attawapiskat and
18 Fort Albany ... but at the same time I ... can't really
19 pinpoint the traditional ... life and my mother was from
20 Attawapiskat and that's how they came across, they came
21 about ... originally from Attawapiskat area.

22 So, when I talk -- when I think about

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1 the past or what I wanted to find out the past history,
2 through books, that's the only way I could learn, is through
3 books, about my past.

4 And there's lots of things I have learned
5 through books, by reading about the history of the people
6 even before the white man came on this land, because there's
7 brief history because there are some stories I have wrote
8 the first ... that came here in the north. They had some
9 ... that they had talked about so these are the things
10 ... and I know it's pretty hard to really understand and
11 I could appreciate some of the shortcomings of the people
12 been talking about that ... culture, especially all the
13 things have been talking about all day, especially the
14 health problems ... or even ... or when you talk about
15 the traders, the understanding that they had. And also
16 various other things that various religion that was brought
17 ... by overseas for our young people to accept.

18 And also the problems that they have with
19 liquor because these are foreign to us and these are things
20 that we talked about and discussed every day and I hear
21 this about issues ... when I work at Wawatay because every
22 day they been brainwashed about these issues because by

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1 work in radio we hear about shortcomings, also some of
2 their frustrations.

3 So these are the things I've been
4 thinking every day. In my past -- in my young days I used
5 to hear about these things. I know I came through hardship
6 too but, like I said ... because I wasn't ... and then
7 the type of work that I do right now. It gave me -- I'm
8 very fortunate -- continue and -- traditions by listening
9 to various people and I'll be able to relay some of the
10 messages ... to my people what's happening and, at the
11 same time, talk about the concerns of native people. These
12 are the things I'm talking about.

13 Every day the constitution is being
14 discussed and also right across Canada. So these are the
15 things -- these are the issues that I really understand
16 and really pinpoint some of the issues that are being
17 discussed and what are the issues affecting our people
18 and also what the government is doing.

19 Lots of times I try to communicate with
20 the chiefs and the councillors and also the young people.

21 There's some people out there that can really define when
22 they talk about the self-government there's still lost

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1 of confusion because some people are a little reluctant
2 to really define what -- because of some interest maybe
3 that they have within the government or they think that
4 they're not going to be trusted what they say. So it's
5 really hard ... so every day I'm trying to listen and
6 pinpoint these concerns that was discussed, especially
7 when you talk -- especially about the healing process.

8 And I remember going to one of the
9 northern communities in Fort Albany just last week -- it
10 was the last week in May. There was a three-day conference
11 there to talk about the community healing conference
12 because they ... they're going to have a big conference
13 this summer about the effects they have with the
14 residential school in August.

15 And there were lots of people that
16 attended that conference in Fort Albany and it was the
17 first time that I was able to expose myself within that
18 kind of conference where people speak -- talk about their
19 feelings, their true feelings and also there all kinds
20 of people that were ... the elders, the young people and
21 there was even -- some of the people that spoke, the early
22 -- the young ones in their early 20s, the talk about the

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1 effects that they have within them about the residential
2 school and what they seen, or what they had felt at that
3 time.

4 So, they still keep -- they are trying
5 to get it out and to find the healing process will be the
6 best way to continue. So what they said was they're trying
7 to express, to let it out, really dialogue openly about
8 what happened to them, you know, or what was done to them.

9 And I hear lots of tears pouring out in
10 that conference because the true feelings came out. But
11 one of the unfortunate things that happened was that ...
12 was there too and also at the same time ... to speak and
13 all the things that I had -- that I went through when I
14 was at residential school because this sort of thing the
15 hardship ... trying to carry on right now and at the same
16 time I'm trying to find the healing process and these are
17 the things I try to do every day on the radio, every day,
18 and we want to make sure that they express their own
19 feelings about some of the things and talk about their
20 problems and their frustrations openly.

21 And also those things that -- they're
22 really very honest about themselves. Or they talk about

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1 the abuse that some of our kids goes through, like the
2 abuse of our elders, the abuse that the ladies, or the
3 family violence, or even sexual abuse is pretty hard to
4 discuss these things openly, really because -- because
5 it's pretty hard for people now to really express
6 themselves because they're scared that other people --
7 the people to listen to them because it's pretty hard for
8 us too, sometimes, how ... deal with this ... because we
9 could feel when we listen to the people, particularly on
10 the radio we could feel the pressure, because we could
11 actually feel their tears when they speak to us.

12 And it's hard -- sometimes we ... some
13 of our feelings. And ... what happened to us ... those
14 who talk about the healing process. What are we going
15 to do when we start talking about these things, some of
16 the hard times that they have within our communities.

17 One time we had an open radio show, talk
18 about the abuse of women. And lots of -- we're trying
19 to discuss -- like that man said before, we never realized
20 what we went through at that time because of those true
21 feelings came up.

22 It wasn't intended to go through

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1 their own people demonstrate ... and at that time when
2 they were blockading those highways and I had the
3 opportunity to discuss, to be part of some of the
4 conferences or confrontations because what the government
5 has been doing and also some of the regulations that are
6 being affected by young people because -- been affected
7 by our own people. And also down south, Kanasadka
8 (phonetic) I was there. I was there ... true feeling when
9 they had the confrontation with their French neighbours.
10 I was there three or four days and I was among the --
11 it was very windy and the gunshots on June 11th when the
12 hostility took place and I was right in Oka.

13 And then we talked to various people and
14 also that the various -- we talk about different factions
15 of people -- traditional people and also the Department
16 of Indian Affairs, we tried to interview them because all
17 I found out now there was a jurisdictional problem because
18 of the law -- because of some of the strange laws. They
19 couldn't understand -- the two nations of people couldn't
20 understand what are the strange law that both of them were
21 supposed to accept because of the federal government.

22 So that's why it's pretty hard for our

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1 people to really understand the foreign laws that are being
2 applied to them. And also even our own traditional people,
3 the translation of our laws are not even -- are not
4 sometimes understood, or how can we apply the old
5 traditional ways.

6 So, during my time in Oka, I really got
7 to think that not enough of our people ... so it's pretty
8 to really -- so it's pretty hard -- so it's pretty important
9 to communicate. And I must be able to come back and tell
10 that to my own people, what I had seen through the
11 communication system that I'm working right now, not only
12 today, but tomorrow too, because ... even to express the
13 tears of our own people to continue to discuss about ...
14 issues that affect them within their own communities.
15 Like, for instance, Fort Albany, the healing ... process
16 that I was telling you about it up to them to try to solve
17 their own problems within that community. And so it's
18 very important to continue this process so there'll be
19 the best of healing that process because they'll be able
20 to discuss ... the young people will be able to learn the
21 feelings of their elders.

22 And in reference to the self-government

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1 and the discussions that surround ... deliberations today
2 ... and some of those issues are very important also, and
3 some are not, according to the discussions here.

4 However, I've come to think of a lot of
5 things listening to the discussions here and I think those
6 are very important, that those should be acted upon ...
7 and immediately and for the -- for you as a Commission
8 to find out -- in your mandate to find out and listen to
9 the people's concerns, I think that's a very important
10 task.

11 And also for the youth, for the women,
12 and for the community members, not only for the people
13 of our communities but from other nations as well, to
14 discuss their concerns and also the issues that they --
15 and I just wanted to maybe make some comment and I think
16 there are other issues that have already been discussed.

17 And I think you'll probably hearing a
18 lot of these concerns and issues that -- along with your
19 travels in this country. And I thank you very much and
20 if you have any questions, I'll take them.

21 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** I do not
22 have any questions.

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1 I would like to thank you for sharing
2 your experience with us. It was a very good story and
3 I think it was very useful that you decided to present.

4 Do any of the Commissioners want to add
5 anything?

6 Okay, thank you.

7 Apparently there was one other person
8 wanted to make a presentation. Awhile ago the
9 Commissioners caucused and we are only going to hear from
10 women.

11 So, if Kevin is going to go through a
12 sex change, then we'll hear from him.

13 **KEVIN SCOFIELD:** Go ahead, Kevin.

14 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** There
15 we go.

16 **KEVIN SCOFIELD:** My name is Kevin
17 Scofield. I'm a television producer for Wawatay Native
18 Television.

19 In my line of work they have something
20 they call -- a phrase -- it's called "conflict of interest."

21 And this little rule was created for people like me who
22 make a living doing what I do.

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1 They are not allowed to put their two
2 cents in on issues that affect Canadians or the people
3 in general.

4 But I'm a native man, I'm a young native
5 man. And I figure I have the right to be able to sit here
6 and speak to Mr. Erasmus.

7 I get paid to watch the world. I get
8 paid to read magazines and to read papers and watch the
9 news and interpret it and tell people what I think of it.

10 From what we've seen in Los Angeles and
11 with various diseases that are ravaging all kinds of groups
12 in North America I think it's pretty much plain to see
13 that this nation that was created -- I mean the United
14 States -- that was created based on the constitution of
15 the Iroquois, it's crumbling, it's falling apart, it's
16 a falling empire.

17 And remember those thousand points of
18 light George Bush was talking about before he got elected
19 -- or when he first got elected? I haven't seen any points
20 of light, except one, and that is that the United States'
21 brother country to the north is finally, after 125 years
22 of existence, finally letting the original inhabitants

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1 of the land be -- have a rightful place in the constitution.

2 And I think that can really change a lot
3 the way is run if -- you see the world being destroyed
4 and if the Canadian government takes a first step in
5 allowing the original inhabitants of the land to have a
6 say in how the country is run, and what kind of things
7 can occur within its borders, then the rest of the world
8 -- perhaps -- might follow suit.

9 My mother is from here and my father is
10 white, so I'm what they -- a hundred years ago they called
11 a halfbreed. I am very proud of my native heritage. I
12 practice my culture and I know nothing about -- I have
13 no white friends and I have -- I know nothing about the
14 white way of life.

15 I went to school in a southern school
16 and I was always just a native.

17 I travel a lot in my job and I go to cities
18 all over Ontario. And to say racism doesn't exist in this
19 country is ridiculous. I've been refused service in
20 restaurants because of my long hair -- maybe for the colour
21 of my skin -- I don't know.

22 I've been told there's no more rooms

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1 available in this hotel and I'd call back later in a French
2 accent and they'd say, "Yeah, we have rooms available."

3 I've always said that native people
4 should -- they don't belong in the city because they have
5 a home, they have a homeland, they have roots there and,
6 no matter how much money you make in the city, no matter
7 how successful and how nice your car is and how beautiful
8 your wife is and how nice your house is, you'll still be
9 just another Indian.

10 And you're walking down the street and
11 people will think you're just going to the nearest watering
12 hole to get drunk.

13 I was in Ottawa when Ovide Mercredi first
14 made his -- when he first used the term "distinct society."

15 I guess you could of say that he kind of took it from
16 Robert Bourassa and the French Quebec people.

17 And I remember there was like a gasp when
18 he first said it. It was kind of -- everybody was shocked.

19 And in the next day in the newspapers there was a real
20 big deal about how, you know, Mercredi was using the phrase
21 that Quebec first used.

22 And I think that was kind of funny,

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1 because here we were, the non-native and the native people
2 bickering about a phrase and that kind of took attention
3 away from the issues.

4 I heard somebody say earlier tonight
5 that we can't -- no matter how much we may want to -- you
6 know, or how much we may wish -- you can't send these people
7 back. No, they're here. You know, that's history,
8 they're here.

9 And native people hurt, you know. I
10 hurt from the things that've been told to me. But I'm
11 not bitter about it. I don't hate all white people because
12 of it. And I think most native people are willing to
13 forgive and forget.

14 And we can go on and cry and whine and
15 demand justice and say we demand to be treated as equals.
16 We can go on and do that all we want. But that will never
17 happen, unless the two dominant cultures in this country
18 realize that we are equals.

19 And when that stops, when they look at
20 us as equals, that's when things can really start changing.

21 I think the biggest reason they look at
22 us as inferior is because they are ashamed of what they

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1 did to us, they're ashamed of the residential school
2 system, they're ashamed of the religion being forced upon
3 us. And there's just a -- the majority of Canadians
4 support the native cause and they're ashamed of what their
5 grandfathers did to our grandfathers.

6 And I can really see us all sitting down
7 and stop talking about "our land," and that's "your land,"
8 and you stay on your land and we'll stay on our land, you
9 know, and stop categorizing little plots of land in this
10 country and just start considering the whole country "our
11 land."

12 You know, I don't speak my language, I'm
13 ashamed to say. Hopefully I'll learn to speak it by the
14 time I'm 30 years old.

15 At work we were doing a story and I needed
16 -- we broadcast in Cree -- and I had to do -- I had to
17 find a word for "reserve." And I asked one of the Cree
18 speaking people in our organization and they said the word
19 was skugigan aski (phonetic), or skounagin aski (phonetic)
20 -- excuse me, all you Cree speaking people out there --
21 and I never knew that that's what they called that, eh.
22 I never knew that's the word for reserve.

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1 And I found that really funny because,
2 when I was a child I remember my grandfather referring
3 that work skugigan (phonetic) to the pail of scraps that
4 they'd thrown there for the dogs, you know, at the end
5 of the day.

6 So, that's what it means. The literal
7 translation is scrap land, leftover land that nobody else
8 wants. And I don't think when they first invented that
9 word a hundred and some years ago that they were trying
10 to be funny. I think that's what they really felt, you
11 know, this is scrap land. So, we're stuck with it.

12 I'm really proud to say I'm from this
13 part of the world, this part of the country. I'm proud
14 to be Canadian. I'm proud to be from James Bay. And I'm
15 proud to be from Moose Factory. And I'm proud to be from
16 way down.

17 Half the world has too much and the other
18 half has too little. And I thank God every day for allowing
19 that white sperm to allow me to be born on this side of
20 the world where it has too much.

21 I really think we can really work out
22 our problems if the three different nations got together

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1 and sat down and talked without hatred and bitterness and
2 just be thankful we live in such a beautiful country as
3 Canada.

4 Thank you very much.

5 **CO-CHAIRMAN, GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank
6 you, Kevin.

7 We have come to the end of the day. It
8 has been a very, very interesting experience for the
9 Commissioners here.

10 I want to thank a number of people.

11 I want to thank Chief Norm Wesley and
12 his staff for everything they have done for us while we
13 have been here. It has been very friendly service, very
14 good service.

15 And I thought the exchange that Chief
16 Wesley and I had was very, very useful contribution. I
17 kiddingly told him I would not ask him any tough questions
18 and then pursued to ask him the toughest I could think
19 of at the time.

20 He was good natured about it.

21 I want to thank the tribal council, the
22 chairman, Stan Louttit, for having the endurance to sit

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1 through the whole day with us and he is still awake --
2 and his staff.

3 I want to thank the cooks. I hear that
4 the noon presentation here was more or less hurriedly put
5 on the responsibility of some people that originally were
6 not going to -- not expected to do that, so I want to thank
7 them especially.

8 I want to thank the people that cooked
9 last night and all of the people that came out.

10 I want to thank the two Commissioners
11 we have here, Elder Thomas Archibald who has showed us
12 that even if you are an elder you can still have the
13 endurance to listen to everybody that wants to talk to
14 us.

15 Thank you for your contributions all day
16 long.

17 And we have had a Youth Commissioner
18 today. We have not necessarily had them in all parts of
19 the country, and I found it very useful that Derek was
20 here. He started with a small presentation this morning
21 and has asked really relevant questions throughout the
22 day.

StenoTran

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1 So, I really want to thank you, Derek,
2 for being with us.

3 I would like to thank Pat Chilton for
4 making sure there were no women presenting to us -- no,
5 I thought you did a marvellous job Pat and everything you
6 did made today a very long day. You told us about all
7 the letters you sent out and every mailbox being filled
8 -- I don't know how many times -- and I see why we are
9 still here after 10:00 o'clock.

10 I don't know if the rest of you noticed,
11 but they kept sending us new agendas and there are different
12 times on them when they were making the changes so we knew
13 which was the most recent.

14 The last agenda was sent to us at 6:40
15 and the last presenter was still going to present before
16 5:30.

17 Anyway, it has been a very useful day.
18 We are going to have a closing prayer and we are going
19 to ask one of the four women that presented to us earlier,
20 Grace Delaney, to come back and close the day for us, if
21 you could Grace -- thank you.

22 **GRACE DELANEY:**

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1

(Closing prayer)

2

--- WHEREUPON THE HEARING ADJOURNED AT 10:20 P.M. TO RESUME

3

AGAIN JUNE 10TH AT N.L.S.S. IN MOOSONEE, AT 11:00 A.M.

4