

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR  
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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Mani-Utenam, Quebec

---Upon Commencing on Friday, November 20, 1992 at 8:40 a.m.

**(Opening ceremony)**

**(Opening prayer)**

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:**

Good morning. I now open this sitting of the public hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The Commission is very pleased to have the opportunity to hold this hearing here in Malioténam. We are attempting to visit as many communities and reserves as possible during the four rounds of public hearings that will be held.

We are at the moment in our second round of public hearings. The first began last April, and continued for a period of 10 weeks until the end of June. In that time, we visited 36 communities. To date, we have had 44 days of public hearings in every one of Canada's ten provinces and in the two territories. We have received oral or written presentations from

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over 850 individuals and agencies, groups and institutions of all kinds.

The Commission was established just over a year ago to study the relationship between Canada's Aboriginal peoples and the various Canadian governments, as well as Canadian society as a whole. The objective is to ensure that the policies of the past, which have too often been poor ones, are changed to make future government policies, and the relationship with Aboriginal peoples, one of respect, equality and partnership.

There are many topics to be studied by the Commission, ranging from justice to education, health, social services, the various problems found in the communities, too often unfortunately employment problems, alcohol problems, violence, particularly against women and children.

The land issue lies at the very heart of the Commission's terms of reference. With respect to the land claims process, the Commission's role is not to intervene in land claims,

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but rather to suggest a more effective process that might accelerate matters. The issue of self-government is also one of the key issues in the Commission's terms of reference.

The Commission has the opportunity to examine all these issues taken together. We hope to be able to produce an overview of a new relationship between the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and Canadians and Quebecers.

We know that maintaining Aboriginal cultures and languages is essential. At the first public hearings, we were told that achieving this would require more self-government, and greater financial self-sufficiency.

We are aware of the fact that there have already been many task forces and commissions of inquiry on Aboriginal issues in Canada. We know that there is a great deal of skepticism among Aboriginal peoples. We also know that we are working at a time when there has never been so much determination, and political will, to find a lasting solution rather than continuing to work on these issues

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in a piecemeal fashion.

The Commission set in motion a process of consultation and dialogue because it is working together with Aboriginal people and with the Canadian public, in a considerable effort involving four rounds of public hearings. We plan to visit over 100, perhaps as many as 125, communities in Canada, which is different from the usual process of visiting approximately 30 towns and cities, mainly in the South.

We are hoping to, and trying to, meet people where they live, to see their living conditions, to hear them talk about problems and, most important of all, solutions. We are not here so much to talk about and identify the problems – although in some instances it will be necessary to do so – but rather to put forward concrete solutions.

We have to work at the field level. It is important to find a way of giving birth to a number of guiding principles that were discussed, in particular over the past year in connection with the Constitution. I believe – and we believe – that the vote held on October 26, is not

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a return to square one. On the contrary. I feel that the process of discussing the Constitution made it possible to educate the public about Aboriginal questions and to provide much more information in the debate on a number of issues – inherent rights to self-government, the existing and potential role for non-aboriginals living on Aboriginal government lands – fundamental issues which, we hope, can be examined in detail by the Commission.

The Commission will succeed only insofar as efforts are made from the standpoint of active involvement by both Aboriginal people themselves and the general public. Our work concerns the relationship between Aboriginal people and the public; it is therefore essential that there be discussion on both sides, and that both sides think about these issues. From this standpoint, we are very happy to be able to be here this morning in Malioténam to hear the presentations that will be made.

As I said earlier, we are striving to see people



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where they live. We are visiting schools, and meeting large numbers of secondary students. We are visiting prisons. We are visiting hospitals. We are visiting shelters, particularly women's shelters.

We hope that in the end we will be able together to make concrete recommendations that for once will be implemented by the federal government as well as by the provincial governments.

The work of the Commission is a collective effort, and we appreciate the participation by the public, by Aboriginal people, and by various institutions. It is essential that the debate be held, and that people not wait for the Commission's recommendations to react separately, depending on their interests, before lobbying governments.

We hope that people come and meet us, and that discussion takes place during the life of the Commission, and that the discussion be begun seriously. This is the best way of guaranteeing that our recommendations will be realistic, and acceptable to Aboriginal people and to the public, and that our

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report will not be shelved.

In concluding, I wish to emphasize that the three parties in the House of Commons supported the establishment of the Commission, and that the way in which it was established differed from all other commissions, on the recommendation of the former Chief Justice of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Dickson, who had been given a mandate by the Prime Minister to recommend the terms of reference and composition of the Commission.

The terms of reference were not prepared by federal government public servants, from either the Department of Indian Affairs or the Privy Council Office. It is a very broad mandate that will succeed, allow me to repeat once again, insofar as people, the public, and all parties concerned make every possible effort.

So without further ado, I should now like, not so much to welcome you, because you are at home, but to wish a very productive working session.

I would like to ask my colleagues... and I take this opportunity to mention

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that the Commission consists of seven commissioners, four of whom are Aboriginal members, and three non-Aboriginal members. I co-chair the Commission with Georges Erasmus, former President of the Assembly of First Nations.

Here with me this morning is Mrs. Bertha Wilson, who sat on the Supreme Court of Canada for several years until 1991, and who had the opportunity to hand down several decisions affecting Aboriginal rights in Canada. Also with me today is Mr. Paul Chartrand, a Métis from Manitoba, a professor of law at the University of Manitoba, and also Mrs. Évelyne St-Onge, who will act as a commissioner on an equal footing with us for this work session. Mrs. St-Onge will be able to ask those who make presentations questions just as we may.

This mechanism, of appointing ad hoc commissioners from the communities in which we are holding hearings – proved to be very productive in the first round of our public hearings. They make it possible for us to dialogue and to ensure that we properly understand what we are being told, and that we have a good understanding of

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the context, or a better understanding of the context. Once again, I wish to thank Mrs. St-Onge for being with us this morning.

I would also like, before turning things over to my colleagues, to note that we have simultaneous interpretation in Montagnais, in French and in English. This will enable every individual to be at ease by speaking their own language.

Without further ado, I would like to ask Mrs. Wilson to say a few words, followed by Paul Chartrand.

Mrs. Wilson.

[English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** Thank you.

Good morning. It is an honour for me to be a member of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and it is a special honour to be here today with you in the community of Malioténam.

As the Co-chair has already said, we have visited many Aboriginal communities, but I can assure you that, personally speaking, I always find it interesting to discover the wealth of difference that exists across Canada. I lived the first 22 years of my

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life in a Métis community whose economy was based on fishing and hunting. There are many things different about this culture and about the diverse Aboriginal cultures in different places.

So we have a great deal of work to do. Today is when we begin it. I look forward with considerable pleasure to the events of this day, the last day of a good week spent in the land of the Aboriginal peoples of this area.

Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

Without further ado, I would now like to invite Mr. Gilbert Pilot, of the Nitassinan Coalition, to come to the table to meet us and give his presentation.

**GILBERT PILOT, NITASSINAN COALITION (first two paragraphs translated from Montagnais):** Before beginning, I asked the Great Manitou to give us a productive day to enable us to state our opinion.

I thank the members of the Commission for having taken the trouble to travel here

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to come and listen to what we have to say about how things are no longer done exactly as they were in the past, that is to say with respect to matters that we never hear anything about afterwards, we, as the Innu nation and also the people on other reserves.

To begin with, I would like to note that the Nitassinan Coalition is a traditionalist movement with 784 members. We have offices in several different communities. Our members are men, women, Elders and young people who care about the Nitassinan, who care about their culture and their language, and who are in the process of determining their future, but still in a context of peaceful co-existence with Quebecers and Canadians.

At the moment, we have misgivings – enormous misgivings – about the system before which we find ourselves, the Canadian legal framework and the Quebec legal framework. It is important to remember that right here, in this very gymnasium, two commissions have already visited us, the Canadian and Quebec Human Rights Commissions, with their two chairmen and their commissioners.

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Before our eyes, we saw the members of various communities of the Lower Shore, from the north of Nitassinan and from the west, express to these commissions all their concerns, even identifying possible solutions. That was in 1989, and today we have not yet seen a single positive sign to indicate that the commissions passed through here.

We are still awaiting detailed reports concerning our interventions during the visits of these commissions.

Then we were visited by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, which "was in the process of defining their future", except that there again we had filed a brief and made interventions to the effect that the Innu People needed to be recognized as a nation, with special and spiritual relations with the Nitassinan, with Mother Earth.

Here again we saw that the Government of Quebec, through Mr. Bourassa who, following the recommendations of the members of this commission, was to begin by holding a referendum on Quebec sovereignty, ignored



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the recommendations and instead held a referendum on constitutional matters, which proved to be a fiasco; I think that everyone is beginning to understand it.

How can we, as Aoriginal people and as members of the Innu People, have confidence? How, here today, can we hope to have those two governments listen to us, through their institutions, which are the Supreme Court, and the Provincial Court, each of which has its own laws?

In some instances, judgements rendered were in favour of Aboriginal peoples; we can list them: Calder, Sparrow, Sioui, and others, except that these decisions are always brought back to the negotiating table. There is no government yet that has deigned to implement those decisions, which were limited to usufruct rights.

And when we are brought back to the negotiation tables, they are governed by policies, and principles, which lead our peoples to the extinction of their existence as a nation.

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That is why today the Nitassinan Coalition is an independent movement from the financial standpoint. We will never go to ask for a few cents, or for financial assistance from government.

We want to affirm ourselves, and confirm our existence as a nation, our rights, our land base, our cultural foundations, our economic foundations, and our spiritual foundations in the Nitassinan.

The problem today – I think that you are in a position to see this by travelling across Canada – is that there are really two visions in the Aboriginal world, two trends: the Aboriginal establishment and the grass roots, the people, who aspire to live well and to define their own future.

Today, we are witnessing a battle between those who advocate dealing with needs and those who aspire to have their rights recognized. Governments play these games well. They tend to exercise what is called an economic supply line to certain band councils, and certain Aboriginal organizations which, eventually, suffering as they are from economic indigestion, forget that there are

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grass roots and forget that there are people who are suffering and who aspire to something else.

If peace is really what is wanted in Quebec, peace between the Aboriginal peoples and the other peoples of Canada, then we recommend what we call the "Joint Statement on Peoples' Rights", a statement that recognizes the same rights for both signatories, which guarantees the principle of equality between our peoples. The statement specifies the right to exist, economic rights, cultural rights, language rights, spiritual rights as well and, at the same time, the responsibilities of the peoples to one another. For us, it is important to note that this statement is the only prerequisite, and the guarantee, that we will be able to aspire to fair and equitable agreements between the Quebec people, the Canadian people and the Innu people.

I believe that if the Commission here today truly wishes to find solutions, it will have to get rid of what is currently called the structures that govern our respective societies.

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There was recent decision of the Sept-Îles Superior Court in favour of Hydro-Québec because in the eyes of this court right means what? It means the law. And who controls the law? Governments, these strangers.

That is why we, based on this joint statement on peoples' rights, are in the process of developing our own constitution, our own charter, and thus no longer ask those governments permission, but exercise our right to self-determination over Nitassinan. We are still the last bastion, one of the last peoples never to have signed any document whatever – treaty, agreement, convention – that ceded our rights and responsibilities over the Nitassinan to other peoples.

We plan to conduct this battle by fostering recognition of the Innu People through other Aboriginal nations across the United States and western Canada, which is in the process of being achieved; to sign with them something other than economic alliances so that at some point we will be able to be economically independent

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and truly aspire to political autonomy, and to establish what is called the "east-west-north-south axis" among the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas.

We therefore ask the Commission to look very closely at what is called "the J treaty" which is a starting point that enables us to move freely in what is called "Canada" and in what is called "the United States", except that our brothers and sisters in the United States cannot do the same. Hence this Canadian policy, under which treaties with the United States are signed, is only a one-way street: a departure, but no return.

There are several other factors that should be studied more closely in terms of economic rights, trade rights, and the kind of trade that we wish to maintain with the South.

Today we are battling monsters like Hydro-Québec, which for strictly economic considerations wishes to extinguish a people, and to cut off its special and spiritual links with our land; except that our movement has sworn to stop them and

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to propose other avenues to them. We have asked that public debates be held, and that a social evaluation be done, but here again it is the law that dictates to such corporations how to go about invading our land, and how to place our peoples in peril.

Today we are also asking the Commission to pressure the Quebec Human Rights Commission and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to give us an honest report, one that deals fairly with the complaints that were submitted to them right here in this gymnasium. What we asked them to do was to help to restore the rights and responsibilities of the Innu People over the Nitassinan.

I conclude by stating that our members, and I, who are conducting this battle, and who are promoting our rights and responsibilities, want to take control of our destiny based on our own values, not those of others. We face reprisals, we face contempt, we face intolerance, which does nothing but increase racism and a lack of understanding, which is always the main cause of these occasional incomprehensible actions.

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Recently, on Sunday, I was the victim of an act of intimidation. Somebody fired a shot on my house. We are still asking ourselves who is interested in making me and the members of our organization keep quiet and reduce our level of activity. But I guarantee you that acts like that will not stop us. Quite the contrary. They will only increase our motivation because our conviction is honest. We believe in what we are saying and we believe in what we are doing, but we are continuing with political action that will always be considered criminal by non-Aboriginal people or by governments. But we have no other choice: we must defend ourselves; we must protect the Nitassinan and protect our members, and our families.

For the moment, that's all I have to say.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Pilot, for having come to meet us and give this presentation. To begin with, I have a few brief questions on points of information.

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You say that your organization, the Coalition, has 784 members. If I understand correctly, these members are not only here in Malioténam, but spread among a variety of Montagnais communities.

**GILBERT PILOT:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You spoke about a joint statement on peoples' rights that you were in the process of developing. Do you have a version of this text to give us?

**GILBERT PILOT:** You will have a copy of the statement this morning.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Good. Is this copy a draft? Has it been adopted? Is it in the process...

**GILBERT PILOT:** It was adopted by the 784 members. It is worth noting that we promoted the document, the position that is held in it, during a walk that we had organized here in Malioténam, all the way to Montreal. At that time, we had met various members of a number of different communities, and they adhered to it,



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and we had publicized the position on the joint statement for a period of two or three months. From this position, we were able to obtain a count of the members who adhered to it, who recognized in doing so that they were a people, and ready also to recognize the Quebec people and the Canadian people.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Can you give us some idea of the Nitassinan land area?

**GILBERT PILOT:** The Nitassinan covers the vast majority of Labrador as far north as Melville Lake, Blanc-Sablon, the shores of the St. Lawrence to Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, which covers approximately 750,000 square kilometres.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Do you maintain relations with the two Innu communities in Labrador?

**GILBERT PILOT:** Very, very close relations, because we worked together in the battle, the campaign that was conducted against the military flights, the low altitude flights, to Goose Bay.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:**

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When the Human Rights Commissions, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Quebec Human Rights Commission came, could you give me a few more details about what went on at the time? What you are speaking of is not so much individual complaints concerning the technical application of the law, but rather more collective claims. Have I understood properly?

**GILBERT PILOT:** There were in fact collective complaints, and they also identified what were considered to be individual complaints. What this means is that the Commissions, when they passed through here, became aware of the fact that there was, shall we say, a range of problems at various levels, whether in the definition of the rights, as well as in the deportment and attitude of a number of non-Aboriginal people with respect to Aboriginal people here in the region, for example, in air travel, restaurants and elsewhere, such complaints had been filed.

As I just mentioned, at one time those institutions

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that were established by government, I always ask myself what direction they are headed in, because after three years it is obvious that they could at the very least have shed a little light on what was happening with these complaints, and there might have been a report. To our knowledge, there has been no sign of life. What we are asking your Commission to do, in fact, is to pressure those other commissions.

At the time, Mr. Yalden's statement when he was leaving the gymnasium, was that the old world had denounced the Indian Act, a truly discriminatory piece of legislation, and flatly said that it was discriminatory and asked the Canadian government to revoke it as quickly as possible.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would like to clarify what this is about. The terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples include the whole issue of the Indian Act, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Affairs. This is clearly an enormous and weighty matter.

At our public hearings,

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we received an enormous amount of information about the problems involved in administering this Act, and in administering the policies that stem from it. It is obvious that in our role as a Commission, we will have to give very serious consideration in our final report and elsewhere, to this Act and to amendments of the Act, and to the possibility of even effecting a transition between the Indian Act and future autonomous Aboriginal governments. It is a very broad issue.

What I am trying to see is whether, in the individual cases that were submitted under the Act that governs these matters, and that are to be administered by the Human Rights Commissions, there were no answers? Were there no contacts?

**GILBERT PILOT:** A number of individual cases were dealt with. We, I think, at the beginning, in our presentation, it was that Canada, Quebec, or those commissions, would work together, shall we say participate in restoring the rights and responsibilities of each individual. That is why at a given moment when you have not had any response to your expectations following the

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consultations that were held here in Malioténam and in Uashat, the people put forward positions that resulted in the joint statement on peoples' rights because our primary objective is to be recognized as such, and that we exist nationally as a people.

The danger for us, is seeing that governments and their institutions are, shall we say, too homogeneous. At a given moment, for me and, I think, all Aboriginal peoples, justice means what exactly? At what precise level of Canadian justice or Quebec justice can our peoples be permitted to grow or live in a context of co-existence with these peoples?

For us, it is clear that at a certain time, as you have said, amending the Indian Act will not solve the problem. Here again there will always be this tyrannical Act. It is an Act that is administered by the Government of Canada through the Department of Indian Affairs, through the Minister. A mere amendment that perhaps delegates more powers is not going to settle the

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problem, because at the same time it denies, with respect to us, our full right to exist with the values and parameters that are our own, and that were defined beforehand.

That is why the joint statement on peoples' rights recognizes the Innu people as a people with clear rights and responsibilities, the same rights to the Quebec people and the same rights to the Canadian people. What this clearly means eventually, is an Innu constitution, a Canadian constitution and a Quebec constitution.

At the moment, we are engaged, for example, in negotiations with the Canadian and Quebec governments within the framework of the Canadian legal system. And what is the framework for the Canadian legal system? Canadian policies concerning comprehensive land claims. That policy, I think everyone knows it, means that you sit down, spend a couple of million on one side, and extinguish a people on the other. And government autonomy, what will that be? It will be the same thing: within a reserve, a boundary imposed by strangers,

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not self-government according to our own concepts.

What we really want, based on this position, is guarantees. We are not taking any more chances. That's what we want to tell you. Guarantees. And the joint statement is a first step to any further discussions with the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Listen, we are certainly at the heart of the Commission's terms of reference, which is to establish a new relationship based on different structures; but clearly the whole question is how to do this. With respect to the principle, it is included in our terms of reference, and we are aware that the relationship has to be changed; it was stated in our discussion paper, which was prepared on the basis of our first round of public hearings.

Moreover, I believe that you are also aware that the Montagnais people is located within Quebec, within the Canadian context, and as you said at the beginning, there is a harmonization and an establishment of reciprocal relations that it should be possible to achieve by mutual agreement. That,

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in essence, is what we are interested in: learning about the joint statement, but also, if you can in the next few months pursue your deliberations concretely on how to go about it, we can perhaps establish a new relationship based on more solid foundations and mutual respect.

We are interested, and we do not want to be left on our own as a Commission to attempt to find concrete operating mechanisms. We are interested in receiving from your association, and from others, additional ideas in written or oral form. We will be returning to Quebec – not necessarily here in this community – and what we have set in motion is the process of dialogue.

I would simply like, in concluding, to clarify matters from the standpoint of the human rights commissions. I think that the individual cases must have been treated, but that for the hearing that was held on the collective issues, you are telling us, "We have not received any reports from those commissions, or there have not been any repercussions, we have not heard anything about it."



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From this standpoint, we will check with the two commissions, because we think that even though it is not our role to get technically involved in such cases, we can act as a facilitator which may well make it possible for information to be disseminated properly, and will look into what is going on. We have already had the opportunity to be of service to organizations or groups in this capacity, although in a limited way, because the Commission's terms of reference do not include making decisions in areas of responsibility that are more properly those of others, but we hear about a lot of things and we will certainly get back to you. We will obtain information about what happened following those hearings, and will contact you once again, either myself or someone on our personnel, to follow up on what you have told us.

I would now like to ask my colleagues to continue the discussion with you.

Mrs. Wilson.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

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[English]

**GILBERT PILOT:** As to details about that, at the moment we are putting into effect

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what I am about to tell you.

Our view at the moment is that the Innu people – which is something I mentioned at the outset – have never given up anything so far, and we will do everything possible to ensure that nothing is ceded to the government. Among our fundamental values as a people is what we call "sharing", and in our document "Joint Statement on Peoples' Rights" is described what we call "joint resources." The concept is that for us, we belong to the land, and for you, that you own the land. Hence the gap in the possibility of getting along and understanding one another: a few square metres belong to you, but as for us, we belong to millions of square kilometres. We belong to this land.

Thus beginning from this concept, our approach is that an Innu congress, which is to say a government structure, a political structure focused on the circle, a circular structure, in which at the beginning we have only the principle of equality that applies... immediately at the outset our concept and our structure is based on the circle, in which each individual has a place: young people, the elderly, men, and especially

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women, who have things to say concerning all facets of our social life, our economic life, our spiritual life and our political life as well. This structure extends, as I was saying, it goes well beyond the limits of what we today call "the Indian reserve."

Beyond these limits, what we are proposing is genuine and exclusive jurisdictions for the Innu, for example with respect to the environment, because we possess the thousand-year old CV that is needed to manage the environment. Other jurisdictions - I will give examples that are important to us, such as justice - can be shared jurisdictions, and also relate to the formulation of development and wildlife plans.

These are jurisdictions that can be shared for the simple reason that it is important to provide ourselves with the means, the mechanisms that will enable us at a given moment, if the Government of Quebec wants to deforest, to be able to have our say and to have the mechanisms required to consult our people: whether

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they agree about the manner in which the project has been submitted by the Government of Quebec.

When you speak about justice, it is obvious that we would have our own system of judgement, with values that also are our own. You have a definition of what is criminal. We also have our definition of what may be considered criminal. You have definitions in legal terms. You have your concept. We also have our concepts.

That is why at this time our approach is being put into concrete terms. We are in the process of exercising, as I said earlier, our right to self-determination.

This also means - and I'll use the example of the economic aspect - that we are in the process of getting along with other Aboriginal nations in the United States with respect to trading arrangements. We have resources, they have the capital. At the same time, it allows us to maintain and preserve and confirm our territorial and economic hold over the resources

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contained in the Nitassinan.

To that end, I believe that the Innu people is ready – as long as it is given recognition for everything to which it has a right, i.e. existence as a nation and all that this entails – to function within a pluralistic State, whether a Canadian nation-State or a Quebec nation-State. At the moment, the risk that everyone is taking, is that everyone appears to wish to hold their positions too much. Too much of a fuss has been made about Quebec's territorial integrity. Which means that we, on Innu territorial integrity, are going to kick up a fuss as well.

I think that if we truly wish to aspire to social peace in Quebec and elsewhere, then for us, as I said earlier, the only prerequisite is the joint statement on the rights and responsibilities of our respective peoples. It would enable us to evolve within a framework that is ours, a legal framework that is ours, and a territorial framework that is ours. Within a pluralistic State, such a framework can fit, and can even delegate, for example, international representation to the State in question,

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continuing to maintain a right of inspection, which would make it possible for there to be guarantees that those rights and responsibilities would always be adhered to, because that is precisely what is missing at the moment.

The only way to make it possible for this joint statement to be adhered to is to ensure that there is an outside body, and we have chosen the Permanent People's Tribunal which, in the event of misunderstandings or disputes, would be the body empowered to deal with them.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

**GILBERT PILOT:** Let's say that we have just returned from a debate, a referendum, a movement involving many different elements constituting the

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country, in which each element attempted to obtain as much as possible, except that every one of the elements involved obtained a minimum. As a result, our current view is that it's going to take time before there can genuinely be the desire to get along.

Another thing that threatens to poison relations soon is the fact that following this national rejection of that accord... we were against it; even though we did not take part in the referendum process because for us doing so would have been to commit ourselves to accepting the results of the majority of those who are "the dominant society." Which means that what is coming for us may be more dangerous still, that is to say the sovereignty of Quebec.

If that should occur, I believe that we are now, as we speak, preparing to block Quebec's accession to full sovereignty.

Between the October 26 referendum and the proclamation of Quebec's sovereignty, many things are going to happen. What we are currently doing... it could have been a foundation, but in what framework? That's what we always have to tell ourselves.



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It is essential to understand that Aboriginal peoples, when they say they are coming on board, will be placed into a framework that is not ours, because already at the outset you have a different vision of society, of law, of rights. The most important thing is individual rights, the right to property, which goes against all the principles are important to our peoples: belonging to something, belonging to a family, belonging to a land. These are concepts that are too divergent.

That is why it was impossible for there to be an agreement or a basis for negotiations, because the starting point is always one side, whether the Canadian side or the Quebec side. It never appears to be possible to start from the Aboriginal side. How does one find the happy medium?

I explained this clearly once: you have structures that resemble pyramids – the prime minister, his ministers, and the people far below – while we opted for the circular structure in which every one is equal, in which every- one is on an equal footing, with rights to everything, to speech, to thought, to economic rights. The two concepts are simply too

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different. How to find the happy medium?

That is why I always return to saying that the Canadian people, and the Quebec people, will have to agree with us on a basis that is truly satisfactory for every one.

Any definition of peoples' rights always refers to what they themselves have signed at the United Nations. Canada and Quebec adhere to what are called international pacts, international law, to have their concerns taken care of; but when the time comes to have our rights respected, we hear "You haven't the right." There is what is called the treaty on non-interference by countries within other countries. They protect and overprotect one another.

How can we, the Aboriginal peoples, aspire to be what we want to be for as long as the Canadian government and the Quebec government have not agreed that the Innu are a people, that the Innu have a right to exist, that they exist as a nation, and that we can sign, and adhere together to a joint statement which at the same time restores confidence. We would,

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if this were the case, at least have the assurance of building on a base that treats us as equals.

Today, we are not equal. We will never be equal for as long as the Canadian government, the Quebec government or the Canadian people or the Quebec people have not understood that we have the same rights, that we are full human beings like them, and that we are a community, a people, just like them. That is the only prerequisite for us and the only guarantee that will enable us at least to aspire to just and equitable agreements – just and equitable – because today we are in the process of transforming the Aboriginal debate, "Those Indians run bingo, those Indians do a whole bunch of things." We restrict ourselves to our small needs.

Later on, you will be walking around Maloténam. What we are offered as a future is a drug addiction treatment centre, a group shelter for young people, and a shelter for battered women. Centres, centres, centres. The reserve is

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an asylum. They think we're crazy.

No attempt has ever been made to foster, to permit our peoples to take themselves in hand, to define for themselves what they would like to be, to identify solutions for themselves and make it possible for them to truly take control over the source of their culture and their identity: the land. There is nothing positive yet today that might permit us to say that the Canadian government or the Quebec government will truly one day allow our peoples to be what they would like to be.

That then is my document.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Commissioner Chartrand.

COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND: [English]

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[English]

**GILBERT PILOT:** First of all,

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what we are in the process of doing now is to truly set in motion our ultimate process. Today it is clear that the Canadian government and the Quebec government have never gone as far in recognizing our entity as a people.

Beginning with this fact, we have always said, I think, in light of everything we have lived through, in light of everything we have been able to learn visually and otherwise, that the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is currently becoming poisoned by the fact that we are still today moving increasingly far away from a desire to understand. The sad example of the referendum was not approved given what was offered therein, although for once, Aboriginal people were at least mentioned, but once again it wasn't much.

The very next day, the economy takes centre stage. But do you know what that means, the economy? It means speeding up all the development projects, development based on a non-Aboriginal concept: dams, mines, forestry and so on. And what does that do? All it does

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is create conflict whether here, with the Algonquins, the Cree, the Mohawks, or others, because once again, the search for a way of possibly truly living together and co-existing will have been shunted off to the side.

What we are doing today, well it's because we are fed up. Enough is enough. We have said to ourselves that we must live, no longer with the tools or authorities that belong to the Government of Quebec, the Quebec people, the Canadian people, but with the instruments that we will make ourselves.

That is why, if no recognition is forthcoming from Quebec, or from Canada, of our existence as a nation, we will sign international treaties with the Navahos, with the Sioux, the Pekkwas (PH), the Cheyenne, the Cree, and within those treaties, provide mutual recognition for mutual protection and mutual assistance, and to help one another to develop in accordance with the concepts and values that we ourselves will have defined, from the cultural, economic or other standpoints; with distinct and clear political alliances that will make it necessary



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for governments eventually to be required to consider this fact, because in the meanwhile, there will be obstacles.

For example, let us suppose that we plan to export products to the United States. You can be sure that at some point they will stop us at the border, "Under their laws, Consumer and Corporate Affairs for example, you do not have a company. You don't pay taxes." They'll stop you. But that is precisely where the battle – the real battle – will begin: asserting our rights through concrete action, because if we continue to sit down with people like that, the risk is that our children will still be sitting down with governments waiting for handouts.

Today we have decided to act and to exercise our full rights to self-determination. We will sit down with the Cree, the Mohawks, with the nations in the United States and in the West to create what we will call free-trade zones covered by political treaties.

We no longer have the choice. Perhaps that is what will force the governments' hand, because as soon as we go ahead and tell these

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governments to "keep your money, I am functioning with my own funds and with my own resources," they will think differently. They will perhaps react differently. It is too easy today to sit down with someone, and to negotiate with him; he is the person who is feeding my family. If I push things even slightly too much, "one of my children won't be eating tomorrow."

This is not the ideal formula for saying that there is a ratio, a balance, in the negotiating process that we have today. That is why today our only choice is to return to the essentials. For us, the Cree are a fully fledged nation, the Navaho are a fully fledged nation, and we will sign treaties with them. If Canada and Quebec then finally decide who they are, Canadians or Quebecers, federalists or separatists, we'll be glad to go and see them if they want to see us. But until then, we have to assume and exercise our right to self-determination. That also means civil disobedience. We do not have the choice. We will have to challenge the law.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:**

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I am sure you understand, Mr. Pilot, that as a Commission we wish to have your co-operation. I believe that your presence here this morning indicates that this is possible. We wish to find solutions to many of the problems you have described. We believe that it is possible within the law.

We ask you to continue to think about it. We have received the statement of principle; we thank you for your documents.

We ask you to continue this concrete review process. You have already mentioned that self-government must be effected at the national level, not at the level of the communities of which the nation is made up. You have prepared some initial ideas about exclusive and shared jurisdictions. We need your help to give concrete reality to your vision and we think that it is without a doubt a cogent alternative and one that deserves to be explored by everyone.

We are speaking about a new relationship, and we feel that what is missing at the moment is this clear and difficult vision.

As Paul Chartrand mentioned, one must first affirm a vision, but it is

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also necessary – and absolutely necessary – to develop a concrete manner of implementing it that gives due regard to the realities, all the realities, the reality of the Montagnais people and the reality of Canada, which is a federation, and of Quebec as a Canadian province.

You mentioned earlier that you wish to prevent Quebec from becoming sovereign in the future. The way I understand this is basically – and correct me if I'm interpreting you incorrectly – a message that says that neither Canada nor Quebec can redefine themselves without the Aboriginal people. I believe that with respect to this matter significant progress was made over the past year. I believe that many more people understand today, both within governments and the general public, that in fact it will be impossible without the Aboriginal people. With this as a starting point, I think that there is hope, that there is a mechanism through the Commission to find a solution, and ways of doing things that will be of benefit to everyone.

I thank you for having begun the process this morning. The discussion is an ongoing one, and we wish it to continue over

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the next two years, and we will stay in touch. We encourage you to continue to be involved in the process and to keep us informed increasingly concretely as the details of your ideas become clearer.

We can also, obviously, do the same thing, because we have wide-ranging contacts across Canada with the various Aboriginal peoples.

Thank you.

**GILBERT PILOT:** Thank you, Sir.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I would now like to ask Mr. Raoul Vollant to come and meet us and give his presentation.

**RAOUL VOLLANT, MEMBER OF THE MALIOTÉNAM BAND COUNCIL:**

Good day everyone. To begin I would like to welcome the Commission and the whole technical team that is here, which is all working out fairly well. I think that everything has gone well so far. Well indeed.

I would like to introduce you to someone who was elected recently here in Malioténam. I would also ask that the Innu chief of Malioténam, Mr. Gilles Bacon say a few words to us.

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Before turning things over to the Malioténam Chief, I wish to note that a council was elected recently. I will mention the names of the councillors who are here in attendance, who are the Montagnais members of Malioténam: councillor Évelyne St-Onge, who is here before me; Louise Roch; Philomène McKenzie, who is not here at the moment; Sylvain Volland, I don't think he is here either.

There is me, Raoul Volland, and I am a member of the new council that was democratically elected in Malioténam.

So now perhaps Chief Gilles Bacon can say a few words to us.

**CHIEF GILLES BACON, MALIOTÉNAM BAND COUNCIL**

**(translated from Montagnais):** I welcome everyone and thank those who took the trouble to come. Welcome all. I also thank the Aboriginal people who came to attend this Commission this morning.

I am very pleased to be here today. I am very happy about the elections. I will not take up much of your

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time to keep you from getting on with your work, which is the reason you came here. I know that you have work to do. I think that you have done everything possible to complete it properly.

That is what I wished to say.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** I will be brief because time is passing. I will be very brief.

I am not going to present you with any plans for changing society, or speak about the future of the Innu here in Malioténam, but I do wish to decry a number of irregularities that are occurring here within our communities; I mean Sept-Îles and Malioténam.

I know full well that the Commission here before me will say, "These may be internal conflicts; if that's the case, then that has nothing to do with us." But did you know that in Canada, in virtually all the band councils, the same thing is happening at the moment.

As you are aware, to elect a Montagnais Council in Malioténam, we proceeded in a step-by-step manner. We held a referendum on October 10. Fifty-six per cent of the people

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were in favour of the creation of a new band in Malioténam. We went through a democratic process, under the watchful eye of the Department of Indian Affairs.

It was a democratic exercise, but we had a great deal of difficulty in obtaining it. We had to do things to obtain it: we held general meetings, we established working groups, we met members of the Uashat Band Council, and we also took direct action on many occasions, for example with barricades. There are 41 Innu in Malioténam who are to be tried for having participated in such actions. We also made a lot of noise at one time to speak a bit about our freedom.

As you know, Malioténam wants to take control over itself. Malioténam wants to become free. At the moment, there are two villages here: Sept-Îles and Malioténam. Before, they were both under the same administration. For several weeks now there has been a band council established here in Malioténam democratically; the Canadian government doesn't recognize us as members, as



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councillors, as the band council here in Malioténam.

As you know - I wish to be very clear about this - I want to a degree to condemn bad management. As you know, the federal government injects over \$13 million each year in the communities of Sept-Îles and Malioténam. If you knew - Quebecers, Canadians, taxpayers - what was done with that money, you would be truly surprised. You would be really surprised about the bad management, and the corruption that exists within this enormous machine. Those involved, play political games, influence peddling, abuse of power, and all this with the complicity of the Department of Indian Affairs.

For 15 years, the Innu of Malioténam have complained about the financial irregularities, the poor management of money, the misappropriation of funds; for 15 years. Now, here, we have had enough, we are tired of it, we are fed up with our leaders, with the organization of the Uashat Band Council, with the poor management of the funds of the Innu of Sept-Îles and Malio.

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There is social injustice as well. If we look a little at the population of Malioténam at the moment... come and have a look around the village. Where are the \$13 million per year?

At the moment, where is the Uashat Band Council of Sept-Îles? They have not submitted a brief. Nevertheless, they are the political organization. They made no presentation here. There is total inertia at the Sept-Îles Montagnais Council. There is still complicity with the Government of Quebec and with the Department of Indian Affairs.

Eighty per cent of the population of Sept-Îles are against the Hydro-Québec dam. The band council is currently negotiating with the Quebec government authorities. As you can see, there is abuse of power. The leaders of Uashat are not following the aspirations and the political will of the Innu. There is a dictatorship here at the moment. It is a dictatorship and I officially denounce today everything that is going on within the two communities.

We ask the Commission for a public inquiry, we ask that an inquiry be carried out.

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We demand a public inquiry into the money and politics the way they are carried out here in Sept-Îles and Malioténam.

At this point, I end my presentation. Just one small word before concluding, and that is that the Uashat Council refuses to support the holding of a public hearing. I wonder why they refuse the idea of holding a public hearing. Why? Guess. Is there something to hide in all of that? For the past 15 years, we, the Innu people of Malioténam have been disputing the existing abuses of power.

I think that the same form of abuse exists in several band councils in Canada. I think that it is not the first time, in your visits to other communities, that a truly major problem has arisen. It's serious.

When we speak of autonomy, before speaking of any self-government, it is truly necessary to first settle what is going on inside, to do a complete housekeeping. There is trafficking going on. I am telling you this frankly, I am telling the truth. If anyone here in the room wishes to say that I'm telling lies, then he should get up and come here and say that I'm not telling the truth.

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Is there anyone here in the room? No one, you see.

We demand that a public hearing be held here in Sept-Îles concerning the trafficking, the embezzlement and the corruption that currently exist. That's it.

I thank the Commissioners who are here. That's all there is. If you have any questions, if you wish to have more details, I'm ready to answer them.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Vollant.

Very briefly, what can you tell us about the population here in Malioténam compared to the population in Uashat?

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** It's very simple. For forty years, there has always been keen competition between the two communities; they are still in competition. Before that, there was the same administration. Now, for the past few months, after a referendum, 56 per cent of the people were in favour of something else.

When you ask what is the...

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** How

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many members of the band live in Malioténam compared to the number that live in Uashat?

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** If we look at the election lists, during the referendum there were, there are 560 persons 18 years and over in Malioténam. In Sept-Îles, there are approximately 460 persons 18 years and over. We are therefore in the majority here.

To give you an example, there has always been competition. It was Indian Affairs that established the village in Malio, and now they do not recognize us.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So there is a slight majority of the members of the band living here in Malioténam.

If I understand correctly, the 56 per cent in the referendum refers not only to Malioténam, but to everyone 18 years and over who voted.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** Fifty-six per cent, yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** This includes Uashat and Malioténam.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** This is something

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that I could clarify a bit for the Commission. There was an agreement reached with the Uashat Council, and the resolution specifies the following: if there is a majority in one or the two communities, if the result of the referendum is positive, then there will be a whole process of separation.

But the band council didn't pay attention to any of this. The Band Council remained immobile on that matter. There was no attempt to speak about a democratic process, in view of the result, still with the complicity of Indian Affairs.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** The referendum was held on October 10?

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** October 10, yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I do in fact have a question concerning the broader issue that you addressed. You spoke of your concerns about management. Clearly, as you said at the outset, you are aware of the fact I think that it is not the role of the Commission to become involved in this type of dispute. Nevertheless, we have the opportunity to hear about a great many things, and we take

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note of them.

My question at this time is the following: if the situation is as you describe it, in the elections of band councils that have been held over the years – since there is a slight majority in the population here in Malioténam – how can you explain why the democratic process did not work in such a way that you could have clearly effected that which you are stating is your wish this morning?

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** Listen, there is a machine, a whole structure, that has existed for 20 years; it's a "scam". With all that money... several million, 13 million per year for the two communities. It's the whole democratic system that was imposed by the Department of Indian Affairs, and which is not suitable here.

Another formula has to be found more democratically, something more traditional, to deal with the social justice that is currently in practice here, to make it possible for there to be harmonization, for healthy administration. With the band council system... one thing must not be forgotten: the band councils are a creature of Indian Affairs.

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It's part of the government apparatus. It is not democratic inside, here.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We do indeed understand that, and we know that it is one of the main changes being demanded. However, my question in essence – to place myself within the area that you yourself identified this morning – is simply a query: The fact remains that it is possible when the time comes for elections to change a band council, and to change the administration, using the mechanism, even if it is something from outside, provided for in the Indian Act.

That, more or less, is the question I am asking you. Through the electoral mechanism provided for in the Indian Act, if you have a vision of these things here in Malioténam, at this time, then essentially I'm asking about the actual application of the mechanism for the band council elections.

You are answering me by saying that it is an unsuitable mechanism, and so on. The fact remains that everyone has the right to vote in the band council election. If I understand things properly, the current Council was elected by a majority when the last election was held.



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**RAOUL VOLLANT:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** It is nevertheless a reality.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** The Chief would perhaps like to reply to your question.

**GILLES BACON:** It's very easy to answer that question. When elections are held, if five chiefs run, then of necessity there is a division among the voters. You have asked the question of how a chief was elected in Sept-Îles, and this by and large is an answer to your question.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I understand that the electoral process allows for elections to be held without necessarily a very large majority; this is something that we live with in Quebec, and in Canada, within the system. But, once again, I simply wanted to check that the democratic process as perceived in the Indian Act was being applied and was working.

**GILLES BACON:** Yes, but the fact remains that if the band council represents 20 per cent of the population, then of course you have to expect that the 80 per cent who did not

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win the election have something to say as well.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And this is possible because there is a plurality of candidates, and basically, the vote is divided. Is that what you are telling me?

**CHIEF BACON:** That's it exactly.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** Excuse me, I could perhaps add the following.

I find the Canadian government's attitude to this social injustice that has existed here for many years to be deplorable. The Department of Indian Affairs closes its eyes to injustice.

We have sent letters, we have asked for inquiries, but nothing, nothing has been done for 15 or 20 years. This didn't begin just yesterday. It is not the result of an internal political problem. There has been social injustice for 20 years, and the administration is badly run. Not since yesterday, but for over 20 years now.

So we denounce it once again today. I know that tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, we shall continue to decry the social injustice

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that exists here in Sept-Îles.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Listen, we are receiving your presentation. We are receiving your request for a public inquiry. Once again, I think that you understand what our role is. We shall certainly obtain as much precise information as we can about the situation, but it is clearly up to the government authorities to take action.

What we can do, in specific situations like this one, is to take the information, try to check that the same information has been given to everyone, and remain in touch with you afterwards on this matter.

**RAOUL VOLLANT:** Thank you. We demand a public inquiry as quickly as possible.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** We have taken note of this, and thank you for having come to meet us.

I would now like to ask Mrs. Mathilda Fontaine of the Malioténam School Parents' Committee to come and meet us.

Good day Mrs. Fontaine.

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**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Good morning.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** You may proceed when you are ready.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE, MALIOTÉNAM SCHOOL PARENTS'**

**COMMITTEE (translated in part from Montagnais):** We are all here in the gymnasium. We are discussing education. I am a member of the school committee. We met recently. We meet concerned parents fairly often. What I am about to submit to you is that the teaching certificate is recognized in the band schools, but not in the provincial schools. Why? The Department of Education issues... I'm going to speak to you in Montagnais.

What I want to say is that for years parents have been asking that teachers have their B. Ed. to teach in our schools. There was a resolution in 1975 that teachers should have their B. Ed., but it was never applied. In 1991, there was another resolution making the same request, for teachers to have their B. Ed., but once again it was never applied. No one has taken any courses

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to obtain their B. Ed.

We met parents, and the same request was made once again that things be made possible for teachers to get their B. Ed.s.

We prepared a form that teachers could use to apply and then to take courses. I think that we received the forms and that everybody was pleased.

There were also a number of people who were not in favour, but most were. That is why we eventually asked ourselves why the government issued teaching permits for teachers to teach on the reserves? Are they afraid that Montagnais teachers would be better than White ones?

Approximately 13 years ago, the Indians complained that the teachers should have their B. Ed.s. Now we are on the school committee and we're still fighting the same battle to make it possible for the teachers to get their degrees.

Referring to this degree, it's not that we look down on the teachers, but I think that parents ought to have the right to get a word in, because

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their teaching permit is not recognized among White people. It is only recognized in our schools here, on the reserves. That is what the parents were arguing for.

We had also discussed another thing at the first meeting of our school committee. We planned the agenda, we spoke about the Tshishteshinu school budgets. We had asked for budgets to be submitted. How the budgets were administered over the year, how the expenditures were made. We asked the Band Council for the information but we never received anything.

We met the director general, Jean-René Blouin, and he answered that there was no per capita. We asked him to give us per capita figures. And he answered that there was no per capita.

That is why we did research into other communities and received the per capita figures for other communities, concerning how their school expenditures run each year. They did not show them to us, but they were ready to show us the school budgets for the year. That is why we also asked the

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following question. What we wanted them to give us were documents, and we had asked once again for the per capita figures. It appears to be very difficult to do the accounting for it.

Raoul had also met them and had asked if there were a per capita, at Sept-Îles. The answer that came to us... in what they gave us the amounts were very similar to those for other bands elsewhere; they had their per capita figures.

When we received that information by fax, they sent us a copy from the Band Council. It had been received in the morning, and, in the afternoon, Jean-René Blouin contacted me asking me what I wanted, which budget figures I wanted to have. He referred me to Solange Fontaine. I contacted Solange Fontaine and asked her to give me the per capita figures for the school. Solange told me that this did not exist, that there was no grant of this kind.

I went and obtained information and was told that there was such a grant. We asked her

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why Malioténam had no per capita grant. She continued to tell me that it did not exist. Then Solange contacted me again. We had been waiting for the budget report for two months. It was very difficult to obtain. It took us two months to obtain the budget report.

Solange contacted us to give us the per capita information and we also met Jean-René Blouin to obtain more information about the budget. We asked the question, "Why did it take so long to obtain the budget report?" We also wrote a letter to Jean-René Blouin, and he never answered it. We had also asked him why he had not answered. The answer he gave us was that he did not have the time. But I think he might have answered. He could have said, "I don't have time today, but I will work on it," but he never did that for us.

That is why we obtained the budget late. We received the budget, and the per capita information as well. Why, suddenly, did they



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give it to us? He was never able to tell us. Is it a coincidence that all of a sudden the per capita should exist? I told him, "You received a fax from the Department of Indian Affairs and that is why you are giving us all the information." It was the only way we could obtain all the information we wanted to have.

What we want to say here is why did it take so long to obtain the budget reports? The reason we asked for the budget was that we wanted to know what the school budget was and what kind of help our children were being given as they progressed through school. It was because at the school the students had to use both sides of the paper. They were used sheets of paper. They were being asked to work on the other side of the used paper. That is why it was always said that there was not enough in the budget for our children to be given proper schooling.

Other services had also been requested, such as remedial teachers. I know that we asked for improved services

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in the schools. We were always told that there was no budget for that.

At Tshishteshinu school replacements are hired. All the services are working except that the services we need, we do not have. I think that our children are missing many things and wasting a lot of time because we are missing things that are essential to their proper education. The essentials are still missing.

That is why we asked how proper education could be introduced in the school. There are many things, when all is said and done. Why are people trying to save money on the budget, when it's the children who will have to pay?

The budget savings that are made are used to pay the Band Council deficit, but the Band Council deficit... it should remain in the schools' budget. It is for the children's needs. I think that the government sends us money for the education of our children, and not to pay for the Band Council deficit.

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Nor is our school a very stable environment. There are many changes, many principals who have passed through. I think that there have been four principals so far.

As I was saying, when we speak of teachers and management, there have been many changes in school management. But what we are asking for now, as the parents' committee for the school, is to upgrade our school so that our children will be able to study the way they should, in a proper atmosphere. The parents are asking that a public inquiry be held into what is going on in this school.

That is the end of my presentation.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mrs. Fontaine, I think that it is important that you, on behalf of the parents' committee, came to tell us about your concerns.

The main concern, and it's not the first time that we have heard it, is that money given to band councils for education purposes, for the budget, is not

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necessarily spent on education, or completely spent on education.

This leads us to the heart of the self-government issue in a certain way because I understand that the system is one that currently stems from the Indian Act, but it is obvious that in a self-government context, it would be up to the communities to make their own choices and to set priorities.

It is clear for us as a Commission that education is a top priority and, in that sense, we certainly share your point of view with respect to the fact that the utmost ought to be done to enhance quality and standards.

The question you are asking, basically, is a one of management and self-government, because we have often been told that the Department of Indian Affairs on the one hand tends to decentralize, to give financing in blocks, and to leave the bands to allocate the money. On the other hand, we are often told that there is too much control by the Department and, moreover – as I mentioned, we are told this often – there is not

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enough control to make sure that the funds given to the band really go to education.

I therefore believe that it is part of the debate and the issue. The reality in question would become accentuated in a self-government context; hence the importance of a democratic mechanism to make it possible for future Aboriginal governments to be accountable to the community.

I would therefore like to thank you for having made this presentation.

We also noted that you mentioned the matter of teaching permits for Montagnais teachers. This is also a concern of the Commission. On the other hand, you are telling us, "We also want the teachers to have B. Ed.s." In fact there are two different concerns that you have: that the teachers should have degrees, but also that the Montagnais teachers should be given recognition through the issuing of permits.

Basically, this is my question: is this school on the reserve one that covers secondary schooling? Is the school a primary and

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secondary school?

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Here in Malioténam?

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** No. Our parents' committee is for the Tshishteshinu primary school.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** It is for primary school.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Yes. For secondary school, there is another parents' committee.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** So your parents' committee is for primary school.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** And at primary school, for the first three years, the first level is in Montagnais.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** There is an Innu program that has begun. There is an Innu class. The parents have the choice.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** There are both.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Yes there are both.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Your

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concern with respect to the Montagnais teachers has to do with the two programs.

**MATHILDA FONTAINE:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well. Thank you.

Mrs. Wilson.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I have nothing to add to what has been said, but thank you for your presentation.



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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I thank you then, Mrs. Fontaine for having come and made your presentation.

We have got behind on the agenda, and so I will ask those who have come to make presentations to try to be as concise as possible. We will attempt to do the same.

I would like to ask Mrs. Danielle Descent to come and meet us. We will then take a coffee break.

Good morning.

**DANIELLE DESCENT:** Good morning. In order to be as brief as possible, I will not read the report that I submitted to the members of the Commission, but perhaps simply summarize it. I want to speak about health and social service here in Sept-Îles/Maliooténam.

You have attended hearings across the country. I assume that you are familiar with the health and social problems that affect Aboriginal communities. As far as we know, the same health and family problems affect us here, the same

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problems that affect all the Aboriginal communities.

For the benefit of the members of the Commission, I would like to describe a number of projects that were set up, a number of attempts that were made to try to solve those problems here. We became aware of the fact that for a number of years, we had been receiving more and more specialists trained in medicine, in nursing, and in mental health. But even though more and more health and social services were being put in place, we had more and more sick people. New specialists arrived, and they found that we had new illnesses.

The only way to end this circle is to follow the path of self-healing. We think that solving health problems and dealing with family problems involves first of all regaining control over our lives, and if we do not regain control over our lives, then no healing is possible, even if we were to be sent the best specialists in the world.

In connection with family violence, I believe that the members of the Commission have had the opportunity

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to visit the Sept-Îles women's centre, according to what I have been told. The process that preceded the establishment of the centre is in fact one of self-healing. At one point in 1989, women who had been victims of family violence, women who continued to live in an environment of family violence, said to themselves, "We'll never get out of this if we don't take our own healing in hand ourselves. Why not have a centre in our community?"

I remember the responses at the time. We were told that it was impossible. Even the specialists told us that it was not a good idea to have a centre in the middle of a reserve where everybody could see it. We were told, "A shelter is something that needs to be hidden. You are going to have problems. You are going to be harassed." The women's response was, "If we are victims of violence, it's because we are afraid, it's because we've kept our mouth shut. Building our own centre at home will help us overcome our fears, and help us talk about it." We were thus the first community to have such a centre within the community.

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The same thing is happening at the moment with sexual abuse and rape. This is something which has been hidden for a long time, not because there isn't any; over 200 cases were reported last year at Youth Protection offices. Except that at those offices, the way things are administered, everything is kept secret, everything is kept under wraps. Very few people are aware of that.

But quietly, victims are beginning to speak about it publicly, and we hear things like, "What needs to be done? What could we possibly do to end it?" People are beginning to convince themselves that if they don't take matters into their own hands, no specialists will be able to cure them.

Self-help groups are now beginning to emerge and sharing their knowledge of traditional medicine, because modern medicine does not heal the whole body. It is necessary to relearn and

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reappropriate knowledge of traditional medicine, because at the moment, although that is not to say that we did not have the knowledge before, but rather that it was weakened by religion, and also by modern medicine, which did not believe in traditional medicine because there was nothing written about it, or nothing had been proved, because it had not been demonstrated under microscopes. But, little by little, no other avenues were open for self-healing with respect to the problems that are dramatically affecting our communities.

In its documents, the Commission wondered whether it might be possible for there to be co-operation between traditional and modern medicine. I would think that yes it is possible, if there is mutual respect and dialogue, which is not currently the case.

Although there are Aboriginal students in medicine at the moment, and nurses who have their degrees, there is nothing in their courses that encourages them to look into traditional medicine. They themselves would have to take the required steps

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on their own. As long as traditional medicines are not recognized, and given the respect they deserve, it is useless to speak of co-operation. They are at the moment on a parallel course. But I believe that it is possible, if the medical authorities, those responsible for the medical bible, show a little respect for traditional medicine practitioners.

The same thing is applicable to Aboriginal social workers. Here in 1987-88 in our community, there was what was called at the time the shouldering of responsibility for health and social services. It was a lovely dream, because we said to ourselves, "We'll be able to do something. We'll now be able to meet the needs of the people."

But the dream is turning in some places into a nightmare, because we inherited a system, we inherited procedures, we inherited regulations that had never helped in the past. The only thing that changed in all of that, was that Aboriginal people were placed in charge of applying the same system. We are "caught up in" the Protection Act, in

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adoption legislation, and in legal intricacies, and everything is at a standstill. Many people now believe that our social workers are not doing what they ought because they are not good social workers.

If the system was faulty before, then simply getting Aboriginal people to administer the system will not make it any better. They too have only two legs.

I think that even though we assumed responsibility, it is necessary to rethink the care system to provide people with something more suited to their needs. It is important to take the time required to do this.

My opinion is that health, family problems, family disintegration, suicide problems, and addiction problems, are political problems of the greatest importance. My opinion, then, is that we should begin by looking at this level.

I would like to conclude by quoting to you a phrase from a Montagnais nurse in Pointe-Bleue, Bibiane Courtois, who used to say, "What's the point in reconquering our lands if we are too sick, too weak or too disorganized to occupy them?" I ask the members of my

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community, from the bottom of my heart, to think about her words.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mrs. Descent.

You have given us a very eloquent message, one of the most eloquent we have had the opportunity to hear on this issue, and we hear a lot. We know that a major concern not only of Aboriginal people but the general public as well, is to follow up on this matter and make the link between traditional medicine and the scientific medical model that we are familiar with.

It is obvious that – and you mentioned this – we raise specific questions about this in the document that we published at the end of the first round of public hearings, specifically question 36 and those following. It is obvious that these are difficult questions, but we must ask ourselves how we can find answers to them.

Your brief argues for the need to do so, the importance of doing so, particularly in those areas that are essentially broader public health issues, in which health problems are linked to and indeed part of



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social problems and problems involving living conditions.

At this time, we ask you to continue to think about these matters, and if you are able to do so, to go one or two notches deeper in terms of securing solutions. You mentioned that for Innu nurses who had been trained in our general health system this other component is missing from their training as it is missing for anyone else's, and that it is difficult, for them and others, to practise it.

You mentioned the situation in which changing the social workers basically brought no changes because the system remained the same. These are issues we give a great deal of thought to as a Commission, and we hope to be able to do so through learning as much as possible from the experiences of people in the field, like you.

Once again, it is the beginning of a dialogue. We hope that you will be able to continue to think about possible ways of finding solutions in the coming months or over the next year, and that you will continue to share your ideas with us either in writing or orally.

Thank you.

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Mrs. Wilson.

COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON: [English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

We shall now recess for 10 minutes for a coffee break, and we will then hear the presentation of The Most Reverend Henri Goudreault, bishop of Labrador City.

Thank you.

--- Short recess to 11:20 a.m.

--- Resumption at 11:30 a.m.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** If you please, we shall now resume the hearing.

Bishop Goudreault, we thank you for having joined us. You may proceed with your presentation whenever you are ready.

**THE MOST REVEREND HENRI GOUDREULT, BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF LABRADOR CITY-SCHEFFERVILLE:** Mr. Chairman, dear friends, I am happy

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to appear before this Commission to tell you about a few of my convictions about the Aboriginal people in this country. I have been interested in the issue of Aboriginal people for a long time, as a member of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, as the former Director of the Saint-Paul University Science Mission Institute in Ottawa, as a speaker, and as a resource person to missionary groups working with Aboriginal people, and in my current role as Bishop of the diocese of Labrador City-Schefferville, where there are six Innu communities and fifteen Inuit communities.

I am a member of the Pastoral Committee that deals with Aboriginal people and a member of the Assemblée des évêques du Québec, and the thoughts that follow are largely taken from a letter published on September 2, 1992 concerning the position of Aboriginal people.

Having received the results of the first round of this inquiry only recently, I have not been able to give the time required to several issues raised in the report, and I sometimes have the impression that the presentation I am about to give you is better suited to the first round of this inquiry.

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William Means wrote in 1983, "In the sixties, Black people took their proper place on the world scene. In the seventies, the Arab people emerged. The eighties will see the rise of the Red man on the world scene." [Unofficial translation]

It is true that the situation for Aboriginal people at the end of the 20th century can be seen in a new light. Some people speak of a renaissance. This is not only the result of remarkable demographic growth. It is due, among other things, to the following factors: the rediscovery and promotion of their religious and cultural values, the pride they take in their identity, their ability to evolve and adapt, their increasingly developed sense of solidarity among one another and with others, the introduction of common strategies to claim their rights, the growing sympathy of non-Aboriginal people to their cause, both nationally and internationally, even though over the past two years, this sympathy in Canada may have been attenuated owing to a number of events that were unfortunate for all parties concerned.

This Aboriginal revival is indicative

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of the strength and vitality of the Amerindian cultures, which remain, in spite of modernism and secularization, deeply spiritual cultures, which is not to say that Aboriginal people themselves are not victims of the pressures exercised on them by a consumer society. They have to do battle to avoid gradually losing certain traditions and certain values that have characterized them to date.

This Aboriginal renewal implies disputing the current focus of western society. Enormous expenditures on military weapons, overconsumption of energy, and a materialism that is replacing genuine spirituality have led not only to Aboriginal people becoming disenchanted and disapproving, but also a growing number of non-Aboriginal people, who are calling into question the underpinnings of existing civilization, which is marked by violence, the need to produce, the need for efficiency, and all the rest.

Such unrest basically means the end of a world. At the same time, new forces are at work, and charting the ways of the future. I am thinking specifically of movements to promote

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ecology, holistic development, respect for human rights, equal opportunities for women, and solidarity with minorities and the disadvantaged. These new forces are for everyone, and should be promoted by everyone. What Aboriginal people and a growing number of non-Aboriginal people are demanding is aimed at everyone's salvation. We should see in this a sign of the times, words that call out to us, and invitation to work together on a joint project.

Succeeding in a joint project requires a number of conditions. Among these, first of all, is legal recognition of the rights of Aboriginal people. Without this recognition, Aboriginal people will have little protection and will be easy victims to the vagaries of time.

Included among these rights is the right to self-determination on their own land. Land is of primary importance.

It is the manifestation of the providence of God, the basis for their traditional hunting and fishing economy, a source of subsistence and income, and, most of all, a stable component of security, welfare and identity. As they say, "Our

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land is our life."

In addition to land, what is required are appropriate decision-making powers, suitable authority, and adequate financial resources. Aboriginal people refuse developments that are planned without them, implemented without them, and whose economic impacts are not shared. As the Band Council of Sept-Îles/Malioténam said it so well in their brief on November 28, 1990 before the Commission on Quebec's constitutional and political future, "We want full control of our resources, to participate in scientific and technical progress, and to establish exchanges on an equal and equitable footing; we will no longer accept development behind our backs."

Giving Aboriginal people the right to self-determination amounts to recognizing their right to exist as individual peoples. There is, clearly, no question of assimilation. Nor should they be considered immigrants simply because they are ethnic minorities. They were here before the Europeans. They have ancestral rights, even though these rights are not



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easy to define.

The legal recognition of rights must be accompanied by a change in attitude towards Aboriginal people. Paternalism no longer has a place. The fiduciary role must also cease. Solutions must no longer be parachuted from above, and problems must no longer be treated piecemeal.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people must become equal partners. The former are not minors in relation to the latter, and the latter must not become second class citizens in relation to the former. They are truly equal partners, and decisions must come from both groups; the rights of each must be respected and all must become aware of their responsibilities. There must therefore be joint participation in preparing projects, in implementing projects, in running projects and in the benefits generated by projects.

It is difficult to imagine it possible for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to be considered equal partners until the former - Aboriginal people - remain

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subject to the Indian Act. I like the answer you gave earlier, saying that it was necessary to move from this Act to self-government. The Act, which was passed to make it possible for the government to meet its obligations to the First Nations, is being challenged increasingly. It treats Aboriginal people differently from other citizens. That is perhaps the most important thing to emphasize.

The thing that is most harmful, I think, to Aboriginal people is being treated differently. Although the Act gives a number of genuine benefits to Aboriginal people, it keeps them in a state of dependence and treats them as separate beings with a different status.

On September 25, 1990 Mr. Brian Mulroney stated, "The Indian Act (...) promotes keeping the Indians dependent on the State, stifles their altogether legitimate aspirations and wounds their dignity. It is degrading to Indians and non-Indians." [Unofficial translation - Hansard?]

Autonomy and the ownership of land by Aboriginal people must not lead to parts of the country becoming hermetically

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closed to other citizens of the country. Doing so would lead to a similar result in the rest of the country, and perhaps non-Aboriginal people would be prohibited from entering Aboriginal lands, and Aboriginal people would be prohibited from non-Aboriginal lands. We would end up without wanting to with "Homelands" for Canada, something no one wants.

The James Bay Agreement, in spite of its limitations – and I believe it is being challenged more for the negative ecological impact that followed than for what it is essentially – is one of the successful initiatives that should inspire all parties engaged in negotiations. I am personally very pleased with the intensity of the current negotiations, and with the gains made by Aboriginal people over the past 30 years – for someone who is 30 years old, it may seem like a very long time; in the life of a nation, it is very short – the genuine gains obtained over 30 years. I am happy with the way they have been able gradually to take control over education, health care and the rest.

I hope that all this progress will be possible in a climate of dialogue

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rather than confrontation, mutual awareness rather than indifference, understanding rather than hardened positions, and fraternity rather than alienation. Everyone's future lies in co-operation, not opposition, and the Church, with its meagre resources but its many contacts, will continue to work towards this.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Bishop Goudreault, for having come to meet us this morning and to describe for us in a very heartfelt and very eloquent way, the vision of the Catholic Church, which the Episcopacy is putting forward with respect to relations with Canada's Aboriginal people.

You rightly mentioned that your presentation is based on the Bishops' letter published on September 2, a letter which the Commission acknowledged. You are no doubt aware that the Church has an important role to play in the living conditions of Aboriginal people. You are personally involved, as you mentioned, and very concretely, with six Aboriginal communities in your diocese, both here in Quebec and

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in Labrador.

We believe that it is extremely important for the the Church and you to make their voices heard in this debate, which is essentially a societal debate that must be held throughout the term of this Commission. It began well before us, of course, and will continue for a long time afterwards. We see our role essentially as one of channelling a number of ideas, making it possible for public education to make a leap forward, and, basically, to find a number of concrete solutions that might be acceptable both to Aboriginal people and to the people of Canada.

As you mentioned, your brief describes a vision, and is concerned more with principles than mechanics and methods. For us this is very important, because we are aware that the Commission's final report will have a much more lasting effect if it is based on solid foundations. Your contribution in this respect is certainly a remarkable, useful and very important one.

I would like to avail myself

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of the opportunity perhaps to ask you questions about a number of concrete situations that might occur in Aboriginal communities, in particular with respect to living conditions, social conditions, and the changing issues that affect the structure of the family. No doubt we consider these mishaps along the way.

Yesterday, at our hearing in Sept-Îles, in Uashat, we had the opportunity to receive a brief and a presentation from the Aboriginal women of Betsiamites, representing Aboriginal women of the North Shore as well. We were told that on occasion, no doubt because of the influence of the Band Council, that Aboriginal unwed mothers could not have their children baptized on the reserve if they refused to give the name of the father.

We took this, of course, to be an isolated incident, but I told the women that we would draw the matter to your attention, because we knew that we would be meeting you this morning. I therefore ask if you could look into the matter.

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We are attempting to make the hearings effective, and to create interaction between the various intervenors. This means of course that we are turning your brief around and drawing it to a very concrete question, but one that is heartfelt and important to those who told us about it yesterday.

Can I have a comment from you on this?

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Yes.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Thank you. You are aware of the fact that in the Church, we are to a certain extent the people responsible for record keeping. If such incidents have occurred among the Aboriginal people, then they have certainly occurred among white people as well, because we follow the same laws.

I think that in the instance of requiring the names of the two parents, that it is because the government forms clearly ask for both to be identified. I have heard that this can lead some to go so far as to refuse baptism; it surprises me, but I do hear about it.

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I think that such things are sporadic, because I am learning about the one you mentioned, here today.

I would like here to refer this matter to a career missionary in the room to know whether in fact it is a policy.

Is Father Pearson (PH) here?

Father Pearson (PH), was it a policy of the Church not to baptize a child if the mother did not want to state the name of the father? I have been informed of this.

**FATHER PEARSON:** Personally, and in my experience over many years, I am very surprised to hear it. I was told about it yesterday. I was not at yesterday evening's meeting, but it was reported to me. I am very very surprised that it could have happened.

As for here, it has never happened, and I see no reason to do so myself.

**HENRI GOUDREAU:** Of course, where such things have happened, we must say we are sorry, because it certainly does not fit in with the mentality of the Church in general.

I can relate to you another case



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among white people that can illustrate the extent to which we are occasionally victims of people's radical ideas.

In Newfoundland, a number of Francophones were refused baptism for their child unless they gave the child an English name. But these are only isolated incidents, the results of a number, a very small number, of radicals, and are indicative of a lack of judgement, and especially a lack of pastoral judgement. But these phenomena arise at a given time because people want to apply a principle in an absolute manner; we do get deplorable results like those, yes. But I am happy that you raised the matter, because it enables us to clarify the situation somewhat.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** All right. It was not presented to us as a widespread situation or a policy, but as events that have occurred and that clearly...

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Deplorable.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** ... difficult for people who have to live with them at the time.

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When you say that Aboriginal people must be recognized for what they are, the Commission basically has two major concerns: to arrive at, with the advice and counsel of as many people as possible, solutions to political and social organization based on partnership, but also to contribute as immediately as possible to improving the living conditions of people from the social standpoint.

In this regard, the policies for justice, education, health, social services, violence, abuse, and a high suicide rate, are problems that are of the greatest interest to us.

Based on the experience you have gained in your mission in the diocese, is it possible for you to give the Commission additional food for thought by making concrete suggestions on what improvements it might be possible to implement immediately? In connection with the broader and more political issues of self-government, we were regularly told, "Don't put all the eggs in the basket of self-government. Help us to solve the social problems that exist first."

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It is rather by way of an invitation, a call that we are making to you to share your experience in this.

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Thank you very much. I always return to the importance of having land. It is fundamental, first for autonomy, for self-financing, and to preserve and develop one's identity.

I had the privilege of going to live with these people in the forest. I was received magnificently and treated magnificently. The people in the forest are different because they do not have these feelings of frustration; they are at home, they are happy, they are not violent. They are in an environment in which they have been able to grow. So the question of land appears to me to be extremely important.

Secondly, Gilles Vigneault in one of his songs says, "If you want to kill a man, take away his work." These people have to have the opportunity to work. You are well aware of the fact that when they are in the woods they have work. They are not paid, but they have work. They keep busy. They need to live on the land, and they have work.

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The problem that arises is that the existing lands are very small, and I think that they have the impression that if they allow industries from outside onto these lands, it virtually amounts to giving up part of the land. The existing system of reserves is so inadequate that it needs to be completely transformed, in my opinion.

That is why I return to the James Bay Agreement, which is being challenged, I know, with respect to the concrete results that will have an impact the ecology, but which appears to me to be a model agreement, although not perfect, which should be an inspiration to many people.

The problem of suicide, to refer to only one of the problems, is an extremely disturbing one. Among the Inuit, for example, it is very serious.

I believe that television, for example – and I have nothing against the mass media, on the contrary – by showing modern life, consumerism and the rest, places a great many ideas and desires in young minds and they are unable, from a practical standpoint, to realize their dreams. It can have an impact on their morale. In any

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event, when we speak about these matters, this comes up from time to time.

I believe that when the various groups have their lands, and sufficiently large lands at that, when they have self-government, within the country of course, and when it is possible for them to have work, then the situation will change considerably.

I don't know whether I'm right, and you may wish to correct me, but it appears to me that there are certain types of work that would come naturally to Aboriginal people: game wardens, fishing wardens, forest wardens, the whole area of tree planting.

And if specialists are needed in such fields, then I think that it's not enough to have good schools only in large cities. It seems to me, that for this type of profession or trade, that schools should be more accessible to Aboriginal people, schools to which they could have access without needing to go so far away.

The poor running or poor administration on the reserves was discussed earlier. Clearly,

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this can be found elsewhere as well. I liked the question that Mrs. Wilson asked, "What mechanisms would we have once self-government is a reality, to make sure that such things do not happen?"

It seems to me that when we speak about self-government, we are opening up a whole set of questions that really need serious study to ensure that we will not, as was said earlier, go from a dream into disappointment, from a dream into a nightmare.

With the existing structures, people have the impression – and yet everyone is attempting to do something positive – that no matter how many millions of dollars are spent, the problem will not be solved. There is a question of structures, a question of responsibility. I was pleased to hear the thoughts put forward by the woman who said, "We inherited a system that does not work, and it is not enough to send us specialists; we have to take control ourselves." That, it appears to me is a key sentence for the future.

Many justice policies and social services problems, and frustrations and suicides would then be solved.

I must admit that my answer is

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perhaps not very enlightening, but in any case, it is the serious issue.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. I believe that it is fundamental.

I would like to ask my colleagues to continue.

Mrs. Wilson.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:**

[English]

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[English]

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Thank you very much. It seems to me that you are focusing attention on the Church's fundamental mission - reconciliation. Unesco has designated next year, 1993, as the International Year of Indigenous People. I believe they total approximately 240 million, about 5 per cent of the world's population. Aboriginal people account for about 5 per cent of this country's population, perhaps closer to 4 per cent than 5.

I have already discussed this matter with my colleagues, the Bishops of Newfoundland, and we will be discussing it again at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1993, the year for Indigenous people.

In my own diocese, there is to be a competition for a scholarship of approximately \$2,000: I will be inviting young people, Secondary IV and Secondary V students, to reflect on the problem of Aboriginal people and the ways of improving



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relationships between the two groups, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

I believe this will make young people think because, in my opinion, no real reconciliation can be achieved through letters or, in any way over long distances. It is necessary to meet, to get to know and admire one another; and I believe that the Church is an organization ideally suited to meetings of this kind.

I know for example that the people of Sheshatshiu (PH) and the whites of Happy Valley, Goose Bay, have held a number of meetings over the past two years to discuss values, views of the current situation, and other such matters.

In the past two years, considerable action has been taken by the Churches to promote dialogue between the two groups.

As you are probably aware, the Churches support what used to be called Project North (Plan Nord), now the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (Coalition des droits des aboriginaux). The coalition is supported by nine Churches.

In Quebec we

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have an organization known as "CODA", (la Coalition des droits des autochtones). It is comparable to the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, but in Quebec and for Quebec. It is also ecumenical.

Most population centres also have an organization commonly known as an association of ministers. All the ministers – in Labrador City, for example, there are nine different denominations for a population of 10,000 – meet regularly once a month and have common projects.

I believe that Aboriginal people have the same kind of organization, except that the villages are very far apart and each village is usually all Catholic or all Anglican or all..., mainly Anglican and Catholic. So, because each village is so homogeneous, it is difficult to have truly ecumenical projects as there is only one religion.

But your question is a basic one, and it seems to me that governments and municipal authorities have the right to expect a great deal from the Churches in this area.

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We are involved in education, and living together in unity and harmony is the very core of our faith. This can never be stressed too much.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** [English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner of the Day St-Onge.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:** Thank you for your support, and for your input.

In June 1992, in Bolivia, there was a meeting of spiritual leaders from North and South America and leaders of various religions from around the world. The meeting was organized by the Pastoral Committee of Costa Rica to discuss the subject of Aboriginal spirituality. It had a twofold purpose: to provide information on Aboriginal spirituality and, at the same time, recognize it as equal to that of other religions.

Because of the assimilation we have experienced, we are now relearning our own culture. We are also relearning our spirituality.

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I would like to know if the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate have begun reflecting on the burgeoning back-to-basics movement.

**HENRI GOUDREAULT:** Thank you very much. In 1989 I think, or 1990, I attended a meeting of all western Canadian missionaries in Labrette (PH); there were I believe about 120 of us. I would say that most of the time was devoted to that very question.

It is part and parcel of your cultural identity. You have, for example, a very pure concept of God. I believe that we are making increasing use of symbols in our liturgy. During the Pope's visit to Fort Simpson, I saw liturgy which, in my opinion, was universal. The prayer that went out to the four corners of the earth was your prayer.

As in all religions, the East is the symbol of life and resurrection and the West is the symbol of death: the sun sets and shadows fall; these symbols are common to all nations. We too have a lot to learn from

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these symbols, and I think they are being used more and more in our liturgy.

However, we do come up against concrete problems. In some areas, the drum as a liturgical instrument is anathema to the people, the Aboriginal people. In other areas, it is considered perfectly normal. So, where the people want drums, there is rarely a problem. When I attended the consecration of The Most Rev. Bishop Croteau of Mackenzie, drums were used in the liturgy.

There is another thing that I find very beautiful. When a chief is in attendance, a symbol indicates that the chief is present; he is available. Well, above the tabernacle, which was in the shape of a teepee, there was this same symbol, to indicate that God, the Chief, was present.

We have a great deal to learn, but we cannot go any faster than the people themselves. There must always be dialogue with you. You know, you could not expect the first missionaries to understand your culture: they knew the Gospel but they did not know

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your values, they did not know your culture. The first Christians were very familiar with the culture, but knew very little about the Gospels. It takes a while for the two to come together.

However, with the generations of Christians that we have today, it should be possible to incorporate the culture into the liturgy. I hope this is happening; it will happen. But, here again, even when we wish to move at the speed of the people, there can be reticence about things that appear possible to us.

I believe that in the past there has been too much severity with regard to some of your religious rituals. All these things are part of a people's identity, and I believe that it is important that such things not be neglected, in the liturgy. It is because of this concern for incorporating your culture that the missionaries translated the Scriptures into the Indian languages, devised instruments for conserving and promoting the Indian languages, established seminaries for the liturgies and did everything they could to ensure that the people could pray in

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their own language.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:** Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for joining us this morning for this presentation. We hope that this exchange of ideas can continue.

**HENRI GOUDREAU:** Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you, Bishop.

I would now like to ask the representatives of the Atikamekw and Montagnais Council to come forward.

Mr. Gill.

**DENIS GILL, VICE-PRESIDENT, CENTRE BLOCK, ATIKAMEKW AND MONTAGNAIS COUNCIL:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. First of all I would simply like to explain that I am Vice-President of the Atikamekw and Montagnais Council, which has the mission, the specific mandate, of pursuing land claims. Although this is not the subject of this morning's presentation, I would nevertheless like to express our satisfaction with the position just expressed by the Most Rev.



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Goudreault, which is in fact the position of the Bishops of Quebec, specifically regarding their concepts of territory and self-government. This is a concept that we have adopted in the current negotiations, and we appreciate the fact that other groups have adopted the same message in the negotiation that we have.

I will now move on to the matter that brings me here.

My subject is Aboriginal participation in the labour market in terms of employment and training.

The Atikamekw and Montagnais Council represents three Atikamekw communities and nine Montagnais communities. In the context of this Royal Commission, we would like to shed objective light on a federal government project for developing employment and training for Aboriginal people.

The project is a vital employment and training projects for the Montagnais, as their socio-economic situation has long been considered critical, in spite of the progress achieved in the past 20 years, that is the increase in

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the administrative responsibilities of the band councils.

The Montagnais are faced with problems which hinder improving the quality of life in their communities. The major problems in these communities are high unemployment, large numbers of social assistance recipients, low employment and low levels of education.

Furthermore, the claims for self-government submitted by the Montagnais to existing governments take it as given that job creation and a labour market are essential to full participation in the social and economic progress of their nation.

Faced with the growing desire for autonomy expressed by Aboriginal people, the various provincial and federal departments have been introducing consultation and co-ordination mechanisms designed to further Aboriginal autonomy in various spheres of activity, especially economic development.

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One result of these mechanisms is "Pathways to Success", an Aboriginal employment and training strategy.

To save time, I shall attempt, without necessarily quoting from the paper, to summarize its main points.

I would like to point out that Pathways to Success is a joint Aboriginal/Employment and Immigration Canada project intended to promote and prepare a qualified Aboriginal labour force so that Aboriginal people can participate actively in their own labour market and that of all Canadians.

I would also like to mention that the Right Honourable Barbara McDougall, the Minister at that time, supported establishment of the Labour Force Development Strategy - Aboriginal Employment and Training Working Group. The LFDS-AETWG concurred on five major principles as a basis for the working relationship between Aboriginal people and EIC. Because of the importance of these five principles, I shall describe them briefly.

The first principle is Consultation and Local Control of Decision Making: that

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this partnership be solidified through the establishment of national, regional and local management boards to ensure that the needs and priorities of the Aboriginal community are addressed and are reflected in the design, development and implementation of EIC policies that affect them.

The second principle is Delivery Mechanisms: that employment and training programs and services be managed, operated, conducted and arranged through Aboriginal infrastructures.

The third is Funding Mechanisms and Institutional Development Capacity: that a funding mechanism be developed which recognizes the planning and operational needs of Aboriginal organizations and communities. Such a mechanism could be based on existing models.

The fourth is Employment Equity (Affirmative Action): that EIC undertake proactive measures to improve recruitment, training and employment of Aboriginal people both internally and externally to EIC.

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The fifth principle is Eligibility for Programs and Services: that the Aboriginal delivery machinery be given the discretion to determine a person's eligibility for programs and services, and that there be a reliance on counselling for determining eligibility rather than strict eligibility criteria as in the past.

The five principles make it clear that Pathways to Success was to establish national, regional and local management boards. However a number of problems arose along the way.

The main problems are related to questionable application of the principles of co-management and partnership, i.e.:

- consultation on and local control of decision making;
- implementation mechanisms;
- funding mechanisms and institutional development capacity; and
- eligibility for programs and services.

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I will present the problems in a fairly general way. Many of them are related to budget transfer. For the 1992-1993 fiscal year, all of a sudden, Aboriginal people had to handle budget transfers. The criteria established by an ad hoc committee and later endorsed by the members of the Regional Management Board for allocation of the funding for the 1992-93 year - a total of approximately \$20 million was forecast for the Aboriginal people of Quebec - were not fully respected. Employment and Immigration was managing the budget of the Aboriginal people as it saw fit, thus jeopardizing the principles of joint management.

As a result, pressure was brought to bear in a number of quarters by, among others, the President of the CAM and Gaston Plourde, President of the Regional Management Board; the Minister of Employment and Immigration was approached. None of this produced any results. The pressure was brought to bear at the request of the Montagnais chiefs. They were seeking a meeting with Mr. Valcourt, the Minister, but this never happened.

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Another major problem was budget distribution. The intention had been that members of the Board would make budget decisions on the basis of criteria based on ethnographic factors and administrative area.

On this point, EIC appeared to have reached its decision even before the First Nations made their recommendations. EIC had submitted a budget distribution model based on administrative area. This was for its own convenience. Consultation and local control in decision making were neither respected nor considered.

There was also the matter of establishing Local Management Boards in urban centres. Some of these were set up in Quebec City and Montreal. The majority of the First Nations were formally opposed to this. The First Nations want to be solely responsible for employment and training services for the band members listed on their registers, that is to say all on- and off-reserve members. Even if the Montagnais made their

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recommendations on the project, everything seemed to indicate that the decision was once again in the hands of Employment and Immigration Canada and a few bodies that took it upon themselves to represent and make decisions for our people.

How can calculations be based on figures which are difficult to check? A large proportion of the urban Aboriginal population is a transient population, and the figures provided were not based on recent data.

Furthermore, the membership of the Regional Management Board was established and made up of the Aboriginal nations, the Native Alliance of Quebec Inc., the Association of Native Friendship Centres, the Quebec Native Women's Association and Employment and Immigration.

It is important to emphasize this problem. As the Aboriginal people are represented by their band councils, which represent them both on- and off-reserve, the inclusion of such organizations as the Native Alliance of Quebec, as well as the Friendship Centres and



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the Women's Association, means that those groups have double representation, in that they are already represented by their band councils, even if they are off-reserve, and represented again by these other associations, which are directly involved in decision making.

Another problem arose regarding eligibility for Employment and Immigration programs. Some Montagnais Local Management Boards have had problems with the eligibility criteria for specific programs, including the UI program. Because of the low rate of employment in Montagnais communities, UI beneficiaries are relatively few. As a result, Local Management Boards are denied access to UI funds in spite of the many pressing needs of the people.

The final problem raised is related to the fact that the Inuit had signed a prior agreement with Employment and

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Immigration Canada. Under a provision of this agreement, they signed an agreement with EIC for approximately \$15 million over a period of three years. The new agreement signed with the Inuit risks making the sums set aside for the Inuit inequitable with those set aside for the other Aboriginal nations.

Even if Employment and Immigration negotiates a separate agreement with a specific nation, this should not affect the funds allocated in the budget to other nations, unless they have given prior approval.

Based on the preceding, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- whereas the mandate of Employment and Immigration Canada is to establish an effective partnership with Aboriginal people to promote and train a qualified Aboriginal labour force capable of participating in their own labour market and that of all Canadians;

- whereas, in 1990, the federal government confirmed the five major principles enunciated in Pathways to Success;

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We recommend:

- that EIC decentralize the entire 1993-94 budget envelope for Aboriginal people according to the criteria drawn up by the Regional Management Board;

- that Local Management Boards in urban areas be subject to the same budget distribution criteria as other Local Management Boards;

- that consultation and local control be applied in all decision making;

- that membership of the Regional Management Board be redefined in a manner equitable to all Aboriginal nations;

- that surplus funds be transferred from one program to another to promote optimum use of the funds allocated to the various programs;

- that LMB eligibility criteria for members of the Native Alliance be clearly defined and approved by the Regional Management Board;

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- that the criteria for the various programs be flexible; and finally

- that the Aboriginal nations of the Regional Management Board be consulted on the 1993-94 budget allocations pursuant to any separate agreement reached between Employment and Immigration and another nation.

In conclusion, establishment of a partnership and the search for new methods to promote the labour market needs of Aboriginal people creates a number of implementation challenges. The Montagnais look forward to a promising employment and training future for their nation and are prepared to take up all challenges.

However commitment, respect and trust among all partners is absolutely essential.

With the establishment of new fair and equitable relationships between the federal government and the Aboriginal people, we will be able to reach our objectives, an increase in Aboriginal participation in the Canadian labour market and

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full participation of Aboriginal people in their social and economic evolution.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Gill. I would also like to thank your Council for tabling a substantial brief on the major question of employment. The brief is all the more apposite as we are hearing, by force of circumstances, a great deal of discussion on the management of specific federal programs, including Employment and Immigration Canada programs.

We realize that, in some respects, our terms of reference with regard to economic development address the medium term; however, we hope to be able to make suggestions for improving program management as we go along. This is the light in which we shall study your brief, which we are seeing this morning for the first time, and we will undoubtedly contact you later for more in-depth discussion. We will also obtain additional information from discussing these matters with the Department of Employment and Immigration.

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In other words, employment is one of the Commission's concerns, although indirectly... it is within our terms of reference, but as an intermediate step. If, during a hearing or a private Commission meeting, we think of any improvements to suggest, including improvements to Commission operations, this is, of course, a possibility that the Commission will consider.

I should also like to emphasize the fact that this is a brief on the specific subjects of employment and the labour market. I know that your Council intends to submit a more general brief to the Commission on its overall concerns; I am saying this because I believe it is important that this fact be on public record.

For our part, we hope – and I repeat the Commission's invitation – to receive a brief from your Council on your overall concerns, including land claims, especially the land claim process, because our terms of reference specify recommending more effective land claim processes.

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I would simply like – I am looking at page 11 of your brief – to draw a parallel with what we heard yesterday from the Association des Indiens hors réserve de la région de Sept-Îles, who said in their presentation, "Even if we have cards and are recognized by the Department as Status Indians, the Band Council does not take us into account, does not give us any information. Unfortunately, the Department deals solely with the Band Council and we are ignored."

[Unofficial translation]

This is a concern which I would like to share with you this morning, as one of the points in your brief is that there may be over-representation of off-reserve people and Aboriginal women. As you know, this is an extremely important question, one that has been the subject of public debate, specifically regarding distribution of the funds that enabled national bodies to engage in consultation on the constitutional debate.

Once again, I should like to have your viewpoint on the specific subject of

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the theoretical capacity of Band Councils to represent their off-reserve members, and the situation as it actually exists. This is a question debated everywhere in Canada, it is not unique to the Montagnais, but a concern which appears major in that the Councils, basically, are more concerned about their on-reserve members and, obviously, this also touches on the question of Aboriginal women.

**DENIS GILL:** On that question, I would perhaps like to point out that, on the one hand, the intention is not to arrange things so that a part of our population is not served. The major fear expressed by the chiefs on this matter has been the fact that, because of the way the structures (including Local Management Boards in urban areas) have been set up, there is a major risk that the total budget allocation for Aboriginal training and employment will end up outside the communities. This is of enormous concern to the chiefs.



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I understand that they must also be concerned about off-reserve members of their communities, but I think that the employment and training situation that can exist inside the communities is common knowledge. I think that, if we want to introduce a program that will solve the problem, it is essential to make sure the funds do in fact reach the communities.

Unfortunately, in many cases, perhaps because they are better organized in urban areas, it is far easier to use the funds there, with the result that, inside the communities, in the long run, the people are at a clear disadvantage in the use made of funds that should have been transferred to the communities. That is the first point.

The second important point is that, within the Native Alliance and other organizations, the definition of membership is very broad. It could be said that this is a fairly easy way of justifying larger allocations and, as a result,

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further depriving the communities.

Our view on the subject is that there should be compliance with what has been agreed in terms of the total membership, inside and outside the communities, to ensure that there will be a more satisfactory distribution of funds.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes, very well. Thank you.

Are there any further questions?

Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** [English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Gill.

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There are two presentations remaining. We shall now move on to the presentation by Denis Perron, Member of the National Assembly for Duplessis, the riding we are in today.

Good morning.

**DENIS PERRON, MEMBER FOR DUPLESSIS AND OPPOSITION  
CRITIC ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS:** Good morning ladies and gentlemen of the Commission.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, it was with pleasure that I accepted the invitation to come here today and take part in the work of this Commission. You will allow me to express my disappointment that, on such an important occasion, the Government of Quebec is not publicly presenting its position on questions that deeply touch us all, specifically Aboriginal people and white people.

For the past 16 years it has been my privilege to be the Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Duplessis, a riding where Quebecers and members of various Aboriginal nations live side by side in Quebec.

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As an MNA, I have always considered it a great privilege to have the opportunity of working to improve the well-being of the inhabitants of my riding. I know from experience that it is possible to develop strong links between Aboriginal people and Quebecers, and still respect cultural differences.

Since I am a politician, this will be a political speech, which is not surprising. I will also touch on humanitarian, economic, cultural and social issues.

After the stormy constitutional debates that were long, painful and divisive, it is time to close the door on the conflict and the media hype, much of it the result of some political leaders' failing to engage in meaningful dialogue or refusing to compromise.

Aboriginal people and Quebecers can live together, on that we all agree. Recent governments in Quebec have put a great deal of effort into supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the Aboriginal nations.

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I would like to refer here to a study published in April 1992 by Brad Morse, a Law Professor at the University of Ottawa, and presented by him to the members of the Commission studying new constitutional partnership arrangements. According to the study, Aboriginal people are better treated in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada.

Professor Morse also emphasized that Quebec's "performance" — and I really mean "performance" — is superior to that of the other Canadian provinces, often significantly, in all areas. He pointed out that the land areas reserved for the Aboriginal people of Quebec are far greater than those in the other Canadian provinces, that only the Government of Quebec has supported Aboriginal languages in Canada, and that Quebec has in general given better support to Aboriginal education initiatives than any other province, that Quebec leads in setting up bodies responsible for providing health services to Aboriginal people,

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and has introduced a number of economic development assistance measures, in particular the guaranteed income program for Cree and Inuit hunters and trappers.

In the past, the Parti Québécois has always attached great importance to finding solutions for promoting joint occupancy by Quebecers and Aboriginal nations. In 1978 the government set up an administrative body known as "SAGMAI" (Secrétariat des activités gouvernementales en milieu amérindien et inuit), now replaced by the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, as well as a network of co-ordinators in 24 government departments and organizations.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** If I may ask you to slow down a little for the sake of our translators. Thank you.

**DENIS PERRON:** Of course, Mr. Chairman.

In February 1983, the Council of Ministers adopted 5 principles as guidelines for government policy. The principles were included in a resolution

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adopted by the National Assembly on March 20, 1985. The resolution was in fact put forward by the late René Lévesque. For the first time, Aboriginal people were granted the status of "Nation". This recognition went hand-in-hand with an undertaking to reach agreements with them on the following points:

- a) exercise of the right to autonomy within Quebec;
- b) exercise of the right to their culture, language and traditions;
- c) exercise of the right to own and control land;
- d) exercise of the right to hunt, fish, trap, gather and take part in managing wildlife resources; and
- e) exercise of the right to take part in and benefit from economic development.

In spite of all this, what is the current situation?

I consider that, since 1986, there has been an about-face. Negotiations have been of the do-what-I-say variety, and results few and far between.

Over and above the guiding principles,



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the Parti Québécois government took concrete action to support the autonomy of the Aboriginal nations and enable them to manage their activities within their territory. One good example is the construction of the Katéri Hospital, fully funded by the government and administered by the Kahnawake Band Council. Another is the establishment of the Pointe-Bleue Aboriginal police training school.

Turning to the Constitution: following unilateral repatriation of the Constitution in 1982, Quebec refused to participate in the meetings of Canadian premiers. Nonetheless, at the request of the Aboriginal nations, Quebec agreed to participate in four constitutional conferences intended to enable governments and Aboriginal peoples to agree on the definition of Aboriginal rights. At the 1983 conference, the late premier René Lévesque even offered his seat to an Aboriginal leader attending to speak in favour of the constitutional amendment ensuring equality for Aboriginal men and women and re-instating women

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previously excluded, and their children, in their nations.

This initial conference reached agreement, and two amendments proclaimed in June 1984 establishing equal rights for Aboriginal women and men (section 35(4)), and ensuring that the rights guaranteed in agreements like the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement would be protected by the Constitution in the same way as rights guaranteed by treaties (section 35(3)).

Let us now move on in time, to see what has happened to the Aboriginal nations. It would be easy to rest on one's laurels and close one's eyes and ears to the expressions of anger and frustration of the past few years. The aspirations of the Aboriginal nations are legitimate, and more effort must be put into redefining a new social contract between Aboriginal people and Quebecers.

This is the task that the Parti Québécois has tackled over the past two years. In December 1990 the Party established a working group that included

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representatives of various Aboriginal nations. Through an exchange of ideas, agreement was reached on the Aboriginal affairs policy for the next Parti Québécois government, including specific mechanisms for personal development.

The Parti Québécois option is unequivocal. It is to make Quebec a sovereign nation and, with the Aboriginal nations, to draft a new social contract for the Quebec nation and all the Aboriginal nations, thus putting an end to the colonial relationships associated with the Indian Act, which goes back almost to the 19th century. The Aboriginal nations will be able to control their institutions and progress on the basis of their own social options, while working with the Québécois nation and developing the country of Quebec.

This new social contract that the Parti Québécois proposes to draw up with the Aboriginal nations implies a major change of mentality by both parties. The Aboriginal nations will be considered our partners in the development of Quebec, and these nations will agree

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to build, with the Quebec nation, a sovereign Quebec.

In the constitution of a sovereign Quebec, the Parti Québécois proposes recognizing and defining the collective rights of the Aboriginal nations. The Quebec nation and the Aboriginal nations will be called upon to take part in drawing up and ratifying the constitution, the birth certificate of a sovereign Quebec, the confirmation of our determination to live together in Quebec.

Furthermore the Parti Québécois recognizes that, over the years, the many Aboriginal people who no longer live on Aboriginal land have become an integral part of Quebec society and made a valuable contribution to it. There are many such people, proud of their origins and their affiliation to Quebec, descendants of different nations, well established in the many communities that make up Quebec society. These Aboriginal people, who are not members of any recognized nation, have established the Native Alliance of Quebec, an association to look after their interests. The Parti Québécois recognizes the Native Alliance of Quebec

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as the official voice of these Aboriginal Quebecers and believes that, in future, it should be invited to take part in all negotiations affecting them.

A future Quebec constitution must define the right of Aboriginal nations to responsible government – not municipal government, but Aboriginal government of their own design and in their own image – which will exercise, in some cases in stages, its power in the land which they currently own or occupy, for example Indian reserves, Aboriginal institutions, category 1 land, and lands relinquished following negotiations with the Government of Quebec.

At all times in an agreement negotiated between the two parties, Quebec and the Aboriginal nations will be able to agree on changing the boundaries of these lands to enable development of Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal and Quebec nations.

The constitution of Quebec should also recognize the option, for the nations which so choose,

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to participate fully in the forms of government which will be established on Quebec territory.

The Parti Québécois, because of its concern for respecting the options selected, proposes signing, with the Aboriginal nations that want self-government, step-by-step agreements establishing the recognized powers of those governments for dealing with such matters as defining a citizenship code, tax structure, education, Aboriginal language and culture, health, environment and resource management, economic development and public works. These agreements will also determine shared powers and all the measures that go to make "good neighbours". Quebec statutes will be amended to allow for implementation of these agreements.

Pursuant to the agreements, sources of government funding can include:

- income taxes and other taxes to be collected by the Aboriginal governments;
- within the framework of the joint land management agreements which I will discuss later,

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Aboriginal governments will have several sources of income;

- according to formulae to be established, the Government of Quebec intends to participate in funding Aboriginal governments, taking into account the Aboriginal people's ability to pay, narrowing social and economic gaps, and the desire to give Aboriginal communities living conditions favourable to their participation in the development of Quebec.

In the final analysis, the Aboriginal governments will wish to assume full financial responsibility, that is to say they will have to set up mechanisms and adopt policies aimed at achieving financial autonomy.

In order to protect the process of negotiating and implementing these agreements, we propose to introduce a mechanism to play the role of ombudsman with regard to Aboriginal claims and questions. There is no question here of giving this body a mandate to settle contentious issues or define the rights of parties. An independent and credible body could play an important role

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in resolving deadlocks and facilitating dialogue.

A Parti Québécois government will also introduce a sustainable development policy, which implies that environmental and economic questions will be given equal importance in the decision making process. This policy will promote integrated land management in accordance with the agreements with Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal people of Quebec have historic rights to pursue their traditional fishing, hunting and trapping activities on vast land areas also exploited by other users. The often excessive exploitation of natural resources – for example clear-cutting our forests, ill-considered hydroelectric and mining development, overexploitation of wildlife – and the lack of dialogue among various users of the same lands can lead to regional conflict and environmental damage. Under the terms and conditions to be established by the parties, it is advisable that the Aboriginal nations be involved in developing and managing the territory within



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which they pursue their traditional activities.

Through agreements, it is possible to define the territory within which each Aboriginal nation will have the right to pursue its traditional activities. At the same time, these agreements could set up joint development and management mechanisms for these territories to allow for both traditional Aboriginal activities and sustainable natural resource development. Within the context of these agreements, an Aboriginal government could receive part of the income or royalties that the Government of Quebec earns from exploiting resources within that territory. This would make the Aboriginal people partners in development.

Of course there would be a period of transition. If the Aboriginal nations are viewed as partners in Quebec development, and in the context of electoral reform, the Parti Québécois intends, in conjunction with the Aboriginal nations, to define appropriate representation in the Quebec National Assembly

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according to a timetable and on terms and conditions which remain to be defined.

The Parti Québécois priority will be to reach agreements, following the guidelines described earlier, which will define the powers of each government. These agreements will be reached without extinguishing Aboriginal rights and will be re-assessed in light of decisions handed down by the Quebec courts and amendments to the Quebec Constitution.

Finally, a Parti Québécois government will respect existing treaties and the acquired rights of the Aboriginal nations until these are replaced by new agreements between the Government of Quebec and the Aboriginal nations.

I would like to add, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, that, in my opinion, a necessary first step is a framework agreement for all Aboriginal nations that may be protected by the constitution in the future; as a second step, specific agreements could be reached with individual Aboriginal nations, as the Aboriginal nations are so different one from the other.

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To accomplish this, it is absolutely essential that piecemeal negotiations cease, that action be taken to ensure that negotiations proceed on a permanent basis, that we put an end to negotiations every six months, every year. God knows we have a good example right here before us, in the matter of the Atikamekw-Montagnais Council which, for the past 12 years, has made every effort to sign an agreement with the governments; here we are in 1992, and still nothing has been settled.

It is essential that agreements be negotiated in good faith; we need real negotiation. Agreements must be signed. Agreements must also be applied. It is our view that the Courts should intervene after an agreement has been signed only if any contentious issue remains to be settled.

I would like to thank the members of this Commission for hearing me out, and I am prepared to explain what I have said and even to answer any other questions which you might like to ask.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you, Mr. Perron, for coming here this morning and giving your presentation. Its great clarity is certainly to your credit.

There are two questions I would like to ask you at this time. The first is related to your statement on page 16, near the end of your brief when, on the question of land agreements, you say:

"These agreements will be reached without extinguishing Aboriginal rights..."

As a Commission, we are aware that this is one of the main problems, the stumbling block of most land claim negotiations in Canada – not only in Quebec, but also in Canada – this procedure by which governments, for purposes of legal certainty, require extinction of rights prior to granting new, more specific rights under an agreement.

We have looked for alternatives

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to the extinction of rights method, which is basic and goes to the very heart of Aboriginal claims; we would like to be able to reach agreements without repudiating rights on what are considered ancestral lands, and do it in a simple and definitive way that would incorporate the legal certainty requirements of economic or other partners sharing the territory in question.

Basically, my question is as follows. Have you done studies, has technical work been done in Quebec on the method for reaching land agreements that would not extinguish Aboriginal rights?

If you have, we would be very pleased if you would share them with us.

**DENIS PERRON:** First of all, I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that in fact some studies have been done on these rights by the Party. There are even legal experts involved in our investigation of these questions.

It is clear that,

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when we ask that rights be extinguished before negotiation, we come up against a blank wall. First of all, it is necessary for the parties to reach agreement on the matter of rights.

You know, I have had the opportunity to see, throughout my many years of political life – even earlier because I have always had great interest in the Quebec question and the Aboriginal question – one extraordinary thing. When we look at legal texts, decisions handed down by the Courts... speaking of legal texts, take the Royal Proclamation of 1763. That was a long time ago. Since 1763, there have been many changes in North America and in other countries of the world. All these legal texts must be reviewed if we are to reach a prior formal agreement on rights.

Rights may differ from one nation to another or, at any rate, those that I am familiar with on Quebec territory, on American territory and also on the territory of the rest of Canada. It is clear that it is impossible

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to proceed by saying, "Your rights are extinguished" and going on to say "Come and negotiate with us". Prior negotiation on rights must be recognized as a prerequisite.

When this has been done, the parties can move directly to the basic question of culture, and cultural rights may be recognized in the context of these negotiations. You know, I have always recognized that I have cultural rights; I do not see why Aboriginal people would not also have cultural rights. One nation's rights may be more restricted in the context of its relationships to other nations.

In the first place, those rights must be recognized and, after that is done, it is time to sit down and negotiate economic questions, social questions, etc. This is how things should be done, I think.

As long as we fail to do this we will be no better than dogs chasing their own tails: we will get nowhere at all.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Listen, I repeat my hope that, if you have specific ideas on alternatives to

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the method of extinguishing rights... because it is a question of a trade; a piece of land is ceded with exclusive ownership in exchange for the extinction of rights over a much greater land area. I think that the problem is a familiar one: it is the solution which is more difficult.

Obviously, this could be discussed at length this morning, but I am expressing the fervent hope that the Commission will be receiving additional information if you have documents that you could share with us and which could assist us in discovering alternatives to this legal mechanism that causes so many problems.

**DENIS PERRON:** With your permission, Mr. Chairman, on that matter, I will see what I have in my office in Quebec City by way of requests made to specific legal experts. It is possible that, with the authorization of the Party, I will be able to forward them to the members of the Commission. This might be of assistance in finding an overall solution to the problem.

You know, I am a Quebecer



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that is a fact, but we are in a federal system, and I think that the problems of the Aboriginal people are panCanadian; they are not restricted to Quebec, they are panCanadian.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. We would greatly appreciate it.

Very briefly, a second question. In the context of your brief, which assumes future Quebec sovereignty, do you see Quebec as taking the place of the federal government or taking over from the federal government in the matter of fiduciary duties with regard to the Aboriginal people, the Indians in particular?

**DENIS PERRON:** Of course, if Quebec becomes a sovereign country, when that happens we cannot have a legal vacuum.

Since there must not be a legal vacuum, whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, all the Acts and Regulations, including constitutional legislation, will have to be repatriated, brought to Quebec. Afterwards the whole question will have to be settled very quickly.

I was talking about the Indian Act earlier.

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In my opinion it is truly antiquated, in spite of the amendments. I think it has been amended twice since 1874; and I think it is still very much out-of-date. Why? Because no agreements were ever reached. That Act will have to be repatriated and then, right away, immediately, negotiations will have to be undertaken to amend it all again. There is no sense continuing like this. It is not common sense. It's almost like the Middle Ages.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I understand what you are saying, but once again, basically, the question — and I know that there are many Aboriginal people in Quebec who wonder about it — is that this fiduciary responsibility entails a guarantee that is important to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, a guarantee which has devolved on the Crown in right of Canada, the federal Crown.

Basically, the question is a legal one. Do you envision the transfer of this fiduciary responsibility to Quebec?

**DENIS PERRON:** Yes. Yes, of course.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well. Thank you.

Are there any other questions or comments?

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I have no questions, but I should like, Honourable Member, to thank you for a very important address. It seems to me that it will prove useful in promoting dialogue.

Thank you very much.

**DENIS PERRON:** It was a pleasure.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** There is one last question from our Commissioner of the Day, Évelyne St-Onge.

Madame St-Onge.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:**

Mr. Perron, on the matter of Quebec sovereignty, if it is a sovereign country and we maintain an alliance with Ottawa, has the Parti Québécois thought of anything else?

**DENIS PERRON:** Listen, the way I see it, when one looks at the evolution of countries internationally, old countries and young countries, especially the young countries established

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in the past few years, say the past 25 years, it is clear that, at the time when a majority gains sovereignty, gains independence – I am not speaking about separation, I am speaking about sovereignty or independence – it is clear that at that time everything related to jurisdiction is repatriated.

Of course there will be a transition period. Everyone, the federal government, the Quebec government, the Aboriginal leaders, will have to work to ensure that the rights of every individual are respected. Starting in the transition period, it is clear that we will also have to respect... in fact, that too is subject to negotiation.

In the context of Quebec sovereignty, a Quebec government will have to respect rights – acquired rights at any rate – respect existing treaties, respect what is in the existing Canadian Constitution, part of which was requested by René Lévesque himself.

It is clear that, in a democracy, others have to be respected too.

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I can tell you that I have not the slightest fear regarding the attitude of Quebecers and the Quebec government in a situation where the citizens of Quebec have voted for sovereignty. The rights of the others living on the territory must be respected.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Obviously this is a broad question, one which deserves much longer discussion. This has been a start.

Thank you for coming here today and presenting your brief.

**DENIS PERRON:** It has been a pleasure, Mr. Chairman. Good luck to every one.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

I would like to ask the representatives of the Naskapi Band of Quebec to come forward and present their brief. This will be the final presentation of the day.

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Thank you.

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** This completes the public hearings of the Commission in Malioténam. We would like to thank everyone who has helped make this round of hearings possible.

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We thank our hosts in this gymnasium. I would also like to thank the translators who have done an excellent job in Montagnais, French, and English.

I would like to thank the Commission staff who made this hearing possible; also Évelyne St-Onge, our Commissioner of the Day. It is my sincere hope, indeed my belief, that she has made this hearing a little more accessible and made a great many people feel at ease and at home. Madame St-Onge also asked a number of important questions of our speakers, and we thank her for that.

We hope that this dialogue can continue. Even though, unfortunately, we will be unable to return here, to Malioténam, we will be back in Quebec. Some organizations, like the Council of the Atikamekw and Montagnais, have already indicated that they will return to present more general briefs.

And so, thank you and good luck to you all.

--- The hearing was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

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COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:

[English]

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[English]

**HENRI GOUDREAU:** Thank you very much. It seems to me that you are focusing attention on the Church's fundamental mission - reconciliation. Unesco has designated next year, 1993, as the International Year of Indigenous People. I believe they total approximately 240 million, about 5 per cent of the world's population. Aboriginal people account for about 5 per cent of this country's population, perhaps closer to 4 per cent than 5.

I have already discussed this matter with my colleagues, the Bishops of Newfoundland, and we will be discussing it again at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1993, the year of Aboriginal people.

In my own diocese, there is to be a competition for a scholarship of approximately \$2,000: I will be inviting young people, Secondary IV and Secondary V students, to reflect on the problem of Aboriginal people and the ways of improving

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relationships between the two groups, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

I believe this will make young people think because, in my opinion, no real reconciliation can be achieved through letters or, in any way over long distances. It is necessary to meet, to get to know and admire one another; and I believe that the Church is an organization ideally suited to meetings of this kind.

I know for example that the people of Sheshatshiu (PH) and the Whites of Happy Valley, Goose Bay, have held a number of meetings over the past two years to discuss values, views of the current situation, and other such matters.

In the past two years, considerable action has been taken by the Churches to promote dialogue between the two groups.

As you are probably aware, the Churches support what used to be called Project North (Plan Nord), now the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (Coalition des droits des aboriginaux). The coalition is supported by nine Churches.

In Quebec we

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have an organization known as "CODA", (la Coalition des droits des autochtones). It is comparable to the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, but in Quebec and for Quebec. It is also ecumenical.

Most population centres also have an organization commonly known as an association of ministers. All the ministers – in Labrador City, for example, there are nine different denominations for a population of 10,000 – meet regularly once a month and have common projects.

I believe that Aboriginal people have the same kind of organization, except that the villages are very far apart and each village is usually all Catholic or all Anglican or all..., mainly Anglican and Catholic. So, because each village is so homogeneous, it is difficult to have truly ecumenical projects as there is only one religion.

But your question is a basic one, and it seems to me that governments and municipal authorities have the right to expect a great deal from the Churches in this area.

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We are involved in education, and living together in unity and harmony is the very core of our faith. This can never be stressed too much.

**COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** [English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** [English]



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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Commissioner of the Day  
St-Onge.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:** Thank you  
for your support, and for your input.

In June 1992, in Bolivia, there was a meeting of  
spiritual leaders of North and South America and leaders of various  
religions from around the world. The meeting was organized by the  
Pastoral Committee of Costa Rica to discuss the subject of Aboriginal  
spirituality. It had a twofold purpose: to provide information  
on Aboriginal spirituality and, at the same time, recognize it as  
equal to that of other religions.

Because of the assimilation we have experienced, we  
are now relearning our own culture. We are also relearning our  
spirituality.

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I would like to know if the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate have begun reflecting on the burgeoning back-to-basics movement.

**HENRI GOUDREAU:** Thank you very much. In 1989 I think, or 1990, I attended a meeting of all western Canadian missionaries in Labrette (PH); there were I believe about 120 of us. I would say that most of the time was devoted to that very question.

It is part and parcel of your cultural identity. You have, for example, a very pure concept of God. I believe that we are making increasing use of symbols in our liturgy. During the Pope's visit to Fort Simpson, I saw liturgy which, in my opinion, was universal. The prayer that went out to the four corners of the earth was your prayer.

As in all religions, the East is the symbol of life and resurrection and the West is the symbol of death: the sun sets and shadows fall; these symbols are common to all nations. We too have a lot to learn from

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these symbols, and I think they are being used more and more in our liturgy.

However, we do come up against concrete problems. In some areas, the drum as a liturgical instrument is anathema to the people, the Aboriginal people. In other areas, it is considered perfectly normal. So, where the people want drums, there is rarely a problem. When I attended the consecration of The Most Rev. Bishop Croteau of Mackenzie, drums were used in the liturgy.

There is another thing that I find very beautiful. When a chief is in attendance, a symbol indicates that the chief is present; he is available. Well, above the tabernacle, which was in the shape of a teepee, there was this same symbol, to indicate that God, the chief, was present.

We have a great deal to learn, but we cannot go any faster than the people themselves. There must always be dialogue with you. You know, you could not expect the first missionaries to understand your culture: they knew the Gospel but they did not know

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your values, they did not know your culture. The first Christians were very familiar with the culture, but knew very little about the Gospels. It takes a while for the two to come together.

However, with the generations of Christians that we have today, it should be possible to incorporate the culture into the liturgy. I hope this is happening; it will happen. But, here again, even when we wish to move at the speed of the people, there can be reticence about things that appear possible to us.

I believe that in the past there has been too much severity with regard to some of your religious rituals. All these things are part of a people's identity, and I believe that it is important that such things not be neglected, in the liturgy. It is because of this concern for incorporating your culture that the missionaries translated the Scriptures into the Indian languages, devised instruments for conserving and promoting the Indian languages, established seminaries for the liturgies and did everything they could to ensure that the people could pray in

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their own language.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:** Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you for joining us this morning for this presentation. We hope that this exchange of ideas can continue.

**HENRI GOUDREAU:** Thank you very much.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you, Bishop.

I would now like to ask the representatives of the Atikamekw and Montagnais Council to come forward.

Mr. Gill.

**DENIS GILL, VICE-PRESIDENT, CENTRE BLOCK, ATIKAMEKW AND MONTAGNAIS COUNCIL:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. First of all I would simply like to explain that I am Vice-President of the Atikamekw and Montagnais Council, which has the mission, the specific mandate, of pursuing land claims. Although this is not the subject of this morning's presentation, I would nevertheless like to express our satisfaction with the position just expressed by the Most Rev.

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Goudreault, which is in fact the position of the Bishops of Quebec, specifically regarding their concepts of territory and self-government. This is a concept that we have adopted in the current negotiations, and we appreciate the fact that other groups have adopted the same message in the negotiation that we have.

I will now move on to the matter that brings me here.

My subject is Aboriginal participation in the labour market in terms of employment and training.

The Atikamekw and Montagnais Council represents three Atikamekw communities and nine Montagnais communities. In the context of this Royal Commission, we would like to shed objective light on a federal government project for developing employment and training for Aboriginal people.

The project is a vital employment and training projects for the Montagnais, as their socio-economic situation has long been considered critical, in spite of the progress achieved in the past 20 years, that is the increase in

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the administrative responsibilities of the band councils.

The Montagnais are faced with problems which hinder improving the quality of life in their communities. The major problems in these communities are high unemployment, large numbers of social assistance recipients, low employment and low levels of education.

Furthermore, the claims for self-government submitted by the Montagnais to existing governments take it as given that job creation and a labour market are essential to full participation in the social and economic progress of their nation.

Faced with the growing desire for autonomy expressed by Aboriginal people, the various provincial and federal departments have been introducing consultation and co-ordination mechanisms designed to further Aboriginal autonomy in various spheres of activity, especially economic development.

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One result of these mechanisms is "Pathways to Success", an Aboriginal employment and training strategy.

To save time, I shall attempt, without necessarily quoting from the paper, to summarize its main points.

I would like to point out that Pathways to Success is a joint Aboriginal/Employment and Immigration Canada project intended to promote and prepare a qualified Aboriginal labour force so that Aboriginal people can participate actively in their own labour market and that of all Canadians.

I would also like to mention that the Right Honourable Barbara McDougall, the Minister at that time, supported establishment of the Labour Force Development Strategy - Aboriginal Employment and Training Working Group. The LFDS-AETWG concurred on five major principles as a basis for the working relationship between Aboriginal people and EIC. Because of the importance of these five principles, I shall describe them briefly.

The first principle is Consultation and Local Control of Decision Making: that



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this partnership be solidified through the establishment of national, regional and local management boards to ensure that the needs and priorities of the Aboriginal community are addressed and are reflected in the design, development and implementation of EIC policies that affect them.

The second principle is Delivery Mechanisms: that employment and training programs and services be managed, operated, conducted and arranged through Aboriginal infrastructures.

The third is Funding Mechanisms and Institutional Development Capacity: that a funding mechanism be developed which recognizes the planning and operational needs of Aboriginal organizations and communities. Such a mechanism could be based on existing models.

The fourth is Employment Equity (Affirmative Action): that EIC undertake proactive measures to improve recruitment, training and employment of Aboriginal people both internally and externally to EIC.

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The fifth principle is Eligibility for Programs and Services: that the Aboriginal delivery machinery be given the discretion to determine a person's eligibility for programs and services, and that there be a reliance on counselling for determining eligibility rather than strict eligibility criteria as in the past.

The five principles make it clear that Pathways to Success was to establish national, regional and local management boards. However a number of problems arose along the way.

The main problems are related to questionable application of the principles of co-management and partnership, i.e.:

- consultation on and local control of decision making;
- implementation mechanisms;
- funding mechanisms and institutional development capacity; and
- eligibility for programs and services.

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I will present the problems in a fairly general way. Many of them are related to budget transfer. For the 1992-1993 fiscal year, all of a sudden, Aboriginal people had to handle budget transfers. The criteria established by an ad hoc committee and later endorsed by the members of the Regional Management Board for allocation of the funding for the 1992-93 year - a total of approximately \$20 million was forecast for the Aboriginal people of Quebec - were not fully respected. Employment and Immigration was managing the budget of the Aboriginal people as it saw fit, thus jeopardizing the principles of joint management.

As a result, pressure was brought to bear in a number of quarters by, among others, the President of the CAM and Gaston Plourde, President of the Regional Management Board; the Minister of Employment and Immigration was approached. None of this produced any results. The pressure was brought to bear at the request of the Montagnais chiefs. They were seeking a meeting with Mr. Valcourt, the Minister, but this never happened.

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Another major problem was budget distribution. The intention had been that members of the Board would make budget decisions on the basis of criteria based on ethnographic factors and administrative area.

On this point, EIC appeared to have reached its decision even before the First Nations made their recommendations.

EIC had submitted a budget distribution model based on administrative area. This was for its own convenience. Consultation and local control in decision making were neither respected nor considered.

There was also the matter of establishing Local Management Boards in urban centres. Some of these were set up in Quebec City and Montreal. The majority of the First Nations were formally opposed to this. The First Nations want to be solely responsible for employment and training services for the band members listed on their registers, that is to say all on- and off-reserve members. Even if the Montagnais made their

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recommendations on the project, everything seemed to indicate that the decision was once again in the hands of Employment and Immigration Canada and a few bodies that took it upon themselves to represent and make decisions for our people.

How can calculations be based on figures which are difficult to check? A large proportion of the urban Aboriginal population is a transient population, and the figures provided were not based on recent data.

Furthermore, the membership of the Regional Management Board was established and made up of the Aboriginal nations, the Native Alliance of Quebec Inc., the Association of Native Friendship Centres, the Quebec Native Women's Association and Employment and Immigration.

It is important to emphasize this problem. As the Aboriginal people are represented by their band councils, which represent them both on- and off-reserve, the inclusion of such organizations as the Native Alliance of Quebec, as well as the Friendship Centres and

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the Women's Association, means that those groups have double representation, in that they are already represented by their band councils, even if they are off-reserve, and represented again by these other associations, which are directly involved in decision making.

Another problem arose regarding eligibility for Employment and Immigration programs. Some Montagnais Local Management Boards have had problems with the eligibility criteria for specific programs, including the UI program. Because of the low rate of employment in Montagnais communities, UI beneficiaries are relatively few. As a result, Local Management Boards are denied access to UI funds in spite of the many pressing needs of the people.

The final problem raised is related to the fact that the Inuit had signed a prior agreement with Employment and

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Immigration Canada. Under a provision of this agreement, they signed an agreement with EIC for approximately \$15 million over a period of three years. The new agreement signed with the Inuit risks making the sums set aside for the Inuit inequitable with those set aside for the other Aboriginal nations.

Even if Employment and Immigration negotiates a separate agreement with a specific nation, this should not affect the funds allocated in the budget to other nations, unless they have given prior approval.

Based on the preceding, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- whereas the mandate of Employment and Immigration Canada is to establish an effective partnership with Aboriginal people to promote and train a qualified Aboriginal labour force capable of participating in their own labour market and that of all Canadians;

- whereas, in 1990, the federal government confirmed the five major principles enunciated in Pathways to Success;

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We recommend:

- that EIC decentralize the entire 1993-94 budget envelope for Aboriginal people according to the criteria drawn up by the Regional Management Board;

- that Local Management Boards in urban areas be subject to the same budget distribution criteria as other Local Management Boards;

- that consultation and local control be applied in all decision making;

- that membership of the Regional Management Board be redefined in a manner equitable to all Aboriginal nations;

- that surplus funds be transferred from one program to another to promote optimum use of the funds allocated to the various programs;

- that LMB eligibility criteria for members of the Native Alliance be clearly defined and approved by the Regional Management Board;



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- that the criteria for the various programs be flexible; and finally

- that the Aboriginal nations of the Regional Management Board be consulted on the 1993-94 budget allocations pursuant to any separate agreement reached between Employment and Immigration and another nation.

In conclusion, establishment of a partnership and the search for new methods to promote the labour market needs of Aboriginal people creates a number of implementation challenges. The Montagnais look forward to a promising employment and training future for their nation and are prepared to take up all challenges.

However commitment, respect and trust among all partners is absolutely essential.

With the establishment of new fair and equitable relationships between the federal government and the Aboriginal people, we will be able to reach our objectives, an increase in Aboriginal participation in the Canadian labour market and

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full participation of Aboriginal people in their social and economic evolution.

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Gill. I would also like to thank your Council for tabling a substantial brief on the major question of employment. The brief is all the more apposite as we are hearing, by force of circumstances, a great deal of discussion on the management of specific federal programs, including Employment and Immigration Canada programs.

We realize that, in some respects, our terms of reference with regard to economic development address the medium term; however, we hope to be able to make suggestions for improving program management as we go along. This is the light in which we shall study your brief, which we are seeing this morning for the first time, and we will undoubtedly contact you later for more in-depth discussion. We will also obtain additional information from discussing these matters with the Department of Employment and Immigration.

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In other words, employment is one of the Commission's concerns, although indirectly... it is within our terms of reference, but as an intermediate step. If, during a hearing or a private Commission meeting, we think of any improvements to suggest, including improvements to Commission operations, this is, of course, a possibility that the Commission will consider.

I should also like to emphasize the fact that this is a brief on the specific subjects of employment and the labour market. I know that your Council intends to submit a more general brief to the Commission on its overall concerns; I am saying this because I believe it is important that this fact be on public record.

For our part, we hope – and I repeat the Commission's invitation – to receive a brief from your Council on your overall concerns, including land claims, especially the land claim process, because our terms of reference specify recommending more effective land claim processes.

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I would simply like - I am looking at page 11 of your brief - to draw a parallel with what we heard yesterday from the Association des Indiens hors réserve de la région de Sept-Îles, who said in their presentation, "Even if we have cards and are recognized by the Department as Status Indians, the Band Council does not take us into account, does not give us any information. Unfortunately, the Department deals solely with the Band Council and we are ignored."

[Unofficial translation]

This is a concern which I would like to share with you this morning, as one of the points in your brief is that there may be over-representation of off-reserve people and Aboriginal women. As you know, this is an extremely important question, one that has been the subject of public debate, specifically regarding distribution of the funds that enabled national bodies to engage in consultation on the constitutional debate.

Once again, I should like to have your viewpoint on the specific subject of

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the theoretical capacity of Band Councils to represent their off-reserve members, and the situation as it actually exists. This is a question debated everywhere in Canada, it is not unique to the Montagnais, but a concern which appears major in that the Councils, basically, are more concerned about their on-reserve members and, obviously, this also touches on the question of Aboriginal women.

**DENIS GILL:** On that question, I would perhaps like to point out that, on the one hand, the intention is not to arrange things so that a part of our population is not served. The major fear expressed by the chiefs on this matter has been the fact that, because of the way the structures (including Local Management Boards in urban areas) have been set up, there is a major risk that the total budget allocation for Aboriginal training and employment will end up outside the communities. This is of enormous concern to the chiefs.

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I understand that they must also be concerned about off-reserve members of their communities, but I think that the employment and training situation that can exist inside the communities is common knowledge. I think that, if we want to introduce a program that will solve the problem, it is essential to make sure the funds do in fact reach the communities.

Unfortunately, in many cases, perhaps because they are better organized in urban areas, it is far easier to use the funds there, with the result that, inside the communities, in the long run, the people are at a clear disadvantage in the use made of funds that should have been transferred to the communities. That is the first point.

The second important point is that, within the Native Alliance and other organizations, the definition of membership is very broad. It could be said that this is a fairly easy way of justifying larger allocations and, as a result,

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further depriving the communities.

Our view on the subject is that there should be compliance with what has been agreed in terms of the total membership, inside and outside the communities, to ensure that there will be a more satisfactory distribution of funds.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Yes, very well. Thank you.

Are there any further questions?

Commissioner Chartrand.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** [English]

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you Mr. Gill.



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There are two presentations remaining. We shall now move on to the presentation by Denis Perron, Member of the National Assembly for Duplessis, the riding we are in today.

Good morning.

**DENIS PERRON, MEMBER FOR DUPLESSIS AND OPPOSITION CRITIC ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS:** Good morning ladies and gentlemen of the Commission.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, it was with pleasure that I accepted the invitation to come here today and take part in the work of this Commission. You will allow me to express my disappointment that, on such an important occasion, the Government of Quebec is not publicly presenting its position on questions that deeply touch us all, specifically Aboriginal people and White people.

For the past 16 years it has been my privilege to be the Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Duplessis, a riding where Quebecers and members of various Aboriginal nations live side by side in Quebec.

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As an MNA, I have always considered it a great privilege to have the opportunity of working to improve the well-being of the inhabitants of my riding. I know from experience that it is possible to develop strong links between Aboriginal people and Quebecers, and still respect cultural differences.

Since I am a politician, this will be a political speech, which is not surprising. I will also touch on humanitarian, economic, cultural and social issues.

After the stormy constitutional debates that were long, painful and divisive, it is time to close the door on the conflict and the media hype, much of it the result of some political leaders' failing to engage in meaningful dialogue or refusing to compromise.

Aboriginal people and Quebecers can live together, on that we all agree. Recent governments in Quebec have put a great deal of effort into supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the Aboriginal nations.

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I would like to refer here to a study published in April 1992 by Brad Morse, a Law Professor at the University of Ottawa, and presented by him to the members of the Commission studying new constitutional partnership arrangements. According to the study, Aboriginal people are better treated in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada.

Professor Morse also emphasized that Quebec's "performance" – and I really mean "performance" – is superior to that of the other Canadian provinces, often significantly, in all areas. He pointed out that the land areas reserved for the Aboriginal people of Quebec are far greater than those in the other Canadian provinces, that only the Government of Quebec has supported Aboriginal languages in Canada, and that Quebec has in general given better support to Aboriginal education initiatives than any other province, that Quebec leads in setting up bodies responsible for providing health services to Aboriginal people,

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and has introduced a number of economic development assistance measures, in particular the guaranteed income program for Cree and Inuit hunters and trappers.

In the past, the Parti Québécois has always attached great importance to finding solutions for promoting joint occupancy by Quebecers and Aboriginal nations. In 1978 the government set up an administrative body known as "SAGMAI" (Secrétariat des activités gouvernementales en milieu amérindien et inuit), now replaced by the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, as well as a network of co-ordinators in 24 government departments and organizations.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** If I may ask you to slow down a little for the sake of our translators. Thank you.

**DENIS PERRON:** Of course, Mr. Chairman.

In February 1983, the Council of Ministers adopted 5 principles as guidelines for government policy. The principles were included in a resolution

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adopted by the National Assembly on March 20, 1985. The resolution was in fact put forward by the late René Lévesque. For the first time, Aboriginal people were granted the status of "Nation". This recognition went hand-in-hand with an undertaking to reach agreements with them on the following points:

- a) exercise of the right to autonomy within Quebec;
- b) exercise of the right to their culture, language and traditions;
- c) exercise of the right to own and control land;
- d) exercise of the right to hunt, fish, trap, gather and take part in managing wildlife resources; and
- e) exercise of the right to take part in and benefit from economic development.

In spite of all this, what is the current situation?

I consider that, since 1986, there has been an about-face. Negotiations have been of the do-what-I-say variety, and results few and far between.

Over and above the guiding principles,

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the Parti Québécois government took concrete action to support the autonomy of the Aboriginal nations and enable them to manage their activities within their territory. One good example is the construction of the Katéri Hospital, fully funded by the government and administered by the Kahnawake Band Council. Another is the establishment of the Pointe-Bleue Aboriginal police training school.

Turning to the Constitution: following unilateral repatriation of the Constitution in 1982, Quebec refused to participate in the meetings of Canadian premiers. Nonetheless, at the request of the Aboriginal nations, Quebec agreed to participate in four constitutional conferences intended to enable governments and Aboriginal peoples to agree on the definition of Aboriginal rights. At the 1983 conference, the late premier René Lévesque even offered his seat to an Aboriginal leader attending to speak in favour of the constitutional amendment ensuring equality for Aboriginal men and women and re-instating women

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previously excluded, and their children, in their nations.

This initial conference reached agreement, and two amendments proclaimed in June 1984 establishing equal rights for Aboriginal women and men (section 35(4)), and ensuring that the rights guaranteed in agreements like the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement would be protected by the Constitution in the same way as rights guaranteed by treaties (section 35(3)).

Let us now move on in time, to see what has happened to the Aboriginal nations. It would be easy to rest on one's laurels and close one's eyes and ears to the expressions of anger and frustration of the past few years. The aspirations of the Aboriginal nations are legitimate, and more effort must be put into redefining a new social contract between Aboriginal people and Quebecers.

This is the task that the Parti Québécois has tackled over the past two years. In December 1990 the Party established a working group that included

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representatives of various Aboriginal nations. Through an exchange of ideas, agreement was reached on the Aboriginal affairs policy for the next Parti Québécois government, including specific mechanisms for personal development.

The Parti Québécois option is unequivocal. It is to make Quebec a sovereign nation and, with the Aboriginal nations, to draft a new social contract for the Quebec nation and all the Aboriginal nations, thus putting an end to the colonial relationships associated with the Indian Act, which goes back almost to the 19th century. The Aboriginal nations will be able to control their institutions and progress on the basis of their own social options, while working with the Québécois nation and developing the country of Quebec.

This new social contract that the Parti Québécois proposes to draw up with the Aboriginal nations implies a major change of mentality by both parties. The Aboriginal nations will be considered our partners in the development of Quebec, and these nations will agree



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to build, with the Quebec nation, a sovereign Quebec.

In the constitution of a sovereign Quebec, the Parti Québécois proposes recognizing and defining the collective rights of the Aboriginal nations. The Quebec nation and the Aboriginal nations will be called upon to take part in drawing up and ratifying the constitution, the birth certificate of a sovereign Quebec, the confirmation of our determination to live together in Quebec.

Furthermore the Parti Québécois recognizes that, over the years, the many Aboriginal people who no longer live on Aboriginal land have become an integral part of Quebec society and made a valuable contribution to it. There are many such people, proud of their origins and their affiliation to Quebec, descendants of different nations, well established in the many communities that make up Quebec society. These Aboriginal people, who are not members of any recognized nation, have established the Native Alliance of Quebec, an association to look after their interests. The Parti Québécois recognizes the Native Alliance of Quebec

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as the official voice of these Aboriginal Quebecers and believes that, in future, it should be invited to take part in all negotiations affecting them.

A future Quebec constitution must define the right of Aboriginal nations to responsible government – not municipal government, but Aboriginal government of their own design and in their own image – which will exercise, in some cases in stages, its power in the land which they currently own or occupy, for example Indian reserves, Aboriginal institutions, category 1 land, and lands relinquished following negotiations with the Government of Quebec.

At all times in an agreement negotiated between the two parties, Quebec and the Aboriginal nations will be able to agree on changing the boundaries of these lands to enable development of Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal and Quebec nations.

The constitution of Quebec should also recognize the option, for the nations which so choose,

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to participate fully in the forms of government which will be established on Quebec territory.

The Parti Québécois, because of its concern for respecting the options selected, proposes signing, with the Aboriginal nations that want self-government, step-by-step agreements establishing the recognized powers of those governments for dealing with such matters as defining a citizenship code, tax structure, education, Aboriginal language and culture, health, environment and resource management, economic development and public works. These agreements will also determine shared powers and all the measures that go to make "good neighbours". Quebec statutes will be amended to allow for implementation of these agreements.

Pursuant to the agreements, sources of government funding can include:

- income taxes and other taxes to be collected by the Aboriginal governments;
- within the framework of the joint land management agreements which I will discuss later,

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Aboriginal governments will have several sources of income;

- according to formulae to be established, the Government of Quebec intends to participate in funding Aboriginal governments, taking into account the Aboriginal people's ability to pay, narrowing social and economic gaps, and the desire to give Aboriginal communities living conditions favourable to their participation in the development of Quebec.

In the final analysis, the Aboriginal governments will wish to assume full financial responsibility, that is to say they will have to set up mechanisms and adopt policies aimed at achieving financial autonomy.

In order to protect the process of negotiating and implementing these agreements, we propose to introduce a mechanism to play the role of ombudsman with regard to Aboriginal claims and questions. There is no question here of giving this body a mandate to settle contentious issues or define the rights of parties. An independent and credible body could play an important role

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in resolving deadlocks and facilitating dialogue.

A Parti Québécois government will also introduce a sustainable development policy, which implies that environmental and economic questions will be given equal importance in the decision making process. This policy will promote integrated land management in accordance with the agreements with Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal people of Quebec have historic rights to pursue their traditional fishing, hunting and trapping activities on vast land areas also exploited by other users. The often excessive exploitation of natural resources – for example clear-cutting our forests, ill-considered hydroelectric and mining development, overexploitation of wildlife – and the lack of dialogue among various users of the same lands can lead to regional conflict and environmental damage. Under the terms and conditions to be established by the parties, it is advisable that the Aboriginal nations be involved in developing and managing the territory within

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which they pursue their traditional activities.

Through agreements, it is possible to define the territory within which each Aboriginal nation will have the right to pursue its traditional activities. At the same time, these agreements could set up joint development and management mechanisms for these territories to allow for both traditional Aboriginal activities and sustainable natural resource development. Within the context of these agreements, an Aboriginal government could receive part of the income or royalties that the Government of Quebec earns from exploiting resources within that territory. This would make the Aboriginal people partners in development.

Of course there would be a period of transition. If the Aboriginal nations are viewed as partners in Quebec development, and in the context of electoral reform, the Parti Québécois intends, in conjunction with the Aboriginal nations, to define appropriate representation in the Quebec National Assembly

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according to a timetable and on terms and conditions which remain to be defined.

The Parti Québécois priority will be to reach agreements, following the guidelines described earlier, which will define the powers of each government. These agreements will be reached without extinguishing Aboriginal rights and will be re-assessed in light of decisions handed down by the Quebec courts and amendments to the Quebec Constitution.

Finally, a Parti Québécois government will respect existing treaties and the acquired rights of the Aboriginal nations until these are replaced by new agreements between the Government of Quebec and the Aboriginal nations.

I would like to add, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, that, in my opinion, a necessary first step is a framework agreement for all Aboriginal nations that may be protected by the constitution in the future; as a second step, specific agreements could be reached with individual Aboriginal nations, as the Aboriginal nations are so different one from the other.

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To accomplish this, it is absolutely essential that piecemeal negotiations cease, that action be taken to ensure that negotiations proceed on a permanent basis, that we put an end to negotiations every six months, every year. God knows we have a good example right here before us, in the matter of the Atikamekw-Montagnais Council which, for the past 12 years, has made every effort to sign an agreement with the governments; here we are in 1992, and still nothing has been settled.

It is essential that agreements be negotiated in good faith; we need real negotiation. Agreements must be signed. Agreements must also be applied. It is our view that the Courts should intervene after an agreement has been signed only if any contentious issue remains to be settled.

I would like to thank the members of this Commission for hearing me out, and I am prepared to explain what I have said and even to answer any other questions which you might like to ask.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.



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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you, Mr. Perron, for coming here this morning and giving your presentation. Its great clarity is certainly to your credit.

There are two questions I would like to ask you at this time. The first is related to your statement on page 16, near the end of your brief when, on the question of land agreements, you say:

"These agreements will be reached without extinguishing Aboriginal rights..."

As a Commission, we are aware that this is one of the main problems, the stumbling block of most land claim negotiations in Canada – not only in Quebec, but also in Canada – this procedure by which governments, for purposes of legal certainty, require extinction of rights prior to granting new, more specific rights under an agreement.

We have looked for alternatives

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to the extinction of rights method, which is basic and goes to the very heart of Aboriginal claims; we would like to be able to reach agreements without repudiating rights on what are considered ancestral lands, and do it in a simple and definitive way that would incorporate the legal certainty requirements of economic or other partners sharing the territory in question.

Basically, my question is as follows. Have you done studies, has technical work been done in Quebec on the method for reaching land agreements that would not extinguish Aboriginal rights?

If you have, we would be very pleased if you would share them with us.

**DENIS PERRON:** First of all, I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that in fact some studies have been done on these rights by the Party. There are even legal experts involved in our investigation of these questions.

It is clear that,

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when we ask that rights be extinguished before negotiation, we come up against a blank wall. First of all, it is necessary for the parties to reach agreement on the matter of rights.

You know, I have had the opportunity to see, throughout my many years of political life – even earlier because I have always had great interest in the Quebec question and the Aboriginal question – one extraordinary thing. When we look at legal texts, decisions handed down by the Courts... speaking of legal texts, take the Royal Proclamation of 1763. That was a long time ago. Since 1763, there have been many changes in North America and in other countries of the world. All these legal texts must be reviewed if we are to reach a prior formal agreement on rights.

Rights may differ from one nation to another or, at any rate, those that I am familiar with on Quebec territory, on American territory and also on the territory of the rest of Canada. It is clear that it is impossible

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to proceed by saying, "Your rights are extinguished" and going on to say "Come and negotiate with us". Prior negotiation on rights must be recognized as a prerequisite.

When this has been done, the parties can move directly to the basic question of culture, and cultural rights may be recognized in the context of these negotiations. You know, I have always recognized that I have cultural rights; I do not see why Aboriginal people would not also have cultural rights. One nation's rights may be more restricted in the context of its relationships to other nations.

In the first place, those rights must be recognized and, after that is done, it is time to sit down and negotiate economic questions, social questions, etc. This is how things should be done, I think.

As long as we fail to do this we will be no better than dogs chasing their own tails: we will get nowhere at all.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Listen, I repeat my hope that, if you have specific ideas on alternatives to

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the method of extinguishing rights... because it is a question of a trade; a piece of land is ceded with exclusive ownership in exchange for the extinction of rights over a much greater land area. I think that the problem is a familiar one: it is the solution which is more difficult.

Obviously, this could be discussed at length this morning, but I am expressing the fervent hope that the Commission will be receiving additional information if you have documents that you could share with us and which could assist us in discovering alternatives to this legal mechanism that causes so many problems.

**DENIS PERRON:** With your permission, Mr. Chairman, on that matter, I will see what I have in my office in Quebec City by way of requests made to specific legal experts. It is possible that, with the authorization of the Party, I will be able to forward them to the members of the Commission. This might be of assistance in finding an overall solution to the problem.

You know, I am a Quebecer

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that is a fact, but we are in a federal system, and I think that the problems of the Aboriginal people are panCanadian; they are not restricted to Quebec, they are panCanadian.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. We would greatly appreciate it.

Very briefly, a second question. In the context of your brief, which assumes future Quebec sovereignty, do you see Quebec as taking the place of the federal government or taking over from the federal government in the matter of fiduciary duties with regard to the Aboriginal people, the Indians in particular?

**DENIS PERRON:** Of course, if Quebec becomes a sovereign country, when that happens we cannot have a legal vacuum.

Since there must not be a legal vacuum, whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, all the Acts and Regulations, including constitutional legislation, will have to be repatriated, brought to Quebec. Afterwards the whole question will have to be settled very quickly.

I was talking about the Indian Act earlier.

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In my opinion it is truly antiquated, in spite of the amendments. I think it has been amended twice since 1874; and I think it is still very much out-of-date. Why? Because no agreements were ever reached. That Act will have to be repatriated and then, right away, immediately, negotiations will have to be undertaken to amend it all again. There is no sense continuing like this. It is not common sense. It's almost like the Middle Ages.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** I understand what you are saying, but once again, basically, the question — and I know that there are many Aboriginal people in Quebec who wonder about it — is that this fiduciary responsibility entails a guarantee that is important to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, a guarantee which has devolved on the Crown in right of Canada, the federal Crown.

Basically, the question is a legal one. Do you envision the transfer of this fiduciary responsibility to Quebec?

**DENIS PERRON:** Yes. Yes, of course.

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**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Very well. Thank you.

Are there any other questions or comments?

**COMMISSIONER PAUL CHARTRAND:** I have no questions, but I should like, Honourable Member, to thank you for a very important address. It seems to me that it will prove useful in promoting dialogue.

Thank you very much.

**DENIS PERRON:** It was a pleasure.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** There is one last question from our Commissioner of the Day, Évelyne St-Onge.

Madame St-Onge.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY ÉVELYNE ST-ONGE:**

Mr. Perron, on the matter of Quebec sovereignty, if it is a sovereign country and we maintain an alliance with Ottawa, has the Parti Québécois thought of anything else?

**DENIS PERRON:** Listen, the way I see it, when one looks at the evolution of countries internationally, old countries and young countries, especially the young countries established



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in the past few years, say the past 25 years, it is clear that, at the time when a majority gains sovereignty, gains independence – I am not speaking about separation, I am speaking about sovereignty or independence – it is clear that at that time everything related to jurisdiction is repatriated.

Of course there will be a transition period. Everyone, the federal government, the Quebec government, the Aboriginal leaders, will have to work to ensure that the rights of every individual are respected. Starting in the transition period, it is clear that we will also have to respect... in fact, that too is subject to negotiation.

In the context of Quebec sovereignty, a Quebec government will have to respect rights – acquired rights at any rate – respect existing treaties, respect what is in the existing Canadian Constitution, part of which was requested by René Lévesque himself.

It is clear that, in a democracy, others have to be respected too.

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I can tell you that I have not the slightest fear regarding the attitude of Quebecers and the Quebec government in a situation where the citizens of Quebec have voted for sovereignty. The rights of the others living on the territory must be respected.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Obviously this is a broad question, one which deserves much longer discussion. This has been a start.

Thank you for coming here today and presenting your brief.

**DENIS PERRON:** It has been a pleasure, Mr. Chairman. Good luck to every one.

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

I would like to ask the representatives of the Naskapi Band of Quebec to come forward and present their brief. This will be the final presentation of the day.

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Thank you.

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[English]

**CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** This completes the public hearings of the Commission in Malioténam. We would like to thank everyone who has helped make this round of hearings possible.

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We thank our hosts in this gymnasium. I would also like to thank the translators who have done an excellent job in Montagnais, French, and English.

I would like to thank the Commission staff who made this hearing possible; also Évelyne St-Onge, our Commissioner of the Day. It is my sincere hope, indeed my belief, that she has made this hearing a little more accessible and made a great many people feel at ease and at home. Madame St-Onge also asked a number of important questions of our speakers, and we thank her for that.

We hope that this dialogue can continue. Even though, unfortunately, we will be unable to return here, to Malioténam, we will be back in Quebec. Some organizations, like the Council of the Atikamekw and Montagnais, have already indicated that they will return to present more general briefs.

And so, thank you and good luck to you all.

--- The hearing was adjourned at 1338 hours.