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Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories

November 19, 1992

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1 Rankin Inlet, N.W.T.

2 --- Whereupon the Hearing commenced at 9:00 a.m.

3 on Thursday, November 19, 1992

4 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Good

5 morning, everyone. We apologize for the delay. It is

6 a custom of our community that we begin with a prayer.

7 I have invited Rhoda Karetak to do a prayer for us this
8 morning.

9

10 **Opening Prayer**

11

12 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Good

13 morning, ladies and gentlemen. I want to welcome you to

14 our hearing here in Rankin Inlet and I just want to give

15 you a brief overview of the work of the Commission that

16 has gone on now and has been going on for approximately

17 almost a year and a half. It is over a year now and we

18 are in the midst of our hearings.

19 The Prime Minister announced a Royal

20 Commission to deal with Aboriginal issues on August of

21 1991. He appointed seven Commissioners. Actually, he

22 appointed Chief Justice Dickson who had just retired from

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1 the Supreme Court of Canada and gave him the mandate to
2 seek appointments from the Aboriginal and the
3 non-Aboriginal communities across Canada. So there were
4 a number of candidates that were proposed and seven
5 Commissioners were finally appointed by Chief Justice
6 Dickson.

7 This Royal Commission is a bit different
8 than other commissions in a sense of the composition.
9 The Commission has seven Commissioners with two co-chairs.
10 The majority of the Commissioners are Aboriginal which
11 is a first time for the federal government to initiate
12 such a Commission involving Aboriginal people.

13 There are the two co-chairs. One
14 co-chair is Georges Erasmus and I am sure you are all
15 familiar with him. He is a Dene from here, the Northwest
16 Territories and is the former Chief of the Assembly of
17 First Nations. The other co-chair is Justice René
18 Dussault who is a judge at the appeals court of Quebec.

19 The other five Commissioners are Mary
20 Sillett whom you are familiar with as well who is an Inuk
21 from Labrador and a former President of the Pauktuutit
22 Labrador Women's Association as well as Vice-President

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1 of the ITC. We also have Paul Chartrand who is a Métis
2 and a professor and a lawyer from Winnipeg.

3 Also, we have Bertha Wilson who is a
4 retired judge from the Supreme Court of Canada and she
5 was the first woman judge to be appointed to the Supreme
6 Court of Canada. Then there are the two of us. I am Viola
7 Robinson and I am the former President of the Native Council
8 of Canada as well as a Micmac from Nova Scotia. Beside
9 me is Allan Blakeney who is well known in Canada as well
10 for his work in the past in the political area. He was
11 the former Premier of Saskatchewan.

12 Our mandate is very broad. We have been
13 given 16 issues to deal with and some people say it is
14 almost impossible and certainly it is a difficult task.

15 We had quite some time -- I think we spent the first six
16 months just organizing our work and organizing the staff.

17 We were told to visit as many communities
18 as possible to find out exactly what the Aboriginal people
19 of Canada -- what their issues were and how they felt they
20 should be resolved. We tried to orchestrate our work to
21 meet that demand.

22 We have decided to hold hearings and we

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1 decided we would at least make three rounds, maybe four.

2 We have gone through one round last spring from April
3 to the end of June and visited a number of communities,
4 and now we are in the midst of our second round.

5 The seven Commissioners do not travel
6 together to the communities. What we have done is we have
7 broken up our Commission into panels of two and, of course,
8 there are sometimes three because there are seven of us.

9 We are always travelling simultaneously in different
10 parts of the country at the same time. As we speak here
11 today, Georges Erasmus and Mary Sillett are in the Yukon
12 and the other three Commissioners are in Quebec.

13 The first round was a listening phase
14 because we thought initially that -- we heard so many times
15 how Aboriginal people are saying, "We have been studied
16 to death. We have all these reports and nothing happens."

17 The first phase was a listening round. We wanted to go
18 around for once and listen to hear what the people had
19 to say.

20 When we finished our round, when we
21 completed our round in June, we produced a report which
22 is called "Framing the Issues". There are copies of that

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1 report available over there as well as pamphlets.

2 We also tried to design some questions
3 evolving from that report to try to motivate and stimulate
4 some discussion and get people thinking towards
5 solution-oriented recommendations or discussions. We
6 propose to do the same thing after this second round.
7 We feel that once we finish in June we will be producing
8 another report and it will be circulated to all the
9 communities, especially to people who we have heard from.
10 We will reflect what we heard and any proposed solutions
11 that might have evolved out of the hearings.

12 So that is what we are doing here today
13 and we do have a full agenda. So I am not going to talk
14 any more in the opening statements. That will be the
15 extent of my opening statements, but perhaps I will offer
16 my co-chair the opportunity to make some opening remarks
17 as well if you wish to.

18 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank you
19 very much, Viola.

20 I want to say two things. First, I want
21 to tell you a little more about what our mandate is so
22 you get some idea of the things we are trying to cover.

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1 Second, I want to say how we are at least going to try
2 to come up with recommendations.

3 First, the mandate. We are to look at
4 relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples
5 in Canada. We are to consider Aboriginal self-government,
6 what it means, how it could be implemented. We are to
7 look at the land base and land claims, treaty issues in
8 other parts of Canada. We are to look at the Constitution
9 and what it is now saying about Aboriginal people and what
10 we think it might say. We are to look at the Indian Act
11 and the special problems which it has caused for some
12 people. We are to look at the legal status of Métis people.

13

14 We were specifically charged with the
15 responsibility of looking at the special problems of
16 Aboriginal people in the North. In more general terms,
17 we are to look at social issues, things that might improve
18 life for Aboriginal people on reserves, in cities, in the
19 north, wherever they live.

20 Economic issues; the way to get a viable
21 economic base for Aboriginal communities; cultural issues;
22 how to support and encourage Aboriginal languages and

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1 family structures and spirituality; educational issues,
2 particularly ways to help Aboriginal young people complete
3 secondary and university education; and matters about the
4 control of schools; justice issues, particularly ways in
5 which the whole criminal justice system does or does not
6 work for Aboriginal people.

7 Finally, we are to look at the role of
8 Aboriginal Elders, the position and role of Aboriginal
9 women and the situation and special problems of Aboriginal
10 youth. So you can see that that is a tall order.

11 As Viola has said, we have heard, as we
12 knew we would, people say, "Look, we have been studied
13 to death." Fair enough. We are going to try to come up
14 with some recommendations. We don't think we are going
15 to be able to come up with good recommendations unless
16 they come from Aboriginal people. I think you people know
17 what the problems are, but if anybody knows what the
18 solutions are, you know them because we don't.

19 Therefore, we are listening very much
20 to you people telling us what you think should be done.

21 If we press a little bit about, "That is the problem.
22 Now, what do you think should be done about it," you will

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1 know that it is because we believe that the answers will
2 have to come from Aboriginal people across Canada.

3 There are many different answers. We
4 will have to put them all together. We will have to put
5 them in some shape, but the kernel of the answers we look
6 to you to give us.

7 I am happy to be with Viola here today
8 in trying to find out what the people of Rankin Inlet and
9 generally this Keewatin Region feel about the problems
10 they face and who should do what about them.

11 Thank you, Viola.

12 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
13 you, Commissioner Blakeney.

14 I would like now to turn over our address
15 to Mayor Paul Kaludjak who is going to give the welcoming
16 address as well as an historical perspective.

17 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
18 Commissioners. Again, good morning, everyone.

19 Just briefly before my remarks, I will
20 be the facilitator for today and I will try to abide by
21 the agenda that is here with us today. If there are any
22 changes to be made, Laurie is here somewhere and she can

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1 make the proper changes for us and I can try to fit them
2 into the agenda as the day goes by.

3 I would like to take a few minutes of
4 your time to elaborate on the perspective of the community
5 for the benefit of the Commissioners and the delegation
6 that is here today.

7 Again, I would like to welcome you to
8 Rankin Inlet. I understand that you are undertaking a
9 lot of travelling to places that you have never probably
10 seen or come about. It does make your job very difficult
11 at times; I understand.

12 I will try to give you a brief history
13 of our community and try to tell you where we are and where
14 we are coming from. Then I will try to reflect on how
15 the past was for Rankin Inlet in those early days when
16 the Tuluk (PH) people were around. They were the only
17 people that were in this area at the time before the mining
18 came up. In that case, hunting was the main staple of
19 these people and, for that, we can see the archaeological
20 sites that are with us today that can tell us that.

21 The main progress of Rankin began in the
22 1600s where John Rankin was one of these people. That

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1 is where the name came from. In the 1700s, the whaler
2 explorers came within this area including James Knight
3 who everybody probably knows where they had a disaster
4 down in Marbro Island (PH) where the whole crew died that
5 winter in the 1700s.

6 Rankin really started in the Korean War
7 and it was the need of nickel then that did create the
8 community in 1957. Due to the fact of the costs of nickel
9 transportation, it was a factor of closure in 1962.

10 In the early seventies, the government
11 moved into the community which we have at the time 320
12 people. From then, the government has decentralized and
13 now the population is about 1,850 in our community today
14 which tells you how the population growth in our community
15 has expanded from that year.

16 To elaborate on how Rankin Inlet it is
17 today, it is one of the fastest-growing communities in
18 the NWT. It is a regional centre for the Keewatin. It
19 is made up of six other communities in that region.

20 Rankin is a hub air transportation and
21 for other services regular from east to west and south
22 traffic. As I advised you, the government is the major

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1 industry in our community. That is to say that we are
2 government-based community.

3 The population is still increasing
4 substantially with a very large population of youth in
5 our community. To provide these jobs, we need training
6 in our community for our residents in the surrounding
7 Rankin area. Rankin has a potential of a rich mineral
8 resource community and chances of gold and other materials
9 are potential in this area.

10 Also, Rankin, for your information, has
11 a resident of students throughout the communities, the
12 region, where we have a hostile that do attend high school
13 in our community. I do emphasize on Rankin as being a
14 construction-boom community at this stage and it has been
15 for the last five years.

16 Just for a point of interest, the GNWT
17 forecasted the population to be 1,345 when, in fact, it
18 is 1,809 to date as stats indicate. Even though the fast
19 growth of the community, members of our population still
20 maintain their traditional skills and hunting and fishing
21 styles in our community. I can say that we live in harmony
22 with the land and its natural resources.

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1 If I can try to put the future into
2 perspective and how we see it as myself, as community
3 leader, Rankin Inlet is a point of major change to be
4 undergone in our community. We are progressing very
5 quickly and it is exciting times here with the horizon
6 that is striving towards us.

7 The community anticipates that there
8 would be a major impact in the economy socially and for
9 the transportation for the Keewatin. We expect that in
10 Rankin Inlet at this stage.

11 Like I indicated earlier, the
12 decentralization of the government will continue to be
13 implemented which will have a major impact in our
14 community. Furthermore, the Nunavut now becoming a
15 reality of entertaining self-government on a territorial
16 scale as well as a municipal scale.

17 We, as a community have to determine
18 where the money is going to be spent and where it is going
19 to go. What this community is striving to do since Nunavut
20 is now in the process -- we would like to be a major player
21 in the Nunavut process and we anticipate there being
22 capital for a new territory.

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1 A major planning is being undertaken for
2 a multi-use health care facility for Rankin Inlet and for
3 the region. It is a unique approach for medical and social
4 needs into our community under one roof and it will create
5 substantial work, economic base for the region.

6 As well, we are looking at renewable
7 resources, industries to undertake to sustain that growth
8 we are experiencing in our community. This will all have
9 spin-off effects throughout the North and the Keewatin.

10 We are prepared to brace ourselves and
11 change for the challenging and the changing times that
12 we are facing. This is the state of our community at this
13 stage.

14 Again, I thank you for visiting our
15 community and your delegation and the opportunity to hear
16 the concerns of our people in the region who are here today.

17 I have given you the perspective of the
18 community as a whole and I hope it will be helpful to you
19 for your listening purposes today.

20 If I may, I am going to the agenda. I
21 understand that we are about 45 minutes late now. The
22 last time it was 30 and it is counting and Mike is smiling

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1 at me.

2 Perhaps I can ask Louis Pilakapsi from
3 the Keewatin Inuit Association to come to the table. For
4 those presentations, the front table in the middle will
5 be the table that you do your presentation from.

6 If I can elaborate a little bit on Louis'
7 role, Louis is the President of the Inuit Association.
8 He was a major player in making sure the land claims deal
9 went through and it is has, and we are all happy.

10 Louis, please.

11 **LOUIS PILAKAPSI:** (Translated from
12 Inuktitut) Thank you. Good morning.

13 My name is Mr. Louis Pilakapsi. I am
14 the President of the Keewatin Inuit Association. I am
15 very happy to see you once again. I met you back down
16 in Winnipeg at one time and I was very happy to make a
17 presentation to the Commission in Winnipeg.

18 You have a mandate from the Prime
19 Minister in regards to the Commission on the Aboriginal
20 Peoples. On behalf of the Keewatin Region, I will be
21 making a presentation.

22 As you know, there are about six other

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1 communities in our region and they would like to see your
2 visit, but unfortunately you have other obligations. I
3 am very thankful that you have given me a chance to make
4 a presentation for half an hour, but I will try to make
5 it brief because we are behind schedule and I want to hear
6 from other people as well.

7 There are a number of issues that we
8 would like to address and, as you know, you have seen the
9 results of the ratification process. The majority have
10 voted "yes" and we still would like the Royal Commission
11 to address some issues, even though we have seen the results
12 of the ratification process.

13 As you know, it will take time to get
14 that through the Parliament, but there are a number of
15 issues as well that we would like to address and I will
16 make it very brief touching on one issue, for instance.
17

18 KIA, the Keewatin Inuit Association has
19 been involved in addressing suicide, for instance, and
20 we have helped the federal government in trying to address
21 this serious issue of suicides. We have stated that the
22 Aboriginal people should have their own people in place

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1 that would be there on their staff because we would gain
2 experience in dealing with this issue. Unfortunately,
3 though, there have been some funding cut-backs and, in
4 fact, there are funding cut-backs from the Government of
5 the Northwest Territories.

6 This is one issue that we are concerned
7 with. There is also an issue which we are concerned about
8 and which I have addressed down in Winnipeg, but in the
9 Keewatin, for instance, Rankin is unique because it has
10 running water. When I made a presentation down in
11 Winnipeg, we touched on the health issues. I would like
12 to address this issue on behalf of it. It had an Ecoli
13 disease that occurred last year because they don't have
14 running water and because they do not have a utility system.

15 I am sure it is possible to have running water.

16 So this is one issue that would have to
17 be addressed by the health board when they are making a
18 presentation to you because it affects your health and
19 we have concerns with children on this issue. So there
20 are a number of issues that will have to be addressed
21 because in the Arctic it is a very cold climate. This
22 is one area that will have to be addressed and if other

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1 people make a presentation on this issue, I would be very
2 happy to hear their presentation.

3 Also, the other concern we have --
4 (off-microphone) -- transportation costs are expensive.
5 Therefore, there are a lot of people who are unemployed
6 and it is very expensive to purchase these items. As the
7 Keewatin Regional Inuit Association President, perhaps
8 we should address some kind of a transportation system
9 that would alleviate some of these expensive items.

10 I could give you an example of a railroad
11 that is in place up through Churchill and it only goes
12 up to Churchill. I have travelled to a number of
13 communities down to southern Canada and they have highway
14 systems that are in place and other kinds of transportation
15 systems. But the only transportation system we have here
16 is limited.

17 I don't know why there is no such thing
18 as a railroad system that could be accessed through the
19 Arctic. If there was a railroad system in place in the
20 Arctic, you could alleviate some of these high costs of
21 purchasing and it would also be an opportunity for
22 employment if this was in place. The summer season

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1 transportation is different as well.

2 So I am trying to make it very brief,
3 Mr. Chairman, on addressing these different issues. Also,
4 I would like to address something that is an issue because,
5 as you know, our climate is very different. There is
6 always a blizzard in this part of the Arctic.

7 Just to give you an example of the Inuit,
8 some are, as you know, on welfare. I could give you an
9 example of the summer that people lost some of their
10 equipment because of the weather. Some people who don't
11 have employment opportunities lost their equipment and
12 I am wondering how they could be compensated.

13 I presented that to the Government of
14 the Northwest Territories and, as you know, I made a
15 presentation to you in Winnipeg and addressed some issues.

16 You had responded to some of my presentation in Winnipeg
17 and in terms of the Keewatin Region, as you know, the mining
18 activity has been slowed down because of land claims.

19 I made a presentation on Baker Lake.
20 We have been involved with uranium issues at Baker Lake
21 and we would not want to see a uranium mine. I have stated
22 that before and I will state it again that we don't support

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1 uranium mine activity, and we would not want to see that
2 kind of activity in Nunavut.

3 People at Baker Lake are very concerned
4 about these kind of uranium activities. We are supportive
5 because there are a number of situations that will occur;
6 for instance, health. As you know, there is global warming
7 and it will affect us as well in the future and there will
8 be a number of people who will be making a presentation,
9 Mr. Chairman, and our Mayor has introduced some issues.
10

11 One area we are trying to address is a
12 health facility for the Keewatin Region. Different
13 communities are quite a distance from each other. In fact,
14 we have to be transported down to Winnipeg for health care
15 as well as Churchill.

16 It will be unique if there is a health
17 facility in the Keewatin because that service will be
18 available for the other communities as well. This issue
19 will be addressed by the Keewatin Regional Health Board.

20 When Inuit are united, when there are
21 some issues that they have to address, we often have a
22 coalition when we are addressing some issues that are of

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1 concern to us. I would like to thank you once again.
2 You will be having an opportunity to listen to the
3 presentations that will be made from Keewatin and there
4 are a number of issues that you will be addressing. There
5 are other communities that you will be visiting as well,
6 and we will be waiting for a report from you and we will
7 have other questions for you later on.

8 Thank you very much.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Perhaps I
10 can open up the table for questions from the Commissioners
11 at this stage for Louis.

12 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
13 like to thank you for your presentation. You have
14 certainly touched on some very important issues. In the
15 way that you have presented yourself, I can see that there
16 are a lot of agreement. Your people seem to be well
17 organized in supporting one another in a lot of these
18 issues.

19 I know that the Health Board is going
20 to be making a presentation later on with respect to the
21 health issues. I do want to say that with your concern
22 over the suicide and the recommendation that you make that

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1 your people should be involved in staffing and working
2 with your own people is one that is shared by all Aboriginal
3 communities across this country.

4 I personally think that that is the only
5 way we can really begin to address these kinds of issues.

6 It is by going it ourselves and I hope that as you make
7 your transition into your Nunavut government that these
8 things will be addressed as you structure your government.

9
10 The transportation issue and the cost
11 issue of bringing your services, your goods to your
12 communities is one, I am sure, that is of concern all across
13 the Arctic. Certainly, when you talk about the
14 possibility of some other means of transportation, even
15 if it is the railroads or if it is by highway or road,
16 that is certainly one that possibly might be an
17 alternative, but it will take some time and probably worth
18 discussing somewhere in the future.

19 The mining issue -- like you say, I
20 suppose that will be discussed again from the
21 representatives of Baker Lake.

22 So I want to tell you that I welcome your

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1 remarks and before I go any further, I want to thank you
2 and I will ask my co-chair in a moment if he has any
3 questions for you or any concerns.

4 Before I do move on, I do want to welcome
5 Michael Kugak who is our Commissioner of the Day here today.

6

7 Do you have any questions?

8 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I would
9 like to ask a couple of questions for my information and
10 then a little more general question.

11 With respect to the goods that come into
12 Rankin, aside from the goods that come in by air, you have
13 goods coming in by sea, by ship and I suppose that the
14 basic goods come in by ship.

15 Do they come ordinarily from Churchill
16 or from Montreal or the St. Lawrence?

17 **LOUIS PILAKAPSI:** (Translated from
18 Inuktitut) This one issue -- when the railroad travelled
19 from -- they deliver them to Churchill and from there,
20 they are picked up by -- although we do get some -- except
21 everything else comes from Churchill, except the initial
22 one comes from Montreal.

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1 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Do you
2 know whether there has been any discussion about building
3 a road into the Keewatin area from Manitoba or
4 Saskatchewan?

5 **LOUIS PILAKAPSI:** (Translated from
6 Inuktitut) These two provinces -- we have not discussed
7 this issue with them, but the Northwest Territories
8 government -- we have asked if they could start thinking
9 about maybe considering putting in a road some time in
10 the future. As it is now, as you are doing your work with
11 the Aboriginal people, I just thought I would bring the
12 issue up with you.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
14 you.

15 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I would
16 like to comment a little bit on the transportation
17 question, Commissioner Blakeney.

18 With respect to the transportation
19 strategy, that was discussed within the GNWT three years
20 ago. There was mention of a road, a highway from Churchill
21 to the Keewatin communities and that is only to say that
22 it was a general discussion. It was part, in a sense,

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1 I guess, of the transportation strategy at the GNWT, but
2 to this date, the community doesn't know how far this has
3 gone.

4 In respect to the agenda for our
5 delegation and everybody, we have a slight change. As
6 you probably noticed, Louis from KIA did his presentation
7 at nine o'clock. John Todd has moved back to 3:00 p.m.
8 today in change with Louis Pilakapsi from KIA. Perhaps
9 you could note that in your agenda, please.

10 Also, as a second note, I wanted to
11 advise everyone that Mr. Don Forsythe is here to represent
12 the DIAND because they were unable to be here. So I thought
13 I had a chance to give Don away to you guys before he was
14 unnoticed.

15 With that, our next presenters are from
16 Baker Lake Concerned Citizens, Joan Scottie and Irene
17 Tiktaalaaq. They are together.

18 **IRENE TIKTAALAAQ:** Good morning,
19 Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. My English name is
20 Irene Tiktaalaaq, and my Inuktitut name is Avallaqiaq.
21 I am a resident of Baker Lake, a community of 1,100 people
22 located 250 kilometres northwest of Rankin Inlet.

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1 Baker Lake is the geographic centre of
2 Canada. It's also the only inland Inuit community. Most
3 Inuit communities are based on hunting sea mammals like
4 whale, walrus and seal. But my people are called the
5 "Caribou Inuit" by anthropologists, because the caribou
6 means everything to people in Baker Lake. We also eat a
7 lot of fish.

8 There are very few wage jobs in Baker
9 Lake, and the unemployment is around 80 per cent. It's
10 really hard on people. Most of the men are hunters,
11 hunting caribou to feed their families. It is our
12 tradition to share what we have with people who don't have
13 enough for themselves and their children.

14 There are people in Baker Lake who make
15 good salaries, and there are a few people -- mainly
16 kabloonaq businessmen -- who are getting rich. But many,
17 many people can barely afford to feed their families from
18 one week to the next.

19 I want to tell you about our volunteer
20 food bank, which helps many of the needy people in Baker
21 Lake.

22 It was started last February by Susan

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1 Toolooktook, who for many years has been my close friend
2 and hunting partner. She went on the community radio one
3 evening and said she was very frustrated with hearing
4 people ask for someone to give them a cup of flour or a
5 cup of milk to help them make it until their next pension
6 cheque or welfare cheque, frustrated with people dropping
7 by her house and asking her for something small like that
8 and not having anything to give them. Susan wanted to
9 help people because she knew they really needed the food
10 items they were asking for, but she was out of food herself.

11 I know the feeling because I have been
12 there myself. I have needed help in the past, and people
13 have always tried to help me out. So I try and help others
14 when I can. That's how people should treat each other.

15 But these days it's often that people have nothing left
16 to share. People ask you for help, and you can't help
17 them. It's a terrible feeling.

18 So Susan announced that she was going
19 to walk to the hill called Nauhaaq. It is called "Sugar
20 Loaf Mountain" in English, and is located 25 kilometres
21 from the community of Baker Lake. Her idea was to make
22 this walk to get publicity about the situation in Baker

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1 Lake, and to ask people for donations. She would use the
2 donations to buy basic food items that could be given to
3 needy people.

4 On the radio that night Susan asked if
5 there were other people who were as frustrated as she was.

6 "Am I the only one who wants to help others, but can't?"
7 she asked. She wasn't the only one. There were many of
8 us feeling that way. A lot of people phoned in to support
9 her, and our committee was formed that night. It has nine
10 women and one man.

11 It was very cold when Susan made her
12 walk, minus 40 degrees the entire time. She pulled a sled
13 with supplies the whole distance there and back -- 50
14 kilometres. Actually, she walked more than that because
15 the weather turned bad and she became lost for a while
16 on the way there. Eventually she made it to a hunter's
17 cabin, an unheated structure with a wood stove. She was
18 heating up a frozen thermos when she burned herself.

19 So on her way back she had to make igloos
20 with her left hand because she couldn't use her right hand.

21 She had an HF radio with her, but she didn't mention
22 anything because she didn't want anyone to worry.

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1 Altogether she was gone for one week, including the three
2 days she spent in the hunter's cabin waiting for the storm
3 to end.

4 The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation
5 staff in Baker Lake made a short program about Susan's
6 walk, and it went on northern television. Donations came
7 in from all over, even a few from southern Canada. A Grade
8 5 class here in Rankin Inlet held a bake sale and raised
9 almost \$400. Altogether we received \$4,822 in donations,
10 which we put in an account at the Northern Store.

11 After our first committee meeting we got
12 permission to use an old building that no one else was
13 using, and this small place has become our food bank, which
14 we call Nauhaaq, after the "Sugar-Loaf Mountain" that Susan
15 walked to. Our volunteers take turns waiting at the
16 building for people to come. The building has no heat
17 or electricity, so we can only operate during daylight
18 hours. We keep perishable items like evaporated milk in
19 a volunteer's house. The idea is that people who have
20 run out of money and food can come and get what they need
21 to make it through until their cheque arrives -- flour,
22 powdered milk, sugar, that kind of thing.

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1 We have gone on the radio asking for
2 donations of country food, and people have given us caribou
3 to distribute. The reason we have to give some people
4 caribou is that many people can't afford to hunt for
5 themselves. It costs money to operate skidoo, and to buy
6 gas and bullets. People get in a trap when they are on
7 welfare. They are not allowed to spend welfare money on
8 their skidoos and, therefore, they can't afford to hunt
9 for themselves. So they have no choice but to stay on
10 welfare and, even though they have nothing much to do,
11 it's difficult for them to hunt for meat for their family.

12 So there are a number of reasons why
13 people need this kind of emergency food. People on welfare
14 simply do not get enough money to make it through an entire
15 month, especially if they have a large family and luxuries
16 like a telephone to pay for. And if you have tried your
17 hardest to make your money last, but still you run out
18 four days before the next welfare day, you are in trouble
19 because they won't give you any more money, period. I
20 guess those are the rules.

21 I'm not against the welfare people. The
22 people who hand out the cheques don't make the rules.

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1 It's just that inflation and high prices mean that people
2 just can't make ends meet any more. And with almost
3 everyone running out at around the same time, you can't
4 count on other people to help you like you used to be able
5 to do. The person you were counting on for help might
6 be counting on you for help.

7 It's also hard for families, like mine,
8 which depend on pension cheques. The pension cheques are
9 very small because most people who are old today worked
10 outside the wage economy most of their lives, and the amount
11 of pension you receive depends on the amount you paid into
12 the pension plan through your work. Another problem is
13 that pensioners in the north don't receive anything extra
14 to make up for the high cost of food up here. So pension
15 cheques don't go very far in the north.

16 For all of these reasons, we give
17 emergency food to about 30 people every week. We have
18 had to limit our hours because we can't afford to help
19 everyone we want to. We do not receive any support from
20 any level of government, and I'm not aware that any
21 government representative has ever visited our food bank.

22 We have budgeted \$350 per month for purchasing dry goods,

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1 but already our account is down to \$2,353.97. If we don't
2 do a lot of fund-raising, we'll soon be out of money.

3 One way we raise funds is through flea
4 markets of donated clothing and other items such as snow
5 knives and ice chisels. Some people in Baker Lake are
6 very poorly dressed, and the flea market allows us to
7 distribute good used clothing to people at very low prices,
8 and at the same time to raise money to buy more food with.

9 Of course, we give clothing free to people who don't have
10 any money at all. We know who these people are. Sometimes
11 even children without a stable family situation turn up,
12 asking for something like a pair of boots.

13 Now that we have been operating for
14 several months we are getting requests for help from other
15 communities. We recently sent a box of clothes to Gjoa
16 Haven.

17 If I knew how to speak English, I would
18 tell important people about the problems that people in
19 Baker Lake and other communities are having. I would
20 invite the Minister of Social Services to let us take him
21 through peoples' homes in Baker Lake. If Social Services
22 is not aware of the problems people are having, and of

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1 the kind of help they and their families need to survive,
2 then we could show them.

3 I experienced hunger myself many years
4 ago, before we moved into the community. Game was scarce,
5 and there was no welfare to help people out. Many people
6 were very hungry then. But it's really frustrating today
7 to see people trapped in the community, willing but not
8 able to hunt and unable to make it to the end of the month
9 on what they get from welfare.

10 I have been told that you would like to
11 hear recommendations about how Aboriginal peoples' lives
12 could be improved. I guess I could suggest that
13 governments should support food banks like ours, but that
14 wouldn't really solve anything. Instead I want you to tell
15 governments to raise welfare and pension levels so that
16 people in Baker Lake and other communities can at least
17 feed their families without having to go to a food bank.

18 I think it's a disgrace that there have to be food banks
19 in such a rich country as Canada.

20 Thank you.

21 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Perhaps
22 they might have some questions for you.

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1 **JOAN SCOTTIE:** Good morning,
2 Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. My English name is
3 Joan Scottie and my Inuktitut name is Panningeryetna.
4 I am also a resident of Baker Lake.

5 I am wearing several hats this morning.

6 I want to speak to you on behalf of the Baker Lake Concerned
7 Citizens Committee, but first I would like to make a few
8 points as a member of the Board of Directors of the Keewatin
9 Inuit Association, representing Baker Lake.

10 I get a lot of phone calls from Baker
11 Lake or from people in my community asking me to help them
12 with their problems. Many of these calls are about the
13 RCMP and the territorial government's Social Services
14 Department, and they come from the ordinary people of Baker
15 Lake -- people who often aren't sure how to deal with
16 government agencies that they regard as being very
17 powerful, very close to each other, and very non-Inuit
18 in the way they operate.

19 We have had a lot of problems in Baker
20 Lake in the last few years with sexual assaults and child
21 sexual abuse -- a lot of problems. Many of the people
22 who are committing these and other crimes are repeat

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1 offenders. They get sentenced for a crime, go to jail,
2 get released, and then a month or two later you see them
3 back in court again.

4 Many of the people who phone me to talk
5 about these problems feel that putting people away in jail
6 is not the answer. They are being punished, but they
7 aren't being helped. They are not getting counselling,
8 and no one is looking at the reasons why they commit these
9 crimes. When someone gets into this much trouble, the
10 whole family suffers. The whole family is sentenced and
11 the whole family is punished, especially the children.

12 I can think of someone in Baker Lake who
13 has been in constant trouble for six years. There are
14 people in the community who know why he is doing what he
15 is doing and believe that steps could be taken to deal
16 with the root causes of his behaviour. But when people
17 approach Social Services, no one there wants to listen.
18 They think they know how to handle everything -- usually
19 by having more charges laid.

20 I didn't come here to complain about the
21 GNWT's Social Services Department or about the people who
22 work for them in Baker Lake. I know they are overworked.

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1 I came to tell you that we need a justice system that
2 actually belongs to the ordinary people of Baker Lake,
3 where our values and our ways of solving problems are taken
4 into account.

5 I know that the Royal Commission is
6 holding a round table on justice issues next week in Ottawa.

7 I hope these issues will be addressed there. I would
8 also ask you to have your research staff look at these
9 issues. If they are already doing so, I would ask you
10 to make sure that they look at Inuit communities as well
11 as First Nations communities. I am sure that ITC, KIA
12 and groups in Baker Lake would be happy to work with you
13 on this.

14 Now I would like to speak to you from
15 the perspective of the Baker Lake Concerned Citizens'
16 Committee, which was formed to fight a proposed uranium
17 mine near our community. The BLCCC is part of a larger
18 organization called the Northern Anti-Uranium Coalition.

19 The initials are pronounced 'NAUC', which is a word in
20 our language for 'No.' So if you ask people in our
21 community if they support uranium mining, they respond
22 'NAUC'!

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1 A few years ago, the German company
2 Urangesellschaft, or UG, announced that they wanted to
3 build an open-pit uranium mine upwind and upwater from
4 Baker Lake. The Kiggavik project was referred to FEARO
5 for an environmental impact assessment. You probably know
6 how this works. The environmental assessment panel comes
7 up with a list of questions, which they call 'guidelines'.

8 The company takes these guidelines and does some research,
9 writes its environment impact statement, EIS. If the
10 panel thinks that EIS addresses all the questions it listed
11 in the guidelines, then it goes ahead with public hearings.

12 If the EIS isn't very thorough, the panel tells the company
13 to go back and do more research.

14 In Inuit society, leaders are selected
15 on the basis of their abilities and are expected to act
16 on community consensus. Unfortunately, our elected
17 Hamlet Council decided not to take a position for or against
18 the proposed mine. Our MP, our MLA, and our prominent
19 business leaders in the region also refused to support
20 or oppose the proposed mine, but we knew they were having
21 closed-door meetings with the company. In other words,
22 most of our leaders weren't leading. They were wheeling

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1 and dealing instead.

2 I worked with other people to form the
3 Baker Lake Concerned Citizens Committee. Our goal was
4 to give a voice to the ordinary people, the ones that the
5 government and the powerful people in the community wanted
6 to keep quiet.

7 The Baker Lake Concerned Citizens
8 Committee speaks for the average person in Baker Lake,
9 people who have nothing to gain and everything to lose
10 if uranium mining goes ahead. If anything happened to
11 the caribou, we Inuit would have nothing left but welfare.

12 So our clean environment means everything to us. If
13 people don't understand that, then they won't understand
14 how determined we are to protect our environment and our
15 culture.

16 Our strategy was quite simple. First,
17 we realized that we had no choice but to participate in
18 the federal government's review process and to try and
19 make it work for us.

20 In the case of the environmental
21 assessment process for the proposed Kiggavik mine, the
22 panel tried something new. They asked anyone who was

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1 interested which questions should be included in the
2 guidelines. We contacted doctors and scientists to help
3 us come up with very precise wording for all kinds of
4 questions we wanted answers to. After all, it is our
5 community and we should be able to ask any question we
6 want.

7 Many of the questions we raised were
8 included in the final EIS guidelines that the environmental
9 assessment panel gave to the company. This made UG's job
10 much harder. The Kiggavik guidelines set a new standard
11 and we were very happy to see our work reflected in the
12 EIS guidelines which were recently issued by an
13 environmental assessment panel in northern Saskatchewan.

14 But we also did a lot of things that had
15 nothing to do with the environmental assessment process
16 itself. One really important thing we did was to provide
17 information to the people of the community. We started
18 with a phone-in show on our community radio station.
19 People asked us questions like: What is uranium, and why
20 is it dangerous to mine? How does it change into other
21 things? Will the tailings be radioactive and, if so, for
22 how long? Can modern science eliminate radiation?

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1 Should we be worried that heavy spring run-offs could
2 contaminate our drinking water or the water that the
3 caribou drink? If there's an accident, can they clean
4 it up 100 per cent? And what about if it takes place just
5 when a bad storm is staring? If there's so much extra
6 yellowcake that's already been mined, why do they want
7 to mine more uranium? Can they really guarantee that
8 Canadian uranium never ends up in nuclear weapons?

9 We developed answers to these questions
10 in plain English, written in a way that ordinary people
11 can understand. We also translated everything into
12 Inuktitut, our Inuit language.

13 We also explained to people that
14 different doctors and scientists have very different
15 opinions about uranium mining. We tried to explain what
16 these differences of opinion were about, that there are
17 laws banning the mining of uranium in Nova Scotia, Vermont
18 and New Jersey. The government and the company never
19 mentioned these things to the community. We explained
20 things that the government and the company wanted to hide.

21 We also worked with other groups inside
22 our region to form NAUC. The Keewatin Inuit Association

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1 and KIA President, Louis Pilakapsi, supported us 100 per
2 cent. The Keewatin Wildlife Federation and Tagak Curley,
3 who was Keewatin Wildlife Federation President, also
4 played a leading role. The Regional Council, the Regional
5 Health Board and a second Concerned Citizens Committee
6 here in Rankin Inlet, made up largely of non-Inuit, worked
7 closely with us. We also worked with other groups like
8 Ecology North and the Northwest Territories Federation
9 of Labour, the national Inuit organization ITC and also
10 the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

11 One of the most important points we made
12 was that, while the environmental assessment is just about
13 this one proposed mine, we know that there is a lot of
14 uranium in our region. It is in the same geological
15 formation as northern Saskatchewan, and we know from the
16 experience there that once one mine is approved, the
17 Aboriginal people completely lose control of their future.

18 Say "yes" once and you lose the right to say "no more."

19 Urangesellschaft itself helped us
20 explain this to people. Shortly after the review started,
21 they applied for permission to explore for uranium inside
22 the boundaries of the caribou calving grounds. That is

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1 when many of the Inuit people really started getting mad.

2 In February 1990, we received a major
3 boost when we were leaked a copy of a confidential briefing
4 document sent by the Northwest Territories manager of the
5 federal government's Department of Indian and Northern
6 Affairs to his bosses in Ottawa. On the basis of
7 confidential discussions with government ministers, high
8 officials and private business people, he predicted that
9 the mine would be approved and that construction would
10 begin in 1995. Reading his memo it seemed the decision
11 had already been made behind closed doors and outside of
12 Baker Lake.

13 Although we already had most of the
14 community on our side, there were still a lot of people,
15 including most of the elected officials, who hadn't made
16 up their minds. This leaked document was the final straw
17 for many of them. On the basis of this document, our
18 elected Hamlet Council finally agreed to have a community
19 plebiscite about Kiggavik. We worked flat out, just like
20 for an election. I will never forget that tension of that
21 night, waiting for the results. Finally the person we
22 had scrutineering the ballots came out looking very happy

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1 -- 90.2 per cent of the people had voted NO to Kiggavik!

2 A few weeks later, the environmental
3 assessment panel released their review of the
4 environmental impact statement for the Kiggavik proposal.

5 In general, they trashed it and, in particular, they said
6 that the social impact assessment was completely
7 inadequate and that they had collected very little
8 environmental baseline data.

9 The panel also wanted more information
10 about the possible impact of global climate change because
11 the company was counting on continuous permafrost -- frozen
12 ground -- for storing tailings. Scientists had told us
13 they couldn't guarantee that, if you built an outhouse
14 on the permafrost, it would be around 50 years from now.

15 So we didn't believe that UG could guarantee the stability
16 and security of the tailings for thousands of years.

17 Finally, on July 5, 1990, UG asked the
18 environmental assessment panel for an 'indefinite delay'
19 in the review process. They said this was because they
20 needed time to work on the environmental impact statement.

21 They never mentioned the vote by the people of Baker Lake.

22 And that's where we are today: Kiggavik is delayed but

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1 not cancelled.

2 I recently attended an international
3 meeting about uranium mining and related issues. I would
4 like to describe this meeting in Inuktitut.

5 (Translated from Inuktitut): The World
6 Uranium Hearing was held in Salzburg, Austria in
7 mid-September. Salzburg declared itself nuclear-free
8 many years ago, and the people of Austria later voted the
9 entire country nuclear-free.

10 The hearing brought together hundreds
11 of people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, from around the
12 world. It was a very powerful gathering, and I learned
13 a lot. I heard terrible stories about what the nuclear
14 industry has done to Aboriginal people around the world.

15 Scientific reports so depressing I try not to think about
16 them. I was happy to be able to tell people about the
17 success we had had, and many people from around the world
18 promised to support us the next time a company proposes
19 a uranium mine for this region.

20 I would like to read you the final
21 communiqué from the World Uranium Hearing:

22 "We, the Indigenous people of the different communities

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1 of the Earth, our Mother, and all
2 Non-Indigenous communities,
3 affected by the nuclear chain,
4 conscious of all peoples'
5 undeniable right to
6 self-determination, our right to
7 a clean environment, concern for
8 our health and well-being and for
9 our future generations, find that:
10 Based on our testimonies and
11 experiences from around the world;
12 based on the evidence of damage to
13 our people, culture, economy,
14 land, water and air; based on our
15 respect for spiritual values,
16 beliefs and practices; We oppose
17 the destruction of our existence.
18 We, the Listeners, have heard the
19 testimonies from around the world
20 by the peoples of the Mountains,
21 the Forests, the Deserts and the
22 Oceans, who suffer daily from the

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1 uranium mining, nuclear weapons
2 testing, nuclear power generation
3 and radioactive waste.

4 These testimonies show the intimate relationship with
5 the Earth and the destruction of
6 the natural environment they
7 depend upon, culturally,
8 spiritually, and materially. It
9 became clear that each phase of
10 nuclear process - civilian or
11 military - has a deadly impact on
12 all forms of life.

13 We realize that we, the inhabitants
14 of this planet, responsible for the
15 generations to come, have to live
16 with consequences of our
17 radioactive heritage from now on.

18 Together we say:

19 No more exploitation of lands and peoples by uranium
20 mining, nuclear power generation,
21 nuclear testing, and radioactive
22 waste dumping;

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1 Clean up and restore all homelands;
2 End the secrecy and fully disclose all information
3 about the nuclear industry and its
4 dangers;
5 Provide full and fair compensation for damage to:
6 Peoples, families and communities;
7 Cultures and economies
8 Homelands, water, air and all things living;
9 Provide independent and objective monitoring of human
10 health and the well-being of all
11 living things affected by the
12 nuclear chain.

13 (English) To conclude my comments
14 about uranium mining, I would like to tell Commissioner
15 Blakeney that I was not surprised to hear that he recently
16 accepted a seat on the Board of Directors of Cameco,
17 Canada's largest uranium mining company. His support for
18 uranium mining is well known, as is the sorry record of
19 the Saskatchewan NDP in this regard. When they were in
20 power under Premier Blakeney, they supported uranium
21 mining.

22 The Aboriginal rights of the Dene people

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1 in northern Saskatchewan were violated when the NDP
2 government decided they would allow uranium mining in the
3 north. When the NDP lost power, they rediscovered their
4 principles and opposed uranium mining. Now that the NDP
5 is in power again, they once again support uranium mining.

6 I am disappointed that Mr. Blakeney's
7 colleagues on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
8 are apparently willing to accept him being in a serious
9 conflict of interest situation. Mr. Blakeney, I'm afraid
10 that you can't be both a Commissioner on the Royal
11 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and a member of the Board
12 of Directors of Cameco and expect to be taken seriously.
13 You should resign from one or the other.

14 Commissioners, I hope you are aware that
15 Inuit have never been anti-development. Inuit support
16 economic development activities, including mining, which
17 don't threaten the environment and the wildlife on which
18 we depend for our cultural and physical well-being. I
19 certainly believe that Keewatin Inuit need and want the
20 jobs that would result from mining activities in our
21 region, but only if it takes place in a truly environmental
22 sustainable way. I have been told that you would like

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1 this round of public hearings to be as solution-oriented
2 as possible. I would therefore like to end my remarks
3 with some solutions -- some principles which, if fully
4 incorporated into the environment assessment process
5 across Canada, would make it easier for Aboriginal people
6 to support proposed developments:

7 First, environmental assessments should
8 take place on a cumulative, bio-region wide basis. In
9 other words, when a project like Kiggavik is reviewed the
10 panel should be directed to review all the development
11 impacts that could have an effect on the region.

12 Mining development in northern
13 Saskatchewan impacts on people in Baker Lake, and vice
14 versa. Let's stop pretending that the effects of projects
15 stop at provincial or territorial borders. Let's stop
16 pretending that we can look at projects like Kiggavik or
17 Great Whale in isolation from other developments in the
18 region. Let's all think like Inuit.

19 Second, environmental assessment panels
20 should be given an open mandate. It may be acceptable
21 to the federal government that the terms of reference of
22 the Kiggavik review specifically excluded from

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1 consideration issues such as Aboriginal rights and the
2 end uses of uranium. It is not acceptable to Inuit.

3 I want to table with the Royal Commission
4 some letters from the Cherokee people in the United States.

5 They are having serious contamination and health problems
6 because of the Sequoyah Fuels uranium reprocessing plant
7 in Oklahoma that processes uranium mined in Saskatchewan

8 That may not bother the government of Saskatchewan, but
9 it is a serious moral issue for Dene and Inuit people.
10 You just don't do thing like that to other human beings.

11 Third, technical issues like mine
12 tailings should not be addressed solely on a
13 project-by-project basis. Native communities are tired
14 of being given razzle-dazzle presentations by people
15 trying to sell us projects. Company A's great idea to
16 store mine tailings is this. Company B's great idea is
17 that. In the end, they all want to dump the tailings in
18 a big hole in the ground and hope they don't get into the
19 groundwater. That's not good enough.

20 If there are going to be a number of mines
21 in this region, then we should figure out in advance what
22 the safest method of tailings is -- I would suggest that

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1 this means monitored and retrievable storage -- and insist
2 that this method be used.

3 Fourth, if a project is approved,
4 monitoring systems should be put in place to check on the
5 assumptions that have been made during the project proposal
6 phase. Companies love to tell communities how many jobs
7 are going to be created, how little pollution will result,
8 et cetera. Their predictions should be analyzed on an
9 ongoing basis.

10 Fifth, the health concerns of Aboriginal
11 communities must be respected. In the case of Kiggavik,
12 we asked for a very comprehensive health baseline study
13 which we could use in case serious health problems
14 developed in later years. This kind of baseline data
15 should be considered a basic human right of Aboriginal
16 communities.

17 Sixth, the views of Aboriginal
18 representative organizations must be respected as well.
19 Inuit have developed a number of democratically elected
20 organizations, each with their own unique mandate. Over
21 the years these organizations have made considered
22 recommendations on a wide range of issues. Few of these

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1 have been acted on by government.

2 I understand that your Research
3 Directorate has commissioned a study of all the
4 recommendations made by other Royal Commissions and
5 similar studies which dealt with Aboriginal peoples --
6 what they recommended and whether these recommendations
7 were implemented. This is a very good project, but I feel
8 you should do a similar study for recommendations made
9 by Aboriginal organizations.

10 I want to table two documents which you
11 should include in such a study. The first is the Keewatin
12 Regional Land Use Plan prepared by the Nunavut Land Use
13 Planning Commission. With regard to uranium mining in
14 the Keewatin, it noted that:

15 "... [the FEARO panel] review, by itself, is not sufficient
16 to answer all of the questions that
17 have been raised ... Most residents
18 of the Keewatin consider uranium
19 mining and exploration to be
20 separate from other types of
21 mineral development. Uranium
22 mining and uranium usage raise

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1 environmental, health, moral and
2 political questions that are quite
3 distinct from other types of
4 mining. Many residents think that
5 there should be a complete ban on
6 all uranium exploration and
7 mining."

8 The second document is the Inuit
9 Circumpolar Conference's Principles and Elements for a
10 Comprehensive Arctic Policy. With regard to uranium
11 mining, it states:

12 "... [the] mining and refining of uranium, thorium,
13 lithium, or other metals to be used
14 for nuclear weapons or nuclear
15 reactors, as well as the
16 reprocessing or enrichment of
17 their by-products, should be
18 prohibited throughout the Arctic."

19 The Inuit of Baker Lake agree with these
20 statements and our actions prove it.

21 I would be happy to answer any questions
22 you may have. Thank you.

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1 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
2 Joan Scottie and Irene Tiktaalaaq.

3 I would like to thank you for your
4 presentation and I will open it now for questions from
5 the Commissioners.

6 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
7 you. I want to thank you for your very comprehensive,
8 well thought out presentation. You have certainly raised
9 some very crucial points and issues here.

10 First of all, with the first presenter,
11 talking about your food banks and the population of 1,100
12 in Baker Lake, is that mostly all Inuit?

13 **IRENE TIKTAALAAQ:** There are not very
14 many kabloonag that come to our food bank. It mostly
15 consists of Inuit.

16 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** But the
17 population itself in the community is mostly Inuit, I
18 guess.

19 **IRENE TIKTAALAAQ:** That's true.

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Your 88
21 per cent unemployment would be all Inuit, too.

22 **IRENE TIKTAALAAQ:** Eight per cent

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1 (inaudible). Yes.

2 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I just
3 want to move on.

4 Before I do that, though, there was a
5 lot of mention about research and we are doing a lot of
6 research on social issues affecting Aboriginal people and
7 I just want to let you know that all presentations that
8 come before us are recorded and are all reviewed by the
9 research department so that the kinds of problems that
10 you raise here and the kinds of solutions that you speak
11 of will be all noted and will be reviewed by the research
12 part of our Commission.

13 Before I go any further, I do hope we
14 do get copies of your written presentations above the
15 documents that you said you were going to table. I think
16 it is important that we have those.

17 The second thing is about justice. The
18 points, I think, that you raise here on how offenders are
19 being treated -- with saying that punishment is not the
20 answer is one that is also shared by Aboriginal people
21 and is certainly one that will be addressed, I am positive,
22 at the justice round table. Again, the points that you

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1 raised and your suggestion about the Inuit community be
2 given the same consideration as what First Nations or any
3 other Aboriginal community will be taken.

4 The other information that you have
5 given us with respect to your concerns about the uranium
6 and your concerns about the development of uranium --

7 **JOAN SCOTTIE:** Our concerns.

8 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** -- I
9 think is one that is very, very crucial and I am glad that
10 you have raised the things that you have done -- this is
11 the place to do it -- and that you are providing us with
12 the information and the material that you say you will.

13 Certainly, I think, as far as research goes, it will be
14 one that will be reviewed very thoroughly by the Commission
15 and I want to assure you that the Commission will be looking
16 at that and making sure that it is addressed in some form.

17 Now I will ask my co-chair if he has any
18 questions or any comments.

19 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** There was
20 one area that I particularly want to ask some questions
21 about and then another one which I want to make a comment
22 on, at least.

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1 The one area had to do with, in effect,
2 a separate justice system or something that works better
3 than the current justice system does at Baker Lake. As
4 you have noted, we will be talking about separate justice
5 systems and changes in the current justice system next
6 week in Ottawa.

7 I think we are conscious of the fact that
8 when we talk about a separate justice system, we are not
9 talking about one but several and probably many to make
10 them sensitive to the particular justice circumstances
11 in particular Aboriginal communities. Thus, a Mohawk
12 community outside of Montreal may well need a different
13 justice system than an Inuit community at Baker Lake.

14 I was wondering whether you could give
15 us any more help as to what you think might work as a justice
16 system in Baker Lake or, if you felt appropriate, in the
17 Keewatin Region?

18 **JOAN SCOTTIE:** My feeling and our
19 people's feeling is that social services or anyone who
20 is in the justice system should have more contact with
21 the people that are working, rather than a -- like our
22 feeling in Baker Lake right now is that the Aboriginal

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1 people, the local people there are not -- what would you
2 call it? -- they are not part of the decision-makings
3 at all in regard to how we should try to improve the crime;
4 as I mentioned, the offenders.

5 We feel that the social services and the
6 RCMP or the whole justice system isn't look hard enough
7 to solve the problems like I mentioned. Because we live
8 in a very small community, we know why that person is
9 committing the crimes over and over again. The social
10 services should look at the root of that problem.

11 I found out about a week ago that many
12 of our offenders are not being counselled. They are not
13 getting the treatment that should be included in part of
14 the sentence. Throwing them away in jail isn't helping.

15 Many of our people are saying that. If you work closely
16 with the Elders or with the people, they will tell you
17 how it can be improved.

18 We are willing, as a community as a
19 whole, to try to help prevent more crimes or repeated
20 crimes.

21 I don't know if that answers your
22 question.

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1 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Now it is
2 being run out of Yellowknife, I take it. The social
3 workers will be hired by the government at Yellowknife
4 and the RCMP will receive instructions from Yellowknife,
5 no doubt. They also get some instructions generally from
6 Ottawa.

7 If it were done out of Baker Lake or
8 Rankin Inlet, if the people who were in charge were more
9 closely linked to the community, do you think that could
10 be made to work?

11 You speak of counselling and I think you
12 were saying probably by Elders, but not necessarily by
13 Elders. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but do
14 you want to say anything further on that?

15 **JOAN SCOTTIE:** No, just that the
16 community should be included in the decision-making, how
17 to deal with, you might say, criminals or the people who
18 are committing the crimes.

19 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** On the
20 other matter -- and you mentioned this and so I had better
21 say something -- with respect to uranium mining which is
22 clearly a very controversial subject and has been in

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1 Saskatchewan for a very long time, uranium has been mined
2 in Saskatchewan for more than 40 years and has been
3 supported by successor Premiers of Douglas and Lloyd of
4 CCF and NDP and Thatcher who was a Liberal and Blakeney
5 who was an NDP and Devine who was a Conservative and now
6 Romanow as an NDP.

7 All I think I can say on that is that
8 -- and I take your point. The mandate of the Royal
9 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is so broad that all of
10 us are going to come into some manner of conflict. We
11 have a judge and he may be in conflict when we talk about
12 different justice systems and we have other people who
13 have close connections with Aboriginal organizations.
14 That is the nature of a very broad mandate.

15 I think all I can say is that my views
16 with respect to uranium mining were publicly-known. There
17 is no way that you can be a political leader in a province
18 like Saskatchewan without your views being known and with
19 the views being known, someone felt that I should sit on
20 the Royal Commission, warts and all, I suppose. I will
21 assume that they assumed that those views were compatible
22 with service on the Royal Commission. That was my

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1 assumption, but if it looks like it is becoming
2 incompatible, then I will take your point. As I say, all
3 of us are going to have some conflicts and if this one
4 becomes acute, then you are quite right in thinking that
5 the position will need to be reviewed.

6 I thank you for your forthrightness in
7 raising the issue because it is one which is in the minds
8 of some people. I will leave it at that.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Are there
10 any other comments? Also, to point out with respect to
11 Baker Lake, the Keewatin Region has social services amongst
12 the communities that takes care of matters within the
13 community socially, but they are under-manned and that
14 is where the problem comes in. I wanted the Commission
15 to understand that.

16 Thank you, presenters. I think we are
17 due for a little break for ten minutes to stretch our legs
18 and give the recorders a chance to break from the
19 pencil-pushing that they do.

20 --- Short recess at 10:55 a.m.

21 --- Upon resuming at 11:08 a.m.

22 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Are we

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1 ready?

2 I would like to again apologize for our
3 agenda. The coordinators indicated that my job is at stake
4 because the agenda is behind. So I will try to make up
5 for this morning if I can.

6 Our next presenter is Rhoda Karetak who
7 is an individual presenter. Rhoda is involved in the
8 (inaudible) we have in the community and also actively
9 involved in counselling younger generations as to the
10 lifestyle of the Aboriginal people.

11 Now I will give to you Rhoda.

12 **RHODA KARETAK:** (Translated from
13 Inuktitut) I am Rhoda Karetak from Rankin Inlet. My
14 Inuktitut name is Apeelapik (PH), but I rarely use it
15 nowadays.

16 Over the years, I have been counselling
17 people and been giving different ideas and I have seen
18 a lot of people. First, I would like to thank you that
19 I have been given this chance to sit up here and give you
20 a presentation. We are here in Canada -- one thing I want
21 to express is the joy that we are able to express our own
22 feelings and that our governments do understand.

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1 Way back then in the years past, before
2 we were governed by -- I was born in an igloo. Now I have
3 travelled and I have lived in different communities which
4 has made me aware -- and I have also been to different
5 meetings all over Canada years ago. Compared to today,
6 the traditions and cultures have changed.

7 When they were too young, when they had
8 to go to school, they had to leave their parents. They
9 were sent to -- but today that tradition has changed and
10 I like that very much. Now they can go up as far as Grade
11 10 without having to leave the community.

12 One concern that I really have which will
13 not be used today is that we said to everything, whenever
14 the government had suggested that we should do it -- the
15 children used to leave their parents to go to school, even
16 those children who were still -- and when they left, they
17 used to hug us very hard, very much. It used to be hard
18 to sleep when that happened.

19 So now the concern has turned the other
20 way. Those that do go to the hospital in the south with
21 tuberculosis who are going to be in the hospital all year
22 -- when they were women, they didn't want -- some women

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1 used to have very long hair and some of their hairs were
2 cut which also touched us, which we didn't like at all.
3 Now we have a different tradition on that which we can
4 now be noticed and our feelings are now felt, and that
5 I like.

6 Also, the dogs that we used to have which
7 -- when they were killed, that also used to touch us.
8 Today, we start thinking that maybe if I am going to get
9 a snow machine, maybe we start thinking, "We hope that
10 at least part of that would be paid by someone else."
11 Especially for us Elders, sometimes this is what concerns
12 us.

13 Also, on the issues that we have today,
14 maybe some of them don't have that much to -- like the
15 airlines. They are very expensive as we live in the
16 Arctic, especially with the younger children. Sometimes
17 we want to send them too -- because they are also very
18 expensive, too. It seems sometimes that there might be
19 cheaper ways of transportation possibly in terms of
20 highways and roads or railways.

21 It seems that these issues, all the
22 issues that we have -- as much as we want to see issues

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1 resolved -- the Aboriginal people and the Elders, we know
2 that they are not recognized in terms of their education,
3 in terms of their knowledge.

4 So we now have employers who -- to give
5 you an example, if there are contracts that are being
6 tendered out, they are given out to people who know exactly
7 what to do in terms of maybe how -- when you see that and
8 they are turned down, that becomes very hard to take.

9 When we don't know exactly -- to give
10 you an example, they have to have bosses who don't even
11 know how to build houses or buildings. The Elders here
12 that we have who have also worked and help erected other
13 things and they are good carpenters. They are able to
14 do their job well.

15 Also, as the climate here is as much as
16 50 or 60 below, we are not able to teach our own children
17 as to how they can start making their own clothes that
18 are warm because we have no papers which would recognize
19 that we have abilities. There are still people out there
20 today who are still alive who can teach these things.
21 Because we don't have papers or maybe because of our lack
22 of education, it seems that the way it is.

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1 A lot of them don't have any place to
2 work and all the clothing is very expensive and especially
3 -- to give you an example, boots for a six-year old costs
4 about \$70, in around there. Also, the young people who
5 should learn -- when they could learn how to sew and when
6 they should be learning how to make those, now they have
7 to work. A lot of them are trying to teach others without
8 having to make any money.

9 We have also have to keep in mind that
10 we have good ways to cook and it is also obvious, especially
11 in May and June, we try to dry our meat which is part of
12 our obligations. The Elders are working very hard on this
13 because they are thinking of their own families. They
14 want their families to have good food and something to
15 be able to live on and they have not been given any chance
16 to rest through their lives. That I have seen very much
17 and it touches me a whole lot, especially when they start
18 looking at their grandchildren. That is the tradition.
19 Their grandchildren always visit them and the younger
20 people who are trying to go to school, if they are able
21 to, they do go.

22 These Elders who are finding it hard to

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1 continue in the Inuit tradition is that you do not throw
2 anyone out, especially if they are your family.

3 It would be very helpful that there is
4 an adult education here for adults which is geared towards
5 adult, but we, as Elders, are not included in that. We
6 are not even trying to find out for ourselves as to how
7 we can learn to teach Elders.

8 They also say that there is no money
9 available for those that are ready for items that are really
10 needed. The younger people can still learn today in terms
11 of how to make warmer clothing and all they are thinking
12 about -- which becomes very hard when you have to go out
13 to buy your clothing. The Elders should have a little
14 more money so that maybe this will be helpful once we have
15 a new Nunavut government.

16 Also, I will give you an example. In
17 terms of sniffing, they say that there is no laws concerning
18 those and we keep hearing that. The Inuit, we have lost
19 a lot of our own families. Sometimes we can't always see
20 what the future is and possibly, at times now, we should
21 work harder and a little faster.

22 We are also being told that, as much as

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1 I have tried over the years, as to how I can help for those
2 who commit suicide. If we are going to be waiting for
3 professionals, it seems that it is going to be almost
4 impossible and we don't want to lose any more family
5 members, if at all possible.

6 Also, I think we have all been thinking
7 about how we can assist those who do commit suicide. Maybe
8 it is (inaudible) even just to think about it. Nobody
9 seems to want to be an initiator and I feel that this is
10 an issue that should be dealt with as soon as possible.

11 In some way, I wonder how we -- those of us who have lost
12 family members -- can maybe find some way of how we can
13 assist.

14 It seems that those who do commit suicide
15 have no place to go to discuss their problems and these
16 women who are abused and those who are abused -- there
17 is a shelter here and I like that very much. Then, again,
18 there are those who are too tired who need the rest. I
19 have been thinking as to how to assist them so that they
20 can get some rest.

21 I have also seen especially as to how
22 Elders as to how really, really tired they are. When you

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1 are an Inuk who are with them and you see them, they are
2 really tired and they have no place to go where they can
3 be assisted. They can't even find anyone that they can
4 talk to. I can see a picture that maybe this can be given
5 to maybe Hamlet Councils and be discussed.

6 I would also like to mention -- I know
7 one woman who is younger than I am who looks very much
8 older than I do. She is younger than I am. When I saw
9 her at the airport, we don't cry there really, even though
10 we have lost. But when she saw me, her face -- she was
11 really crying which really hurt me. She was very tired
12 physically.

13 I do go fishing which takes about a half
14 hour to get there. I went fishing there with her and I
15 know I helped by taking her out there. She says she used
16 to be able to do that and she hadn't seen it since then.

17 I did not notice that and so I can also be accused because
18 of that, but there are people who become very tired.

19 I have been thinking that this is not
20 an isolated issue. I have also seen that in Baker Lake,
21 especially for those who want to commit suicide, as to
22 how we can get closer together so that their concerns can

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1 be addressed. When we meet with other women who feel that
2 they should be abused, women who feel that they should
3 be made tired, that is not the way they should be dealt
4 with.

5 The Elders in the communities who are
6 looking for employment, especially those, they don't want
7 to be on welfare and there are a lot of them who don't
8 want to be on welfare. Because it is a harsh climate up
9 here, everything that we use -- skidoos, snow machines
10 -- are very expensive. This becomes hard to deal with
11 just to even think about, especially looking at it even
12 if it wasn't their dogs. But I wonder if there is some
13 way that these transportation systems can be less
14 expensive.

15 Maybe we can't see this right away, but
16 I am very glad that I have a place because I love my own
17 people very much. Sometimes I am very happy that there
18 is an Elders home in Baker Lake and there is also an Elders
19 home in Nukviat (PH). I am glad that we can be known and
20 felt and given the chance to be able to speak here.

21 Thank you.

22 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Perhaps we

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1 could open this now for questioning. Perhaps you might
2 have some questions for the person who made the
3 presentation.

4 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want to
5 thank you for your very moving, touching presentation.

6 The issue you raise here about Elders
7 not being recognized for their contribution or for what
8 they could contribute is something. Incidentally, we do
9 have a role as a Commission, a mandate, to look at the
10 role of Elders.

11 It seems to me from what you are saying
12 here is that Elders have a lot to contribute. Most of
13 them are on welfare and pensions, but they really want
14 to work. This is a message that we have been getting right
15 across the country.

16 Your concern about education and
17 suicide, those are other areas as well that seems to be
18 consistently being addressed as we move across the country.

19
20 The Elders -- we have had some
21 recommendations in the past. For instance, going into
22 institutions, into the penitentiary where we have talked

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1 to the inmates. They have Elders now coming in to talk
2 to them and help them, and they call it -- it helps them
3 heal because they are in there.

4 However, at the same time, the
5 institutions have a lot of professional people,
6 counsellors and psychologists and those kinds of people
7 who work with the inmates, but it seems as though, when
8 the Elders come in, even the limited time that they do
9 spend with them seems to be working for them a lot better
10 than the professionals. I think this is a message that
11 you are trying to give, that the Elders do have a lot to
12 contribute, but you have to be recognized at the same level.

13 Because you don't have credentials or
14 papers, you are sort of ignored. I think we have to get
15 a message -- and I shouldn't be telling you this, but I
16 think this is what you are saying. You can correct me
17 if I am wrong. The message has to be that there is a large
18 resource in the Aboriginal community consisting of Elders
19 who have a lot that they can contribute to the alleviation
20 of incarcerated people, people who are victims of violence,
21 young people, if they are recognized and can be treated
22 as part of the workforce that is doing a job for their

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1 community.

2 I think that is a very valid assessment
3 of what you are saying and I think it is consistent to
4 what we have heard. So I want you to know that I understand
5 what you are saying and I agree with you. We have heard
6 it more than once and I hope that something can be done
7 in the future that will give the Elders a more prominent
8 role in the development of their communities because you
9 have so much to contribute. It is like you say even with
10 the housing. It is not always those papers that make
11 people professional. It is people who have had the
12 experience -- and particularly in this part of the country
13 -- that we have to recognize that.

14 So I want to thank you for your
15 presentation and let you know that it will be well
16 documented in our work.

17 Would you like to say something?

18 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Just one
19 question, if I may. It has to do with suicides.

20 Can you tell me whether the number of
21 suicides in this Keewatin Region seems to be going up or
22 going down or about the same? It is something we have

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1 heard quite a bit about and I am wondering whether you
2 have any particular thoughts as to what might be done to
3 lessen the number of suicides.

4 **RHODA KARETAK:** Thank you.

5 It started in the early years. This
6 region has seen a number of suicides. In the early years,
7 there were a whole number of suicides, but I think it is
8 more or less stable right now.

9 Perhaps I could try to help. If
10 somebody is contemplating a suicide, for instance, we
11 should meet with that certain -- or I should meet with
12 the person that has lost an individual through suicide
13 so I could gain some insights.

14 So I am very slowly trying to address
15 this issue in my community and perhaps we could come up
16 with a newsletter that could be traditional -- it could
17 be a traditional material in which you could use different
18 items and describe what those different items are. Or,
19 you could have a newsletter that could have a humour
20 content. I think this would encourage people to come out
21 and discuss their problems if we could have some kind of
22 a newsletter.

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1 There was an accident in one of the
2 houses in which during midnight there was a shot that was
3 heard, but it was an accidental shooting where nobody was
4 killed. They thought that this young individual was
5 trying to attempt a suicide, but that was not the case.
6 The problem was that the balloon exploded which sounded
7 like a shotgun or a gun.

8 We were encouraged not to kill ourselves
9 by our parents and I think a lot of cases do occur when
10 there is a break-up in a girlfriend or a boyfriend
11 relationship.

12 So I would encourage people to speak to
13 that person or individual that is having problems. That
14 would alleviate some of their problems and if you could
15 counsel these people who are contemplating a suicide, this
16 would be very helpful and I would encourage people to help
17 each other when they are carrying these burdens.

18 I have spoken with different individuals
19 because they have helped me in discussing these issues.

20 I could say right now that suicide has stabilized a bit
21 today.

22 I thank you.

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1 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

2 I have a question for you.

3 My understanding during your
4 presentation was that these Elders, especially elderly
5 females, have burdens in terms of their grandchildren
6 because they babysit for grandchildren. It is my
7 understanding that today, when we are very busy, when you
8 have jobs, for instance, this is also an additional burden
9 for them because they have to babysit.

10 It is a very different role now. It
11 seems like they babysit for the whole year round.

12 **RHODA KARETAK:** This is not the only
13 issue or problem and some young people, when they conceive,
14 I think it is those people who are not married and they
15 tend to throw that problem to their Elders.

16 Elders have to sew, use their
17 traditional roles because traditional clothing is an issue
18 that has to be addressed because I think we should give
19 the Elders an opportunity to rest in terms of babysitting
20 in our communities. We should address this problem. They
21 have other traditional roles instead of just babysitting
22 for their kids.

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1 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you.

2

3 I would like to encourage the presenters
4 to shorten their presentation, if I can, to be precise
5 and to the point. Again, I would emphasize that my job
6 is at stake as the facilitator.

7 I would welcome Bette Palfrey from the
8 Keewatin Regional Health Board. Bette has been
9 instrumental in keeping the Health Board in the Keewatin
10 alive as to the question of evolution of the government.
11 They indicated that they would dissolve the regional
12 boards and Bette has been the person that has kept the
13 Board together in unity.

14 Their big issue to date is the one I
15 mentioned earlier in my welcoming remarks, the
16 multi-health care facility that they are working on which
17 will be a major impact in the Keewatin Region in time when
18 it does go through.

19 Welcome, Bette.

20 **ELIZABETH PALFREY, KEEWATIN REGIONAL**

21 **HEALTH BOARD:** Thank you, Mayor Paul and Commission
22 Members.

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1 Before I begin, on behalf of John Todd,
2 the MLA, I would like to express his regrets that he wasn't
3 able to be here. I understand that he was on the agenda
4 this morning. I had passed the message along yesterday
5 that he wasn't able to come due to the cancellation of
6 the flight and the fact that the Legislative Assembly is
7 sitting. He had no way of getting here and getting back
8 to Yellowknife.

9 I see that he is on the agenda for this
10 afternoon. He will be unable to be here personally, but
11 he will make sure that you have a written presentation
12 of the speech he was intending to make.

13 Before I begin with my official
14 presentation, I would just like to make a comment that
15 as a transplanted Aboriginal person from the south who
16 has lived in the North for 25 years, I think it is
17 unfortunate that today, in 1992, many of the concerns that
18 you hear being raised are concerns about the lack of
19 sensitivity to our culture as Aboriginal people, to the
20 importance of the role that our Elders play, and to the
21 downgrading that the importance of our lifestyle and our
22 wishes have had to take over the past 200 years in Canada.

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1

2 I think many of the presentations that
3 you will hear throughout this country are similar to the
4 wishes that you have heard here today and that I will
5 express, that people no longer wish to become or have to
6 be second-rate citizens in this country, that our
7 forefathers were the original members of Canada and that
8 we wish to participate fully in the future development
9 of Canada.

10 So today I am pleased to be before you
11 to bring the point of view of the Health Board to the various
12 presentations that you will hear. What we would like to
13 do is give you a snapshot picture of the health status
14 of Inuit residents of the Nunavut region of the NWT. We
15 hope this picture will allow you to take a different point
16 of view into thinking about Aboriginal people, their health
17 status and how it touches all areas of concern.

18 Today we are standing on the threshold
19 of a new era in Canada in Aboriginal empowerment,
20 cross-cultural understanding of the various
21 socio-economic and other stigmatizing factors which have
22 placed barriers in the provision of adequate levels of

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1 care and status for our Aboriginal people in this country.

2 My role today is to talk about medical
3 realities and health status of Aboriginal people. But,
4 before beginning, I would like to let you know a little
5 about the people I represent and the region we are speaking
6 of.

7 Within the Keewatin Region, the Health
8 Board is a body responsible for the delivery and
9 administration of overall health services to largely Inuit
10 communities in this area of Arctic. Most of our
11 communities, as you know, are accessible only by air.

12 For medical purposes, our region
13 consists of eight communities, including St. Kilouak (PH),
14 with populations from 250 up to the largest community of
15 Rankin Inlet with 2,000. We have a cachement population
16 of over 6,000 people. Our system currently is feeding
17 into the Churchill Health Centre and tertiary care is
18 provided in Winnipeg, mainly at the Health Sciences Centre,
19 although other facilities or cities are utilized depending
20 on the need and the urgency.

21 For the purpose today, we define overall
22 health care including the physical and mental well-being

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1 of all the residents of the region, both Aboriginal and
2 non-Aboriginal. The administration centre of our system
3 was relocated from Churchill after Health Services were
4 transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories
5 in 1988. Currently, health care is delivered at the
6 community level using the old nurse practitioner models
7 set up under medical services with physician backup located
8 in Churchill and in Winnipeg.

9 To link this whole health care system
10 together, we have a lifeline emergency flight service with
11 aircraft based in both Churchill and Rankin Inlet. This
12 service, combined with a regular air service, provides
13 the necessary infrastructure to allow our personnel to
14 deal with the many life and death situations faced on a
15 regular basis in communities where weather conditions are
16 often less than hospitable.

17 Two of the biggest changes to allow
18 upgrading the services in the Keewatin have been in the
19 area of transportation and communication upgrading.
20 Rapid advances in both these areas have allowed significant
21 changes in allowing the communities to have contact and
22 access to southern centres on a regular basis. Not too

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1 many years ago, phone service was limited to radio phone
2 which was weather-dependent and air transport often took
3 two or three days to reach Winnipeg, particularly if
4 weather was out somewhere along the route.

5 Today, we have jet service, as you know,
6 sometimes non-stop, sometimes it doesn't come, and Hawker
7 Siddeley service from most of the other communities to
8 link up with the jets.

9 In contrast to 10 or 15 years ago, where
10 there were no airport facilities in most of our
11 communities, we now have modern airports with weather
12 information available hourly.

13 Along with these changes in systems,
14 though, there have also been several important changes
15 with respect to political systems and the involvement of
16 Aboriginal people. One of the most dramatic and
17 empowering changes for the people of this region was the
18 formation of not only regional boards of education, but
19 also in regional health boards.

20 These changes, combined with the final
21 stages of the land claims negotiations for Nunavut and
22 the ownership of both private and birthright development

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1 corporations, are giving Inuit people a sense of control
2 over their own destiny, a sense which is long overdue in
3 our Aboriginal communities and people.

4 However, in many ways our communities
5 in the Arctic are similar to southern reserve communities.

6 Our communities, while not surrounded by boundaries
7 imposed by white government, as in the reserves, are
8 surrounded by vast geographic expanses of uninhabited
9 land, most of which is virtually undeveloped, with the
10 exception of some sustenance hunting and fishing, very
11 little renewable resource harvesting, and some limited
12 mineral exploration.

13 All this leads to a lack of economic
14 opportunity which means that employment is very limited
15 for the people of this area and very similar to the
16 situation in southern reserves.

17 In the past, in an effort to look at our
18 own long-range planning for the Health Board and for health
19 care needs in the region, we commissioned a study into
20 current health status of residents of the Keewatin. This
21 study was done under the hospices of the University of
22 Manitoba and it really provided us with a current health

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1 picture for the people of this region. It has also
2 provided us some ability to begin a strategic plan to
3 address the changing needs for priorities within health
4 care. It means that we need a shift to more preventative
5 health care, rather than after the fact treatment, as has
6 been done under the old medical services model.

7 I think what our health status picture
8 has shown us is that the current model that we were using
9 is not working. It is not providing the level of health
10 that people in Canada should be reaching in the 1990s.

11 In an effort to respond to this, we
12 recently identified health promotion within the region
13 as a priority and a health promotion specialist has been
14 hired to work with our community Health Committees to begin
15 the shift. We have also a seasonal medical officer of
16 health hired for the summer and he had begun the planning
17 necessary to help our communities become aware of some
18 of the high incidents of communicable disease within the
19 Keewatin.

20 However, while the health study dealt
21 with health implications and trends, it also touched on
22 other influencers such as housing conditions,

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1 over-crowding, employment and all these are managing to
2 have an impact on overall health.

3 Currently, within the NWT, the
4 population of Aboriginal people is the majority. Of this
5 majority, 72 per cent of the Aboriginal population have
6 less than a Grade 9 education and this is compared to 44
7 per cent of non-Aboriginal population, which is far higher
8 than the national average of 20 per cent. This picture
9 is beginning to change as more regional high schools are
10 moved back into the communities, but the change is very
11 slow.

12 Our massively-growing population
13 averaged a 17 per cent growth from the last census to this
14 one, and that indicates, to some extent, the magnitude
15 of the problems we are going to be facing over the next
16 decade in attempting to deal with the problems associated
17 with both social and the economic costs of a
18 rapidly-increasing community.

19 Within the community of Arveat (PH), 45
20 per cent of the population of 19 or 18 hundred is under
21 the age of 20. They are entering their child-bearing
22 years. When that population begins to grow, we will not

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1 be able to keep pace with the demands that it will place
2 on us.

3 Low levels of education mean
4 unemployment or access to low-paying jobs and a far greater
5 dependence than would be the case in other areas where
6 there are housing markets. Most of our population here
7 is depending on public housing as a means of providing
8 shelter.

9 In many communities, the unemployment
10 rate is exceeding 50 per cent on an ongoing basis. Many
11 of the individuals unemployed for long periods of time
12 are forced to use public housing since no other affordable
13 option exists.

14 Our statistics show that 72 per cent of
15 unemployed Native adult males and 59 per cent of unemployed
16 females wanted a job. The jobless rates are the highest
17 for our youth. The youth are the biggest resource for
18 the future, but they often have the most sense of
19 hopelessness and despair because they don't see a future
20 for themselves.

21 Dependents on social programs mean much
22 of our financial resources are going into social

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1 assistance. In some communities, the percentage of the
2 population receiving social assistance is as high as 95
3 per cent.

4 Of the public housing available in the
5 territories, approximately 51 per cent of the clients
6 inhabiting that housing receive some form of social
7 assistance. Most of these public housing units are
8 over-crowded and are sub-standard. This is putting
9 additional stress and strain on families living in those
10 conditions.

11 In our largest community, Rankin Inlet,
12 and the one with the most employment opportunity, there
13 is a waiting list of nearly 100 families for public housing.

14 Many of these people are living with friends and
15 relatives, often 13 or 14 and on up to 19 in a three-bedroom
16 unit, sleeping in shifts on the floor when adequate
17 sleeping space is not available. This is our wealthiest
18 community.

19 As expected, these social problems --
20 alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, sexual abuse --
21 are all rising and they are being reported in increasing
22 numbers. Our Elders have referred to suicide in the NWT.

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1 It is at an epidemic level, four times that of the national
2 average for youths between the ages of 14 and 24. They
3 are our biggest resource for the future, yet they see no
4 future for themselves.

5 This is also the group with the highest
6 rate of unemployment and therefore with limited access
7 to affordable housing.

8 These resources, coupled with a birth
9 rate that is four times that of the national average which
10 we already mentioned, mean that there are limited abilities
11 for our financial resources to keep pace with the need
12 for social problems, housing starts, education facilities,
13 preventive health care programs, and other related needs.

14
15 Currently, 20 per cent of the total
16 budget of the NWT is going towards health care. When our
17 population expansion continues over the next decade, given
18 the current downloading of financial implications from
19 the federal government to the provincial and territorial
20 governments, we are afraid that we will not be able to
21 keep pace with the needs of the communities.

22 Forty-four per cent of the households

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1 in the Northwest Territories are in core need, poverty.
2 These houses suffer either affordability, suitability
3 or adequacy problems. That is comparing to only 14 per
4 cent in southern jurisdictions. We all know poverty
5 equates to poor health and we have seen the results in
6 this region.

7 So how do we translate these figures,
8 statistics and budgets available into health care which
9 is reflective of the needs facing our population as we
10 enter into the nineties? The Keewatin Regional Health
11 Board, the Department of Health and other caregiver
12 agencies can deal with the physical hurt. We can attempt
13 to mend the body and we can, in some way, attempt to heal
14 the spirit.

15 Our health status report gives us a
16 representative view of the health status of Inuit people.
17 We know the bleak statistics with regard to Aboriginal
18 health status in Canada and our health status assessment
19 shows no differing results here in this region. Diabetes,
20 hypertension, overweight, poor nutritional status are
21 epidemic amongst Native people in Canada today.

22 We can provide the necessary funding for

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1 the purchase of food, but unless there is a basic
2 understanding of how to buy, what to buy, and some education
3 for different food values, we will be fighting these
4 diseases for years to come.

5 I was in Yellowknife a few weeks ago and
6 I watched a young woman -- in all likelihood, she was
7 probably unilingual or unable to read -- pour a container
8 of whipping cream into her baby's bottle. Unless we can
9 deal with this type of ignorance and inability to
10 understand nutritional values, these type of problems will
11 continue to plague us.

12 We are only too well aware of the high
13 cost in not shifting our emphasis into preventive health
14 care services. Last year in our region we had an epidemic
15 of Ecoli 0157 which escalated into a full-blown health
16 concern, passed for the first documented time, in
17 person-to-person contact rather than the usual food source
18 contamination spread. That epidemic ended up costing the
19 system well over \$1 million to treat and wait for the
20 outbreak to abide because there really is no treatment
21 for Ecoli 0157. It does not respond to antibiotics.

22 Much more of the emphasis needs to be

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1 shifted into preventative types of care, higher degree
2 of emphasis on before and after the fact treatment; more
3 emphasis on determining where the problems lie and
4 hopefully, down the road, we will be having to spend less
5 of our dollars on after the fact crisis management.

6 We need to work collectively to educate
7 our politicians that change must be effected in our health
8 care system to act as preventers rather than crisis
9 managers. Programs have to be shifted into needs
10 identified by community health care preventers and
11 providers to make the best use of the dollars available.

12
13 More work needs to be done at the
14 national political level for federal health agencies to
15 ensure that funding shifts in the non-insured services
16 are in place to allow this type of preventive care so badly
17 needed in our communities.

18 The current downloading and abrogation
19 of financial responsibility for provision of health care
20 services to our Aboriginal people in Canada should not
21 be allowed to continue.

22 One of the biggest users of our health

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1 care dollars continues to be lung and other cancer-causing
2 illnesses which are exasperated by smoking. This is one
3 disease we know can be reduced through effective
4 non-smoking and chewing campaigns, yet we are unable to
5 shift the necessary dollars to be able to do so.

6 I think you heard our Elders refer to
7 the mental health-related issues that have rapidly come
8 to the forefront of medical-related needs as the culture
9 goes through a rapid period of transition. The high birth
10 rate, coupled with the economic stresses, related social
11 problems, such as abuse of alcohol and related family
12 violence, have combined to bring mental health related
13 problems from the bottom of a list of 20 health concerns
14 to the fifth concern from the top of health professionals.

15
16 This change is rapidly affecting health,
17 with many of the stress-related health issues now taking
18 their toll. We are only too well aware of the limitations
19 in existing manpower to deal with these issues, but
20 counselling services that are broad-based in nature are
21 not available in the communities even though we have
22 indicated that they are one of our top priorities.

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1 Another major use of our budget and
2 manpower continues to be in trauma-related injuries caused
3 by Honda and snowmobile accidents, particularly when
4 alcohol is involved. Enforcement, education, and awareness
5 can begin to resolve some of these costs, yet this again
6 falls into the area of prevention and education rather
7 than actual injury expenditures. We all know the high
8 cost of these types of injuries. At some time we will
9 have to reinvest some of these dollars utilized for
10 after-care into prevention.

11 More emphasis needs to be placed in
12 allowing Aboriginal and community groups to be empowered
13 with the knowledge to take active part in the planning
14 and treatment of health issues. I think that is a message
15 that you are going to be hearing everywhere. People wish
16 to be empowered with the ability to make change. They
17 see what the problems are. We aren't able to take part
18 in the solution.

19 A beginning step in this process has been
20 the creation of community health committees and our
21 community Health Promotion Officer will be working closely
22 with these groups to ensure that they have the skills and

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1 tools to work in their communities to prevent and to
2 educate.

3 For too long our system has taken the
4 responsibility for health care and education from
5 Aboriginal people. It is important that these people gain
6 back the sense of responsibility and authority that they
7 have traditionally always had.

8 In ancient times, responsibility for
9 health was that of the individuals involved, and that came
10 with a sense of duty. Today, the resulting years of
11 colonialistic, paternalistic types of systems removed that
12 kind of thought and have resulted in the type of problems
13 we are seeing today. The medical profession is seen as
14 all-responsible and little thought is given to how
15 individuals can take part in solving or treating their
16 own problems.

17 More emphasis needs to be placed on
18 boards similar to the Keewatin Regional Health Board to
19 allow communities to become partners in this process of
20 health care and in the other problems that they are facing.

21

22 In Rankin Inlet, recently, we moved the

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1 contract for dental care back into the region that was
2 provided out of Manitoba. Currently, this is being
3 operated as a non-profit company by one of the regional
4 Aboriginal development corporations. This type of
5 ownership of health care with the combined sense of control
6 and participation in the process are integral to returning
7 responsibilities to our people.

8 The Canadian Medical Association has
9 also recognized the need for more involvement in health
10 issues surrounding Aboriginal peoples. It is concerned
11 also with the poor health status on a national level.
12 There are profound inequalities in health status and they
13 continue to plague the Aboriginal communities with higher
14 death ratios, higher morbidity rates and the ever constant
15 picture painted by the suicide rates. They are a
16 depressing picture painted with the colours of health
17 status of Native people across Canada.

18 The CMC has advocated new approaches to
19 allow Native people to take control of health services
20 and to provide culturally-sensitive and appropriate health
21 care and to encourage Native people to enter the health
22 field so they too can be involved in their process.

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1 Their recommendations are not unsimilar
2 to many of the others I think you will hear. They recommend
3 involving Native boards in reviewing social determinants
4 of health status and in management of their own services.
5 They recommend reviewing medical school curricula with
6 regard to the delivery of health care to Native peoples.
7 They recommend continuing to enhance the training of
8 Native peoples as Aboriginals to enter the health care
9 field as professionals.

10 They wish to encourage and acknowledge
11 the role of both Native healers and western physicians.
12 They both have a part to play in the system. I think,
13 most importantly, their recommendation is to foster the
14 process of empowerment among Native peoples.

15 I understand that part of the
16 recommendations of the panel of the Canadian Medical
17 Association was to establish a taskforce to prepare a
18 submission on health issues to this Commission and I hope
19 that they have done so. But I think these type of
20 recommendations all indicate a need for change in the
21 medical system and generally in our systems by involving
22 and ensuring greater participation. The participation

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1 should be grassroots and it cannot involve the system any
2 longer passing recommendations for Native people without
3 involving them and their communities in the process.

4 This is the type of process that we, the
5 Keewatin Regional Health Board, advocate and we ensure
6 that will happen through the participation of our boards
7 and our trustees at the community level, the health
8 committees and the other players that make up the health
9 system in the eastern Arctic.

10 It is only through this type of wholesale
11 change that we can hope to change the bleak picture of
12 the medical status of the residents of this region.
13 Participants, participation and partnerships have to be
14 the passwords to allow us to enter a new era in Canada,
15 and we hope that you will take this message back.

16 Thank you.

17 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
18 Bette.

19 I would open the table for questions from
20 the Commissioners at this stage.

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Again, I
22 would like to thank you for your presentation and I hope

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1 you will make that available to the Commission for our
2 records.

3 You made mention of the federal health
4 agencies needing to be informed. Right now, they are in
5 the process of downloading to the Territorial Government
6 and you think that that is not going to work or it is not
7 working. It seems to me that I heard you say that the
8 downloading should not continue. Was that what you were
9 saying?

10 **BETTE PALFREY:** I think what we have
11 seen is that, as we look at the picture of health status
12 of the residents and particularly Aboriginal people across
13 Canada, the system, as it has evolved, has not worked.
14 I think right now, because of financial limitations, the
15 government is saying, "We will reduce the dollars being
16 expended," because, obviously, on a national level, they
17 wish to bring in a balanced budget.

18 However, at some point in time, I think
19 we have to relook at where the money is being spent, how
20 it is being spent and how we can change the system. We
21 know the system hasn't worked well in the past. The
22 medical service model has not proven to be efficient or

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1 to be proactive in other areas in Canada. It certainly
2 has not been here.

3 However, we also see at the same time
4 that we are being constantly told that there is less money,
5 less money and we know we have a population increase that
6 is going to be requiring more financial resources directed
7 in that direction.

8 An example would be: Last year, we were
9 told that because of the reduction and the abrogation of
10 the federal government for non-insured services, we had
11 to reduce I-team visits in this region to one visit per
12 year per community.

13 For some of the smaller communities,
14 where you have children entering the school system, how
15 can you expect them to be able to see the blackboard when
16 there is one visit a year from an eye doctor?

17 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** The other
18 thing that you mentioned there was going to be -- I am
19 not aware of the Commission receiving anything from the
20 Medical Association of Canada regarding the taskforce,
21 but we will certainly keep our eye open for that.

22 Would you have any comments or

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1 questions?

2 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** You
3 people will be faced with a dilemma that all people working
4 in the health field are faced with. Priorizing dollars
5 is always tough.

6 In some sense, you have to choose between
7 hospitals, health centres high tech and prevention,
8 participation, power to the people.

9 I gathered from you that you felt really
10 that you had to skew the dollars more to prevention and
11 public participation. That is very difficult in our
12 society as we find because of the fact that the high tech
13 is given to us daily by the television, whether it is
14 General Hospital or whatever. The whole public education
15 through television is that high tech will solve all
16 problems when we know that that is patently false.
17 Problems of housing, public health -- you get much more
18 return for what you spend with an anti-smoking campaign
19 than you will with another piece of high tech.

20 What do you think the chances are of
21 getting people in the Keewatin area and the people who
22 plan health programs for them to recognize this shift to

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1 what is sometimes called the wellness bottle?

2 **BETTE PALFREY:** I think the point of
3 what we were trying to get across is that the planning
4 of the programming has to come from the people in the area
5 that is being serviced. If there was global budgeting
6 given, then it would be incumbent on the people in that
7 area to do their best to plan for the needs as they see
8 them.

9 Right now, we are still being caught up
10 in the type of paternalistic system that says, "We know
11 what is best for you." But who knows best what is best
12 for this region better than the people of the communities
13 who are dealing every day with the problems? That is where
14 we see the necessity for change to empower and to involve
15 the people at a grassroots level to a greater extent in
16 the planning and in the process of being part of the health
17 system.

18 That is what I am saying. We feel that
19 the system, as it has been in the past, when it is handed
20 down from the top, from a very distant top in most
21 instances, has not adequately served the needs of the
22 people of this region, nor has it adequately served the

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1 needs of the Aboriginal people across Canada, but
2 everywhere.

3 In most places where I have talked to
4 people, they feel that they are at a stage now where they
5 have the education and the resources available at a
6 community level to be able to indicate where money should
7 be spent or where it could be directed more effectively.

8 So we are advocating that we take
9 existing dollars and better utilize them as we did with
10 the dental contract. We took existing dollars, relocated
11 it into the region. There are now nine people employed
12 within this region. It has provided some employment.

13 We would like to encourage the system
14 to look at the same type of thing for our hospital facility.

15 Currently, we go now to Churchill for health care. There
16 are 130 jobs that go with that facility. Ninety per cent
17 of the population that enter that facility are residents
18 of this region, yet those jobs, those dollars and all that
19 air transportation money that we are spending could be
20 more effectively utilized had we a hospital within the
21 boundaries of this region and could we provide those jobs
22 to children who are coming out of school here.

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1 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Who would
2 manage the global budget? Would it be the Regional Health
3 Board? Is that the proposal?

4 **BETTE PALFREY:** I certainly think that
5 that is something that the Implementation Committee to
6 look at a Nunavut government will be reviewing how budgets
7 are looked after and who is doing it. Currently, right
8 now, we administer the health budget for this region.
9 However, we administer it; I won't say we would control
10 it. The control still remains in Yellowknife.

11 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have
12 nothing but encouragement for you in this regard. The
13 efforts at community control in some other parts of Canada
14 has been, in some sense, spectacularly successful. We
15 have seen hospital use, day-bed use go down 30 per cent,
16 35 per cent; the use of prescription drugs go down 30 or
17 40 per cent, and the money going into preventive care and
18 homemaking and home support, and all those things going
19 up. The result has been dramatically better. So I give
20 you every encouragement.

21 **BETTE PALFREY:** Thank you.

22 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

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1 You mentioned a number of things that I was just wondering
2 about.

3 For the Ecoli problem we had in Arveat
4 (PH) that we spent something in the neighbourhood of a
5 million dollars, I think one of the major problems, of
6 course, was the stress that it gave the community and the
7 deaths that were associated with the problem.

8 You also mentioned the work that you are
9 doing in regard to trying to prevent cancer among our people
10 with the no smoking campaign and the mental health issues
11 and the alcohol-related deaths.

12 I am just wondering how you pay for all
13 of that?

14 **BETTE PALFREY:** The expenditures for
15 Ecoli was something that was covered under the supplemental
16 funding by the Government of the Northwest Territories.
17 The one million dollars is an estimate that we have of
18 hard costs that were involved.

19 Basically, the Centre for Disease
20 Control in Ottawa. There was some support from Atlanta
21 and all the laboratory costs, the extra manpower, the time,
22 what we don't have a good handle was all the soft costs

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1 of my time, all the departmental time, the other
2 departments, people who were involved that we actually
3 never saw. So we know it is well in excess of a million.
4 The million is what we really know for sure.

5 The other programs, Mike, that you
6 referred to, the preventative programs, there currently
7 is no financial resource available for most of those.
8 What we are saying is that we feel that if we invested
9 now in preventing some of these things that we think in
10 the long term, as Mr. Blakeney has said, we can reduce
11 the expenditures in other areas, but it is basically an
12 investment now and a reallocation of dollars in order to
13 be able to reduce costs in the long term.

14 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

15 Thank you.

16 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I was going
17 to try to impress the coordinators this morning with Lucien
18 Taparti and Larry Ussak to try to combine them, but I
19 understand that Larry Ussak left.

20 However, I would like to take the
21 opportunity to welcoming Lucien Taparti who is involved
22 with the Elders group in town that we had a get together

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1 with last night at the hotel. They did a fabulous drum
2 dance for you and they are quite well organized now. They
3 just started.

4 So I welcome Lucien who is the Elders'
5 Chairperson at this stage.

6 **LUCIEN TAPARTI:** (Translated from
7 Inuktitut) I would like to make a presentation. I would
8 like to say some positive issues, but that is not always
9 the case. I will be making a presentation that reflects
10 my views.

11 For example, I did some taping for CBC
12 last year and interviewed a number of individuals. I have
13 interviewed a number of Elders in different parts of
14 Keewatin and when I did the interviews, I interviewed a
15 number of people who are involved with hunting. There
16 are different meetings on annual bases or monthly bases
17 in different parts of the region.

18 I have interviewed different Elders from
19 different communities and there are different issues,
20 elections every year. We do go on campaigning and there
21 are campaign issues in different communities, whether you
22 are white or Inuk or whether you are unemployed or you

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1 are self-employed.

2 These are different issues that we
3 addressed on our campaign. After the election, we forget
4 some individuals. Perhaps we concentrate too much on
5 people who do have businesses and Elders and hunters are
6 neglected. This is not the only case in this community.
7 This reflects other communities as well.

8 Since this is the case, these people that
9 were campaigning before the election tend to concentrate
10 on some limited issues and they forget other campaign
11 promises that they had made. Some individuals are left
12 out.

13 This being the case, I would like to make
14 a presentation on Elders and Elders organizations that
15 we are contemplating starting. We don't have an
16 organization that represents us. Elders tend to be
17 neglected, not all of them but some of them.

18 This being the case, the Elders -- last
19 year I turned 65, for instance, and the Elders before me
20 didn't have a piece of plastic. Once they are
21 beneficiaries of an old age pension, they receive a card.
22 Mine came just very recently and it occurred to me that

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1 there are other pensioners, too. Other people have to
2 be aware that we have these cards and we should get
3 discounts if we carry these cards on some services.

4 We still don't have any people who are
5 representing our concerns. This is a good example of what
6 I mean where our concerns are not being expressed.

7 I had an opportunity to be employed, but
8 I was attacked by a polar bear; so I do have disability
9 now because of that.

10 I would very briefly like to say to you
11 that there are other issues and there were a number of
12 presenters who discussed the penitentiary system or the
13 correctional system. I would like to add to that
14 discussion. Very briefly, I would like to touch on that
15 issue.

16 Last year, we just came up with an
17 organization for Elders which was formed last year. We
18 had an annual meeting where Elders from different regions
19 met in Baker Lake last year discussing different issues.

20 A representative, our MP for this riding, Mr. Jake Annoiak
21 (PH) was invited and there were physicians who made
22 presentations to us on health issues. Those too made

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1 presentations. We discussed social issues and these made
2 their presentations to us on social issues.

3 Finally, we had an opportunity to
4 respond to the presentations. One question was: What
5 kind of rights would the Inuit like to discuss? I was
6 the only person that responded to him by saying that it
7 is the Inuit tradition that they depend on their Elders
8 as a resource. This is why their culture depends on Elders
9 and if they have any problems, they could depend on Elders
10 to discuss those problems. The Elders could help
11 individuals with problems.

12 So the Inuit tradition is different from
13 Ablunak (PH) and I think this was mentioned earlier. There
14 are different cultures and the justice system is different.

15 In fact, our justice system is different from your culture
16 and, in fact, right now the justice system just takes them
17 to -- these individuals are incarcerated in Yellowknife.

18 They just watch TV. They are not really being helped
19 by the system.

20 Elders would like to help the younger
21 generation and if it is a difficult case, yes, the justice
22 system will address that case. But if it is a

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1 culturally-relevant issue, I think we have a role to play
2 in addressing that problem. Perhaps it could be
3 family-related and we have to wake up individuals. Elders
4 have to educate individuals.

5 Also, right now, as a member of the
6 Elders organization, we don't have any funds
7 in place. We don't have a facility available, but we do
8 sometimes have a place to meet. We do have some support
9 from our community and also they respect us because we
10 are Elders.

11 So this is what I wanted to present to
12 you. As Elders organization, it would be very beneficial
13 to the community and we have just started very recently.

14 Right now, there is a vacuum in place between southern
15 culture and the Inuit culture for our young people. They
16 don't quite have the knowledge of our culture and they
17 don't quite have the formal education. So they are
18 sometimes in Limbo.

19 On a daily basis, they have to attend
20 the formal education institutions and there are some
21 traditional values that they don't learn because they have
22 to attend those education systems on a daily basis. There

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1 are other parts of an education that should be in place
2 which reflects the traditional values, like going out on
3 the land. They have to face some climate that is very
4 different in the classroom.

5 Another issue that will have to be
6 addressed is land claims because we can't always depend
7 on traditional campaigns. We don't really own the land.
8 There is a time for us to die and we are given certain
9 a certain time to live.

10 So if you understand my presentation,
11 I thank you very much for this opportunity.

12 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I would
13 open up the table for questions from the Commissioners.

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I don't
15 have many questions, but I want to thank you. I think
16 your presentation has been helpful to us. It is good to
17 hear from the Elders on what you have to say.

18 There is just one thing I wanted to ask
19 you and that is: You mentioned that you had a meeting
20 in Baker Lake with your Elders last year and you invited
21 your MP and you invited physicians, doctors. They had
22 asked what your issues were and you had explained them

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1 to them.

2 How did they respond to you when you said
3 what you thought Elders' roles should be?

4 **LUCIEN TAPARTI:** (Translated from
5 Inuktitut) Jack was the only one who responded to us and
6 he said, "How many Inuit can become interviewers?" I seem
7 to think that maybe he was thinking of finances when he
8 asked that question.

9 So I answered that if we really wanted
10 to help and really be able to assist as to who could be
11 interviewers, we should right now not even discuss
12 finances. That is what I answered him.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
14 you.

15 Perhaps my co-chair here might have some
16 questions or comments.

17 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have no
18 questions. I think everything was stated very clearly.

19 I just want to say that we are hearing from many people
20 the fact that it would be a good idea to involve Elders
21 in the justice system, particularly in dealing with younger
22 offenders, giving advice and counsel, rather than using

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1 the current system which doesn't work very well.

2 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you.

3 We should break for about half an hour
4 and we will try to get back at one o'clock if we can.

5 For the information of the presenters,
6 I would like to advise the coordinators, if they can get
7 a hold of Mr. Larry Ussak and Marius Tungilik, that they
8 will be on at one o'clock. Thank you.

9 --- Luncheon recess at 12:26 p.m.

10 --- Upon resuming at 1:17 p.m.

11 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Good
12 afternoon, everyone. I would like to welcome any
13 additional delegations from the community who are here
14 with us this afternoon.

15 Looking through the agenda, you are
16 probably aware that we are slightly behind schedule and
17 I will try to make sure my colleagues that we will try
18 to catch up during the day. Bear with me, please.

19 Our next presenter will be Larry Ussak.

20 Larry is part of the Hamlet Council at the present time.

21 He is involved with various activities within the
22 community with the dog mushers and the Recreation Committee

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1 which plays a large role in the community today. He is
2 here to talk about the housing issues that are involved
3 in our community.

4 Larry, please.

5 **LARRY USSAK:** First of all, as you know,
6 we live in a very cold country. There are no trees up
7 here and no shelter up here.

8 Housing is not the only thing that I am
9 going to be talking about. There are a few other things
10 that I am going to be talking about.

11 First of all, the wildlife up here. The
12 Wildlife Management takes care -- when you see it on TV,
13 it is kind of upsetting. You kind of back away and want
14 to be with the Greenpeace which you really don't want to
15 be at the same time.

16 As you know, the polar bear up here is
17 white and white is -- during the winter or spring season,
18 he is trying to be camouflaged. What some of the people
19 do down south or around the Churchill area is very upsetting
20 when they go around painting the polar bears with black
21 numbers on them. That gets really hard for the polar bear
22 to hunt on the ice because it is not camouflaged any more.

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1 That is really upsetting. We are not going to go around
2 and follow the bears and feed them. It is going to be
3 very expensive to do that. So it is better off if you
4 would not colour them and maybe do something else.
5 Colouring is not the answer, colouring them black.

6 If you talk to an Elder and ask him about
7 how the bear hunts, you would probably be pretty upset
8 after you hear the story of how the bear hunts. He has
9 a black nose. He even hides his nose when he is crawling
10 up to a seal and blinks his eyes. He hardly opens them
11 because his eyes are black, too, so that the seal won't
12 see it. So if you paint the bear black, it is kind of
13 hard for the poor bear to hunt.

14 Another thing that is really upsetting
15 too -- I have seen it on TV -- is when they put a big radio
16 collar on the bear and the bear has cubs to feed. That
17 gets really hard for the bear to hunt.

18 The government says that the bears are
19 dying away. It doesn't help too much when the government
20 puts collars on them and paints them black. That gets
21 harder for the bear to hunt. So there must be a better
22 way that it could be done to save the bear.

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1 Another thing, too, up here that is
2 really hard to is to find jobs up here. I believe you
3 two are booked in a hotel down there, the Siniktarvik Hotel.
4 When you come in, there are such things as training
5 programs up here. When you come in, the hospitality down
6 there, you see, seems to be okay, but all the high-class
7 jobs are white people and it hurts even for me. There
8 is hardly any training down there. Probably a lot of the
9 money that is spent up here from the government is for
10 training, but they probably use it on something else.

11 It would be nice if more things were
12 happening around the Keewatin, like more training. There
13 are high schools up here now. There could be more training
14 up here. So it is kind of upsetting even when you go in
15 there and see a lot of white people that have the high
16 class and all the underpaid are doing the sweeping and
17 very simple things.

18 There are such things as training. We
19 have been up here for over 50 years now in school and our
20 ancestors have been up here for thousands of years and
21 we survived okay on their techniques. So we could learn
22 your technique too and learn from your trade. We learned

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1 from their trade and we survived up to today.

2 So we are not going to go back into the
3 past now. We have to go ahead now. You guys (inaudible)
4 into jobs in your way; so we are going to have to fight
5 for those jobs now. So training is one of the issues that
6 I would really like to see up here.

7 We have a lot of drop-outs up here and
8 that is why we have a lot of suicides, like somebody
9 mentioned suicides. It is because of the jobs up here
10 that are really hard to find. It is so expensive up here
11 to live. Housing is very expensive.

12 Even for me to think -- like I wish you
13 -- without a job like me, to live up here, be on welfare,
14 I wish somebody from the government or the government could
15 hire somebody to live up here to see how it really is to
16 get the facts of life up here when you don't have a job
17 on welfare. It is a real tough life, especially during
18 the winter.

19 I know welfare is not the answer, but
20 cutting back on jobs is not the answer, too, because that
21 is what raises taxes when you cut back on jobs. The
22 government cuts back a lot of jobs and then they raise

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1 the taxes. That is not the answer. If you create more
2 jobs, there would be less taxes and more to give out to
3 the people.

4 Even down south, I am not a southerner,
5 but it hurts me to see when they cut back on the jobs.
6 They are creating more taxes and that is not the answer
7 at all. The more jobs you create the less tax there is
8 and the more people are happier.

9 I have a family with six kids and a wife
10 working at the school who makes fair money, but every week
11 we spend about \$700 and her take-home is \$1,400 for two
12 weeks. We hardly have enough money for ourselves for
13 clothing, but food and the house and to gas my machine
14 to go hunting and to clothe our kids. It gets to be really
15 hard because the food costs up here are so high. It is
16 so expensive to live up here.

17 Years ago, when I first started noticing
18 the sea, it used to be the ship from Montreal and things
19 seemed to be a lot easier until NTCL came along. It seems
20 like everything went up. That is one of the things that
21 we are trying to fight for in the Council. It is to see
22 maybe the ships start coming back up here from Montreal

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1 or somewhere from the south. It is a lot cheaper than
2 the NTCL and air freight is not the answer, too, for us
3 because it is so expensive.

4 For example, I have a dog team and I am
5 a racer. I like to race. For me to get two dogs from
6 Yellowknife, it costs me \$215. That is how bad the air
7 freight is just for two dogs to come up to Rankin from
8 Yellowknife.

9 Up here to fly in the Keewatin, it is
10 really expensive as you have seen. If you fly on Calm
11 Air and then you hit Churchill, to go south, the rate
12 changes. Why is that for us? Why do we get the bad end
13 of the deal here?

14 I think I have taken up your time here.
15 So I am thanking you for letting me speak here.

16 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
17 Larry.

18 Maybe, at this stage, I would ask the
19 Commissioners if they have any questions for Larry.

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank you
21 for your presentation.

22 You talk about the jobs and there is no

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1 training for any of the businesses to train your people
2 for better jobs or better opportunities.

3 Have you ever in the past had training
4 programs. There have been training programs offered by
5 Canada Employment and Immigration over a number of years,
6 and I am just wondering: Have you ever had those kinds
7 of programs in this area?

8 **LARRY USSAK:** I am not saying there
9 isn't any training, but I am saying that there is a lot
10 of southerners that have taken the jobs that should be
11 a job training -- like a good example is the hotel. There
12 are a lot of jobs that are taken. In the whole hotel,
13 there is Keewatin Travel. There is a front desk. If you
14 take a look at the front desk, the kitchen, there are a
15 lot of people that could be trained for those jobs up here.

16 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** But you
17 have never done this. No business has ever done this
18 before: trained some of your people, on-the-job training
19 or whatever?

20 **LARRY USSAK:** There is training up here,
21 but --

22 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** But it is

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1 not going to your people. Is that what you are saying?

2 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:**

3 (off-microphone) What Larry is emphasizing is that there
4 is not enough. For example, the hotel situation. That
5 is what Larry is indicating to us.

6 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** There is
7 some in some other businesses and stuff, but it is not
8 enough.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** That's
10 right.

11 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Do you
12 have any people working in employment counselling or
13 employment training for your own people?

14 **LARRY USSAK:** What I am getting at is
15 that there is training out there. There is training for
16 us, but I am just giving you an example. If you go into
17 the hotel, there are people who are sweeping the floor.
18 Who are they? I am just saying: Who has the high-class
19 jobs?

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Oh, I
21 understand that. I understand what you are saying, but
22 maybe you are not understanding what I am saying.

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1 Nevertheless, that is fine. I just
2 wanted to know if maybe these businesses aren't using the
3 training that they could use to help train people in better
4 ways. However, as you say, maybe there is just not enough.

5 Do you have some comments?

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** No, I
7 think Mr. Ussak has made his points.

8 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
9 Larry, for your presentation.

10 I will introduce Marius Tungilik who is
11 a unique individual by himself who did attend the
12 residential school in Chesterfield in the fifties and the
13 early sixties. He is also the Regional Director for the
14 region. He made the News North headlines about a week
15 ago when he was a lost and found person then.

16 I introduce Marius Tungilik.

17 **MARIUS TUNGILIK:** First, I want to thank
18 you for -- as you came here to the Inuit land, I am sorry
19 that you weren't able to visit other communities inside
20 the region. I know there are a lot of other people who
21 have a lot to say outside of Rankin Inlet. I am going
22 to speak in English.

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1 (English) This is a personal account
2 of my experience of residential schools. Many children
3 went through many of the same treatment and problems and
4 I hope it will provide an insight into our predicament.

5 In August of 1963, I was sent to
6 Chesterfield Inlet, Northwest Territories to attend the
7 Joseph Bernier Federal Day School by the federal government
8 and the Roman Catholic church. I was five years of age.
9 I returned there year after year from August to May until
10 1969.

11 Prior to my departure, life in my home
12 town, Repulse Bay, was bliss. I was loved dearly by my
13 parents. I was free to do whatever I wanted to do. Later
14 on, I would have been eased into performing tasks that
15 would have given me the skills to lead my own life in harmony
16 with my fellow men and nature. Every step of the way I
17 would have been told what needed to be done, how it should
18 be done and why it needed to be done. I was happy where
19 I was. I suppose I never really knew just how happy I
20 was then.

21 Obviously, my parents did not know what
22 lay in store for us in school, or they did not have a say.

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1 While our command of the English language would develop,
2 we were not taught anything about our language, our
3 heritage, our culture, our governing systems, our
4 spiritual background, our strengths. Any lessons
5 pertaining to our people taught us that we were Eskimos,
6 that we lived in igloos, that we rubbed noses, that Indians
7 called us "Eaters of Raw Meat". Would our parents have
8 consented to that sort of treatment if they knew? No,
9 they could not have known, nor could they have had any
10 say on the matter.

11 Aside from the fact that we were not
12 allowed to speak our own language in the residential
13 school, we cried many a night in bed from homesickness.
14 We were in a very vulnerable situation. It seemed like
15 we were asking to be taken advantage of. We could not
16 contact any members of our families as there were no
17 telephones, and we certainly could not run away because
18 there were no scheduled flights and there were no roads.

19 Strangely enough, the staff at the
20 Turquetil Hall -- that is the students' residence -- seemed
21 to comprehend just how alienated we must have felt, for
22 they paid particular attention to making us feel welcome

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1 for about a week after we arrived and about a week or two
2 before we returned home.

3 Oh, the days just before we returned to
4 our own communities! It was such an exciting period!
5 We were again relatively free from harassment. It was
6 spring time and we were anxious to go camping with our
7 parents. It made the abuse seem so surreal and so far
8 away.

9 My parents were deeply religious and
10 spiritual, and I was more than comfortable with that.
11 It was, generally speaking, a good wholesome way of life.
12 It required discipline. It reinforced their belief to
13 help others and it kept us in check. However, I was turned
14 off by the concept of God (for how could the men of God
15 be so evil) and the concept that men were put on this world
16 to rule the earth and to satisfy their needs regardless
17 of what it meant to the environment. I also later resented
18 the church for their role in colonizing the north and
19 assimilating the Inuit people into mainstream society.
20 I resented the fact that they discredited and destroyed
21 our spiritual values.

22 I am presently a Regional Director with

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1 the government of the Northwest Territories, a position
2 I would never have dreamed of filling when I was younger.
3 Not exactly, anyways. I had often taken long walks out
4 into the tundra back home when I was about four or five
5 and sang hymns out loud and daydreamed of helping people
6 by leading others. I practised making speeches that the
7 winds of changes were coming and of our need to be prepared.

8 Equipped with these dreams, coupled with
9 the topnotch English education that I received in
10 Chesterfield Inlet, I was able to grow into who I am today.

11 Everyone has a dream. We should all learn to tap into
12 them and strive to realize those dreams.

13 This topnotch education had a price.
14 I had neglected my heritage for a very long period of time.
15 It was not until I met my lovely wife, Johanne, in 1977
16 that my appreciation for the land and our culture developed
17 and blossomed. The land was always there, it was always
18 beautiful. The distaste that I had developed for my own
19 culture and my own people in school had a very profound
20 impact.

21 It had taken me a very long time to become
22 free of the brainwashing notion that our traditional ways

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1 were undesirable and obsolete. I was also blinded by work,
2 ambition and the need to explore the world.

3 It took me a very long time to realize
4 just what happened to me in my childhood and how it helped
5 shape my destiny and character.

6 There were many puzzling things that I
7 did not quite understand about myself. I did not always
8 know what was driving me, good or bad.

9 Why was I, for instance, so compelled
10 to control everything that entered my life? Why did I
11 physically abuse the one loved? Why the sharp tongue?
12 Why the escapism?

13 The complete recollection of Brother
14 Parent did not come to me for a long time. I thought about
15 it sometimes, but it was more like something that happened
16 to someone else in another time and place. He was one
17 of the supervisors at Turquetil Hall when I was there.
18 He was generally a good man, or so I thought.

19 We used to sleep in a dormitory setting
20 at the students' residence. Shortly after I began going
21 to school, I do not remember exactly when or how long it
22 went on for, he started bringing me into his room adjacent

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1 to the dorm. There he would give me some candies. Sweets
2 were rare then. He would fondle my genitals and ask me
3 how it felt. He would ask me to touch his genitals as
4 well. The strange mixture of excitement, of being
5 included, of the secrecy involved, of the sexual arousal,
6 of being bad in a holy environment, of wonderment, of
7 confusion, of the helplessness, of the shame, of being
8 used, of everything involved, overwhelmed me. It finally
9 ended tragically.

10 A number of us had started noticing that
11 more and more children were seen to enter the Christian
12 Brother's room and joked about whose turn it was to "milk"
13 the brother. At least knowing that I was not alone in
14 this situation helped me to cope better with the trauma,
15 I'm sure.

16 After a spell of this, we must have
17 decided that if it was okay for adults to act in this
18 fashion, it was okay for us as well. Late one night, we
19 crept out of our beds quietly and started to fondle one
20 of the boy's genitals. We got caught by one of the Grey
21 Nuns, obviously, and they, of course, had to make an example
22 of us. They did not bother asking us why we committed

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1 such an unthinkable outrageous act to begin with.

2 The next morning we were called to the
3 front of the dorm and accused of molesting one of our own
4 and made to strip and strapped with a belt in front of
5 everyone. Once again, we were subjected to another form
6 of abuse by their actions. That was enough to deter
7 Brother Parent, I guess. It never happened to me again.

8 Up until recently, whenever I
9 accidentally sniffed my hands, I would bring back memories
10 of the sexual abuse. I guess it reminded me of the
11 masculinity of the Christian Brother and the strong smell
12 of tobacco.

13 I was still relatively happy as a child
14 despite all that was happening about me. But it is
15 difficult to think of the happy times at this moment when
16 I am dealing with the trauma.

17 I was guilty like the rest when it came
18 to making fun of the big kids who wet their beds and the
19 peculiar ways that some kids acted and how fat some kids
20 were. It was all part of the subculture in school.

21 Many of us hated the kids of Chesterfield
22 Inlet who stayed with their families while we had no choice

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1 but to be at the "Vatican Penitentiary." We fought a lot.

2 The sense of competition between the "outsiders" and the
3 residence boys was very strong.

4 The food was horrible some of the time.

5 The rotten milk and the rotten fish heads which they served
6 with pride as part of the cultural inclusion were
7 particularly bad. I am sure they had a very small budget
8 to work with. We were never hungry, though.

9 The beatings by one teacher, the
10 infamous Mr. George Demeule, during one semester were
11 especially trying. He once had me at the back of the
12 classroom and asked me what he had written on the
13 blackboard. I did not realize that I needed glasses at
14 the time, but I just couldn't see, so I told him that I
15 didn't know. The next thing I knew, he stormed at me and
16 lifted me off my chair in a rage and threw me on the floor
17 and screamed that maybe from now on, I would learn to pay
18 attention.

19 The physical abuse that took place that
20 year was unbelievable. We were scared silly most of the
21 time because we had no idea what would happen next. The
22 teacher frequently went around the classroom with an

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1 eighteen-inch ruler and beat us on our backs as he went
2 from desk to desk.

3 It was not all bad though. We had games
4 after school outside the residence and it seems we were
5 always playing dodge ball. We were invited to parties
6 if we had collected enough good points during the month.

7 People sometimes say that we should just
8 be grateful for the education that we received which
9 enabled us to be where we are now. To those, I say: Yes,
10 but if we had to do it all over again, forget it! If you
11 only knew what we had to go through.

12 They may not realize that we had had to
13 go through some very rough times where we acted in ways
14 we did not understand. We were either branded as basically
15 bad people, suffered in silence, or failed to cope with
16 any of this at all. I have lost some friends who failed
17 to cope and committed suicide. There is little wonder
18 why my resentment for the Roman Catholic institution is
19 so strong at times.

20 When I was old enough to go to Churchill,
21 Manitoba to attend the Churchill Vocational Centre (CVC),
22 upon completing Grade 8, my parents decided, on the advice

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1 of the local priest, that it would not be in my best interest
2 to go after seeing how messed up the students were upon
3 returning. They reported that the students lost their
4 cultural identity and engaged in all sorts of sexual
5 activities. Little did they know that I had already
6 suffered the effects of such in Chesterfield Inlet.
7 However, being the agreeable person that I was, I respected
8 their wishes.

9 I have had to make a lot of changes in
10 my lifestyle after discovering how destructive I had become
11 and realizing that I need to heal myself to become a better
12 person. I can say it is never easy to ask for help. It
13 takes a considerable amount of courage and willingness
14 to change in order to seek help from outside. There is
15 always a way to improve oneself; however, the motivation
16 and the understanding is not always present, and the
17 resources are not always available.

18 I have been very fortunate over the years
19 to achieve many of my personal and career goals. I am
20 proud to be an Inuk and I am happy once again. There were
21 many a day and night that I could not consider myself
22 worthy.

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1 I know there are many people who have
2 suffered from similar problems who may still be wondering
3 where they went wrong. I strongly feel that it is time
4 for the church to face up to their wrongdoing and to help
5 foot the bill in helping the people they have wronged.
6 I also feel it is high time for former students of the
7 residential schools to come out and deal with problems
8 that they have been forced to live with for the past 25
9 to 30 years. It is necessary to get in touch with our
10 buried emotional pain that we have suppressed in order
11 to begin to heal.

12 When I think back to my childhood, we
13 must have had very strong coping mechanisms to survive
14 so much abuse of various kinds.

15 By dealing with our loss and grief, the
16 root of our demise becomes clearer and the road to our
17 recovery becomes easier to follow. However, because of
18 the limited resources in the north, it is extremely
19 difficult to find help.

20 We will continue to remain victims of
21 society and depend on government agencies for all of our
22 needs if we cannot come to grips with the root of our

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1 problems. We will continue to be wards of the state and
2 the cycle of violence and abuse will continue without the
3 commitment to right the wrongs committed to our people.

4 Without resolving these critical issues
5 of concern, we will not be successful in mapping out our
6 own future.

7 In summary, we were sent away from our
8 parents and familiar surroundings when we were too young.

9 We were subjected to many forms of abuse. We tried to
10 escape our past. We lost our spirituality. We suffered
11 from a loss of cultural identity. We became addicted to
12 alcohol and drugs. We perpetuated the cycle of violence.

13 We misdirected our anger; we failed to cope, all in the
14 name of assimilation and religion.

15 During the 1950s and 1960s, over a
16 hundred children were sent away to Chesterfield Inlet from
17 as far away as Pond Inlet, Pelly Bay, Repulse Bay, Igloolik,
18 Hall Beach, and Coral Harbour.

19 We need to know why we were subjected
20 to such treatment in order that we may begin to understand
21 and heal. I strongly recommend a public inquiry to deal
22 with the Canadian government and the Roman Catholic church

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1 to have them disclose information of their treatment of
2 Inuit children and to disclose information pertaining to
3 the residential school policy. I would also recommend that
4 a reunion of the students of Chesterfield Inlet be arranged
5 in the near future. Combined, it will serve as an
6 effective means of making the information and the resources
7 available. Then, perhaps, we will be able to put the past
8 to rest.

9 Thank you.

10 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
11 Marius Tungilik.

12 Perhaps I can open the table for
13 questions and comments from the Commissioners.

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** First of
15 all, I want to thank you. I think you are a very courageous
16 person to be able to come before us and to present yourself
17 so eloquently.

18 I want to say that we have heard many
19 horror stories about the residential schools and the
20 impacts of the residential schools from a number of
21 communities right across the country, but I don't think
22 I have heard one that has been so eloquently presented

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1 as you have. I do hope that you will provide us with a
2 copy of your presentation.

3 I want to tell you that the Royal
4 Commission is doing some research, specifically dealing
5 with the residential school problems. Those kinds of
6 recommendations have been presented before and we, I think,
7 can assure you that they will be taking into consideration
8 and there will be something -- I am not sure how fast or
9 how things are progressing, but certainly it is one of
10 the priorities of the Commission. So thank you very much.

11

12 I will ask if my colleagues have any
13 comments or questions.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I
15 underline what Viola Robinson has said. We have heard
16 a number of presentations, many, but a number which were
17 focused as yours was in the best way to promote the healing
18 process. How can this be done? How can the churches and
19 the government come to accept the fact and acknowledge
20 publicly that terrible errors were made and that steps
21 must be taken to, so far as it is possible, deal with the
22 harm created?

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1 It is that particular question we, as
2 a Royal Commission, are addressing: How best can that
3 be done and how can we make recommendations and to whom?
4 That is what we are dealing with. We had a little exchange
5 ten days ago where one of our Commissioners, Georges
6 Erasmus, said it is time -- he was talking about the Roman
7 Catholic Church at that time -- they made a formal apology.

8
9 We have heard from the Conference of
10 Roman Catholic Bishops saying that we have said this, this
11 and this. Fair enough, but it is sometimes not widely
12 known. It was done by Bishops of a given area, but the
13 problem is still there. There is not a perception that
14 there has been a full appreciation of the damage done.
15 We are trying to see how we can deal with what can no longer
16 be denied as very, very deep wrongs done to a significant
17 number of people.

18 **MARIUS TUNGILIK:** If there is any
19 information as to how we can deal with the residential
20 school problems, I would certainly appreciate knowing.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank you
22 very much.

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1 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
2 you.

3 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
4 Marius.

5 Before I go to the next presenter, I
6 would like to welcome the Leo Ussak Secondary School
7 attendance today with their teachers, Grade 2 and Grade
8 6 who are here with us today. For their information, this
9 is the hearing of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
10 Peoples. The Commissioners before you that you are aware
11 of are Michael Kugak, as the Commissioner of the Day, Viola
12 Robinson, a Commissioner, and Allan Blakeney, also a
13 Commissioner for today.

14 They will be here to listen to the
15 concerns of the Aboriginal Peoples as the day goes by,
16 and that is what we are doing today for your information.

17 Perhaps I can call the next presenter,
18 Mr. Paul Williams. Paul Williams is a clergyman in our
19 community and very closely tied with people who have social
20 problems and also the religion that is administered within
21 our community.

22 Paul Williams, please.

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1 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** Commissioners, I am
2 somewhat hesitate to appear before you today partly because
3 everything that I would want to say, I think, would be
4 better said by members of our Native community than by
5 myself. But as you have already been told, I am currently
6 the vicar of the Anglican Parish here in Rankin Inlet.

7 I would like to address simply today as
8 an individual, though, concerned with the well-being of
9 the northern Native people of Canada. I would like to
10 speak on two issues, if I may, they being education and
11 suicide.

12 Education is a wonderful tool and we have
13 the wonderful opportunity to pass it on to our children,
14 especially culturally-based education. From what I have
15 seen and know to be true, there just isn't enough funding
16 available to offer proper cultural education, whether it
17 be in language or land-skills or traditional history.

18 As you heard from our previous
19 presenter, much of this was robbed from the people. I
20 think it is time that we did all that we could to restore
21 it.

22 For an Inuk, survival depends on knowing

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1 your culture. If an Inuk isn't taught properly about
2 surviving in a harsh, unpredictable climate, he or she
3 won't survive. It is a reality of life up here. If that
4 same Inuk isn't given proper schooling, training to survive
5 in what is beginning to be a competitive job-wise society,
6 he or she won't survive. Also a reality up here.

7 So the individual who has not been taught
8 to survive within his or her own culture, on the one hand,
9 and who cannot get a job to secure a living on the other,
10 will not have the self-esteem needed to be able to handle
11 the very stressful lifestyle that we have up here.

12 In order that both of these areas of
13 concern might be dealt with, I believe that the educational
14 system that we have needs to take a longer look at the
15 messages it is sending out as well as the content.

16 To hire language instructors and
17 cultural inclusion workers was a good idea. But to hire
18 them and then to give them minimal wages and limited
19 resources seems to suggest that this area of education
20 is not so important after all. I have seen cultural
21 inclusion workers scrounging around for material, in one
22 case even going to the community dump to find cast-off

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1 scraps in order to teach a class.

2 The work that these language and
3 cultural inclusion staff are performing is just as
4 important as the work of the academic program teacher.
5 It is just as necessary. But the message that seems
6 clearly to be coming out is that this is a pleasant
7 diversion or a way of keeping children interested in school
8 long enough to give them a "real education".

9 The school system that we have needs to
10 look long and hard at what it is teaching and whether it
11 is really giving our children the education that they need
12 or the education that it is thought that they need. The
13 education we have now can lead and does lead in to many
14 situations to a person who is neither comfortable nor
15 prepared to live in the Native or the non-Native world.

16 I think it could be successfully argued that this is one
17 of the causes of alcoholism, abuse, criminal activity,
18 both petty and grand, and suicide.

19 On that note, I would like to turn to
20 my second area which is suicide. I am not going to instruct
21 you in the causes of suicide at this time. Indeed, there
22 are many. Every one of the 16 terms of reference for your

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1 Commission could be viewed as a partial cause for a person
2 wishing to commit suicide. Rather, I want to ask for help.

3 In the first round of your hearings, you
4 heard that the suicide rate for Aboriginal people under
5 25 is the highest of any racial group in the world. I
6 have heard, and believe it to be true, that the rate for
7 Inuit is the highest in Canada. I cannot think of one
8 community in the eastern Arctic that has not experienced
9 the tragedy of suicide.

10 A couple of years ago, in the community
11 of Clyde River on Baffin Island close to a dozen young
12 people, if not more, committed suicide in just over one
13 year; this in a community of less than 600 people.

14 Individual lives are touched by suicide
15 no matter where the person might be from. Perhaps because
16 the Inuit total population is so limited, a suicide in
17 one community will touch and affect people three and four
18 communities away. The suicide rate is truly scary.

19 Mr. Winston McKay, in addressing you in
20 round one, said that "if the [above-mentioned] stats were
21 duplicated in a dominant society, we would declare a
22 national emergency and mobilize all our resources." I

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1 agree with that statement.

2 Yet, very little of this is heard about
3 in that dominant society down south. True, the CBC's "The
4 Journal" did one program on the problem of suicide in
5 Inukjuak, Quebec, and then the subject was put aside, as
6 if to say, "Well, that's that! We've done all that we
7 can to help."

8 These suicides are happening in isolated
9 communities. The ongoing tragedy of suicide is not being
10 communicated to the south where the government sits, and
11 the tragedy is that even before we've had a chance to
12 recover from one suicide, before we've had a chance to
13 truly deal with one suicide, news arrives of another.

14 Most communities in the North suffer
15 with pain and shock each time a suicide or even an attempted
16 suicide occurs. There are so many negative feelings
17 arising out of suicide that entire communities practically
18 shut down in shock. The pain is so tremendous that,
19 practically speaking, the entire town needs some form of
20 professional help in trying to deal with the suicide.
21 This is especially true when there are multiple suicides,
22 one following another.

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1 Where are the legions of trained
2 counsellors that such an epidemic would prompt if we were
3 down south?

4 Most communities have nursing station
5 staff, clergy, and social workers in residence, but I doubt
6 that any of these are specifically trained to deal with
7 the issue of suicide. I know that I am not. I had three
8 weeks of training on how to cope with a suicide. None
9 of us are trained to deal with the issue on such a large
10 scale where an entire community needs help.

11 If I might make an analogy -- and I
12 apologize to the interpreters ahead of time -- the resident
13 professionals, the clergy, the nurses, social workers,
14 are like general practitioners. We are good at what we
15 do and we have abilities, we have training, we have
16 resources. But you wouldn't ask a general practitioner
17 to do delicate brain surgery. You would get someone fully
18 trained and up on the latest techniques.

19 The Territorial Government, funded in
20 part by the federal government, has hired one Suicide
21 Prevention Officer to care for people of the Kitikmeot
22 and Keewatin regions. Just looking at her territory on

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1 a map, you can see that what with airline schedules,
2 weather, and cost of transportation, she is not fully able
3 to care for each community when it needs to be cared for.

4 Her job seems very much like a band-aid solution to an
5 injury to a major organ.

6 Perhaps the government feels that with
7 her hired and with the resident professionals that I have
8 mentioned before, they can cope with suicide and, in this
9 way, deal with a suicide and also keep the costs down.

10 The other disadvantage of having just
11 this one person working in this field is that these
12 communities are suffering deeply emotional shock and it
13 is often hard for people to open up about their feelings
14 to someone who is basically a stranger. This is not the
15 Suicide Officer's fault, considering the size and scope
16 of her territory, but it adds to the frustration and the
17 grief.

18 The other way of handling suicide that
19 is often relied on up here is to fly a group of counsellors
20 and psychologists into a community just after a suicide.

21 They counsel and psychologize for about a week and then
22 they fly out, case closed. You cannot help an entire

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1 community in one week's time, and on top of that, a lot
2 of the problems faced by those who are left behind often
3 don't emerge right away. Eight months, nine months, ten
4 months later, when the next person attempts suicide, or
5 successfully commits suicide, the whole procedure starts
6 again, often with different trained counsellors arriving
7 because the other ones have packed up and left. It can
8 take up to a year or longer for some people to face up
9 to a suicide in their family or their community, but where
10 are the trained counsellors then?

11 It does not appear that suicide is a
12 major issue for our leaders. It may be a major issue,
13 but it doesn't appear to be. If I might paraphrase someone
14 else's comments, care and concern over this issue not only
15 has to be given, but it has to be seen to be given. People
16 have to see that the government is concerned about the
17 rising suicide rates.

18 I would like to urge, if I may, that your
19 report recommend that governments start training
20 individuals from each community and each reserve
21 situation, specifically to deal with the issue of suicide;
22 starting from prevention programming through grief

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1 management and the associated counselling that is needed
2 to deal with the emotional turmoil that a suicide causes.
3 This needs to be done soon.

4 I would also like to see the knowledge
5 that our Elders have in dealing with problems. I would
6 like to see that knowledge applied to the problems of
7 suicide and suicide prevention. But then they, too, will
8 need guidance and training in order to do this

9 How do we stop suicide? Again, the
10 answers are many, but I believe that a foundation that
11 has to be built upon is hope. Hope that unemployment will
12 end; hope that good housing will become available; hope
13 that when you finish your education there will be a job
14 for you; hope that someone, somewhere cares; hope that
15 this wretched life is not all that a person is going to
16 get. I

17 believe that part of your mandate is to
18 help bring a measure of that hope to the Aboriginal peoples,
19 and I thank you for the work that you are doing.

20 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
21 Paul Williams.

22 I will turn the table over to the

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1 Commissioners for questions and comments.

2 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank you
3 very much. I would like to thank you for your
4 presentation. I think that your concern for the education
5 has been addressed very precisely.

6 I believe that when you talk about the
7 need for the cultural -- education has to be both cultural
8 as well as academic. If you don't get either, if you get
9 one, you will fall in between.

10 You mentioned in the area of education
11 that culture and language should be considered of equal
12 importance to other academic subjects. You think that
13 the education system has a definite role in providing
14 cultural education to Aboriginal people, including, of
15 course, language.

16 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** I believe that the
17 education system has a role to play in that, yes. The
18 community is involved, but the school has to also be
19 involved.

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** That
21 seems to be what we have been hearing, but just here the
22 other day we also heard that the role of cultural education

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1 and language is a role of the parents.

2 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** I wouldn't argue that.

3 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Maybe it
4 could be both ways.

5 Where we are here now in Rankin, are
6 there any kind of cultural courses that you are aware of
7 or languages courses that are provided? I know their
8 education system goes up to grade 10. Are they providing
9 any of that now?

10 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** The education system
11 goes up to Grade 12 and in the higher grades, at present,
12 I know that there is a language and a Northern Studies
13 Program which does do some of the work. But I do know
14 that the Northern Studies Program, in the high school at
15 least, is supervised by two people, one of them simply
16 doing language. She is looking after language study for
17 upwards of 100 students which means she can practically
18 give them a minute and a half of her time per day.

19 There is some programming going on, but
20 I would argue that it is not enough and it is not funded
21 well enough.

22 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Are they

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1 considered as credit courses?

2 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** Yes.

3 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I am
4 going to turn my questioning over here to my colleague
5 and see if he has any.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I wonder
7 if you could give a comment on how you think things are
8 going with respect to what I took to be your chief message.
9 Do you think there is a rising level of hope for the future
10 among the young Aboriginal people in Rankin Inlet and this
11 region or a falling level of hope? Do they see the world
12 developing more or less as they would like it but far too
13 slowly, or do they not see any real signs of hope in the
14 future?

15 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** Anything that I would
16 say on that would be pure supposition, but my feeling is
17 that while our young people are seeing glimmers of hope
18 -- like pin pricks in a black cloth -- the overall picture
19 is still a very dark one and, at times, it seems, even
20 to myself as an adult, that we have an opportunity of hope
21 given to us and, at the same time, the rug is pulled out
22 from us in another area. It is almost like a

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1 counterbalance so that we are never given a firm enough
2 footing on which to build.

3 In talking with my own daughter, who is
4 15, and youth of her age, it is almost like the world is
5 just on a rollercoaster and they are not sure where they
6 are going to be able to get off, if they are going to be
7 able to get off.

8 I am not sure if I have answered your
9 question.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Oh, yes.

11 This really deals with some very fundamental issues with
12 respect to how governments and others who are in some
13 position of authority or influence attack these problems.

14

15 Is it somewhat important, very important
16 or not very important that the control of institutions
17 in the community devolve to local Aboriginal people, the
18 empowerment argument? Is it primarily a matter that there
19 is just not enough resources being devoted to the problem
20 or is it primarily a matter that the resources are being
21 funnelled through culturally-insensitive governments and
22 organizations which don't allow the resources to be

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1 adequately used? It is some of both, undoubtedly, but
2 where would you put the emphasis?

3 **PAUL WILLIAMS:** I agree with you that
4 it is some of both. I am sure I could put an emphasis.

5 But if I had to lean one way, I would say that more emphasis
6 needs to be put on empowering local leaders. As I said,
7 perhaps the local Elders could be made more responsible
8 and be given more authority in these areas. It is not
9 that the government is -- well, the government and the
10 churches still are paternalistic in many ways. So a lot
11 of their authority does need to be given away, but it is
12 also true that the funding is just not enough.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
14 you.

15 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
16 Paul Williams.

17 Looking at our agenda, our next
18 presenter is Angie Kubuitok. Angie is involved with the
19 activities of the Anglican Church in our community and
20 also a representative of the Housing Association.

21 Angie, please.

22 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Even though I

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1 represent those organizations, I was asked to speak on
2 suicide prevention.

3 I will briefly start off with myself.
4 Two weeks before my husband committed suicide, he said,
5 "I knew I was going to miss my mother when she was gone."
6 That was very heavy, very, very heavy. It happened eight
7 years ago.

8 When death takes a loved one, grieving
9 is a painful and sometimes prolonged process. At times,
10 it may seem impossible to face the simplest task to get
11 through the day. The desire to withdraw is strong. The
12 whole world is a dark place to wake up to.

13 It is so obvious that the fatherless or
14 the motherless children are not themselves. They tend
15 to shy away from others and the parent who is left to care
16 for them sometimes will do anything to keep them happy.

17 When I was told to do this suicide
18 presentation, I interviewed a couple of young people who
19 had lost a brother or a sister, a daughter or a son. So
20 this is what my younger sister told me. She tried to help
21 out in any way she could to please her niece and nephew.

22 For example, buy material things for the children to keep

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1 their mind off what happened to fill the loss of their
2 parents, things that the children themselves might want
3 and yet keep quiet about it. That is when it hurts the
4 most: when the children are afraid to express themselves.

5 The parent who is left to care for the
6 children is over-protective because they have already
7 suffered a loss in the family. In my case, my children
8 were sad and we all missed their dad in the springtime.
9 That is when their father took us out camping together.

10 I hurt inside and yet I didn't want to
11 show it to my parents or my brothers or sisters. I wanted
12 to show them that I could be independent. I felt guilty
13 when either of my parents saw me crying for my late husband
14 because I knew that I was putting a burden on them. I
15 felt that I was not only a burden to my parents, but to
16 the community as well. I hid in my sadness. I forced
17 myself to be happy even though it hurt so much inside.

18 Life is not the same any more.
19 Socializing is not important any more. Part of me is gone.

20 I wanted to withdraw from the community. Family members
21 were angry, breaking material things. It took three years
22 to really realize that he was gone. Some of my sisters

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1 and brothers withdrew from other people and stopped
2 socializing. Some are afraid to get married, afraid the
3 same thing is going to happen to them.

4 It hurts more when a person takes his
5 or her own life. Death is only accepted when there is
6 a disease in them. Father or mother-in-laws constantly
7 think that they don't make their son-in-law or
8 daughter-in-law feel welcome at home, in their home. All
9 they can do is show love to their grandchildren. They
10 see that the children are still looking for their father
11 or mother who is gone.

12 The grandchildren ask about their
13 parent, where they may be. When mother wakes up, she often
14 goes to the bedroom to see that her son is there. The
15 son had turned to alcohol to replace the loss of a loved
16 one and we tend to argue with our siblings over nothing
17 practical.

18 When I did this research, I asked them:
19 What can be improved? For the young people, make sure
20 you get heard clearly when you are having trouble with
21 yourself or other friends. Say that you are having trouble
22 with a close friend. Let your feelings out. Talk to a

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1 counsellor, close friend or someone you trust. And when
2 you talk to these people, use extreme caution with a
3 suicidal person.

4 Encourage them to socialize with their
5 peers. Let them know that you are available to talk when
6 having problems. Do not joke about suicide and when people
7 talk of suicide, take it seriously. Give him or her family
8 support. Don't let them be alone during this time.
9 Encourage them that they have a reason to live. Show them
10 love and make them feel special.

11 The Suicide Prevention Specialist
12 should talk to the family who has just lost a member.
13 It really works because the woman I interviewed said her
14 son had changed and started showing love to the children
15 who had lost their mother. Even a follow-up afterwards
16 should be an asset. We would like to see the crisis line
17 open longer hours.

18 I will read one more piece which I got
19 from one other person I interviewed.

20 "I lost a brother in the mid-seventies to suicide. He
21 was my oldest brother. He was the
22 President of the Student Council

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1 at the high school in Yellowknife.
2 To this day, our family doesn't
3 know why he did that. It is a very
4 bad experience since we didn't know
5 that he needed help. If I knew he
6 was gong to through this, I would
7 have given him family support. I
8 was in elementary school when this
9 happened and he was in a different
10 community. It still comes to my
11 mind that I wish he was still here
12 with us. If only he knew how much
13 we loved him, maybe it wouldn't
14 have happened. I hope anybody
15 does not have to go through with
16 this. It makes you wonder why he
17 did that and it is like an
18 unfinished book. My suggestion is
19 that when somebody talks about
20 committing suicide, take it
21 seriously and don't joke about it
22 because it is a serious problem.

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1 Give him or her family support and
2 don't let them be alone during this
3 time. Encourage them that they
4 have a reason to live. We should
5 always love each other and not let
6 anybody feel that they wouldn't be
7 missed. By committing suicide,
8 you just ruin your beautiful family
9 and hurt lots of friends. If you
10 just wait, you will find the better
11 day."

12 Thank you.

13 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
14 Angie.

15 If I can have your permission at this
16 stage, would you be able to wait for questions from the
17 Commissioners?

18 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Yes.

19 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I would
20 open the table for questions from the Commissioners.

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I want to
22 thank you for becoming before us with your presentation.

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1 It is a very sensitive topic -- suicide -- and we, as
2 Commissioners, have heard many moving, emotional
3 presentations dealing with suicide.

4 I don't have any questions for you. I
5 think you have outlined a lot of the problems and maybe
6 some of the solutions as well on what should be done about
7 suicide.

8 You did mention in the end -- I have just
9 a brief question -- about the open line. Did you say you
10 had a crisis line? Does that operate 24 hours?

11 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Yes, it is open Monday
12 to Friday from seven to nine or ten.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I see.

14 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Seven to ten.

15 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** That is
16 throughout the day, I guess, seven in the morning until
17 ten in the evening.

18 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Yes. Some people I
19 interviewed would like to see it open 24 hours if it is
20 possible.

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** The
22 points you have made here are very valid points and I don't

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1 have any more questions for you. I do want to thank you
2 for your courage to come before us and speak on such a
3 sensitive topic.

4 I will ask my co-chair here if he has
5 any comments or questions.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I just
7 have one comment.

8 You have made some suggestions
9 encouraging people to talk about their problems; not to
10 joke about suicide; having a crisis line open longer hours,
11 if possible; using the services of after suicide
12 counsellors.

13 I think I would just like to add one thing
14 and that is that we are not in control over our own destiny
15 or the destiny of others; partly in control, but partly
16 not in control. Therefore, we can't take the burden of
17 all the things that happen.

18 This is particularly true when grief
19 strikes because there is something about grief which causes
20 us to ask ourselves: Was there something I should have
21 done? Could I have...? All of those. We have to
22 understand that those are part of the grief and they are

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1 not real. They are not fair questions to direct to
2 ourselves.

3 Of course, we grieve. There is nothing
4 we can do about that. We grieve. We are human. But we
5 should not tax ourselves by asking: If only...? What
6 if...? Could I have...? That is part of the grief and
7 not a real question about the real world.

8 That is the only comment I make.

9 **ANGIE KABLUITOK:** Thank you.

10 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
11 Angie.

12 Going to the agenda again, we have Leoni
13 Kappi. She is the Chairperson from the Community
14 Education Council in our community and also plays a very
15 important role in our community for the education aspect
16 of it and has been very involved in education-related
17 matters in our community.

18 Leoni, please.

19 **LEONI KAPPI:** (Translated from
20 Inuktitut) I will speak in my language.

21 On behalf of our Community Education
22 Council, I would like to thank you for this opportunity

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1 to make a presentation to you. There are a number of issues
2 that we would like to address as an Education Council.
3 Because there are a number of people who will be making
4 presentations, I will briefly introduce some issues.

5 First of all, this education system is
6 introduced at an early age, right from the time the child
7 is born. The education system is from kindergarten to
8 Grade 12 and we have contemplated on issues that would
9 be relevant to the graduates for higher education.

10 Other than the Arctic College, any
11 curriculum that would be relevant to the Grade 12 graduates
12 -- and I would like to touch on Reverend Paul Williams'
13 presentation which touched on the Education Council
14 members.

15 It is important to have a curriculum
16 which includes cultural traditional knowledge. Our going
17 out on the land is one curriculum that is not in place,
18 but funding is always a problem for us. Because of the
19 limited funding, we can't introduce this curriculum to
20 our schools, although we would want to encourage it.
21 However, we don't have any access to the funds for this
22 kind of a curriculum.

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1 Regarding adult education, at the
2 moment, adult education is a very small facility and I
3 think for the drop-outs, it would be an opportunity for
4 them to use that facility. When drop-outs start
5 contemplating that they have very limited education, they
6 would want to enter the adult education system, but we
7 don't have any adult educators. We don't have funds
8 available to provide adult educators and we don't have
9 the funds to provide a facility that would be used for
10 adult education.

11 Our language is another issue. We are
12 very concerned about our language. We have a deep interest
13 in our language, that it should be part of our education
14 system. We will be working very hard to make sure that
15 our cultural education staff are provided with
16 certificates. Right now, we would like to see a
17 certificate in place that would give these people an
18 opportunity to be provided with certificates recognizing
19 their culture.

20 In terms of funding that is provided to
21 the different institutions in Canada, we should be given
22 an opportunity to be provided with funds. To give you

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1 an example, Japanese people in Vancouver are provided with
2 funds to seize some different clothing that are provided
3 in Vancouver. I think if we were given an opportunity
4 to show what kind of cultural clothing we have or
5 traditional clothing we have, it would be part of
6 education.

7 Another item that we would like to
8 address is training. It is necessary to provide a training
9 program so that our staff could be trained properly, but
10 funding is always a problem as well. Although Inuit could
11 be part of the classroom, I think for a classroom assistant,
12 they should be provided with a training program in which
13 they would be given an opportunity to upgrade to the next
14 level.

15 When you have a very limited budget for
16 your organization, it is always difficult to address these
17 issues. Perhaps if we could be provided with more funds,
18 if we could have that access, we would develop more programs
19 that would be relevant to our Council.

20 Thank you.

21 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Are there
22 any questions or comments from the Commissioners?

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1 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** First of
2 all, I thank you for your presentation. You keep stressing
3 the lack of funding. Is that all that is really stopping
4 you from pursuing the kinds of things that you have talked
5 about here?

6 **LEONI KAPPI:** Somebody mentioned
7 earlier that regarding our language or our culture
8 inclusion programs, we do have staff members for Grade
9 9 to 12 and we only have one instructor for those grades
10 for the language program.

11 She does have a certificate, but we are
12 trying to get an additional staff member. We did make
13 some submissions, proposals, but we were denied access
14 to funding.

15 At the elementary level, for instance,
16 there is a shop teacher at that level and there is another
17 instructor. We have some budget to provide salaries to
18 those two positions.

19 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
20 you. I will turn it over here and see if there are any
21 questions or comments.

22 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** A couple

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1 of questions, if I may, one fairly specific and one a little
2 more general.

3 The first one: Having to do with adult
4 education which you suggested is especially needed for
5 drop-outs -- and you spoke of not having a facility --
6 is the regular school open at night, the K to 12 school,
7 and is it available in the evenings for adult education?

8 **LEONI KAPPI:** Yes, it is open to the
9 public in the evenings. We could probably open it for
10 people who are interested in adult education, but we have
11 only one staff member. If we had more staff, perhaps
12 additional staff, it would not be such a burden and perhaps
13 we could set a schedule to have adult education in the
14 school. At the moment, we don't have it in place in the
15 school.

16 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** My second
17 question is a more general one. Are there Inuit teachers
18 at the school, at the K to 12 school, and are there enough
19 of them? How would you suggest to get more Inuit teachers?

20 **LEONI KAPPI:** At the moment, there are
21 more than ten people who are in training programs. They
22 are involved in the Keewatin Teacher Education Program

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1 and there are over ten of them on the program right now.

2

3 We are requesting for an Inuktitut
4 instructor who has the expertise on traditional knowledge
5 or traditional knowledge on different parts of sleighs
6 -- we are requesting a person with that kind of a
7 certificate, but right now there is a number of people
8 who are on the Teacher Education Program. What we are
9 requesting is a person who has the expertise on traditional
10 knowledge.

11 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
12 you.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
14 you.

15 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**
16 I have one question regarding a comment you made on
17 students, regarding traditional skills, for example.
18 Perhaps if they are provided with --

19 **LEONI KAPPI:** To give you an example,
20 in Rankin Inlet, if I want to go out caribou hunting or
21 fishing, how would I survive if I were caught in a storm?
22 I would have to learn to survive. I would have to learn

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1 survival skills, techniques. How can I cope with the
2 situation?

3 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
4 Leoni.

5 I am going to try to compliment myself
6 because I am catching up with the agenda and I wanted to
7 assure the coordinators that I am catching up.

8 The next presenter is from the Inuit
9 Cultural Institute, Ollie Ittinuar. Ollie is a respected
10 Elder in the community whose interest is the Inuit culture.

11 He keeps the issue alive within the communities and, for
12 that matter, in the North where Inuit culture is involved.

13 Ollie Ittinuar, I give the chair to you.

14 **OLLIE ITTINUAR:** (Translated from
15 Inuktitut) Thank you very much.

16 As he told my name, I Ollie Ittinuar.

17 I am 70 years old and I have no education. I am a true
18 Inuk. I can't even speak English. I only speak
19 Inuktitut. I can't read English either.

20 I am going to keep it short. I can never
21 speak long because I am Inuk, maybe. I am the Chairman
22 of the Inuit Cultural Institute Board and we keep -- I

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1 have been recognized and I have been working for a number
2 of years in terms of the Inuit tradition. I keep trying
3 to keep the tradition and culture alive either by inside
4 (inaudible).

5 During the winter, of course, this
6 becomes very hard to carry and I have lived inside the
7 tree line and outside the tree line. Those two are very
8 different we are living in. I have lived inside the tree
9 line for nine years. It is fine. It is less harsh. As
10 long as you have a place, it is not as harsh as it is up
11 here.

12 Up here where we have lived since I have
13 grown up, before the white man came, I used to hunt around
14 here when there was nothing to find. Today, it is now
15 very different. You can see everything here in Rankin
16 Inlet.

17 The Inuit Cultural Institute, as I was
18 saying -- as much as we had been working hard on this,
19 we don't want to lose it. There have been -- finances
20 is always an issue here. I see sometimes -- have been
21 going up and down in terms of finances and everything seems
22 to be going that way. I also know that when there are

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1 a lot of organizations -- I know because there are so many
2 different organizations now, it is harder to give out the
3 finances that they are really requesting. It is very much
4 like trying to ---

5 As I was saying, the work that I see us
6 trying to do, the Elders -- no doubt, in the next few years,
7 they are going to be gone and while they are still alive,
8 we are trying to work as hard as we can. Those who have
9 seen and those who are able to see what they used to do
10 and what they remember from what they have learned from
11 their parents and from their grandparents, we are working
12 hard on this so that once we are gone, it will known in
13 the future and it can be recorded, documented.

14 Those of us who live here -- I know we
15 should have a culture and a tradition. We have to work
16 hard on that. We work together sometimes. Sometimes we
17 work together and sometimes -- well, that is the way it
18 is. Sometimes we argue with the government and that is
19 where we get our funding. Sometimes when it takes them
20 a little longer to deliver the finances, it becomes a
21 littler hard, but it is good. It does help. It does help.

22 Also, in terms of the work that ICI does

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1 -- sometime in the future, it will be noticed, of course.
2 It will have a use, especially when the Nunavut government
3 is started. Of course, the work that they have done --
4 there is going to be a use for them some time in the future
5 for maybe our children's children. No doubt, all this
6 use is going to be the work we are doing right now. Maybe
7 they are just sitting there right now, but they will have
8 a use in the future. It seems very obvious.

9 Using myself as an example, I have been
10 in the south and have lived -- using my children as an
11 example, there have been -- the school doesn't have enough
12 funding except the fact -- that is true. For us, the Inuit
13 tradition -- we have learned that -- in terms of survival
14 skills -- and we have our own traditions and cultures.
15 We have to teach our children and there are so many now.

16

17 It seems not too long ago that there are
18 lots of people with lots of children. When I see the
19 kabloonaq and they are using traditions, I realize that
20 the last person who was speaking in terms of teachers --
21 as I was saying, the Inuit Cultural Institute -- they have
22 with them some implements that used to be -- we had to

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1 try in Ottawa. Right now, they don't have any room in
2 -- they are not at the museum for three years. It has
3 been over two years.

4 But as much as they have to be in the
5 Inuit -- and we have been asking for facilities to house
6 them, yet we have -- so that they would be here in the
7 museum there. They don't really want to keep them. But
8 because there is no funding for facilities, which is why
9 they are not just stored in Yellowknife -- we remember
10 this every day and talk about it every day as to how we
11 would find facilities for them. They are real
12 implements, like old carvings and old implements, and there
13 are all kinds of them. This is something that we are
14 working hard on today.

15 Also, the other subject that I wanted
16 to -- and I am very forgetful, as I am forgetting as I
17 am talking. People here in the world -- we are all Inuit.
18 They may have different dialects, but their lives are
19 from the past and since the (inaudible) of non-Inuit,
20 including the Indians. They have their own traditions.
21 I am talking about the Aboriginal people.

22 Every once in a while, they should use

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1 their culture and it is not even documented. It should
2 be documented on paper, but it should not only be documented
3 orally. So we have heard of these suicides. These will
4 not end as we live on this earth, but right now, one thing
5 that we are working hard for some of us -- maybe just some
6 of us; I don't know. Sometimes it seems as if we are not
7 being heard in terms of the Inuit tradition and the culture.
8 Sometimes we don't have a full understanding of it.

9 Those of us who know and understand, we
10 have to prepare in terms of judgeship. We have to help
11 them so that what we used to use to help out with -- I
12 also used to work with the RCMP. This is all we are.
13 We can't say, "Why don't you go over there for a while?"
14

15 So now we are looking for ideas in
16 Yellowknife. They came from justice to talk to us and
17 I believe them. They gave me some letters and some
18 documents -- what we used to use -- it should also be
19 documented and so now I really believe that -- let us agree
20 together and then give it to them. Even though I may not
21 have a formal education, I have my own knowledge that I
22 could use that I could write down. This is what I am trying

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1 to do. I just wanted to present that to you. I like it
2 and I am working on it.

3 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I will ask
4 for questions from the Commissioners. Perhaps they might
5 have some questions for you.

6 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
7 like to thank you for your presentation. I agree with
8 you. I don't think I have any questions for you. I think
9 you have made very good points and I couldn't agree with
10 you more.

11 I will ask and see if there are any
12 questions over here from my co-chair.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have
14 one question at the start.

15 You tell me that you are 70 years old.
16 How do you keep your hair from going grey? I am not 70
17 and mine is going grey.

18 **OLLIE ITTINUAR:** (Translated from
19 Inuktitut) Grey hair is irrelevant in terms of ages.

20 I forgot one item. While I have this
21 opportunity with you, for a number of years now, we have
22 been putting in plans. I have been involved with different

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1 -- in fact, I was at a hearing where the railroad was
2 discussed in Manitoba. It was discussed that this would
3 go all the way up to the Arctic and, in fact, it should
4 be addressed at the House of Parliament because it would
5 be an economic opportunity for Canada if they could build
6 a railroad or some kind of a transportation system to the
7 Arctic. We order items from Montreal and they are very
8 expensive and they are very expensive to transport, too.

9 Perhaps, if the Churchill railroad is
10 irrelevant to you, it will be still relevant to us in terms
11 of costs because all the goods that are up here are very
12 expensive and it would be very relevant to the Natives.

13 I would want you to raise that issue to the House of
14 Parliament.

15 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I have
16 one other question, if I may, and this is a serious
17 question.

18 Is your Institute and other
19 organizations like it -- are you recording on taperecorders
20 the stories of the Elders in all of the communities
21 throughout the Arctic? There are some wonderful tales
22 to be told and, as you say, those Elders will not be with

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1 us forever. I am wondering whether the recording is going
2 well.

3 **OLLIE ITTINUAR:** Yes, we have a number
4 of tapes. In fact, we have a whole number of them down
5 at the Institute. We have recorded the Elders. We have
6 recorded some of our Board of Directors deliberations.
7 In fact, we just relocated from Muckviat (PH) to Rankin
8 and we have a number of Elders' tapes.

9 In fact, we are contemplating sending
10 these tapes to different places because some of these tapes
11 are very old.

12 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank you
13 very much.

14 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you
15 very much.

16 **OLLIE ITTINUAR:** Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

18 I have one question, sir.

19 You mentioned that your activities --
20 if Nunavut becomes a reality, they will be used. Since
21 the ratification has been completed, are you involved in
22 part of the land claims process in some ways?

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1 **OLLIE ITTINUAR:** I cannot really
2 respond to you on that question. If the land claims people
3 can approach us, we are more than happy to accommodate
4 them in discussing the land claims issues because we are
5 part of the land claims process. We will be affected by
6 the land claims. So we would be more than happy to
7 accommodate the people from land claims.

8 Thank you.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you.
10 Pertaining to our agenda, seeing that
11 Peter Ernerk is not here today, I will go into the three
12 o'clock schedule which was entitled for John Todd, MLA,
13 as we made that alteration this morning.

14 I have a letter fro the Chairperson for
15 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, a letter from
16 John Todd, MLA for Keewatin Central.

17 Before we break, I would like to read
18 the letter to the Commissioners if I may.

19 "I am writing from Yellowknife to extend my greetings
20 and to welcome you to Rankin Inlet
21 and to the Keewatin Region.

22 As you are aware, I had originally requested the

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1 privilege of appearing before the
2 Royal Commission on Aboriginal
3 Peoples in order to outline some
4 of the concerns and positions that
5 have been brought to my attention
6 during the time I have served as
7 a member of the Legislative
8 Assembly to represent my riding,
9 Keewatin Central. Regrettably,
10 inclement weather had made it
11 impossible to travel from
12 Yellowknife in time to meet with
13 you. Alternatively, I will look
14 forward for a written submission
15 early next week. I trust you will
16 feel at home during your stay in
17 Rankin and that your hearings will
18 prove instructive.

19 Please do not hesitate to count on the hospitality
20 and helpful perspective of the
21 people that you will encounter
22 while in the Keewatin.

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1 Best wishes for the task ahead of you and my sincere
2 wishes that we might have the
3 opportunity to meet in person again
4 some time in the near future.

5 Yours sincerely, John Todd, MLA, Keewatin Central."
6 So he will be doing a written submission early next week.

7 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
8 like to thank you for that and the letter will be recorded
9 and we will be looking forward to his submission.

10 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** At this
11 time, I think we have caught up to our schedule. This
12 will give us a chance to have a coffee break for ten minutes.
13 --- Short recess at 3:08 p.m.

14 --- Upon resuming at 3:26 p.m.

15 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** We can
16 resume.

17 I would like to state that there are
18 several people not in attendance that were supposed to
19 do a presentation, like Kevin Sanquin who is on the agenda
20 for Katauyak Society. He is not in attendance. So we
21 will go to the next one on the list which is the Keewatin
22 Legal Aid Society, Annie Napayok.

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1 Annie is also a member of the Keewatin
2 Inuit Association. She is also quite involved with the
3 activities in a small community sixty miles south of here,
4 Welco (PH). So she is quite active in that community in
5 the community activities.

6 Annie, please.

7 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** Mr. Chairman, I am Annie
8 Napayok. I am the Vice-Chairman for the Keewatin Legal
9 Aid Society and I was asked to come here on behalf of Legal
10 Aid, especially in terms of the legal -- as we are working
11 with the -- since 1989 -- and I was in the first Board.
12 When my term was over, my term was extended.

13 As we have been made to understand, as
14 we understand here in the Keewatin, in terms of the law,
15 not only in the Keewatin, the law that we follow -- of
16 course, which is not necessarily geared towards the
17 Aboriginal people. They are not even really geared
18 towards even to the smaller communities.

19 The Canadian law and the Constitution
20 is what they are based on and those that are to be --
21 anything that has to do with the law, even with those --
22 of course, everything that goes on, even adoption, we deal

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1 with all the legal issues which, for us Inuit, are not
2 based on our culture.

3 I am sure you have heard so many times
4 that -- one that I really wanted to touch upon is that
5 last year, when our Board was meeting, in the Keewatin,
6 there is only one lawyer who does work for all of the
7 Keewatin. Last October or September, when we were
8 meeting, we were told that in the next two years inside
9 the Keewatin there had to be 66 people that had to be
10 interviewed.

11 Because there were so many -- and it
12 became obvious that the younger ones -- that also have
13 to go through the justice system and it seems that -- and
14 there are people -- they have been waiting for so long
15 and there are even those who -- because they have to wait
16 so long to go through the court system, sometimes they
17 become so afraid. They have been living this life for
18 so long, as much as they are supposed to be witnesses and
19 so on, or whether they are just waiting to be sentenced.
20

21 One thing -- we, as Aboriginal people
22 -- there is a use when you follow the Canadian law.

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1 Sometimes they even say they are too young in terms of
2 the -- when they are only 18 years, he has now become an
3 adult according to the law. Even our young people
4 understand that.

5 When they think they are able to do
6 anything that they want following the law -- so they use
7 that to not follow their parents advices. I am not saying
8 that the youth are bad people, but in terms of the law
9 which is not -- I thought I would bring that to you.

10 According to our tradition and culture
11 and our -- since we were children that we have been
12 following -- there are those that we have followed and
13 I have been thinking about this for a number of years.
14 Our bases, our own unwritten Constitution and our own
15 unwritten laws should also be written down and be
16 recognized.

17 As much as we like the laws that we have,
18 some of the laws we are now able to -- but those of us
19 who have caught up -- for those who have committed any
20 crime -- back then, they were not even discussed as long
21 as they have not committed murder.

22 What they used to be able to do is that

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1 they have forgiven each other after having discussed the
2 matter face to face with each other. They used to follow
3 what they said they were going to do, but today, in terms
4 of the law, now that we are following these laws -- when
5 I say -- in terms of law, I could say, "Yes, I am going
6 to do it." I can either say "yes" or "no". Of course,
7 they, themselves -- they are going to have to be told.
8 So for these number of years, because you did this crime,
9 you are going to incarcerated.

10 Also, the other part that is geared
11 towards this -- those who are Inuit understood that there
12 is a correctional centre in Yellowknife and then there
13 are other -- when we are arrested and we are either in
14 Iqaluit or Yellowknife. So depending on the seriousness
15 of the crime, we could even be sent down to a penitentiary.

16

17 Something that we would like to express
18 -- sometimes it takes us Inuit a long time to understand
19 exactly. Because we did not follow these laws from our
20 children, sometimes we don't always understand them and
21 we are just getting to the point that we are understanding.

22 Sometimes, without knowing that we have broken the law

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1 and not realizing that we have because we did not know
2 and did not understanding -- because of this -- now ---
3 Last year, we went to a workshop which
4 had to do back in 1990. I think it was 1990 or 1991 in
5 the Alaska. That had to do with the law either from
6 Greenland or even from the States and from all over the
7 community. They went to Alaska to a workshop to go and
8 listen as to -- that wanted to hear what the Aboriginal
9 people wanted.

10 There are some Aboriginal people in the
11 different worlds that are now starting to use their own
12 laws. I think even in Saskatchewan where they are starting
13 to place in their own laws which was derived from there.
14 Instead of putting away the young offenders -- for
15 incarceration -- and the person who was really incarcerated
16 -- their grandparents took them to an Island. He kept
17 on going back and forth between. So he was finally taken
18 to an island and kept there and incarcerated.

19 Using the Native traditions, learning
20 all the traditions, whether it is hunting -- and told all
21 those stories and now he is able to do that. So now he
22 is trying to -- he is very envious. While we were there,

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1 we heard -- and those who came to hear these lawyers and
2 judges and anyone who had to do with the law, they were
3 there to listen to the Aboriginal people. When we saw
4 this, we were all very happy and these different cultures
5 -- as to how -- and they were able to discuss from their
6 own experiences as to how inappropriate some of the laws
7 are.

8 When we came back, I was thinking that
9 now we have something else to work towards while the Elders
10 are still there and maybe have them go and visit. I was
11 thinking that we would be able to do that, but when we
12 got back, we had another workshop with a legal workshop
13 and then we found out that the funding has been cut. We
14 were told that the Keewatin Legal Aid Society Board
15 probably would not even exist any more.

16 Even after we heard that, if you had
17 heard that from those other people that we met in Alaska
18 (inaudible) -- when they were visiting to do some research
19 and also to see the penitentiaries and the -- they visited
20 all of those and visited all the Elders trying to learn
21 what their cultures were in terms of their own Native law
22 in Quebec. They even went to Iqaluit. In the legal --

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1 they also went to the legal centre in Iqaluit to try to
2 do there -- except we find out here, since our last meeting
3 -- here is what we wanted to do -- to have maybe at least
4 two elders, a male and a female, to ask them to decide
5 what they used to do. We were told that there was no
6 funding and so we were not able to go ahead with that.
7 So we were to meet with two after Christmas. After
8 Christmas, it is now what we have.

9 In terms of the Native cultural --
10 because the funding had been cut -- as much as we have
11 a lot of work to do in terms of the law, in terms of
12 Aboriginal law, especially those that we have been
13 concerned about, those who are supposed to go through the
14 legal system -- as long as their crime isn't that -- because
15 the RCMP has always informed, has always told us as to
16 how serious the crime was. So maybe even these younger
17 children -- if they could be worked on through the
18 traditional legal system, I think this would have a great
19 impact.

20 I am very glad to be able to say that
21 because I can discuss this with you while you are here.

22

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1 In the past week, I had a meeting with
2 -- I met with KRC and I discussed this with them, too,
3 and they, of course, welcomed us on this. They also said,
4 even though it was just -- at least they showed us that
5 we have their support. I am very glad that I am -- in
6 terms of the law, I am glad that I was able to present
7 what I have for you.

8 Thank you.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I would
10 leave it for questions from the Commissioners at this stage
11 or comments.

12 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
13 like to thank you for your presentation on justice.

14 It appears that you certainly have
15 raised some problems here in terms of your work. By the
16 fact that you just have one legal person representing the
17 whole area of Keewatin, I think that is one that is very
18 lacking.

19 But I do want to talk a little bit about
20 your suggestion about the system the way it is now and
21 how it deals with the Aboriginal youth. The system that
22 you referred to prior to it -- there was a way of dealing

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1 with the Aboriginal youth, not just putting them in the
2 institutions and the way you are describing it. That has
3 been talked about before on other occasions.

4 For instance, I think you talked about
5 young offenders who don't become -- they are considered
6 an adult when they are 18 years old and there was a way
7 of dealing with those offenders prior to the law that you
8 use now that was working. You were mentioning that those
9 kinds of laws that were being used by your people, even
10 though they were unwritten, should be recognized. We have
11 heard this over and over again and I am sure you will get
12 a lot of support from that.

13 As well, going to Alaska and hearing what
14 other countries are doing, I think that would give you
15 a lot of insight because we have also heard, too, about
16 how some Aboriginal communities in other countries are
17 administering their own justice through peacemaker's
18 courts and dealing with issues other than those such as
19 murders or such.

20 I guess what I want to share with you
21 is that -- I have to say that I share your concerns and
22 your problem, I guess, now is that you have a lack of

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1 funding. It seems that there is no commitment from any
2 government or anything for you to continue your work or
3 it is being threatened that the funding might stop or the
4 support might stop from governments to continue the work
5 that you are doing.

6 Is that accurate?

7 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** Yes, you are very
8 accurate. For instance, if we are to start a program in
9 which we could do some research on taping the Elders --
10 we have made a request to do some research, but there are
11 absolutely no funds available to do some research. In
12 fact, our organization could dissolve because of lack of
13 funding.

14 One of the lawyers left last year and
15 part of her services was funded by the Government of the
16 Northwest Territories. She was a part-time staff and
17 part-time staff to the Legal Board of the Northwest
18 Territories. In fact, the lawyer we have right now is
19 totally funded by the Legal Board from the Northwest
20 Territories.

21 So I think GNWT's commitment is to
22 dissolve our organization and this is a problem to us when

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1 we want to do some research on our traditional system that
2 we could introduce. This is something that is lacking
3 in terms of funding from the governments.

4 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Perhaps
5 we can share with you some of the areas that the Royal
6 Commission will be doing work in, and one of them is in
7 the area that you are talking about: justice. As a matter
8 of fact, we will be holding a round table on justice next
9 week and the Royal Commission will be embarking or has
10 already began to do research in the area of justice.

11 Your presentation here will be alerted
12 to the staff to ensure that this issue is addressed at
13 our justice round table next week. So we hope that maybe
14 somewhere in the future somebody from our research staff
15 on justice may be in touch with your organization to see
16 how maybe we can do some work together on your areas of
17 concern.

18 So, at this time, I will turn the
19 microphone over to my co-chair and see if he has any
20 questions for you or comments.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Let me
22 ask a couple of questions about how you might see the legal

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1 system working in the Keewatin Region.

2 Do you feel that the police work in the
3 Keewatin Region should be done by the RCMP or by some police
4 who are appointed by the people in the Keewatin Region?

5 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** Could you clarify what
6 you mean by appointing police work?

7 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** When
8 people talk about the justice system, they sometimes mean
9 how the police work and sometimes how the courts work and
10 sometimes how the prosecutors work and somehow the
11 correction system works.

12 I am just asking you whether you were
13 generally satisfied to have the RCMP do the policing or
14 whether you would like to have the police appointed by
15 maybe the GNWT, like in Ontario with an Ontario Provincial
16 Police, or maybe by the people in the Keewatin Region,
17 by an elected board in the Keewatin Region, like City
18 Winnipeg or, perhaps, by the Hamlet Board, like in some
19 towns that I know where they appoint their police persons.

20

21 Are you satisfied with the RCMP or would
22 you like some people who were local?

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1 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** Sometimes there is a
2 problem with the RCMP services because they are part of
3 the federal government system and because of the
4 guidelines, there might be some conflict because we are
5 the residents of the Northwest Territories. We have to
6 follow the laws of the Northwest Territories and sometimes
7 there might be a piece of the legislation that might not
8 be under the jurisdiction.

9 So, in terms of the RCMP service, we are
10 generally satisfied with the RCMP, but there is always
11 some kind of a policy problem because it might be something
12 that might be relevant to their jurisdiction.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** One
14 further question. Has your legal aid society done any
15 thinking about what kind of a justice system might work,
16 let's say, in the Keewatin Region if it was based upon
17 the traditional laws of the Inuit? Let's say for criminal
18 law and let's say for not too serious crimes, could you
19 think of how that might work? I think it could work.
20 I am just asking whether you have been thinking about how
21 it might work.

22 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** We have contemplated

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1 dealing with an issue, but we haven't put it in any plans.

2 I think Aboriginal people should have some kind of a
3 jurisdiction in which the RCMP should provide them with
4 a jurisdiction in terms of not serious crimes.

5 Some other thing that I didn't touch on
6 is an issue. There are juries that are in place and the
7 jury system is something we use, too, up here. However,
8 when you have a jury system, you require interpreter
9 services.

10 If the unilingual Inuit were to be
11 involved, even though they have the very capable use on
12 a jury, they are not allowed to be on a jury because they
13 don't speak English. This is always a problem. Although
14 they could be used by the jury system, they are not being
15 used because they don't speak English.

16 It would be more appropriate to have
17 these people on a jury, but because you don't speak English,
18 sorry, you can't be on our jury. So I think that because
19 I have an interest in the justice system, I should be
20 involved.

21 The other thing I would like to introduce
22 is a busing system or a transportation system. In order

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1 to get a transportation system in place, you have to have
2 a guideline which requires so much kilometres. This is
3 a policy for the education system. Although our climate
4 is very harsh, we cannot have any transportation system
5 in place because you do not meet our requirements. Yes,
6 it is very cold. In fact, your temperature is down at
7 minus 50 to 55 range.

8 I could elaborate on the requests we
9 would like to make, but because it involves some kind of
10 a policy, this should be addressed and we don't have these
11 funds in place. There is always a problem because of these
12 different policies.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
14 you.

15 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**
16 I have one question. I have a question regarding the
17 justice system.

18 I think you mentioned 66 cases and some
19 of these cases involve a number of months and the
20 physiological stress they go through while waiting for
21 their case to be heard. In the Baffin Region, for
22 instance, I think they have a Justice Committee in place

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1 right now.

2 I wonder if we could have one in place
3 in the Keewatin Region in the future?

4 **ANNIE NAPAYOK:** Because of lack of
5 funding and because the Keewatin Legal Aid Society could
6 be dissolved because they don't have the funding in place.
7 The funding that is provided from Yellowknife might not
8 -- so there is absolutely no funding place to start up
9 a justice system that could be used for Keewatin. Because
10 we don't have any funds, we cannot operate this mechanism.

11 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you
12 very much, Annie.

13 At this agenda on our agenda, the people
14 who were supposed to be here, people such as Mr. Peter
15 Ernerk, Mr. Kevin Sanquin, Karen Acorn, who is not here
16 at this stage -- I would like to advise the coordinators
17 to contact the following people for written submissions
18 later on in the week or so, if they may.

19 In that case, I would like to, on behalf
20 of the Municipality of Rankin Inlet, do a submission on
21 their behalf, if the Commissioners don't mind, before we
22 go to open forum.

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1 Thank you for the opportunity to present
2 the concerns of the people of Rankin Inlet and other places
3 that were here today to talk about the important issues
4 of our daily lives in the community.

5 Again, to repeat the importance of the
6 issues that you heard today, I will briefly talk on behalf
7 of education, health care, justice system, self-government
8 and the alcohol and drug problem in the North.

9 It is obvious that our education system
10 is not working for our youth. We have to find a mechanism
11 to teach our children that will combine the traditional
12 values and the ways that the technological advances of
13 society. We have met the skills of entry levels. I will
14 give you an example: carpenters, electricians,
15 secretaries, bookkeepers and also heavy equipment
16 operators, and people of that nature.

17 I assure you that the next skill would
18 have to be professional jobs: doctors, lawyers, and
19 engineers. Our society has to start to accept these and
20 we need higher education. We need opportunities in our
21 community to prepare ourselves for the upcoming
22 self-government and to balance a wage economy structure

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1 that we have.

2 We see that this is to pave the way for
3 the existing ratification that did happen a week or so
4 ago on the Nunavut vote. That is our submission on the
5 educational part from our community perspective.

6 Number two, the health care. Life
7 expectancy for Inuit has lengthened and, therefore, the
8 population is increasing. With the Elders' population
9 on the rise, we have determined the health care and the
10 housing system for them. We require a birthing centre
11 in our community so that the low risk births can take place
12 here. In the past, women have to be sent out for six weeks
13 prior to the south and this is an unacceptable situation
14 at the present time for our society.

15 We are planning a multi-use health care
16 facility to meet the needs of the medical requirements
17 in our community and our region. We feel that this is
18 a humane approach to health care to enable us to deliver
19 the service in our region and our community. That is our
20 submission on the health care issue.

21 To reflect on the alcohol and drug
22 problems in our community and throughout the North, we

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1 all realize that it is very high. We are still wrestling
2 with the problems that we have related to crime, violence,
3 mental problems and suicides.

4 As a community, we have taken the
5 initiative to try to rectify the problem in our own hands
6 and try to educate ourselves as community people and
7 Aboriginal people to know how to use the use of alcohol
8 in our community and try to handle and prevent programs
9 that will look after such services. That is our submission
10 to the Royal Commission.

11 Number four, the justice system. The
12 justice system does not always reflect the need of the
13 culture that it governs. A legal system needs to be
14 developed that recognizes the culture and uses the Elders
15 in that system. That was expressed by many presenters
16 today, that this should be the case. That is our
17 submission to you today.

18 Also, on self-government, as I
19 indicated, the recent land claims negotiators have been
20 ratified. We, in the eastern Arctic, have an incredible
21 opportunity to develop programs and policies that will
22 benefit our residents to reflect the needs of the special

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1 people it serves in the Nunavut area, to achieve our
2 mandates and goals by the Inuit to pave the way for the
3 younger generation.

4 These five items are our submission to
5 the Royal Commission. I would like to advise you that
6 we will be submitting a written copy to your resource people
7 and we trust that our submissions will be taken seriously.

8 We will have expectations that they will be considered
9 and submitted to the proper people who will react to them.

10 At this stage, thank you for listening
11 to our submissions and I am open for questioning at this
12 time. Thank you.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I don't
14 think I have any questions. I think you have summarized
15 very well the presentations that were made here today.

16 I do want to stress, though, that I do
17 hope that all the written submissions that were made were
18 passed in to our staff so that we will have things recorded
19 accurately. As well, it is to assure you that anything
20 that is being presented here or any other hearing is taken
21 seriously and will be directed to the proper research
22 staff.

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1 We look forward to written submissions
2 for those who are not here. There are a number of ways
3 that you can make your submission. You can do it by written
4 briefs that can be sent to the Commission or you can do
5 it through tapes or video or you can do it through phones.
6 We have toll free lines that you can call. We don't want
7 anybody to be intimidated by coming to have to sit before
8 an audience and to make your concerns known. We want to
9 ensure that we don't want any barriers for people to make
10 presentations to the Commission.

11 Before I make my thank yous, I am going
12 to ask my co-chairs if they want to make any closing
13 comments or any questions to your remarks.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I would
15 like to put a couple of questions to the Mayor.

16 The first one would deal with drugs.
17 We have been getting some different signals across the
18 North as to whether drugs are a problem as opposed to
19 alcohol. We are getting the same signals with respect
20 to alcohol in almost every community. It represents a
21 problem. But with respect to other drugs, some say "yes"
22 and some say "No, not really."

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1 I am wondering what you would say about
2 Rankin.

3 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
4 Allan.

5 I will respond to that as a community
6 experience. I had indicated to you that there is a wide
7 problem of alcohol and drugs in our community. That is
8 without question. What I indicated to you also is that
9 we are trying to come to grips with this and are trying
10 to alleviate the problems that we are facing, trying to
11 work together as a community to come to the bottom of it.

12 We are trying to give proper preventative programs in
13 our community, such as the Addiction Program that we have
14 under the wing of the Hamlet at the present time.

15 However, this is not working for us
16 because, as expressed throughout the presentations, due
17 to the lack of funding, there is so much this program can
18 do. So what I am saying to you is that the social programs
19 that we have in our community don't have the adequate
20 funding to properly sustain the programs that they wish
21 to deliver, one of them being the drug problem in our
22 community.

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1 I hope that answers your question.

2 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** So you
3 would say that there is a drug problem besides alcohol.

4 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** That's
5 right.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Let me
7 ask another question and this is purely for my information.

8
9 You refer to Rankin Inlet as a Hamlet.
10 What other classifications of municipal government are
11 there? I suppose Yellowknife is a city, is it?

12 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Yes.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Is there
14 anything between a city and a hamlet? Is Inuvik a town
15 or what are the -- can you give me a little rundown of
16 what the categories are?

17 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Certainly.

18 From one to about four -- your local government is a
19 settlement council. Then your next up is the Hamlet
20 Council which gives you more power. Then your next step
21 is a village which does start to go into taxing authorities
22 and so forth. Then your next level of government is your

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1 town, such as Iqaluit. The higher up you go, then you
2 go to city, the city council and so forth. Those are the
3 four or five levels of government systems that are in place
4 in the North.

5 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** So the
6 Hamlet of Rankin Inlet -- the Council can't levy taxes.
7 Can they levy property taxes?

8 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Yes, they
9 can. What they have to do in that case is go to the public,
10 do a vote and the public has to vote to initiate or approve
11 and the vote has to be 70 per cent or something. There
12 is a standard that you follow. The community has to give
13 you the rubber stamp to say you are a tax base.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** All
15 right. I am really finding out whether the community of
16 Rankin Inlet has many ways to get money itself. It doesn't
17 obviously have many ways to get money.

18 There were many references to inadequate
19 funding and some of it would come from Ottawa and most
20 of it would come from Yellowknife, and I wondered whether
21 some of it might have come from the Hamlet of Rankin Inlet.

22 I wasn't clear always as to whether, when people were

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1 talking about lack of funding, they were talking about
2 lack of funding from Ottawa or lack of funding from
3 Yellowknife or lack of funding from Mr. Mayor. It is
4 mostly the first two, I gather.

5 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** On that
6 remark, when we talk about lack of funds, we are generally
7 talking about GNWT programs that are allocated to us.
8 With respect to a tax base community, we are merely talking
9 about real estate and we are not talking about much more,
10 and that is as far as it goes.

11 If you are talking about taxing to
12 produce more programs in the community, I don't think that
13 is the angle that we look at here.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
15 you.

16 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Likewise.

17 I will go back to being the facilitator.
18 Going back to our agenda, I understand that the one I
19 ruled out, Karen Acorn, is now in the audience. Perhaps
20 I could call upon Karen who is the Suicide Prevention
21 Officer for our community and, for that matter, for the
22 region. She is very active in the social programs in all

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1 the various communities of which there are seven at this
2 stage.

3 Karen, please.

4 **KAREN ACORN:** As Mayor Kaludjak
5 mentioned, my name is Karen Acorn and I would also like
6 to introduce Nowya Williams.

7 I am pleased to have the opportunity to
8 speak with your Commission today. I work for the
9 Department of Social Services within the Government of
10 the Northwest Territories and I am in a position of Suicide
11 Prevention Specialist for the eastern Arctic.

12 We all realize that suicide is not a new
13 phenomenon. Research tells us that it has been happening
14 for years in cultures throughout our world. However, over
15 a decade ago, Canada started to recognize the enormity
16 of the problem and the traumatic and devastating impact
17 that it was having on our society.

18 Today, the average rate of suicide in
19 Canada is approximately 14 per 100,000. Statistics for
20 the Northwest Territories suggests that the rate of suicide
21 is three times higher than the national average.

22 Those most at risk for suicide are males

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1 between the ages of 15 and 25 and the most common methods
2 used in suicides are firearms and hanging.

3 When considering northern lifestyles,
4 risk levels may be considerably increased when the
5 lethality and the means by which to attempt are available
6 in every community and, in fact, in many homes.

7 It is encouraging to know that people
8 in communities across the Territories have recognized the
9 need to address the issue of suicide. Again, national
10 statistics will suggest that for every death by suicide,
11 there are seven people directly affected. I would suggest
12 that the number of people directly affected by suicide
13 in the Territories increases dramatically and may impact
14 several communities, not just one.

15 Unfortunately, many people who are
16 addressing the problem of suicide have also experienced
17 the suicide death of a loved one. While wanting to stop
18 this from happening in their communities, they
19 continuously search for a sense of understanding.

20 These people may include the father who
21 wonders if his strict discipline caused his son's suicide
22 or the mother who heals her own pain associated with her

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1 son's suicide by telling others that it was not their fault
2 and that they are not to blame. Or, another father who
3 may feel that he should have spent more time with his son.

4 Another situation, a lady who continues
5 to relive her feelings of helplessness because she was
6 hundreds of miles away when her sister chose to take her
7 life. Or, the people who have lost a very dear and close
8 friend and years later realize that they still miss that
9 friend and they still don't understand why their friend
10 is dead. An older man who 15 years after his brother's
11 suicide still has difficulty talking about it and when
12 he does, becomes extremely emotional.

13 These are just a few situations and they
14 are not just in the Northwest Territories. These
15 situations could be anywhere in Canada, but, again, they
16 are a few situations presented to you in the briefest form
17 without any of the details of what these people are left
18 with to relive and rework in their own minds, within their
19 families and within their communities.

20 They are real situations of people who
21 are attempting to work through their grief and I believe
22 they have our respect for their courage and strength.

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1 Furthermore, we need to provide services
2 that will, in essence, support survivors of suicide,
3 services that are culturally-appropriate, that offer
4 support and allow for the work that is required for healing
5 to begin. To adapt to grief is hard work.

6 Simultaneously, we need to address
7 suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. We need to move
8 beyond seeing suicidal actions as a manipulative tool and
9 we need to begin to recognize it for what it really is:
10 a cry for help, an action that states there are serious
11 underlying problems that need to be addressed.

12 Suicide, in the majority of cases, can
13 be prevented if information is given and skilled
14 development is provided. Reports that have come out of
15 the Northwest Territories and the communities who have
16 participated in those reports echo my personal belief that
17 suicide is not a problem that the government can solve.

18 It is a problem of each individual, of every community
19 and of society as a whole.

20 Individual care and concern must be
21 given to our fellow friends, families and neighbours.
22 Communities must develop an action plan to address all

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1 aspects of suicide, be it prevention, intervention or
2 post-vention.

3 Society, in the form of developed
4 structures, such as government and various related
5 departments, services and agencies, must do their part
6 in assuring that the means are made available by which
7 individuals and communities feel confident in tackling
8 their concerns relating to suicide.

9 A major step has already been taken.
10 Suicide is being addressed as a recognized and serious
11 problem. From this, awareness to the problem is being
12 raised, but there is a long way to go and I believe there
13 is much work to be done.

14 I believe that it is through avenues such
15 as this and on behalf of my position that I request some
16 serious thought be given to the area of suicide in the
17 Northwest Territories; that consideration be given to the
18 people that I represent through the position that I hold
19 with the government, ensuring that awareness and education
20 be available to individuals and communities; that
21 communities grow and develop the confidence to prevent
22 suicide; and that those who suffer a loss by suicide are

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1 provided with the support they so desperately need.

2 I would just like to thank you once again
3 for the opportunity to speak to your Commission.

4 Nowya, do you have anything to say?

5 **NOWYA WILLIAMS:** (Translated from
6 Inuktitut) I would like to add to the presentation because
7 this presentation is something that has to be addressed.

8

9 As you know, if we look at the whole
10 Northwest Territories, the Keewatin Region has been
11 affected by this problem.

12 Even in Rankin Inlet, if there was no
13 commitment and no suicide in Rankin -- there has been some
14 suicides. If there was a suicide in Coral Harbour, Rankin
15 would be affected. So there has to be some kind of a
16 program that has to be in place that would address suicide
17 that would be relevant to our communities.

18 For example, we could use our Elders.
19 Although they don't have the formal education, they don't
20 have a certificate saying that they have this certain
21 expertise, I think they could contribute to a program such
22 as suicide prevention.

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1 I think there are some community people
2 who would be interested in contributing, but because they
3 don't have any certificate in place, they don't help.
4 I think there have been a number of suicides now.

5 Since the government has been in the
6 Arctic for a number of years, they have been waiting for
7 -- they just wait for programs and we say that government
8 can address this issue. However, you have seen results
9 that if we just wait for the governments, our problems
10 just keep growing and there are a number of suicides that
11 have occurred already.

12 I think there has to be a -- we shouldn't
13 just wait. I think there has to be a mechanism in place
14 that would involve our Elders. They have gone through
15 an experience with grief such as death in their
16 communities. There is a problem with a relationship
17 between a man and his wife -- these were addressed by the
18 Elders.

19 In fact, they could contribute, but they
20 are just standing on the sidelines waiting for the
21 government to react to this situation. I am not saying
22 the government is all to blame regarding suicides, but

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1 I think we should be sensitive enough to involve our Elders
2 in programs because they have the expertise in dealing
3 with some experience. It seems like they are just set
4 aside and I think we should see some kind of a mechanism
5 in place where Elders can be involved and participating
6 with this kind of activity.

7 I am very happy to make a presentation
8 to you today and I hope we will see some results with your
9 public inquiry. As you know, there have been a number
10 of suicides that have occurred already and I think there
11 should be other positions open in terms of Suicide
12 Prevention Officers

13 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you.

14 I would open the floor to the
15 Commissioners for questions and comments.

16 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
17 like to thank you both for your presentation.

18 Suicide Prevention Officer -- we have
19 had some presentations earlier today, some highly
20 emotional ones dealing with suicide. So we do recognize
21 the seriousness of the suicide issue.

22 First of all, are you the only worker?

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1 How much area do you cover?

2 **KAREN ACORN:** This position was
3 established for the eastern Arctic and I believe came as
4 a response to regional forums that were designed to provide
5 an opportunity for individuals within communities in their
6 own regions to get together and discuss the issue of
7 suicide. From those forums, reports were developed and
8 presented and part of, I believe, the response to that
9 is the position.

10 Yes, at this point in time, there is one
11 position for the eastern Arctic.

12 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** One
13 position. That is what evolved out of those forums.

14 **KAREN ACORN:** And one person.

15 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Has there
16 been any work done in developing a plan for a program that
17 would adequately service and address the issues that you
18 have raised?

19 **KAREN ACORN:** There is such a plan in
20 place right now. It is still in the development stages
21 and that is with regard to a curriculum, I believe, that
22 the is looking at addressing the issue of suicide within

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1 the Territories.

2 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** How far
3 along is it? At what stage is this plan?

4 **KAREN ACORN:** It is entering, I believe,
5 into the final stages.

6 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** When do
7 you think it will be ready?

8 **KAREN ACORN:** I really can't answer
9 that. I haven't been closely involved with it, although
10 I am aware of it. I think they were hoping it would be
11 completed early in the new year or at least to the stages
12 that they could go into some final drafts.

13 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Has there
14 been a lot of Inuit participation in the development of
15 this program?

16 **KAREN ACORN:** Yes, I believe there has.

17 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** So it
18 includes some of the things that you talked about,
19 including the utilization of the Elders.

20 **KAREN ACORN:** I believe the curriculum
21 they are working on is or will be very adaptable and that
22 that is one of the things that they are hoping to have

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1 happened with the material they are developing. It is
2 that it will be adaptable not only to regions or
3 communities, but for young and old so that they will be
4 able to use input and support.

5 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** That kind
6 of information would be helpful to the Commission once
7 it is completed.

8 So I would ask my colleague if he has
9 any comments or any questions for you.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Is your
11 role in your office of a Suicide Prevention Officer
12 primarily designed to talk with individuals and families
13 who may have experienced a suicide in the family or where
14 there may be felt to be risks, or is your role primarily
15 to organize in each community some sort of a support group
16 or some local organization which will attempt to deal with
17 the problems in that community?

18 **KAREN ACORN:** Are you speaking to more
19 like community development in that sense?

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** That may
21 be the phrase, whatever you would call getting together
22 a group which is designed to spot potential suicides and

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1 to provide support where it has occurred?

2 **KAREN ACORN:** A large percentage of my
3 job is spent in consultation with community caregivers,
4 professionals and groups providing support and information
5 to them so that they may respond more directly.

6 Another large percentage of my job is
7 in the area of community development which involves working
8 with communities who have identified their own needs in
9 terms of the issue of suicide and to help them develop
10 a plan that will accommodate their needs.

11 Another part of that would be to work
12 with communities in helping them to identify what they
13 might want to do within their community.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** If it is
15 true to say, as I believe it is, that suicides, many of
16 them, can be characterized as a cry for help, could you
17 offer a comment as to why this cry is missed, why the
18 symptoms are not caught in a small community where
19 everybody is thrown together in schools and in churches
20 and other organizations and in families, in relatively
21 tight family groups? How is it possible?

22 I can see how it happens in a big city

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1 which are lonely places, but in a small community where,
2 as it has been said, everybody lives in everybody else's
3 pocket, to what would you ascribe the fact that these
4 signals are missed?

5 **KAREN ACORN:** I might offer a couple of
6 comments to that. One of them may be that the person may
7 be reaching out in a fashion that they are comfortable
8 to reach out for help, but they aren't being heard because
9 the behaviour is being misunderstood or the way in which
10 they are reaching out for help may not be understood.

11 The other side of that situation I would
12 like to respond to as well and offer the suggestion that
13 quite often it is very difficult to react to somebody close
14 to us being suicidal. It is very frightening and it can
15 be a very scary thing to have to deal with.

16 Sometimes, we don't realize that the
17 person may be suicidal because we understand or
18 misinterpret the behaviour and consider the person to be
19 wanting something else. But I think, quite often, what
20 does come into play is a very real sense of fear that someone
21 close to us could be suicidal.

22 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank

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1 you.

2 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

3 I was just wondering -- we have had a lot of people here
4 today who have said that we are having a lot of problems
5 with our people, our Native people not sort of being able
6 to do things for themselves because they don't have some
7 kind of official sanction, some kind of paper that says
8 that they are qualified to do certain things.

9 I was just wondering how you are doing
10 your job. Do you work with Elders and other people in
11 the communities to do your job or how do you do your job?

12 That is basically what I am asking you, I guess.

13 **KAREN ACORN:** I do my job in two ways.

14 One is by referral through the area offices, the area
15 Social Services office, and that is in relation to an
16 individual who may be considered at risk. I become
17 involved with that individual at times through a referral
18 process.

19 The other component which addresses more
20 the community development is by going to the community
21 and meeting with community groups, the Hamlet Council and
22 whatever services or agencies are in the group, finding

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1 out who is interested or wanting to do work in this area.
2 From there, I would pull a group of people from within
3 the community who are interested in the topic to help them
4 develop whatever they see as being necessary for their
5 community.

6 It seems like communities have different
7 focuses in terms of what is important within the community
8 and I think it is important to take that into consideration
9 when we are looking at developing anything. So I primarily
10 work with whoever shows an interest and is willing to meet
11 with me.

12 **COMMISSIONER OF THE DAY MICHAEL KUGAK:**

13 Thank you.

14 **NOWYA WILLIAMS:** (Translated from
15 Inuktitut) In regards to -- they went to communities --
16 for those -- they are useful and they could be -- for a
17 suicidal person, but maybe these councils -- sometimes
18 they hurt. For those -- usually they -- and their hurt
19 is so large. As much as they become good council members,
20 but they get to a point where they don't know where to
21 go for assistance.

22 So I am really starting to think that

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1 we were not -- we just realized that the person who was
2 working here who really wanted to assist, as much as they
3 want to do this, there is no one available. Karen, who
4 is available and is really willing to work, but if she
5 had been in -- and there is no other person to assist.

6 So I was just saying, in the community,
7 especially in the communities, I feel that there should
8 be available at least one person.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
10 Karen and Nowya.

11 All right. We are approaching the
12 bottom of our agenda. I would just like to re-emphasize
13 to our coordinators that we are coming to the bottom of
14 our agenda.

15 We are going to have an open forum at
16 this time. We have Bill Gower to make a few comments that
17 he would like to make and also present to you.

18 I would say at this time: Do you have
19 a person taking notes or comments? Bill's submission is
20 verbal and so somebody will have to record them.

21 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Yes, we
22 do.

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1 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** All right.

2 Bill, please.

3 **BILL GOWER:** Thank you very much.

4 Commissioner Robinson, Blakeney and
5 Kugak, I won't have to repeat everything that you have
6 heard here today. I think you got the message, but what
7 I am going to say is that I am going to suggest what may
8 happen in the future if something isn't done.

9 Before I came up here, I stopped at the
10 Co-op and I looked at the voters' list for our community.
11 There are just under 800 eligible voters. That is out
12 of a population of 1,850. So that tells me that under
13 the age of 19, there are approximately 1,000 youth or
14 children. One thousand who are going through the school
15 system right now.

16 This school system more or less promises
17 them that if they stick with the school and not drop out,
18 they are more or less guaranteed a good life because they
19 will be getting a good job.

20 Right now, the only employer here in
21 Rankin Inlet, the major employer which all other businesses
22 are dependent, is the Territorial Government. They have

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1 reached a saturation point as far as employing new people.

2 There is a hiring freeze right now.

3 Where are these people going to work?

4 That is 1,000 people who are going to need jobs here in
5 Rankin Inlet. You can repeat this in all the other
6 communities in Keewatin.

7 What happened in the past -- like they
8 say, history repeats itself. What happened in Wats (PH)
9 back in the sixties, what happened in Los Angeles these
10 summer -- if something isn't done for these young people,
11 I am predicting that ten or fifteen years from now, there
12 is going to be chaos.

13 I just want to leave you with that
14 message.

15 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** I wanted to
16 stress to the Commissioners that Bill Gower is part of
17 the Hamlet Council. He is very active in environmental
18 and community issues and he does a lot of issue tackling
19 like that. He is very involved in the community.

20 I was going to leave it for questions
21 from the Commissioners, Mr. Gower, if you don't mind for
22 a little bit.

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1 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would
2 like to thank you for your brief comments. They are very
3 well taken and I want to tell you that I don't have any
4 questions for you, but certainly we have the same concern
5 that you have. What we are looking for is help from people
6 like yourself and others to help us to formulate some kind
7 -- what can be done?

8 We can't tell people what we think should
9 be done. We want the people to help us in creating
10 solutions on what has to be done. Certainly, these kinds
11 of situations are right across Canada and the way this
12 particular situation might be addressed would be addressed
13 quite differently than maybe in Winnipeg or some other
14 southern community. But we are seeking assistance and
15 guidance and help from the communities, from the people
16 to help us on what are we going to do or what can the
17 Commission do to help you to address this situation.

18 **BILL GOWER:** One of the answers is this
19 or a possible solution is: The whole education system
20 has to be revamped. Instead of just teaching them and
21 preparing them for university and stuff like that, they
22 should be teaching them to create their own jobs, not have

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1 everything handed to them on a silver platter. They should
2 go out there and become entrepreneurs or whatever so that
3 they would be able to do it and not have people from the
4 south coming and doing it and leaving them behind all the
5 time. That is one thing.

6 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** That is
7 one certainly. It will be recorded and if there are any
8 other --

9 **BILL GOWER:** But the education has to
10 suit the needs of this particular region because the people
11 from this region -- the majority of them are not going
12 to go to the south and live down there. They are always
13 going to come back here and end up here.

14 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I think
15 there is an opportunity to do that, too, with this
16 ratification process, but the people have to do it.

17 Did you have any comments?

18 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** You have
19 identified two areas. It will be no easy job to create
20 the jobs that are going to be needed.

21 One obvious area is to see if people can
22 be trained to fill the jobs which are now filled by people

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1 from the south: the nurses and the whatever, the teachers
2 and others who might well be from the area. The second
3 you have said could easily be being entrepreneurs, to be
4 operating some of the businesses in the region.

5 Are there other areas where you see with
6 potential for creating jobs?

7 **BILL GOWER:** Actually, there is nothing
8 happening here. They are going to have to start exploring
9 the natural resources, the non-renewal resources, mining
10 and whatever. They are going to have to do it because
11 you just can't keep taking from the south all the time.
12 You are going to have to start trading back and forth.

13 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Mines, of
14 course, depend on mineral bodies, but there may well be
15 some about and you would favour the development of mining.

16 **BILL GOWER:** I would myself, yes. You
17 have to get in tune with the world and progress with the
18 world, but make sure that you benefit from it.

19 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Right,
20 and that is a very valid point. There are lots of places
21 in the world, particularly mining, which can be done with
22 big equipment and with relatively few employees and unless

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1 it rolls something back into a community, it is of marginal
2 benefit. The community should be aggressive on that.

3 **BILL GOWER:** I know the kids are getting
4 more educated all the time, more sophisticated and they
5 have more and more expectations. If they are not going
6 to be met, they is going to be trouble.

7 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Thank
8 you.

9 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you,
10 presenters and Commissioners.

11 That brings us to the conclusion of our
12 agenda. Are there any remarks that the Commissioners
13 would like to make at this point?

14 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** Is there
15 anybody else who wants to say anything for the good and
16 welfare?

17 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Thank you.

18 I had only one person for the open forum and so I thought
19 I would close the door quickly.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** We have
21 lots of time.

22 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** I would

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1 like to take this opportunity to make some closing comments
2 and to thank the Commissioner of the Day Michael Kugak
3 for sitting here with us today and his help. Also, I would
4 like to thank our Facilitator Mayor Paul Kaludjak. You
5 will have to forgive me if I don't pronounce your names
6 right because I am not familiar with these names.

7 As well, I would like to thank Rhoda
8 Karetak for her opening prayer and the interpreters, John
9 Patterk and Percy Tutannuaq; as well as the whole community
10 of Rankin Inlet and the lodge for the coffee and the lunch;
11 the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation.

12 Also, we would like to introduce our
13 staff to you and thank them too. There is John Morrisseau
14 who is our Director of Public Participation and Laurie
15 Fenner who is the Team Leader under Public Participation;
16 Nipihsa Bracken who is our Team Assistant. She is sitting
17 back there taking some notes. Rhoda Kayakjuak is with
18 Communications and Linda Jordan, our Senior Policy
19 Analyst. She is one who records everything that is being
20 said here.

21 Dara Culhane is from our Research staff.
22 She is on the Research staff for Social Issues and Sean

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1 McDermott who is technician who is responsible for all
2 of this equipment here sitting back there. Kim Stewart
3 is the one that has the ice cream cone thing on her face.
4 She is the court reporter and she does all the transcripts
5 for us word for word. So I hope she doesn't have any
6 problems and will be able to provide us with a good
7 transcript.

8 Of course, there is Allan and myself.
9 We are the two Commissioners here. We want to both thank
10 everybody for their hospitality, for your time and for
11 your co-operation and for all your presentations and
12 everything. We want to wish you well.

13 The Commission will come back to this
14 region again, probably in the next round. I don't know
15 who it will be. It may not be us. It will probably be
16 two other Commissioners. We won't come back to the same
17 place, but we will certainly come back to another part
18 of the region, I do believe. I can't guarantee that
19 because I don't know the plans, but I know that we are
20 trying to get back especially to the North. It is included
21 in every round.

22 So, once again, thank you for your

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1 attention and for your co-operation and for your
2 presentations.

3 Did you want to say anything?

4 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** I would
5 just say, "With that, I agree," or "Amen", as you like.

6
7 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** Closing
8 remarks. I think it was said well already by Commissioner
9 Robinson. That will shorten up my thank you list because
10 she covered pretty well everybody.

11 However, I would like to especially
12 acknowledge the community members and the people from
13 outside our community who did bring presentations today.
14 It was interesting and informative, emotional, and that
15 is part of life. We accept that and we are looking for
16 solutions along with the Commission with ourselves.
17 Working together, we will come out to achieve our goals.

18 It does make it a very pleasant day for
19 us. I would like to thank the Commission for having me
20 and it does seem to make us wiser by day. I think the
21 items that were brought forward were very important and
22 they should not be forgotten.

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1 Lastly, I would like to ask the Royal
2 Commission -- the logo that you have up there, the symbol
3 -- what it stands for. If somebody would describe it,
4 the symbol, for the information of the delegation, what
5 it means, if you don't mind, I would appreciate it.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** We just
7 happen to have it.

8 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** You just
9 happen to have it.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:** It is a
11 little pamphlet or book mark that explains it.

12 **FACILITATOR PAUL KALUDJAK:** So there is
13 an article on the symbol itself. Fine. I will read that
14 later.

15 Again, thank you. For the closing
16 prayer, Mr. Paul Williams was good enough to do a closing
17 prayer for us. Could we stand please.

18

19 **Closing Prayer**

20

21 --- Whereupon the Hearing adjourned at 5:00 p.m.