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LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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--- The hearing resumed at 9:15 am on Tuesday, December 1, 1992

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We will now resume the session of public hearings that we adjourned yesterday evening.

I would like to ask Drs Roland Chamberland and Jacquelin Cossette to make the first presentation this morning.

DR ROLAND CHAMBERLAND, CLINICIAN: Jacquelin Cossette and I will simply be adding certain elements to what was discussed yesterday.

I would like to begin with the elements that might serve to resolve the problems that are seen in the aboriginal communities here. I cannot speak for the communities elsewhere in Quebec, but from what we can see in our work as clinicians, it is certain that the problems we have in the field must be approached with a new perspective, problems which are mainly related to issues of violence and the suffering generated

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as a result, and so forth.

It is quite clear to us that what is absolutely required is multidisciplinary teams of clinicians to come and get involved with the communities, in the communities. We cannot proceed as we are now with the bare minimum, ending up like a speck in the scenery.

I am very annoyed at the frequently heard comment, "that costs money". It is also clear that it is easy for people who are not clinicians to think like that, but you must look at what the pathologies generated by alcohol consumption can cost society in terms of health budgets.

When people come to the hospital with a bleeding esophagus or pancreatitis or any of the secondary effects of excessive long-term chronic alcohol consumption, I don't need to draw you a diagram to show that this is extremely expensive. So we are far better off preventing this in advance.

It is clear that, to do this in the community,

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it is absolutely necessary to work on violence-related issues. And that requires the involvement of these teams. For us, this is now evident from the situation in the field.

Jacquelin will continue.

DR JACQUELIN COSSETTE, CLINICIAN: Mr Chairman, Ms and Messrs Commissioners, I would like to situate myself in the more general context of your work.

You will soon be completing your second series of public hearings across Canada. You have already released the report on your first series of hearings and a discussion paper.

You are now in this second series of hearings, seeking solutions to enhance the lives of aboriginal people in this country, Canada. You have seen and heard from aboriginal people from various communities in this region, and from their helpers as well, who have attempted to relate the efforts made in their communities to develop and revitalize their overall health situation, efforts which involve changes to every facet of their lives. It is in this context that

I

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am working as a clinician, as well as Dr Chamberland.

You have no doubt heard some original ways and strategies of using the resources of certain communities. What is important in these strategies is that the aboriginal people remain in control of them, with some degree of autonomy and responsibility.

This is important.

The degree of autonomy and responsibility depends a great deal on their individual and collective abilities to take themselves in hand and fulfil themselves as aboriginal people in our modern world.

You have no doubt sensed the hardship involved in this effort of theirs, but also the determination and courage that motivate them. You must also know that the co-operation of resources outside the aboriginal world is necessary and that the provincial and federal governments must adapt to the Natives' needs rather than force the Natives to adapt to the various systems in the non-aboriginal world, a world which yet wants to support

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Natives in developing the various aspects of their lives.

You have travelled across Canada, and in the course of these travels many observations have been made about the process of change in the communities of Anglophone aboriginal Canadians. Some interesting changes have taken place, and the experience of the Alkali Lake community is an excellent model. A film was made, entitled *The Honour of All*, which is a very good depiction of the process of change initiated by a community member who obtained the agreement of almost all of his peers, thus bringing about some extraordinary changes.

This film was made thanks to research in which the Neetchee Institute, if I am well informed, took part. Today this film serves as a model for the instruction of all communities that want to begin a process of change, of healing, but films like this are also extremely important so that non-Natives may understand the problems of

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aboriginal peoples and understand the type of resources that have to be developed.

I think that this research and this film are of equal if not greater use to the white world, the non-aboriginal world, particularly all those in institutions who have to understand and to develop plans to assist aboriginal people.

I have had *The Honour of All* circulated in the province of Quebec, and found that, in comparison with the Francophone communities in the rest of Canada, the French translation here was very poor, and only those with a very good knowledge of English could benefit from this film.

I have had it circulated among non-aboriginal professional groups and among Natives in prison, for example, and everyone was always very moved. The message is simple and moving, and mobilizes viewers to make changes in their thinking and their actions. But there is no Francophone equivalent. Neither, I think, has there been

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any equivalent observation of a process of change within a Francophone community.

I would like to emphasize that it is important that there be in Quebec an observation of a successful process of change, with thinkers who can write about it, and that this be put in a form that can circulate, a film for example, which can be used for the instruction and information of aboriginal communities who want to begin a process of change; but it is especially important that this document be widely distributed among practitioners and administrators, those who manage the institutions, who wish to provide services to aboriginal people.

I think that Francophone Quebec, aboriginal people as provincial resources, Francophone Natives, are entitled to a resource of this type for their own assistance. This is something that is worth developing. Who could look into this? This Commission might come up with some interesting solutions.

Personally, I do not want

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to speak on behalf of a specific community this morning because I have no mandate to do so; but I am convinced that you will find a community, if not several, which might be used to observe a particular process which itself might become a model to spur reflection throughout the province of Quebec.

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you. I think that your last suggestion is certainly interesting.

Yesterday we heard the Société de Bien-être Kitcisakik. In addition we heard young people who came to speak with us of their hardships, their difficulties, but also their hopes.

In fact, the Commission has encountered situations such as this just about everywhere in Canada.

One of the questions we are asking ourselves is how to intervene effectively in the communities, because often it is the women and young people who come to talk to us, more than the leadership. Sometimes the leaders come as well. It depends on the level of

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awareness.

In the presentation yesterday there was less talk of self-government than of social problems and the necessary preliminary healing. I think this is definitely a good sample of what we regularly hear in terms of priorities in the communities.

One of the things we are struck by is how to ensure that the generations of women and children can see the situation improve, how they can take action without stigmatizing the communities, because one senses a block, often at the leadership level, a kind of fear that in speaking of these problems one is placing them out for public view and losing control of the image of the community that is being put out.

The Commission is very conscious of this. We will be doing about a hundred case studies in various aboriginal communities across the country--Inuit, Métis, Indian. We are presently working on standards and codes of ethics for the conduct of this research. Often, the more difficulties in a community,

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the more striking the research findings can be, and basically, instead of helping, one ends up creating a situation where the image of the community is made worse, in a way. So there is the danger of doing more harm than good.

My question . . . you have been psychiatrists and physicians for over ten years in the context of the Algonquin communities here, particularly at Lac Victoria: how can we be sure of working . . . You tell us that multidisciplinary teams are needed with the aboriginal leadership. How can we ensure that such intervention has a positive effect?

The Commission has a mandate to attempt to bring Natives and non-Natives in Quebec closer together. We would not want this concern, which is in a way more intellectual, to hinder very concrete intervention in improving living conditions. You have surely had occasion to think about this. This is your daily experience.

How do we ensure that we can

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carry out this work and at the same time maintain a certain control, so that this does not create a stigma for the communities and hence a kind of block, preventing others from opening up, from coming to speak about problems and, indeed, from accepting the services that they need?

I think that this is a useful line of thought for many aboriginal communities here, as well as throughout Canada generally.

Could you say something about your views on this?

JACQUELIN COSSETTE: I think it is important that the aboriginal communities be placed in their particular situation and supported so as to achieve successes in their overall health picture; this is one way I have of seeing mental health, within the context of a comprehensive health which also includes a degree of political, economic and cultural autonomy. This requires successes.

What are the strategies that will ensure that non-Natives will help Natives to succeed? These are strategies that will address the grass roots; in which non-Natives

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will agree not to have power or authority at the scientific level, in terms of ideas; in which non-Natives will share their ideas and knowledge so that Natives can take them when they are ready and realize them, so that Natives can take just pride in finally succeeding.

These are strategies that run contrary to how our institutions are organized. Realizing them requires nothing less than a bypassing of institutions that cannot change fast enough to bring this type of support, because this is a support for people in need in the communities, for community workers, for practitioners who co-ordinate with local teams so that non-Natives can complement the aboriginal team or teams.

So this requires some degree of freedom of action on the part of the professionals. This means that, ideally, they should be relatively free of the constraints of their own institutions, not to mention the constraints of the schools they attended, which

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are a source of intellectual strait-jackets, ways of thinking, ways of acting, and it is important that the communities be able to select the persons, the professionals, whom they want to work with, after first testing them.

I do not think that a non-Native should work with a Native without first passing a probation period, or the equivalent, in which the Natives observe him and decide whether they want to work with him.

Some such requirement has to be put into effect, and our institutions are not really ready to accept that. Therefore, what is needed is that the local political officials responsible for organizing these services must have access to a provincial or federal government authority which would embrace this type of strategy, would agree to promote it, and would be prepared to accept different formulas from one community to another, because not all communities have reached the same degree of development in terms of preserving their culture--not just development of their culture, but development as well of their

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abilities to live in the modern world, and integration of all these things.

So different solutions are required. And would this not also require, if I may venture to say it, the bypassing of many institutions in order to gain access to a place where the people can analyse and respond adequately to situations and get the funding to meet their needs?

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Speaking of institutions, a question about the local community service centres, which were created to introduce some degree of innovation by taking into account social problems and health problems.

To your knowledge, do the local community service centres in the region take an interest in the situation of the local aboriginal people? Do they give this any consideration or take any action? Because it seems to me that these are front-line institutions which, from the outset, are in a better position than the hospitals to begin a change of policy direction regarding these problems of

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physical, mental and social health in these aboriginal communities.

JACQUELIN COSSETTE: I should say yes: the institutions take a general kind of interest, each according to its way of thinking, for they each have their way of thinking. However, truly effective work is done in a community when a person is released by the institution to think for himself, to act freely with the Natives and to bring in adapted responses which will not necessarily be those that have been formulated and institutionalized in the organization to which the person belongs.

ROLAND CHAMBERLAND: If you would allow me, Mr Chairman, I would like to add a few points on the questions you have asked.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: By all means.

ROLAND CHAMBERLAND: Regarding the point of entry into the communities, I think that basically you put it very well: one of the ways is that the leadership may decide one fine day that it will open the door, and so forth;

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but the classic way in which demands come forth within the community is via the women and children, as you said.

I think that, at that point, the way to go about really working one's way in, in an effective and appropriate manner, is to respond to those demands very meticulously, and on that basis to win the people's confidence, once entry has been achieved.

The problem I see with this is that, yes, it requires some freedom on the part of the clinicians, but it also requires some basic training in dealing with problems in a cross-cultural environment. As a rule, this is something that is very much lacking in relations with aboriginal communities.

I think that the clinicians at large in the regions need training to be able to truly deal with, or more adequately deal with, the problems encountered.

I can give you some examples that I have seen, which have nothing to do with the

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mental health clinic or other clinics, but this is just to give you a little example. Once there was a known batterer who presented himself to the police--and in saying this, I have total respect for the police and the work that they do here--

He presented himself to a police officer and said: "I would like to give my testament." What he meant was that he simply wanted to relate everything that he had done in the way of assaults, etc. The police officer in question simply answered: "You have to go see a notary for that."

That will give you some idea . . . just a little anecdote to illustrate that we must be able to deal with these problems directly, but with our ears a little more open than usual and in a way that allows us to be able to respond effectively to whatever comes up.

I think that once entry is achieved, usually via the women and children, confidence then is won and

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you get a snowball effect. From that point, the doors in the community will open. But I think that we have to proceed very cautiously here, as if walking on thin ice. The movie is *Dances with Wolves*, but here, we're dancing on thin ice.

It is really necessary to be cautious. And you mustn't burst from the starting gate and go crazy. Over the years we have seen lots of people come through the communities; we often seen people, whether "Indian lovers" or whatever, who really launch themselves into orbit, but after a while things aren't going right in the community.

What is really needed is people who are calm and steady; these are essential personal qualities to be able to enter into the communities. And once that is done . . . you know, with time one becomes trusted and the clinical information really gets out. That's how to see it.

For the LCSCs in all of this, the situation is the same as for the clinicians. These institutions also have some way to go in terms of training. For the moment, in any case, they certainly are

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points of entry . . . and the regional boards use them a lot as entry points, as well as for aboriginal services, but the boards too need training.

There are people who do good work within these institutional boxes, but the box itself, as a whole, has need of training in dealing with the aboriginal problem.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Do you wish to add anything?

JACQUELIN COSSETTE: Yes. What I said earlier may seem pretentious and arrogant, particularly to the ears of non-Natives, and to Natives as well. I want to speak about the ignorance that has characterized relations with aboriginal people in my life.

Since I was very young, almost since I was born, I have been in contact with the aboriginal people; they used to live on the bank of Harricana River in the summer. I am now 59 years old, but it has only been four years since I began to realize how ignorant I have been, how powerless I have been because I did not know

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my own ignorance. I had pretensions and preconceived ideas, even if I had a kind of friendship and goodwill for aboriginal people.

If it took me 55 years of my life to begin to understand and to have the feeling of maybe being able to do more effective work, there are others who have a long way to go; and the institutions in particular, I think, have some work to do. Our masters, our teachers, must be the aboriginal people themselves, everywhere and all the time.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you.

Commissioner Robinson?

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr Blakeney?

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

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[English]

ROLAND CHAMBERLAND: In my practice I have seen many nurses, much nursing, in the aboriginal communities. I have seen many individuals and many different types of nursing in various communities.

When I began my practice, I often noticed that the nurses had no points of referral to which they could . . . even if they managed to uncover all of the clinical problems of violence they had to face, they had nowhere to refer these problems. So they found themselves piling up an incredible workload. They were occupied with what is called counselling, and at the same time had to take on a great deal of clinical community nursing work connected with vaccination and everything to do with physical health.

Consequently, they very quickly became

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snowed under with work. I have seen a quite amazing turnover of nurses in the aboriginal communities. They couldn't manage to last one year: two was the maximum. Generally, those affiliated with Health and Welfare Canada suffered this type of . . . today we have colourful expressions for this, company burnout, but in any case they were completely exhausted after one or two years.

Some individuals nonetheless managed to survive this: these were women who were married to aboriginal men. It was easier for them, because they had access to more information and they created a network for themselves which they were able to use to absorb all of the clinical problems that they had to face.

The fact remains that it is a terrible situation when the nurse has no network to which she can refer all of the problems she encounters. She breaks down. This is part of the normal clinical process.

In one of the communities where I worked, I noticed that the nurse

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was no longer placing all her referrals with the social services she did business with, because there was never any response; consequently, at one point she found herself completely without resources.

She should have the benefit of a support role at that point; her situation became extremely difficult because there was no support response. It's as if she were making radio transmissions but there was never any reply to her questions. So it became extremely difficult.

I find it extraordinary when these women and men manage to function all the same, even during very brief periods in the communities. But whenever there is no referral team being built around these women and men, they come to the end of their rope very, very quickly.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Anything further?

JACQUELIN COSSETTE: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you.

Commissioner Polson?

COMMISSIONER GORDON POLSON: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

ROLAND CHAMBERLAND: To add to what Jacquelin is saying, the important point so far as I am concerned is to grasp every aspect of a problem as soon as it presents itself. What I mean by that is not working only with the child or the mother or the father or whatever, but looking at every facet of the whole problem in the first place. This is the first thing to do.

What this implies is going around to see everyone who is directly or indirectly concerned, and that may include the

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political authorities in certain cases, and so forth.

After the proper clinical inspection of every aspect of the problem, one may take action or make suggestions, but one may never take command, give orders, assume attitudes or . . . for me, it is really the antithesis of how one should operate in a cross-cultural environment to show up and start telling someone to do this or do that. That will never work.

It is a matter of proposing solutions, together with the key elements of the community. It is on this basis that the individual concerned will decide to opt for one thing or another.

It must also be understood that the people have to make their own way. It must be accepted that they may adopt a certain pattern or procedure once, twice, three times, even if we hold up a mirror for them and say "we don't think this is going to work".

This must be accepted. We must accept certain methods about which we will have some questions. And so forth.

The important thing in all this

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is to keep up hope, and above all conduct a balanced clinical inspection of all aspects of the problem. Never, ever evade a problem that is submitted, or dismiss it offhandedly. Sometimes, after doing this work for 12 years, it's not the most tempting thing in the world, but that's life. And the problems never arise, as they classically do in an office or somewhere like that, complete with their own detailed schedule. Not even the Commission's schedule.

Things always happen just when you least expect them.

Adequate problem management is always what is required. That is why I insist so much on clinician training, because you really have to know an awfully broad spectrum of therapeutic tactics to be able to function in this environment.

Also, as Gordon said, in any environment where there is violence, one must in any case be able to . . . As Commissioner Polson said, indeed, violence is not peculiar to the aboriginal world.

There is violence in the

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non-aboriginal world, as we all know, but one must be capable of adequately dealing with these problems. So the therapeutic spectrum has to be very broad.

JACQUELIN COSSETTE: I would like to add that when non-aboriginal practitioners reject recipients who need and request services, particularly when those needs are created by great pain and major problems, such as violence and incest, that rejection is usually unconscious.

We find notes in the files such as, "Patient not motivated", "Patient misses appointments". And this is enough to close a file. The clinician may close the file and not really be aware that he is doing so because of his unconscious dismissal, as a result of which this person will not be receiving services.

He will be dismissed by the clinician and the institution, from which it would be desirable for him to receive services.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:

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Dr Chamberland, Dr Cossette, we thank you for coming to add your concrete experience to what was begun yesterday.

As I have had occasion to say, we hope to maintain contact. The Commission will be doing its public consultation work next year and we would appreciate it if you would set down in writing any additional ideas you may have or contact us in person. You know how to reach us. We are extremely interested in hearing from you.

This is a dialogue, and we are aware that we are only at the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, as regards how to approach the social problems of physical and mental health in a number of communities. Your advice is very important as inspiration for the Commission's recommendations.

Thank you.

I would now like to ask Mr Rhéal Boudrias, the outgoing president of the Native Alliance of Quebec, to come forth and make his presentation.

MR RHÉAL BOUDRIAS: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

We will break for coffee, and resume in ten minutes with the presentation of Monsignor Drainville.

Thank you.

--- Adjournment of the session at 11:00 am.

--- Resumption of the session at 11:10 am.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would now ask Monsignor Drainville to come forth and make his presentation.

MONSIGNOR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE, BISHOP OF AMOS:

Mr Justice, Chairman of the Commission, Lady and Gentlemen Commissioners, I was very pleased to accept the invitation you extended to me to present some reflections on the relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples before this Royal Commission.

I feel that your Commission has an exceedingly important mission to perform on this fundamental issue of harmonious relations between the First Nations and the other nations within our country. I will attempt to make my modest contribution to this subject.

The territory of the Diocese of Amos, for which I am responsible, includes Abitibi and

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extends to Upper Mauricie in the East and part of the territory of James Bay in the North. For 15 years, this territory has allowed me to be in frequent, almost daily contact with the Algonquins. I also meet frequently with the Attikamekw of Obedjiwan and sometimes of Manouane. I also have occasional but unsystematic contact with the Cree, who are of the Anglican persuasion and not within my jurisdiction.

My familiarity with these three Amerindian nations of Quebec is still rudimentary and very fragmentary. However, this allows me to be not wholly confident of received opinion about the present experience of Amerindians in their life on the "reserves".

My presentation is based in part on the "Pastoral Letter on the Aboriginal Issue" published last September by our committee of the Quebec Assembly of Catholic Bishops. I will later add a few personal thoughts.

We thought it wise to write this pastoral letter because it seems to us that

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the dialogue between Natives and non-Natives is presently not at its best. There has been a positive evolution in several respects, but a long road remains to be travelled together if we are to achieve acceptably sociable relations between our two peoples.

This letter to aboriginal and non-aboriginal Christian communities is an invitation to join together in building a better world, by looking upon each other as equal partners in the realization of a global common project.

In this text, we say:

Neither group can decide what is good for the other and neither can defend its rights by ignoring the other's. For this global common project to succeed, concerned parties must not only consider their rights, they must above all

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realize their responsibilities. All must participate in the elaboration, the realization and the functioning of the project. The fallouts [sic] of the project must also be shared.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 26)

Let us look back very briefly at our history, not in order to try to repeat it, but possibly to avoid new mistakes: Europeans arriving on this continent wanted to make this "new world" a place to implement "their world". As their culture and civilization was completely different and availed itself of a more developed science and technique, they quickly imposed their vision of the world and their ways.

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They acted as masters and aboriginals progressively lost their lands,
their autonomy and control of their lives.

Those people have, so to speak, been
driven back and kept apart from the
economic as well as the political spheres.

Thus the aboriginals who had developed,
in social, cultural, economic and
religious areas, ways to live harmoniously
with their environment, found themselves
rapidly in a state of dispossession and
dependency. In former times masters of
all the country, they finally had to limit
themselves to reserves the government
would condescend to give them.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 6)

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Meager [sic] space and wretched territories allocated to them, strong demographic increase, lack of work and profound frustrations created by their situation of dependency, all produced many hardships also experienced by many non-natives with similar problems: violence, alcoholism, substance abuse, loss of dignity, inferiority complex. Eager to get out of reserves and attracted to urban centres, they became more and more numerous in the cities. Unfortunately, this exodus only made their situation worse. Very often they lived

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in the cheapest dwellings and were left with the lowest paid jobs.

They felt even more marginalized in the city than in the reserves. This urban emigration often resulted in the breakdown of family and community life.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 7)

In short, aboriginal people were historically placed in situations where their human development was often very, very difficult. It is more than probable that, if placed in the same situations, we white people would have fared no better than they.

Furthermore:

Century-old relations between natives and non-natives have often
been and are still tense. They sometimes
end up in confrontation, some even

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becoming violent. Reasons for frustrations are numerous: slow negotiations; decisions affecting aboriginals taken without sufficient consultation; projects started before basic questions have been clarified; conflicting visions on property, development, ecology and autonomy; uncertainty concerning ancestral rights; uneasy dialogue between oriental-type and western cultures, different system values [sic]; prejudices on all sides.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 9)

Clearly, the solution to the "native question"

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doesn't first lie in monetary compensations or other indemnification of this nature, but in a series of measures which go to the core of the problem and offer more global solutions than those actions taken until now. Those actions were too often limited to settl[ing] immediate matters or correct[ing] past mistakes. This way of proceeding must be set aside. We have to rethink the orientation underlying policy-making.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 10)

One of the main points in our letter concerns recognition of aboriginal rights, which we join

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many other organizations in recommending (see Note 25 in the Pastoral Letter):

Among aboriginals' fundamental demands, we must forcefully underline

their right to self-determination on their own territory. The "mother earth", as they so well say, holds a central place in their lives. It is the concrete manifestation of God's providence, the basis of their traditional fishing and hunting economy. Much more than a source of revenue and subsistence, the natives find in her "a stable element of security, of well-being and identity

(. . .) Our earth, they say, is our life". (Pastoral Letter, No. 21)

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During his visits to Canada in 1984 and 1987, Pope John Paul II supported aboriginals' demands. "It is clearly the position of the Church that peoples have a right in public life to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political fields. This is true for everyone. It has particular applications for you as native people, in your strivings to take your rightful place among the peoples of this earth, with a just and equitable degree of self-governing. For you, a land base

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with adequate resources is also necessary for developing a viable economy for present and future generations. You need likewise to be in a position to develop your lands and your economic potential and to educate your children and plan your future."

John Paul II, Yellowknife, 1984;

Pastoral Letter, No. 22)

In September 1987 at Fort Simpson, the Pope returned to the same idea, saying that no-one has any doubt that it is no longer possible for any people to exist today without a territorial settlement. (See Note 26 in the Pastoral Letter.)

Aboriginal people agree that the

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elements of self-government must include the right to an adequate land base, appropriate decision-making powers for the exercise of self-government, adequate jurisdictional authority and sufficient fiscal resources to implement self-government. (Moment of Decision, Aboriginal Self-Government and the Constitution, Project North, Toronto, 1987, p. 5)

At this time, it seems to me that a consensus has been established as to the necessity of knowing the rights of aboriginal peoples to self-government and to a land base accompanied by adequate resources. The whole difficulty arises when one attempts to apply this principle to specific situations and territories for a given aboriginal nation in a particular part of Quebec or Canadian territory.

I do not personally feel

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competent to enter into concrete examples of the rearrangement of these jurisdictions and divisions. However, I anticipate difficulties, probably very great ones, which will demand great skill, long patience, and an unrelenting will by the two peoples to reach an agreement based on mutual respect.

Please permit me now, Mr Chairman, to venture a few specific, informal thoughts based upon personal observation.

1) I feel that the "reserves" on which Amerindians currently live are much too cramped and that there is an urgent need for this situation to be rectified. It is unacceptable to allow this situation to persist. Once again, I am convinced that we white people would never have agreed to live in such conditions. In our Pastoral Letter we provide numerous statistics for the aboriginal people of Quebec on what is probably a consequence of this situation.

2) Personally, I am very disappointed in the attitude of the Quebec Department of Forestry, specifically in its slowness to reach

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agreements with Amerindian groups within the framework of the timber supply and forest management agreements, known by lumbermen as TSFMAs, which are provided for under Bill 150 of the Department of Energy and Resources. No such slowness has been demonstrated with regard to the lumber companies.

I am familiar, for example, with the work done by the Attikamek Nation Council in Upper Mauricie on a new mode of forest management in this region which is much more consistent with sustainable development. The government is hiding behind the pretext of land negotiations so as not to take any action, while maintaining the same destructive management of the logging companies on this ancestral territory of the Attikamekw.

3) I had the opportunity to visit South Africa in February 1986, as part of an anti-apartheid awareness campaign organized by the Catholic Bishops of South Africa. Bishops from a number of countries had been invited to visit that country. During their mission there, the seven members of our Canadian delegation had the opportunity

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to learn something about the operation of the *bantoustans* (the homelands) in South Africa.

We know that the *bantoustans* of South Africa are areas where blacks are set apart and divided by ethnic origin. The black people do not want this; this is a forced separation.

Of the ten *bantoustans* corresponding to the ten ethnic groups in the country, some are fragmented into up to forty parcels of land or so for one *bantoustan*. Furthermore, four of these *bantoustans* are considered "independent countries" within South Africa, with the attendant border problems when one moves from one parcel to another, especially if it has been the whim of some *bantoustan* to set up a nice "army" of civil servants.

I mention this simply so that we may systematically dismiss, for Quebec and for Canada, this myth (and I want to emphasize that word) of the ethnic cohesion of the "nation-state", and also so that we do not find ourselves with an system of countless borders to be crossed within either Quebec or Canada once

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the "aboriginal" lands have been reorganized.

4) For a number of years the Amerindians have been criticizing the Church and certain missionary communities for not having sufficiently respected their culture and their spirituality, and even for having contributed to their assimilation. The Oblate Fathers, among others, asked pardon of the Indians in July 1991 at Lac Sainte-Anne, Alberta, for this behaviour which may have been harmful to them. I find this gesture by the Oblates magnanimous.

I would personally add that, while certain actions may have been deplorable, there are many more which have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate the attachment of these missionaries to these people; they have played a role in the survival of their languages and their customs.

I simply mention the fact that the Oblates alone have written 141 dictionaries in 27 Amerindian languages and 74 grammars in 19 languages, in addition to magazines and journals, and books of history, legends and prayers in aboriginal languages. They have contributed to the preservation of the oral traditions.

One may point out as well that when the

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Pope participated in the Amerindian festival in Midland, Ontario in September 1984, he agreed to let himself be purified by the smoke and to receive the eagle feather, actions which clearly demonstrated the Church's new understanding of aboriginal cultures.

Professor Louis-Edmond Hamelin says that this ceremony, seen by a national television audience in Canada, accomplished more in itself as a sign of the enculturation of the Church than anything that had ever been done before. The Pope performed a comparable gesture at Fort Simpson in September 1987 when he saluted the four points of the compass--a characteristically Amerindian act.

5) In closing, I want to emphasize the importance of spirituality, of the link with the earth and the Creator among aboriginal people, elements which we white people have partly lost.

On the other hand, we realize that many whites react the same way as Natives to the materialistic nature of our society: one thinks of the ecological movement, and so forth.

We are increasingly aware that several of

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their demands not only aim at their salvation but ours also. Their problem of survival and fulfillment also becomes ours when major challenges await us at the end of the 20th century. Instead of seeing aboriginals' claims as threatening or being opposite to our own interests, shouldn't we instead see in this a sign of the times, a word calling upon us, an invitation to co-operate together for the salvation of humanity? We have reached a decisive hour and the time has come for a new alliance.

(Pastoral Letter, No. 19)

Mr Chairman, I thank your Commission for having received me. I

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wish you much success in this work of high civilization that you are doing. And if my humble prayers to the Spirit, who is the great Manitou to the Amerindians, can be of benefit to a royal commission, I offer them to you with my whole heart.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you, Monsignor Drainville, for this message filled with peace and wisdom.

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: Thank you very much.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I must say that, even for a royal commission, there is no royal road to learning. We are certainly open to suggestions, particularly when they are more of a long-term nature and when they concern the relationship between Natives and non-Natives.

Clearly, I think there are certain remarkable passages in your brief which are quite specific, particularly on the subject of the forest management agreements in Upper Mauricie.

This week we will be visiting the Attikamekw in Manouane, a traditional reserve.

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We will certainly be hearing about this.

We are familiar with the difficulty of this issue here in the region, at Barrière Lake in particular. Also, regarding your experience on your visit to South Africa and the importance of maintaining open territories, I think that is one of our biggest challenges.

The Commission has had occasion to remark that one of the major problems with the White Paper tabled by the federal government in 1969 was that it proposed to open up the reserve system with no compensation for the safeguard and maintenance of aboriginal cultures and languages.

We are very conscious that there is a transition that will have to be gone through to ensure the strengthening of these cultures and languages, while at the same time promoting the openness of the aboriginal peoples. This may be the most difficult bend that the Commission has to negotiate, because it leads us to the whole question of ethnic government versus public government, of respect

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for tradition versus the rules of the democratic process as we spontaneously know them.

Here I mean that an equation is often drawn between traditions and non-democratic elements. We have often been told in our cross-Canada tour that people want to have much more daily and much more immediate control than that afforded by a 15-minute election every two years or four years, after which those elected can behave almost like dictators.

So people talk to us about a different form of democracy. All of this has its part in the considerations of the Commission.

Essentially, I would like to ask you . . . we are aware that the Catholic Church has not only played a role, but continues to play an important role in Quebec. We also realize that the Commission has a fundamental public education role to play in terms of relations between Natives and non-Natives.

Last September we studied with great interest the pastoral letter

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issued by the Catholic Bishops of Canada. Are there any more concrete projects or additional measures being sponsored by the Catholic Church to try and create a *rapprochement* with regard to the whole problem of stereotypes, of the discrimination which too often still exists?

Does the Church intend to involve itself in a concrete way with the public--a long and exacting task--to try and advance the mentality and the harmony that are necessary to understand the decisions that will have to be made?

As you say, there are certain decisions which are going to be difficult. In some cases, self-government necessarily implies expanded territories and resource fees, and that means greater openness to joint economic development ventures between Natives and non-Natives.

Therefore it seems to us that, from the ecumenical perspective being promoted by the Catholic Church and certain aboriginal and other spiritual movements,

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the Catholic Church can play an important role in Canada, especially in Quebec.

Apart from the pastoral letter, have you entered into a consideration of any additional, concrete initiatives to promote, in the next few, crucial years, a change in direction to be made in this relationship, to promote both a reconciliation and, above all, an understanding that will allow us to advance positively into the future together, Natives and non-Natives, in Canada and in Quebec?

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: The letter to which you refer is a letter from Quebec. It is not for the whole of Canada. Perhaps it is applicable there as well, but it is a letter from the Committee, which has been accepted by the entire Quebec Assembly of Catholic Bishops.

Your question . . . we are very concerned with the question you ask about relations between Natives and non-Natives.

As to initiatives that we are attempting, I will indicate some examples of things that are very modest but which, little by little, may possibly

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produce some results.

For example, after what is called the Oka crisis in 1990, our committee prepared a discussion package containing opportunities for meetings, and even celebrations, directed toward reconciliation, and not just for the region where the incidents took place. This package was then sent out to every diocese.

This did not have any huge impact, but it did give rise to some small meetings between Natives and non-Natives, discussion meetings, even occasionally including prayers for reconciliation, because we felt that these incidents, even though they did not take place here and were far away, had some effect even in our region. These were initiatives suggested by our committee of bishops, to indicate our desire for reconciliation.

One example of some very simple things we are trying to do is what we call a pastoral diocesan council for our diocese of Amos. Last year

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on two occasions--it's very little, but on two occasions we held meetings, one in what I might call our white territory, and another in Pikogan. We were the guests of the Pikogan reserve, with the chief and the priest who was there at the time, Mgr Cadieux, who is now in Mussoni (PH), so that we could talk and above all so that we whites could learn more about the aboriginal culture.

The Elders of the Pikogan reserve introduced us to elements of their culture, their way of life in the forest, how to live in the forest, how to look for natural remedies in the forest.

For our co-workers, about thirty people, it was an absolutely splendid revelation.

We are trying to encourage rather routine activities of this sort, which don't make for great media news but which are occasions to bring people closer together. We are trying to increase the number of these sorts of activities.

Also, we know that there are a fair number of aboriginal people living in the big centres--Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg

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and so on. Here we are rather at a preliminary stage, but we are trying to establish a little more specific contact with them at the pastoral level.

We find this work difficult because we have problems simply establishing contact with them through various organizations; it may be necessary, perhaps not to create organizations, but to make contacts through other ones which might make it easier to locate aboriginal people. There is a desire to try and maintain greater contact with these aboriginal people in the cities.

In regions such as this one, contacts are perhaps a little easier. There is the Lac Simon reserve, and also in Témiscamingue there is Notre-Dame-du-Nord. These are possibilities.

If you go to Upper Mauricie, there is Manouane, that's definite, Attikamekw, Obedjiwan or Montachi (PH), the diocese of Trois-Rivières. The desire is there, but things are still quite simple. We would like to develop this.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you.

Ms Robinson.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

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[English]

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: [English]

I do not think that our hold is strong enough for us to have this kind of influence on our people's thinking.

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The only response I can give to that is that this might be achieved through discussion and reflection via our own existing committees, whether Catholic or ecumenical. From time to time there are . . . I have one text here, "A New Covenant", which was published by all the leaders of the various churches of Canada in 1987. I have a copy here.

Together, we take certain stands such as this. Then all the community development work remains to be done by the governments to bring our people, Catholic, Anglican or other, to a new way of thinking. I don't see many other ways to proceed apart from starting up discussion within small groups--pastoral groups, and so forth--through a gradual process of reflection; certainly, changing the thinking of whites and aboriginal people as well so that there is greater mutual acceptance is work that will require very great patience.

I regret to tell you that we have no particular system for arriving at this goal, apart from patiently continuing to organize our groups like this as best we can. There

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is no particular system that will lead us to this goal.

I have one incidental suggestion. For example, a group such as Development and Peace, which is very involved in social justice . . . thank you, Rita. Development and Peace, Développement et Paix, exists across Canada. This is quite a large organization which, as I almost forgot, can do and is already doing development work in this area of relations.

They currently have this program called rebuilding the Americas. They are involved in establishing ties between aboriginal people here and those in the countries of Latin America and Central America, where sometimes 60 per cent or more of the population is aboriginal. So they work to establish relations.

This is one group, among others, which can help to disseminate this new way of thinking.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: As for the Church as such
and personnel of that sort,

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we can't say that we have specialized personnel for that type of work, helping in the healing process or helping in situations of family tension or even violence.

On the reserve there is the priest, the pastor, and occasionally nuns, though increasingly fewer of them--in our region, at any event, there aren't any who visit the reserves, except for one spot. Here in Quebec there is the Department of Social Affairs within the government, where there are a lot of skilled people who do work, let's say some of this work of providing accompaniment for families. This is done on the reserves as well.

I cannot guarantee that these people always have the talents and skills to adapt their work specifically to the Amerindian environment, the aboriginal community, but I believe that there are people in the Department of Social Affairs who can do this sort of work. There are probably other people, and I know some persons in this room who could be more specific about this, but as far as I am concerned, my answer is in

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two parts.

Within the Church we have no personnel, apart from the priest who may already be rendering enormous services in this regard; occasionally there may also be nuns. I think also that we must not ignore the presence of these government officials from the Department of Social Affairs, who I do believe bring healing or assistance to these families.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: Thank you.

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: You're welcome.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Commissioner Polson.

COMMISSIONER GORDON POLSON: [English]

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[English]

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[English]

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: You have asked me a fine philosophical question there, one that is theological at the same time.

We increasingly hear this term "holistic". You say that the First Nations have a kind of holistic, or global, view. Ecology is part of this perspective. Everything has to be seen together globally, and this is an approach that pleases me to some degree, but only up to a certain point.

That is because in the term

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"holistic" there is sometimes . . . people even include the totality of creation, even include God, as if He were inside Creation, when the term "holistic" is pushed to the extreme.

To integrate with my personal faith and in a somewhat general fashion, I think that the First Nations reflect upon this issue. We Christians consider God to be outside the world. He is the Creator of the world, but is not incorporated within it. God is personal and transcendent and beyond the world.

At the same time, our way of seeing God in our faith, and God's way of being present in the world, has been that He has come in the person of Jesus, and so become one of us. He became Jesus Christ, living among us, and then Jesus Christ resurrected, whereupon he became Christ in glory.

In our way of thinking of God, He is simultaneously outside the world and present within the world in the person of Jesus.

Here is where something of a distinction is drawn between the holistic perspective, taken to the extreme. In that

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perspective, it is as if God were immanent only, within the world and not distinct from it.

In our way of thinking, part of God is abstracted, namely that part which is beyond, which is a wholly other being, a transcendent being.

This reservation being made, I find that we concur very well both in our faith in the Creator God, which is what we teach, and as Christians or simply believers. The First Nations see the presence of God in all of Creation; God is there and He gives His whole life, because God is the source of life, and for your people Mother Earth is the source of life.

Here there are many, many affinities. I see many more affinities between the First Nations and us whites, but I consider myself a Christian and the leader of a diocese, which includes whites and your people as well, aboriginal people as well.

I am responsible for the whole, and in that regard I have no difficulty agreeing on how to see the world or on integrating things with your way or the way of our faith.

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When I earlier alluded to the Pope's actions at Midland, of accepting the purification by smoke and then receiving the eagle feather, this was a sign that was very considered, very deliberate, to say that the Amerindian culture is not something that is pagan. This is something that was said in former times, and we regret it. It is not something pagan. For the Pope this act was a very deliberate recognition of your culture and your civilization.

We are trying to do this, not always adequately and not always with success. One must try to integrate enculturation, to integrate Amerindian customs and ways, and that includes integration within our Christian or Catholic religious ceremonies. We are increasingly attempting to do this.

This has not been sufficiently done in the past. The indication that the Pope gave to us at that moment was that we must go forward. He had done the same thing in Fort Simpson, where he turned to the four points of the compass.

There are many, many

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affinities between your way of seeing the earth, nature and life and that which one discovers by studying our own theology.

COMMISSIONER GORDON POLSON: Thank you for your speech.

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: You are most welcome. I thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Monsignor Drainville, I would like to thank you for coming to meet with us and talk with us.

We hope that this may continue throughout the period in which the Commission will be doing its work. Once again, if you have any other thoughts to convey to us, we will be very happy to receive your guidance and to benefit from the wisdom of your reflections.

MGR GÉRARD DRAINVILLE: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My thanks to everyone.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would now like to ask Ms Édith Cloutier, representing the Val d'Or Friendship Center, to come and join us with her colleagues.

Mrs EDITH CLOUTIER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VAL D'OR ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE: If it does not cause any problems, I have with me members of the Board of Directors who will make the presentation.

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CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Would you be so kind as to identify yourselves for purposes of the recording.

EDITH CLOUTIER: They are people on our staff who are here to take part in the presentations.

LUCY LOUTTIT, VICE-PRESIDENT, VAL D'OR ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE: Lucy Louttit, Vice-President.

EDITH CLOUTIER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VAL D'OR ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE: Edith Cloutier, Executive Director.

JOHANNE LACASSE, BOARD MEMBER, VAL D'OR ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE: Johanne Lacasse, Board member.

ALAIN KISTABISH, SECRETARY, VAL D'OR ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE: Alain Kistabish, Secretary.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Good morning. Please proceed in the order you think

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best.

EDITH CLOUTIER: Before beginning, I should first like to welcome you. We are pleased to receive you here in our city. We are happy to be able to take part in the Commission and to make the presentation. Thank you for the time you have allowed us.

ALAIN KISTABISH: And welcome to Algonquin territory.

Val d'Or is a young municipality (58 years old in 1992). It was born out of mining and forestry activities and attracted thousands of aboriginal workers who helped to build the city. Over the years, because of their presence, roads were opened up and houses built on what appeared to be virgin land; at least that was the view held by newcomers of this vast expanse.

However, around them and almost unknown to them, lived the Anichinabe aboriginal people, who had occupied the land from time immemorial.

We are not going to rewrite the

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historic details. We shall simply note that these people were forced, not without clashes, to renounce some of the traditional aspects of their lives, in particular nomadism, which is not the same thing as wandering, since their social organization was geared to the rhythms of nature, and so they had winter and summer encampments depending on the seasons for hunting, fishing or gathering produce and annual assemblies in specific locations near the major waterways since they travelled by canoe.

Today most of the members of this aboriginal people now live in communities that have long been called "reserves", which is a dreary expression because it implies segregation.

However, several Natives have left the communities of their birth temporarily or permanently, some to improve the quality of their life by working for modern companies and others to study or seize job opportunities of which there are not many in the aboriginal communities.

Unlike the cities of western Canada, where many aboriginal people live who moved there

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between 1950 and 1960, Val D'Or did not witness these migrations until the 1970s. In 1990 1.2 per cent of the permanent residents of the city were Natives.

Val D'Or is a city of 22,000 inhabitants located in the north-central part of Quebec about 550 kilometres from Montreal.

It is one of the main cities in the Abitibi region. It owes its name and its existence to the search for and discovery of large quantities of gold in the nineteen thirties.

The principal aboriginal nations to be found in Val d'Or are the Algonquin and the Cree. While it is thought that the Cree usually come to Val d'Or only for brief or temporary, albeit regular, visits, it is the Algonquin, when it comes down to it, who make up the essential aboriginal population of our city.

Although a large number of them have congregated in a district in the western part of the city, most are scattered more or less everywhere. The aboriginal minority is especially visible downtown at the time of gatherings, festivals, sports tournaments or other activities specifically organized for Natives and these activities

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attract Natives from almost everywhere to the city and they descend on it at those times.

I shall let Mrs Lacasse continue.

JOHANNE LACASSE: Before going on to speak to you about a research study on Natives in the urban environment, I should like to point out that the researchers looked into the question as to whether similar studies had already been done in Canada. The conclusion was that no other research has been done in Canada.

I should like to continue by depicting for you a typical aboriginal resident of Val d'Or.

The research on Natives in the urban environment was carried out in Val d'Or between the summer of 1988 and the winter of 1991. The study, which was initiated by the Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre in light of questions raised and needs felt by this organization, was conducted by the University of Quebec in Abitibi-Temiscamingue in co-operation with and for the Friendship Centre.

In essence, the goal of the research was to deepen and increase our knowledge of aboriginal people living in

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an urban community in order to give all the parties concerned, both white and aboriginal, a realistic source of information that would enable them to meet the perceived needs and wishes of the aboriginal population of Val d'Or. The goal was also to provide Natives from the area with the same source of information to enable them to obtain certain services and to guide their actions.

In this way we surveyed over 250 Natives from Val d'Or, including Cree, Algonquin and Inuit and also including post-secondary students. However, the total number of our respondents was 191, given the number of Natives recorded in Val d'Or by Statistics Canada in the last census in 1986 (260, including Metis).

Our team is quite proud of the fact that it was able to gain the co-operation of 191 Natives in Val d'Or.

We thought we should include a summary of this research in our presentation so that we could depict for you a typical aboriginal resident of Val d'Or.

This person is a women of 35 with one or two children, whose spouse is

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White or Native and who speaks English as her first language, French as her second language and also a little of her original aboriginal language. She is an Algonquin, a status Indian, was born in a town and has lived in Val d'Or for over ten years. She moved to the city for reasons of employment, education or family.

She lives in rented housing in the Baie Carrière district in the southwestern part of the city, where there is a concentration of low-cost housing for Natives. She has a secondary education and works full time for an aboriginal organization. Her annual income is approximately \$10,000 and the primary source of this income is her work.

The Natives living in Val d'Or maintain contact with their out-of-town communities and they have relatives and friends in the City of Val d'Or.

Overall, there was a great deal of satisfaction with living conditions in the city. The main sources of dissatisfaction are jobs, salaries and the environment.

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A majority of the Natives living in Val d'Or (76 per cent) claim to be in good health; the fact that they live in the city does not influence their state of health in any way (64 per cent). Nevertheless, a large majority of respondents (79 per cent) occasionally make use of the city's health services.

The recreational activities in which aboriginal residents of Val d'Or participate involve both their own culture and that of the Whites or are inherent in both cultures. They are always keen on certain traditional activities like fishing, camping, trapping, crafts and the oral transmission of traditions.

The aboriginal residents of Val d'Or are rather well informed and have integrated the mass media into their culture: television, the press and radio now play a role in their lives.

Racial discrimination exists in Val d'Or at all levels of relationship but in its most obvious form is practised by Whites against Natives (63.2 per cent of respondents feel that this is so). The discrimination suffered by Natives is primarily psychological in nature (non-verbal, verbal, related to

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prejudice), although five per cent of respondents say that they have been subject to physical discrimination.

Aboriginal residents of Val d'Or approve of their ancestors' way of life although a majority of them are also puzzled by the form of spirituality experienced by those ancestors.

A majority of our respondents believe that their culture is being lost (49.7 per cent), more than one-third believes that it is still alive (35.6 per cent) while 13 per cent have no opinion on the subject. The reasons given by those in the first group are the loss of their language, assimilation, migration and abandonment or ignorance of their customs. The reasons given by the second are more inward-looking: spiritual heritage, heredity, strength of mind and self-confidence.

Means that might be used to preserve their culture suggested by the aboriginal residents of Val d'Or include in descending order: return to the source (34 per cent), language (27 per cent), contact with the elders (19 per cent), education (18 per cent), cultural activities (16 per cent), unification of the nations (14 per cent) and

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political solutions (8 per cent).

As far as lifestyles are concerned, a majority of the aboriginal residents of Val d'Or prefer living in the city (60 per cent) while 27 per cent of respondents plan to leave the city for the forests and 13 per cent have no opinion on the subject.

In the near future a majority of respondents intend to remain in the city (66 per cent) and to work on the aboriginal cause (62 per cent). Education plans are also important: 46 per cent of respondents want to study full time and 34 per cent part time.

As far as their future needs are concerned, the respondents feel that the most important are housing (40.7 per cent) and employment (39.6 per cent).

When our respondents look to the future, especially given the duality between modern life and traditional culture, 39 per cent believe that it is possible to combine these two realities harmoniously while 37 per cent feel, on the contrary, that it is not possible and 20 per cent

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are undecided.

It is with this topic of duality toward the past, the present and the future that we shall conclude our summary. In the final analysis, in fact, it is difficult not to admit that this duality underlies almost all the questions raised by our research.

Several respondents with whom we met during our investigation are still in contact with their communities outside the city; in the city they mix and live primarily with their own kind; the causes of poor health among them are urban stress and their diet; they work for aboriginal organizations and most of them are involved in the aboriginal cause; they have low incomes and they are victims of discrimination by Whites. Most of them approve of their ancestors' way of life.

One-half of them believe that their culture is being lost as a result of contact with Whites and the city; one-third of them see a return to the source as a means of preserving their culture; their primary objectives for the near future are to remain in the city and work on

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the aboriginal cause; more than one-third of them consider it impossible to achieve a harmonious fusion of the two cultures because of assimilation; one Native in Val d'Or out of five is undecided about his future because of this cultural duality.

However, this research project noted another point of view that should be examined. In Val d'Or we generally have Natives who have adapted to an urban lifestyle and seem rather satisfied with it. A majority of them were born in the city and the transition from one lifestyle to another has taken place gently over the years.

They are full citizens who work, consume and enjoy themselves primarily in Val d'Or. They enjoy good health and have an average education. They have relatives and friends here. The young people seem to like school and relations between Whites and Natives seem to be generally good.

They are essentially satisfied with their standard of living, participate in many leisure activities and use the services available. Aboriginal residents of Val d'Or are rather well informed; they know where to go if they have problems.

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They like the city, the comfort it provides and the services it offers and they intend to remain there in the near future. Although they approve of their ancestors' way of life, they feel that it no longer meets current needs.

Eighty-five per cent of Natives living in Val d'Or are Catholics and they are puzzled but curious about the spirituality of their ancestors. They are rather nationalist because 62 per cent of them want to work on the aboriginal cause. A large majority of Natives in Val d'Or plan to obtain more education in the near future.

They are interested in preserving their culture although one-half of them believe that it is doomed to assimilation.

Opinions concerning the future are divided but 39 per cent of them feel that it is possible for aboriginal culture and white culture to live together in harmony.

I shall now hand over to Mrs Cloutier.

EDITH CLOUTIER: I shall continue and move on to the very heart of the recommendations we wish to make to the Commission.

The Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre,

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which was established in 1974, has developed constantly throughout its twenty years of existence. The Centre has set itself the objectives of improving the standard of living of Natives in the urban environment, continuing to maintain harmonious relations among aboriginal and other peoples and promoting aboriginal culture in the community.

With the increasing migration of Natives to the cities (according to the Statistics Canada report for 1986, 52 per cent of Natives no longer live on the reserves), the Friendship Centre has had to develop a broad range of services and ensure that these are delivered adequately to a constantly growing urban aboriginal population.

The Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre employs a total of 12 persons on a permanent basis. All the employees are Natives. The Centre provides several services such as referrals, assistance, health liaison service, room and board, job and training programs and community development, to name only a few.

The Centre takes an active part in

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the community in order to provide the aboriginal population of Val d'Or with adequate representation. Groups dealing with social issues are increasingly seeking out the Friendship Centre to take part in various advisory committees. Unfortunately, given our limited human resources, we cannot participate in all of them.

The Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre participates, among others, in a discussion group on the quality of service provided by the Department of Manpower, Income Security and Professional Training, the advisory group on the prevention of alcoholism and drug addiction in Val d'Or and in an advisory committee on violence in the City of Val d'Or.

Another interesting point is the fact that the Friendship Centre was invited last year to become more involved in a field that is not social in nature. The Centre was asked to represent the aboriginal communities on the Comité d'aide au développement des collectivités (CADC) [committee to assist in community development]. It committee is primarily concerned with economic development. In

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addition, in order to gain a better understanding of the aboriginal reality in the community, the Val d'Or Chamber of Commerce has approached the Friendship Centre with a view to having one seat on the Chamber's board of directors filled by an aboriginal representative.

This is the result of efforts made over the last several years to improve relations between Natives and non-Natives. Although it was one of the Friendship Centre's objectives, the creation of harmonious relations with the non-aboriginal community was not achieved overnight. Through the "community interaction" component of the aboriginal friendship centres program, we have been able to make the general population more aware of the richness of our culture through various social and cultural activities.

Unfortunately, the events that marked the summer of 1990 have made it clear that a great deal remains to be done and that it is only by becoming more involved on a regular basis and making maximum use of the limited resources made available to us that we can continue the struggle against racism and prejudice.

Furthermore, we believe that the

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school system should do more to sensitize young people to the reality of aboriginal life in conjunction with aboriginal groups. It must be made clear that it is unjust to regard differences with equanimity.

We must learn to accept differences and respect them.

As we noted earlier in this presentation, major migration is taking place to the urban centres. Native friendship centres have evolved, not without disputes, at a similar rate and have had to diversify and adapt their services.

In Val d'Or over the last twenty years the Aboriginal Friendship Centre has always been there to provide front-line services to individuals who have moved into the city looking for a better standard of living. While this was happening, the aboriginal friendship centres movement developed a certain amount of expertise and thus became the best qualified national association to deliver services in an urban situation.

The aboriginal friendship centres have become major stake-holders in their

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communities. Because of these numerous interactions with local groups and organizations, the friendship centres have developed close links with non-aboriginal people. Our many forms of involvement in both communities and the constant requests made by the Val d'Or community to the Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre have made us to realize that friendship centres excel in creating good relations between the two peoples.

As a result of its multidisciplinary character, the Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre has succeeded in understanding the needs and concerns of aboriginal people in the urban environment. We feel that aboriginal friendship centres are in the best position to meet the needs of the urban aboriginal population on a daily basis.

The urban aboriginal community of Val d'Or has succeeded in developing over the years, regardless of the structures that exist on the surrounding reserves. Today, we must all face a fact that no aboriginal group or organization can deny: the need for the

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aboriginal peoples to fight against all forms of violence and abuse in order to give our people back a sense of pride, whether they live on a reserve or elsewhere. This is the framework within which the Val d'Or Aboriginal Friendship Centre is attempting to develop its approaches.

However, we believe that the ideal can be achieved only if we work together closely. We realize that the clients who pass through the Centre's doors come from the reserves and that their needs on arriving in the city are immediate.

Thanks to its flexibility and its multidisciplinary role, the Friendship Centre has succeeded in responding rapidly. However, we realize that some needs cannot be met overnight. An awareness campaign and co-operation with aboriginal and non-aboriginal stake-holders may be necessary, not to say essential, before concrete and effective results can be attained. If such results are to be attained, a lot of time, energy and resources, both financial

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and human, will be required.

On the other hand, as an aboriginal organization working in the urban environment, the Centre has limited financial resources. Organizations like aboriginal friendship centres must look to the funds provided to the population as a whole since existing federal programs for the First Nations are available only to groups living on reserves. Despite the fact that 52 per cent of Natives live off the reserves, financial resources have not been made available to the groups serving the constantly growing population of Natives living elsewhere than on the reserves.

We sincerely feel that the sharing of these resources could only achieve positive results for all the First Nations. Access to additional funding sources, possibly through the Department of Indian Affairs, National Health and Welfare and the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy would enable Natives living in the cities to develop socially and economically.

In conclusion,

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aboriginal friendship centres must be viewed as major partners in the First Nations' development process. Since the end of the 1950s aboriginal friendship centres have been one of the very few reception structures actually working in our urban aboriginal population.

Aboriginal friendship centres have accordingly acquired experience in delivering services and developed the necessary infrastructures to build an autonomous society that meets the needs of all its citizens who have chosen to live in an urban environment.

We are pleased to have been able to participate in this second series of hearings. For our part, we believe that we have made a few suggestions that will enable the Commission to develop its recommendations concerning the delivery of services in an urban environment and to define the role to be assigned to aboriginal friendship centres across Canada while recognizing that friendship centres attempt on an on-going basis to create links with their partners, both Native or non-Native, with a view to helping to improve the

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quality of life of an entire society.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Thank you for this very important presentation which also includes a summary of the study you conducted of the situation of the aboriginal population here in Val d'Or.

I should like to stress the fact that we are very aware of the role played by aboriginal friendship centres in distributing services in the urban community.

At this point I should like to ask you ... Yesterday we had a presentation by the Société de Bien-être du Grand Lac Victoria [society for the welfare of Grand Lac Victoria] and we were told clearly that there were about one hundred children here in Val d'Or in foster homes.

The question is, obviously we know that the people come from the reserves or the communities. What sort of relations do you have with the leadership on the reserves, with the band councils, on the one hand, and also in the specific case that was mentioned yesterday, do you have a role when such a situation occurs, with respect to the school boards?

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In a situation like this but also because, as you said in your brief, there are many people in Val d'Or who have come for aboriginal education in Val d'Or. Have you established a role with the school boards, possibly with the CEGEP, with respect to both the reception and the integration of natives in school boards and also, more broadly, with respect to the education of non-aboriginal students concerning the reality of aboriginal cultures?

Essentially, there are two things: the functional links with reserves and also specifically with respect to the education sector.

EDITH CLOUTIER: Concerning the first part of your question, which refers to relations between the Friendship Centre and the band councils or other groups representing these band councils, as described in the brief, at that level it's rather closed as far as the delivery of services they provide on their reserves is concerned or, in other words, it's rather a case of everyone for himself.

Without really saying that we

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in the friendship centres are concentrating a great deal on the urban population, obviously. We have nevertheless tried to establish certain links with the communities.

I know that the Friendship Centre is recognized as being a group that provides services but, unfortunately, there have not really been any links or liaison established with the communities. It's not that we haven't tried; on the contrary, we have tried in some fields, including consciousness raising.

I have the impression that in the reserves and band councils it is rather a very local concentration that exists at that level.

To answer the second part of your question, which concerns relations with the school boards, unfortunately at that level also we have not been able to establish links. However, I know that attempts have been made on many occasions by the Friendship Centre to look for the resources that would enable us to provide services in the schools through the Quebec Department of Education.

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Unfortunately, we were told that there is no funding or support that could come from the province to support groups such as friendship centres to meet certain needs they may have.

In fact, some requests do come from the community asking for support for the education of their students and also consciousness-raising.

At this level we have not been able to obtain resources to provide an on-going service. However, we are trying to become involved with the various educational institutions by organizing certain activities designed to raise awareness that may recur on an annual or biannual basis.

So in this regard we have reached the awareness-raising stage. However, efforts are being made in an attempt to raise awareness even more. Given the range of services and the number of human resources allocated to us, let us say that we are trying to become more integrated in all those areas.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Just one further point.

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You state in your brief that you are playing an increasing part, as far as your resources allow, in committees, including those on economic development and not solely in those relating to the social field.

Am I to understand that, as far as the school system is concerned, which is, after all, quite fundamental and the basis for much else, that you have attempted to take measures or make more important contacts, because one of the things that also struck me when the events occurred at Lac Victoria which had the result that a lot of children had to come to town, in the final analysis, it was in the Protestant school board that this happened and not in the Catholic school board.

I should like to ask you, in fact, whether going beyond activities that are, as you said, somewhat more structured, have you attempted to make contact with the two school boards?

EDITH CLOUTIER: Not directly with the school boards. Let us say that steps have nevertheless been

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taken with respect to needs in the schools for which the school board is directly responsible.

We conducted a survey and research into the needs or the number of aboriginal students in their schools.

Following that we wished to do further research on the issue to approach the Department of Education directly in an attempt to obtain perhaps a certain amount of funding and that's where we were ... It is obvious that the schools boards would be interested in having aboriginal groups participate although the schools boards do not want to use their resources to provide services that are geared strictly to the aboriginal population.

As a result we had to turn to the Department of Education and that's where we came up against a wall at that level, where we were told: no, you cannot participate in that way.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: I shall ask my colleagues to continue.

Commissioner Robinson, please.

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CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Mr Blakeney.

[English]

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That's why they use the school board.

ALAIN KISTABISH: Just as a follow-up, there are statistics collected by Statistics Canada that may be of help in seeing the immigration that is going on in Quebec and also in the rest of Canada.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENE DUSSAULT: Thank you for your presentation. We hope you will keep up your good work.

It is certain that for the Commission aboriginal friendship centres are the resource for Natives in the urban environment. We shall certainly look at the situation in relation to the potential role of those associations, for friendship centres, also with respect to participation in aboriginal self-government in the urban environment, as was mentioned by Mrs Robinson. Thank you.

We shall adjourn the session briefly for lunch.

We shall resume at 1:30 promptly because we do not have much flexibility in this afternoon's agenda.

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We will hear from three groups: the Centre d'entraide autochtone de Senneterre, the Lac Simon Band Council and the Association de développement économique algonquin.

Thank you; at 1:30 pm.

--- Hearing recessed at 12:48 pm.

--- Hearing resumed at 1:45 pm.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We will now hear the presentation of the Centre d'entraide autochtone de Senneterre made by its representative, Mr. Louis Bordeleau.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Dear members of the Royal Commission, I greet you and thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this brief.

I have been working at the Senneterre native friendship centre since it opened in 1978. The centre is an apolitical, non-profit community organization whose main goal is to help aboriginal people living in or passing through the town.

We work in a number of areas: housing, health promotion, information, the preservation of our culture,

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support to drug addicts, help for the disadvantaged, liaison service in education and health care, organization of recreational activities, inter-ethnic awareness-raising, participation in economic and social development, etc.

Senneterre is a municipality with a population of just under 4,000 located in the eastern end of the Abitibi region. Approximately 350 aboriginal people live in Senneterre on a quasi-permanent basis. These Amerindians come from three different nations: the Cree (50 percent), the Algonquin (28 percent) and the Atikamekw (22 percent).

Eighty percent of the aboriginal population are under 30 years of age and 50 percent are under 18. Most have never lived on a reserve and do not hold steady jobs. The aboriginal people of Senneterre have their problems and face the same obstacles as their brothers and sisters living in other urban centres in Quebec and Canada.

Since the Commission has already heard about the various problems facing aboriginal peoples during the first

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series of public hearings, I will not repeat here the sombre list of problems and the unenviable statistics concerning Canada's first peoples.

As Mr. Georges Erasmus so eloquently stated when the establishment of this Commission was announced, the work of the Royal Commission must result in more than just the publication of these sombre statistics. Five hundred years after the arrival of Christopher Columbus, it is high time that the discussions between aboriginal peoples and Canadians of European descent be imbued with frankness, mutual respect and wisdom.

With the closing of another chapter in the constitutional saga, we really do not know what awaits us tomorrow. Shall we see self-government, the status quo or more Okas? Or perhaps a mixture of all three?

Be that as it may, our organization, the Centre d'entraide et d'amitié autochtone de Senneterre, would like to submit the following possible approaches for solving our problems:

(1) Most aboriginal people living in urban centres will continue to live there. In recent years, regional

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and national aboriginal organizations have claimed to represent them politically at various negotiating tables without necessarily consulting them and informing them of the issues that concern them.

Since we cannot predict at the present time what form our future aboriginal governments will take and the powers they will have, it is essential to maintain and support community organizations such as the native friendship centres so that aboriginal people living in the cities can continue to have access to the various essential services provided there.

(2) As regards self-determination for the aboriginal peoples, we would look favourably on a gradual return of land and powers to the aboriginal peoples.

The necessary negotiations could be patterned after the negotiations between the Navajo nation and the United States government. The Navajos currently manage most of their programs and natural resources.

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(3) Aboriginal women play a very important role in the native friendship centre movement. Through their contribution we have been able to develop a network of services geared to the essential needs of aboriginal people living in or passing through urban centres. Aboriginal women must be guaranteed equitable participation in future negotiations and/or discussions concerning aboriginal peoples.

(4) As regards the restructuring of relations between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, our organization is working regularly to increase awareness of aboriginal culture in the schools. This enables young elementary school students to gain a better understanding of our customs and traditions.

We must encourage initiatives of this type on a larger scale in order to develop healthier and more respectful relations between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

(5) The delivery of social, education, health and community services in the cities must be rationalized.

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Experience has shown us that it is beneficial to set up forums for consultation and co-operation bringing together all parties concerned in order to solve major problems.

For example, to deal with the problems of aboriginal youth, we brought together at the same table a social worker, an educator, parents, an employee of the native friendship centre, a police officer, a representative of the local community social services centre (CLSC) and even a town councillor. When all these great people are brought together, they demonstrate goodwill and patience and really put their heart into the job. This method has brought positive results in our community.

(6) Since a substantial percentage of aboriginal people live in urban centres and it is not currently possible for them to have access to the same resources as those available in aboriginal communities, this situation must be rectified. The problems of drug abuse are just as prevalent in the cities as they are on the reserves. Why not have a NNADAP officer in the cities?

These are a few possible approaches which, we hope, will find some small place in this Commission's future

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report. However, we are still examining this issue.

Our provincial and national associations will be submitting to you our common concerns as well as specific recommendations arising from a nationwide consultation process.

Thank you for your attention.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Bordeleau, for the presentation by the Senneterre friendship centre.

First of all, some technical information. How many employees do you have at the Senneterre centre? Are they all aboriginal people?

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Six of our seven permanent employees are aboriginal people.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: If I understand you correctly, you have established good contacts at the elementary school level at least.

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LOUIS BORDELEAU: Yes. We have good co-operation with the school board.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In terms of integrating aboriginal people into the school context; but you have also told us that this has had an impact on content. Has this had an influence on the curriculum taught to all children to help them gain a better knowledge and understanding of aboriginal culture and reality?

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Could you elaborate on this? Earlier we were told here that this had not yet been achieved.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: I believe that we in Senneterre are pioneers of sorts in this regard. It is to some extent our initiative at the centre to increase the entire population's awareness of aboriginal culture. We decided that it would be better to go see the students, to increase the students' awareness while they are young. The schools have greatly appreciated this and encouraged us to continue our efforts in this direction.

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We set up exhibits in the schools. Our efforts have been appreciated and we have been asked to continue.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: At both the elementary and secondary levels?

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Our efforts at present are limited to the elementary school level. We do not have sufficient resources to do this on a large scale.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: When you say that most of the aboriginal people in Senneterre have never lived on a reserve, do you mean... in many cases, the aboriginal population is increasing in the cities because the people come from communities or leave the reserves in search of jobs, sometimes for reasons of protection.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Historically, some aboriginal people moved to Senneterre back in 1930 or 1940. In most cases, their children all grew up in Senneterre.

However, there are others who have moved to Senneterre who previously lived on reserves, but they are not the majority.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So the main group comes from the same original community. There are at least one or two generations in Senneterre.

What you're saying is that there are new arrivals coming from the communities and the reserves.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Your point of view on the organization of... Senneterre is a town of 4,000. You said in your brief that there are 350 aboriginal people.

You spoke of a forum for consultation and co-operation, which also included town councillors.

How do you view the concept of government in a context such that of Senneterre, of aboriginal government vis-à-vis municipal government? In your opinion, should this concept apply to the delivery of services? Should this include all aboriginal people? There are three nations in Senneterre.

Could you elaborate a little on this, because this is one of the issues the Commission is wondering about,

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namely whether distinctions should be made between the various aboriginal peoples and also whether this should be a concern at the school board level, at the level of the boards of directors of health care facilities, hence at the level of service delivery organizations, social service agencies, or should this go a little further and include a somewhat more political structure?

Have you examined this issue?

LOUIS BORDELEAU: I clearly understand your question but our organization has never really examined all the political issues and the...

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You are really concerned about the delivery of services.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: We are concerned about the delivery of services.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: And without any distinction between Cree, Algonquin or Inuit.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: As long as you are in the community, as long as you reside in the community, everyone has

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equal access to the services.

We will leave the political issues up to the political organizations which have this mandate.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: This is, nevertheless, an issue which I invite you to examine because I believe it is important that the native friendship centres give consideration to this issue because, once again, we held a round table in Edmonton on urban issues and there were really two opposing schools of thought on this subject. Those involved in the delivery of services said not to politicize the delivery of services, to keep the delivery of services rational and logical and not to make a distinction between the various aboriginal groups.

However, those who live on the reserves, who have signed treaties, said that the delivery of services should be associated with a more political organization, that this is a government function, and that the different nations should be responsible for the delivery of services to their own people.

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So, you get some idea of the situation. Essentially, what I'm saying is that this is a question that will not be easy for the Commission to resolve -- not necessarily to resolve, but to deal with.

I believe it is important for organizations responsible for the delivery of services to examine this issue because there are things that will involve them at a given point in time, that will come. This is what I am getting at in making this comment.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: I believe that we will be called on to seriously raise...

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: This is not any easy question.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: No, certainly not. I imagine that the most difficult part is yet to come, in negotiating these agreements.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I will ask my colleagues to continue.

Commissioner Robinson, please.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

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[English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Blakeney.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

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[English]

LOUIS BORDELEAU: [English]

The figure of 350 is relatively less stable because there are both people arriving and people leaving.

The figure of 350 was... we arrived at this figure in 1988 and we are currently working on conducting another sort of census to see what the number is now. According to our estimates, the figure is relatively stable.

There are nevertheless many problems of unemployment and there are few jobs available. It is not very tempting for aboriginal people to move to Senneterre because there are no jobs.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

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[English]

LOUIS BORDELEAU: [English]

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

LOUIS BORDELEAU: There is excellent co-operation between the two friendship centres. We help each other out when we have common problems, whatever they may be.

As regards people, it is still fairly rare for us to be able to discuss a particular individual or family. It is still fairly rare.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Polson.

COMMISSIONER GORDON POLSON: [English]

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[English]

LOUIS BORDELEAU: That's right. Friendship centres are independent organizations managed by a board of directors elected annually in the town.

How will the centres be maintained or develop with self-government, is this what you mean by your question?

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Since, as we mentioned earlier, these are service organizations... I believe that the centres could continue to provide services to aboriginal people living in urban centres.

As regards resources, the resources will obviously have to come from the aboriginal governments depending on the nations, depending on the future political framework.

I believe that the centres could easily continue to provide the same services even if we achieve aboriginal self-government because there will always be aboriginal people living in the cities. We cannot all return to the bush because there is not much left.

COMMISSIONER GORDON POLSON: [English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you very much for coming to make this presentation to the Commission.

LOUIS BORDELEAU: I would like to thank you too.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I would now like to ask Chief Simon Anichinapeo and the other representatives of the Lac Simon Band Council to meet with us.

NOÉ MITCHELL: My name is Noé Mitchell. I come from the Lac Simon Algonquin community. I am a councillor and information officer.

To each of you present in this room, I join with our Creator, with the good spirits of our ancestors, with my leaders and with the members of my Lac Simon Algonquin community to wish you a cordial welcome to the Algonquin territory of Abitibi-Temiscamingue.

These days, our community, located south of the city of Val d'Or, one kilometre from Highway 117, has a reputation which is far from positive. It currently presents a sombre and very negative picture, evidence of a deep wound caused by a multitude of social problems related to situations of socio-cultural, spiritual, economic and political crisis.

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There is no point in rehashing the history of searching for victims and victimizers, since our community is gradually establishing the process of the healing circle, bringing together the leaders and social and educational workers and the community as a whole.

Our community is taking itself in hand and this will dramatically change the day-to-day life of our members, since the future of our children, of our youth, of our elders, of our wise ones and of ourselves, deserves to be healthy, reassuring, secure and full of promise for a life of peace and prosperity.

Our leaders, our social and educational workers are joining forces and combining their efforts and energies to find solutions and put forward resolutions in order to alleviate the various thorny problems which have persisted in our community for too many years.

As is true elsewhere, our community has not been spared the phenomenon of suicide among Algonquin youth, the

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prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse, which more often than not leads to violence against our women, our children, our elders and visible minorities.

As is the case elsewhere, we are systematically backed against a wall and we must act before we lose our future destiny. A change in ways of thinking, greater community awareness and consciousness-raising and greater individual and family group responsibility are only means which are advocated in our community.

Beyond these problems related to the phenomenon of suicide among our young people, of sniffing, of juvenile delinquency, of violence, of crime arising from alcohol and drug abuse, the problem of housing in our community is very pressing.

When one considers that the average of non-aboriginals in one dwelling is 3.4, and the threshold of tolerance for aboriginals nationally is 4.4, and that the figure in our community is 7.4, it is easy to draw conclusions.

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When we speak of economic development, between you and I, is it possible to adequately promote this sector when we know at the outset that this federal territory to which we are confined is neither logical nor adequate in the short term?

Ask the two non-aboriginal governments how they imagine economic development in a "sardine can." Ask them how they visualize miracle solutions on a little piece of land when, once upon a time, this rich territory was crisscrossed by the tracks of our ancestors. Ask them how they perceive the prosperity of the Algonquins within this territory of Abitibi-Temiscamingue since we do not really know how to achieve it, other than to "chance" a small business sector on the meagre patch of land where our community is established.

There are government programs which too often do not correspond to the specific needs of our leaders. There are possibilities for negotiations to the extent that the programs are flexible, insofar as possible, for our community. Let us take the example of the judicial system. It is necessary

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that there be within our local government laws and regulations based on our culture and our tradition in terms of enforcement, judgment and acquittal.

Our community is taking its destiny in hand by implementing security measures which respond specifically to its population. Our leaders are putting forward different programs at the social, cultural, spiritual, economic and political levels and we will ensure that the two governments hear our voices not only to "patch up" or "mask" our requests but to genuinely satisfy the immediate and obvious needs of our community.

To this end, it is necessary that the leaders of the other governments lend an ear to our requests and that they come to meet with us on our small patch of land so that they can see with their own eyes what our community has to live with on a day-to-day basis.

What the leaders want above all is that the governments respect the requests of our nation in terms of land

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claims, responsibility for our affairs, its monetary contribution to the establishment of programs intended for our respective communities in the sectors identified as priorities and that the governments put in place a process of government-to-government negotiation to ensure a prosperous future in our respective communities.

Our most cherished wish is that the future of our children be ensured by an agreement on sharing the wealth of our Mother Earth, the resources of our lakes and rivers and the exchange of our transmissions on the airwaves and the protection of our rights based on our tradition and our culture.

We are a peaceful people with a spirit of sharing handed down from our ancestors. We advocate co-existence and the shared management of the Algonquin territory, as long as our ancestral rights are fully respected.

On this point I will conclude, wishing each and every one of you a safe return and may the Good Spirit guide your steps toward the path of harmony, peace and mutual

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co-operation so that a new world reigns in our respective communities.
Meegwetch.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I thank you for travelling here to meet and discuss with us.

Perhaps simply for the record, could you remind us how many people live on the reserve, the number of band council members in particular? Is it around 700?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: On the Indian Affairs list, the population is estimated at 870 while we, the community we serve, is approximately 1,000 persons.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: And the size of the reserve?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: One square mile.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: When you speak of the housing problem, we hear about this on all the reserves, with the growth in population, at this time you have, according to the birth rate you cite, which is very high...

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In the current year, have you built houses, under programs with the federal government?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: This year we built eleven housing units. Presently we have been allocated three other houses. To be able to catch up, various studies have been conducted within our community. The study is currently in the hands of federal officials.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: For a special catch-up program.

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: Presently, with the talks I have had, there is a new program that will come out at the end of this year.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You have an elementary school and a secondary school on the reserve?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: How many students are there?

ANNIE CHEEZO, LAC SIMON BAND COUNCIL: There are 82 secondary students and 126 elementary students.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Are they all from the Lac Simon community or are there others from neighbouring communities?

ANNIE CHEEZO: There are a few who come from... There are not many. There must be just three or four from Grand Lac Victoria. There are no others.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We know that your community has experienced some difficult moments in recent years.

I would like to return to a point in your brief on page 3, where you talk about the justice system. You say:

"Let us take the example of the judicial system. It is necessary that there be within our local government laws and regulations based on our culture and our tradition in terms of enforcement, judgment and acquittal."

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Can you elaborate a little on what you have in mind. Last week in Ottawa, the Commission held a Canada-wide round table on justice. Among other things, we examined six pilot projects across Canada -- Vancouver South, a project in Metro Toronto. We looked at court operations in Kahnawake, in Telstin (PH) in British Columbia. We looked at a certain number of experiences.

Also at the round table, as was frequently the case during our hearings, aboriginal women told the Commission: "Be very careful. We wish to ensure that our rights and the rights of our children are respected."

Hence, the entire question of laws, cultures, traditions, with reference to the justice system, the Criminal Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is an extremely delicate and difficult issue and one in which there are many differing viewpoints, among aboriginal people as well.

We were told that there is a need for justice committees at the local level before charges are laid. This is

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often not only a matter of sentencing but also to deal with minor offences, minor problems. However, aboriginal women have told us they want to have the right to make a complaint under the regular system, the general system.

Can you tell us a little more about what you had in mind when you wrote this paragraph in your brief. This is a difficult question on which we would like some clarification.

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: If I can go back a little in time. As an aboriginal people, we had laws. For us, it is a question of moving in this direction.

Certainly, there are things which also for us at the community level are more acceptable, as the aboriginal women in Quebec have mentioned. Indeed, we currently have a project dealing with family violence, sponsored by Quebec Native Women Inc., which is under way in our community and aimed at sorting out the direction in which we wish to go.

I think that it is here that we need to have a say in the current system.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Is there an immediate urgency to reform the current system so that it is more sensitive to the needs of aboriginal people, so that it better meets needs, or are you saying that a whole separate system is needed, a system which returns to aboriginal laws, traditions and culture?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: There is a way of examining the two current systems so that at a given moment we can explain to the people our vision as leaders and harmonize the two legal systems currently in effect.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: One final question. Once again, do you, based on your experience, see any areas in the present system where immediate improvements could be made?

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: We currently have a legal advisor who is working to explain the judicial system. Perhaps in the near future, we, the people, will ask that there be a

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mechanism to provide this information to us within our community.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Essentially, what you're saying is that the understanding of how the judicial system works, of all its components, extends from the police to probation. The correctional system is not sufficiently understood, and additional information should be made available in your community.

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you.

Commissioner Robinson?

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

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SIMON ANICHINAPEO: The whole problem, it's a little... For the last five years, on average, there have 45 new births a year in our community. The community as such is also very young. Young people make up 80 percent of the population. We currently have about 117 houses for 213 families.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

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[English]

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: I see rather that... I am currently negotiating at several levels for my community. What I am presently asking for myself is that everything that is managed by the federal and provincial governments in terms of law be transferred.

To deal with the problem we are currently experiencing, we must... we advocate awareness-raising instead. There is a generation in my community that we have considerable difficulty reaching at present. Our elders.

During the colonization period, when the Oblates arrived... I don't know in what context they evangelized, and they've remained attached to that era. Perhaps they're waiting just now for... the Church to say that their way of life was good at the time.

I believe that this is the aspect of the solution we currently see in order to be able to solve the social problems our community is currently experiencing.

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COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: There are already some people in our community who are aware of the questions you are asking. I believe that we have set a long-term task for ourselves. The Europeans have been here for 300 years; that makes 300 years that we have been mixed up. We think that it will take a few more years before we reach that point.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON: [English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Blakeney.

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COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: There are currently two federal organizations involved - Indian and Northern Affairs and Health and Welfare Canada. These are the only organizations with which we are currently working in addition to the social services program.

We currently have one person working to increase the population's awareness of this problem. We are trying see what kind of services the other communities are

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providing; Maniwaki, for example, has a women's centre.

Recently, many people in our community have been going to detoxification centres. We have difficulty following up on these people when they return to their community. They were in a centre and there is really no follow-up afterwards.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: [English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We would like to thank you for your presentation. Once again, as I have told others, if you have any additional information you would like to provide, an additional brief, we will be continuing to stimulate public participation during the next year and you are certainly welcome.

SIMON ANICHINAPEO: Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Before hearing from the Association de développement économique algonquin, we will have a short presentation from Développement et paix des peuples autochtones.

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Good morning.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR, CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION

FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: Good morning. My name is Marcelle Sinclair. I am representing the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

I would first like to thank you for having agreed to hear us, even if we were not officially included in the agenda.

At the same time, I wish to apologize for the text which may not be as much to the point as it should be, but considering the circumstances, this is the best we could do.

I would first like to give a background to Development and Peace which is an organization of the Catholic Church, established 25 years ago by the bishops of Canada. Therefore, we are working all across Canada.

Our mandate is to promote the international solidarity of Canadians with the peoples of the Third World. This is done in two ways: firstly through the funding of Third World projects and, secondly, by conducting educational campaigns among the

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Canadian people on questions dealing with the Third World and the problems of its peoples.

Three years ago, we conducted a campaign called "Rebuild the Americas". In this campaign, we decided to include situations occurring in Canada since, in our work in the Third World during the past 25 years, we had become aware that, increasingly, there were often links between Third World peoples and those of Canada. The poverty in the Third World and the impoverishment in Canada or in the United States are often identical, and the reasons and consequences are often similar.

We also decided to do this for reasons of consistency, that is, we cannot ask the social movement in Canada to be sympathetic to peoples and reasons in the Third World, if we are not ourselves sympathetic to the reasons and problems experienced in Canada. This is what brought us to talk about the question of Canadian Aboriginal peoples.

We do not claim to know much about the

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question of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, since this was not our mandate, or our priority. We are, therefore, talking more from our own experiences of being involved with Aboriginal peoples of the south, that is of South and Central America.

In addition, we have noticed certain things with regard to Canadian history. We believe that, until now, there has been a lack of political will to settle the Aboriginal question in Canada. The same can be said of various countries in the Americas.

As I was saying, we wish to speak from our mandate which consists of supporting the peoples of the south by establishing connections with what is happening to the Aboriginal peoples here in Canada.

We notice that, for the Americas in general, the First Nations have been stripped of their resources, their rights and the means to control their future. Their culture is also threatened with extinction in many areas.

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We also believe that, for 500 years, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, in turn, have subjugated the Aboriginal peoples and ravaged the environment in the cause of development which only benefits part of the population, a minority which, obviously, is generally made up of white people. In this manner, the insatiable exploitation of natural resources has expelled entire Aboriginal communities from their land, depriving them of their means of subsistence and of their cultural and spiritual heritage. We believe that this is as true of Canada as it is of other American countries.

We have drafted part of this text together with certain Aboriginal organizations who have given us some explanations.

What I am going to say now is actually the understanding that Development and Peace has of the Aboriginal question, of the Aboriginal concerns and claims, to the very limit of understanding that white people may have, unskilled as they are in these matters.

As we understand it, the claims are linked to the enshrining of Aboriginal rights in the

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Constitution. This implies a recognition that, as the first inhabitants of this country, the Aboriginal peoples have rights which they have never renounced and which several treaties have already recognized.

For the Aboriginal peoples, we believe, this signifies that they should be included in the Canadian Constitution. This is where they see the true basis for future negotiations.

We believe that belonging to a territory, rather than owning it, actually determines national identity and ensures the resources needed for subsistence and autonomy. We understand that, for the Aboriginal peoples, the right to the land signifies the right to life.

We believe that having self-government without land is something impossible. Autonomy is necessarily linked to having land and we believe that, to a large degree, the survival of the Aboriginal peoples depends on self-government.

Our experience with peoples of the Third World has convinced us that there can be no true

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development without the responsible participation of persons concerned in their own future. It seems that this applies as much to the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada as it does to those from other countries.

At all levels of Development and Peace, we have made a commitment to try to expand and share our knowledge and experience from working with Aboriginal peoples, to work at developing a climate for dialogue to improve our knowledge of present-day cultures and our mutual understanding, to work more closely with Canadian organizations sympathetic to Aboriginal peoples, and to encourage the members of Development and Peace, and the Catholic population in general, to explore new forms of solidarity with Aboriginal communities. In all this, we support what Monseignor Drainville said this morning.

Finally, we recognize that our solidarity with the Aboriginal peoples of the south induces us to be more consistent in our solidarity with local struggles. This is only a first step, committing

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us to move from words to action.

In a word, through our volunteers and the Church which we represent, Development and Peace wishes to create new links with local Aboriginal peoples, to participate in establishing a dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you.

Maybe you can explain briefly, when you talk about the volunteers of Development and Peace, what this Organization, established 25 years ago, currently represents in Canada.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: The Organization has a national secretariat, located in Montreal, and a second secretariat for educational questions, located in Toronto for the English-speaking section. This represents approximately 3,000 members across Canada. We generally conduct two campaigns per year, one of which concerns education; for example, this year's campaign specifically focuses on Aboriginal peoples.

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We have had training and information sessions on the Aboriginal question with one part discussing the question of the south, that is the Mayas of Guatemala, and one part which intended to give our members more understanding of the situation of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada, more particularly in Abitibi-Temiscamingue, for the local area.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: At the secretariat, you have some employees. I imagine that there would be a small staff...

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: For all of Canada, if I am not mistaken, there are 72 persons.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Does the funding for the organization come from the members?

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: The basic funding of the organization comes from a special collection which takes place in all Canadian Catholic churches once a year during Lent. This represents almost half the funding. The second part comes mainly from the Canadian International Development Agency. And there

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are some minor sources, coming from provincial governments and various groups, but this is a minor item in the budget of the organization.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: As you have mentioned, you have had an interest in the situation of Canadian Aboriginal peoples for approximately three years.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: If I understand it well, your organization will be able to present a brief in Montreal, when we are having public hearings in Montreal.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: I believe so. Everywhere the Commission went, they requested that our regional staff be present at the Commission. Normally, however, there should be a presentation in Montreal by the staff of the national secretariat.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I am mentioning this because we appreciate that you are here today, in this area, but we also believe that the organization has much to contribute because the Aboriginal issue obviously has international significance and, with your experience in Central and South America, I believe that

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your contribution can be important to the Commission.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: I will deliver the message.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: That is very good.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: Could I just add something?

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Certainly.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: During recent years, we have also tried to approach local interest groups and community organizations. I would like to deliver a little message to the Algonquins of the area.

I know that we have few connections between us but, in my work with various interest and community organizations, I have sensed much interest and open-mindedness with regard to the Aboriginal question. Furthermore, people find it very hard to take the first step and to find ways of establishing the initial contacts.

I hope that our presence here today will

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constitute a message, saying that there is an interest among the white population, in the everyday world I would say, to establish contact and to get to know the surrounding Algonquin community better, and I feel that it would be important to set up the mechanisms to do so.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Listen, I believe it is important that the message be transmitted. During the previous day and a half, you have undoubtedly noticed that there are gaps and there are points of contact, whether between the school system and the Aboriginal concerns... I can go on. Evidently, we can only wish that you apply your contribution to trying to develop a connection between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in the region and, obviously, in a wider context.

I thank you again.

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I am going to ask my colleagues if they have any further comments, information or questions.

Mrs. Robinson.

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COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:

[English]

MARCELLE SINCLAIR: Thank you.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Blakeney.

COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY:

[English]

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COMMISSIONER ALLAN BLAKENEY: (cont.)

[English]

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We thank you.

We are going to have two presentations: the first for the Algonquin Economic Development Association. I would like to invite the Director,

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Steeve Mathias, to speak to us, and then we will hear Mrs. Éline Pichet for the Val d'Or Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Mathias, good morning.

STEEVE MATHIAS, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ALGONQUIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION: Dear Algonquin brothers and sisters, Members of the Commission, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the land of the Algonquins.

I would now like to talk about the economic concerns of the Algonquins, since I am involved in economic development and director of the main Algonquin institution for economic development, namely the Algonquin Development Association, also called ADA.

I admit that I do not quite know what to expect from the work of your Commission. You are already aware that some Aboriginal leaders have expressed serious reservations with regard to this Commission. They have even predicted that, as with most government commissions and studies conducted in the past, your report will end up on the shelf, particularly after the failure of Charlottetown.

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However, we should be positive, if only for lack of better things.

In addition, through the documentation of your Commission, I have learnt that, during this second series of hearings, you are looking for practical recommendations. For our part, we are actively looking for practical and concrete solutions to improve the situation of Algonquin communities.

But let us proceed to the main part of our speech, that is the economic concerns of the Algonquins.

For a complete illustration of the scope of concerns by the Algonquins on economic questions, it would be necessary to discuss many subjects, among others the socio-economic profile of communities, the impact of the Indian Act on community economic development, the precarious legal status of Algonquin land, the importance of traditional activities in a development project, the implementation, in advance, of community infrastructures for the purpose of ordered and systematic development, government policies and

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programs influencing development, the upgrading of human resources, natural resources and the environment. I

don't think that this forum is the best suited vehicle there is, nor that we have enough time to discuss all the issues mentioned, even though this should be done to make the scope of problems associated with economic development of the Algonquins well understood.

Therefore, I will limit myself to a summary discussion of one of the elements mentioned earlier, i.e. government policies and programs aiming at the development of Algonquin communities.

Essentially, I think that the perception our communities have of government actions may be summarized in the following terms:

(1) The state of poverty and economic dependency in which all communities find themselves is a direct result of the policies and actions of various governments that have succeeded each other to this day and the only way to put an end to this chronic situation once and for all is for the Algonquin nation to achieve full and complete autonomy as soon as possible.

(2) In the interval of the accession of the Algonquins to a genuine autonomy, in order to ease the links of dependency in which our communities are maintained or at least

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to reduce the multitude of obstacles raised by governmental action, obstacles that prevent any economic self-sufficiency, those governments that are genuinely wishing to help could begin by recognizing the following principles:

(a) For the Algonquins, the community is the mainspring on which all development must rest.

(b) For an Algonquin, economic development cannot be dissociated from political, sociocultural and spiritual blossoming.

(c) There can be no harmonious development without due attention given to the specificity of each community and, consequently, no standardized development framework is possible.

In other words, it seems clear to us that all those millions of dollars and governmental programs intended for the development of Aboriginal Peoples will be able to produce only

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mediocre results and a great waste of time, as long as there exists a persistent refusal to recognize the Aboriginal reality and legitimate aspiration of Algonquin communities to determine their own objectives and development priorities.

At the federal level, in response to repeated demands by Aboriginal leaders, the Government in the 1980s undertook a reevaluation of all the Aboriginal economic development programs.

In 1989, the Government of Canada launched its Canadian Strategy for the Economic Development of the Aboriginal peoples. We were told at the time that this government initiative was intended to put an end to the top-down approach to economic development used until then, which prevented Aboriginal communities from acquiring the expertise and abilities required to take charge of their own economic future.

We were also told that this new strategy was founded on the following principles: to allow the Aboriginal Peoples to determine their own

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goals and priorities; to seek to increase the autonomy of the communities as the principal objective; to base this initiative on the creation of a solid partnership between the Government and Aboriginal communities; and to translate the Government's undertaking into a long-term plan of action (five years) and maintain the services of the Departments of Industry, Science and Technology, Indian Affairs, and Employment and Immigration.

What are the specific benefits in 1992 for Algonquin communities after the implementation of more than two-thirds of the Canadian Government's action plan as stated in its Canadian Strategy for the Economic Development of the Aboriginal Peoples, especially after having already spent more than two-thirds of the budget anticipated at \$873.7 million?

For your information, not very much: the unemployment rate is as high as ever, if not higher; community infrastructures are still non-existent; social problems are getting worse; and

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finally, even though the Strategy aimed specifically at the creation of viable businesses, none of the communities served by the Algonquin Development Association has any commercial corporations created with the financial assistance of ISTC, the principal sponsor of the government strategy.

In fact, the only tangible element directly ensuing from the Strategy has been the creation in 1991 of the Algonquin Development Association.

It seems evident to us that the Canadian government strategy will require a serious change of direction if there is still the will to help Algonquin communities in achieving autonomy, self-determination and control of their economic future.

We at ADA do not believe that the principal problem resides at the level of programs put forward in the Canadian Strategy for the Economic Development of the Aboriginal peoples. We even think that these programs, as many other Canadian government programs, could very well produce interesting results

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if they were carried out in a context respectful of the Aboriginal reality and individual character of the communities.

According to us, the fundamental problem responsible for the failure of the Canadian Strategy to produce results in terms of economic self-determination of Algonquin communities can be essentially explained by the lack of will, if not the lack of ability, on the part of governments to act in a manner respectful of Algonquin realities and needs.

Finally, ADA considers that in addition to the change of direction that the Canadian Government must make in order to bring the programs of the Strategy nearer to Algonquin needs and realities, it would be also important to focus particular attention on other Canadian Government programs, which we think could potentially benefit Algonquin communities if they too were adapted to our specific needs.

We would like to stress in particular the following programs: (1) Canada/Quebec Agreement; (2) Employment and Immigration community development programs.

We would like to point out that these two programs target community development specifically. We have already approached Government authorities with a view to ensuring that these

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programs benefit Algonquin communities. For reasons not yet explained to us, we have been told of serious reservations with respect to Algonquin communities benefitting from these programs.

Taking into consideration the state of permanent crisis represented by the economic situation of Algonquin communities, ADA rejects this position by government representatives and will take the measures necessary to ensure that Algonquin communities gain access to these programs.

To conclude, we have tried in this presentation to demonstrate some of the economic concerns of the Algonquins, and, in particular, those associated with government policies and programs targetted to result in community development.

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I hope that the content of my presentation will be of use to you.

Thank you for your invitation and until the next time.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you, Mr Mathias, for having made this presentation on behalf of the Algonquin Development Association. Maybe first you could give us some information about the Association itself.

You are the general director of the Association, are you not?

STEEVE MATHIAS: That's right.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You have established...

STEEVE MATHIAS: We were established in 1991.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: ...in the context of the programs you talk about.

STEEVE MATHIAS: Indian Affairs programs.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: What have your activities consisted of? You have been in existence for a year, a year and a half?

STEEVE MATHIAS: It will be two years in April.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: What have your principal activities consisted of since your establishment, in practical terms?

STEEVE MATHIAS: The only projects we have accomplished to date are off-reserve projects. As the General Director, I think that the Strategy does not favour community development any more. To date, we have no projects established on reserves. There are projects to which we have contributed, but without any participation from the principal sponsor - ISTC.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You are financed by Science and Technology. Does your financing come from...

STEEVE MATHIAS: Yes. For the business portion, we call on the Aboriginal Business Development Program. To date, the only projects to which they have contributed -- I'm speaking of the six communities represented at this time by ADA -- there are no projects on reserves; all the projects we have at this time are off-reserve.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: The off-reserve projects, can you say a few words about what they have been?

STEEVE MATHIAS: There are some restaurants, some service stations. There is also a lack of follow-up by ISTC; they have invested enormous sums of money -- by "enormous" I mean "rather significant" -- and they have not done

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any follow-up. There was even a developer who was entitled to additional contributions from them, to other portions of the contribution, but no follow-up was done.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: But are there any projects on which you have collaborated and worked that did bring results?

STEEVE MATHIAS: The problem, I think, is that all is in place for the off-reserve projects, both from the legal point of view and from the point of view of infrastructure. But when we come to establish a project on a reserve, there is no infrastructure in place, no laws - that type of thing.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I understand that. Nevertheless, this morning, certain groups have come to represent the Algonquins who do not live on reserves. The Commission is also concerned with the economic development of Aboriginal populations living in an urban setting or off the reserves. In this sense, I understand that, at the beginning, your work has indeed consisted of being involved in projects off reserves and that you are concerned with being able to do the same on reserves, where there are different legal problems.

Once again, as far as the Algonquins who do not live on reserves are concerned, were there any projects that brought results? Are there any projects which have been started

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up and which will last?

STEEVE MATHIAS: Yes. There are some projects that work, that are in operation. As I said earlier, the Association has existed only two years and already one sees businesses that are in need of a follow-up, that need to be straightened out.

There are programs that have been put in place by governments and we have difficulty in linking the projects with these programs.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: What is the precise role of your Association in the development of these projects?

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STEEVE MATHIAS: We are under one of the programs run by Indian Affairs. It's called CEDO, the Community Economic Development Organization. We are a national CEDO since we represent six communities.

Our role has been to find two professionals to work on economic development, prepare business plans. We have these employees working with us full time. Our role is to assist entrepreneurs in starting businesses, inform them of programs available to their types of business, prepare a business plan with them, and then link them with those programs that are available to them.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I see what your role is. You wish to play it also on reserves.

STEEVE MATHIAS: Yes. It's because the six communities are asking themselves how they will go about bringing in economic development when they have difficulty in understanding what it is.

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They wonder whether the Strategy does not aim at having only off-reserve businesses. But these six communities served by the Association are all alike; while some others have the status of reserve, still others are a settlement, and some do not even have any defined land.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Once again, I think that we have put a finger on one of the most difficult questions, also for this Commission. It is clear that Aboriginal economies, how to proceed to ensure that economic development takes place? It cannot be legislated or regulated.

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and also opportunity... When Mr. Blakeney said a little earlier to previous presenters that land would not necessarily solve the economic problem, it is because we are aware that in several cases, because of the nature of the land, its location, there must be some thought given and action taken in terms of precise

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projects, not only in relation to the land, but also in relation to innovation. Basically, what is required are economic development opportunities which will allow these projects to be implemented.

We know from experience that in other parts of Canada there are often success stories with a joint Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origin. This is another question I wanted to ask you.

Has your organization, in the two years of its existence, ever joined, ever attempted... Are there any links established with non-Aboriginal economic circles in the region?

STEEVE MATHIAS: Since our organization is still very young, we try to become involved with other existing regional bodies.

To date, we have been invited to participate in other organizations that service all communities in the region, for example the *Conseil régional de développement en Abitibi-Témiscamingue* or the *Collectivité d'aide au développement communautaire* - CADC. These are other places where we are told that their programs might respond to all the needs of the Algonquins, even the very specific ones.

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The *Collectivité d'aide au développement communautaire*, CADC, has in place a strategic plan. We inquired what they had planned for the Algonquins and we found that there was nothing.

That's why I think our role here is to become involved with regional organizations. Now I need to deal with six CADCs to serve my six communities. It's very, very difficult.

If I want to launch a project involving all six communities, it's almost impossible, because I would need an authorization from each CADC. That's why our goal is to create our own CADC to answer our own needs.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: CADC, for the benefit of the recording, is that the "regional development council"?

STEEVE MATHIAS: Yes.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Some of my colleagues are from other provinces and there is always this bureaucratic jargon.

STEEVE MATHIAS: It's because I'm bilingual and there are other...

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: It's not a question of language, this really is a language of acronyms.

STEEVE MATHIAS: I use English terms more often than French.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Yesterday, we spoke of *CRSSS*, regional councils that had been replaced. One becomes spontaneously used to the sense of these symbols and acronyms. When you travel from province to province, you realize that there is a whole world to learn. One must acquire this ever-changing knowledge of acronyms.

I will ask my colleagues to go on.

STEEVE MATHIAS: There are many abbreviations in the area of economic development.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: That doesn't necessarily simplify the issue.

COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:

[English]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Blakeney. [English
follows]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Mr. Polson. [English
follows]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: [English] Thank you.

We will now hear a final presentation by Ms. Hélène Pichet, who is the General Manager of the Chamber of Commerce in the Val-d'Or region.

ÉLAINE PICHET, GENERAL MANAGER, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF VAL D'OR: That's it, all right, otherwise it would have been a nice promotion.

Mr. Bolson, Mr. Dussault, Mr. Blakeney and Mrs. Robinson, I am going to quickly read to you the letter we sent.

This will confirm the active participation of the Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or as an organization with regard to good relations between the Val d'Or business community and the Aboriginal peoples.

The Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or has more than 500 members, who come from all areas of economic activity. The Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or is paying close attention to the evolving Aboriginal community in Val d'Or, and has been doing so for several years. Our organization has often supported projects promoting exchanges between the two peoples, through social and economic activities and relations.

Furthermore, in order to provide adequate representation for the Aboriginal people within our organization, Ms. Édith Cloutier, the director of the Centre d'Amitié Autochtone, has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of

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Val d'Or since June 1992.

The Chamber of Commerce is constantly present and working with and/or supporting projects involving the Aboriginal people. For example, the Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or has for several years been providing volunteer services to and assisting the development of social activities such as the annual Amerindian hockey tournament and, quite recently, I personally participated in the development and establishment of a promotional campaign entitled "Christmas Welcome", the purpose of which was to welcome the Cree and Algonquin communities during the Christmas season. I have also included a document as an appendix.

Notwithstanding all the efforts made by our organization, this project did not get the general support of our business community. However, we are convinced that other projects will develop that can improve relations between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

While recognizing the importance of harmonious relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or wishes to assure your Commission that it will continue to promote all possible interaction, in a spirit of economic, social and cultural partnership.

It is signed by the president of the Chamber of Commerce, Jacques Morin, who is unable to be with us. That is why I am here to present it.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Thank you, Ms. Pichet, for

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coming to make your presentation on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce of Val d'Or.

If I understand clearly, the project that you have appended to your brief is not going ahead for the time being.

ÉLAINE PICHET: No, the project, we worked on it, I myself worked on it for part of the summer, I worked a lot with C we were a committee, with a number of people on it. I worked actively, particularly with the person who did all the visual work and all that. It was quite a business.

Unfortunately, we didn't have much time in which to present it to the merchants in Val d'Or, so people felt a little bit pushed, they didn't have enough time unfortunately. It was such a nice big project that it would have taken six or seven months to prepare the business community to agree to the project, since people would also have to invest financially.

The project itself was fantastic, because basically what it did was, it was a project to welcome the Aboriginal people more adequately in the Christmas season, because we're always talking about the economic spin-offs for a week, it's a direct spin-off of 4.5 million dollars. That's a lot of money for a city such as ours. So, that is why we support such a project as the Chamber of Commerce.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So, it's put off for the time being...

ÉLAINE PICHET: That particular project is postponed for now, I think perhaps we'll have to get into it earlier, or maybe

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make it a little bit simpler at the beginning and develop it, improve it year by year. This project already exists in some cities, such as Timmins.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You were in attendance during the presentation of the previous speaker, Mr. Mathias of the Algonquin Development Association. In the Chamber's brief, the final paragraph on the first page, you say,

"The Chamber of Commerce is constantly present and working with and/or supporting projects involving the Aboriginal people."

I understand that it is one thing to support a project. My question is, basically, are you trying to be active by creating C for example, another organization such as the previous one, the economic development association, are you trying as a Chamber of Commerce to establish some links and promote, not only support, the start-up of projects on the Aboriginal side?

ÉLAINE PICHET: Of course, when I say support or provide volunteer services, that's what we can do in terms of our Chamber. We have two full-time people. We are a non-profit agency. We spend 80 percent of our time looking for funding in the community. I can assure you, it takes an enormous amount of energy. When we manage, that is why our support is actually at the level, that is, of C I for one know that last year, I was a volunteer at the Amerindian tournament. I did some things, I spent two days selling drinks, we did some things. I worked as a volunteer. I gave some time.

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Also, the Chamber of Commerce, every year, goes around to the hotels to ask if they C in any event, we do some things like that, we conduct some activities. When we have requests for support, we look at them on the Board of Directors and we support them or whatever.

Relations with the Aboriginal people are important to us, because, in fact, we offered a position to Édithe Cloutier, who is the general manager of the Centre d'amitié autochtone, precisely to get the version or vision of the Aboriginal people within our Board, because they are elected, they are volunteers once again.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: On the program level, what I had in mind is that you have 500 members.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In terms of employment, there are a number of Aboriginal people here in Val d'Or, a number that will be growing. Is the Chamber playing a role with its members to encourage or...

ÉLAINE PICHET: I think that by supporting projects like the Christmas Welcome one, and putting a lot of work into it, I worked on it for several months, and our members are aware, so, basically, they are...

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I understand, but basically, my question is, many of your members are employers, no doubt, here in Val d'Or or a certain number.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Nevertheless, I have some Aboriginal firms, I don't have a huge number.

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Some non-Aboriginal employers, in other words, are in favour of promoting the employment, the hiring of Aboriginal people.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Yes, but of course this is a matter that can be pursued. That is precisely why we went to get an Aboriginal person to sit on our Board. If Édithe, tomorrow morning, brings up this or that problem or view, we must always look at it from a Chamber of Commerce perspective.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I understand.

ÉLAINE PICHET: So, we'll take a look, we'll give some thought to the matter. But so far I think we have helped a lot. What I thought was a bit unfortunate in this, was that we had a week and a half advance notice to come and make a presentation here. I consider that deplorable. Really, I want to tell you this. I find it really deplorable.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Normally, you should have had six weeks.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Yes, I know, but...

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: That's one of our little problems.

ÉLAINE PICHET: I raise it because it is not the first time this has happened. When I have to work on projects, Aboriginal things, it is always at the last minute, and I find we are working C personally, I find it doesn't work well. It could be better.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In this case here, I will

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tell you that you have plenty of opportunity to repeat what you have to say, because we are not coming and going back to our offices to write our recommendations. As I have had occasion to say, it is a dialogue we are beginning.

I would like somewhat to take what you have told me on the spur of the moment to suggest that we continue our thinking. We are extremely interested in getting some additional comments, because once again we are going to be in a phase of public consultations and public participation between now and next fall, or the fall of '93, and we will be returning to Quebec, unfortunately not to Val d'Or, so it is possible to resubmit a substantial brief. In other words, the delays will not be there. I understand that this does not substitute for what you said.

ÉLAINE PICHET: That's it, I mean, the full-time staff, we only have two people, so, we're dealing with volunteers who have to get together. It's not easy, which is why I felt somewhat uneasy in presenting this, but I said at least we will get the chance to say something or express ourselves a bit.

There is something else that I wanted to mention, which we forgot to mention in this, and this is that the Chamber of Commerce, in '90, recognized an Aboriginal company that won C the business of the year, it went to an Aboriginal firm, which was Air Quebec. So we, as a Chamber of Commerce, are very much aware of what the Aboriginal people are doing for our community. Relations are good, but of course they could be better.

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From having worked with Aboriginal people, the only thing I can say is that we don't function in the same way at all. This is perhaps what I find we don't realize, or where there may be some room for improvement in terms of relationships.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: What you say is important, because it is at the heart of the problem in the relationship.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Yes.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Basically, it is a cultural problem.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Exactly.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: This morning, there was a speaker who talked to us about adaptation, the concept of Indian time, etc. So, if you could continue your thinking and submit some additional thoughts, because here we are getting into attitudes, we are getting at the intercultural junction.

ÉLAINE PICHET: It is not so easy to point that out. I have to work with Aboriginal people and all that, and I am somewhat known in that community, but I don't want it to be taken badly either.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: No. It's less for the purpose of indicating the problem than to try to give us some hints for resolutions, convergence solutions, because we frequently have lists of cultural differences and when we say that we say to ourselves what will we do to get it together.

ÉLAINE PICHET: But it is now two years, two and a half years, that I have been with the Chamber of Commerce as its general

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manager, and this is really what I have noticed, that's the problem. We simply don't work in the same way, and we find ourselves at a given time, that's the way it works. It is very frustrating for me, and it must be for them as well.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: We get this from all sides, but I must tell you that we are experiencing this in terms of the Commission. We have 65 percent of our staff which is Aboriginal staff, from all parts of Canada, Métis, Inuit, status Indians, non-status Indians, etc., and it's a multicultural undertaking and there is a ferment, there is a shock. We experience it on a daily basis. We thought that not only did we have no choice in the matter, but that it would no doubt be one of the legacies of the Commission if we managed to do this and produce some results.

ÉLAINE PICHET: I am not saying that one way is better than another, but I really feel that there is a problem in this.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I was saying this in order to say that we are having a similar experience. We understand very well what you are saying, and we are being told this on all sides, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. I think basically that what we should try to do is to find out how to get some points of anchorage.

ÉLAINE PICHET: I think that the best way is to discuss it, like this. I know myself that when someone calls me, on an Aboriginal matter, and tells me, Hélène, can you do it for tomorrow morning, I say, no, you should have called me two weeks ago. I really sound off and I tell them, I am busy, there's no time. I can't deliver something

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the next morning, it can't be done. I don't work like that, and that's what I say. I don't hide it.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: You are putting your finger on a very, very important reality.

ÉLAINE PICHET: I think I came here mainly to tell you that, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So, once again, if you have some thoughts, some additional suggestions, don't hesitate to send them to us in writing. They will be welcome.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Certainly, because there is no language problem at all.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: It is the deeper cultural situation on both sides.

Mrs. Robinson. [English follows]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: In fact, you are perfectly right. We are very aware of it. If we had to function solely with notices in the newspapers, the hearings would not function. We have people who are working on the ground, local representatives. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, situations outside our control crop up and there are delays, like the one you mention, but we are very conscious that it is through direct contact with people, completely. And that is the way we are trying to function, but we don't always follow through 100 per cent.

Mr. Polson. [English follows]

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CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: [English]

Ms. Pichet, I would like to thank you for coming and meeting with us and making the presentation. Once again, we urge you to continue to think about some suggestions for solutions. I think you have provided, for one of the rare times in the Commission, an opportunity to conduct this discussion between the cultural junction and the underlying context.

ÉLAINE PICHET: I mentioned it this afternoon. I hope it was clearly understood. I am not happy with Mr. Bolson's question. It bothers me a lot and it will continue to bother me.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: Don't leave before speaking to us.

ÉLAINE PICHET: No, it is because this afternoon he began his interjection by telling me that he listened when people spoke, unfortunately, I have some Latin blood and sometimes we get going and we sound off, but I mean you have to respect that, too. When I said we had given a seat on our Board of Directors to an Aboriginal person, I think that that's an important step. It hadn't been done before. We push things a lot when Aboriginal people come to see us with problems. We are listening, and that's what is important.

I think we're keeping our part of the bargain. Still, we are a Chamber of Commerce. We have some very specific mandates. That's all I wanted to say.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: I think you have made a very,

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very worthwhile contribution to the Commission this afternoon, and more generally.

Thank you, Ms. Pichet.

ÉLAINE PICHET: Thank you, and good evening.

CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT: So, we will end this session of public hearings here in Val d'Or. We are going to resume as a Commission in Maniwaki tomorrow morning. Thank you.

--- The session is adjourned at 3:55 p.m.